



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

Reference
Document

Frequently Asked Questions: UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Reporting

November 2016

UNEG SO3 Working Group on Gender Equality & Human Rights

Introduction

This FAQ was developed as a quick reference guide for UN-SWAP EPI focal points responsible for reporting against the UN-SWAP EPI on an annual basis. The FAQ identifies key questions that often arise and also clarifies key steps in the process.

- Questions 1 – 4 apply to the UN-SWAP EPI more generally
- Questions 5 – 9 concern the overall UN-SWAP EPI reporting process
- Questions 10 – 13 are more specific questions regarding the assessment

1. What is the UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI)?

It is one of the 15 performance indicators developed as part of the accountability framework of the [UN System-wide Action Plan](#) (UN-SWAP)¹ to implement the Chief Executives Board for Coordination CEB Policy 2006/2 on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

EPI serves both as a reporting tool and also as a benchmark to help UN entities integrate Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) into evaluations.

UNEG has taken a leading role in supporting the development of the Technical Note and Scorecard for this UN-SWAP performance indicator. UNEG also publishes a synthesis of the results of the annual reporting cycle on its [website](#).

2. What does the UN-SWAP EPI assess?

The EPI assesses the extent to which the evaluation reports of an entity meet the gender-related UNEG Norms & Standards and demonstrate effective use of the [UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation](#).

The UN-SWAP EPI Scorecard provides a basis for harmonizing reporting across entities.

The process entails a meta-analysis of the evaluation reports:

Those entities that have a meta-evaluation process in place are encouraged to integrate and align with the EPI scorecard criteria and scoring system

¹ For more information on UN-SWAP see: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>

Those entities that do not have such a process should use the EPI Scorecard to report on an annual basis (typically due by end of January) through a) hiring an external reviewer; b) participating in a peer learning exchange facilitated through UNEG; or c) conduct an internal self-assessment.

3. Who should be nominated to coordinate the UN-SWAP EPI assessment and reporting?

Each entity should have a main UN-SWAP focal point, who is in general the main Gender Focal point for the UN entity. In general, each performance indicator of the UN-SWAP has a ‘business owner’ who is the technical lead for that area of work. For those entities that do not have an evaluation function, programme managers who coordinate external evaluations conducted by JIU, OIOS, or BOA and /or commission evaluations to external evaluators should act as EPI focal point.

However, in the case of organisations with an evaluation function, UNEG has promoted that the Evaluation Offices appoint an EPI Focal Point as a means for facilitating reporting against the EPI. In addition, although the assessment could be conducted by the EPI Focal Point, UNEG encourages to opt for an independent assessment conducted by an external consultant or through a peer learning exchange exercise. The EPI focal point should coordinate closely with the overall UN-SWAP focal point / Gender Focal point for the entity.

4. What key references should be consulted in order to prepare for the UN-SWAP EPI reporting?

Please make sure to access the [UNEG UN-SWAP EPI Technical Note and Scorecard](#).²

The UNEG guidance ‘[Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#)’ from 2014³ should guide all evaluations and will be a helpful resource to ensure a thorough review of the evaluation reports.

5. What should be included in the UN-SWAP meta-review/evaluation?

UN entities should include only those reports that meet the UNEG definition for evaluation (Norms and Standards, 2016):

An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.

² <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>

³ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>

There are other forms of assessments than evaluations: for instance self-assessments, appraisals, monitoring exercises, reviews, inspections, investigations, audit, research and internal management consulting. These assessments should not be included.

The evaluation reports should contain a description of the methodology used, evidenced based findings, conclusions and recommendations. If the methodology is not described in the report, and the Terms of Reference (ToR) is not annexed to the report, the TOR should be included in the assessment. Finally, the evaluations included should have been finalized in the period being reported: annual reporting cycle Jan – December.

6. How many evaluation reports should be assessed for the UN-SWAP EPI reporting?

The general recommendation is to include all evaluation reports (100%) if the overall number of evaluations per year is equal to or below 30. If the number of evaluations is over 30, 30 selected evaluation reports should be included in the assessment.

Those entities with established meta-evaluation processes should include 100% .

The sample should be balanced: geographically; mix of types; themes; etc.

7. What is the timeline for the UN-SWAP EPI reporting?

UN Women Independent Evaluation Office serves as a secretariat for the EPI, which entails providing feedback and support to the EPI focal points regarding the reporting process and the final report entered in the system. UNEG reminds its members of the upcoming UN-SWAP EPI reporting period in October/November of each year.

The key deadline for submitting the entire UN-SWAP report of the previous year is usually the last day of January of the next year. The deadline is quite strict, as UN Women must prepare the mandated report that is submitted to ECOSOC on a yearly basis. Thus, UNEG recommends that entities should start the review process early (e.g. November), in particular if an external reviewer will be hired, in order to complete the reporting on time.

8. What are the essential steps of the UN-SWAP EPI reporting cycle?

- A. Evaluation office appoints UN-SWAP EPI focal point**
- B. Evaluation office decides on type of review- internal, peer learning exchange, external, part of regular meta-evaluation process- as well as the number of evaluations to be included**

Ideally, the UN-SWAP EPI criteria are integrated into the overall quality review processes of the evaluation office and the UN-SWAP criteria are included in its meta-evaluation which is conducted by an external assessor. Clearly, an external assessor will provide a more objective review of how the evaluations perform against the criteria.

If the evaluation office does not have the funds to hire an external assessor, an internal review should be completed. Thus, someone should be assigned this task and a plan for how to conduct the internal review should be developed – for example perhaps two staff members could review the same reports and come to an agreed upon final score; then the team could come together as an office and discuss remedial plan of action to be committed to; time should be allocated for the review process to be completed by 31 January.

C. Assessment of evaluation reports against EPI criteria using Scorecard

The UNEG endorsed scorecard is centered on assessing the evaluation reports of an entity against 4 criteria.

The first three criteria look at whether gender equality concerns were integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis, evaluation indicators, evaluation criteria and questions and methods and tools for data collection and analysis. These issues are generally captured under the introductory section and the methodological section of the evaluation report.

1. *GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis and Evaluation Indicators are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.*
2. *GEEW is integrated in Evaluation Criteria and Evaluation Questions specifically address how GEEW has been integrated into the design, planning, implementation of the intervention and the results achieved.*
3. *A gender-responsive Methodology, Methods and Tools, and Data Analysis Techniques are selected.*

The last criterion is focused on whether 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.

4. *The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendation reflect a gender analysis.*

After reviewing the individual evaluation report for each criteria, a score is assigned as follows:

- 0-3 points = Missing requirements
- 4-7 points = Approaches requirements
- 8-10 points = Meets requirements

- 11-12 points = Exceeds Requirements

Once you have filled in the scorecard for each individual evaluation (which requires a new worksheet in the excel spreadsheet) you are ready to calculate the aggregate score in the meta-evaluation scoring sheet. Scores for each individual evaluation are added up and divided by the total number of evaluation reports reviewed. This number is the final score for the EPI, which is reported in the online reporting system.

- 0-3,5 points = Missing requirements
- 3,51-7,5 points = Approaches requirements
- 7,51-10,5 points = Meets requirements
- 10,51-12 points = Exceeds Requirements

D. Additional comments

The online reporting system has a section for “additional comments”, which is a great opportunity for the evaluation office to note steps that have already been taken or will be taken to strengthen the integration of gender equality in evaluation systems or practices (e.g. inclusion in evaluation policy, guidance, dedicated training). Because the scorecard is only focused on the evaluation reports, this section allows entities to provide an analysis of the challenges and barriers to integrating gender equality in evaluation and how the evaluation unit/office is addressing these.

E. Optional UN-SWAP Peer Review or EPI Peer Learning Exchange – validation

Once you have completed the individual and aggregate scores for the evaluation reports of your office you are ready to engage in a peer learning exchange. Check with your entity UN-SWAP focal point to see if the entity is planning an overall peer review. If not, then it is highly encouraged to engage in an EPI Peer Learning Exchange, while keeping the UN SWAP focal point aware of the process. Please also refer to the guidance note regarding the [peer learning exchange](#).⁴

F. Input results in online system & attach the scorecard

There are currently two lines of reporting: one through the entity wide gender focal points for UN-SWAP reporting as well as the direct line of reporting to UN Women on the EPI scorecard⁵. If there are any technical queries regarding reporting, you may contact the UN-SWAP EPI focal point at UN Women prior to submission. In general, once you have your final score (which should be approved by the Director/Chief of evaluation) you should communicate with the Gender Focal Point for your entity and submit the results to this person (or the focal point for UN-SWAP reporting) including the attachment of the scorecard in excel format, the remedial actions (“additional comments”), and any other supporting information. This

⁴ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>

⁵ Current focal point is: Sabrina.evangelista@unwomen.org

person will enter the information in the online reporting system – including the scorecard. This is then submitted as part of your entities overall UN-SWAP report to UN Women for review.

G. Revision and fine-tuning of reporting plus submission of the final report

The UN Women focal point for the EPI will review the information entered and submit any questions regarding the submission to the focal point at UN Women that oversees overall UN-SWAP reporting. They then consolidate this feedback with feedback on other indicators and submit it to the entity Gender Focal Point. In some cases, it might be more efficient to contact the UNEG EPI focal point on a bilateral basis prior to submitting the formal report in case there are any major issues. Finally, the feedback is submitted to the entity and you may need to update the information provided and re-submit the final report.

H. UN Women prepares: ECOSOC & UNEG reports

UN Women will use the submitted information as the basis for its report to ECOSOC and to UNEG. The report that is submitted to ECOSOC is at the aggregate level, meaning that entity scores are not identified. The report that is submitted to UNEG focuses solely on the Evaluation Performance Indicator and makes all scores transparent.

9. What are guiding questions as well as relevant quality criteria in order to assess the 4 areas of the UN-SWAP analysis?

UNEG is currently developing a “checklist” that will provide further support to assessing the criteria. Below are some initial guiding questions that can support the assessment according to the 4 scoring criteria⁶.

A. Evaluation scope of analysis & indicators

Does the evaluation include an objective specific to the assessment of GEEW considerations or was it mainstreamed in other objectives?

Does the evaluation analyse the extent to which GEEW was taken into consideration in the design of the intervention being evaluated?

Was sufficient information collected during the implementation period on specific indicators to measure progress on GEEW or were additional/new indicators identified?

B. Evaluation criteria & evaluation questions

Was gender and/or human rights mainstreamed into all evaluation criteria and an optional standalone criterion included in the evaluation framework?

⁶ If information such as the evaluation objectives, criteria, questions or methodology are not described in the evaluation report, the evaluation Terms of Reference should be consulted in order to answer these guiding questions.

Is there a dedicated evaluation question regarding how GEEW has been integrated into the design, planning, implementation of the intervention and the results achieved and integrated throughout other questions?

Were evaluation sub-questions that specifically address GEEW, such as participation and social inclusion in the intervention included in the framework?

C. Evaluation methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques

Were data disaggregated by sex?

Were methods used for ensuring meaningful participation and the inclusion of the voices of women as well as of underrepresented groups, including the most vulnerable where appropriate, throughout the evaluation process (inception, data collection, and reporting phases)?

Does the report explain how evaluation data collection tools were gender-responsive by, for example, ensuring potential participation barriers were explored or including questions that investigate how the intervention has/not contributed to changing gender norms amongst the target population?

Does the evaluation report identify how ethical standards were applied throughout the evaluation and were all stakeholder groups treated with integrity and guaranteed protection and respect for confidentiality?

D. Evaluation findings, conclusions & recommendations

Does the evaluation report identify strengths, address gaps and limitations regarding aspects of GEEW of the intervention?

Does the evaluation report have an intersectional analysis of the specific social groups (and sub-groups) affected by the issue that is being addressed by the intervention?

Do the findings include data analysis that explicitly and transparently triangulates the voices of different social role groups, and/or disaggregates quantitative data?

Are unanticipated effects of the intervention on GEEW described?

Do the findings, conclusions, and recommendations explicitly address the gender and human rights dimensions assessed by the evaluation?

Does the evaluation report provide specific recommendation addressing GEEW issues, and priorities for action to improve GEEW of the intervention or future initiatives in this area?

Does the evaluation report also provide lessons/challenges/recommendations for conducting gender-responsive evaluation?

10. Some of our projects were not planned and implemented integrating Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) in the first place, how do we report EPI scores for the evaluation of such projects?

Evaluating with a human rights and gender lens will identify the gaps in the programming, and thus is an essential way to improve programming. It is expected that improving integration of GEEW at the downstream would contribute to UN entities' efforts to integrate GEEW in programme planning and implementation.

EPI is organized around 4 scoring criteria that assess how evaluation preparation, implementation and evaluation reports have integrated GEEW. One aspect of the analysis is the extent to which the project integrated GEEW in its design and implementation, thus, if there was no consideration of GEEW this is a critical finding, as it is an essential aspect of good programming within the UN system.

11. I did not conduct the evaluation myself, how do I assess the EPI for this particular evaluation?

This is actually beneficial, as this means you may have a more unbiased assessment. Although the unit of analysis for the EPI is the evaluation report, the TOR, which should be annexed to the evaluation report, could provide useful information.

Although all evaluation reports should aim to include a summary of all the issues identified under the EPI criteria, it may be useful to review other supporting documentation, such as the inception report of the evaluation to analyse the evaluation methodology, data collection methods, sampling strategy, and the list of informants and beneficiaries.

Additionally, participation in the Peer Learning Exchange can further enhance the robustness of the assessment.

12. How should a situation be handled, in which it was not possible to involve an evaluator with expertise in GEEW despite repeated efforts by the evaluation office/ manager to ensure a GEEW-sensitive approach?

The UN-SWAP EPI rating should be based on the final result (the evaluation report), irrespective of the efforts made by the commissioning office or the headquarter evaluation office. The UN-SWAP is meant to facilitate learning and ideally will inspire critical thinking about the evaluation unit's practices to integrate GEEW and how they can strengthen their practice. This can be reflected in the section dedicated to remedial actions.

13. What actions can be taken in order to improve the efforts in GEEW of an evaluation function?

The remedial actions provide an opportunity for the evaluation unit/office to provide a plan of action on how integration of GEEW will be strengthened. These are some examples how gender mainstreaming can be improved in individual evaluation offices:

Make a clear reference to UNEG HR&GE Guidance (Evaluation Policy, Guidance, TORs etc.);

Include reference to UN-SWAP EPI and attach the criteria for assessment in evaluation TORs;

Align evaluation report quality assessment systems (meta-evaluation) with the UN-SWAP EPI criteria and reporting cycle;

Require integration of GEEW across all evaluation criteria in addition to an (optional) standalone criterion;

Include GEEW and UN-SWAP reporting in evaluation training;

Ensure recruitment processes for consultants/firms identify GEEW expertise as requirement;

Establish an internal quality assurance process for reviewing gender considerations in evaluation processes;

Develop a checklist for integrating gender equality in evaluation for evaluation managers.