

EVALUATION POLICY

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
CONCEPT AND ROLE OF EVALUATION AT ESCWA	4
OBJECTIVES	5
SCOPE OF EVALUATION	5
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	10
NORMS	11
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES	13
THE EVALUATION PROCESS	14
USE OF FINDINGS	20
COORDINATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING	21

ACRONYMS

CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination
DA	Development Account
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PPRs	Programme Performance Reports
RB	Regular Budget
RBM	Results Based Management
RPTC	Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation
SDPS	Strategic Directions and Partnerships Section
SPMS	Strategic Planning and Monitoring Section
TORs	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
XB	Extra-budgetary



INTRODUCTION

ESCWA's Evaluation Policy is revised to provide updated and clear directives for ESCWA staff and management in the design and delivery of evaluations, and to articulate to member countries and partners a coherent vision for the use and implementation of evaluation to improve the work of the Commission and its impact on development in the region. The policy elaborates an understanding of evaluation concepts and processes in accordance with the principles, norms and standards of the UN Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS) and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

The policy emphasizes accountability, managing for results, and continuous learning. It promotes the integration of human rights and gender equality principles across the planning and implementation of ESCWA programmes, projects, initiatives, and institutional processes. Attached to this policy is a set of guidelines to aid in the planning, design and implementation of evaluations and the use of evaluation findings according to the terms set in this document.

ESCWA's revised Evaluation Policy comes into effect on 10 July 2014 and supersedes all previous evaluation policies and guidelines. ESCWA will periodically review the Evaluation Policy to ensure consistency and coherence with new developments in UN Evaluation policies and processes.



CONCEPT AND ROLE OF EVALUATION AT ESCWA

Evaluation: Evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible of any activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance etc. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the UN system. An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the development of organizations of the UN system and its members.¹

For the purposes of this policy, Evaluation shall refer to all activities included in the above definition provided that the evaluation process is independent, ie is not managed and/or conducted by the activity manager. All evaluations according to this Policy will be managed and/or coordinated by the ESCWA team responsible for evaluations and supported by external

¹ UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, April 2005, page 5.

consultants whose independence from the evaluation subject is evident. Therefore, the Policy excludes from its purview “internal self-assessments” otherwise known as the Programme Performance Reports (PPRs) as those are undertaken by ESCWA’s Strategic Planning and Monitoring Section. The Policy also excludes any and all routine assessments, reviews and surveys initiated, administered, and conducted by activity managers in the course of implementation of activities (for example, meeting evaluations).

Evaluation at ESCWA is intended as a strategic function, forward looking, methodologically rigorous, and analytically ambitious. It aims to assess as independently and logically as possible the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability of ESCWA’s work. In addition, evaluations assess the extent to which evaluation subjects promote UN norms and values and specifically those related to Human Rights and Gender Equality. Evaluations are initiated and conducted with the purpose of improving ESCWA’s ability to deliver on its mandate and to enhance the impact of ESCWA’s work in promoting development in the region. Rooted in regional priorities, ESCWA’s approach to evaluations also adds as a guiding principle the extent to which the organization’s work supports regional integration as an enabler of inclusive development in the region.

In adopting this policy, ESCWA is cognizant of the importance of evaluating the impact of normative work in particular and of the global challenges associated with such evaluation. The impact of normative work can be difficult to delineate and more difficult to measure. However, as an organization that strives for sustainable improvement in the social and economic development of the region and the welfare of its people, ESCWA is committed to a diligent and continuous process of improving its programmatic capacities and delivery on its mandate. This includes the ongoing identification of new and better methods to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the work of the organization to achieve clearer and stronger results.²

As such, evaluations are planned, designed and implemented to feed into all levels of ESCWA’s planning and implementation processes, including the elaboration of a strategic vision, the strategic framework and work programme, the coordination and management of partnerships and resource mobilization, as well as the management of specific sub-programmes and activities.

² For reference, see UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System, 2013.



OBJECTIVES

Evaluations at ESCWA have three main objectives.

Accountability: Evaluations enhance the organization's ability to ascertain and report on its achievements, the extent to which the organization was able to deliver on its mandate as effectively and efficiently as possible, and the organization's contribution to social and economic development in the region. In holding ESCWA accountable for delivering on its mandate, evaluations enhance ESCWA's credibility in the region, and facilitate a stronger engagement with member countries, partners, donors and beneficiaries.

Managing for Results: Evaluations improve the organization's ability to plan strategically and for maximum impact. Evaluation results inform planning processes and contribute to ongoing efforts to clarify the objectives, improve the modalities, and identify the impact of normative and technical advisory work to achieve concrete results. Evaluations aid ESCWA as a whole and programme managers in particular to refine modalities of work and ensure more concrete results and tangible impact.

Continuous Learning: Evaluations contribute to an organizational culture of continuous learning and improvement, distilling lessons learned, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and promoting diligence and creativity in addressing challenges. Evaluations are constructive and forward looking and strive to create ownership of findings by all primary stakeholders.



SCOPE OF EVALUATION

Types of Evaluations

Internal and External Evaluations

Evaluations within the UN System and according to the guidelines of OIOS are classified as Internal or External. Broadly defined, Internal Evaluations are managed by staff or offices internal to the organization (in this case ESCWA) while External Evaluations are managed by entities outside the organization: OIOS, JIU or their consultants.

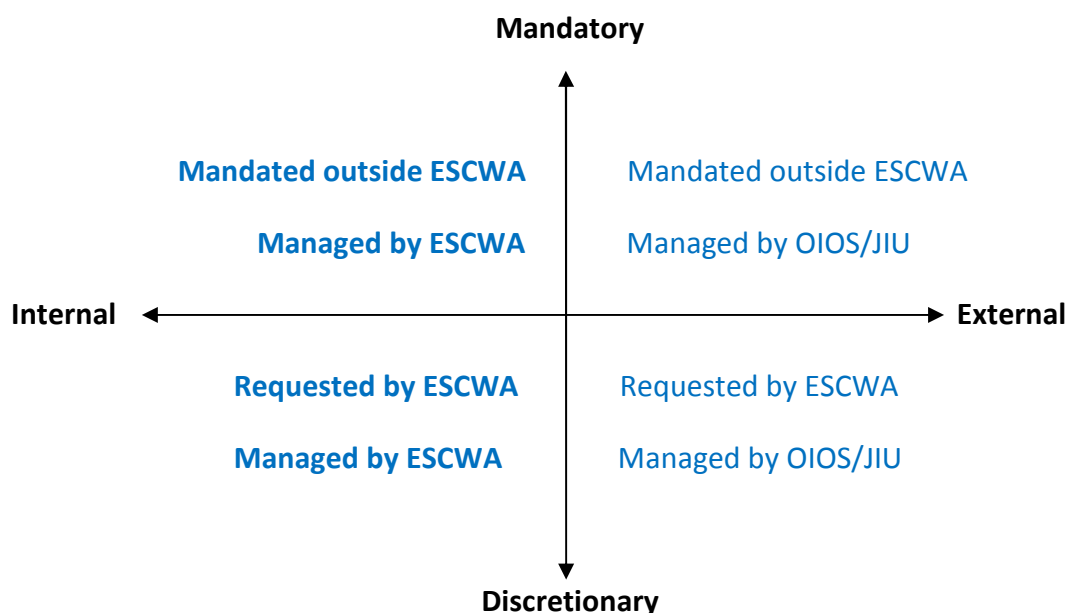
Mandatory and Discretionary Evaluations

Evaluations according to OIOS are also further divided into Mandatory or Discretionary. Mandatory Evaluations are those that are required by the General Assembly, the Committee for Programme Coordination (CPC) or other Intergovernmental Entities (IGs) such as the ESCWA

Commission. Evaluations may also be required by donors in the case of XB projects or by funding source in the case of Development Account projects.

Discretionary evaluations, on the other hand, are undertaken at the discretion of ESCWA--the request for evaluation originates within ESCWA and is not mandated or required by an outside entity.

Figure 1



For a full list of how evaluations are mandated/requested and managed please see Figure 2.

EXCEPTION: “Mandatory Self-Assessments”, referred to in ESCWA and regional commissions as the PPR (Programme Performance Report), are distinct and outside the scope of the ESCWA evaluation manager. These reports are generated on a regular basis according to a set template and in line with planning and monitoring processes. ESCWA continues to consider ways to improve mandatory self-assessments, including through biennial self-reflections by the subprogramme directors, and develop meaningful and systematic approaches to the PPR under the management of the ESCWA Planning and Monitoring Section.

The ESCWA Policy on Evaluations is therefore an internal policy and governs any and all internal evaluations whether discretionary or mandatory (including those relating to XB and DA). The Policy does not extend to external evaluations whether discretionary or mandatory. It also does not extend to the management of the PPR.

<i>Figure 2</i>	Types of Evaluations			
	External		Internal (covered by Policy)	
MANDATORY	Requested by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA CPC Donors External stakeholders 		Requested by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCWA Commission Donors and/or partners (includes DA and XB projects) 	
	Managed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OIOS JIU OIOS or JIU consultants 		Managed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCWA Evaluation Team 	
	Used by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA CPC IG Bodies Donors External stakeholders Senior managers ESCWA staff 		Used by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCWA Commission Donors and/or partners Senior managers ESCWA staff 	
DISCRETIONARY	Requested by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Managers 		Requested by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Managers ESCWA specialized committees 	
	Managed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OIOS JIU OIOS or JIU consultants 		Managed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCWA Evaluation Team 	
	Used by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior managers ESCWA staff 		Used by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior managers ESCWA staff 	

What is Evaluated

Discretionary Self-Evaluation at ESCWA covers the following:

- ESCWA Strategic Framework and Biennial Programme of Work
- ESCWA Subprogrammes
- Cross-cutting themes or issues
- Flagship publications or a set of publications
- Programmes, projects or initiatives (including RPTC)
- Processes or Mechanisms (ex. RCM, IGM)

Note on Subprogramme Evaluations:

To ensure consistency and comparability across subprogramme evaluations, each should address issues of:

- Vision
- Management and Institutional Issues
- Priority Programmatic Areas
- Coordination and Partnerships
- Technical Cooperation

OIOS and UNEG work with five broad criteria of what is evaluated in regard to any evaluation subject. However, evaluations do not have to evaluate according to all five criteria every time. These criteria are: Relevance; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Impact; and Sustainability.⁴

Table 1

Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
The extent to which an activity, expected accomplishment or strategy is pertinent or significant for achieving the related objective and the extent to which the objective is significant to the problem addressed.	The extent to which an intervention's objectives are achieved or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.	Measurements of how well inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results (outputs, outcome, impact).	The change produced by an intervention, including positive or negative, direct or indirect effects.	The extent to which a programme or activity will have long term benefits and impact.

Prioritizing Evaluations

For evaluations to achieve the three objectives of accountability, managing for results, and continuous learning, they must be planned strategically and carefully. The following should be taken into account in the design of the evaluation plan.

⁴ Table adapted from OIOS List of Key Oversight Terms, April 2013.

Timing: Will the results of the evaluation be incorporated in a timely manner into ESCWA's planning, monitoring, and implementation processes?

Usability: Will the findings be relevant and contribute to ongoing and/or future work? Does the institutional or the environmental context support change and improvement in the design and implementation of the evaluation subject?

Feasibility: Will the evaluation achieve its objectives? Is the data available or adequate to address the evaluation objectives? Does the environmental context allow for a thorough assessment?

Cost benefit: Will the projected findings of the evaluation contribute to the improvement of ESCWA's work and its impact on socio-economic development taking into account the projected cost and the limited human and financial resources available for evaluations?

Impact: Will the evaluation serve the organization's evaluation objectives in multiple ways, and are the results and lessons learned beneficial beyond the timeline of the evaluation?

Risk: Will the evaluation findings feed into the organization's assessment and mitigation of risk (to its mandate, reputation or credibility) as a result of projects or initiatives that may be deemed critical, sensitive, or controversial, or those which carry a significant financial commitment?

Institutional Learning: Will the evaluation contribute something new to institutional learning? Is the evaluation subject a pilot initiative with the possibility of replication?

To the extent possible, Evaluation Plans should link evaluation priorities to regional and institutional priorities in terms of thematic evaluations as well as those focused on structure, mechanisms, or modalities of work. In addition, evaluations of subprogrammes should be staggered to ensure that adequate time is given to absorb findings and institute change before subsequent evaluations are planned.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Human Rights and Social Justice

Evaluations assess and promote the adherence of ESCWA activities and products to the principles of Human Rights and Social Justice in the design, implementation and expected achievements. Evaluations should question the extent to which efforts were made to utilize a rights-based approach, to acknowledge and respect the rights of individuals as well as vulnerable and/or disadvantaged groups, and to identify and tackle issues of access, equity and

equality. Evaluations should also assess the extent to which activities and products are participatory and inclusive and reach out to civil society.⁵

Gender Equality

Evaluations strengthen institutional accountability for mainstreaming gender in all activities and products and assess the extent to which these activities and products support the empowerment of women and girls in the region and promote gender equality. In the design, implementation and expected accomplishments, evaluations will question the extent to which efforts were made to work with a gendered perspective, to identify and strengthen opportunities for the inclusion of women and girls in the development process, and to ensure greater representation of women and girls as stakeholders in the design and implementation of ESCWA activities.⁶

Evaluations shall be assessed against gender-related UNEG norms and standards as required by the UN SWAP Evaluations Scorecard.

Regional Integration

Evaluations will assess the extent to which ESCWA's activities and products support the organization's commitment to promote regional integration for social and economic development. Evaluations should consider the analysis provided, the modalities of work, as well as the partnerships and networks formed to assess the organization's contribution to regional integration.

Sustainable and Inclusive Development

As the world embarks on a new agenda post-2015, ESCWA has a role to bridge the gap between regional and global perspectives, to ensure that development priorities are supported by and feed into global frameworks, and to promote internationally agreed development goals. Evaluations should assess the extent to which ESCWA activities and products build on regional and global consensus and make use of regional and international forums and agreements to strengthen the course of sustainable and inclusive development in the region.

⁵ See UNEG Handbook, "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation—Towards UNEG Guidance."

⁶ UNEG Handbook, "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation—Towards UNEG Guidance", stipulates the following: "Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. It implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men." (page 13)

Intentionality

Evaluations are planned in a timely manner to ensure that the results feed into ESCWA's planning and decision-making processes. The choice of the subject of evaluation should be made in accordance with the feasibility, credibility, and usefulness of the timing of the evaluation.

Biennial evaluation plans should be clearly accounted for in ESCWA's overall work programme and budget, and should correspond to a strategic multi-year evaluation work programme. Evaluation plans are reviewed annually and shared with ESCWA's Commission and made public.

Impartiality

The evaluation process should be governed with impartiality in the planning, design, and implementation, and in the selection of evaluators, ensuring due process and methodological rigor at every stage. Evaluators should be impartial with regards to the subject being evaluated and in the conduct of consultations, the analysis of findings and the formulation of recommendations.

Independence

The Evaluations Team at ESCWA reports directly to the Executive Secretary on evaluations and is institutionally independent from the programme planning and monitoring function. To ensure further independence, ESCWA staff do not participate as evaluators but limit their work to the planning and management of evaluations and the facilitation of evaluation follow up and the distillation of lessons learned. Evaluators are expected to conduct their work and present their findings independently.

Quality

Evaluation reports must present in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations. They must be brief and to the point and easy to understand. They must explain the methodology followed, highlight the methodological limitations of the evaluation, key concerns and evidenced-based findings, dissident views and consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. They must have an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, and facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons. Evaluators are held accountable to the Evaluation

⁷ Adapted from UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, April 2005.

team for the design and delivery of evaluations according to the norms and standards established in this Policy.

Transparency

All relevant stakeholders should be consulted in a transparent manner, and evaluation summary reports along with policy, guidelines and procedures should be available to major stakeholders and made public documents.

Ethics

Evaluators must act with utmost personal and professional integrity and must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators must take care that those involved in evaluations have a chance to examine the statements attributed to them. In addition, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality in accordance with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

In cases where wrong doing is uncovered, evaluators must report the evidence to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate the personal performance of individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with due consideration for this principle.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Evaluations are managed within ESCWA by a team in the Strategic Directions and Partnerships Section in the Office of the Executive Secretary. Evaluations is one of several functions carried out by the Section and is supported by the Chief of the Section at a P5 level, two programme officers and one assistant. In the absence of a fully distinct evaluation unit, the Chief of Section of SDPS reports to the Deputy Executive Secretary who acts as the UNEG Head and in turn reports to the Executive Secretary and the Commission on Evaluations.

The Section's mandate is to promote policy coherence, interdisciplinary thinking, and strategic partnerships and resource mobilization within the organization. The section's work is distinct from planning and monitoring functions within ESCWA. Evaluations are an extension of the Section's mandate and evaluation findings will contribute to the Section's ability to deliver on that mandate.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Commission is responsible for strategic guidance and oversight of ESCWA's programme of work. The intergovernmental body may request project, programme or other level evaluations by resolution (as Mandatory Internal Evaluations). Specialized Committees of the intergovernmental mechanism may refer suggestions to the Commission for consideration or recommend evaluations directly to ESCWA senior management—those recommendations remain at the discretion of ESCWA pending availability of resources.

The Executive Secretary is responsible for all ESCWA activities including evaluations. The Executive Secretary ensures that ESCWA evaluation activities are in line with UN norms and promotes the use of evaluation to strengthen accountability, managing for results and continuous learning in the organization. The Executive Secretary approves ESCWA's evaluation plans and the management response to evaluations, and holds members of ESCWA's senior management accountable for following up on responses. In addition, the Executive Secretary ensures adequate allocation of resources, human and financial, to the evaluation teamr.

Senior Managers are responsible for following up on evaluation results. Senior Managers sign a compact with the Executive Secretary to implement initiatives and/or changes within their subprogrammes to improve performance and impact in line with agreed evaluation findings. Senior Managers are accountable for ensuring the full cooperation of their offices and staff during evaluations and follow up.

The Strategic Directions and Partnerships Section (The Evaluation Team) is considered the evaluation manager and is responsible for planning and managing evaluations as well as facilitating follow up to evaluations and capturing lessons learned. The Section:

- prepares biennial evaluation plans, yearly work plans, and considers ad hoc evaluations as necessary
- drafts Terms of Reference for evaluations, sets up Steering Committees or Reference Groups, reviews inception and draft reports
- identifies consultants, ensures quality of outputs (adherence to norms and criteria including logic and clarity, evidence-based argumentation, and integration of guiding principles), and approves final report
- presents evaluation findings to the Commission, the Executive Secretary and Senior Management and disseminates results as appropriate; manages the production and dissemination of evaluation reports and summaries
- facilitates the production of management responses to evaluation recommendations and the preparation of action plans where applicable

- liaises with OIOS, UNEG, Regional Commissions, UN entities, and evaluation networks to ensure continuous improvement of evaluation at ESCWA and to share lessons learned
- reviews ESCWA's Evaluation Policy at regular intervals and suggests changes as necessary
- where relevant, acts as focal point for external evaluations of ESCWA that have a strategic or thematic dimension
- captures lessons learned to inform planning and other strategic functions

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Planning

The Evaluation Team, in consultation with ESCWA Executive Secretary, and taking into account any recommendations by the ESCWA Commission and subsidiary committees, prepares a Biennial Evaluation Plan, submitted as Form 12 during the preparation of the ESCWA Programme Budget submission to the Office of the Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts in the UN Secretariat and to the General Assembly. Following approval, the Plan is then further elaborated to confirm purpose, scope, budget, outputs and timeframe and included in the following ESCWA Programme Budget submission. A yearly work plan is also prepared.

As per the norms outlined in this policy, evaluation plans should be strategic in identifying the subjects of evaluation: they should justify why the subject is chosen, the timing of the evaluation, and the expected outcome and its usability in accordance with the purpose of the evaluation.

Evaluation plans may be amended as necessary in the course of the Biennium.

Budgeting

Regular Budget Evaluations

ESCWA has dedicated human resources to the Evaluation Team as part of the work plan of SDPS and covered by ESCWA's regular budget. In allocating funds for evaluations, ESCWA will aim for 1% of its overall budget in a given biennium. The sum total of available financial resources will be allocated to cover costs associated with activities in the Evaluation Plan and at the discretion of SDPS. Those costs include:

- Consultancy fees
- Travel of consultants and ESCWA staff
- Editing and translation of evaluation reports
- Equipment (including desks, computers, software and electronic data collection tools)
- Evaluation training needs

RPTC Evaluations

ESCWA allocates 1% of the operational funds of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation to cover evaluation of RPTC activities and projects.

Development Account Evaluations

DA guidelines stipulate that at least 2% of the project budget should be earmarked for end of project evaluation.

Extra-budgetary Evaluations

A mandatory requirement for each XB project over US\$500,000 is the incorporation of appropriate resources for monitoring and evaluation functions, ranging from 2-4 % of the overall project budget.

Managing the Process

In accordance with the Evaluation Plan and the directives of ESCWA's Commission and/or the Executive Secretary, SDPS as the Evaluation Team will manage evaluations as per Roles and Responsibilities above. SDPS is responsible for the implementation of evaluations according to the terms of this policy.

Subprogramme and activity managers are responsible for ensuring adequate logistical support to the implementation of the evaluation, including through the provision of data, contact information and liaison with stakeholders, travel arrangements and other similar support.

Evaluations will proceed in four stages: Inception; Data Collection and Analysis; Reporting and Dissemination; and Follow-up--*see Table 2 below*. For detailed description please consult the ESCWA Guidelines on Evaluation.

Table 2

	1 Inception	2 Data Collection and Analysis	3 Reporting and Dissemination	4 Follow-up
ESCWA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft TORs • Recruit consultant • Set up Steering Group and/or Expert Reference Group • Compile background documents 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review report • Approve and produce report (editing/printing) • Disseminate Report and/or Summary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support preparation of Management Response • Support preparation of Action Plan and signing of compacts where relevant • Review progress on follow-up • Identify lessons learned and feed into planning and other processes
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review • Prepare Inception Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visits, interviews, surveys, Focus Groups • Analysis of data and findings • Initial debriefing on findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Evaluation Report • Finalize and submit Report • Formal presentation of findings 	

ESCWA will make evaluation findings public. An Evaluation Report or Summary will be uploaded to the ESCWA website. ESCWA will also report on evaluation findings to the Commission Session and subsidiary committees relevant to the evaluation subject.

For Development Account (DA) and Extra-budgetary (XB) projects, ESCWA will report evaluation findings to the DA Programme Manager and donors respectively.

Quality Assurance and Competencies

The following competencies and criteria contribute to overall quality assurance of evaluations at ESCWA. In addition, a series of guidelines are developed along with the policy and covering all steps related to the design, implementation and follow up to evaluations. These guidelines are in line with OIOS and UNEG standards.

Evaluating Normative Work

Given the difficulties and nuances of measuring and evaluating the impact of normative work, Evaluations focused on impact should set out clear definitions and scope of short, medium and long term results. They should clearly identify duty bearers and rights holders. And the evaluation should address the extent to which the planning and implementation processes serve and strengthen the adoption and implementation of UN norms relevant to the evaluation subject. In addition, in evaluating normative work in particular efforts should be made to work with local experts and utilize local knowledge to the extent possible in the design and implementation of the evaluation.⁸

Profile of the Evaluator (consultant)

- Thorough understanding of the UN context and familiarity with the role of programming in the UN Secretariat
- Thorough understanding of the regional context and experience working in the region
- Good technical knowledge of evaluation components, including evaluation design, data collection, data analysis and reporting
- Knowledge of and commitment to human rights and gender equality issues
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and ability to effectively convey complex information in a clear and concise manner
- A high level of expertise in the distilling, communication and reporting of findings, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned
- Relevant language proficiency
- Knowledge of technical area being evaluated (desirable)

In line with UNEG Standards, Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to clients before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any points where such conflict occurs. This includes conflict of interest on the part of either the evaluator or the stakeholder⁹.

Evaluation Deliverables

Terms of Reference: In consultation with the programme or activity manager, the Evaluation Team will draft initial TORs outlining the objectives and scope of Evaluation. The TORs will be revised by the Evaluator following a desk review and consultation with the Steering Group and/or Reference Group where applicable.

⁸ See UNEG's Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System.

⁹ UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, page 8.

Inception Report: The Evaluator will submit an Inception Report building on the findings of a Desk Review and consultations. The Inception Report will clarify the objectives and scope, will present clear methodology for the implementation of the evaluation, and will identify all relevant stakeholders.

Findings: The Evaluator will submit an initial draft of the results of the Evaluation to the Evaluation Team and the Steering Group where applicable. The Evaluator will address any queries related to clarity and due diligence and adherence to the TOR.

Final Report: The Evaluator will submit a Final Report to be discussed with senior management and the activity manager. The Report will include the methodology, findings, recommendations and lessons learned. A Quality Checklist for the Evaluation Report is included in the ESCWA Guidelines for Evaluation and will be shared with the Evaluator at the outset of the evaluation. The Final Report will be shared in accordance with the terms of this policy.

Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity

To enhance the validity and objectivity of the design and implementation of the evaluation, every effort should be extended to identify and involve all relevant stakeholders (see Evaluation Scope above). Efforts should also be made to respect geographical and gender representation. Key stakeholders should be consulted in the design and implementation of the evaluation process to clarify objectives and ensure ownership of results.

Two further modalities may be employed to ensure greater engagement and inclusivity:

Steering Groups: To include all primary stakeholders--the ESCWA Evaluation Team; the Evaluator; the Activity or Programme Manager; a member of ESCWA's Senior Management assigned by the Executive Secretary; person or persons in a governing position at the discretion of the ESCWA Evaluation Team (for example: a member of a Board of Governors or an Advisory Group). Steering Groups will "act as a sounding board, and facilitate and review the work of the evaluation. In addition, this group may be tasked with facilitating the dissemination and application of the results and other follow up action."¹⁰

Reference Groups: To include external experts on the subject of evaluation. Reference groups will "provide substantive guidance to the evaluation process (eg. provide inputs on the Terms of Reference and provide quality control of the draft report)"¹¹. Reference Groups are necessary and feasible where the organization seeks further independent technical input on the quality

¹⁰ UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, page 15.

¹¹ UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, page 15.

and effectiveness of ESCWA activities and products and where—at the discretion of the ESCWA Evaluation Team-- the scale and objectives of the Evaluation would warrant the establishment of such a group.

USE OF FINDINGS

Dissemination Strategy

Findings and recommendations of all sub-programme and project evaluations, regardless of their nature, will be made available to stakeholders, beneficiaries, the UN system and the general public through evaluation briefs posted on ESCWA's evaluation webpage. In addition, Evaluation Terms of Reference and Evaluation Reports will be disseminated to all staff of the Regional Commission through ESCWA's intranet. Sub-programmes will also be encouraged to table a discussion on specific evaluation results at relevant ESCWA inter-governmental meetings. Starting 2015, some evaluation reports may also be shared publicly, through the UNEG evaluation database, pending the approval of the evaluated project/programme team.

Management Responses and Action Plans

All evaluations, regardless of their nature, will solicit an explicit management response from the subprogramme or activity manager, or where applicable, the Executive Secretary. This management response will outline:

1. Detailed remarks per recommendation made in the evaluation report, within one month of report submission;
2. A specific action plan which maps out the steps that will be taken to address any shortcomings related to objectives, modalities, and results of the evaluated activity. The production of the action plan will be coordinated by SDPS and agreed to by the Executive Secretary and the Director of the subprogramme or activity manager. Where the evaluation is of a subprogramme, the plan may form a Compact to be signed between the ES and the Director of the subprogramme.

In addition, and in coordination with SDPS, subprogramme managers will produce a biannual status report on the implementation of the action plan for sub-programme evaluations.

Lessons Learned and Reports on Evaluation

Progress made on responding to areas of improvement and identifying initiatives for best practice will be integrated into the planning process.

The Evaluation team will also produce biennial reports on the findings of all evaluations, synthesizing findings and identifying institution-wide strengths and weaknesses to share with all ESCWA staff. These findings will be taken into account by all managers in the preparation of the Strategic framework, the programme budget, and the design of extra-budgetary projects and technical advisory services. The findings will also inform the preparation and/or revision of the ESCWA Evaluation Work Plan.



COORDINATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

SDPS will also engage with evaluation units or similar entities within the Regional Commissions, with UNEG and OIOS and with other UN entities. SDPS will also engage with non-UN evaluation networks including EVALMENA. The aim is to address global evaluation issues and improve evaluation capacities internally and the use of evaluations to strengthen the impact of social and economic development globally, including in particular the impact of normative work.