UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

Standards for Evaluation in the UN System

April 2005

Towards a UN system better serving the peoples of the world; overcoming weaknesses and building on strengths from a strong evidence base

Preamble

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), as a group of professional practitioners, undertook to define norms and standards that aim at contributing to the professionalization of the evaluation function and at providing guidance to evaluation offices in preparing their evaluation policies or other aspects of their operations. This initiative was undertaken in part in to response to General Assembly resolution A/RES/59/250[1] of December 2004, which encouraged UNEG to make further progress in a system-wide collaboration on evaluation, in particular the harmonization and simplification of methodologies, norms, standards and cycles of evaluation.

These standards build upon the UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN system (UNEG/FN/Norms[2005]). They are drawn from best practice of UNEG members[2]. They are intended to guide the establishment of the institutional framework, management of the evaluation function, conduct and use of evaluations. They are also a reference for the competencies of evaluation practitioners and work ethics, and are intended to be applied as appropriate within each organization. UNEG will periodically update, elaborate and expand the coverage of these standards in the service of the UN system organization[3].

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[1] Document A/C.2/59/L.63 of 17 December, paragraph 69.

[2] In addition to evaluation policies and guidelines existing within the various organizations of the United Nations system, the standards have also drawn from the following sources: OECD/ DAC evaluation principles; national standards of OECD countries; evaluation policies of the international financial institutions; evaluation policies of the European Union standards of evaluation associations; evaluation guidance developed by ALNAP for humanitarian action.

[3] UN organizations refer hereinafter to all organizations, funds and programmes as well as specialized agencies of the UN system.

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1. Institutional Framework and Management of the Evaluation Function

Institutional Framework

> **Standard 1.1:**
>
> UN Organizations should have an adequate institutional framework for the effective management of their evaluation function.

1. A comprehensive institutional framework for the management of the evaluation function and conduct of evaluations is crucial to ensure an effective evaluation process.

2. Such an institutional framework should address the following requirements:

    - Provide institutional and high-level management understanding of and support for the evaluation function's key role in contributing to the effectiveness of the Organization.

    - Ensure that evaluation is part of the organization's governance and management functions. Evaluation makes an essential contribution to managing for results.

    - Promote a culture that values evaluation as a basis for learning.

    - Facilitate an independent and impartial evaluation process by ensuring that the evaluation function is independent of other management functions. The Head of evaluation should report directly to the Governing Body of the organization or the Head of the organization.

    - Ensure adequate financial and human resources for evaluation in order to allow efficient and effective delivery of services by a competent evaluation function and enable evaluation capacity strengthening.

    - Encourage partnerships and cooperation on evaluation within the UN system, as well as with other relevant institutions.

> **Standard 1.2:**
>
> UN Organizations should develop and evaluation policy and regularly update it, taking into account the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN system

3. The evaluation policy should be approved by the Governing Bodies of the organizations and/or Heads of the organization, and should be in line with the applicable UNEG Norms for Evaluation and with organizational corporate goals and strategies. The evaluation policy should include:

- Clear explanation of the concept and role of evaluation within the organization;

- Clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation professionals, senior management and programme managers;

- An emphasis on the need for adherence to the organization's evaluation guidelines;

- Explanation of how evaluations are prioritized and planned;

- Description of how evaluations are organized, managed and budgeted;

- An emphasis on the requirements for the follow-up of evaluations;

- Clear statement on disclosure and dissemination.

Standard 1.3:

UN Organizations should ensure that evaluation plans of evaluation activities are submitted to their Governing Bodies and/ or Heads of organizations for review and/ or approval

4.   The Governing Bodies and/ or the Head of the organization should receive not only the evaluation plan, but also a progress report on the implementation of both the evaluation plan as well as the recommendations emanating from the evaluations.

Standard 1.4:

UN Organizations should ensure appropriate evaluation follow-up mechanisms and have an explicit disclosure policy

5.   Appropriate evaluation follow-up mechanisms should exist within the organization, ensuring that evaluation recommendations are properly utilized and implemented in a timely fashion and that evaluation findings are linked to future activities.

6.   A disclosure policy should ensure the transparent dissemination of evaluation results, including making reports broadly available to the Governing Bodies and the public, except in those cases where the reasonable protection and confidentiality of some stakeholders is required.

Management of the Evaluation Function

Standard 1.5:

The Head of evaluation has a lead role in ensuring that the evaluation function is fully operational and that evaluation work is conducted according to the highest professional standards.

7.   Within the comprehensive institutional framework, the management of the evaluation function, entrusted to the Head of evaluation, should ensure that:

- An evaluation policy is developed and regularly updated;

- The budget for evaluations is managed in an efficient manner;

- An evaluation plan of evaluation activities is developed as part of the organisation's planning and budgeting cycle, on an annual or biannual basis. The plan should prioritize those areas most in need of evaluation, and specify adequate resources for the planning, conduct and follow-up of evaluations.

- Adequate evaluation methodologies are adopted, developed and updated frequently;

- The evaluations are conducted according to defined quality standards in a timely manner, in order to serve as a useful tool for the intended stakeholders/ users;

- Reporting to high-level management is timely and relevant to their needs, thereby supporting an informed management and policy decision-making process;

- Regular progress reports are compiled on the implementation of the evaluation plan and/ or the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the evaluations already carried out, to be submitted to the Governing Bodies and/ or Heads of organizations.

- Lessons from evaluations are distilled and disseminated as appropriate.

Standard 1.6:

The Head of evaluation is responsible for ensuring the preparation of evaluation guidelines

8.   Evaluation guidelines should be prepared and include the following:

- Evaluation methodologies that should reflect the highest professional standards;

- Evaluation processes, ensuring that evaluations are conducted in an objective, impartial, open and participatory manger, based on empirically verified evidence that is valid and reliable, with results being made available;

- Ethics, ensuring that evaluations are carried out with due respect and regard to those being evaluated

> **Standard 1.7:**
>
> The Head of evaluation should ensure that the evaluation function is dynamic, adapting to new developments and changing needs both within and outside the organization.

9.　In particular, the management of the evaluation function should include:

- Raising awareness and/ or building evaluation capacity;

- Facilitation and management of evaluation networks;

- Design and implementation of evaluation methodologies and systems;

- Ensuring the maintenance of institutional memory of evaluations through user-friendly mechanisms;

- Promoting the compilation of lessons in systematic manner.

2. Competencies[4] and Ethics[5]

1.　All those engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities should aspire to conduct high quality and ethical work guided by professional standards and ethical and moral principles.

Competencies

> **Standard 2.1:**
>
> Persons engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities should possess core evaluation competencies.

2.　Evaluation competencies refer to the qualifications, skills, experience and attributes required by those employed within the evaluation function to carry out their duties as stipulated and to ensure the credibility of the process.

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[4] See UNEG Guidance Document "*UNEG Core Competencies for Evaluators of the UN System*", UNEG/G/2(2008) and "*UNEG Job Descriptions for Evaluators in the UN System",* UNEG/G/JD/P1-P5(2008).

[5] See UNEG Foundation Document "*UNEG Ethical Guidelines"*, UNEG/FN/ETH(2008) and "*UNEG Code of Conduct",* UNEG/FN/CoC(2008).

3.   Competences are required for all those engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities, managing evaluators, conducting training and capacity development and designing and implementing evaluation methodologies and systems.

4.   Some skills are particularly useful for persons conducting evaluations as "evaluators", while others are needed for persons who manage evaluations as "evaluation managers". The term "evaluators" used below encompasses both roles.

5.   Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to clients before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any point where such conflict occurs. This includes conflict of interest on the part of the either the evaluator or the stakeholder.

6.   Evaluations should accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge. Similarly, evaluators should practice within the limits of their professional training and competence, and should decline to conduct evaluations that fall substantially outside those limits.

> **Standard 2.2:**
>
> Evaluators should have relevant educational background, qualification and training in evaluation.

7.   Evaluators should preferably have an advanced university degree or equivalent background in social sciences or other relevant disciplines, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, social statistics, advanced statistical research and analysis.

8.   Evaluators should continually seek to maintain and improve their competencies in order to provide the highest level of performance in their evaluations. This continuing professional development might include formal seminars and workshops, self-study, evaluations of one's own practice, and working with other evaluators to learn from their skills and expertise.

> **Standard 2.3:**
>
> Evaluators should have professional work experience relevant to evaluation.

9.   Evaluators should also have relevant professional experience in :

- Design and management of evaluation processes, including with multiple stakeholders.

- Survey design and implementation.

- Social science research.

- Project/ programme/ policy planning, monitoring and management.

> **Standard 2.4:**
>
> Evaluators need to have specific technical knowledge of, and be familiar with, the methodology or approach that will be needed for the specific evaluation to be undertaken, as well as certain managerial and personal skills.

10.   Specialized experience and/or methodological/ technical knowledge, including some specific data collection and analytical skills, may be particularly useful in the following areas:

- Understanding of human rights-based approaches to programming.

- Understanding of gender considerations.

- Understanding of Results Based Management (RBM) principles.

- Logic modeling/ logical framework analysis.

- Read-time, utilization-focused, joint, summative and formative evaluation.

- Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

- Rapid assessment procedures.

- Participatory approaches.

11.   The evaluator, whose responsibilities include the management of evaluation, needs specific managerial skills:

- Management of evaluation process;

- Planning, setting standards and monitoring work;

- Management of human and financial resources;

- Team leadership;

- Strategic and global thinking;

- Foresight and problem solving.

12.   The evaluator also needs certain personal skills that are particularly useful in evaluation;

- Team work and cooperation;

- Capability to bring together diverse stakeholders;

- Communication;

- Strong drafting skills;

- Analytical skills;

- Negotiation skills;

- Language skills adapted to the region where the evaluation takes place.

Ethics

Standard 2.5:

Evaluators should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relationships with all stakeholders.

13.   In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions, evaluators should operate in accordance with international values.

14.   Evaluators should be aware of differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction and gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and be mindful of the potential implications of these differences when planning, carrying out and reporting on evaluations.

15.   Evaluators must ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process. Evaluations also have an overriding responsibility to ensure that evaluation activities are independent, impartial and accurate.

Standard 2.6:

Evaluators should ensure that their contacts with individuals are characterized by respect.

16.   Evaluators should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation.

17.   Knowing that evaluation might often negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

Standard 2.7:

Evaluators should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information

18.   Evaluators should provide the maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right to privacy.

19.   Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. They should also inform participants about the scope and limits of confidentiality.

20.   Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.

21.   Evaluators have a responsibility to note issues and findings that may not relate directly to the Terms of Reference. They should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues, such as evidence of wrongdoing, should be reported.

> **Standard 2.8:**
>
> Evaluators are responsible for their performance and their product(s).

22.   Evaluators are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/ or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.

23.   Evaluators should be responsible for the completion of the evaluation within a reasonably planning time, acknowledging unprecedented delays resulting from factors beyond the evaluator's control.

3. Conducting Evaluations

Design

> **Standard 3.1:**
>
> The evaluation should be designed to ensure timely, valid and reliable information that will be relevant for the subject being assessed.

1.   The conduct of evaluations follows the cyclical planning at various levels, which is comprised of different stages: planning, design, implementation and follow-up.

> **Standard 3.2:**
>
> The Terms of Reference should provide the purpose and describe the process and the product of the evaluation.

2.   The design of an evaluation should be described as precisely as possible in the Terms of Reference, which should include the following elements:

- Context for the evaluation;

- Purpose of the evaluation;

- Scope (outlining what is covered and what is not covered by the evaluation);

- Evaluation criteria (*inter alia* relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability);

- Key evaluation questions;

- Methodology – approach for data collection and analysis and involvement of stakeholders;

- Work plan, organization and budget;

- Products and reporting;

- Use of evaluation results, including responsibilities for such use.

> **Standard 3.3:**
>
> The purpose and context of the evaluation should be clearly stated, providing a specific justification for undertaking the evaluation at a particular point in time.

3.   The purpose of the evaluation must be clearly and accurately defined bearing in mind the main information needs of the intended users of the evaluation. The purpose discusses why the evaluation is being done, what triggered it and how it will be used. The purpose also related to the timing of the evaluation at various junctions in the management cycle. This adds to the clarity of the evaluation and should provide the broad orientation, which is then further elaborated in the objectives of the scope of the evaluation.

> **Standard 3.4:**
>
> The subject to be evaluated should be clearly described.

4.   The subject to be evaluated should be described in terms of what it aims to achieve, how the designers thought that it would address the problem they had identified, implementation modalities, and any intentional, or unintentional, change in implementation.

5.   Other elements include the importance or parameters of the subject to be evaluated including its cost and its relative weight with respect, for example, to the organisation's overall activities. At the very least, the description should include the number of participants/ people reached by the undertaking.

> **Standard 3.5:**
>
> Evaluation objectives should be realistic and achievable, in light of the information that can be collected in the context of the undertaking. The scope of the evaluation also needs to be clearly defined.

6.   The objectives of the evaluation should follow from the purpose of the evaluation. They should be clear and agreed upon by all stakeholders involved.

7.   Scope determines the boundaries of the evaluation, tailoring the objectives and evaluation criteria to the given situation. It should also make the coverage of the evaluation explicit (time period, phase in

implementation, geographical area and the dimensions of stakeholder involvement being examined). The limits of the evaluation should also be acknowledged within the scope.

8.   Evaluations may also be oriented by evaluation questions. These add more detail to the objectives and contribute to defining the scope.

9.   The objectives and scope of the evaluation are critical references to determine the evaluation methodology and required resources.

> **Standard 3.6:**
>
> The evaluation design should clearly spell out the evaluation criteria against which the subject to be evaluated will be assessed.

10.   The most commonly applied evaluation criteria are the following: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, value-for-money, client satisfaction and sustainability. Criteria for humanitarian response should also include: coverage, coordination, coherence, connectedness and protection. Not all criteria are applicable to every evaluation.

11.   The evaluation methodologies to be used for data collection, analysis and involvement of stakeholders should be appropriate to the subject to be evaluated, to ensure that the information collected is valid, reliable and sufficient to meet the evaluation objectives, and that the assessment is complete, fair and unbiased.

> **Standard 3.7:**
>
> Evaluation methodologies should be sufficiently rigorous to assess the subject of evaluation and ensure a complete, fair and unbiased assessment.

12.   Evaluation methods depend on the information sought, and the type of data being analysed. The data should come from a variety of sources to ensure its accuracy, validity and reliability, and that all affected people/ stakeholders are considered. Methodology should explicitly address issues of gender and under-represented groups.

13.   The limitations of the chosen evaluation methods should also be acknowledged.

> **Standard 3.8:**
>
> An evaluation should assess cost effectiveness, to the extent feasible.

14.   Using a range of cost analysis approaches, from the elaborate cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis, to cost-efficiency analysis, to a quick cost comparison, an evaluation should, to the extent possible, pursue the following broad questions:

- How do actual costs compare to other similar benchmarks?

- What is the cheapest or most efficient way to get the expected results?

- What are the cost implications of scaling up or down?

- What are the costs of replicating the subject being evaluated in a different environment?

- Is the subject being evaluated worth doing? Do economic benefits outweigh the costs?

- How do costs affect the sustainability of the results?

15. Cost analysis in evaluation builds on financial information, but may also involve calculating "economic costs" such as human resources, labour-in-kind, opportunity costs etc.

16. The scope of cost analysis, i.e. whether cost comparison is made concerning impacts, outcomes or outputs, will depend on the purpose of the evaluation and the evaluation questions posed. Cost analysis must be explicit in terms of the different perspectives from which costs are analysed (donors, a single organisations, primary stakeholders) and the limitations – the complexity of the subject (multiple programme objectives, partners, financial systems), the availability of data and the time and resources invested.

17. Cost analysis is not always feasible. Where no cost analysis is included in an evaluation, some rationale for this exclusion should be included in the objectives or methodology section.

18. It is expected that evaluators point out areas of obvious inefficient use of resources.

Standard 3.9:

The evaluation design should, when relevant, include considerations as to what extent the UN system's commitment to the human-rights based approach has been incorporated in the design of the undertaking to be evaluated.

19. UN organizations are guided by the United Nations Charter, and have a responsibility and mission to assist Member States to meet their obligations towards the realization of the human rights of those who live within their jurisdiction. Human rights treaties, mechanism and instruments provide UN entities with a guiding frame of reference and a legal foundation for ethical and moral principles, and should guide evaluation work. Consideration should also be given to gender issues and hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups.

20. The evaluation design might in addition include some process of ethical review of the initial design of the undertaking to be evaluated, including:

- The balance of cost and benefits to participants including potential negative impact.

- The ethics of who is included and excluded in the evaluation and how this is done.

- Handling of privacy and confidentiality.

- Practices of obtaining informed consent.

- Feedback to participants.

- Mechanisms for shaping and monitoring the behavior and practice of evaluators and data collectors.

Process

> **Standard 3.10:**
>
> The relationship between the evaluator and the commissioner(s) of an evaluation must, from the outset, be characterized by mutual respect and trust.

21.　The responsibilities of the parties who agree to conduct an evaluation (specifying what, how, by whom and when what is to be done) should be set forth in a written agreement in order to obligate the contracting parties to fulfill all the agreed upon conditions, or if not, to renegotiate the agreement. Agreements, such as the Terms of Reference, should be established at least in the follow areas: financing, time frame, persons involved, reports to be produced or published, content, methodology, and procedures to be followed. Such an agreement reduces the likelihood that misunderstandings will arise between the contracting parties and makes it easier to resolve them if they arise. Providing an inception report at the start of the evaluation is a useful way of formalizing such an agreement and ensuring proper interpretation of the Terms of Reference.

22.　Evaluation should consult with the commissioner(s) of the evaluation on contractual decisions such as confidentiality, privacy, communication, and ownership of findings and reports.

> **Standard 3.11:**
>
> Stakeholders should be consulted in the planning, design, conduct and follow up of evaluations.

23.　Stakeholders must be identified and consulted when planning the evaluation (key issues, method, timing, responsibilities) and should be kept informed throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation approach must consider learning and participation opportunities (e.g. workshops, learning groups, debriefing, participation in the field visits) to ensure that key stakeholders are fully integrated into the evaluation learning process.

24.　When feasible, a core learning group or steering group composed of representatives of the various stakeholders in the evaluation may be created. This group's role is to act as a sounding board , 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.

> **Standard 3.12:**
>
> A peer review, or reference group, composed of external experts may be particularly useful.

25.　Depending on the scope and complexity of the evaluation, it may be useful to establish a peer review or reference group composed of experts in the technical topics covered by the evaluation. This

group would provide substantive guidance to the evaluation process (e.g. provide inputs on the Terms of Reference and provide quality control of the draft report).

Selection of Team

> **Standard 3.13:**
>
> Evaluations should be conducted by well qualified evaluations teams.

26.   The number of evaluators in a given team depends on the size of the evaluation. Multi-faceted evaluations need to be undertaken by multi-disciplinary teams.

27.   Evaluators should be selected on the basis of competence, and by means of a transparent process.

28.   The members selected must bring different types of expertise and experience to the team. If possible, at least one member of the team should be experienced in the sector or technical areas addressed by the evaluation, or have a sound knowledge of the subject to be evaluated. At least one other should preferably be an evaluation specialist and be experienced in using the specific evaluation methodologies that will be employed for that evaluation. The evaluation team should also possess a broad knowledge and understanding of the major economic and social development issues and problems in the country(ies) where the evaluation is taking place or in similar countries in the region. Background or familiarity with emergency situations may also be required, both for the conduct of the exercise itself, and for understanding the particular context of the evaluation.

> **Standard 3.14:**
>
> The composition of evaluation teams should be gender balanced, geographically diverse and include professionals from the countries or regions concerned.

29.   Qualified, competent and experience professional firms or individuals from concerned countries should be involved, wherever possible, in the conduct of evaluations, in order, *inter alia,* to ensure that national/ local knowledge and information is adequately taken into account in evaluations and to support evaluation capacity building in developing countries. The conduct of evaluations may also be out-sourced to national private sector and civil society organizations. Joint evaluations with governments or other stakeholders should equally be encouraged.

30.   Members of the evaluation team should also familiarize themselves with the cultural and social values and characteristics of the recipients and intended beneficiaries. In this way, they will be better equipped to understand and respect local customs, beliefs and practices throughout the evaluation work.

Implementation

> **Standard 3.15:**
>
> Evaluations should be conducted in a professional and ethical manner.

31.   Evaluations should be carried out in a participatory and ethical manner and the welfare of the stakeholders should be given due respect and consideration (human rights, dignity and fairness). Evaluations must be gender and culturally sensitive and respect the confidentiality, protection of source and dignity of those interviewed.

32.   Evaluation procedures should be conducted in a realistic, diplomatic, cost-conscious and cost-effective manner.

33.   Evaluations must be accurate and well-documented and deploy transparent methods that provide valid and reliable information. Evaluation team members should have an opportunity to disassociate themselves from particular judgments and recommendations. Any unresolved differences of opinion within the team should be acknowledged in the report.

34.   Evaluations should be conducted in a complete and balanced manner so that the different perspectives are addressed and analysed. Key findings must be substantiated through triangulation. Any conflict of interest should be addressed openly and honestly so that is does not undermine the evaluation outcome.

35.   Evaluators should discuss, in a contextually appropriate way, those values, assumptions, theories, methods, results, and analyses that significantly affect the interpretation of the evaluative findings. These statements apply to all aspects of the evaluation, from its initial conceptualization to the eventual use of findings.

36.   The rights and well-being of individuals should not be affected negatively in planning and carrying out an evaluation. This needs to be communicated to all persons involved in an evaluation, and its foreseeable consequences for the evaluation discussed.

Reporting

> **Standard 3.16:**
>
> The final evaluation report should be logically structured, containing evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations and should be free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible.

37.   A reader of an evaluation report must be able to understand:

- The purpose of the evaluation;

- Exactly what was evaluated;

- How the evaluation was designed and conducted;

- What evidence was found;

- What conclusions were drawn;

- What recommendations were made;

- What lessons were distilled.

38.   If evaluators identify fraud, misconduct, abuse of power and rights violation, they should confidentially refer the matter to the appropriate UN authorities to investigate such matters. Evaluations should not substitute, or be used for, decision-making in individual human resources matters.

39.   Evaluators should allow all relevant stakeholders to have access to appropriate evaluative information, and should actively disseminate that information to stakeholders if possible. Communications to a given stakeholder should always include all important results that may bear on the interests of that stakeholder. In all cases, evaluators should strive to present results as clearly and simply as possible so that clients and other stakeholders can easily understand the evaluation process and results.

Follow up

Standard 3.17:

Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and management addressed by its recommendations.

40.   As per the Norms, this may take the form of a management response, action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities.

41.   Follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management and/or the Governing Bodies should be systematically carried out.

42.   Periodic reporting on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations should also be conducted. This report should be presented to the Governing Bodies and/or the Head of the organization.

4. Evaluation Reports

Standard 4.1:

The title page and opening pages should provide key basic information

1. The following information should be easily accessible in the first few pages of the report:

- Name of the subject (i.e. activity, programme, policy etc.) being evaluated;

- Date;

- Table of contents, including Annexes;

- Name and organization(s) of the evaluators,

- Name and address of the organization(s) that commissioned the evaluation.

Standard 4.2:

The evaluation report should contain an Executive Summary.

2. An Executive Summary should provide a synopsis of the substantive elements of the evaluation report. To facilitate higher readership, the Executive Summary should be short, two to three pages, and should "stand alone". The level of information should provide the uninitiated reader with a clear understanding of what was found and recommended and what has been learned from the evaluation.

3. The Executive Summary should include:

- A brief description of the subject being evaluated;

- The context, present situation, and description of the subject *vis-à-vis* other related matters;

- The purpose of the evaluation;

- The objectives of the evaluation;

- The intended audience of the report;

- A short description of methodology, including rationale for choice of methodology, data sources used, data collection and analysis methods used, and major limitations;

- The most important findings and conclusions;

- Main recommendations.

> **Standard 4.3:**
>
> The subject being evaluated should be clearly described, including the logic model and/or the expected results chain and intended impact, its implementation strategy and key assumptions.

4.	The evaluation report should clearly describe what the purpose of the subject being evaluated is and how the designers thought it would address the identified problem. Additional important elements include: the importance, scope and scale of the subject being evaluated; a description of the recipients/ intended beneficiaries and stakeholders; and budget figures.

5.	The description of the subject being evaluated should be as short as possible while ensuring that all pertinent information is provided. If additional details are deemed necessary, a description including the logic model can be provided in an annex.

> **Standard 4.4:**
>
> The role and contributions of the UN organizations and other stakeholders to the subject being evaluated should be clearly described.

6.	The report should describe who is involved, their roles and their contributions to the subject being evaluated, including financial resources, in-kind contributions, technical assistance, participation, staff time, training, leadership, advocacy, lobbying, and any contributions from primary stakeholders, such as communities. An attempt should be made to clarify what partners contributed to which outcome.

7.	Users will want to compare this with who was involved in the evaluation to assess how different points of view were included.

> **Standard 4.5:**
>
> The purpose and context of the evaluation should be described.

8.	The purpose should discuss why the evaluation is being done, how it will be used and what decisions will be taken after the evaluation is complete. The context should be described in order to provide an understanding of the setting in which the evaluation took place.

> **Standard 4.6:**
>
> The evaluation report should provide an explanation of the evaluation criteria that were used by the evaluators.

9.	Not all criteria are applicable to every evaluation. The rationale for not using a particular criterion should be explained in the report, as should any limitations in applying the evaluation criteria. Performance standards or benchmarks used in the evaluation should also be described.

10.	It is important to make the basis of value judgments transparent.

> **Standard 4.7:**
>
> The evaluation report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation objectives as well as the scope of the evaluation.

11.   The original objectives of the evaluation should be described, as well as any changes made to the evaluation design.

12.   The scope of the evaluation should be described, making the coverage of the evaluation explicit. The limits of the evaluation should also be acknowledged.

13.   The original evaluation questions should be explained, as well as those that were added during the evaluation. These are critical references against which the content of the report ought to be compared to.

14.   The objectives and scope of the evaluation are also critical references to judge whether the methodology selected and resources allocated were adequate.

> **Standard 4.8:**
>
> The evaluation report should indicate the extent to which gender issues and relevant human rights considerations were incorporated where applicable.

15.   The evaluation report should include a description of, *inter alia*:

- How gender issues were implemented as a cross-cutting theme in programming, and if the subject being evaluated gave sufficient attention to promote gender equality and gender-sensitivity;

- Whether the subject being evaluated paid attention to effects on marginalized, vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups;

- Whether the subject being evaluated was informed by human rights treaties and instruments;

- To what extent the subject being evaluated identified the relevant human rights claims and obligations;

- How gaps were identified in the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights, and of duty-bearers to fulfill their obligations, including an analysis of gender and marginalized and vulnerable groups, and how the design and implementation of the subject being evaluated addressed these gaps;

- How the subject being evaluated monitored and viewed results within this rights framework.

> **Standard 4.9:**
>
> The applied evaluation methodology should be described in a transparent way, including any limitations to the methodology.

16.   A comprehensive, but not excessive, description of the critical aspects of methodology should be contained in the evaluation report to allow the user(s) of the evaluation to come to their own conclusions about the quality of the data. Any description of the methodology should include:

- Data sources;

- Description of data collection methods and analysis (including level of precision required for quantitative methods, value scales or coding used for qualitative analysis);

- Description of sampling (area and population to be represented, rationale for selection, mechanics of selection, numbers selected out of potential subjects, limitations to sample);

- Reference indicators and benchmarks, where relevant (previous indicators, national statistics, etc.);

- Evaluation team, including the involvement of individual team members;

- The evaluation plan;

- Key limitations.

17.   The annexes should include the following:

- More detail on any of the above;

- Data collection instruments (surveys, checklists, etc.);

- System for ensuring data quality through monitoring of data collection and oversight;

- A more detailed discussion of limitations as needed.

> **Standard 4.10:**
>
> The evaluation should give a complete description of stakeholders' participation.

18.   The level of participation of stakeholders in the evaluation should be described, including the rationale for selecting that particular level. While not all evaluations can be participatory to the same degree, it is important that consideration is given to participation of stakeholders, as such participation is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in the use of conclusions, recommendations and lessons. A human rights-based approach to programming adds emphasis to the participation of primary stakeholders. In many cases, this clearly points to the involvement of people and communities. Also, including certain groups of stakeholders may be necessary for a complete and fair assessment.

> **Standard 4.11:**
>
> The evaluation report should include a discussion of the extent to which the evaluation design included ethical safeguards where appropriate.

19.   The report should have a good description of ethical considerations, including the rationale behind the evaluation design and the mechanisms to protect participants where appropriate. This includes protection of the confidentiality, dignity, rights and welfare of human subjects, including children, and respect for the values of the beneficiary communities.

> **Standard 4.12:**
>
> In presenting the findings, inputs, outputs, and outcomes/ impacts should be measured to the extent possible (or an appropriate rationale given as to why not).

20.   Findings regarding inputs for the completion of activities or process achievements should be distinguished clearly from outputs, outcomes and impact.

21.   Outcomes and impacts should include any unintended effects, whether beneficial or harmful. Additionally, any multiplier or downstream effects of the subject being evaluated should be included. To the extent possible, each of these should be measured either quantitatively or qualitatively. In using such measurements, benchmarks should be referred to.

22.   The report should make a logical distinction in the findings, showing the progression from implementation to results with an appropriate measurement and analysis of the results chain, or a rationale as to why an analysis of results was not provided.

23.   Data does not need to be presented in full; only data that supports a finding needs to be given, and full data can be put in an annex. Additionally, reports should not segregate findings by data source.

24.   Findings should cover all of the evaluation objectives and use the data collected.

> **Standard 4.13:**
>
> Analysis should include appropriate discussion of the relative contributions of stakeholders to results.

25.   Results attributed to the subject being evaluated should be related back to the contributions of different stakeholders. There should be a sense of proportionality between the relative contributions of each, and the results observed. This is an integral element of accountability to partners, donors and primary stakeholders.

26.   If such an analysis is not included in the report, the reason why it was not done should be clearly indicated. For instance, if an evaluation is done early in the management cycle, results or any link to a stakeholder's contribution may not be found.

> **Standard 4.14:**
>
> Reasons for accomplishments and difficulties of the subject being evaluated, especially constraining and enabling factors, should be identified to the extent possible.

27.   An evaluation report should go beyond a mere description of implementation and outcomes and include an analysis, based on the findings, of the underlying causes, constraints, strengths on which to build on, and opportunities. External factors contributing to the accomplishments and difficulties should be identified and analyzed to the extent possible, including the social, political or environmental situation.

28.   An explanation of context contributes to the utility and accuracy of the evaluation. An understanding of which external factors contributed to the success or failure of a subject being evaluated helps determine how such factors will affect the future of the subject being evaluated, or whether it could be replicated elsewhere.

> **Standard 4.15:**
>
> Conclusions need to be substantiated by findings consistent with data collected and methodology, and represent insights into identification and/ or solutions of important problems or issues.

29.   Conclusions should add value to the findings. The logic behind conclusions and the correlation to actual findings should be clear.

30.   Conclusions must focus on issues of significance to the subject being evaluated, determined by the evaluation objectives and the key evaluation questions. Simple conclusions that are already well known and obvious are not useful, and should be avoided.

31.   Conclusions regarding attribution of results, which are most often tentative, require clear detailing of what is known and what can plausibly be assumed in order to make the logic from findings to conclusions more transparent, and thereby increase the credibility of the conclusions.

> **Standard 4.16:**
>
> Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis, be relevant and realistic, with priorities for action made clear.

32.   For accuracy and credibility, recommendations should be the logical implications of the findings and conclusions. Recommendations should also be relevant to the subject being evaluated, the Terms of Reference and the objectives of the evaluation, and should be formulated in a clear and concise manner. Additionally, recommendations should be prioritized to the extent possible.

33.   Recommendations should state responsibilities and the time frame for their implementation, to the extent possible.

> **Standard 4.17:**
>
> Lessons, when presented, should be generalized beyond the immediate   subject being evaluated to indicate what wider relevance they might have.

34.   Not all evaluations generate lessons. Lessons should only be drawn if they represent contributions to general knowledge. They should be well supported by the findings and conclusions of the evaluation. They may refine or add to commonly accepted lessons, but should not be merely a repetition of common knowledge.

35.   A good evaluation report has correctly identified lessons that stem logically from the findings, presents an analysis of how they can be applied to different contexts and/or different sectors, and takes into account evidential limitations such as generalizing from single point observations.

> **Standard 4.18:**
>
> Annexes should be complete and relevant.

36.   Additional supplementary information to the evaluation that should be included in annexes includes:

- List of persons interviewed (if confidentiality allows) and sites visited;

- Data collection instruments (copies of questionnaires, surveys, etc.);

- The original Terms of Reference for the evaluation;

- List of abbreviations.

37.   The annexes increase the usability and the credibility of the report.