

Guidance
Document



Guidelines for the Evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

September 2021

These Guidelines were developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO). The analysis and recommendations of this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or the United Nations Member States.

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FOREWORD

The United Nations development system reform, initiated by Secretary-General António Guterres, aims to strengthen the United Nations (UN) system's collective support to countries in their pursuit of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). To ensure coherence and sharpen the focus of the UN system's support, the UN Resident Coordinators' function was elevated and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF) was introduced.

The shift of emphasis from assistance to partnership under the new CF calls for proper accountability of the system to the governments and people that it supports, as well as to all partners and stakeholders who joined our efforts. The commitment to provide effective support requires constant reflection and learning to adapt our work and seek the best course of action. The new CF Evaluation thus became an important instrument in making the reform work.

These Guidelines were prepared in a true collaborative spirit. Developed by the CF Working Group of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the newly established evaluation function of the Development Coordination Office (DCO), they benefited from contributions and iterative reviews by a large number of evaluation professionals and collaborators across the UN system.

To serve their purpose, the Guidelines must be adopted and put into practice by the UN Resident Coordinators and the UN Country Teams. Their ownership of the CF Evaluation, and their will to make it work as intended, are key to proper public accountability and effective learning. The Guidelines should also be used and referenced by those who are involved in supporting, advising and overseeing this exercise at the regional and global levels.

We count on all colleagues to make the CF Evaluation an instrument of change and hope they find these Guidelines useful to that end.

A stylized blue ink signature of Robert Piper, consisting of a large 'G' shape with a horizontal bar and a small dot.

Robert Piper
Assistant Secretary-General
For Development Coordination

A blue ink signature of Masahiro Igarashi, written in a cursive style.

Masahiro Igarashi
Chair
United Nations Evaluation Group

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List of abbreviations

CCA	Common Country Analysis
CF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
DCO	Development Coordination Office
EDM	Evaluation Design Matrix
ILO	International Labour Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN-SWAP	UN System-Wide Action Plan
VNRs	Voluntary National Reviews

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We would like to thank members of the UNEG Cooperation Framework Working Group who contributed their knowledge and expertise to produce these Guidelines. In particular, we would like to thank Working Group co-conveners Patricia Vidal Hurtado (ILO) and Omar Awabdeh (FAO) who led the process to develop the Guidelines, as well as Working Group members Bikul Tulachan (UNICEF), Chaitali Chattopadhyay (UN Women), Natalia Acosta (UNEP) and Natalie Angela Neil (OIOS).

Special thanks to Guy Thijs (Director, ILO Evaluation Office) for advising the Working Group and Simon-Pierre Tegang (Senior Evaluation Advisor, UN DCO) for his valuable contributions and support in finalizing the Guidelines.

We would also like to thank the Heads of evaluation functions in UNEG member agencies for sharing their valuable expertise and insights.

1. Introduction

General Assembly resolution A/RES/72/279 designated the United Nations (UN) Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as “*the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of United Nations development activities in each country, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”. Renamed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF), it forms the centrepiece of UN reform and represents the collective response of the UN to help countries address national priorities and challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Evaluation of the CF is a mandatory independent system-wide country evaluation¹ and is separate from an annual review. CF evaluations ensure accountability, support learning and inform decisions regarding the design of subsequent CF cycles. They systematically assess the contributions of the CF by focusing on achieved development results, as well as internal and external gaps and overlaps in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

CF evaluations are guided by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (2016). They must be credible and grounded on independence, impartiality and a rigorous methodology. The process should be transparent and inclusive (involving relevant stakeholders) with robust quality assurance. Evaluation results and recommendations are derived from, and informed by the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data, as well as the accurate analysis of evidence. CF evaluations require that evaluations are ethically conducted, and managed by independent evaluators who exhibit professional and cultural competencies.

CF evaluations are decentralized and country-led, with oversight and technical support provided by the UN Development Coordination Office² (DCO) to guarantee the independence, credibility and utility of evaluations. DCO also ensures accountability by tracking the implementation of recommendations, and public dissemination of the report and management response. UNEG, in its supporting role, provides technical advice and ad-hoc support to any activity during the process upon request. CF evaluations are planned on a quadrennial basis by DCO in consultation with countries. However, as part of evaluability requirements, in addition to having a CF evaluation in the quadrennial evaluation plan, it should be commissioned only if it has been implemented for a minimum of 24 full months.

CF evaluations have three key objectives namely, to:

- i. Ensure accountability of UN actions to stakeholders;
- ii. Provide a transparent and participatory platform for learning and dialogue with stakeholders regarding national progress, challenges and opportunities, and best approaches in the context of the system-wide national response; and
- iii. Deliver clear recommendations to support the next CF cycle and ensure accelerated progress towards the SDGs.

The independent evaluation of the CF should be completed in the **penultimate year of the CF**. There should be linkages with individual and joint UN agency-level evaluations, as well as Voluntary National Reviews to maximize complementarities and synergies. The evaluation should be conducted in an inclusive manner and promote national ownership. Evaluation design, procurement and processes should build on and strengthen national evaluation capacities, including through the use of national

¹ During the transition period, evaluations may still be examining contributions made under UNDAFs rather than CFs. The Evaluation Guidelines apply to both UNDAF and CF evaluations. CF should, therefore, be read interchangeably with UNDAF throughout this document.

² The institutional structure of DCO is still evolving. As such, for the purpose of these Guidelines, reference is made to DCO as a whole. DCO may delegate some tasks to its regional bodies and/or its Evaluation Unit.

evaluators to the extent possible. The CF evaluation should further utilise data from relevant evaluations and/or review processes as part of the evidence base to assess progress against outcomes.

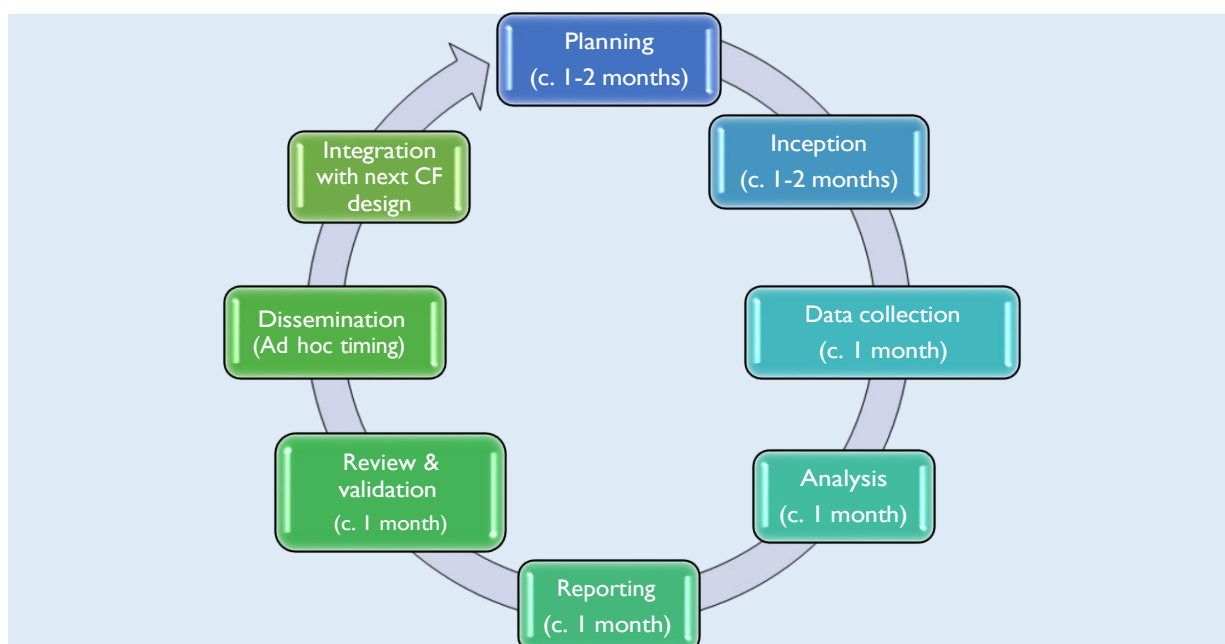
These guidelines provide a step-by-step approach to conducting CF evaluations. Section 2 provides an overview of the evaluation process. Sections 3 and 4 show steps to ensure a robust and effective evaluation set-up and design. Section 5 details the data collection, analysis and reporting phases. Section 6 discusses evaluation dissemination and post-evaluation tasks. Templates that can be directly employed during the course of the evaluation, including the inception and evaluation report templates, can be found in the [Appendices](#).

2. The Country Framework Evaluation Process

Timely and careful planning is key to increasing the quality and utility of CF evaluations. A CF evaluation should be initiated at least nine months (penultimate year of the CF) prior to the start of the next CF design phase, which begins with the Common Country Analysis (CCA).

The evaluation lifecycle is presented in Figure 1 and is defined by six distinct phases: planning; inception; data collection and analyses; reporting; review and validation; and dissemination.

Figure 1: CF evaluation lifecycle



Planning

During the planning phase:

- The RC notifies the apex national counterparts (or the CF Steering Committee), DCO and the (UNCT) Result Groups on the UN's intent to launch the CF evaluation.
- The RC and UNCT designate an Evaluation Manager³.
- The Evaluation Manager, in consultation and with support from the RCO and UNCT, establishes a national Evaluation Steering Committee.
- All preparatory deskwork and consultation processes to draft the [Terms of Reference](#) (TOR) and recruit the Evaluation Team in coordination with the DCO is undertaken.

Inception

Led by the independent Evaluation Team Leader, this phase involves mapping and scoping activities leading to the refinement of the evaluation design and questions that will be reflected in the [Inception](#)

³ For example, a representative of the UN agency chairing the M&E group, or the chair of the Programme Management Team or any other agency with a substantive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officer.

[Report](#). With support from the DCO Evaluation Advisor, this phase includes a briefing of the RC and the Evaluation Manager; agreeing or developing theories of change; and drafting the Inception Report through a consultative process.

Data collection and analysis

The data collection and analysis phases include all primary and secondary data collection and analysis.

Reporting

During the reporting phase the Evaluation Team compiles and synthesizes findings and prepares the [Evaluation Report](#).

Review and validation

All UNCT and Evaluation Steering Committee members are engaged in the review and validation phase.

The RC/UNCT drafts a [management response](#) to propose timebound actions and interventions to address recommendations and assign responsibilities for follow up.

Dissemination

Section 6 details various modes for dissemination of the Evaluation Report. For example, stakeholder workshops provide an opportunity to ensure the dissemination of evaluation findings, as well as facilitate discussion on actioning recommendations and integrating findings into the next CF planning cycle. A broad range of stakeholders including, for example, government officials, funding partners, civil society organizations and the private sector should be invited.

A cross reference table on the phases, activities, and roles and responsibilities is available in [Appendix 1](#).

3. Evaluation set-up

3.1. Management, governance and quality assurance mechanisms

3.1.1. Management and governance arrangements

The RC and UNCTs hold the overall responsibility of commissioning the CF evaluation and any follow-up actions. The RC must define the key actors in the governance of the evaluation, and their roles and responsibilities, at the outset to ensure an independent process. Clear management and governance mechanisms will also ensure that all those involved are accountable for their specific input to the process and clarity of actions.

Other key actors include:

- The Evaluation Manager;
- The Independent Evaluation Team;
- The Evaluation Steering Committee;
- DCO, the DCO Evaluation Advisor and regional evaluation bodies; and
- UNEG.

DCO is responsible for approving all evaluation products including the TOR, inception report, final report and other associated products.

[Appendix 2 – Annex B](#) provides further details management and governance roles and responsibilities.

3.1.2. Quality assurance

DCO is responsible for quality assurance and oversight of and throughout the entire evaluation process. DCO will quality assure the evaluation report at the end of the evaluation process to ensure the soundness, usefulness and evidence-based elements of the final report.

The Evaluation Steering Committee is engaged from the outset together with the Evaluation Manager to guide the whole evaluation process. The Committee ensures the technical and factual quality of the data, analysis and findings.

Evaluation Team members are required to sign the [UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators](#) (2008).

All CF evaluations should adhere to [UNEG's Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (2016), as well as follow guidance on gender equality and human rights⁴.

3.2. Evaluation timeline and budget

Once on board, the Evaluation Manager, with the support of the DCO Evaluation Advisor, will draft the operational evaluation workplan and timeline to detail the steps and timings of each phase of the evaluation⁵. The overall timeline of the CF evaluation should fit with the next CF development roadmap, and the CF evaluation results should feed into the CCA process and the next CF planning process.

⁴ UNEG [Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#) (2014); [UN Women Evaluation Handbook on how to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation](#) (2015); [UN SWAP EPI Technical Note and Scorecard](#) (2018); and [UNEG Good Practices for Integrating Gender Equality and Human Rights in Evaluation](#) (2017).

⁵ Note that the full, detailed evaluation timeline will be drafted by the Evaluation Team and included in the Inception Report.

Following consultations with the UNCT, DCO, development partners and government counterparts, the RC should approve the operational evaluation workplan and timeline to officially launch the process.

To ensure the most effective stakeholder engagement, consideration should be given to factors that may impact the timeline including, for example, national processes such as elections.

Following consultations with the UNCT, DCO, development partners and government counterparts the RC should sign off the operational evaluation workplan and timeline to officially launch the process. The overall timeline of the CF evaluation should fit with the next CF development roadmap, and the CF evaluation results should feed into the CCA process and the next CF planning process.

To ensure adequate funding and planning for CF evaluations, each CF should incorporate an evaluation plan as an Annex. The budget associated to this evaluation plan should be discussed and established by the UNCT during the budgeting process of the CF. The evaluability assessment of the CF (UNEG, 2020) ⁶ should inform this process. DCO currently provides the core fund for CF evaluations (USD50,000 per country). The RC should advocate and mobilize additional contributions from UNCT agencies.

3.3. Terms of Reference

The Evaluation Manager is responsible for drafting the TOR in consultation with the RCO and thematic group leads. The process to develop the TOR should be inclusive, and aligned with other efforts aimed at strengthening ownership and national evaluation capacity development. Identifying and engaging a broad range of stakeholders, partners, constituents and civil society groups, including those who do not work directly with the UNCT but play a key role in the national context, is a critical first step. DCO is responsible for approving the TOR.

The TOR should be used as the initial information paper to formally establish the evaluation, set the overall purpose, and act as the basis on which to launch the evaluation and hire the Evaluation Team.

The TOR should outline the overarching purpose, objective and scope of the evaluation. It may also provide an overview of the: evaluation criteria and main questions; overall approach and methodology; qualifications of Evaluation Team members; deliverables and timeframe; evaluation management arrangements; and intended use of the evaluation results.

To ensure quality and accountability, the TOR should explicitly adhere to the [UNEG Norms and Standards](#) (2016) and [Ethical Guidelines](#) (2020). As per the [UN SWAP EPI](#) Criteria (Criteria 1)⁷, CF evaluations should integrate gender into the evaluation criteria and questions to ensure that gender-related data is collected.

⁶ [Evaluability Assessment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\)](#)

⁷ The Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI) is one of the performance indicators developed as part of the accountability framework of the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) to implement the Chief Executive Board for Coordination Policy (CEB/2006/2) on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The EPI is assessed against four criteria:

- 1) GEWE is integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEWE related data will be collected.
- 2) A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.
- 3) The evaluation report reflects a gender analysis as captured in the findings, conclusions and recommendations – this could be captured in various ways throughout the evaluation report. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.
- 4) The entity has commissioned at least one evaluation to assess corporate performance on gender mainstreaming or equivalent every 5-8 years.

3.4. Stakeholder engagement

A systematic stakeholder identification and mapping of the development actors, including development landscape analysis, should be conducted as part of the **planning phase** of the evaluation.

Detailed stakeholder mapping and analysis will be done during the **inception phase**. The exercise should detail all stakeholders to be engaged through both governance mechanisms and as potential respondents during data collection. The CF will be the primary source to conduct the mapping to ensure inclusion of all relevant stakeholders from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

3.5. Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team is responsible for conducting the evaluation. Identification and selection of team members are facilitated by the Evaluation Manager on behalf of UNCT/RCO, in consultation with the DCO Evaluation Advisor, during the **planning phase**.

The team is comprised of external evaluators who work in full independence from the evaluation commissioners.

Due consideration should be given to: cultural and gender balance; language requirements for the evaluation; professionalism and experience; and coverage of relevant subject areas of work by UNCT member agencies.

The team should also include adequate specialist coverage of key cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights, and environmental sustainability.

Further details on the composition and qualifications of the Evaluation Team can be found in [Appendix 2 – Annex C](#).

4. Evaluation design

4.1. Preliminary research and scoping process

4.1.1. Theory of change approach

The theory of change (ToC) is the key reference framework for evaluators. For CF evaluations, the ToC should extend from the SDGs to CF outcomes. While the ToC will have been developed when the CF was designed, the Evaluation Team and Evaluation Manager should assess if it is sufficiently articulated for the purpose of selecting outcomes to be evaluated. Findings from the **CF Evaluability Assessment** (UNEG, 2020)⁸ in this area should be considered by the Evaluation Team.

A ToC meeting, led by the Evaluation Manager and Evaluation Team, could be held early in the inception phase of the evaluation to support the Evaluation Team, UNCT and the Evaluation Steering Committee members to develop a common understanding of ToC activities, expected outcomes, underlying assumptions and consensus on potential outcome indicators to be measured. In some cases, the Evaluation Team may need to reconstruct the ToC to better align with the CF's implementation and account for emerging development changes in the country. This needs to include also cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and empowerment of women, human rights and non-discrimination (including disability inclusion), and environmental sustainability.

4.1.2. Evaluation scope

The CF evaluation should cover all UN development system (UNDS) programmes (resident, non-resident and regional) implemented in the country during the CF cycle until the start of the evaluation within their geographic scope. It may also cover activities implemented before the start of the CF cycle if their effects appear to extend beyond a single CF cycle. Due consideration should be given to the activities of agencies without a formal country programme, activities implemented as part of global or regional programmes and projects, and the activities of non-resident agencies with explicit recognition of regional and cross-border elements within the CF.

In principle, the CF evaluation should not seek to conduct a full evaluation of individual programmes, project or activities of UNCT members, but rather synthesise and build on the programme and project evaluations conducted by each agency⁹.

The Evaluation Manager and Evaluation Team, in consultation with the Evaluation Steering Committee, may decide to prioritise specific CF outputs and activities (e.g., limit the evaluation scope to assess the breadth and depth of contributions based on the level and scope of UNCT work). Data availability and the overall development landscape in the country can also play a role to inform the scope of the evaluation.

The Evaluation Team should use appropriate evaluation methodologies that identify collective contributions at the outcome level and ascertain the plausibility of causal relationships between activities and outcomes (see Section 5.1 on [Methodology](#)).

⁸ Available at: www.unevaluation.org/UNSCDF_EA.

⁹ Each UNCT member is responsible for providing data and evidence-based information that demonstrate its contribution to the Joint Work Plan and overall CF outcomes and national development goals.

4.2. Evaluation criteria and questions

Defining appropriate evaluation questions around key criteria is a critical step during the evaluation scoping phase.

4.2.1. Evaluation criteria or analytical dimensions

As per the CF Companion Package (March 2020), evaluation questions should assess the following criteria¹⁰:

- Relevance and adaptability.
- Coherence.
- Effectiveness.
- Efficiency.
- Coordination.
- Sustainability.
- Orientation towards impact.

The CF evaluation should explicitly address cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and women's empowerment¹¹, human rights and non-discrimination, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability¹², among others. CF evaluations are expected to address them through an adequate evaluation design, and relevant questions and methodology to yield key findings, conclusions and recommendations in these areas¹³.

For the assessment of humanitarian interventions, two additional evaluation criteria could be considered, namely, **coverage** and **connectedness**. When assessing humanitarian interventions, the evaluators will not only consider the ability of the CF and UN entities to respond to humanitarian crises, but also the extent to which the UNCT has been able to apply a resilience approach by linking prevention, preparedness, response and early recovery with national capacity building. Assessment of humanitarian interventions within the framework of a CF evaluation is possible only for crises that are geographically localized and/or limited in time and intensity.

4.2.2. Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions should be framed by the selected evaluation criteria (such as effectiveness and coherence) and drafted in line with the following guiding principles. Evaluation questions should be:

¹⁰ Several of these dimensions relate to the internationally agreed evaluation criteria developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The OECD-DAC criteria should be used depending on the questions that the evaluation intends to answer. As such, they should not be applied methodically, but rather based on the needs and intent of the evaluation.

¹¹ As per the 2015 [UN Women Evaluation Handbook on how to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation](#), evaluations that are responsive to gender equality and women's empowerment are systematic and impartial assessments that provide credible and reliable evidence-based information about the extent to which an intervention has resulted in progress (or the lack thereof) towards intended and/or unintended results regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women.

¹² As of June 2021, UNEG Working Group on Integrating Environmental and Social Impact in Evaluations is in the process of preparing guidance on operationalizing environmental sustainability in evaluations to address aspects of: Identification of long-term environmental positive/ negative effects and outcomes and assessment of the environmental dimension "footprint" of implementation.

¹³ For instance, regarding environmental sustainability, CF evaluations can consider the extent to which climate change, for example, impacts expected outcomes, any environmental risks associated with the outcomes' design and implementation, and whether these risks pose any threat to the sustainability of the results achieved with the contribution of the UN system support.

- Clear, precise and relevant.
- Clearly organized, in a logical order, around the evaluation criteria, e.g. relevance, effectiveness, and coherence.
- Directly and clearly grounded in the CF ToC and the SDG priorities and gaps of the country.
- Critical for addressing the issues targeted by the selected evaluation scope.
- Limited to a manageable number while allowing the evaluation to fulfil its accountability and learning objectives. A good practice is to have 2-3 questions per analytical dimension/criterion.
- Integrate gender equality and empowerment of women, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability concerns within each of the dimensions/criteria.

A list of potential questions by criterion are available in [Appendix 2 – Annex A](#) to inform the drafting of the TORs. It is not a prescriptive or mandatory list, rather it aims to inform evaluation managers in the identification of evaluation questions for the TOR.

4.3. Evaluation design matrix: Questions, indicators and potential sources

Based on the evaluation questions, the Evaluation Team drafts the evaluation design matrix (EDM) as part of the Inception Report (see section 4.4). The EDM is a centrepiece of the evaluation and plays a critical role at all the steps of the evaluation process. It contains the core elements of the evaluation: (a) what will be evaluated (evaluation criteria, evaluation questions and related issues to be examined – “assumptions to be assessed”); (b) how to evaluate (sources of information and methods and tools for data collection). It deserves particular attention from the Evaluation Manager, who should know how to develop and use it. Both the Evaluation Manager and Evaluation Team should have an in-depth understanding of this tool.

The Evaluation Team is responsible for developing the EDM during the inception phase. It should include a detailed overview of the key evaluation questions aligned to the criteria, sub-questions, data sources and indicators.

4.4. Inception report

The inception report provides the conceptual framework and main operational plan for the CF evaluation, including the timeline for conducting the evaluation. It is produced by the Evaluation Team to operationalise the TOR and includes:

- An assessment of: (a) the soundness of the ToC for the CF, and (b) the extent to which that ToC evolved during the CF’s implementation.
- An overview of the evaluation objectives, scope and topic selection.
- A systematic purposive sampling framework to identify interventions and stakeholders.
- A detailed evaluation approach, criteria and questions, and tools and methodology.
- The [EDM](#) detailing evaluation questions, indicators and data sources.
- The management, governance and quality assurance mechanisms.
- A plan detailing evaluation activities and a timeline.

An Inception Report template can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

5. Data collection, analysis and reporting

5.1. Evaluation approach and data collection methods

5.1.1. Evaluation approach

The overarching approach to CF evaluations should support course-corrective and adaptive decision-making through evidential data collection, reflection and analysis, as well as independence and impartial judgement. The scope, design and implementation of CF evaluations should generate relevant, analytical, evidence-based, cost-effective and timely information on the results. The evaluation should demonstrate whether or not the UN is making a difference in supporting governments and people to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The evaluation will therefore assess the UN's contribution to the intended change defined in the CF ToC. A contribution analysis using a theory-based approach¹⁴ is one suggested evaluation perspective that can be considered.

The CF evaluation should use a **participatory and consultative approach**, whereby key CF stakeholders and national partners are engaged, and their views and feedback are collected and used at different stages of the evaluation process. By engaging all key stakeholders from the outset, the evaluation will seek to bolster national ownership and, consequently, promote the use of evaluation findings. Evaluation design, procurement and processes should build on and strengthen national evaluation capacities. This includes the use of national evaluators to the extent possible and when appropriate.

5.1.2. UN normative work and support of standard-setting

Central to the UN mandate is its normative and standard-setting support^{15 16} to countries. The CF evaluation will judiciously map, analyse and assess the relevant areas of normative work and standard-setting of the UNCT guided by the [UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System](#) (2014).

5.1.3. Data collection methods

The Evaluation Team should select the most appropriate combination of data collection methods to address each evaluation question. Suggested data collection methods include, but are not limited to:

- **Document review:** CCA, CF and Joint Work Plans; mid-term progress reviews (where undertaken); annual reports and existing evaluation reports (notably those conducted by individual UN agencies, and those issued by national counterparts); strategy papers; national plans and policies; and related programme and project documents.
- **Synthesis or meta-analysis** of previous evaluations and assessments carried out by UN agencies and/or development partners. In principle, the CF evaluation should not conduct a full

¹⁴ The evaluation will need to assess and explain how the UN collectively contributed to the observed development results at outcome and output level, and whether the assumptions behind the identified causal pathways of change held or not. Approaches such as process tracing, outcome mapping, outcome harvesting, or most significant change can be considered.

¹⁵ The type of the UN normative work includes, but is not limited to, developing international conventions, protocols and declarations; establishment of norms, standards, international codes of conduct and guidelines; monitoring and reporting on the implementation of conventions, norms, and other obligations; development and dissemination of normative products, including knowledge products and information resources; promotion and capacity strengthening in relation to crosscutting norms and standards; and, facilitating intergovernmental dialogue and coordination. It also includes the commitment to leaving no one behind; addressing root causes of vulnerability and poverty; and protection of rights – ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, communities affected by forced displacement, persons with disabilities, persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics.

¹⁶ Examples of normative work: The Convention on Biodiversity; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions with respect to labour standards and international laws; the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

evaluation of individual programmes, projects or activities of UNCT members, but rather synthesise evidence from programme and project evaluations conducted by each agency.

- **Semi-structured interviews** with key stakeholders including, for example, government counterparts, civil society organisations, UNCT members and implementing partners.
- **Field visits.**
- **Stakeholder surveys.**
- **Focus group discussions**, when needed, involving groups and sub-groups of beneficiaries, including community members, decision-makers, and other key stakeholders and partners.
- **Other methods**, such as case studies and direct observation; mobile-based data collection tools; Big Data and data mining; simulated field visits in fragile and conflict environments; geospatial analysis, maps and remote sensing systems are encouraged to support triangulation¹⁷.

Data collection methods should be selected with due regard to:

- The availability of existing evaluative evidence and administrative data.
- Logistical constraints (including, for example, challenges relating to travel, budget, and time constraints).
- Ethical considerations (particularly when evaluating sensitive topics or in sensitive settings such as post-conflict settings).

Data collection methods and processes should be **gender-responsive**¹⁸ and data should be systematically disaggregated by sex and age and, to the extent possible, by geographical region, ethnicity, disability, migratory status and other contextually relevant markers of equity¹⁹. Specific guidelines should be observed, namely the [UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation](#) (2014)²⁰ and [UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicators](#) (2018).

5.2. Sampling

A systematic purposive sampling approach should be used to select programmes that will be covered in the scope of the CF evaluation. The selected programmes should have sufficient level of transformational intent (depth, breadth and size) and maturity. The systematic purposive sampling approach can also be used to target groups and stakeholders to be consulted. The selection will be informed by the portfolio analysis and stakeholder mapping undertaken during the inception phase of the evaluation. This analysis will yield information on the relevant initiatives and partners to be part of the evaluation (including those that may not have partnered with the UNCT but play a key role in the outcomes to which CF contributes). The Evaluation Team should clearly outline the sample selection criteria and process, and any potential bias²¹ and limitations.

¹⁷ For more information on evaluation methods, see the [UNEG Compendium of Evaluation Methods](#) (Volume 1) (2020).

¹⁸ As per the UNEG [Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#) (2014), when deciding among different methods and instruments, it is useful to question, if the selected method(s) or tool(s) will: (1) Detect meaningful changes and contribution of the intervention to the enjoyment of rights, empowerment of rights holders and increased capacities; (2) Be suitable for the populations and individuals that need to be involved in the data collection process; and (3) Be appropriate to involve all the key stakeholders, without discriminating against some groups or individuals, and allow for guaranteeing the meaningful participation of all stakeholders.

¹⁹ Data disaggregated by gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, disability, religion, language, caste, national or social origin is required to capture intersectionality or how multiple types of inequality and discrimination reinforce exclusion.

²⁰ For more information refer to [Good practices in gender-responsive evaluations](#) and [Guidance on Evaluating Institutional Gender Mainstreaming](#).

²¹ Sampling bias result from not covering all the population (omission bias) or by covering some parts of it (inclusion bias).

The sampling technique should ensure that the selected samples adequately reflect the diversity of stakeholders of the intervention, and pay special attention to the inclusion, participation and non-discrimination of the most vulnerable stakeholders. Failing to do so may affect the credibility and technical adequacy of the information gathered.

5.3. Evaluation ethics

The CF evaluation should adhere to and be guided by the [UNEG Norms and Standards](#) (2016) and the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#) (2020) at every stage of the evaluation process, observing the following principles of integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence

Figure 1: UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020)



5.4. Analysis: process and triangulation

The Evaluation Team should systematically organize, compare and synthesize data collected. The analysis will include an assessment of what the data is stating about each of the evaluation questions. The Evaluation Team is strongly encouraged to use data analytical tools or instruments²². Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect the results from targeted analyse²³ on gender equality and empowerment of women, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability.

²² For example, SPSS, STATA, Qualtrics, and NVivo.

²³ UN SWAP EPI Criterion 3.

The evaluation must include triangulation of information using various methods of data collection and sources of information to ensure robust and credible findings. In this regard, a variety of other validation methods can be applied to ensure data validity²⁴, accuracy, reliability²⁵ and quality. For instance, validation can be conducted by assigning multiple data reviewers within the Evaluation Team to cross-check data entry and analysis.

Triangulation is typically carried out by the Evaluation Team during the analysis phase. It helps to counteract interests or biases related to any one data source, thereby giving more credibility and stronger evidence on which to base evaluation conclusions. Data triangulation is also important to ensure that the voices of most vulnerable individuals and groups are heard and verified by various data sources.

The evaluation report should describe the analytical process undertaken, any analytical frameworks used for the evaluation and the underlying rationale for the judgments/conclusions made by the team.

5.5. Best practice in evaluation report writing

The evaluation report should:

- Be written in a clear and concise manner that allows readers to easily follow its logic.
- Not be overly filled with factual descriptions, especially those available elsewhere.
- Present findings, conclusions and recommendations in a logical and convincing manner.

Further:

- Language employed should be universally comprehensible, with sentences remaining precise and neutral.
- The length of the report should be limited to ensure engagement and accessibility.
- There should be a **logical flow of information**.
- The report should have a **deductive logic** and tell a story with the evaluation results, rather than simply present results against questions.
- The report should be **structured clearly**, with paragraph and section content aligned with the respective section header and sub-header.

The report is to be read in line with the UNEG CF Evaluation Guidelines document, with further detail on evaluation conduct and quality assurance found in the [UNEG Evaluation Report Quality Checklist](#) and [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluations](#).

5.6. Report structure

Standard evaluation reports should comprise the following elements:

- What was evaluated and why (purpose and scope).
- How the evaluation was conducted (objectives and methodology).

²⁴ Validity refers to the degree to which the evaluation and its data collection tools are measuring the concepts intended to be measured; in other words, whether or not the tools are collecting the information they are intended to collect or measuring the right construct.

²⁵ Reliability is consistency in results using the same method (i.e., if the same survey is instituted several times it should give you similar results each time).

- What was found and on what evidence (findings and evidences/analysis).
- What was concluded from the findings and in response to the main evaluation questions (conclusions).
- What was recommended (recommendations).
- What could be usefully learned (lessons learned).

An Evaluation Report template can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

For each CF evaluation a **Summary Performance Rating** will be submitted by the Evaluation Team with the final CF evaluation report to facilitate regional and global performance synthesis. The rating system of CF evaluations is recommended to simplify the identification of levels of performance by decision-makers; to help aggregate results; and enhance the provision of consolidated reporting back to governments in programme countries as well as to governing bodies. The performance rating scheme is available in [Appendix 7](#).

5.7. Recommendations

Recommendations should be developed to ensure the utility of the evaluation. They should:

- Logically follow the findings based on evidence and the conclusions drawn from them, with their rationale clearly explained.
- Be relevant to the country context and to the aim of driving progress towards the achievement of national goals and the SDGs.
- Be developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders to ensure the relevance and feasibility of the actions.
- Not be overly prescriptive so as to allow the UNCT to design concrete actions for implementation in the management response.

5.8. Management response

To strengthen the use of evaluation findings, promote learning and accountability, and contribute to improved programme design and delivery, all CF evaluations require a management response.

Once the evaluation report is finalized and signed off by DCO, the RC/RCO and Evaluation Steering Committee should coordinate to prepare the formal management response to the evaluation. It should contain a response to each recommendation (normally prepared in tabular format) and a follow-up mechanism.

The response to each recommendation should include:

- Whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted, or rejected and why;
- Actions that will be taken, by whom and when, for those recommendations accepted; and
- An explanation of why certain recommendations were rejected and potential alternative actions to address the issues raised.

The management response should be presented at a post-evaluation stakeholder workshop for discussion. The final evaluation report will be made publicly available.

A management response template can be found in [Appendix 5](#).

5.9. Recommendations tracking

The process to ensure that evaluation findings inform future action involves the formal issuing and tracking of recommendations, and subsequent follow-up by DCO. This process aims to ensure actions indicated in response to the CF evaluation recommendations are adequately implemented. The process and frequency of follow-up must be indicated in the management response.

DCO will set up a mechanism to monitor implementation of the management response.

[Appendix 6](#) includes a template for the compliance monitoring of the management action plan in response to the CF evaluation recommendations.

6. Dissemination

6.1 Dissemination modes

The RC shall commit to facilitate maximum in-country dissemination of the report, management response and follow-up actions. DCO shall commit to posting the CF evaluation reports, management responses and follow-up actions on the UNSDG website.

As the CF evaluation is finalised, the Evaluation Manager and Evaluation Steering Committee should give due thought to internal and external dissemination modes. Due regard should be given to:

- **External dissemination:** discussing how the report will be made publicly available including, for example, which platforms may be used.
- **Internal dissemination:** platforms used for internal publication and roll-out to regional and global management.
- **Dissemination to study respondents:** how findings will be disseminated to all stakeholders/respondents engaged in the evaluation, including the government, noting if/how the language and format will be adapted for different stakeholder groups as appropriate and necessary.

6.2 Stakeholder workshops

Post-evaluation stakeholder workshops provide an opportunity to present findings and engage stakeholders in discussions regarding evaluation recommendations and next steps. A broad range of stakeholders should be invited to the workshop including: high-level government officials; funding partners and civil-society organizations; local-government officials from areas where there were programme activities; and representatives of other stakeholder groups, as appropriate. Ideally, the invitation should be sent by the highest-ranking government official possible, together with the RC, to encourage participation.

6.3 Accountability to beneficiaries

Accountability to beneficiaries and/or the affected population is an important principle in evaluation dissemination. They often give their time to respond to evaluator requests. It is, therefore, an important act of public accountability to inform them when their contributions are used to improve UN assistance and, by implication, national efforts to achieve the objectives embodied in the SDGs.

Additionally, stakeholders, as well as beneficiaries and affected populations involved in the evaluation process, should be given access to the key messages in an appropriate format. The key messages should summarize the main findings that are relevant to each constituency, thank those who spent their time providing inputs to the evaluation, and provide a link for those who wish to obtain the full report. The means of disseminating key messages should be chosen based on the type of beneficiary, for example:

- Email or text messages if appropriate;
- Letters to beneficiary group representatives;
- Posters in locations where beneficiaries or affected populations can see them;
- Short audio-visual items, presented collectively to beneficiary groups or through internet media; or
- Messages broadcasted through existing media channels.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Planning, roles and responsibilities and guidelines cross references

Phase	Action	Lead	In consultation with	Guideline section
Planning	Notify apex national counterparts (or the CF Steering Committee), DCO and the (UNCT) Result Groups on the UN's intent to launch the CF evaluation	RC	DCO	Chapter 2; Annex B
	Designate an Evaluation Manager	RC	UNCT/ DCO	Chapter 2; Annex B
	Establish a national Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluation Manager	RCO/ UNCT	Chapter 2; Annex B
	Draft the operational evaluation workplan and timeline	Evaluation Manager	DCO Evaluation Advisor	Chapter 3.2; Annex B
	Preparatory deskwork and consultation processes to draft the TOR	Evaluation Manager	RCO/ thematic group leads/ DCO	Chapter 2; Chapter 3.3 and 3.4; Appendix 2 (including Annex B)
	Approve the Evaluation TOR	DCO		Chapter 3.3; Annex B
	Publish a call for independent external evaluators	RC		Chapter 3.5; Annexes B & C
	Identify and recruit the Evaluation Team	Evaluation Manager	DCO/ DCO Evaluation Advisor	Chapter 2; Chapter 3.5; Annexes B & C
	Final approval of the Evaluation Team	DCO		Annex B
	Identify stakeholders and map development actors	Evaluation Manager		Chapter 3.4; Annex B
Inception	Map and scope activities to refine the evaluation design and questions to be reflected in the inception report	Evaluation Team Leader	Evaluation Team	Chapter 4; Chapter 5.1, 5.2; Appendices 2 (including Annex A and B) & 3
	RC and Evaluation Manager briefing	Evaluation Team Leader	Evaluation Team ; DCO Evaluation Advisor	Chapter 2; Annex B
	Agree/ develop theories of change	Evaluation Team Leader	Evaluation Team; DCO Evaluation Advisor;	Chapter 2; Chapter 4.1; Annex B

			RC; and Evaluation Manager	
	Detailed stakeholder mapping and analysis			Chapter 3.4
	Drafting of the inception report	Evaluation Team Leader	Evaluation Team	Chapter 4; Chapter 5.1, 5.2, 5.3; Appendices 2 (including Annex A and B) & 3
Data collection & analysis	Primary and secondary data collection and analysis, including triangulation	Evaluation Team		Chapter 5.4; Annex B
Reporting	Synthesise of findings and drafting of the Evaluation Report	Evaluation Team	Evaluation Manager	Chapter 2; Chapters 5.5, 5.6, 5.7; Annex B; Appendices 4 & 7
Review & validation	Review and validation (quality assurance)	DCO	UNCT/ Executive Steering Committee	Chapter 2; Chapter 3.1.2; Annex B
	Draft a management response	RC/RCO	UNCT/ Executive Steering Committee	Chapters 2 & 5.8 ; Annex B; Appendix 6
Dissemination	In-country dissemination of the report, management response and follow-up actions	RC	UNCT/ Executive Steering Committee	Chapter 6.1; Annex B
	Post CF Evaluation Reports, management responses and follow-up actions on the UNSDG website	DCO		Chapters 5.8, 5.9, 6.1; Annex B; Appendices 4 & 5
	Organise post-evaluation stakeholder workshops	Highest-ranking government official	RC/ stakeholders government officials, funding partners, civil society organizations and the private sector	Chapters 2 & 6.2
Throughout	Quality Assurance	DCO/ Evaluation Manager		Chapter 3.1.2; Annex B

Appendix 2: Terms of Reference template

TERMS OF REFERENCE UNSDCF EVALUATION [name of country (YEAR)]

1. Background – Country Framework Evaluation Context

- Provides a general introduction to the Country Framework (CF) and overview of the context (a brief context analysis, description of the development landscape, and mapping of the CF outcomes and outputs) for the evaluation.
- Outlines the broad scope of the evaluation and sets the scene for the rest of the Terms of Reference.

The overview should describe how the CF has evolved in the country and how it is related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), national development plans and other key development policies and strategies. The country typology (e.g. middle-income or land-locked country) and whether the CF was developed in a normal development setting or during transition from humanitarian/recovery to development phase should also be noted.

A brief presentation of the CF Theory of Change (ToC) and results framework, including the rationale, intervention logic and risks and assumptions is part of this section, as well as a mapping of participating agencies, allocated funding/resources (including funding gaps) and key stakeholders.

Reference to available evaluative knowledge and assessments of results, notably the results of country programme evaluations of UN agencies operating under the umbrella of the CF should be included.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Inclusion of sufficient and relevant contextual information	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The introduction clearly sets the scene for the evaluation with key information about the CF, including a description of the particular political, development and governance environment in which the evaluation will be taking place, including transborder or regional dynamics. For example, the most relevant aspects of the economic, social and political context are described.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brief description of how the CF fits into national priorities and its relation to the SDGs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Description of the national progress (Voluntary National Reviews [VNRs], Human Development indicators and other development indexes), changes in government laws, institutions, regulations, plans and strategies).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Summary of the CF's ToC, rationale, intervention logic, strategy and approach, including risks and assumptions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If applicable, mention is made of any changes to the logical framework to account for emerging events e.g. COVID-19, government change, man-made or natural disaster.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A mapping or description of participating UN agencies, partners, and resources (and funding gaps) is clearly presented.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and plans of the CF, as well as former evaluative knowledge and assessment of results are referred to.

2. Purpose and Objectives

Presents the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. While the purpose is normally standard for CF evaluations, the objectives can be adjusted and expanded, depending on the context and the evaluation needs. The evaluation objectives will inform the evaluation questions, which will be further elaborated as part of the inception report.

The purpose and objectives of CF evaluations are generally the same across countries. The CF evaluation has two primary purposes:

- I. Promote greater learning and operational improvement.** The evaluation will provide important information for strengthening programming and results at the country level, specifically informing the planning and decision-making for the next CF programme cycle and for improving UN coordination at the country level. The UNCT, host government and other CF stakeholders can learn from the process of documenting good practices and lessons learned, which can then be shared with DCO and used for the benefit of other countries.
- II. Support greater accountability of the UNCT to CF stakeholders.** By objectively providing evidence of results achieved within the framework of the CF and assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions used, the evaluation will enable the various stakeholders in the CF process, including national counterparts and donors, to hold the UNCT and other parties accountable for fulfilling their roles and commitments.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Assess the contribution of the CF to national development results through evidence-based judgements using evaluation criteria (accountability).
2. Identify factors that have affected the CF's contribution; answering the question of why the performance is as it is; and explaining the enabling factors and bottlenecks (learning).
3. Reach conclusions concerning the UN's contribution across the scope being examined.
4. Provide actionable recommendations for improving the CF's contribution, especially for incorporation into the new CF programming cycle. These recommendations should be logically linked to the conclusions and findings of the evaluation and should draw upon lessons learned identified through the evaluation.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Specific reference to the purpose and objectives of the evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear statement of why the evaluation is being conducted, its purpose and expected outcomes, and justification for its timing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The evaluation objective(s) clearly follow from the overall purpose of the evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The evaluation objectives are realistic and achievable, in light of the information that can be collected in the context of the undertaking.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Issues and inputs from stakeholders are adequately covered and reflected in the objectives of the evaluation.

3. Scope

Presents:

- The period covered by the evaluation;
- The type of work from the different UN agencies to be assessed;
- Specificities on the CF outcomes, issues and topics to be examined; and
- The key users of the evaluation and intended use.

The evaluation scope should specify the key outputs and programmes that contribute to the CF outcomes, including the work of non-resident agencies during the CF programming cycle. This section will make reference to the cross-cutting issues and normative work of the UNCT (i.e. gender equality and empowerment of women, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability) to be considered as part of the evaluation scope.

The key users of the evaluation results and the time period that will be covered by the evaluation will be specified in this section too.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Specific reference to the scope and users of the evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explicit and clear definition of what will and will not be covered by the evaluation, including the timeframe, geographical and/ or thematic areas to be covered by the evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specific reference that the evaluation will integrate cross-cutting issues and normative work, including gender equality and human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability concerns.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The scope of the evaluation is adequate to meet the stated evaluation objective(s).
<input type="checkbox"/>	The scope of the evaluation is feasible given resources and time considerations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brief statement of how the evaluation will be used and identification of the primary and secondary users of the evaluation (key users and target audiences). This is informed by stakeholder mapping.

4. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

Introduces the key evaluation criteria and questions. Examples of potential evaluation questions are available in [Annex A](#).

The TORs include a list of evaluation questions that are in line with the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation. The evaluation questions are usually structured around the following criteria:

- Relevance and adaptability
- Coherence
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Coordination

- Sustainability
- Orientation towards impact

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Evaluation questions cover all the criteria/ dimensions mentioned in the guide	
<input type="checkbox"/>	There is reference to the evaluation criteria against which the intervention will be assessed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-defined and specific to the timing and objectives of the evaluation, and to how the evaluation findings will be used, and by whom. ▪ Drawn from the intervention ToC and/or logic model to ensure specificity to the context and the intervention. ▪ Relevant to the intervention and to users' needs. ▪ Prioritized, given that evaluations are limited in time and resources. ▪ Developed applying a gender lens by considering gender equality and empowerment of women within each of the dimensions/ criteria or as a standalone criterion, and in the evaluation questions and sub-questions. <p>They should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Go beyond intended results to explain why and how the CF achieved or did not achieve its results. ▪ Address human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability issues.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentions that the evaluator may adapt the evaluation criteria and questions, upon agreement between the Evaluation Manager and the evaluator as reflected in the inception report.

5. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

Describes the evaluation's intended approach and methodology.

The TORs specify the evaluation approach and the variety of methods and data collection tools the Evaluation Team will be expected to follow. Data collection methods must be linked to the evaluation criteria and evaluation questions as specified in Section 4 of the TORs.

The section should give specific consideration to gender sensitivity and specify that data be systematically disaggregated by sex and age and, to the extent possible, by geographical region, ethnicity, disability, migratory status and other contextually relevant markers of equity.

Reference to a variety of validation methods is made to ensure that the data and information used, and conclusions made are well-founded and carry the necessary depth. Triangulation of information sources and findings should be explicitly described as they improve validity, quality and use of evaluation.

Quality checklist for this section:

Section clearly describes the evaluation approach and methods to be used to ensure a rigorous assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specific reference that the evaluation should follow UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluations, as well as UNEG Ethical Guidelines is made.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Description of the approach(es) to be adopted to enhance the utility and national ownership of evaluation results, and specifies that the methodology should ensure involvement of key stakeholders throughout the evaluation process (e.g. stakeholder workshop, debriefing of evaluation users, etc.). Examples of approaches include participatory, utilization-focused, and theory-based.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The methodological approach for the evaluation is briefly described and the section specifies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An overview on the approach and methodology, including an evaluation design matrix, sampling plans and the work plan, should be developed as part of the inception report; ▪ Reference to the data collection methods should be identified following: analysis of availability of existing evaluative evidence and administrative data, logistical constraints (travel, costs, time, etc.) and ethical considerations (especially when evaluating sensitive topics such as gender-based violence or in sensitive settings such as post-conflict settings); ▪ The evaluation methodology should comprise the use of multiple methods, including an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, to capture the intervention's contribution to the achievement of expected and unexpected outcomes; ▪ Multiple methods and tools should be used for validation and triangulation of findings; ▪ Data collection, analysis and presentation of findings should be responsive to and include issues relating to gender equality and empowerment of women, diversity inclusion and non-discrimination, human rights and environmental sustainability.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The methodological approach accounts for existing evaluations and the synthesis of evaluative evidence e.g. project evaluations, agency-specific evaluations, CF mid-term review, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The evaluation methodology takes into account the overall purpose of the evaluation, as well as the needs of the users and other stakeholders.

6. Management Arrangements

Describes management issues related to the conduct of the CF evaluation. This section should lay out the various levels of management, clarify reporting lines and clearly state to whom the Evaluation Team reports.

The TORs should lay out the various levels of management involved in commissioning and overseeing the evaluation, clarify reporting lines and clearly state to whom the Evaluation Team reports. Drafting this section can be informed by the details included in [Annex B – Governance roles and responsibilities](#).

This section should include also the expected composition of the Evaluation Team and related qualifications. Further details are included in [Annex C – The Evaluation Team](#). As it is likely that more than one evaluator is recruited, it is also helpful to stipulate reporting lines within the Evaluation Team and clarify each partner's prospective contribution.

Reference is made to the validation of evaluation results with national partners and stakeholders, and their use to inform the development of the next CF.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Section clearly presents the management arrangements and reporting lines for the evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear description of the governance and management arrangements for the evaluation, including the key actors involved, their roles and responsibilities and the reporting lines.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents the roles and responsibilities for Evaluation Team members, evaluation stakeholders and partners.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indicates the preferred Evaluation Team composition and desired competencies of evaluators (qualification, languages, relevance experience, statistical and analytical skills required, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specifies that the Evaluation Team should abide by the UNEG Code of Conduct for carrying out the evaluations.

7. Evaluation Process and Timeline

Presents the overall evaluation process, and tentative timeframe of the CF evaluation.

The main stages of the CF evaluation process should be laid out, namely: preparation; conduct and implementation; and follow-up and use of evaluation results. The TOR should also include a tentative timeframe.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Section clearly presents the evaluation process and timeline	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents the key stages of the evaluation process and an indicative timeframe, including milestones and deadlines.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indicates that the evaluation timeframe will be further detailed in the inception report, following consultations with key stakeholders.

8. Evaluation Deliverables

Details key deliverables of the evaluation process.

The key deliverables that the CF Evaluation Team is expected to produce are:

- **Inception Report**, containing a preliminary analysis of the CF ToC or, in its absence, reconstruction of the CF ToC; an elaboration of the evaluation approach and methods, including the [evaluation design matrix](#); and a detailed evaluation plan and timeline, including a tentative list of interviews to be arranged or plans for field visits.
- **Preliminary findings report or presentation**, in a template to be agreed with the Evaluation Manager.
- **Draft and final CF Evaluation Report**, including the annexes.

Quality checklist for this section:

Section presents the main evaluation deliverables to be produced	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Description of the expected deliverables to be produced by the Evaluation Team, including the timing for their delivery. Reference is made to the suggested templates for the deliverables.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Details or references are made to the expected requirements, in terms of language, format, structure and length for each of the deliverables.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A clear description of how the quality of the deliverables will be assessed is included.

Annex A. Evaluation questions and related criteria

The table below presents a set of tentative evaluation questions by criterion that can be considered by the Evaluation Manager to identify key evaluation questions of the TORs. This is not a mandatory list of questions and evaluation managers can apply them and identify additional ones as they see fit. **A good practice is to have 2-3 questions per dimension/criterion.** It is imperative that the questions are in line with the CF evaluation objectives, scope and needs. The final set of questions for the evaluation should be decided at the inception stage, following a participatory and consultative approach with key stakeholders (e.g. Evaluation Steering Committee, Consultative Group and key partners).

Criteria	Some examples of potential evaluation questions
Relevance and adaptability IS THE CF DOING THE RIGHT THINGS AND ADAPTED WELL TO EMERGING NEEDS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the CF integrated key issues and development challenges identified by the UN Common Country Analysis (CCA)? • To what extent are the CF objectives aligned and been consistent with the needs, priorities, and policies of the government (including alignment to national development goals and targets, national plans, strategies and frameworks). • How dynamic and responsive has the CF been to emerging and unforeseen needs, especially those of the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups? • To what extent did the CF build on a sound gender analysis, in such a way to promote gender equality and women's empowerment? • To what extent was the CF designed with due consideration to environmental sustainability? • To what extent does the CF address the triple nexus (development-peace-humanitarian spheres) and align with peace and humanitarian response planning? • To what extent has the CF addressed regional and cross-border issues? • To what extent did the implementation of the CF (joint workplan and agencies programmes) adjust to emerging issues faced by the country during the implementation? • To what extent have the partnerships with the national government specifically (e.g., ministries, agencies and other representatives) remained strong or was challenged at times of national emergencies and how well did the RC and UNCT were able to promote national ownership of supported new interventions, programmes and policies proposed by the UN to address emergencies?
Coherence HOW WELL DOES THE CF FIT?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the CF strengthened the position, credibility and reliability of the UN system as a partner for the government and other actors, and has served as an effective partnership vehicle? • To what extent has the CF promoted complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with other key development partners to maximize the achievement of results?

Criteria	Some examples of potential evaluation questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the CF strengthened the coherence of support by UNCT members and sought partnerships (with civil society/private sector/local government/parliament/national human rights institutions/international development partners) to enhance achievement of results? • To what extent was the CF designed and delivered in line with international and national programming principles? • To what extent has the UN system promoted or supported policies that are consistent among each other and across sectors, given the multi-sectoral nature of social and economic development?
<p><i>Effectiveness</i></p> <p>HAS THE CF ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVES?</p> <p>IS THE CF DOING IT RIGHT?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the CF contributed effectively to provide greater clarity and transparency of results achieved and resources used? • To what extent did the CF adopt and promote resilience-building approaches in support of governments' sustainable development objectives? • How adequately has the CF invested in, and focus on, national capacity development? • To what extent did CF adopt results-based management practices in its design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the achievement of results? • How effective has the CF been in achieving the results outlined in the results framework? What have been the benefits for the people and institutions targeted by the interventions, including the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized population? • To what extent has the CF contributed to key institutional, behavioural and legislative changes that are critical for catalysing progress towards the CF desired impact? • To what extent has the CF contributed to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment? • To what extent did the UN system support follow human rights principles and contribute to the promotion of human rights, including disability inclusion? • To what extent was the CF implemented with due consideration to environmental sustainability? To what extent has the CF contributed to the promotion of environmental sustainability objectives? • To what extent has the CF contributed to building national and local capacities and ensuring long-term gains? To what changes, in terms of capacities, knowledge of individuals or institutions in the country has the UN system support contributed to, if any?

Criteria	Some examples of potential evaluation questions
Efficiency HOW WELL HAVE RESOURCES BEEN USED?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the CF supported by an integrated funding framework and by adequate funding instruments? What were the gaps, if any? Have resources been allocated efficiently? • Has the CF been implemented in a timely way? • Has the CF reduced transaction costs for partners through greater UN coherence and discipline? • Did UN coordination reduce transaction costs and increase the efficiency of CF implementation? • To what extent has the CF collectively prioritized activities based on the needs (demand side) rather than on the availability of resources (supply side), and reallocated resources according to the collective priorities and changing needs if/where necessary? • How adequate has the CF been in facilitating the effective reallocation of resources to emerging needs and priorities? • Has the CF facilitated the identification of and access to new financing flows at scale for national partners?
Coordination HOW WELL HAS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CF BEEN COORDINATED?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the different UN agencies contributed to the functioning and consolidation of UNCT coordination mechanisms keeping in mind the spirit of the UN reform and adhering to it? • To what extent has the RC's office ensured equitable coordination with other United Nations agencies in the country, particularly in the event of potential overlaps, while maintaining coherence in agencies' mandates? To what extent has the CF fostered internal coordination, through the promotion of synergies and interlinkages between its interventions? • To what extent the national government and the UN system successfully coordinated the implementation of joint workplans and UN agencies' specific programmes to maximize efficiency, coverage, reaching the most vulnerable (disabled, women, youth, etc) while reducing overlaps? • To what extent does the CF fully reflect the interests, priorities and mandate of UN agencies in the country? • To what extent the planning and coordination of the CF (through the Results Groups with the RCO support) efficiently contributed to a coherent implementation and to the achievement of indicators' targets (outputs and outcomes)? • How well was the RCO able to successfully coordinate responses to national and global emerging issues during the implementation of the CF?
Orientation towards impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have UN system activities articulated in the CF driven progress towards, or supported achievement of ToC outcomes? • To what extent have UN activities stemming from the CF strengthened economic and individual resilience and contributed to reducing vulnerability against shocks and crises? • To what extent have UN activities stemming from the CF impacted gender inequality?

Criteria	Some examples of potential evaluation questions
WHAT DIFFERENCE DO CF INTERVENTIONS MAKE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the CF promoted a just transition to environmental sustainability and addressed environmental sustainability concerns?
Sustainability WILL THE BENEFITS LAST?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanisms, if any, has the CF established to ensure socio-political, institutional, financial and environmental sustainability? • What is the likelihood that progress towards the SDGs is sustained by national partners and stakeholders over time?

Annex B. Governance roles and responsibilities

This section provides a summary of responsibilities of the RCO, Evaluation Manager, Executive Steering Committee, DCO, Evaluation Team and UNEG.

Resident Coordinator/ Resident Coordinator's Office

- Commissions the CF evaluation in coordination with the UNCTs.
- Designates the Evaluation Manager in coordination with the UNCT and with support from DCO.
- Supports the establishment of an Evaluation Steering Committee.
- Widely publishes the call for external evaluators.
- Supports the Evaluation Manager in compiling a preliminary list of background information and documentation, a list of all interventions implemented during the period under evaluation, and the stakeholders mapping.
- Participates in the evaluation consultation process.
- Provides comments to the key evaluation products.

Leads the preparation of the management response document

Evaluation Manager

Oversees the entire process of the evaluation, from its preparation to the dissemination and use of the final evaluation report. He/she:

- Technically oversees the evaluation and reports regularly to the evaluation steering committee by organizing regular evaluation steering committee meetings. The Evaluation Manager works in close collaboration with DCO for quality assurance purposes and technical support.
- In consultation with and support from the RCO and UNCT, establishes an Evaluation Steering Committee as a technical subset of the joint national and UN Steering Committee.
- Ensures consultations with all UN entities in the country (based on the evaluation plan), to align their potential evaluations calendar and identify possible synergies in process and content.
- Prepares the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the evaluation in a consultative manner.
- With support from the RC's office, compiles a preliminary list of background information and documentation on both the country context and the CF and list these in an Annex of the TOR.
- In collaboration with DCO, identifies potential independent candidates to conduct the evaluation, guaranteeing the absence of any kind of conflict of interest and ensuring a gender-balanced Evaluation Team.
- Requests a first stakeholders mapping of the main partners relevant for the CF evaluation from the relevant bodies, including the Programme Management Team and RCO.
- Manages interactions and serves as interlocutor between the Evaluation Team and the Evaluation Steering Committee;
- Sets up meetings during the fieldwork phase, and organizes briefing and debriefing sessions between the Evaluation Team and evaluation users.

- Organizes theory-of-change and stakeholder workshops as needed.
- Coordinates comments on and ensures the quality control of deliverables submitted by the Evaluation Team throughout the evaluation process ensuring that the UNEG Norms and Standards, Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations, as well as guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation are followed/adhered to.
- Sends all evaluation products to DCO for approval.
- Ensures the Evaluation Report is sent for publication and dissemination, and supports the dissemination activities of the Evaluation Steering Committee.
- Ensures the management response is provided by concerned units/agencies/bodies.
- Clears payment of the Evaluation Team once outstanding issues have been addressed satisfactorily.

Evaluation Steering Committee

- Supports the evaluation process, guide the Evaluation Team and facilitate access to stakeholders and information.
- Provides input to the evaluation TOR, and selection of evaluation issues and questions.
- Facilitates stakeholder identification and consultations, and provides access to information sources (documents and interviewees) to support data collection.
- Provides overall comments on the main deliverables of the evaluation, including the inception report and draft evaluation report.
- Prepares a management response to the evaluation, in consultation with the UNCT members, within two months of receiving the final evaluation report.
- Ensures the evaluation report and its results are disseminated and shared with DCO and other key stakeholders, promoting the use of evaluation and lessons.

DCO²⁶

The roles and responsibilities of DCO, with support and collaboration with regional entities/bodies, are to:

- Support the RCO/UNCT to schedule and launch the CF Evaluation.
- Support the RCO/UNCT to identify and select the Evaluation Manager and Evaluation Team.
- Provide support (backstopping) to the Evaluation Manager at all stages of the evaluation.
- Participate in Evaluation Steering Committee meetings when possible.
- Review, comment on and approve the evaluation TOR.
- Support the Evaluation Manager in identifying potential Evaluation Team candidates and review the summary assessment table to pre-qualify consultants.
- Approve the selection of the Evaluation Team.

²⁶ Consolidation of roles and responsibilities of DCO regional and HQ outfits, including the DCO Evaluation Unit and DCO Evaluation Advisor.

- Oversee the process to ensure the independence and quality of the evaluation by:
 - Establishing a hotline for the Evaluation Team should they encounter risks to the independent conduct of the evaluation.
 - Reviewing and approving the inception report, checking if the approach and the methodology proposed are of professional quality.
 - Ensuring the quality of the draft and final report, by receiving the first and final draft of the report and the audit trail to ensure the transparency of the process and ascertain that the Evaluation Team was not subject to undue pressure to alter the contents of the report.
 - Conducting an external quality check of the draft report and approve the final version of the report.
- Lead and ensure the dissemination and use of evaluation results.
- Ensure accountability mechanisms, submission of the management response, track the implementation of the recommendation, and the use of the evaluation in the design of the next CCA and CF.

Furthermore, **DCO** should:

- Provide a global platform for the public dissemination of the report.
- Occasionally synthesize findings and compile lessons learned from CF evaluations and feed them back into advice to UNCTs, agency management and governing bodies, as appropriate.
- Keep a record of the drafts and audit trail in a depository.

Evaluation Team

- Gains an in-depth understanding of both the CF and the country context.
- Assesses the ToC and its reconstitution (if necessary) to better adhere to the CF as implemented.
- Selects and adapt the evaluation questions²⁷ and propose the most appropriate methods for data collection and analysis.
- In consultation with the UNCT and the Evaluation Manager, selects a sample of stakeholders (from a sampling frame - comprehensive stakeholder map) to interview during the field phase. The methodological approach to sampling should be well described.
- Collects data during the field phase. Triangulates and analyses the data.
- Drafts the inception and draft and final evaluation reports (with the summary of Performance Rating). Revises deliverables as needed based on comments.
- Leads stakeholder, briefing and debriefing workshops as needed.

Further details on the Evaluation Team are available in [Annex C](#).

²⁷ Examples will be provided.

UNEG

In its supporting role, UNEG can:

- Provide technical advice for guidance materials, as well as for individual cases, on request.
- Support the development of further guidance materials, tools and templates, a draft policy framework and other supporting materials during and after the transition period.
- Facilitate the coordination of agency evaluations and joint evaluations, to the extent possible, as inputs to the CF evaluations.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange for UN entity-wide learning as well as learning at the regional and national level.

Annex C. The Evaluation Team

The **Evaluation Team** is made up of **independent** external evaluators. It must have a Team Leader with extensive evaluation expertise and average 3–5 members, depending on the size of the UN country operation. There must be at least two members to allow triangulation of observations and validation of findings within the Team.

In composing the Evaluation Team, national evaluators should be used to the extent possible, and a gender balance should be maintained. Further, the Team can be supported by local enumerators (data collectors), if needed, to collect primary data. Each Team member should sign and comply with the [UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators](#), which provides ethical guidelines for the conduct of evaluations.

The **Evaluation Team Leader** leads the entire evaluation process, working closely with all team members. He/she will conduct the evaluation process in a timely manner and communicate with the Evaluation Manager on a regular basis and highlight progress made/challenges encountered. The Evaluation Team Leader will be responsible for producing the inception report and the draft and final evaluation reports.

Team members contribute to the evaluation process substantively through data collection and analysis. They will share responsibilities for conducting desk review and interviews and conduct field visits identified and collect data. They will provide substantive inputs to the inception report, the presentation of preliminary findings as well as to the draft and final reports

The Team should be built with due consideration to:

- ✓ Cultural and language balance;
- ✓ Gender balance;
- ✓ Coverage of relevant subject areas of work by UNCT member agencies;
- ✓ Coverage of key cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability; and
- ✓ Collective knowledge of the national context in various areas of UN work.

Evaluation Team member qualifications

- Advanced university level of education in evaluation or field(s) relevant to one or more CF areas of work. Where possible/suitable PhD level preferred for the Evaluation Team Leader;
- Proven experience in conducting evaluations of complex programmes and themes (minimum 10 years for the Team Leader, 3-5 years for other team members);
- Experience and background in gender equality/gender analysis and gender responsive evaluations;
- Good understanding of the SDGs, other relevant regional or global frameworks and their implications for development cooperation;
- Good understanding of multilateralism and the role of the UN System in development cooperation in the context of the country in question;
- Understanding of UN Reform and its implementation implication at the country level;
- Demonstrated analytical capacity, particularly in the case of the Team Leader, including on political economy and financing for development;

- Sound knowledge of the country context and an in-depth understanding of at least one area of work of UNCT members; collectively, Evaluation Team members should broadly cover all areas of UNCT activity;
- Demonstrated ability to write and communicate clearly in languages appropriate for the country; and
- No conflict of interest such as recent or expected employment by UNCT members or implementing partners, private relationships with any UNCT members or staff or government counterparts or implementing partners; participation in the design, implementation or advising CF being evaluated, among others). Any potential conflict of interest should be declared by candidates during the application process.

Selection process

The evaluator selection process will follow the procurement rules and regulations of the contracting entity. To ensure independence, value for money and transparency, the process must follow **the principle of open and competitive recruitment**. The selection panel should include the DCO Evaluation Advisor, some UNCT members and an external evaluation expert.

Sources of recruitment

There are many avenues to disseminate the call for proposals. Sources of recruitment should include:

- ✓ Advertisement in major national media where international job opportunities are normally found by local professionals (see appendix 8 – sources of recruitment);
- ✓ Circulation among national evaluation associations, regional evaluation associations and international evaluation networks (UNEG can support this process, on request) (see appendix 8 – sources of recruitment); and
- ✓ Referrals from the UNEG member evaluation offices.

In principle, to enhance fairness and demonstrate transparency multiple channels should be used to disseminate the call. In addition, below is a list of other suggested websites to place the call.

- [United Nations Evaluation Group](#)
- [International Development Evaluation Association \(IDEAS\)](#)
- [International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation \(IOCE\)](#)
- Individual VOPE/National Evaluation Associations websites in the country (e.g. [South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association](#); [Australian Evaluation Society](#); [American Evaluation Association](#))
- [African Evaluation Association](#)
- [ReLAC](#) (Latin American Evaluation Association) (Need to first subscribe by sending an email to relac-subscribe@gruposyahoo.com.ar and follow instructions received)
- European Evaluation Association – send email to secretariat@europeanevaluation.org or http://www.europeanevaluation.org/work_opportunities
- [EvalCommunity](#) – Includes a broad database of self-listed evaluation experts and firms. There is a fee charged to post.
- [United Nations Development Business](#)
- [Development Gateway](#)

- [Independent Evaluators Webring](#)
- [DevNetJobs](#)
- [ELDIS](#)
- The [Communication Initiative](#)
- [OECD/DAC Evaluation Network](#)
- [IPDET Mailing List](#)
- [XCeval Distribution List](#)
- [Geneva Evaluation Network](#)
- [Peregrine evaluation listserv](#)

Appendix 3. Inception Report template

INCEPTION REPORT UNSDCF EVALUATION [name of country (20xx)]

1. Background – the CF Evaluation Context

This section provides an analytical overview of the context for the CF evaluation including: a brief and updated context analysis; description of the development landscape; and mapping of the CF outcomes and outputs against the participating agencies and recourse allocations.

The overview should describe how the CF has evolved in the country and how it is related to national development plans and other key development strategies (such as national development plans), with reference to available evaluative knowledge and assessments of results. A stakeholder mapping, monitoring and coordination mechanism with UNCT and the monitoring and evaluation structure is also included.

Quality checklist for this section:

Inclusion of sufficient and relevant contextual information	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduction clearly sets the scene for the evaluation with key information about the CF.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Description of the particular political, development and governance environment in which the evaluation will be taking place, including transborder or regional dynamics. For example, the most relevant aspects of the economic, social and political context are described. This should also include findings from a preliminary analysis of gender and human rights issues, roles, attitudes, relations and challenges.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Description of the national progress (VNRs, Human Development indicators and other development indexes), changes in government laws, institutions, regulations, plans and strategies).
<input type="checkbox"/>	A mapping of outcomes and outputs, participating agencies, partners and resources (and funding gaps), and if needed, a reconstruction of the logical framework to account for emerging events e.g. COVID-19, government change, man-made or natural disaster.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Key stakeholders in the CF are described, with reference to specific agencies or institutions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and plans of the CF are referred to.

2. Purpose, Scope and Users

This section confirms the purpose and objectives of the evaluations, the topics/issues that will be addressed by the evaluation and specifies the time period evaluated, as reflected in the TORs. It also includes the main users of the evaluation.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Specific reference to the purpose of the evaluation and how it will be used	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reference to the mandate for the conduct of the evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specific reference to why the evaluation is being done, including justification for why it is being done at this time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The evaluation objective(s) clearly follow from the overall purpose of the evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The evaluation objectives are realistic and achievable, in light of the information that can be collected in the context of the undertaking.
Specific reference to the scope and users of the evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explicit and clear definition of what will and will not be covered, including, for example, the timeframe, phase in the CF results and/or geographical area to be covered by the evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The scope of the evaluation is adequate to meet the stated evaluation objective(s).
<input type="checkbox"/>	The scope of the evaluation is feasible given resources and time considerations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identification of the primary and secondary audiences for the evaluation and how the evaluation will be useful. This is informed by a stakeholder mapping.

3. Evaluation Criteria, Questions and Methodology

This section describes the evaluation's intended approach and methodology. The evaluation criteria will be listed in this section. The evaluation questions addressing the evaluation criteria will be included, alongside a detailed methodological approach, specifying data collection methods, and techniques linked to the evaluation criteria and evaluation questions.

It includes a detailed methodological approach to ensure capturing issues on gender equality and empowerment of women, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability. The Evaluation Team will synthesize this information in the [Evaluation Design Matrix](#), focusing on the key evaluation sub-questions, method/tool, data sources and means of verification/triangulation. The Evaluation Design Matrix is considered the most critical part of the report as it sets out how data will be collected and triangulated to answer the evaluation questions.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Specifies the criteria that will be used to guide the evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Detailed narrative on the evaluation criteria against which the subject to be evaluated will be assessed, including, for example, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, transformational change and sustainability, as referred to in the TORs.
Includes a comprehensive and tailored set of evaluation sub-questions by unpacking the evaluation questions within the framework of the evaluation criteria.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Detailed 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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The set of evaluation questions adds further detail to the objectives and contributes to further defining the scope.

<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
Specifies the methods for data collection and analysis	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A clear and accessible methodological plan is described in a standalone section that is clearly delineated from other information contained in the TOR.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The methodological approach and design should account for existing evaluations and the synthesis of evaluative evidence e.g. project evaluations, agency-specific evaluations, CF mid-term review, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The methodological approach and design for the evaluation is explained, including specific 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. 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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The data collection and analysis methods 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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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. Sampling plans are included.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The matrix of evaluation questions provides logical and explicit linkages between the evaluation questions, data sources, data collection methods and analysis methods.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The evaluation methodology considers the overall purpose of the evaluation, as well as the needs of the users and other stakeholders.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The evaluation methodology explicitly and clearly states the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The inception report specifies that the evaluation will follow UNEG norms and standards for evaluations, as well as ethical guidelines.

4. Evaluation Work Plan and Management Arrangements

This section provides an update on the evaluation timeline and work plan for the CF evaluation. It also clarifies reporting lines and clearly state to whom the Evaluation Team reports and the division of labour within the Evaluation Team members.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Includes a work plan	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inclusion of an evaluation calendar specifying the evaluation steps and deliverables.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Detailed description of the key stages of the evaluation process and the time line.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The roles and responsibilities for Evaluation Team members, the commissioning organization and other stakeholders in the evaluation process are clearly described.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The work plan describes the evaluation quality assurance process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The work plan describes the process, if any, for obtaining and incorporating stakeholders' comments on a draft evaluation report.

5. Main Deliverables

This section lists down the key deliverables of the CF evaluation, including debriefing sessions/workshops, and presents an overall structure of the final report.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Includes the key deliverables	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The key outputs that will be delivered by the Evaluation Team are detailed down, including information on the degree to which the evaluation findings and the draft report will be accessible to stakeholders, including the public.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The structure of the final evaluation report is included in this section.

6. Risks and Limitations

This section describes the limitations/risks the evaluation anticipates due to unavailability of data, timing of field visits, etc. It provides an explanation of how the Evaluation Team will manage and mitigate limitations/risks and/or their implications for the evaluation process and evidence gathering.

7. Annexes

The Evaluation Team is expected to list key documents for the evaluation, such as the evaluation question matrix, the TORs, the interview protocol, survey templates, etc.

Appendix 4. Evaluation Report template

EVALUATION REPORT UNSDCF EVALUATION

[name of country (20xx)]

The CF Evaluation Report template forms part of a core complement of instruments and templates designed to ensure quality, consistency and clarity in reporting against the CF. The template should be adopted as the official structure for all evaluation reporting. Authors should consider the following core evaluation reporting principles:

- Reports should be written as **clearly and concisely** as possible. Language employed should be universally comprehensible, with sentences remaining precise and neutral.
- It is good practice to limit report length to no more than **8,500 words** to ensure engagement and accessibility.
- There should be a **logical flow of information** so that the report is comprehensible for any audience.
- The report should follow **deductive logic** and tell a story with the evaluation results, rather than simply present results against questions.
- The report should be **structured clearly**, as outlined in the present template, with paragraph and section content aligned with the respective section header and sub-header.
- The report is to be read in line with the UNEG CF terms of reference document, with further detail on evaluation conduct and quality assurance found in the [UNEG Evaluation Report Quality Checklist](#) and [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluations](#).
- As standard in all UN reporting, the evaluation report should include a contents page and list of all acronyms used throughout the report.

1. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary provides a brief (normally no longer than two pages) synopsis of the evaluation. The Summary should provide the overall story of the evaluation in a clear, concise and compelling way.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

The Executive Summary includes:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A brief overview of the purpose and objective of the evaluation (i.e. why the evaluation is being undertaken) ²⁸ .
<input type="checkbox"/>	A brief summary of the evaluation scope and main areas of enquiry, as detailed in the inception paper (i.e. what is being evaluated).

²⁸ Critical objectives could include: ensuring accountability and transparency of all UN activities at the country level; providing a status/progress check against established results indicators; providing evidence that allows for reflection, adjustments and course correction as is necessary; providing clear recommendations that support immediate action and focus for the next CF cycle; and engaging all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, in participatory dialogue as part of the systems thinking approach.

<input type="checkbox"/>	A brief summary of the methodology.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A concise summary of key evaluation findings written in summary/bullet form. A maximum of six key findings is recommended.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A brief summary of concluding statements and proposed recommendations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notice that the evaluation report will be followed by a mandatory management response and action plan drafted by the evaluation steering committee.

2. Introduction

The introduction details the purpose, subject and scope of the evaluation, evaluation questions, and report structure.

Quality checklist for this section:

The introduction includes:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Purpose and objective of the evaluation (explaining why the evaluation has been undertaken); who/what mandated/requested the evaluation; what the evaluation aims to achieve (including accountability and learning); and how the results will be used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subject: short description of the key focus of the evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scope: overview of selected areas of enquiry/outcome focus (derived from the theory of change); intervention types to be evaluated; geographical coverage; time period (both of data to be reviewed and of conducting the evaluation itself); target stakeholders; and reasons for scope choices. The section should further detail if and how the evaluator addressed the six core programming principles (accountability, Leave no one behind LNOB, Human Rights-Based Approach, gender equality, resilience and sustainability).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation questions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Structure of evaluation report: a short paragraph introducing the chapters of the evaluation report.

3. Country Context

This section provides a country status update as context to the evaluation findings. Reporting should aim to be as concise as possible, highlighting key developmental, humanitarian and peace challenges and opportunities, and status changes at the country level since the last evaluation was conducted.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

The country context section includes:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A brief overview of present-day country context including any major developmental, humanitarian and/or peace challenges and/or opportunities, and status changes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The status of national progress towards SDGs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	An overview of CF status and UN programmatic/normative areas of intervention and status.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A list of key stakeholders and partners at the country, regional and global levels.

4. Methodology

The methodology section should detail evaluation design and data collection methods, including data sources, data analysis, and steps to ensure gender, human rights and environmental responsiveness. The section should further detail steps taken to comply with UNEG norms and standards to ensure best practice in the management, exercise, and use of the evaluation.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

The methodology section includes:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stakeholder mapping and engagement modes: reference should be made to methods used to ensure stakeholder engagement throughout the study. It is advisable to include (in section or appendix) a stakeholder map or table detailing all internal and external stakeholders consulted and engaged throughout the evaluation ²⁹ .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data sources and data collection: how data was provided and by who (such as through documents, external stakeholders, beneficiaries etc.) and how data was collected (e.g. through interviews, documentary review, surveys, and/or direct observation). This section should include sampling methodologies employed and describe gender equality and human rights considerations in the design of the data collection process (such as gender-balanced selection of interviewees). The section should further detail any limitations in the evaluation process (including, for example, availability of stakeholders and beneficiaries, survey response rates, and security situations impacting data collection) ³⁰ .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data analysis: explains methods applied and steps taken to compile, analyze and triangulate data in order to identify key evidence and arrive at evaluation results. The section should detail any specific analytical tools or instruments used for data analysis (such as, for example, SPSS, STATA, Qualtrics, and NVivo) and methods employed to ensure data triangulation and gender analysis.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance: detail the evaluation management and governance structure, including the role played by the Joint National-UN Evaluation Steering Committee and Consultative Group.

²⁹ Example text: the CF evaluation has employed a participatory, inclusive approach, ensuring the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, whilst also aiming to promote national ownership through the active and meaningful engagement of government counterparts. Stakeholders have been engaged at all stages of the evaluation including, for example, through the Evaluation Steering Committee, through direct data collection itself, and in the results workshop on evaluation findings (note: adapt to context). The following stakeholders were engaged: (insert table)].

³⁰ Example data collection section text: the evaluation employed a mixed-method approach to ensure the credibility and accuracy of data through triangulation. The following data collection methods were used (*insert bullet list or table of methods used and sampling employed*): document review (potentially including a review of assessments/oversight undertaken by internal/external entities, country status reports, and data repositories); stakeholder interviews; focus group discussions; stakeholder/population surveys; direct observation; field missions.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality assurance and ethics: detail quality assurance activities including regional quality review and mechanisms external to the RC/RCO/UNCT (in line with UNEG Norms and Standards on conflict of interest avoidance).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethics: the report should detail approaches and methods employed to ensure the highest ethical standards of conduct, including ensuring informed consent was obtained from all respondents ³¹ .

5. Findings

This section should include a brief, overall assessment of performance, including its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and orientation towards the impact (whenever possible). Findings are supported by evidence and triangulated. Unintended and unexpected outcomes should be also included.

Quality checklist for this section:

Evaluation findings:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Findings are clearly organized and coherent, logical and relevant in their direct relation to the evaluation questions, succinct and precise, objective, and analytical.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Findings clearly explain ‘why’ things are happening as well as ‘what’ is happening.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Each result/finding area should be clearly titled with either the outcome/result area or key finding statement and ensure that the key programming principles are reflected.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The findings reflect a gender analysis.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Both text and visual representations of data are employed to ensure that findings are both engaging and clearly displayed in the most appropriate form.

³¹ 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. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, must ensure that sensitive data is protected and that it cannot be traced to its source and must validate statements made in the report with those who provided the relevant information. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of private information from those who provide it. When evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered, it must be reported discreetly to a competent body (such as the relevant office of audit or investigation).

6. Conclusions

This section presents the main conclusions that are formulated by synthesizing the main findings into statements of merit and worth.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Evaluation conclusions:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concluding statements should be clearly and concisely presented based on findings and substantiated by evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conclusions should reflect reasonable evaluative judgements that add insight and analysis beyond the findings and should encompass progress on gender and other cross-cutting principles.

7. Recommendations

This section details the main recommendations following the quality principles stated below.

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Evaluation recommendations:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are clearly based on and explicitly linked to evaluation results (Relevance)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are ranked in order of importance or urgency (Prioritisation)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Address the appropriate entity/body/focal point (Targeted)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Specify by when recommendations should be implemented (Time-bound)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are as specific as possible, while avoiding excessive prescriptiveness (Clear)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are capable of being accomplished within the timeframe and resources available (Feasible)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have the potential to bring about real change (Strategic)

8. Limitations and Lessons Learned

The limitations and lessons learned section provides an opportunity for the RC/RCO/UNCT to reflect on any opportunities and challenges presented by the evaluation, in order to ensure best practice in future evaluations. The section may detail limitations in the data collection phase including, for example, the availability of stakeholders and beneficiaries, survey response rates, and security situations impacting data collection and how the data limitations were overcome.

9. Summary Performance Rating

This section provides a summary overview of the performance to facilitate regional and global performance synthesis. [Appendix 6](#) provides a tool to facilitate this process.

Appendices

[Quality checklist for this section:](#)

Appendices <i>may</i> include:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The theory of change against which outcomes were evaluated.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The CF results framework.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Joint workplans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Further detail on methodology including, for example, data collection instruments (including details of their reliability and validity) and sampling strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geographical scope (including countries/regions/sites visited, if not detailed in main body of the report).
<input type="checkbox"/>	List of stakeholders interviewed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation design matrix.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organisations and/or institutions engaged. For reasons of confidentiality, individuals interviewed should not be named in the report. If appropriate, however, organisations engaged as respondents could be named.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quantitative data/survey results beyond that detailed in the main body of the report.

Appendix 5. Management Response template

UNSDCF Evaluation Management Response

[country name/date]

[General response to the evaluation in a narrative format, referring to specific conclusions as appropriate. Some textual samples provided below.]

- 1) United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Country X welcomes the evaluation ...
- 2) As the evaluation pointed out, UNCT is facing the challenge of ...
- 3) In particular, UNCT agrees with Conclusion 1 that ...
- 4) UNCT however considers Conclusion 2 does not portray an accurate picture of ...
- 5) The management response for each recommendation is provided below.

Management Response to the evaluation recommendations

Recommendation 1 [Text of the recommendation (may be shortened as appropriate)]		Accepted / Partially accepted / Rejected [Please select one as appropriate]	
Explanation [Explanation of rejection or partial acceptance]			
Actions to be taken [Actions to be taken in response, broken down as appropriate.]	Responsible entity/ies	Timeframe	Resource implication
....			
(a) ...			
(b) ...			
Recommendation 2 [Insert text of the recommendation here]		Accepted / Partially accepted / Rejected [Please select one as appropriate]	
Explanation			
Actions to be taken	Responsible entity/ies	Timeframe	Resource implication
Recommendation 3 [Insert text of the recommendation here]		Accepted / Partially accepted / Rejected [Please select one as appropriate]	
Explanation			
Actions to be taken	Responsible entity/ies	Timeframe	Resource implication

Appendix 6. Compliance Monitoring of the Management Action Plan in Response to the CF Evaluation Recommendations

UNSDCF Evaluation Recommendations Review [country name/date]

[The follow-up report is used as a basis for reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the action planned in response to the evaluation. This review should normally be undertaken in the context of the Steering Group's annual review of the progress made in the Cooperation Framework implementation.]

[Provide the context in which the review is undertaken. Some textual samples provided below]

This review is undertaken in the context of the annual review of Cooperation Framework Implementation by the Steering Group, comprising ...]

[Provide general assessment of the progress made, challenges faced and what needs to be done to overcome such challenges. If a planned action needs to be changed, explain the reason and the new actions planned. Some textual samples provided below]

1. Overall, a good progress was made in implementing planned actions committed in the management response to the Cooperation Framework evaluation of 20xx ...
2. The election of the new government in 20xx resulted in a change of national strategy. This necessitated a revision of some planned actions associated with Recommendation X ...

Recommendation 1 [Text of the recommendation (may be shortened as appropriate)]				Implemented / Partially implemented / Not implemented yet [Please select one as appropriate]
Actions planned [From the management response.]	Responsible entity (ies)	Timeframe	Resource implication	Progress in implementation / Action taken [If needed, indicate new actions planned]
....				
(a) ...				
(b) ...				
Recommendation 2				Implemented / Partially implemented / Not implemented yet
Actions planned	Responsible entity	Timeframe		Progress in implementation / Action taken
...				

Appendix 7. Summary Performance Rating

Criteria/issue	Rating ³²	Summary comments ³³
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE	Median score	
A1. Alignment with SDGs and National strategic priorities	HS □ HU (6-1)	
A2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	HS □ HU (6-1)	
A3. Dynamic and Responsive CF	HS □ HU (6-1)	
B. COHERENCE	Median score	
B1. CF position, credibility and reliability	HS □ HU (6-1)	
B2. CF complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination	HS □ HU (6-1)	
B3. Synergies and interlinkages of interventions	HS □ HU (6-1)	
B4. Forging strategic and effective partnerships	HS □ HU (6-1)	
C. EFFECTIVENESS	Median score	
C1.1 Delivery of CF outputs	HS □ HU (6-1)	
C1.2 Progress towards outcomes	HS □ HU (6-1) ³⁴	
- Outcome 1	HS □ HU (6-1)	
- Outcome 2	HS □ HU (6-1)	
- Etc.	HS □ HU (6-1)	
C2. Adopting and promotion of resilience-building approaches	HS □ HU (6-1)	
C3. CF focus on national capacity development	HS □ HU (6-1)	
C4. Targeting the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized population	HS □ HU (6-1)	
D. EFFICIENCY	Median score	
D1. Integrated funding framework	HS □ HU (6-1)	
D2. Collectively prioritized activities based on the needs	HS □ HU (6-1)	
D3. Effective reallocation of resources to emerging needs and priorities	HS □ HU (6-1)	
D.4 Timeliness of actions	HS □ HU (6-1)	
E. SUSTAINABILITY	Median score	
E1.1. Financial risks	L □ U (4-1)	
E1.2. Socio-political risks	L □ U (4-1)	
E1.3. Institutional and governance risks	L □ U (4-1)	
E1.4. Environmental risks	L □ U (4-1)	
E2. Catalysis and replication	HS □ U (4-1)	

³² See rating scheme at the end of the document.

³³ Include reference to the relevant sections in the report.

³⁴ Aggregate rating of all the outcome ratings.

F. ORIENTATION TOWARDS IMPACT	Median score	
F.1 CF contributions to key institutional, behavioural and legislative changes	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F.2 CF contribution to advance achievement of SDG targets	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F.3 CF contribution to advance cross-cutting concerns on gender equality	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F.4 contribution to advance cross-cutting concerns on human rights and non-discrimination, including disability inclusion	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F.5 contribution to advance cross-cutting concerns on environmental sustainability	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE	Median score	
F1. CF design	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F2. Quality of RCO leadership and effective oversight	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F2.1 Quality of CF implementation by UNCT	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F3. Quality of UNCT coordination and integration	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F4. National ownership on the CF	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F5. CF stakeholder engagement	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F6. Communication, knowledge management and M&E	HS□ HU (6-1)	
F7. Quality of UNCT collective and joint efforts	HS□ HU (6-1)	
Overall rating		

Interpretation of ratings:

Rating	Ordinal scale	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	6	<i>“Level of achievement of outputs/outcomes clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings.”</i>
Satisfactory (S)	5	<i>“Level of achievement of outputs/outcomes was as planned and/or there were no or minor short comings.”</i>
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	4	<i>“Level of achievement of outputs/outcomes likely to be as planned and/or there were moderate short comings.”</i>
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	3	<i>“Level of achievement of outputs/outcomes somewhat lower than planned and/or there were significant shortcomings.”</i>
Unsatisfactory (U)	2	<i>“Level of achievement of outputs/outcomes substantially lower than planned and/or there were major short comings.”</i>
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	1	<i>“Only a negligible level of achievement of planned outputs/outcomes and/or there were severe short comings.”</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	0	<i>The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of achievements.</i>

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability will be assessed taking into account the risks related to financial, socio-political, institutional, and environmental sustainability of outcomes. The evaluator may also take other risks into account that may affect sustainability:

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Ordinal scale</i>	<i>Description</i>
Likely (L)	4	<i>There is little or no risk to sustainability.</i>
Moderately Likely (ML)	3	<i>There are moderate risks to sustainability.</i>
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	2	<i>There are significant risks to sustainability.</i>
Unlikely (U)	1	<i>There are severe risks to sustainability.</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	0	<i>Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.</i>

Appendix 8. References

UN Women

_UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation (2015). Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>

_Good Practices in Gender-Response Evaluation (2020). Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/good-practices-in-gender-responsive-evaluations#view>

United Nations Evaluation Group

_Code of Conduct for Evaluators (2008). Available at www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct.

_Guidance Document - Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations
(2014). Available at www.unevaluation.org/guidance/HRGE.

__Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System (2014). Available at www.unevaluation.org/normative_evaluations.

_Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System (2016). Available at www.unevaluation.org/2016-Norms-and-Standards.

—Good Practices for Integrating Gender Equality and Human Rights in Evaluation (2017). Available at <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2695>

Guidance Document - UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Technical Note
(2018). Available at <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>.

__Guidance Document – Guidance on Evaluating Institutional Gender Mainstreaming (2018). Available at www.unevaluationorg/evaluating_gender_mainstreaming.

_Guidance Document - Evaluability Assessment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) (2020). Available at http://www.unevaluation.org/UNSCDF_EA.

__Foundation Document - UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020). Available at www.unevaluation.org/UNEG_Ethics.

__Compendium of Evaluation Methods Reviewed - Volume 1 (2020). Available at www.unevaluation.org/evaluation_methods_compendium_voll.

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