

# EVALUATION CHECKLISTS

## 16. Terms of Reference

### Principles and Norms

#### NEED FOR TERMS OF REFERENCE TO ADDRESS ALL STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS

16.1 The evaluation TOR should address issues of concern to each group of stakeholders. The TOR or the evaluation team should specify how the views and expertise of groups affected by the program would form an integral part of the evaluation.

Based on DAC Principle VI, paras. 23 and 24

### Standards and Guidelines

#### PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

16.2 The TOR should provide the purpose and describe the context, process, and product(s) of the evaluation. A clear justification should be provided for undertaking the evaluation at a particular time. The design of the evaluation should be described as precisely as possible.

Based on UNEG Standards 3.2 and 3.3

16.3 The GRPP being evaluated should be clearly described, including what it aims to achieve, the means chosen to address the problem(s) identified, the implementation modalities, the financial parameters, and a measure of scope and coverage in terms of beneficiaries.

Draws on UNEG Standard 3.4

#### CHECKLIST FOR COMPLETENESS

16.4 The TOR should include the following elements:

- Context for the evaluation, including a stakeholder map
- Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation
- Evaluation criteria (such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability)
- Key evaluation questions
- Methodology – the chosen approach for data collection and analysis and for participation of stakeholders
- Work plan, including organization, budget, a possible inception report review phase, any criteria for composition of the evaluation team, and details of access to support services or facilities if applicable
- Products and reporting, including the process for reviewing the draft evaluation report before it is finalized

Based on UNEG Standard 3.2, para. 2

- Planned dissemination, disclosure and use of evaluation results, and any restrictions related to confidentiality
- Any responsibilities involving follow-up after publication of the final evaluation report.

#### MEANING AND CONTENT OF VARIOUS COMPONENTS

Based on UNEG Standard 3.5, paras. 6–8

16.5 The *objectives* of the evaluation should follow from the purpose of the evaluation. These should be clear and agreed upon by all stakeholders involved. The *scope* establishes the boundaries of the evaluation, tailoring the objectives and evaluation criteria to the given situation. The scope should also include the explicit *coverage* of the evaluation – the time period, stage of implementation, geographical area, and the dimensions of stakeholder participation being examined – and acknowledge any limits of the evaluation. Evaluations are also oriented by *evaluation questions*, which add more detail to the objectives and contribute to defining the scope. The most commonly applied *evaluation criteria* are relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Sometimes, value-for-money and target group satisfaction are assessed as well. Not all criteria are applicable to every evaluation.

#### REVISIONS OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Draws on IEG's experience with reviewing GRPPs

16.6 The TOR is a key reference at two stages of the evaluation: in selecting the evaluation team and during implementation. The TOR may be revised between these two stages:

- During the selection process, the TOR provides the essential information for evaluators who are presenting their qualifications and proposals. The TOR defines the factors that delimit the evaluation exercise, providing key inputs to the potential bidders to determine if they can organize a team and process to meet expectations for credibility and quality. Such delimiting factors include time-frame, budget, any specifications with respect to the team composition, scope and methodology (if specified), evaluation criteria and questions (if specified).
- During implementation, the TOR determines the deliverables for the contract, as well as any specifications on process or mandatory stages of review that the evaluation must pass through before being finalized.

16.7 Frequently, the TOR provides for the preparation of an inception report, or the commissioners of the evaluation may invite the evaluation team that has been selected to prepare one. The preparation and review of an inception report provide an opportunity to further specify methodological and organizational aspects of the evaluation, including any provisions for needed meetings, interviews, site

visit travel, new data collection, etc. The inception report may also provide an opportunity for the team to point out any limitations they perceive which might affect the credibility and quality of the evaluation if the TOR is followed to the letter – such as inadequate budget, tight time frame, lack of consensus on program or evaluation objectives, lack of an M&E framework, poor data, or lack of provision (budget and/or time) for building participation and consultation of stakeholders into the design of the evaluation.

16.8 In some cases, a preliminary evaluability exercise may be needed. (See paragraph 2.7.) In other cases, it may be necessary to expand the scope of the evaluation to include design and discussion of a logframe or larger M&E framework to provide a foundation for a credible present or future evaluation. Or it may be desirable to increase the level of participation and consultation. The commissioners of the evaluation may also decide that the budget and contract need to be revised, or the deliverables phased differently. In all cases, the TOR should be formally revised and again approved by the commissioner of the evaluation. The evaluation team is then held to the revised TOR, which is published in the final evaluation report.