

Terms of Reference for Consultant: “Mapping & Review of Evaluation Ethics”

UNEG Ethics and Code of Conduct Task Team

17 October 2018

Background

The [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\)](#) is a professional network that brings together the units responsible for evaluation in the UN system. It aims to promote the independence, credibility and usefulness of the evaluation function and evaluation across the UN system. The [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations](#) ensure that UNEG members adhere to shared basic principles and apply best practices in managing, conducting and using evaluations. First published in 2005, they were updated in 2016 and include specific norms and standards on “ethics”.ⁱ

Based on the 2005 Norms and Standards, UNEG issued the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#) as well as the [UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system](#) in 2008. It is unknown to what extent these documents have been used and how well they have served the UN evaluation community. At the same time, several UN Organizations have developed their own specific ethical guidelines for evaluation. Also, a few UN entities have since 2008 adopted new or revised Evaluation Policy frameworks; some of which are centred upon independence and integrity.

In 2017, a UNEG task team was created to review and revise the ethical guidelines and code of conduct. The purpose of these revisions is to ensure a common understanding of what ethics in evaluation means and that UNEG is providing appropriate guidance and tools to support ethical evaluations. Such guidance should reflect recent developments in key areas that affect the ethical management and conduct of evaluation, in both development and humanitarian settings.

To lay the groundwork for these revisions, the UNEG Ethics and Code of Conduct Task Team is commissioning a mapping study to identify current good practice with regard to evaluation ethics and to pinpoint the issues that need to be reflected in the new UNEG ethics guidance/code of conduct. The task team is seeking the services of a consultant to conduct this mapping and review. This document outlines the terms of reference for the assignment.

Scope of the Consultancy

The consultancy involves three elements:

- A literature review to ascertain the state of the art in normative and operational frameworks that pertain to ethics in evidence generation, professional conduct and conflict of interest for both development and humanitarian evaluation contexts. This should include comparator

organizations' (evaluation units in Development Banks, bilateral development agencies, ICRC, INGOs, etc.) responses to current ethical challenges such as protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, data protection, engaging with non-State armed groups, etc. and a discussion on how these organizations handle conflict of interest, institutional review boards, duty of care, etc. The review will also consider handling of evaluators' actual or perceived conflict of interest in respect of career advancement outside the evaluation field. An initial e-library for this project has been created by task team members and can be built on.

- A review of de facto practices within the UNEG community establishing how the 2008 guidelines/code of conduct have been used. This component should be light-touch, including e.g. a short online survey and selected key informant interviews.
- Critical appraisal of the 2008 UNEG ethics guidelines/code of conduct to identify key gaps and areas requiring updating with regard to the above state of the art and practice review.

On the basis of the above, the consultant will prepare the mapping report. The report should be no longer than 20 pages in length, supported by ample Annexes and examples/illustrations. Its key feature should be forward-looking recommendations towards future UNEG guidance and norms on ethics, code of conduct, management of conflict of interest and related issues. Recommendations regarding the format of ethical guidance are also expected. The report of the consultancy will be used as part of the ethics task team's presentation to UNEG at the upcoming 2019 Annual Meeting. It is also expected serve as a basis for discussion in determining if ethical considerations should be embedded into other UNEG foundation documents.

Deliverables and Timeline

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Number of work days</i>
Inception report, including annotated bibliography and data collection tools	14 December 2018	5
Literature review: Establishing the state of the art in evaluation ethics	11 January 2019	8
Practice review: Online survey and key informant interviews	January – early February 2019	5
Draft report for task team review	22 February 2019	7
Draft final report for submission to UNEG	29 March 2019	3.5
Final report	31 May 2019	1.5
		TOTAL: 30

Duration & Location

The consultancy of maximum thirty days will be undertaken from late November 2018 to the end of May 2019. The consultancy is home-based and does not include any travel.

Reporting

The consultant will be supervised by the two co-conveners of the UNEG Ethics and Code of Conduct Task Team (evaluation staff members of WFP and UNICEF). The task team itself will serve as a reference group. Final editing and proofing support will be made available through the Task Team.

Payment

Payment is lump-sum and based on deliverables. It is due in three installments: Upon completion of the inception report (20%), upon delivery of the draft report (40%) and upon approval of the final report (40% of contract amount).

Qualifications and experience

- Advanced University degree in academic discipline(s) relevant to evaluation
- In-depth understanding of ethical concerns in evidence generation, in particular when working with vulnerable populations
- Sound knowledge of current development/humanitarian evaluation policies and practices; knowledge of UNEG, the UN system or UN organizations an advantage.
- Strong qualitative and quantitative research skills
- Ability to synthesize and summarize information
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Successful track record working in teams and involving multiple stakeholders.

ⁱ Norm 6 reads: “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)”. Standard 3.2. reads: “All those engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluations should conform to agreed ethical standards in order to ensure overall credibility and the responsible use of power and resources. Ethical principles for evaluation include obligations on the part of evaluators to behave ethically in terms of Intentionality: giving consideration to the utility and necessity of an evaluation at the outset; Conflict of interest: exercising the commitment to avoid conflicts of interest in all aspects of their work, thereby upholding the principles of independence, impartiality, credibility, honesty, integrity and accountability; Interactions with participants: engaging appropriately and respectfully with participants in evaluation processes, upholding the principles of confidentiality and anonymity and their limitations; dignity and diversity; human rights; gender equality; and the avoidance of harm; Evaluation processes and products: ensuring accuracy, completeness and reliability; inclusion and non-discrimination; transparency; and fair and balanced reporting that acknowledges different perspectives; and Discovery of wrongdoing: discreetly reporting the discovery of any apparent misconduct to a competent body.