

# UN-HABITAT EVALUATION MANUAL

## PLANNING FOR EVALUATION

Annual Evaluation Plan with  
Evaluations and Budgets

## PREPARE FOR THE EVALUATION

Evaluability Assessment  
Terms of Reference

## MANAGING THE EVALUATION

Evaluation Team, Reference Group,  
Data Collection, Report, Review

## FOLLOW-UP & USING EVALUATION FINDINGS

Dissemination, Management Response,  
Tracking of Recommendations

A decorative graphic consisting of a grid of small dots, arranged in a shape that resembles a large 'L' or a corner, positioned to the left of the title text.

# UN-HABITAT EVALUATION MANUAL

APRIL 2018

UN  HABITAT

## UN-Habitat Evaluation Manual

This report is available from <http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluation>  
First published in Nairobi in April 2018 by UN-Habitat.  
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Produced by the Evaluation Unit

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HS/070/17E

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### Acknowledgements

Design and Layout: Andrew Ondoo

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF BOXES, FIGURES, TABLES AND TEMPLATES .....	IV
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS .....	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	VI
FOREWORD .....	VII
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Policy and framework for evaluation in UN-Habitat.....	2
1.2 Definition and purpose of evaluation .....	4
1.3 The strategic intent of results-based evaluation.....	5
1.4 Evaluation in results-based management .....	5
1.5 Key terms in evaluation and results-based management .....	8
1.6 Understanding theory of change in results-based evaluation.....	9
<b>2. EVALUATION IN UN-HABITAT .....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Types of evaluations conducted by UN-Habitat.....	14
2.2 Key roles and responsibilities.....	15
2.3 UN-Habitat accountability and quality assurance systems.....	17
<b>3. PLANNING FOR EVALUATION .....</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 Steps for developing the evaluation plan.....	22
3.2 Deciding on evaluation type.....	25
3.3 Budgeting for evaluation.....	27
<b>4. PREPARING FOR THE EVALUATION .....</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1 Checking evaluability .....	30
4.2 Stakeholder engagement .....	31
4.3 Developing the evaluation terms of reference .....	34
4.4 Cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights, youth participation, climate change and safeguards in evaluations .....	38
4.5 Selecting the evaluation team .....	42
4.6 Quality assurance of the terms of reference .....	44
<b>5. INITIATING AND MANAGING THE EVALUATION .....</b>	<b>46</b>
5.1 Managing the evaluation consultant or team .....	46
5.2 Inception phase.....	48
5.3 Data collection .....	49
5.4 Analysis and preliminary findings.....	51
5.5 Ensuring a high quality report.....	52
5.6 Stakeholder involvement in reviewing the evaluation report .....	55
5.7 Quality assurance of the evaluation report .....	57
5.8 Managing self-evaluation and quality assurance of the self-evaluation report.....	61
<b>6. USING EVALUATION FINDINGS AND FOLLOW-UP .....</b>	<b>65</b>
6.1 Management response and action plan .....	66
6.2 Un-habitat systems to facilitate follow-up and use of evaluation.....	70
6.3 Communicating evaluation results .....	71
<b>ANNEX I: BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>75</b>

# LIST OF BOXES, FIGURES, TABLES AND TEMPLATES

## LIST OF BOXES

Box 1: Smart impacts and outcomes, and Smart indicators.....	8
Box 2: Proposed steps of applying theory of change and the case of the “Planning Project in Blue Nile State, Sudan” .....	10
Box 3: Evaluating the Global Land Tool Network with use of “pathways of change” .....	12
Box 4: Quick checklist for assessing the evaluability of a project .....	31
Box 5: How to determine the evaluation budget.....	36
Box 6: Quick checklist for a quality Terms of Reference .....	37
Box 7: Integrating Gender Equality in UN-Habitat Evaluation Processes .....	39
Box 8: Examples of evaluator qualifications and expertise.....	43
Box 9: Ethical considerations for data collection .....	51
Box 10: Sharing Preliminary Findings of the Evaluation of the Cooperation Agreement between UN-Habitat and Sweden, 2012-2015 .....	52
Box 11: Lessons learned from the evaluation of the project on ‘Identification of Best Practices, Policies and Enabling Legislation’ .....	56
Box 12: Self-evaluation of the Community-Based Municipal Support Programme in Afghanistan .....	63
Box 12: Self-evaluation of the Community-Based Municipal Support Programme in Afghanistan .....	63
Box 13: Management response and follow-up to the mid-term evaluation of the ‘Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme II’ conducted by the European Union .....	69
Box 14: Disclosure policy .....	71

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Results based management cycle .....	6
Figure 2: The Results Chain .....	7
Figure 3: Key phases of the evaluation process .....	19
Figure 4: Overview of planning for the evaluation .....	30

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Checklist for preparation of the UN-Habitat evaluation plan .....	23
Table 2: Common types of UN-Habitat evaluations .....	26
Table 3: UN-Habitat required project evaluation budget .....	28
Table 4: Key actors in the decentralized project evaluation process .....	33
Table 5: Sections required in the TOR .....	34
Table 6: Checklist for proposed outline of the inception report .....	49
Table 7: Roles and responsibilities for inception report.....	50
Table 8: Checklist for outline of UN-Habitat evaluation report.....	53
Table 9: Key evaluation products and target audience .....	73

## LIST OF TEMPLATES

Template 1: Evaluation plan of regional office or branch .....	24
Template 2: UN-Habitat evaluation report quality review template.....	58
Template 3: UN-Habitat self-evaluation template .....	62
Template 4: Management response and action plan .....	67
Template 5: Annual reporting on implementation of accepted decentralized evaluation recommendations .....	88

# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
HCPD	Habitat Country Programme Document
HPM	Habitat Programme Manager
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMDIS	Integrated Management and Document Information System
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MTSIP	Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan
PAAS	Project Accrual and Accountability System
PAG	Project Approval Group
POW	Programme of Work
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
RBM	Results-based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	United States Dollars

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The UN-Habitat Evaluation Unit would like to acknowledge all those that contributed to this manual, especially UN-Habitat staff and evaluation focal points, which have managed evaluations and contributed valuable practical experience. We would like to extend our sincere thank you for your contributions and commitment to strengthening evaluation and learning within UN-Habitat.

# FOREWORD



I am pleased to introduce the new Evaluation Manual, which replaces the Monitoring and Evaluation Guide published in 2003. The new manual is expected to bring improvements in our evaluation practices towards results oriented management. It is intended to guide and assist UN-Habitat staff and consultants involved in planning, initiating and managing UN-Habitat evaluations.

The on-going reforms and transformational change of the United Nations are increasing the demand for greater accountability and demonstration of results achieved by development interventions. In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development was adopted by 193 member states of the United Nations. The Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and gives a prominent role to urbanization and cities with the inclusion of SDG goal 11 of making our cities, human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. In 2016, the New Urban Agenda was adopted as a critical step for realizing sustainable development in an integrated and coordinated manner at global, regional, national and local levels. Both agendas call for effective implementation, follow-up and reviews. Good evaluation practices are expected to play a crucial role in supporting effective and efficient implementation of SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

Evaluation is critical for promoting accountability and for understanding what we are doing right and where we need improvements. We need to know whether we are achieving what we set out to do, and if not, how to do better. In order to do so, UN-Habitat's evaluation coverage, especially at project level, needs to be improved. Evaluations will inform us, our donors, and our key partners about what results are being achieved, improvements needed and what is being learned. Producing credible, timely and objective evaluations that describe how UN-Habitat's interventions are performing will improve our reputation and guide us in decision-making that will consequently lead to improved policies, strategies, programmes and practices.



This manual builds on the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy (2013), the Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework (2016), and the UN-Habitat Handbook for Results-Based Management (2016). It draws upon a variety of evaluation sources from other UN agencies such as UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, and United Nations Evaluation Group, and other donor communities (Sweden, Norway, Canada, European Commission, etc.). It complements other UN-Habitat efforts to improve performance measurement and to strengthen management accountability and learning.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Evaluation Unit for producing this useful tool. Let us use it effectively to plan, conduct and manage credible and useful evaluations that will improve our performance. The manual will be reviewed and updated periodically based on the lessons learned from its implementation.



**Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**

Under-Secretary-General and  
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the lead United Nations agency for cities and human settlements and a global actor in the field of sustainable urban development.

UN-Habitat depicts global conditions and trends on urbanization, promotes global norms, supports governments in the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies for sustainable urbanization, assists in developing innovative models and interventions in urban development, helps mobilize national resources and external support for improving human settlements conditions.

Initially, it was established as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), through the General Assembly Resolution 32/162 of December 1977, following the first global Conference of United Nations on Human Settlements that was held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976. For nearly two decades, from 1978 to 1996, UNCHS remained a small technical agency. Faced with rapid urbanization, accelerating slum formation and growing evidence of urban poverty, the second United Nations Conference on the Human Settlements (Habitat II) was held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996. The main outcome of the conference was the adoption of the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda. This gave UNCHS an explicit normative mandate of assisting Members States to monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and to report on global human settlements conditions and trends. At the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)

in October 2016, the outcome document, the New Urban Agenda, reaffirms the role and expertise of UN-Habitat within its mandate, as a focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements; The New Urban Agenda contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve the SDGs and targets, including SDG 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

UN-Habitat is striving to align its programme of work with the Sustainable Development Goals, New Urban Agenda and other international agreements (e.g., the Paris Climate Change Agreement and Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development), which are in line with its on-going reforms.

UN-Habitat's work is guided by the interests and priorities of the member states as formulated in UN-Habitat's six year strategic plans, regional strategic plans, and Habitat Country Programme Documents (HCPDs), which are aligned with national priorities. These plans and documents are used as a starting point for identifying expected outcomes and impacts of UN-Habitat's work and for measuring progress towards the achievement of results.

As a learning and knowledge-based organization, UN-Habitat depends on its ability to use knowledge generated and stored in the organization to increase its ability to respond better to demands, meet its objectives and facilitate progress towards the achievement of goal development goals, the urban agenda and strategic organizational goals.

Results-based evaluations of UN-Habitat's projects are an effective way to determine changes that are attributable to the project and can contribute to better understanding and addressing challenges to sustainable urbanization. With the priorities of the New Urban Agenda, it is expected that future evaluations will increasingly address development of urbanization and human settlements within the context of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and implementation of national urban policies. A National Urban Policy is considered by many governments and stakeholders, including UN-Habitat, as a tool for the implementation and monitoring of global urban agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework. It is clear that the 2030 Agenda and New Urban Agenda raises the bar for global development; this has implications for the evaluation function of UN agencies to ensure evaluation can make essential contributions to managing for results.

There are considerable methodological issues to take into account in conducting impact evaluations of urban development projects; however, it is mainly lack of resources that prevents UN-Habitat from conducting impact evaluations. A shared knowledge base and increased evaluation coverage achieved through the conduct of thematic, programme and project evaluations will help demonstrate what is achieved from UN-Habitat's interventions.

This manual is intended to strengthen planning, initiating and managing results oriented evaluations in UN-Habitat. The key criteria, standards and process for evaluation are the same for project evaluation, sub-programme programme evaluation, country programme evaluation, institutional evaluation, thematic evaluation or strategy evaluation. The manual provides guidance to UN-Habitat's staff—especially project

managers and evaluation focal points—evaluation consultants and others involved in the planning, managing and follow-up of evaluations.

## 1.1 POLICY AND FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION IN UN-HABITAT

The independent Evaluation Unit at UN-Habitat was established in 2012, separating the evaluation function from monitoring and operational management. The *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* came into effect in January 2013 and it facilitates evaluation at UN-Habitat conforming to best practices and norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). The policy is supplemented by Requirements for the Implementation of the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* institutionalizing mandatory self-evaluation of all closing projects and the *Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework* aiming at increasing evaluation coverage of UN-Habitat projects and specifying evaluation performance targets.

The *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* and the *Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework* are the main documents that set forth the principles and organizational framework for evaluation planning, conduct and follow-up in UN-Habitat.<sup>1</sup> These principles are aligned with the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *UN-Habitat evaluation policy* responds to various decisions and recommendation, including "The regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), which mandate the conduct of evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat and requires all United Nations programme activities to be monitored and evaluated, within the context of the professional guidelines." *UN-Habitat (2013), UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy*.

<sup>2</sup> UNEG (2016), *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*.

The key principles for evaluation in UN-Habitat are:

- **Impartiality:** Impartiality is characterised by objectivity, absence of bias, professionalism and integrity. An evaluation should be conducted in an impartial manner at all stages, including the planning of evaluation, the formulation of scope, the selection of evaluation teams, the conduct of the evaluation and the formulation of findings and recommendations.
- **Independence:** The independence of the evaluation function is defined by organizational/ functional independence and behavioural independence.

Organizational and functional independence requires that the central evaluation function is positioned independently from planning and management functions, carries out the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda, and is provided with adequate resources to conduct its work.

In UN-Habitat, the Evaluation Unit is independent from other management functions and separated from those responsible for the design and implementation of projects and programmes being evaluated.

Evaluators must not have any vested interest and maintain the highest standards of professional and personal integrity during the evaluation process. They must have freedom to conduct their evaluation work and be free to express their assessment.

- **Credibility:** This is achieved through the use of impartial and unbiased evaluators, technically and culturally competent evaluators, and use of appropriate methods and sources for data collection and analysis. Credibility requires transparent evaluation processes, involvement of relevant stakeholders and

robust quality assurance system.

- **Quality:** All evaluations shall meet minimum quality standards. All evaluation reports must be presented in a complete and balanced way, detailing evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.
- **Utility:** The utility of evaluation is manifested through its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organisational learning, informed decision-making processes and accountability for results. Utility is ensured through systematic prioritization of evaluations included in the UN-Habitat evaluation plan and systematic consideration and follow-up of the evaluation recommendations, with clear accountability for the implementation of accepted recommendations; and public access to evaluation reports and alignment with the results-based management framework. It means in commissioning evaluations, there should be clear intention to use the resulting recommendations.
- **Ethical Conduct:** Personal and professional integrity of evaluators and respect for confidentiality of sources. Evaluation must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for beliefs, manners of social and cultural environment, for human rights and gender equity. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence.
- **Transparency:** Transparency is ensured through consultation process with key stakeholders at all stages of the evaluation process. Terms of reference are made available to major stakeholders and reports are made public on the UN-Habitat website (and internally on Habnet). Transparency is an essential element of evaluation that establishes trust and builds confidence in the process and its output.

- **Accountability:** The primary purpose of conducting evaluations is accountability. To account for resources provided to UN-Habitat for implementation of its activities and achievement of results.

## 1.2 DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

UN-Habitat subscribes to the UNEG understanding of evaluation, which defines evaluation as "...an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc."<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of evaluation is to promote accountability and learning. Evaluation aims at determining the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the UN system.<sup>4</sup> An evaluation is expected to provide evidence-based information about results that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making process.

Other oversight functions in UN-Habitat are related to evaluation, but distinct such as audits, reviews, research and knowledge management.

Audit is focused mainly on compliance with the rules and regulations of UN-Habitat and risk management, while evaluation is focused on development results and enhancing the understanding of what work or does not work, why and how.

Monitoring is a continuous function that uses the collection of data on specified indicators to track progress against expected accomplishments providing

UN-Habitat management and key partners with information on progress of achievements and use of funds.

Data collected and insights gained in the course of monitoring are used in the evaluation process. There are two key differences between monitoring and evaluation:

- 1) Monitoring is conducted internally by project staff or implementing partners, while evaluation is conducted by independent, external consultants, with the exception of self-evaluations, which are part of the rigorous process at the closing of the project;
- 2) Monitoring tracks achievement of outputs and tracks changes at the outcome level, focus is on tracking the timely and effective undertaking of activities and budget expenditures, while evaluation use triangulation to measure achievement and contribution towards outcomes and impact. Different methods are used for analysis and ultimately evaluators make a judgement on performance and merit of the project evaluated.

Reviews are *ad hoc*, largely internal, assessments of the performance of an initiative, programme or project. Reviews tend to emphasize operational issues over achievement of development results. Reviews tend not to be as methodologically rigorous, and they generally do not assess results against evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact).

<sup>3</sup> UNEG (2016), *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*, paragraph 1.

<sup>4</sup> UNEG (2016), *op.cit.*

Research is a systematic examination of an intervention or phenomenon aimed at the development of or contribution to knowledge. Evaluation uses social science research methods for data collection such as surveys, interviews, observations and analysis and can contribute to knowledge.

Knowledge management systems are fed by monitoring, reporting and evaluation findings and lessons, which are inputs to organizational learning.

### 1.3 THE STRATEGIC INTENT OF RESULTS-BASED EVALUATION

Evaluations in UN-Habitat are carried out to inform the management, governing bodies, including the Committee of Permanent Representatives, donors and other partners about what UN-Habitat is achieving, what improvements should be considered, and what is being learned.<sup>5</sup>

In UN-Habitat, results-based evaluation is conducted for the following reasons:

- Evaluations are an important source of evidence of achievement of results, UN-Habitat's performance and maximizing the impact of UN-Habitat's contribution. UN-Habitat relies on evaluations to assess performance, identify results achieved, measure effectiveness and determine alternative ways to meet its objectives.
- Sharing evaluation results with key audiences demonstrate accountability and transparency. By building a greater understanding about what UN-Habitat is intending to achieve and how it will achieve it; support is generated from donors, governing bodies and Member States.
- It provides credible and reliable evidence decision-making on project design, allocation of resources, implementation and improving knowledge of projects.
- It can be an agent of change and promote, defend or oppose specific approaches or projects and help shaping opinions.
- It informs the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting cycle, thereby increases cohesion, consistency and communication between branches and regional offices.
- It is an important contributor to building knowledge and organizational learning and may form a basis for making future interventions more relevant and effective.
- Evaluation offers a learning opportunity to find out what is working, what is not working, and what needs to improve.

UN-Habitat evaluations provide evidence of the processes employed at the global, regional and country levels and results achieved at the output, outcome and impact outlook levels; examining the unique role of UN-Habitat in terms of operational, normative and coordination work; and identifying the challenges and opportunities that facilitate or hinder the achievement of results.

### 1.4 EVALUATION IN RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Evaluation is a critical component of results-based management (RBM). UN-Habitat, like other UN agencies, applies results-based management in planning, monitoring and evaluation at organizational and project levels (Figure 1).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Evaluation informs the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its regular meetings and through meetings of the sub-committee on Policy and Programme of Work, the sub-committee on Finance and Administration, and the UN-Habitat Working Group on Programme and Budget.

<sup>6</sup> UN-Habitat (2016), *UN-Habitat Results-Based Management Handbook – Applying RBM concepts and tools for a better urban future*.

**FIGURE 1: RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT CYCLE**

**Source:** UN-Habitat (2016), *Results-Based Management Handbook*, figure 4, page 10.

Many UN organizations, including UN-Habitat, embarked on a process of introducing results-based management in the early 2000s. The emphasis was to define realistic expectations for results; monitoring of progress using appropriate indicators; empowering project managers and partners to measure performance; and adding value of the evaluations function and transparency in performance reporting.

In 2007, UN-Habitat applied results-based management as the approach for formulating, implementing and achieving the results of its first six-year Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) as mandated by the Governing Council in its resolution 21/1. The MTSIP ended in 2013 and was replaced by a new six year strategic plan for the period 2014-2019.

The UN-Habitat goal of the strategic plan 2014-2019 is: “Environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable, gender sensitive and inclusive urban development policies implemented by national, regional and local authorities have improved the standard of living of the urban poor and enhanced their

participation in the social economic life of the city.”<sup>7</sup>

As part of the process of institutionalizing results-based management, UN-Habitat has a results framework for the Strategic Plan 2014-2019, and adheres to participatory programme planning and project review through the Project Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG is a key instrument for ensuring that all projects are results focused and aligned to the approved strategic framework and biennial work programme and budget, regional strategic plans, Habitat Country Programme Documents (HCPDs) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework at country level and considers cross-cutting issues of gender equity, human rights, youth participation and climate change in the design as well as develops a logical framework in the project document.

All of the steps of the results-based management cycle have evaluation implications, and evaluation influences the work undertaken at each step. Part of managing for results is to be clear on what the project is designed to achieve, measure progress towards and attainment of results, as well as learning from project experiences. Evaluation is an important tool for managers to undertake their results based management responsibilities.

The planning stage of results-based management entails the development of the UN-Habitat results framework with strategic results, expected accomplishments and indicators for the overall strategic plan and for each of UN-Habitat’s seven focus areas and sub-programmes. A results framework and a performance measurement plan were developed for the Strategic Plan 2014-2019 as tools for programme performance assessment.

<sup>7</sup> UN-Habitat (2014), *Results Framework of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan (2014-2019)*.

The results framework is key for evaluation of sub-programmes because it helps explain the links or causal relationships between the ultimate goal (impact), the means for achieving it, and indicators for measuring achievement. It is used as a key tool for assessing UN-Habitat’s (programme) contribution to results.

As UN-Habitat is a project-based organization and each sub-programme is implemented through a number of projects, therefore the results framework at sub-programme level is reflected in the results chain and logical framework of every project (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2: THE RESULTS CHAIN**



Source: UN-Habitat (2016), Results-Based Management Handbook, figure 1, page 3.



## BOX 1: SMART IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES, AND SMART INDICATORS

Results include outputs, outcomes and impacts. A well-designed project will have SMART formulated expected accomplishments at outcome level that link with outputs and with SMART formulated indicators at both outcome and output level to measure progress toward delivery targets.

### Impacts and outcomes

- S** **Specific:** Impacts and outcomes and outputs must use change language—they must describe a specific future condition
- M** **Measurable:** Results, whether quantitative or qualitative, must have measurable indicators, making it possible to assess whether they were achieved or not
- A** **Achievable:** Results must be within the capacity of the partners to achieve
- R** **Relevant:** Results must make a contribution to selected priorities of the UN-Habitat strategic plan and national priorities
- T** **Time-bound:** Results are never open-ended—there is an expected date of accomplishment

### Indicators

- S** **Specific:** Is the indicator specific enough to measure progress towards the results?
- M** **Measurable:** Is the indicator a reliable and clear measure of results?
- A** **Attainable:** Are the results in which the indicator seeks to chart progress realistic?
- R** **Relevant:** Is the indicator relevant to the intended outputs and outcomes?
- T** **Time-bound:** Is data available at reasonable cost and effort?

**Source:** UNDP (2009) *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results*, pp. 58-63.

## 1.5 KEY TERMS IN EVALUATION AND RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

**Results** include outputs, outcomes and impacts (Box 1). These are all articulation of what is hoped to be achieved by the implementation of projects through the UN-Habitat programme of work.

**Activities** are undertaken in order to transform inputs into outputs and are the specific technical, financial, advocacy, partnership and support from UN-Habitat that are combined with partner efforts to achieve the outputs.

**Outputs** are products and services produced or delivered from the completion of activities. They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified.

**Outcomes** are benefits achieved from a project and represent change in the institutional and behavioral capacities for development conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of goals. The UN-Habitat project document identifies outcomes as expected accomplishments.

**Impacts** are long-term effects on target populations produced by a development intervention (whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended, positive or negative) on targeted beneficiaries. They include changes in conditions for urban citizens, slum dwellers, local authorities, city planners, women and men and youth etc. These effects can be economic, sociocultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of other types. Positive impacts should have some relationship to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other relevant internationally agreed development goals, and national development goals, including commitment to goals, principles and commitments made at Habitat III on the new urban agenda.

**Indicators** are quantitative or qualitative factors or variables used to assess progress towards expected accomplishments. They provide evidence of progress in attainment of development results. Indicators support effective planning, management and reporting. Indicators are used mainly at three levels: Impact and outcome indicators and output indicators.

**Assumptions** are external conditions, factors or risks, which could affect the process or success of a project. UN-Habitat projects also incorporate the element of cross-cutting issues. UN-Habitat has four cross-cutting areas: Gender equality, human rights, youth engagement and climate change. Cross-cutting issues are addressed to a varying degree in projects and determine the extent to which the issues can be considered as a result of the project intervention.

#### TIP: PROJECT DESIGN

Most projects can be designed to adequately cover changes in two to three expected accomplishments and change measured with the use of multiple – both quantitative and qualitative indicators – for each expected accomplishment. More than two to three expected accomplishments tend to lead to overlap in indicators used and a significant increase in monitoring resources may be required.

Expected accomplishments should represent the direct and immediate impact of the project, rather than the more long-term impact that happens because of it.

Although evaluation is placed at the end of the results-based management cycle, evaluation can take place at various points of a project, sub-programme, country programme, policy or strategic plan. Lessons learned from evaluations are instrumental to the results-based management process, as they should help UN-Habitat design new projects and

enhance knowledge on what works and what does not work. Evaluation is critical for supporting results-based management and contributing to knowledge management in UN-Habitat and beyond.

Results-based evaluation promotes accountability by providing information on the way in which urban development projects are affecting citizens and contributing towards achievement of UN-Habitat's commitments.

Results-based evaluation can help promote ownership by beneficiaries by using the knowledge produced from an evaluation for better development programming that engages citizens, makes them feel empowered through participation in the evaluation process and in the communication of its results, develop the capacities to participate in broader processes and communication among participants, project managers, evaluators, donors, Member States and other stakeholders.

## 1.6 UNDERSTANDING THEORY OF CHANGE IN RESULTS-BASED EVALUATION

Theory of change is a tool to make a representation of how a project is expected to lead to desired results. Its value lies in conveying beliefs of why a project is likely to succeed in achieving its objectives and impacts. It specifies the components of a project in relation to other components and resources provided to engage in activities in order to achieve specific objectives. The resources, activities, outputs, intended outcomes and impacts have casual logic and are interrelated. Using theory of change in evaluation ensures a common understanding of a project's objectives and how the objectives were to be achieved.

Therefore, theory of change based evaluations make use of explicit theory or model how the project causes the intended outcomes and

the evaluation is partly guided by this model theory of change.

In some cases, evaluators may find the project to be evaluated already has a theory of change and so they will need to review it.

Often, it will be necessary to reconstruct or rework the existing theory. If no theory

of change exists then the evaluator should construct one and validate it with the project manager and project staff involved at the beginning of the evaluation process. Results-based evaluation incorporates theory of change as an essential analytical tool. Use of the theory of change entails a rigorous review of project progress along the pathways of the project from outcome to impact (Box 2).

**BOX 2: PROPOSED STEPS OF APPLYING THEORY OF CHANGE AND THE CASE OF THE “PLANNING PROJECT IN BLUE NILE STATE, SUDAN”**

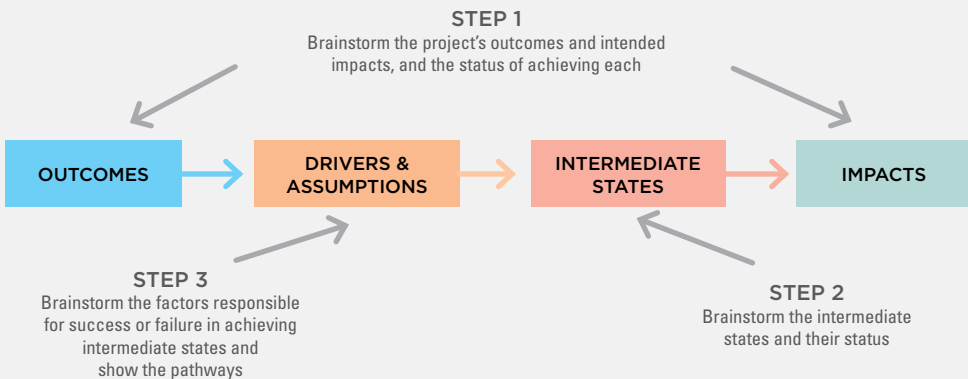
The process of developing a theory of change can help you to refine and enhance the effectiveness of your project. The theory of change can be a useful tool for communicating what your project does and how it has an impact in a clear and convincing way. For evaluation, the theory of change is a first step in designing an effective evaluation as it accurately identifies all of the project’s outcomes that need to be measured.

The first step of applying theory of change in an evaluation context is to identify the project’s intended impacts based on the ‘objectives’ statements specified in the official project document.

The next step is to review the project’s logical framework to assess whether the design of the project is consistent with, and appropriate for, the delivery of the intended impact. The method requires verification of the causal logic between the different hierarchical levels of the logical framework moving ‘backwards’ from impacts through outcomes to the outputs.

The aim is to develop an understanding of the causal logic of the project intervention and to identify the key ‘impact pathways’.

The figure shows the steps for reconstructing a theory of change.



The third and final step involves analysis of the ‘impact pathways or causal links’ that link project outcomes to impacts. The pathways should be analysed in terms of the ‘assumptions’ and ‘impact drivers’ that underpin the processes involved in the transformation of outcomes via intermediate states to impacts as well as risks.

The project example used is the “Planning Project in Blue Nile State, Sudan”, which was evaluated in 2015 for the evaluation of the UN-Habitat Sudan Country Programme

2012-2015. The project’s intended impact was better planned and managed urban settlements by the government to provide security and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for targeted communities in a gender-responsive manner.

In reality, delivery processes from outputs to outcomes and impacts are often complex; they often involve multiple actors and decision-processes and are subject to time-lags, meaning that project impact often accrue long after

the completion of project activities. The elaboration of a Regional Spatial Planning Strategy for the Darfur region was used to strengthen the planning capacity of the State Ministries and to improve the cooperation between the State Ministries and the Federal Ministry; the five States Ministries were equipped with laptops and planning software, with land survey and registration equipment; staff were trained in using the software.

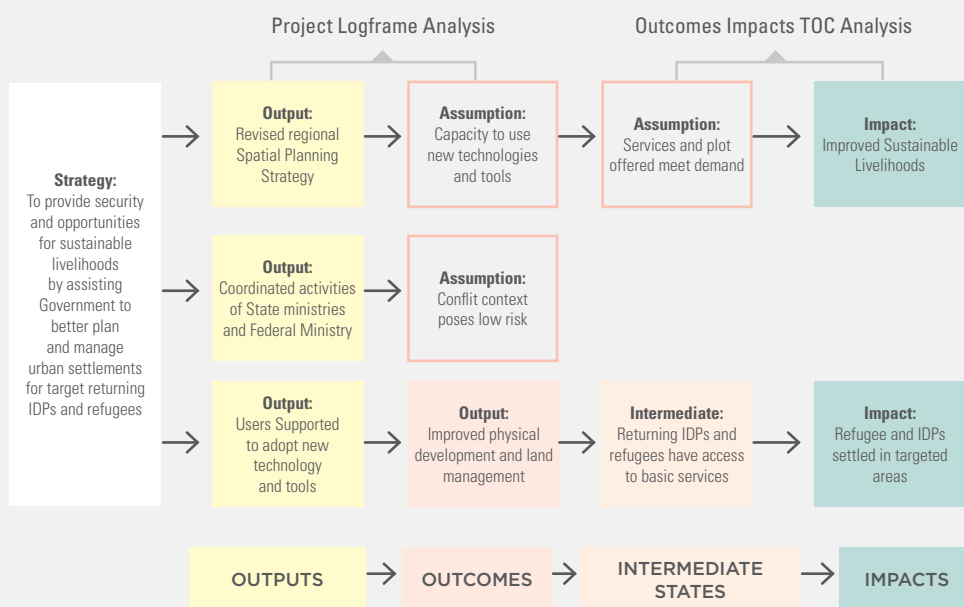
Capacity building included modules in site-survey data programme, GIS and other computerized tools for decision-making and planning, land conflict management and participatory planning. Five pilot areas were selected and used to train the five State Ministries of Planning in rapid urban sector profiles for sustainability, land management and construction, 5,500 plots were demarcated for IDPs. Finally, State Ministries of Planning were equipped with illustrated urban planning and land management guidelines as part of the elaboration of the regional strategy for Darfur, 25 Village assessment reports incorporating plans

and strategies to review returning IDPs were elaborated in collaboration with IOM and complimented by awareness campaigns.

The project delivered improved physical development and land management to serve returning IDPs and refugees, achieving at outcome level returning IDPs and refugees working, better housed and having access to basic services, basic shelter, social services and environmentally sound infrastructure, and impacts in the form of sustainable livelihoods of targeted group of people in the region.

The provision of land survey and registration equipment, laptops and software is sustained by the training of staff in the use of the applications. Some tools and software were found to be complicated in view of the limited capacity of the Ministries. Time delays due to the conflict sensitive context in Darfur, difficulties finding staff and consulting firms withdrawing from assignments because of risk issues.

The figure shows an example of the results chain.



**Source:** Based on GEF Evaluation Office (2009). ROTI: Review of Outcomes to Impacts Practitioners Handbook and UN-Habitat (2015), Evaluation of the UN-Habitat Sudan Country Programme 2012-2015

The review identifies the sequence of conditions and factors deemed necessary for project outcomes to yield impact and assesses the current status of and future prospects for results. These relationships can be described as ‘theories of change’,

‘pathways’, ‘results chains’, intervention logic’, and ‘causal pathways’.

The pathways summarize casual relationships and help identify or clarify the assumptions and risks in the intervention logic of the project (Box 3).

### BOX 3: EVALUATING THE GLOBAL LAND TOOL NETWORK WITH USE OF “PATHWAYS OF CHANGE”

An example of the complexities of applying the theory of change in an evaluation process is the The Global Land Network Tool (GLTN), which works to promote secure land and property rights for all, through the development of pro-poor and gender appropriate land tools. GLTN started in 2006 and is implementing Phase 2 (2012-2017). The evaluation team found that the path between the project document activities and high level results were not well articulated. To overcome this challenge, the evaluators defined and mapped stakeholder-based outcomes during an evaluation inception workshop in Nairobi.

An evaluation question in the Terms of Reference for the mid-term evaluation of the GLTN reads as follows: “How likely are the expected accomplishments to be achieved in line with the theory of change (i.e., causal pathways) of GLTN Phase 2 programme?”

The location specific pathways that resulted from the mapping exercise were translated by the evaluators into a more generic pathway and applied to the programme as a whole. This resulted in a diagram and a list of outcomes to be harvested as basis for the evaluation analysis. The differences between the project’s logic model and logical framework and the developed pathway of change, were that in the former many activities, outputs and expected accomplishments were mentioned, but they lacked outcomes which were linked to stakeholders.

Therefore, it was unclear to the evaluators on what level, or with whom, change had to take place and difficult to understand from the logical model why and how activities or outputs were expected to produce outcomes. In the pathway of change prepared by the evaluators, all outcomes were stakeholder-linked. The stakeholders are grouped in: Global and regional institutions, academics, local governments, governments & national policymakers, donors and civil society organisations. What each of these categories of stakeholders had to achieve was presented in successive outcomes forming a “pathway”. Each stakeholder-outcomes-pathway contributed to three conditional outcomes, which—together—lead to the programme impact (urban and rural tenure security for the poor).

Retro-fitting of log frames, as in the case of the GLTN mid-term evaluation to “pathways of change” should be done with caution—as the need for retrofitting indicates that there were shortcomings in the initial design of the project’s framework. The new developed “pathway of change” model, however, allowed for the evaluation team to find and assess that a number of outcomes were in fact “emerging” and it was able to recommend adjustments to the remaining period of GLTN’s phase 2.

**Source:** *UN-Habitat (2016), GLTN Phase 2 Programme, Mid-term Review*

## SUMMARY

- Evaluation is defined as “...an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance.”
- Evaluation is related to but distinct from other oversight functions of audit, monitoring, reviews and research.
- The *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* (2013) guides all evaluation activities at UN-Habitat based on best practices and norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group. Key evaluation standards for conducting evaluations are: impartiality, independence, credibility, quality, utility, ethical conduct, transparency and accountability.
- The *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* is supplemented by executive directives that institutes self-evaluation of all closing projects, budgeting for evaluation and evaluation performance targets for increasing evaluation coverage of UN-Habitat projects.
- UN-Habitat programming and delivery is based on results-based management. All steps of the results-based management cycle have evaluation implications, and evaluation influences the work undertaken at each step from planning, implementation to monitoring, evaluation and learning. In line with the results based management approach, UN-Habitat has adopted a results framework for its Strategic Plan 2014-2019, and are both referred to in evaluations of UN-Habitat projects and programmes.
- Key terms in evaluation and results-based management are: results, activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts, indicators, and assumptions (*see section 1.5*). These elements, put together, form the *results chain* or pathways of a project, from input to activities, output, outcomes and impact. For evaluations, the pathways are reconstructed through the use of the *theory of change*, which serves as a fundamental analytical tool in any evaluation, and helps to assess the performance and successful delivery of results in a project (*see Box 2 on how to apply theory of change*).

## 2. EVALUATION IN UN-HABITAT

The *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* (2013) identifies the institutional structures governing evaluation and respective roles and responsibilities for evaluation in UN-Habitat. It outlines the organizational framework for evaluation planning, initiating and managing evaluations and follow-up to evaluations in UN-Habitat. All UN-Habitat staff are responsible for adhering to the principles of the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* and promoting a culture of evaluation. UN-Habitat undertakes both centralized and decentralized project evaluations.<sup>8</sup>

### 2.1 TYPES OF EVALUATIONS CONDUCTED BY UN-HABITAT

Evaluations can be categorized according to:

- When the evaluation is undertaken (timing): ex-ante, mid-term, terminal/ end-of-project, ex-post evaluation.
- For what purpose the evaluation is conducted formative, summative, impact evaluation, etc.
- What is being evaluated: project, thematic, subprogramme, strategy, policy, institutional or country programme evaluation, etc.
- Who conducts the evaluation: self-evaluation, external, internal, joint evaluation, etc.
- Who manages the evaluation: centralized or decentralized evaluation.

Regardless of the type of evaluation, management principles and standards for evaluation will apply.

Centralized evaluations are independent assessments managed by the UN-Habitat Evaluation Unit with support of external evaluators. They are used to assess programmes and projects of corporate strategic significance concerning development effectiveness, organizational performance, and normative and operational coherence.

Decentralized evaluations are conducted of projects by independent external evaluators but managed by the project manager in the branch, regional office or country office.

Decentralized evaluations are conducted in consultation with the Evaluation Unit. Decentralized evaluations play a critical role in managing for results and are used to assess project performance.

Compulsory self-evaluations are undertaken at the closing of the project. Project managers undertake self-evaluation at the closing of a project, which a methodologically rigorous self-assessment process based on a template and completed by the project manager or project implementing office and overseen by the Programme Division.

Centralized evaluations are often corporate or strategic evaluations of organizational policies, strategies, and themes with a global perspective or in 'high risk' areas of operations. This includes mandatory external evaluations requested by the UN-Habitat governing bodies, donors or other interagency body or discretionary external evaluations

<sup>8</sup> In the remaining chapters projects are referred only (not programmes).

requested by UN-Habitat.<sup>9</sup> The evaluation of UN-Habitat by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the United Nations Secretariat in 2015 is an example of a mandatory external evaluation, which was requested by the committee for Programme and Coordination. It was conducted and managed by OIOS with follow-up at UN-Habitat corporate level reported to OIOS and the UN-Habitat Working Group on Programme and Budget.<sup>10</sup>

Other examples of mandatory external evaluations are evaluations of the strategic plan, which is mandated by the UN-Habitat Governing Council and includes an evaluability assessment in 2016, midterm evaluation in 2017 and a final end-of programme evaluation in 2019.<sup>11</sup>

Donors or other external stakeholders can request a mandatory evaluation. An example of this is the assessment of UN-Habitat by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), which is a network of governmental donors and the process is managed by the MOPAN Secretariat.

Project evaluations focus on achievement of expected results and operational performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness,

relevance, impact and sustainability of UN-Habitat's interventions. These evaluations are typically conducted as ex-ante evaluations, interim, mid-term and end-of-project evaluations. Mid-term evaluations are undertaken of projects with a duration of four or more years and with emphasis on high risk projects. End-of-project evaluation is undertaken at the completion of the project. In UN-Habitat, all projects of value USD1 million and above require an end-of-project evaluation conducted by an external consultant.<sup>12</sup>

The self-evaluation is prepared by project managers or the project implementing office at global, regional and country levels. Self-evaluation of closing projects is required by management of all projects of value between USD300,000 and under USD1 million. The Programme Division coordinates and manages the self-evaluations.<sup>13</sup>

Evaluations of UN-Habitat projects conducted by donors, implementing partners or others should adhere to the UN system standards and norms for evaluation, which are in line with the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluation.

## 2.2 KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Key roles within the governance structure for the UN-Habitat evaluation function are described below. These are based on the same in the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy*.

### Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat

- Provides oversight and monitors the implementation of the work programme and implementation of decisions of the Governing Council. The Governing Council and Committee of Permanent Representatives also endorse the strategic framework and programme budget of UN-Habitat.

<sup>9</sup> The *Evaluation Policy* defines these evaluations as: Mandatory and discretionary external evaluations. Mandatory external evaluations are requested by the General Assembly, Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and donors, conducted by Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and external consultants, and used by CPC, General Assembly, and other intergovernmental bodies. Discretionary external evaluations, which are requested by senior managers, conducted by OIOS, JIU or external consultants, and used by donors, external stakeholders and senior managers. *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy*, paragraph 36.

<sup>10</sup> OIOS (2015), *Evaluation of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme*, E/AC.51/2015/2.

<sup>11</sup> The Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) approved the strategic plan for 2014-2019, together with the biennial programme budget for 2014-2015, at its 24st Session, through Resolution 24/15 of 19 April 2013. In the same resolution, the Governing Council further requested the Executive Director to continue strengthening implementation of the results-based management in all the programmes, was approved with an evaluation framework. All focus areas of the Strategic Plan (or subprogrammes of the work programme) will be evaluated at least once during the life of the plan. The 2015 OIOS evaluation of UN-Habitat specifically has recommended for evaluability study, mid-term and final evaluation of the strategic plan to be conducted.

<sup>12</sup> UN-Habitat (2016), *Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework* (memo signed by Executive Director, 5th January 2016).

<sup>13</sup> UN-Habitat (2013), *Requirements for the Implementation of the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* (memo, signed by Chief of OED, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2013).



### The UN-Habitat Management Board

- Endorses the annual evaluation plan listing planned evaluations to be conducted. Endorses the management response and action plans of evaluations conducted.
- Oversees the implementation of actions provided in the management responses.

### Senior Management Group (or Committee)

- Reviews and discusses draft management responses and action plans to corporate and centralized evaluations.
- Follows up on management responses with relevant organisational entities.
- Reviews the summary of findings of the quality review of decentralized evaluation reports.
- Reviews progress to key evaluation performance targets and devises follow-up measures.

### The Executive Director of UN-Habitat

- Is accountable for UN-Habitat results and is responsible for appointing a professionally competent head for evaluation within the organization.
- Ensures independence of the evaluation function and provides adequate resources for evaluation and for fostering an enabling environment for the evaluation function.

### The Evaluation Unit

- Is the custodian of the UN-Habitat evaluation function. It reports directly to the Executive Director, and on day-to-day matters to the Deputy Executive Director.
- Ensures the implementation of UN-Habitat's Evaluation Policy.
- Ensures the evaluation plans for evaluations are developed and implemented.

- Leads the process for planning, managing, disseminating and follow-up of centralized evaluations and supports decentralized evaluations conducted by branches and regional offices in terms of guidance, quality assurance and technical assistance. It also assesses the quality of decentralized evaluations.

- Ensures evaluation budget is efficiently managed.
- Ensures evaluations are conducted according to professional standards.
- Ensures evaluations are conducted in a timely manner with focus on credibility, good quality and utility.
- The Head of the evaluation function manages human and financial resources allocated for evaluation and ensures the evaluation function is staffed with professionals with evaluation competencies.
- Manages and maintains a follow-up mechanism on progress of implementation of evaluation recommendations.
- Reports to the Senior Management Committee and Board on progress made toward key evaluation performance indicators.
- Supports quality assurance and capacity building of UN-Habitat staff by providing guidance and training on evaluation and providing direct support for decentralized evaluation planning, conduct, reporting, follow-up and use.
- Works with project managers to ensure projects are closed with self-evaluation reports.
- Promotes evaluation use and follow-up using interactive processes that involve stakeholders.

### Branch Coordinators and Directors of Regional Offices

- Are responsible for managing decentralized evaluations. Working with the Evaluation Unit, they contribute to a coherent and effective evaluation function in UN-Habitat.
- Approve the selection of evaluation consultants for decentralized evaluations and approve the main deliverable of the evaluation process, which is the evaluation report.
- Champion the use of evaluations within UN-Habitat and ensure that adequate financial and human resources are made available for evaluation of projects so as to ensure an effective and efficient evaluation.
- Create an enabling environment that strengthens the evaluation culture in the focus area or region under their purview.
- Put in place the factors and resources necessary to ensure the evaluability of projects, including quality design and monitoring, reporting and documentation.
- Are responsible for the use of findings, lessons learned and recommendations resulting from evaluations to improve planning and implementation of projects.
- Supports decentralized evaluations as responsible for project approval.
- Reviews projects before submission to the PAG by assuring the evaluability of projects through guidance on the development of theories of change, logical frameworks, performance monitoring frameworks and their implementation, and monitoring documentation systems, including the Project Accrual and Accountability System (PAAS).

### Evaluation Focal Points

- Is a project manager or staff from a branch and regional office trained in evaluation and responsible for facilitating exchange between centralized and decentralized evaluation systems by supporting the implementation of the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* and the *Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework*, and ensuring Terms of Reference (TOR) for evaluations are aligned with regional strategic plans, Habitat Country Programme Documents and UNDAFs in the respective regions.
- Implements branch and regional office evaluation plans, coordinates and provides guidance to project managers in branches, regional and country offices in planning and initiating decentralized project evaluations. Focal points communicate information about all evaluation-related work in order to promote compliance with the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy*.
- Provides quality assurance of evaluation process deliverables and chairs reference groups established to oversee decentralized evaluation of projects implemented by his/her branch or regional office (or country office in the region).
- Is responsible for reporting on the follow-up to evaluations conducted by the branch or regional office.

### The Management and Operations Division

- Assures resources of planned evaluations are allocated in the appropriate budgeting lines of projects.
- Maintains and provides back-stopping to documentation systems, including the Project Accrual and Accountability System (PAAS).

### The Programme Division

- Coordinates and oversees the self-evaluation of closing projects.

## The Project Manager

- Manages or supports management of decentralized evaluation processes.
- In order to enhance impartiality, the project manager may be the evaluation manager, but should not have individual decision-making authority in evaluation processes and must acquire approval from the branch coordinator or regional director on the final selection of evaluation consultant and approval of the final evaluation report.

## 2.3 UN-HABITAT ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

UN-Habitat has devised a system to improve the coverage of UN-Habitat evaluations and to ensure the use of evaluations by holding managers accountable for conducting project evaluations of good quality and for responding to evaluations. High quality evaluations are critical for results-based management, knowledge generation for wider use, and accountability to donors, implementing partners and stakeholders. The Evaluation Unit provides tools and technical support to project managers managing decentralized evaluations to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. It provides support to the entire evaluation process by reviewing the evaluation plan, terms of reference (TOR), draft inception and draft evaluation reports, and other support as applicable.

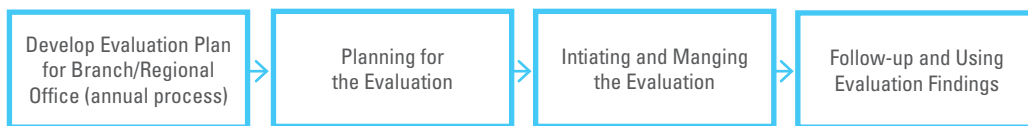
In addition to reporting on the performance of the evaluation function in IMDIS, the Evaluation Unit reports and tracks the key evaluation performance targets of the Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework. These performance targets are aligned with the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* and provide evidence of progress, or lack thereof. The evaluation performance targets are as follows:

- Target 1: 100% of projects of value USD 1 million and above is evaluated and all closing projects should have a self-evaluation report.
- Target 2: 10% of projects of value USD 0-1,000,000 bracket is evaluated.
- Target 3: At least one country programme evaluation is conducted for each 2 year Programme of Work in each of the four regions.
- Target 4: Two corporate/strategic evaluations are conducted per year.

The Evaluation Unit reports on annual basis to the Executive Director, the Management Board and Senior Management Committee on the financial resources invested in evaluation, human resources dedicated to evaluation, coverage and types of evaluations managed, implementation rate of planned evaluations, submission of completed decentralized evaluation reports to the Evaluation Unit, quality of evaluation reports, use of evaluation, and extent to which decentralized evaluations conducted in a year are compliant with evaluation process standards.

The quality of decentralized evaluation reports is systematically assessed by the Evaluation Unit. The quality review of UN-Habitat evaluation reports is based on the evaluation report standards of UNEG and the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy*. The standards should be used by UN-Habitat project managers and evaluation focal points to assess the quality of evaluation reports. The quality review of decentralized evaluation reports follow a template and it is completed by an external evaluator for the Evaluation Unit to produce an independent assessment of the quality and usefulness of the evaluation report and provides practical feedback on how to improve future evaluations. In addition, the quality review supports sharing and synthesis of evaluation findings, good practices and lessons learned.

The Evaluation Unit presents the findings of the quality review to the Management Board and Senior Management Committee. Quality reviews of evaluation reports are also shared

**FIGURE 3: KEY PHASES OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

with evaluation focal points to improve the quality and utility of evaluations by highlighting the strengths, good practices and areas that require improvement. A meta-analysis of the quality review of evaluation reports is included in the UN-Habitat Biennial Report on Evaluation, in which UN-Habitat reports to the Committee of Permanent Representatives on the evaluation function in UN-Habitat.

The quality assurance evaluation process corresponds to the evaluation stages. It helps branches and regional offices in achieving compliance with the process in consultation with the evaluation focal point. The following chapters in this manual are organized according to the evaluation stages and provide detailed information on the associated requirements and checklists. Figure 3 identifies the key phases of the evaluation process.

The standard process for a decentralized evaluation is characterized by leading role and responsibilities of the project manager, the branch coordinator or regional director and the branch or regional office evaluation focal point in preparing and planning for evaluation, managing and using the evaluation.

Centralized evaluations are managed by the Evaluation Unit. It will lead on all steps of the evaluation process in consultation with the project manager and evaluation reference group.

#### Developing the Evaluation Plan:

- the evaluation focal point and project manager support the development of branch/regional office evaluation plan

- the branch/regional office evaluation focal point submits the annual evaluation plan to the Evaluation Unit
- the regional director or branch coordinator appoint an evaluation manager (often the project manager) for each project evaluation.

#### Preparing for the Evaluation:

- for decentralized evaluation, the focal point and project manager prepares the Terms of Reference evaluation of the project
- the draft Terms of Reference is shared with the evaluation focal point and Evaluation Unit for quality review
- the final Terms of Reference is submitted to the Evaluation Unit and uploaded on intranet Habnet
- the project manager consults with the branch/regional office evaluation focal point on the selection of the consultant/ firm for the evaluation and obtains approval from the branch coordinator or regional director on selection of evaluation consultant.

#### Initiating and Managing the Evaluation:

- the project manager reviews the inception report
- the draft and final inception report is shared with the branch/regional office evaluation focal point for quality assurance
- the project manager reviews the quality of the draft evaluation report

- the draft evaluation report is shared with the evaluation focal point of the branch/ regional office and the Evaluation Unit for quality review
- the evaluation report is approved by the regional director or branch coordinator
- the final evaluation report is submitted to the Evaluation Unit within two months of finalization.

#### Follow-up and Using Evaluation Findings:

- organizational entities that are responsible for or will be involved in the follow-up to the evaluation. The management response is a formal written response to the findings and recommendations of an evaluation jointly formulate the management response.
- For decentralized evaluations, the management response is prepared by the project manager, shared with the evaluation branch/regional office focal point and approved by the branch coordinator/ regional director. For centralized evaluations, the process to prepare the management response is coordinated by the Evaluation Unit.
- the project manager or branch/regional office evaluation focal point disseminates the evaluation report to ensure access to evaluation results and to facilitate learning.

## SUMMARY

- All UN-Habitat staff are responsible for adhering to the principles of the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* and promoting a culture of evaluation. The policy identifies roles and responsibilities for evaluation in UN-Habitat.
- In UN-Habitat, there are specific roles assigned for the evaluation function and conduct of evaluations to the governing bodies of UN-Habitat, the UN-Habitat Management Board, the Senior Management Group (or Committee), the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, the Evaluation Unit, Branch Coordinators and Directors of Regional Offices, the Management and Operations Division, the Programme Division, the evaluation focal points and project managers (see section 2.2).
- In line with roles assigned to managers in UN-Habitat, from executive level to project level, there is a system in place to improve the coverage of UN-Habitat evaluations and to ensure the use of evaluations: Managers are held accountable for conducting project evaluations of good quality and for responding to evaluations.
- Evaluations can be categorized by when the evaluation is undertaken, the purpose of the evaluation, what is being evaluated, who conducts the evaluation, and who manages the evaluation. For example, an evaluation can be undertaken as a *formative, decentralized, mid-term project evaluation*—it means in this case that the evaluation will be managed by the project manager to assess the value added of the project while the project activities are still in progress (see section 2.2).
- Evaluations are conducted by independent, external consultants.
- Evaluations managed by the Evaluation Unit are termed as ‘centralized evaluations’. Evaluations managed by the project manager are termed as ‘decentralized evaluations’.
- Self-evaluations are undertaken at the closing of the project by project managers based on a template (see Chapter 2).
- Project evaluations focus on achievement of expected results and operational performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact and sustainability of UN-Habitat’s interventions.
- The standard process for an evaluation starts at the time of developing the office’s evaluation plan (for Branch, Regional Office or other entity), then for planning the individual evaluation by preparing for the evaluation, then initiating and managing the evaluation, and finally using and following-up on evaluation findings.

## 3. PLANNING FOR EVALUATION

Evaluation needs to be included in the strategic and operational planning of designing a new project. During the planning and design stage, the project manager with the branch coordinator or regional director need to consider what, across the spectrum of the entire sub-programme and regional portfolio, will be evaluated within a given period and allocate appropriate resources. It is essential that planning for evaluation takes place at such an early stage because:

- The design of the project affects its evaluability—in other words—how it can be evaluated (for example, an end-of-project evaluation, self-evaluation or evaluated as part of a country programme or sub-programme evaluation)
- Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) expected accomplishments and indicators are fundamental to evaluating the project
- Monitoring results through project implementation is critical to having valid information available for an evaluation
- Time and resources required for the evaluation need to be reflected in work plans and budgets

The *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* establishes that the biennial evaluation plan, incorporating planned evaluations by the Evaluation Unit and evaluations of projects planned by branches and regional offices, be used as the main planning tool for evaluations to be conducted. The projects by branches and regional offices that are to be evaluated are included in the UN-Habitat evaluation plan.

It is an organizational exercise that is part of the organization's planning and budgeting cycle. The plan is revised on annual basis and is flexible to absorb new demands from within UN-Habitat, as well as from donors and other stakeholders, as the need arises. It is essentially a calendar of all evaluations and status of their implementation. It also provides information in terms of evaluation theme, planned evaluation date, evaluation stakeholders and evaluation budget (Table 1).

### Evaluation planning requirements

All branches and regional offices should develop a plan of centralized and decentralized evaluations as well as self-evaluations in conjunction with their sub-programmes and regional and country work plans. The plans should be submitted to the Evaluation Unit and consolidated in the overall UN-Habitat evaluation plan to contain all evaluations.

Branches and regional offices should review and update their evaluation plans annually together with the development of work plans.

The UN-Habitat evaluation plan, reviewed by the Senior Management Committee and endorsed by the Board, is shared by the Evaluation Unit on to the intranet *Habnet* to ensure transparency and accountability on UN-Habitat evaluations.

### 3.1 STEPS FOR DEVELOPING THE EVALUATION PLAN

Evaluation planning involves a series of steps that are outlined below. For decentralized evaluations, branch coordinators, regional directors and project managers should lead this process with the support of their

evaluation focal points in accordance with the evaluation process standards. For centralized evaluations, the process is led by the Evaluation Unit in close consultation with

the responsible branch or regional office. Each evaluation should be listed with information about the project and evaluation details using the evaluation plan template (template 1).

**TABLE 1: CHECKLIST FOR PREPARATION OF THE UN-HABITAT EVALUATION PLAN**

Section	Content
Evaluation Title and Type	Is the evaluation title clearly defined in terms of evaluation type, period of time and project to be evaluated?
Accountabilities and Responsibilities	Does the evaluation plan specify office in charge/project manager of the evaluation?
UN-Habitat programme relevance for Branch or Regional Office	How is the project to be evaluated linked to UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan (2014-2019), thematic focus areas, regional strategic plan, Habitat Country Programme Document or UNDAF?
Resources & Budget	Does the evaluation plan include a secured budget for the evaluation, source and approved budget line? The amount set aside for the evaluation should be feasible and appropriate for producing a good evaluation report.
Scope	Does the evaluation plan specify the geographic area covered by the project?
Work Schedule	Does the evaluation plan provide a schedule that establishes a working framework for the evaluation? Individual tasks should be assigned time frames, and target dates for milestones and the completion of the evaluation report.
Status	Does the evaluation plan describe schedules indicating if evaluation is yet to start, in progress or completed?

### Step 1: Identify evaluations to be included in the plan

There are three approaches to evaluation planning that branches and regional offices can follow to ensure that they are evaluating as per requirements of UN-Habitat:

- 100 per cent projects of value USD 1 million and above is evaluated at the end of the project
- At least one country programme evaluation for each 2 year PoW in each of UN-Habitat's region and comprising a selection of projects implemented in the country
- 10 per cent of projects of value between USD 300,000 and under USD 1 million are evaluated.

### Step 2: Complete the branch/regional plan with evaluation activities

The evaluation plan template (template 1) should list evaluations in which UN-Habitat branches and regional offices are managing and evaluations, which they are involved in but not managing, e.g., UNDAF evaluations, donor-lead evaluations as well as evaluations managed by the Evaluation Unit. The 'Remarks' column can be used to explain the selection, including the criteria used for the section of country programme evaluations. The draft plan should be shared with the respective branch or regional office evaluation focal point before it is submitted to the Evaluation Unit for consolidation in the biennial UN-Habitat Evaluation Plan.



### TEMPLATE 1: EVALUATION PLAN OF REGIONAL OFFICE OR BRANCH

Evaluation Title	Type (project/ country programme, other)	Lead unit/ office in charge	Project Manager	Strategic Plan expected accomplishment and other plan	Evaluation budget available (Yes/ No)	Amount/ USD	Region / country scope	Planned dates (start/ end)	Status (not started/ initiated/ ongoing / completed)
<b>Decentralized evaluations managed by the regional office or branch</b>									
<b>Evaluation 1</b> <b>(example):</b> Identification of best practices, policies and enabling legislation in the local delivery of basic urban services, end-of- project evaluation	Project	Robert Lewis- Lettington, Branch Coordinator, ULLGU	Diana Lopez, Local government and decentralisation Unit, UN-Habitat office in Madrid, Spain	MTSIP Focus Area 2: Promotion of participatory urban planning, management and governance	Yes	USD 40,000	Latin America (Cuba, El Savador, Colombia, Ecuador and Uruguay), Mozambique	March – July 2015	Completed
<b>Evaluation 2</b>									
<b>Evaluation 3</b>									
<b>Evaluations initiated or managed by donor or other stakeholders in which the regional office or branch participates</b>									
Evaluation 1 (example): Midterm Evaluation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme II (PSUP II)	Project	European Union through IBF International Consulting	Kerstin Sommer, Slum Upgrading Unit, HSUB	MTSIP Focus Area 3: Promote pro-poor land and housing / SP Focus area 5: Housing and slum upgrading, EA 1	Yes (costs covered by the EC)	N/A	Global	November – May 2015	Completed
<b>Evaluation 2</b>									
<b>Evaluation 3</b>									

### Step 3: Review and update annually the branch/ regional plan with evaluation activities

Branches and regional offices can refine and revise their evaluation plans based on actual project implementation to ensure that they are on track to evaluate during the period scheduled in the plans. Any change made must be recorded in the evaluation plan.

### Step 4: Report on the status of evaluation plan implementation

For centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Unit oversees and monitors the status and progress of evaluations.

For decentralized evaluations, the evaluation focal point monitors and annually updates the status of each evaluation and shares the plan with the Evaluation Unit. The branch coordinator or director of the regional office is responsible for implementation of the evaluation plan. Drawing on the information provided, the Evaluation Unit reports on the status of the evaluation plans of branches and regional offices on annual basis to the Executive Director and Senior Management Committee and/or to the UN-Habitat Board, as well as on *ad hoc* basis, such as requests from the Committee of Permanent Representatives and auditors. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that information is provided in a timely way to ensure accurate reporting to the senior management.

## 3.2 DECIDING ON EVALUATION TYPE

Evaluation type is defined by UN-Habitat according to when the evaluation is undertaken, what is evaluated, and who evaluates.

### When the evaluation is undertaken?

- *Ex-ante*/evaluability appraisal (before the project starts)
- *In-situ* evaluation, Interim evaluation, Mid-term evaluation (during project implementation)
- *Ex-post* evaluation, outcome evaluation at the end of the project or later, including impact evaluation (towards end of the project, and for impact evaluation a year or later after end of the project)

### What is evaluated?

- Project evaluation
- Sub-programme/programme evaluation
- Institutional evaluation (for example, evaluation of a regional office)
- Sector evaluation
- Thematic evaluation
- Policy evaluation
- Country programme evaluation

### Who evaluates?

- Self-evaluation (at project closure by project manager or project implementing office)
- Internal evaluation (by project staff or project consultant)
- External evaluation (by external evaluation consultant hired by UN-Habitat Evaluation Unit or project manager is considered an external evaluation, or evaluation by donor or partner)
- Joint evaluation (shared by evaluation responsibilities of UN-Habitat and other implementing partners or agencies, or donors)

In terms of numbers, most evaluations conducted in UN-Habitat are end-of-project evaluations, which is a results assessment of the project and its outcomes towards

expected accomplishments and managed by the project manager or the Evaluation Unit (Table 1).

**TABLE 2: COMMON TYPES OF UN-HABITAT EVALUATIONS**

Evaluation Type	Description	Office Responsible
Project /programme evaluation	A results assessment of an individual project to determine results achieved, its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact outlook.  Project evaluation can be conducted at the midpoint of the project (mid-term), during implementation (interim evaluation), or at the end of the project (summative final evaluation).	Branch, regional office or country office, or Evaluation Unit.
Sub-programme/ programme evaluation	An assessment of a sub-programme or part of a sub-programme's expected accomplishments and its outcomes.  Focus is on assessing programme design and theory, process and programme achievements and results at outcome and impact levels.	Evaluation Unit
Country programme evaluation	A systemic assessment of the contributions made by the UN-Habitat to sustainable urbanization at the country level. It focuses on a set of interventions and their overall success in achieving expected accomplishments and meeting objectives. It uses the Habitat Country Programme Document (and Regional Strategic Plan) as main points of reference.	Evaluation Unit
Institutional (e.g., Regional office) evaluation	An assessment of key institutional settings and activities to inform corporate decision-making and improve institutional relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. The goal is to strengthen institutional capacity and suggest institutional change processes. An assessment of the work of the regional office involves assessing the contributions made by UN-Habitat to sustainable urbanization and objectives of the Regional Strategic Plan focusing on programming elements, such as collaboration with other UN-Habitat entities, capacity development, innovation, partnership strategies and regional-level results.	Evaluation Unit
Thematic evaluation	An assessment of a thematic area of work. It analyzes multiple projects addressing a theme (e.g., housing financing, integration of gender equality, capacity building, etc.) with a view to understanding the combined results in an area and better understanding the opportunities, challenges and gaps in programming and results. It can be conducted at the global, regional or country level.	Evaluation Unit
Policy or strategy evaluation	An evaluation, which emphasizes ways in which the evaluation findings can influence policy and strategic processes.	Evaluation Unit

To decide which type of evaluation to conduct, the following points should be considered:

- What is the evaluation purpose (i.e., learning, accountability or decision-making)?
- Who is the target audience for the information from the evaluation?
- What kinds of information are needed

to make decisions and/or contribute to learning?

- What is the scope of the evaluation (i.e., time frame, geographical representation, breath of programmes and projects included)?
- What are the resources available to collect the information (i.e., human, financial, time)?

- When is the information needed (i.e., is there a strategic meeting, is the project coming to an end, etc.)?
- Which organization will manage the evaluation? (i.e., evaluation organized by one organization is an individual evaluation, while joint evaluations are co-managed by a UN-Habitat entity and at least one other organization. This can be in the context of a joint project or programme, including UNDAF.

### 3.3 BUDGETING FOR EVALUATION

Evaluation is a core function of UN-Habitat. Therefore it is essential that adequate resources be allocated to evaluation at branch and regional office levels as part of the overall planning and budgeting process. The *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy* stipulates that the evaluation function should have a budget share of 1 per cent or more of the total UN-Habitat biennium budget.<sup>14</sup>

UN-Habitat is a project based organization and core funds allocated for the evaluation function, however, are very small compared to the demand for evaluation and funds are tied to posts i.e., the Chief to the Evaluation Unit (regular budget) and one administrative assistant (foundation) and evaluation capacity building activities by donors.

To meet evaluation demands and achieve the evaluation performance targets set by UN-Habitat, all projects should include budget provisions for evaluation. The project manager and respective regional director or branch coordinator are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources for evaluation are planned in the project documents. The Project Approval Group or Regional Project Approval Groups should not approve projects that do

not have adequate resources for evaluation—in particular projects of USD 1 million and above, are required to conduct end-of-project evaluation.<sup>15</sup>

Directors of regional offices and branch coordinators are responsible for ensuring adequate resources (both financial and human) for evaluation and that all projects of USD 1 million and above are evaluated, by external consultants. Projects of value between USD 300,000 and under USD 1 million can be evaluated by external consultants.

#### TIP: MID-TERM EVALUATION

Mid-term evaluation is recommended for projects with a budget over USD 1 million and with a duration of four years or more.

The evaluation budget will depend on scope and scale of the project to be evaluated. When calculating the total financial investment in evaluation and recording evaluation-related expenditures, the following cost items should be considered and included:

- Conduct of evaluation (direct project investment in the conduct of evaluations, e.g., consultancy costs, daily subsistence allowance and travel). At least USD 50,000 for projects of and over USD 1 million.
- Indirect cost for technical support and quality assurance and follow-up by the Evaluation Unit. This is USD10,000 for projects of and over USD1 million, and USD7,000 for projects under USD1 million.
- Capacity building costs (cost related to training UN-Habitat staff and partners, e.g., evaluation focal point participation in evaluation workshops)

<sup>14</sup> UN-Habitat (2013), *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy*, paragraph 61. In addition, the policy states that "United States Agency for International Development (USAID) devotes 3 per cent of the total programme costs to evaluation. UN Women targets 3 per cent of its total budget, including core and non-core, in the evaluation function."

<sup>15</sup> Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework (memo signed by Executive Director, 5th January 2016).

**TABLE 3: UN-HABITAT REQUIRED PROJECT EVALUATION BUDGET**

Project	Evaluation Requirement	Evaluation Budget
Projects under USD 1 million and above USD 300,000	Evaluation report prepared based on self-evaluation template at the end of the project is a requirement. Cost estimate provided here is based on the involvement of the Evaluation Unit. End of project evaluation is optional.  <b>Note:</b> Projects under USD300,000 (the minimum amount for UN-Habitat projects) are exempted from evaluation, unless the evaluation is required by donor	Estimate USD 25,000
Projects of and over USD 1 million	End of project evaluation is required. The evaluation is done by external consultant or the Evaluation Unit.	Estimate USD 60,000
All Projects	Self-evaluation report is required for all closing projects.	—

- Communication costs, including dissemination of evaluation results and findings (publication costs, dissemination workshops).

Project evaluation costs specified in the Revised *UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework*, supersedes section 5.6 Evaluation of the *UN-Habitat Project Based Management Policy*, and Branches and Regional Offices should ensure that adequate resources are allocated to evaluation (table 2).<sup>16</sup> Table 2 provides indicative figures for project evaluations.

The project document should have a separate budget line for evaluation. Project managers can secure the evaluation budget by creating a budget line for evaluation in the project and set aside appropriate funds annually over the lifetime of the project. Reporting on evaluation expenditures is part of the annual reporting by the Evaluation Unit to the Senior Management Group. Therefore, it is important that evaluation expenditures are separated from monitoring expenditures for the purpose of corporate reporting on evaluation key performance indicators.

<sup>16</sup> *UN-Habitat Project Based Management Policy* (memo signed by Executive Director, 22nd November 2012). "The indicative amounts [...] a minimum of 0.6 % should be budgeted for evaluation." (paragraph 19).

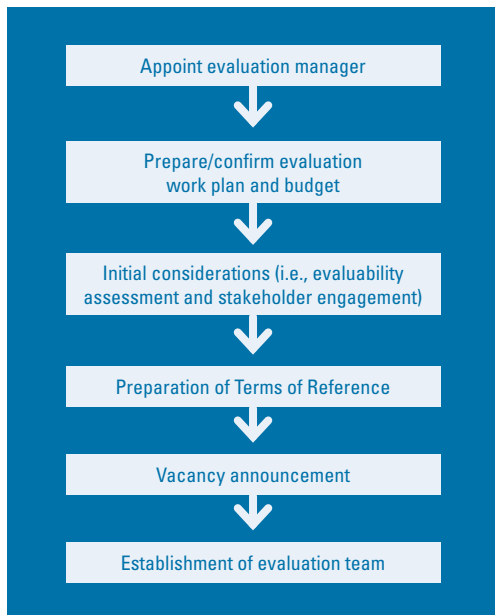
## SUMMARY

- All branches and regional offices should develop a *plan of centralized and decentralized evaluations as well as self-evaluations* in conjunction with their sub-programmes and regional and country work plans. The plans should be submitted to the Evaluation Unit for consolidating the plans in the overall UN-Habitat evaluation plan (*see Template 1*).
- The steps for developing the evaluation plan, include:
  1. Identify evaluations to be included in the plan—decide on type of evaluation by determining when the evaluation is to be undertaken, what is evaluated, and who evaluates?
  2. Complete planning template for branch/ regional plan of evaluation activities (*see Template 1*). Information required in the planning template: evaluation title and type, lead unit/ officer-in-charge, project manager, Strategic Plan expected accomplishment and other plan, evaluation budget availability and amount, regional/ country scope, planned dates, and status).
  3. Annually review and update the branch/ regional evaluation plan
  4. Report on the status of evaluation plan implementation
- All projects should include budget provisions for evaluation. The evaluation budget covers conduct of the evaluation, technical support, capacity building and communication / dissemination costs. A UN-Habitat project document should have a separate budget line for evaluation (*see section 3.3*).
- All projects of USD 1 million and above are required to conduct an end-of-project evaluation. New projects will not be approved by the Project Approval Group or Regional Project Approval Groups without adequate budget provision for evaluation. Mid-term evaluation is recommended for projects with a budget over USD 1 million and with a duration of four years or more. Estimated cost USD 50,000 per evaluation.
- Projects under USD 1 million are required to complete a self-evaluation at the end of the project and full end-of-project evaluation is optional.
- Self-evaluation report is required for all closing projects.

## 4. PREPARING FOR THE EVALUATION

As a first step an evaluation manager should be identified for decentralized evaluations to manage the evaluation process (Figure 4). The evaluation manager is often also the project manager for practical reasons. However, the selection of evaluator (or evaluation team) and approval of the final evaluation report must be done through approval by the branch coordinator or regional director. This is to ensure impartiality, and the project manager responsible for the implementation of the project to be evaluated should not have sole decision-making responsibility in the evaluation process. For centralized evaluations, the evaluation manager will be a staff of the Evaluation Unit.

**FIGURE 4: OVERVIEW OF PLANNING FOR THE EVALUATION**



### 4.1 CHECKING EVALUABILITY

It is important to consider the “evaluability” at the early planning stage of a project in order to ascertain whether the project’s objectives are adequately defined and the results verifiable. Evaluability is the extent to which a project can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.

All UN-Habitat projects, which have passed and been approved through the Project Approval Group (PAG) and Regional Project Approval Group (RPAG), should be in a condition to be evaluated. An evaluability assessment is a systematic process intended to determine whether or not a project can be evaluate and if an evaluation is likely to provide useful information. An evaluability assessment also helps prepare the project to create the conditions necessary for an evaluation (i.e., assess the design of the project’s logical framework and ascertain that its expected accomplishments are adequately defined and its results verifiable). It can take place at the beginning of the evaluation planning process or when preparing the Terms of Reference. The evaluability assessment will review the design of the project, availability of relevant monitoring information and data, and the conduciveness of the context for evaluation. An evaluability assessment is not a replacement for a high-quality project design but it is useful for ensuring that the project is ready for evaluation.

The project manager can move onto the next step of identifying stakeholders to be engaged in the evaluation process, once the evaluability

assessment has determined that the project can be evaluated or identified specific measures that can be taken by an evaluation in order to address project shortcomings. The branch or regional office evaluation focal point can be consulted on how to prepare for an evaluation (Box 4).

#### BOX 4: QUICK CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING THE EVALUABILITY OF A PROJECT

- Does the project that is to be evaluated have a clear defined results map or logframe? If it is a country programme evaluation, is there a common understanding as to what initiatives and projects will be subject to evaluation?
- Are goals, outcome statements/ expected accomplishments, outputs and inputs and activities clearly defined? Are indicators SMART?
- Is there sufficient capacity for project or programme to provide required data for evaluation? For example, is there baseline data? Is there sufficient data collected from monitoring against targets? Are there well documented progress reports, field visit reports, reviews and previous evaluations?
- Is the planned evaluation still relevant, given the evolving context? Is the purpose of the evaluation clearly defined and commonly shared amongst stakeholders?
- Will political, social and economic factors allow for an effective conduct and use of the evaluation as envisaged?
- Are there sufficient human and financial resources allocated to the evaluation?

**Source:** UNDP (2009), *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results*, p.148

## 4.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

All UN-Habitat evaluations are participatory evaluations, which involve stakeholders. Involving stakeholders before an evaluation starts, and keeping them informed about progress during the evaluation process, allows the stakeholders to explain their expectations to the evaluation and raise related questions and concerns. There are many benefits from engaging stakeholders in the evaluation process. The involvement is crucial to ensuring the support of stakeholders during the evaluation process and afterwards during the implementation of follow-up actions to the evaluation.

Involving key stakeholders such as donors, project managers, partners, beneficiaries and governing bodies increase the chances that the evaluation results will be used, improves ownership, credibility and transparency of the evaluation process, reveals barriers and sensitivities that can be dealt with in early stages of the evaluation process, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and enhances the relevance and quality of the evaluation.

There are some key principles to follow when engaging stakeholders:

- **Inclusiveness:** Take into account all directly and indirectly affected groups—stakeholders, including duty-bearers and rights-holders—and be sensitive to differences among them. Disaggregate groups by relevant criteria such as gender and age and pay attention to which groups benefit and which groups contribute to the intervention under review.



- **Participatory and reflective:** Engage stakeholders in an active and meaningful involvement in the design, management and conduct of the evaluation. Assess whether or not the stakeholders were able to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project and if the project and the evaluation reflects their engagement, for example, through interviews or surveys).
- **Respect:** Treat all stakeholders particularly those who are vulnerable, with respect for their culture, language, gender, location, and abilities, and develop appropriate ways to engage and be accountable to them.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Ensure the design and conduct of the evaluation is transparent and responsive to questions about all aspects of the process. The results should be publicly accessible and feedback should be provided to the stakeholders about the process, results and use of the evaluation.

Stakeholders of an evaluation should be identified in the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the evaluation, and should ideally be involved in the preparation of the TOR. In practice, there are two categories of stakeholders. The first category is key stakeholders with direct ownership of the project, mainly peers from the UN-Habitat relevant implementing entity (or entities), the donor and joint implementing partners, and they are usually included in the reference group established to oversee the evaluation process (Table 3). The second category of stakeholders is other stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project, and direct and indirect beneficiaries.

### Evaluation reference group

The reference group is a mechanism to ensure the active involvement of stakeholders in an evaluation process. The reference group is formed at the start of the evaluation process

in order to provide the evaluator or evaluation team with feedback from a technical and methodological perspective. The composition of the reference group is at the discretion of the project manager.

A reference group performs an oversight function that helps ensure transparency of the evaluation process as well as generate a sense of ownership and participation among reference group members and the organization as a whole. Specifically, the members of the reference group will be tasked with providing input on the preparation of evaluation Terms of Reference and review main evaluation deliverables, which include inception report with an evaluation work schedule, and review of findings of draft evaluation report and final evaluation report for factual accuracy, errors of interpretation or omission of information.

The participation of stakeholders through a reference group can be challenging to manage and may have cost and time implications. However, it is instrumental to building trust and accountability and improving the quality of the evaluation report and support learning from the evaluation. Make sure to brief reference group members about their role in the evaluation and their responsibility to provide feedback.

The reference group should be aware that due to contractual liability with the evaluator and to ensure validity, the reference group cannot alter the scope of the evaluation agreed upon in the Terms of Reference and clarified in the inception report. While it is important for the evaluation report to reflect the diversity of views gathered from different stakeholders (project manager, donors, beneficiaries, etc.), at the same time evaluators must maintain their impartial judgement in the final report. All comments and feedback from reference group members may therefore not be reflected in the final report.

**TABLE 4: KEY ACTORS IN THE DECENTRALIZED PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS**

Actor	Roles and Responsibilities
Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and engages potential stakeholders</li> <li>• Lead the development of the evaluation TOR</li> <li>• Manage the selection and recruitment of evaluation team</li> <li>• Ensure the evaluation consultant/team understand the TOR</li> <li>• Guide the evaluation process and provide advice on performance management approaches and provide technical support as required</li> <li>• Manage the contractual arrangements, the budget and the personnel involved in the evaluation</li> <li>• Consults with branch coordinator or regional director for approval on selection of evaluator or evaluation team and approval of the final evaluation report</li> <li>• Introduce the evaluation team to various stakeholders</li> <li>• Explain evaluation standards and ensure they are respected</li> <li>• Oversees progress and conduct of evaluation</li> <li>• Make payments against evaluation deliverables (i.e., inception report, draft and final evaluation report)</li> <li>• Review and approves the inception report and the draft evaluation report(s); and ensure the final draft meets quality standards</li> <li>• Publish and disseminate evaluation products</li> </ul>
Branch Coordinator or Regional Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approves the selection of evaluator or evaluation team and approval of the final evaluation report</li> </ul>
Branch or Regional Office Evaluation Focal Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews and provides quality assurance of the TOR, and main deliverables of the evaluation process (i.e., inception report, draft evaluation report and final evaluation report)</li> <li>• Provide overall management response to the evaluation; and response to every recommendation with an action plan to implement accepted recommendations, responsible parties and timelines for implementation</li> </ul>
Evaluator/ Evaluation Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fulfill the evaluation contractual arrangements in line with UN Norms and Standards and ethical guidelines</li> <li>• Plan and conduct the evaluation</li> <li>• Involves stakeholders in the evaluation</li> <li>• Delivers inception report, draft reports and final report timely</li> </ul>
Reference Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews and provides comments on inception report, draft report and final evaluation report as required and provides advice on the evaluation process and options for improvement</li> </ul>
Evaluation Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides technical support to the evaluation process as needed for the development of TOR, review of inception report and draft evaluation report</li> </ul>

### 4.3 DEVELOPING THE EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

The project manager prepares the Terms of Reference (TOR) once the decision is made to proceed with an evaluation. The Terms of Reference is developed by the Evaluation Unit if it is managing the evaluation. The TOR offers the first substantive overview and conceptual outlook of the evaluation. It articulates management's requirements/ expectations for the evaluation. It guides the evaluation process until the inception report with work plan takes over as the primary control document. UN-Habitat follows a specific format for TORs (Table 4).

**TABLE 5: SECTIONS REQUIRED IN THE TOR**

Section	Content
1.	Evaluation Title
2.	Background and Context
3.	Mandate of the Evaluation
4.	Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation
5.	Scope and Focus
6.	Evaluation Questions based on Evaluation Criteria
7.	Stakeholder Involvement
8.	Evaluation Approach and Methodology
9.	Evaluation Team
10.	Qualifications and Experience of the Evaluation Team
11.	Responsibilities and Evaluation Management
12.	Deliverables
13.	Resources
14.	Provisional Timeframe

Developing an accurate and well-specified TOR is a critical step in managing a high-quality evaluation. The evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR) is probably the most important document in preparing for an evaluation. It defines all aspects of how the evaluator or evaluation team will conduct the evaluation. The TOR defines why the evaluation is being undertaken, what it will

examine, how and when it will be conducted, who will use it and how it will be used. To prepare the TOR, the evaluation manager should be able to answer the following questions:

- Why and for whom is the evaluation being done?
- What issues are to be addressed and what it intends to accomplish?
- Who will be involved and the expertise required to conduct the evaluation?
- When will milestones be reached and what is the time frame for completing the evaluation?
- What resources are available for conducting the evaluation?

The time and effort spent in preparing a good TOR has big returns in terms of quality, relevance and usefulness of the evaluation to be conducted.

#### *Key sections of the evaluation TOR*

The evaluation title should tell what is to be evaluated and the type of evaluation. The background and context section should include a brief introduction to UN-Habitat and its mandate and strategic framework in the area that the project is working and the context and issue to which the project is responding. It should describe the project, the logic of the implementation strategy and outline the theory of change, expected accomplishments, timeframe, budget donor and management structure of the project.

The mandate of the evaluation refers to the formal request and reason for conducting the evaluation such as request from donor, decision by Governing Bodies or other, or evaluation requirement of UN-Habitat. The description of the purpose of the evaluation should state what the evaluation will assess and what the evaluation is expected to provide to UN-Habitat and others. The objectives

should be formulated to follow the purpose of the evaluation, and identify evaluation criteria.

The scope and focus states the time frame of the project to be evaluated, for example, for an end of project evaluation from the project's start to its end, near end or after the end of the project, indicating the rate or percentage of project delivery of planned activities and outputs and expenditure. The scope should take into account other existing evaluation or planned evaluation of the project or programme area to limit duplication. While the scope is usually straight forward to define for project evaluation, it can be more difficult to define the scope for country programme evaluations. The scope should be realistic given the time and resources available for implementing the evaluation. The following should be considered in defining the scope for evaluation:

- The period covered by the country programme evaluation, e.g., past five years of programme; or since the implementation of the strategic plan 2014-2019.
- Thematic coverage, if it is a large country programme, it may be necessary to narrow the selection of projects for in-depth review in the country programme evaluation.
- Size and composition of the evaluation team. For a country programme evaluation, evaluation expertise and local knowledge and language are both important skills in the evaluation team and can be acquired with the expertise of an international evaluator and a national consultant.

The evaluation questions are formulated based on the evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact outlook and sustainability. All five evaluation criteria should be addressed in a project evaluation and the performance of each in the project will be rated. The evaluation criteria for mid-term evaluations are the same as for end of project evaluations except that it can be difficult to assess impact as delivery is still on-going and this limitation should be specified in the scope and focus section.

The section on evaluation approach and methods should describe steps and activities that would be undertaken and answer the evaluation questions.

Sections on responsibilities, evaluation management and provisional work schedule must be realistic and follow the evaluation approach and methods to be used. It should be clearly specified who will be responsible for supporting the evaluation team and specific roles. Generally, the TOR calls for the evaluator to produce three primary deliverables: An inception report with an evaluation work plan; a draft evaluation report for review; and final evaluation report. The evaluation schedule provides a provisional time frame for delivery of products and milestones. The project manager should provide cost projections for the evaluation in the resources section. In cases where a limited budget is likely to constrain the scope and methodology, a good practice is to state the constrain the scope and methodology, a good practice is to state the available budget and ask the evaluator to describe what they can achieve with that budget either in the letter of interest or in the inception report (Box 5).

## BOX 5: HOW TO DETERMINE THE EVALUATION BUDGET

### Consultant fee

The fee depends on level and number of days. Fee ranges are specified in Administrative Instruction on Consultants and Individual Contractors (ST/AI/2013/4).

In UN-Habitat, a senior consultant with evaluation experience is usually selected to conduct an evaluation. If the scope and focus of the evaluation necessitates an evaluation team of more than one consultant, the most senior of the consultants usually lead the evaluation team and is responsible for drafting the evaluation report. A "national" consultant may take on a more supporting role in the evaluation team such as data collection.

### Travel costs

Travel is usually to the location of the project implementing team and field visits to project sites. Consultants travel least-cost economy. The costs of a return air-ticket from the place of recruitment on least-cost economy will be reimbursed upon submission of travel claim together with the supporting documents including copy of e-ticket, receipts and used boarding passes. Three quotations from a reputable travel agent shall be submitted for UN-Habitat's clearance prior to purchase of tickets.

### Daily substance allowance

While the most part of the evaluation will be home-based for drafting of the evaluation report, daily substance allowance (DSA) is paid for the time duration of the consultant spent to visit the project team and for field visits. DSA rate depends on city and country. Find rates at <http://icsc.un.org/map/>

### Any other costs

This can be additional costs of the evaluator for use of a survey application, shipping of documents, visa application and issuance costs. It can also be necessary to translate the evaluation report to increase the utility of the evaluation report, for example, from English to French, Spanish or Arabic for the donor or other stakeholders. Professional layout of the report may be preferred by the donor.

The project manager selects in consultation with the branch coordinator or regional office director and recommends the successful evaluation consultant(s) to the human resource/ contract responsible staff for drawing the contract.

Before undertaking evaluation work within the UN-Habitat, the project manager shall initiate contract negotiation with the evaluator(s). The intent is to establish a mutual understanding of what to be done, by when and at what cost within the best interest of UN-Habitat. Methods of payment should also be negotiated, for example:

- 20 per cent upon signing the contract
- 40 per cent upon submission of draft report
- 40 per cent after approval of final report

Since the TOR plays a critical role in establishing the quality criteria and use of the evaluation report, adequate time should be allocated to developing the TORs and its content (Box 6).

### Defining evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions

UN-Habitat evaluation criteria are aligned with those of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). The standard criteria include: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact outlook and sustainability and evaluation questions are formulated to address all five evaluation criteria. In addition, the evaluation questions related to effectiveness or as a stand-alone criterion should address gender equality, human rights, youth participation and climate change. The extent to which each of the cross-cutting issues will be addressed will be depending on the relevance to the project. The specifics of the project may also justify including additional criteria, for example, partnership engagement or coherence with other organizational entities or thematic areas. In the case that one or more of the standard five evaluation criteria are not used, a rationale for the decision should be given in the TOR, inception report and evaluation report.

Evaluation questions contribute to further defining the objectives by relating to the purpose and criteria for the evaluation and the project's design and set-up and its target

stakeholders and beneficiaries. The questions should be organized around the evaluation criteria and the evaluation report should present findings accordingly. Three to four questions related to each of the evaluation criteria is usually considered sufficient.

#### **BOX 6: QUICK CHECKLIST FOR A QUALITY TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- Should be explicit, focused and contain all necessary sections and elements (see table 4 above)
- Provide a clear mandate for the evaluation team about what is being evaluated and why, who should be involved in the evaluation process, and expected outputs and deliverables
- Be customized to the particular circumstances and the purpose of the evaluation
- Have scope and methodology adjusted to the allocated budget and time schedule for the evaluation
- Establish the quality criteria and use of the evaluation report
- Outline methodology and methods appropriate to achieving the evaluation's objectives and collection of data and triangulation of data leading to credible analysis and evidence based findings.

The key questions outlined in the TOR will serve as the basis for the development of more detailed interview and survey questions by the evaluation team. The questions guide the evaluator in designing the evaluation and in collecting information and data. The cross-cutting issues should be addressed both in terms of change and outcomes and in terms of process by how gender equality, for example, was integrated in the planning, monitoring and implementation stages of the project.

#### ***Selecting the appropriate evaluation approach and methods***

Specifying evaluation approach and methodology for the evaluation at the time of preparing the terms of reference can be challenging before the evaluator or evaluation team is on board. The development of evaluation approach and methodology involves:

- Determining the design
- Choosing information collection methods
- Determining the methods of data analysis

In order to establish whether a project has brought about change, the situation before and after the implementation of the project must be compared (i.e., comparison of before and after). For this method to be employed, baseline data need to be established before project implementation.

For changes that can or have been observed after the implementation of the project, it is important to determine whether the changes observed can be directly attributed to the project and UN-Habitat's role in the project. One way to do this is to explore the "counterfactual," which means asking "what would have happened without UN-Habitat's involvement"? UN-Habitat contribution can be determined with more certainty if it can be shown that a similar change would not likely have taken place without the project.

The objectives of the evaluation and evaluation questions largely determine which methods of data collection that are most appropriate and are aligned with the evaluation design. The following considerations may help to determine which method of data collection would be appropriate:

- What data is already available and what needs to be collected?
- What data collection method will best answer the evaluation questions?
- What resources and time are available for data collection?
- What method will ensure stakeholder involvement?
- Can the validity/ accuracy and reliability (consistency in results using the same method) of data be strengthened through a mixed qualitative/ quantitative approach?

The quality of the evaluation very much depends on the methods used. A mixed methods approach is used in nearly all UN-Habitat's evaluations. The mixed methods approach in UN-Habitat often include desk study review of documents, key informant interviews and consultations, focus group discussions, survey, observation and field visits. The evaluation approach and methods section of the TOR should outline each method to be used and describe data collection methods and analysis.

Participatory tools for consultation with stakeholder groups and inclusion of beneficiary groups/ individuals and women and youth should be considered and ensure key stakeholders are not discriminated against during the evaluation process. The evaluator will elaborate on the rationale for selection and their limitations in the inception report and evaluation report. The evaluator should also detail how protection of subjects and respect for confidentiality will be guaranteed. A UN-Habitat evaluation must adhere to principles of respect for dignity and diversity, fair representation, compliance with codes for vulnerable groups (e.g., ethics of research involving young children or vulnerable groups), confidentiality and avoidance of discrimination and harm.

Data analysis is the search for patterns and relationships in data and is guided by the evaluation questions. There are many different tools for analysing qualitative and quantitative data. Whichever method is chosen, there should be a process for verifying findings and data. The project manager and the reference group should work with the evaluator or evaluation team to review the findings of the evaluation within the context of the project, organization, etc., to identify possible explanations for unexpected results and determine the conclusions that can be drawn from the data without unduly influencing the recommendations.

#### 4.4 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES OF GENDER EQUALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, YOUTH PARTICIPATION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SAFEGUARDS IN EVALUATIONS

In UN-Habitat, cross-cutting issues need to be taken into account in carrying out evaluations. These include gender equality, youth participation, human rights, and climate change. UN-Habitat is committed to ensuring that these basic principles are reflected in all its programming activities and throughout the project cycle. Since 2016, all concepts and project proposals reviewed by the Project Approval Group are assessed and rated against compliance with cross-cutting "markers". This means a contextual analysis has been made of each cross-cutting issue and the cross-cutting issues may also be reflected in the logical framework.

A UN-Habitat project for consideration of the PAG must receive a final rating of '1' or more in order to be approved in terms of analysis and relevant issue-related indicators. This final rating will be recorded in PAAS. Projects rated '0' (i.e., blind/negative rating by the respective cross-cutting teams) will be disallowed to move to the Umoja stage to access funding. Projects planned before 2016 and now due for

evaluation may not have applied the full extent of cross-cutting issues in the design and logical framework.

The terms of reference should contain questions to assess whether the gender equality, human rights, youth participation and climate change have been adequately considered by the project during its

implementation. Gender equality can be integrated throughout the evaluation process (Box 7). The project manager will have the greatest influence at the initial consideration stage and it is important that the project manager have a good understanding of the relevance to the project to be evaluated and their application system, or seek assistance during the development of the TOR.

### BOX 7: INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY IN UN-HABITAT EVALUATION PROCESSES

#### Evaluation Preparation

- **Evaluability**—exercise to identify gender equality dimensions (does the project have gender equality as primary focus, or not?) and if an evaluation is needed and likely to provide useful information.
- **Stakeholders Analysis**—to identify who are the different groups in the project, and why and how they should be included in the evaluation process. Possibility of positive bias, by focusing on beneficiaries only.
- **Evaluation Team**—Consultant(s) should have gender balanced evaluation knowledge and experience, sector knowledge, understanding of UN mandate in gender equality, knowledge of region/ country/local context and language.

#### Evaluation Methodology

- **Evaluation Criteria**—Gender equality can be applied to the five standard criteria (Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability) and possibility of adding equality, participation, social transformation, inclusiveness, and empowerment.
- **Evaluation Questions**—Use Theory of Change (i.e., outlining the results chain and integrated with the project's logframe).
- **Evaluation Approach and Methodology**—mixed methods approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data based on consideration of resources, adequate sample, stakeholder participation, and use existing data sets, and need for triangulation of data and validation of findings.
- **Evaluation Indicators**—ideally from project's logframe of both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Specific indicators can also be created during the evaluation planning stage (in the TORs and evaluation inception report).
- **Data Collection Methods and Tools**—mixed methods approach (desk review, focus groups, interviews, surveys).
- **Data Analysis**—understanding the context of gender equality and analyse/ interpret within that understanding.

#### Evaluation Report and Use

- **Evaluation Report**—Standard format for UN-Habitat evaluation reports, which include purpose and objectives, approach, findings (achievements and performance assessment of evaluation criteria), conclusions, lessons learned, recommendations.
- **Validation Process**—review process of draft reports involving key stakeholders.
- **Management Response**—accept/ not accept recommendations and implementation responsibility and time plan.
- **Dissemination Strategy**—identify users of report to decide on language and format (report and brief). For evaluation reports and briefs see [www.unhabitat.org/evaluation](http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluation).

*Source: Adapted from - UNEG (2011), Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation: Towards UNEG Guidance*



The evaluation should reflect on whether the contextual analysis of the cross-cutting issues in the project document was incorporated into activities and reflected during implementation.

### *Gender equality and empowerment*

Gender mainstreaming approach in urban and human settlement is done through analysis, advocacy, networking, results-based project management and high quality information management and communication. It requires that gender equality considerations are integrated into projects in all themes and sectors, and where appropriate targeted to women or men specifically, provided that the intention is also to change mainstream thinking and action so that gender equality is achieved. In UN-Habitat, gender results are planned for in projects in the thematic areas (branches) and regionally (regional offices) as part of the strategic plan 2014-2019.

Gender analysis is a socio-economic analysis that exposes the manner in which gender relations affect an issue of development. The analysis focuses on differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men and their assigned gender roles.

Gender equality indicators measure performance and require the collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data. These measure: differences in participation, benefits, outcomes, and impacts for women, men, boys and girls; changes in gender relations (positive or negative); and how these changes impact on achievement of development objectives.

### *Human rights*

All programmes of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should further the realisation of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights and other international human rights instruments.

Rights considered relevant to most of the work of UN-Habitat can be found in right to housing, right to water, right to land and the social concept of “right to the city”. The Right to Adequate Housing is found in: Article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on ‘forced eviction’ all projects should incorporate an eviction impact assessment. The Right to Water has not been explicitly recognized as a self-standing human right in international treaties. However, international human rights law entails specific obligations related to access to safe drinking water that require States to ensure everyone’s access to a sufficient amount of safe drinking water for personal and domestic uses. The right to land is an emerging right not yet recognized in any International Convention with binding force. However, for its relevance, many countries have land rights and tenure security protected through their constitutions.

The Right to the City (RTTC) is not founded in international law, but is rather a social movement. It is not to be confused with human rights relevant in the context of urban development. Different stakeholders interpret the content of this concept differently and sometimes can be in contradiction with each other. By comparison human rights are internationally agreed norms with clear definitions and obligations. The “Right to the City” may not be used in replacement of human rights.

UN-Habitat promotes the wider developing concept of Human Rights in Cities for All, which denotes mainstreaming of the 2003 UN Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation within the purview of the mandate of UN-Habitat based on the UN Common Understanding.

All evaluation designs should include consideration for the extent to which relevant human rights aspects were incorporated in the design, and detail how relevant human rights aspects will be assessed using a specific approach and methods for data collection that is human rights based. Similar to other UN programmes, UN-Habitat utilizes the human rights-based approach (HRBA) in all its projects. The TOR should also specify the level of experience needed by the evaluations or evaluation team on human rights and the other cross-cutting issues.

### *Youth engagement*

Youth is a cross-cutting issue for UN-Habitat, reflecting the commitment UN-Habitat has to ensure that people who would otherwise be marginalized because of their age have a voice in the process of urbanization. This is reinforced as per the following Governing Council (GC) resolutions on youth: 19/13 – Enhancing the Engagement of Youth in the Work of UN-Habitat, 20/1– Youth and Human Settlements, 21/6– Urban Youth Development, 22/1– Strengthening the Development of Urban Young People, 23/7– Urban Youth Development: The Next Step.

Constituting the majority of the population in many rapidly urbanizing countries, youth need to be taken into account for urban development to be inclusive. As a means to this end, UN-Habitat’s projects should reflect how youth are likely to be affected by the issues at hand, and further, how youth can be involved in the project cycle to address them.

A youth analysis helps uncover linkages between the project and youth within the targeted community. Conducting a youth analysis entails collecting data relevant to youth, either qualitative or quantitative. Analyzing an issue from the standpoint of youth is the first step towards addressing the youth dimensions of urban development. This analysis interprets data and information about

a situation from a youth perspective, i.e., the issues specific to youth in their given roles, activities, needs and available opportunities.

In projects the youth are recognized as stakeholders, experts and/or target group in the different stages of the project and by collecting age disaggregated data in project document or logical framework.

### *Climate change*

UN-Habitat’s approach to climate change is outlined in its climate change strategy. Climate is described as the average course or condition of the weather at a place usually over a period of years as exhibited by temperature, wind velocity, precipitation and humidity. A shelter or a building is designed to protect its occupants from the adverse conditions of the weather. As we choose our clothing according to the seasons, buildings’ envelop should be designed to respond to its micro-climate. It can respond to the need for thermal comfort. Green building design strategies address each of the following climatic data: temperature, solar radiation, relative humidity, rainfall and wind. The way buildings are planned and designed today has a direct implication on the energy consumption, hence they have a strong potential to negatively or positively impact two important elements of every day life: our environment and energy bills. Their contribution to climate change mitigation on greenhouse gas emission is directly related to the way they are designed in relation to local climate, the site specific characteristics and the embodied energy of the entire construction process.

Some projects will have explicit and measureable climate benefits. For example, city-level projects designed primarily to improve urban air quality may also lead to reduced emissions of greenhouse gases as a climate ‘mitigation’ benefit. In other cases projects that seek to buttress the resilience of

cities to confront various shocks and stresses may also yield climate ‘adaptation’ results. In such cases, project documents can be reformulated to make the climate benefits more explicit.

### *Environmental and social safeguards*

Safeguard standards define the environmental and social objectives and principles that apply to all projects and to the staff that work on those projects. UN-Habitat is committed to applying environmental and social safeguard standards to do-no-harm and avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment. Where avoidance is not possible, adverse impacts will be minimized, mitigated and managed by applying the applicable safeguard standards and procedures as outlined in UN-Habitat’s Environmental and Social Safeguards System, which came into effect in January 2017.<sup>17</sup>

Projects are reviewed and approved by the Project Approval Group for environmental and social safeguards and mitigation plans similar to the process of applying gender, youth, human rights and climate change markers. There is need for environmental and social mitigation plans in projects that address land acquisitions, loss of natural areas or important habitats and biodiversity, soil and land degradation, displacement of housing or farms or involuntary resettlements, damage to valuable historical and religious/ cultural and archeological resources and pollution. Such projects may cause contamination, conflicts, debris, and risks to health and safety.

Evaluators will assess mitigation measures and activities performed by projects during the implementation phase to prevent and minimize possible negative impacts on the environment and people.

## 4.5 SELECTING THE EVALUATION TEAM

The selection of evaluators is based on the TOR. It specifies the extent of the evaluation work expected, the size and qualifications of the team required and provides estimated number of days required to undertake the evaluation. The full TOR should be included as an attachment to the short advertisement, which is posted by UN-Habitat. If resources allow, an evaluation team of two or more consultants is ideal because they can provide a broader range of expertise and perspectives in the team.

For example, the project manager could hire one evaluation expert and one thematic substantive expert and, to the extent possible at least one of the consultants should have UN-Habitat relevant expertise. Alternatively, hire one international consultant with extensive evaluation expertise and one national consultant (national to the geographical location of the project) familiar to the context and language to support the international consultant during data collection. Gender balance and geographic representation should also be considered. Evaluators are required to submit one or two examples of evaluation reports recently completed when responding to the consultancy vacancy announcement.

<sup>17</sup> UN-Habitat (2017), *UN-Habitat Environmental and Social Safeguards System, Version 1.0, 9th December 2016*.

The expertise, skills and experience needed will depend on the scope and methodology and the evaluation. The TOR should specify as clearly as possible what the profile of the evaluator or team should be, to attract strong candidates for conducting the evaluation (Box 8).

### BOX 8: EXAMPLES OF EVALUATOR QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE

Ideally, an evaluator should have both proven evaluation skills and substantive expertise in the area of work as well as be familiar with UN-Habitat and its sustainable urban development mandate. Some key qualifications and skills:

- Knowledge and understanding of UN and UN-Habitat's role in promoting sustainable urbanization, human settlement issues in general and interlinkages to other areas, especially normative work, research and advocacy.
- Extensive proven experience in conducting evaluations and delivering professional results, presenting credible findings derived from evidence and putting conclusions and recommendations supported by the findings. Examples of evaluation reports produced by lead evaluator to be included in expression of interest.
- More than 15 years of experience in results-based management, professional project management and monitoring and evaluation.
- Experience in implementation of projects in the geographic area, fully acquainted with conflict and post-conflict development projects, country experience and similar intervention in fragile states.
- The international consultants must be fluent in English; working knowledge of local language is an advantage.
- Advanced academic degree in urban development, environment, gender, housing, infrastructure, governance, or related fields.
- It is envisaged that the team members would have a useful mix of experience and academic training relevant to the project evaluated and be gender-balanced.

### TIP: SEARCH FOR EVALUATION CONSULTANTS IN INSPIRA

Find Personal History Profiles of applicants for evaluation consultancies in UN-Habitat in Inspira and the UN-Habitat e-Roster.

The selection of evaluation team should consider:

- Whether the evaluation is to be conducted by an individual or a team?
- What specific expertise, skills, and prior experience the evaluators are required to have? Evaluators must have extensive experience in carrying out evaluations, technical knowledge of the topic that is being evaluated as well as other specific expertise, such as country-specific knowledge, language skills, and an understanding of UN-Habitat and the organizational context in which it operates. The Evaluation Unit will be available to provide support in identifying suitable candidates.
- Distinguish between desired and mandatory competences, as well as whether competencies are required by the whole team or by certain team members.
- The expected distribution of responsibilities among the team leader and other team members.
- Additional information that will assist in gauging the qualifications of evaluators.

The recruitment and selection of external evaluation consultants follows standard procedures for recruitment of consultants in UN-Habitat either through Umoja and Inspira or by UNOPS. In the selection of external evaluator, consider carefully all of the expertise that may be required to the evaluation. Evaluation expertise is a highly specialized skill that requires training and experience and it is not the same as having monitoring, reporting and oversight experience.

Undertake an open and competitive process to recruit the evaluation team. The process should be impartial, fair and transparent, and there needs to be sufficient time allowed for the recruitment. Request support from the branch or regional office evaluation focal point and the Evaluation Unit at Headquarters to circulate the vacancy opportunity amongst their evaluation networks and public websites. The contract for the external evaluator should specify three deliverables of the evaluation, namely: An inception report with evaluation work schedule, draft evaluation report for review, and final evaluation report.

### *Avoiding conflict of interest*

Impartiality is the absence of bias in due process and ensures credibility of the evaluation. In order to avoid conflict of interest, those who are involved in the evaluation process must be impartial and have no vested interest in the project. Therefore, for decentralized evaluations, the project manager of the project to be evaluated should not have sole decision-making responsibility in the evaluation process, including the selection of the external evaluator or evaluation team and approval of the final evaluation report but involve the regional director or branch coordinator.

In centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Unit, which is independent of management and line functions, ensures impartiality. Also

the external evaluator should not have been involved in the design or implementation of the project.

Evaluators must have personal and professional integrity. Evaluators must be sensitive to and tackle issues of discrimination and gender inequality and acknowledge different perspectives and views. If an evaluator encounters evidence of suspected wrongdoing, the evaluator must promptly report them in writing to the appropriate authority, bearing in mind that the related investigation is not under their authority.

## **4.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

After drafting the TOR the project manager should share it with the evaluation focal point of the branch or regional office for review and feedback. Then the TOR should be shared with the Evaluation Unit at Headquarters. For centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Unit will make sure to share the TOR for review.

The reference group should also receive the TOR to ensure common understanding of the purpose and focus of the evaluation, facilitate ownership and manage expectation of key stakeholders and their role in the evaluation process.

The evaluation process requires the project manager to invest considerable time. Project managers often underestimate the time and resources required once the evaluator is board and the evaluation process starts. The evaluator is likely in most cases to be unfamiliar with some aspects of the project to be evaluated or the UN-Habitat legacy of the focus area or regional portfolio and relies on the project manager to identify data sources and source persons for documentation and contacts.

## SUMMARY

- The first step of conducting an evaluation is to identify an evaluation manager. The evaluation manager is often also the project manager for practical reasons. For centralized evaluations, the evaluation manager will be a staff of the Evaluation Unit.
- After appointing the evaluation manager, the next steps are to prepare/ confirm the evaluation work plan and budget, consider evaluability and stakeholder engagement, prepare terms of reference, make vacancy announcement for evaluation consultant(s), and select and establish the evaluator/ evaluation team.
- All UN-Habitat evaluations are participatory evaluations, which involve stakeholders such as donors, project managers, partners, beneficiaries and governing bodies. Stakeholders of an evaluation should be identified in the terms of reference of the evaluation, and should ideally be involved in the preparation of the terms of reference.
- The evaluation reference group is a mechanism to ensure the active involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process. A reference group performs an oversight function that helps ensure transparency of the evaluation process as well as generate a sense of ownership and participation among reference group members. Reference groups have proved to be useful in evaluations of programmes of UN-Habitat hosted secretariats, projects with steering committee and advisory board set-up, and joint projects.
- The project manager prepares the terms of reference once the decision is made to proceed with an evaluation. The terms of reference is developed by the Evaluation Unit, if it is managing the evaluation. A terms of reference consists of sections on background and context, mandate of the evaluation, purpose and objectives of the evaluation, scope and focus, evaluation questions based on evaluation criteria, stakeholder involvement, evaluation approach and methodology, evaluation team/ evaluator, qualifications and experience of the evaluation team, responsibilities and evaluation management, deliverables, resources, and provisional timeframe. A good terms of reference contains all these necessary sections (*see section 4.3*).
- Resources are determined by the evaluation budget. The costs are determined by calculating the consultant(s) fee(s), travel costs, daily substance allowance, and any other costs such as translation/ proofing, layout and printing of the evaluation report.
- Cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights, youth participation, and climate change need to be taken into account in carrying out evaluations. The terms of reference of the evaluation should contain questions in the section 'evaluation questions based on evaluation criteria' to assess whether the cross-cutting issues have been adequately considered by the project during its design and implementation.
- UN-Habitat has adopted environmental and social safeguards, which define the environmental and social objectives and principles that apply to all projects and to the staff that work on those projects. In an evaluation, evaluators will assess mitigation measures and activities performed by projects during the implementation phase to prevent and minimize possible negative impacts on the environment and people.
- The selection of evaluators is based on the terms of reference in terms of work expected, qualifications and experience of the evaluation team, size of evaluation team, and estimated number of days. In order to avoid conflict of interest, the project manager should not have sole decision-making responsibility in the section of evaluator(s) but should involve the regional director or branch coordinator. The evaluator(s) should not have been involved in the design or implementation of the project. In centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Unit—independent of line functions, ensures impartiality in the evaluation process, including selection of an evaluator.

## 5. INITIATING AND MANAGING THE EVALUATION

### 5.1 MANAGING THE EVALUATION CONSULTANT OR TEAM

An open and clear line of communication between the evaluation consultant or team and the project manager is necessary. The project manager ensures evaluation ethics and standards are met by the evaluator and monitors progress. Supporting the evaluation team should not interfere with the evaluation process in ways that could jeopardize the evaluation's impartiality.

Supporting the evaluation process during this stage will include:

- Providing comments and quality assurance on deliverables
  - Organizing relevant background documentation required by the evaluation team
  - Briefing the evaluator on the project, purpose and scope of the evaluation and any relevant contextual information
  - Facilitating connections with stakeholders for information and data collection and establishing a schedule of interviews, surveys, etc., for the evaluation team
  - Providing support in addressing emerging issues as they arise in the collection and analysis of information and data
  - Communicating on a regular basis with the evaluator to provide support
  - Sharing evaluation products with the evaluation focal point of the branch or regional office and members of the reference group for comment and compiling feedback
- Providing logistical support to the evaluator, including organizing the schedule of interviews and meetings for site visits
  - Ensuring the evaluator has a plan for safety and security when visiting project sites
  - Ensuring the evaluator has a plan for applying ethical standards in the conduct of the evaluation

The project manager and regional/ branch evaluation focal point should screen deliverables for quality prior to sharing with the Evaluation Unit and evaluation reference group. This step is very important due to the time constraints of the Evaluation Unit and members of the reference group.

If the deliverable is of satisfactory quality, it can be shared with the members of the reference group and the Evaluation Unit for comments, typically with a one to two weeks' timeframe.

For centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Unit is the primary point of managing the evaluator or evaluation team. In decentralized evaluations, the project manager from branch, regional office or country office is the main point of contact.

Assisting the evaluation team during the evaluation process helps building mutual trust and respect and minimizes surprises in the draft report. Project managers may not have an answer for every question of the evaluator, but they can take a lead on findings answers.

**TIP: IMPARTIALITY IN EVALUATION INTERVIEWS**

To ensure the impartiality of the evaluation process, the project manager should not accompany evaluators or participate in individual interviews with stakeholders or other data collection (unless it is a self-evaluation or participatory data collection method), as it may result in biased results and affect the credibility of the evaluation.

It is important that evaluation managers are aware of the potential risks to the conduct of an evaluation and plan in advance to mitigate or minimize them.

Some common risks to evaluation conduct include:

- Evaluator proves incompetent, lacks substantive expertise or display inappropriate ethics or attitude
- Stakeholders are alienated by the evaluator or evaluation team
- Time proves too short
- Budget proves too low
- Project logical framework is missing, or there is no baseline
- Documentation is not catalogued, scattered or unattainable.

As project manager there are ways to mitigate these common risks. In the case of an evaluator that proves to be incompetent or lack skills and expertise to conduct the evaluation may, it may be necessary to end the contract if the evaluation team is unable to deliver and exhibiting inappropriate behaviour.

Corrective action could also be taken such as adding expertise to the team. But, it is not appropriate to terminate a contract on ground that stakeholders are not happy with the findings of the evaluation.

To avoid stakeholders feeling alienated by the evaluation team, try finding appropriate ways for engaging stakeholders as part of the inception report. Make sure initial communications are set up well. Test the team's sensitivity to cultural, social and local norms. Discuss with the team and identify how to meaningfully engage with stakeholders that feel alienated.

It is quite common, due to delaying circumstances during the planning of the evaluation that time or budget is insufficient. Invest time in discussing the TOR during the initial phase so that the evaluation design matches the time schedule and budget available. The inception report should clearly identify limitations of the evaluation and how the evaluation team will mitigate or adjust to the limitations or constraints. During the conduct of the evaluation, look for ways to modify design, methods or data and interview sampling to reduce time and costs. As a last resort, ask for an extension or more funds.

UN-Habitat has a process in place for design of new projects and approval through the Project Advisory Group and Regional Project Approval Groups; however, some projects may not have a full or adequate logical framework. The project manager or the evaluation team should reconstruct or develop it as part of the task outlining the Theory of Change in the inception report.<sup>18</sup> The availability of a baseline should be assessed in the initial phase of developing the Terms of Reference or in the inception report and the baseline reconstructed where possible.

<sup>18</sup> See earlier Box 2: Assessing impact of the Global Land Tool Network with "pathways of change" on case of the reconstructing the theory of change and logical framework for the mid-term evaluation of GLTN in chapter 1.4 Evaluation in results-based management.



## 5.2 INCEPTION PHASE

The inception phase is an important initial phase of the evaluation process. It helps to forge a common understanding between the project manager and the evaluator or evaluation team on the full design of the evaluation and how it will be implemented. The inception phase is an opportunity to further clarify the TOR and any areas of uncertainty in relation to scope and expectations. The inception phase also provides an opportunity to develop a common understanding of evaluation questions, and to clarify the process, resource requirements, responsibilities and time schedule for deliverables. It is important to discuss the accessibility of prospective interviewees, information and data, and alternative methods, if data is unavailable.

### Inception meetings

Meetings with the evaluator, project manager and the branch or regional office evaluation focal point should take place in the inception phase. Members of the reference group and the Evaluation Unit may also participate. These meetings can take place over the phone, via Skype or in person, resources allowing. Inception meetings are an opportunity for the evaluator to introduce themselves and to gain clarity on the project and context in which the evaluation will take place. They also allow for the project manager to have preliminary contact with the evaluator, introduce the purpose and approach of the evaluation, and facilitate further exchange on data collection.

### Inception report

The inception phase culminates in an inception report produced by the evaluator. The inception report is a key document that serves as a road map for managing the overall evaluation process. The inception report is largely prepared based on the TOR, preliminary desk review of key project documentation and outcomes of the inception meetings between the evaluator and the

project manager and the members of the reference group. It also benefits from the preliminary review of relevant documentation and consultation with relevant staff and stakeholders.

The inception report includes the following:

- Proposed methods and analysis frameworks, including theory of change
- Data collection procedures and sources
- Results of an evaluability assessment or scanning
- Review of documentation and scoping conducted
- A work schedule with associated activities, deliverables, timetables, roles and responsibilities, as well as travel and logistical arrangements for the evaluation.

The inception report should be very clear on how the evaluation team will report to and engage with the evaluation manager and management and reference groups throughout the evaluation process. The inception report should comply with UNEG Norms and Standards and the *UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy*. Table 5 is a checklist for the outline of an inception report.

### Review of the inception report

The inception report should undergo a rigorous review before it is approved. The review must address the appropriateness of the proposed evaluation design, methodology and data collection instruments. It should examine the structure and clarify of reporting, proposed mechanisms to assure confidentiality of data and information, engagement of stakeholders, adherence to evaluation quality standards, and integration of gender equality, human rights, youth participation and climate change, as relevant, in the design of the evaluation. Stakeholders should be given one to two weeks to provide feedback.

**TABLE 6: CHECKLIST FOR PROPOSED OUTLINE OF THE INCEPTION REPORT**

Section	Content Header
1.	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background and context</li> <li>• Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation</li> <li>• Theory of change</li> </ul>
2.	Approach and Methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach: Use of evaluation criteria and elaboration of key evaluation questions</li> <li>• Methodology: Evaluation design (describe methods of data collection and analysis, potential target groups for discussion and interviews, surveys)</li> <li>• Limitations to the evaluation</li> </ul>
3.	Summary of key aspects of evaluation, specifying what will be evaluated and how (well to capture in initial submission)
4.	Work plan (task schedule with timing)
5.	Responsibilities, logistics and support
Annexes	Annex 1: TOR Annex 2: List of documents reviewed Annex (if applicable), interview questionnaire or survey questionnaire

The UN-Habitat project manager in coordination with the reference group (see chapter 2.2 for description of roles and responsibilities and 4.2 on stakeholder participation) should approve the final inception report before the evaluation team undertakes any primary data collection. Once approved, the inception report replaces the TOR as key reference document and will form the basis for guiding the entire evaluation process through its finalization.

Roles and responsibilities for quality assurance of the inception report are outlined in table 6.

### 5.3 DATA COLLECTION

Once the inception report is approved, the evaluation team can begin collecting data. The project manager should provide logistical support to the evaluator to facilitate data collection.

However, with the exception of self-evaluation or participatory data collection activities, the UN-Habitat project manager should not participate in data collection activities, as this would interfere with the impartiality of the process. The evaluator is responsible for addressing translation needs, if necessary.

**TABLE 7: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INCEPTION REPORT**

Role	Responsibilities
Evaluation Team or Evaluator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepares the inception report, which should reflect an agreed upon approach and design for the evaluation from the perspective of both the evaluation team and the evaluation manager.</li> </ul>
Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducts a preliminary assessment of the quality of the report. If it is not of good quality, it should be sent back to the evaluation team.</li> <li>Provides substantive comments on the conceptual and methodological approach and other aspects of the evaluation design.</li> <li>Establishes mechanisms for communication, consultation and presentation of the report (Skype, phone, video-conference, e-mail, and where possible, workshops or meetings).</li> <li>Coordinates feedback on the draft and final report from evaluation focal point, management and members of the reference group.</li> <li>Approves the inception report.</li> </ul>
Members of the Reference Group including the Branch or Regional Office Evaluation Focal Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides substantive comments and other operational assistance throughout the preparation of the draft and final inception report.</li> <li>Where appropriate, participates in meetings and workshops with other key stakeholders before finalization of the inception report.</li> </ul>

In order to maximize stakeholder participation in the evaluation, the project manager should support the evaluator during data collection in the following ways:

- Consult partners regarding the evaluation and the proposed schedule for data collection.
- Arrange for a debriefing by the evaluator prior to completion of data collection to present preliminary and emerging findings or gaps in information to the evaluation manager, evaluation focal point from the branch or regional office and the reference group.
- Ensure the stakeholders identified through the stakeholder analysis are being included, in particular the most vulnerable or difficult to reach, and provide logistical support as necessary contacting stakeholder and arranging for transportation.
- Ensure that the evaluator is abiding by the ethical principles of the United Nations System.

Data collection should follow the approach outlined in the inception report. If it is necessary to change the evaluation activities during the course of the evaluation, changes should be discussed with the project manager. Any changes made to the approach or data collection tools could introduce systematic error or bias and thus compromise findings. Thus, it is necessary to weigh the benefits of these changes with the disadvantages. Specific safeguards must be put in place to protect the safety (both physical and psychological) of both respondents and those collecting the data (Box 9). It is the project manager's responsibility—or in the case of centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Unit—to ensure that a safe place for reflection and free and meaningful participation is created.

### Ensuring high-quality evaluation data

The quality of project data available for an evaluation will impact the collection of evaluation data. It can be that there is no theory of change or limited baseline information. A project manager may also face challenges from high turnover of staff during the lifetime of a project, lack of

monitoring systems or weak documentation system, and inadequate resources and capacities for maintaining strong quality data. In these situations, the evaluator needs to take steps to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the project and are developing evaluation data collection tools that accurately measure the project's progress.

The evaluator should apply cultural sensitivity to ensure high quality of data and validity. A clear understanding of cultures and values will ensure that appropriate data collection methods and tools are developed. In particular, the evaluator should identify the complexity of cultural identities, identify power dynamics between and within different groups, and be cognizant of the use of language. Engaging with the members of the reference group and stakeholder groups who are the focus of data may contribute to a more culturally appropriate evaluation for considering multiple perspectives when interpreting findings.

The project manager should ensure the evaluator takes the following into account:

- If a theory of change or baseline does not exist, the evaluator can reconstruct these through stakeholder workshops
- Cultural aspects that could impact the collection of data should be analysed and integrated into data collection methods and tools
- There should be adequate time for testing data collection tools
- The limitations of the data should be understood and generalizing findings should be avoided unless a strong random sample was taken
- Use multiple methods of data collection and analysis (triangulation), which allows for validation across the multiple methods and sources
- Validate findings through engagement.

### BOX 9: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

In data collection, participatory methodologies are a key element. Participatory methodologies involve people. With the partial exception of infrastructure what goes under the name of development has people at or near the centre. People's realities—their lives and livelihoods the multifarious conditions they experience, their relationships, their values, their awareness and aspirations—these are complex and in continuous flux. The realities people commonly face can be characterized as local, complex, dynamic, diverse, uncontrollable and unpredictable. They are the only people who have expert knowledge of the complexities they experience. To the question: whose complexity counts? The answer has to be theirs and to gauge their views the evaluator must approach them with respect:

- Have a plan in place to protect the rights of the respondent, including privacy and confidentiality
- The interviewer or data collector should be trained in collecting sensitive information
- Data collection tools should be designed in a way that are culturally appropriate and do not create distress for respondents
- The interviewer or data collector should be able to provide information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support.

*Source: Course material Robert Chambers and Institution of Development Studies (no source indicated).*

## 5.4 ANALYSIS AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Information and data analysis is a continuous process throughout the evaluation. Once all information and data is collected, data is systematically organized, and comparison and synthesis is made of information and data derived and collected. The analysis includes an assessment of what the information is saying about each of the evaluation questions. Information from various methods of data collection and sources of information are used in order to triangulate the information and ensure robust findings. Ultimately, evaluators must make judgements based on the evidence. The evaluation report should

describe the analytical process undertaken and the underlying rationale for judgments made.

After conducting interviews with project management staff internal and external to UN-Habitat and other stakeholders, the evaluator or evaluation team may present its preliminary findings, for example, in an exit-meeting at the end of interviews and consultations with the project implementing team (Box 10).

The sharing of preliminary findings by the evaluation team will build understanding as the evaluation process is underway and lead to greater buy-in and use of evaluation results, but needs to have been built into the TOR, the inception report and the evaluation team's work schedule. This is an opportunity for the team to field emerging trends from primary data collection against the reactions of stakeholders and the reference group, as they may be able to provide further information, point out key gaps in data, errors of interpretation and validate the preliminary findings. After the meeting, the evaluator will make ensure to address any issues identified through the preliminary findings' workshop in the draft evaluation report.

## 5.5 ENSURING A HIGH QUALITY REPORT

The evaluation report is the main output of the evaluation. UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System instruct that "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 for overall analysis." 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 lessons were

distilled; and what recommendations were made." The evaluation report should also explain the context in which the project and the evaluation took place.<sup>19</sup>

An evaluation report is considered of 'good quality' when the evaluation report meets the formal requirements of the evaluator's contract, it conforms to the agreed format for structure and contents, and the report is well written and provides a satisfactory response to evaluation questions. The evaluation report should avoid technical jargon and other language that could marginalize stakeholders.

### BOX 10: SHARING PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN UN-HABITAT AND SWEDEN, 2012-2015

The evaluation team conducting the 2016 Evaluation of the Cooperation Agreement between UN-Habitat and Sweden to support the implementation of the UN-Habitat Institutional and Strategic Plans, 2012-2015 presented their preliminary results of the evaluation in an exit meeting. The meeting took place after review of documentation related to all 19 projects funded by the agreement and interviews and consultations with project management teams and other stakeholder. The meeting was held as an exit meeting at the end of interviews and consultations at the UN-Habitat Headquarters and field visits to project sites in Nairobi suburbs.

The purpose of the meeting was to share preliminary results of the evaluation and provide an opportunity for project managers and staff to give feed-back on the findings. The one hour meeting allowed for a welcome and re-introduction of the evaluators, for the evaluation manager (Evaluation Unit) to outline the evaluation process and for the evaluators to present the preliminary findings and respond to quires from staff participating in the meeting. Factual errors and perceptions were questioned and discussed. Information provided during the meeting was considered in the draft evaluation report.

*Source: UN-Habitat Evaluation Unit*

<sup>19</sup> See UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy, Section XII. Evaluation Reporting and Disseminating Evaluation Results, paragraphs 63-66.

The evaluation report will also:

- Provide an overview of the project that was evaluated
  - Describe how the project was designed and logic of cause and effect
  - Specify the evaluation methodology used and limitations. Only methods specified in the terms of reference and inception report should be used, and if not, clearly explain why
  - Answer the evaluation questions
  - Present factual findings systematically and for readers to form their own opinion
  - Provide just and unbiased conclusions
  - Highlight lessons learned related to intervention design, implementation, monitoring or evaluation
- Put forward recommendations supported by the finding and conclusions
  - Meet UN-Habitat’s layout and formatting requirements.

The final evaluation report should be organized according to the outline provided in table 7. The table of content serves as guidance for preparing meaningful, useful and credible evaluation reports. However, the evaluator is free to add sections—as relevant—given the context of the evaluation. Regardless of the choice made by the evaluator in terms of structure, what is most important is that the report is in line with the checklist for assessing evaluation reports and has clarity of reporting.

The UN-Habitat branding guidelines for formatting front matter of an evaluation report, especially front cover and logo and disclaimer should also be followed.

**TABLE 8: CHECKLIST FOR OUTLINE OF UN-HABITAT EVALUATION REPORT**

Title Page and Opening Pages	The following information should be easily accessible in the first few pages of the report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the name of the evaluated intervention and its location;</li> <li>2. duration of the intervention covered by the evaluation,</li> <li>3. month and year of the report;</li> <li>4. names and organization(s) of evaluators; and</li> <li>5. official disclaimer.</li> </ol>
Table of Contents	The table of contents should list sections with sub headings and annexes. Separate list of boxes, figures and tables should also be included.
Acronyms and Abbreviations	List of key terminology used by acronym in alphabetical order.
Executive Summary	This is a brief and concise summary of purpose, objectives and scope of evaluation, intended audience of the report, short description of methodology used including rationale for choice of methodology, data sources, analysis methods and evaluation limitations, main findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.  The summary should be a stand-alone synopsis of no more than 10 pages of the whole evaluation report, as it is the part of the report that most people with limited time will read.
1. Introduction	The introduction should contain concise information about intervention background and context, mandate for the evaluation, overall objectives, purpose and scope of the evaluation. It should specify in brief how and by whom the evaluation is intended to be used, and describe the outline of the report.

2. Overview of the Evaluated Intervention, Project or Programme	<p>Overview of the evaluated intervention should be as short as possible while ensuring that all important information is provided. The section should clearly describe the main characteristics of the evaluated intervention including its history and development, its theory of change (results chain) or logic model from input to output, outcome and impact, objectives and priorities, its implementation strategy and key assumptions.</p> <p>The budget of the intervention and timelines should be included in the section or attached in the annex for reference.</p> <p>The roles and contributions of various stakeholders should be briefly described, including financial contributions from donors. Progress of the intervention should be described and key outputs delivered should be included. This section should also cover the context of why the evaluation is being done in order to provide an understanding of the setting in which the evaluation took place. Reference to relevant UN-Habitat programmatic documents and mandates should be included.</p>
3. Evaluation Approach and Methodology	<p>This section should describe how and when the evaluation was carried out including the design of evaluation and justification of the methodology used and evaluation limitations. It should describe data collection and analysis methods, as well as evaluation criteria and evaluation questions used based on the Terms of Reference. Use of methods specified in the terms of reference and inception report should be mentioned, and if not, clearly explain why.</p> <p>The section should include a brief description of how gender equality aspects and (as relevant) cross-cutting issues of human rights, climate change and youth as well as environmental and social safeguards were incorporated in the evaluation.</p> <p>The information about process and methods used in the evaluation enable key stakeholders and users of the evaluation report to judge its reliability.</p>
4. Main Findings	<p>The section should contain an objective reporting of findings, not the opinion of the evaluator, and findings should be supported by evidence.</p> <p>The section should do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the level of achievement of each of the expected accomplishments of the project as ‘achieved’, ‘partly achieved’ or ‘not achieved’</li> <li>• Assess each of the evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact)</li> <li>• Assess the gender equality dimensions of the intervention, and assess other cross-cutting issues as relevant</li> <li>• Provide evidence to support conclusions and recommendations</li> <li>• Be coherent and free from internal contradictions</li> </ul>
5. Evaluative Conclusions	<p>Conclusions should be to the point and substantiated by findings consistent with data collected and methodology. Conclusions should add value to the findings. They should focus on issues of significance to the subject evaluated.</p> <p>Include a table with overview of rating of each evaluation criteria with a short justification for the rating given.</p> <p>The findings should consider both achievements, opportunities and challenges, and assess the overall achievement of the intervention taking into account positive and negative aspects.</p>
6. Lessons Learned	<p>Lessons learned are generalizations based on the evaluation experience and should be well supported by the findings of the evaluation. Often the lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in intervention planning, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact. Lessons should only be drawn if they represent contributions of value to general knowledge.</p> <p>The lesson learned should capture the situation or process that occurred during the project, action taken or alternatives considered to fix the issue, and what worked well and what can be improved upon. Other information that may help other project leaders or advice to future project teams can be included.</p>

7. Recommendations	<p>Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis. They should be specific, related to verifiable actions, identify the person or entity responsible for implementing the recommendation, practicable by bearing resources and other constraints in mind, recommendations should not contradict or seem to contradict each other and it should be clear from the recommendations what are primary concerns and which are secondary. In addition, recommendations should state responsibilities and timeframe for implementation, to the extent possible.</p> <p>It is advisable to keep the number of recommendations manageable, and not more than 10 to 15 recommendations.</p>
Annexes	<p>Annexes should be complete and relevant. They increase the usability and the credibility of the evaluation report. Additional supplementary information to the evaluation that should be included in annexes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annex 1: Terms of reference</li> <li>• Annex 2: List of persons interviewed (if confidentiality allows)</li> <li>• Annex 3: Project budget</li> <li>• Annex 4: Other relevant information, such as data collection instruments and questionnaires</li> <li>• Annex 5: Bibliography</li> </ul>

Lessons learned should be formulated as generalizations based on evaluation experiences with the projects evaluated that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact (Box 11).

The recommendations should have direct linkage to the findings and conclusions of the report and be actionable. For clarity, the evaluator can reference the findings that the recommendation relates to. The number of recommendations should be feasible for the office to implement or a foreseeable period (two - four years). UN-Habitat evaluation reports usually do not have more than 10 to 15 recommendations; these should be prioritized and addressed to specific stakeholders.

Recommendations should be specific, related to verifiable actions, identify the person or entity responsible for implementing the recommendation, practicable by bearing resources and other constraints in mind, recommendations should not contradict or

seem to contradict each other and it should be clear which recommendations are of primary concern and which are secondary.

## 5.6 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN REVIEWING THE EVALUATION REPORT

The involvement of stakeholders is a key principle in evaluation. It can foster empowerment and a broad sense of ownership contributing to a more credible and useful report, which can also facilitate implementation of recommendations.

Stakeholders, typically through the reference group, should be given the opportunity to comment on the draft report. The final evaluation report should reflect the evaluator's consideration of the comments and acknowledge any substantive disagreements.

Stakeholders should review the report to identify factual errors, omissions and misinterpretation of information and review the recommendations to ensure that they are feasible.



### BOX 11: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT ON 'IDENTIFICATION OF BEST PRACTICES, POLICIES AND ENABLING LEGISLATION'

The evaluation report of 'Identification of Best Practices, Policies and Enabling Legislation', identified a number of lessons learned. Specifically the lessons learned identified implementation approaches used by the project included good practices that need to be replicated on a broader scale:

- Technical support resources and deliverables built on existing initiatives and local government priorities. This raised the catalytic effect of outputs that contributed to broader objectives and, in some cases, leveraged parallel donor financing.
- Technical support was facilitative more than it was prescriptive. Participation was encouraged in the planning and delivery of project outputs. Technical assistance was designed around local contexts and priorities. These factors encouraged higher levels of local government ownership and commitment, as occurred with Nampula in Mozambique and some of the city-to-city alliances.
- UN-Habitat's presence at the country level was important in raising project effectiveness and efficiency. Project activities were often supportive of existing UN-Habitat initiatives, and in turn were assisted by at the country level by HPMs and programme staff (i.e., Mozambique and El Salvador).
- The project lacked an over-arching project vision and its components were implemented independently of each other. However, the combination of unrelated initiatives within the same project served risk management purposes, as at least some results were likely to be achieved. This arrangement also encouraged "economies of scale" by applying a common management and administrative framework to the four components, which may have lowered servicing costs (as opposed to implementing four separate projects).

Linkages between components could have been developed but this would need a more integrative approach. These linkages would have raised synergies between related outputs and results, enhancing aggregate impact.

The project's formulation was affected by particular circumstances that discouraged a more integrative design process; most of component initiatives were recycled from earlier project proposals. Although the components underwent successive revisions following the project's approval, they remained segregated and were implemented as "stand alone" initiatives. The revision exercises could also have served to identify linkages connecting outputs and results of the four components, and reflect these linkages in project work plans, so as to articulate a more integral programme approach.

Linkages between components can create internal synergies. For example, if the project was viewed as a dynamic system, the case studies and innovative practices derived from implementing decentralized technical assistance and pilot initiatives at municipal levels would have provided inputs for the dissemination of best practices, which in turn would have fed into capacity building initiatives and national/regional events, strengthening urban policies and building a regional platform for Habitat III and the New Urban Policy. This would have enabled a more programmatic approach by operationalizing linkages between complementary outputs and results, and streamlining arrangements for their execution.

**Source:** UN-Habitat (2015) *Identification of Best Practices, Policies and Enabling Legislation in the Local Delivery of Basic Urban Services (Phase 2): End of project evaluation (Evaluation Report 1/2015)*.

The evaluation report should indicate the stakeholders consulted and the criteria for their selection and level of participation. Divergent views from different stakeholders must be reflected in the report to ensure transparency of the evaluation process. The report should clearly state if views are that of the evaluator based on information collected

or the views of a stakeholder. Quotes from interviewees can be included in the report with indication of stakeholder group to highlight particular views but without including the name of the interviewee to ensure anonymity and maintain the confidentiality in which the views were transmitted to the evaluator.

## Maintaining impartiality and addressing wrongdoing

The evaluation is expected to provide an impartial and systematic assessment of the project. Therefore, involvement of stakeholders should not interfere with the impartiality of the evaluation. The evaluator has the final judgment on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report and the evaluator must be protected from pressures to change information in the report.

In the event that the evaluator identifies issues of wrongdoing, fraud or other unethical conduct UN-Habitat procedures should be followed that ensures confidentiality is maintained. Issues should be reported to the Director of the Division of Management and Operations, which in consultation with the Legal Unit will make a decision on next steps. More information on standards and ethics can be found on UN-Habitat intranet *Habnet* under 'fraud and corruption', including contact details to the OIOS investigation hotline.

## 5.7 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Only good quality evaluation reports can truly support results-based management and knowledge generation and provide accountability to stakeholders and beneficiaries. The evaluation manager is responsible for ensuring that the evaluation meets UN-Habitat evaluation quality standards and which the project and its stakeholders can use. In order to support UN-Habitat's branches and regional offices in producing high quality evaluation reports, the following process for quality assurance of the evaluation report has been instituted.

UN-Habitat evaluation managers should use these standards to assess the quality of evaluation reports. The evaluator should have the standards in mind while writing the report and can use the checklist before delivering the draft and final reports.

UN-Habitat has developed a template for reviewing the quality of an evaluation report to guide evaluation managers and evaluators on what constitutes a 'good quality' evaluation report in line with UNEG guidelines (Template 2). The template can be used as a checklist by the project manager in assessing compliance before accepting the report as final and pay the evaluation consultant. The quality review assesses the report structure, description of the evaluated project and key parameters:

- General overview of project evaluated and evaluation approach
- Structure, logic and clear format of the report
- Object of the evaluation
- Evaluation mandate, purpose, objective and scope
- Evaluation methodology
- Findings and evaluative conclusions
- Lessons learned and recommendations

### Quality assurance process for decentralized evaluations

The project manager and branch or regional office evaluation focal point should check the evaluation report for quality. If it does not meet the UN-Habitat evaluation report format requirements, it should be sent back to the evaluator for improvement. Once the report is of satisfactory quality to be shared with stakeholders and members of the reference group, they need to be given enough time to review and provide feedback—typically one to two weeks.

Once the project manager has approved the final report, the branch coordinator or regional director has the final approval, and the report must be approved within four weeks of finalization.

Centralized evaluation reports are subject to quality assurance review by the Evaluation Unit.

### Central quality review of evaluation reports

A review of the quality of all UN-Habitat evaluation reports is undertaken annually by an external evaluation consultant hired by the Evaluation Unit using the evaluation quality review template and the results are submitted the Senior Management Group and the Board and published (Template 2).

Aggregate performance results on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan Evaluation Performance Indicator on the integration of gender equity in evaluation reports are shared with UN Women, which will include results in its report to the United Nations Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming a gender perspective into the United Nations system.

The overall rating and assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation report indicates the credibility of the results

and determines the extent to which the report can be used for future programming and other purposes. The review of the quality of the evaluation report scores its key sections and determines the overall quality score of the report. The Evaluation Unit makes use of a five-point system: Excellent/ best practice (5), highly satisfactory (4), mostly satisfactory (3) and unsatisfactory (1 & 2), and not applicable (0) for the overall report.

In addition to sharing report quality scores with concerned offices to support improved quality and utility of evaluations UN-Habitat's Evaluation Unit presents the quality scores of reports to senior managers annually as part it's reporting on UN-Habitat progress towards key performance targets on evaluation.

### TEMPLATE 2: UN-HABITAT EVALUATION REPORT QUALITY REVIEW TEMPLATE

**Title of the evaluation report:**

**Month and year of the evaluation report:**

**Responsible Regional Office or Branch:**

**Type of report:**

Centralized evaluation report, decentralized evaluation report, joint evaluation report, or evaluation by with other entity.

**Date of the quality review:**

**Name of reviewer:**

**Level of independence:**

Extent to which independence of implementation and control of the evaluation activities were ensured in the evaluation process.

**Evaluation approach:**

Types include: mid-term, interim, end-of-project, impact, global programme, country programme

**Executive feedback on overall quality score:**

Feedback to be provided after completing sections I-VI and with both positive and negative feedback on the quality of the report.

**Section I: Report is Well Structured, Logic and Clear**

Question	Comments	Quality Score
1. Do the opening pages contain all the basic elements? Title of project evaluated, timeframe of the evaluation, UN-Habitat logo, disclaimer, table of contents, list of figures and tables, list of acronyms and abbreviations.		
2. Is the report logically structured and UN-Habitat's format for evaluation reports?		
3. Is an executive summary included as part of the report?		
4. Does the executive summary contain all the necessary elements? Elements include: Overview of the evaluated project; evaluation objectives and intended users; evaluation methodology; most important findings and conclusions; main recommendations		
5. Do the annexes contain appropriate elements, including Terms of Reference, project budget overview, list of interviewees, bibliography and questionnaire templates (if used)		

**Section II: Object of the Evaluation**

Question	Comments	Quality Score
1. Is the project of the evaluation described well?		
2. Is the context explained and related to the project that is to be evaluated?		
3. Is the results chain/ logic model/ project theory of change well-articulated?		
4. Are stakeholders clearly identified?		
5. Are key stakeholders' contribution described?		
6. Are UN-Habitat's contributions described?		
7. Are the implementation status and expenditure % of the project described?		

**Section III: Evaluation Mandate, Purpose, Objectives and Scope**

Question	Comments	Quality Score
8. Are the mandate and purpose of the evaluation clear?		
9. Are the evaluation's objectives and scope clear and realistic?		
10. Do the evaluation's objectives and scope relate the purpose of the evaluation?		
11. Does the evaluation provide a list of evaluation criteria that are appropriate for the purpose?		
12. Does the evaluation explain why the evaluation criteria were chosen and/or any standard evaluation criteria rejected?		
13. Are the interlinkages of the project to UN-Habitat's strategic plan, regional strategic plans and Habitat Country Programme Document and/or UNDAF described?		

### Section IV: Evaluation Methodology

Question	Comments	Quality Score
14. Does the report specify methods, data collection and analysis methods, sampling methods and limitations?		
15. Does the report specify data sources and data limitations?		
16. Does the evaluation make use of the project's log frame or other results framework to capture the theory of change and guide the assessment?		
17. Do the evaluation design, methodology and analytical framework consider and include information on gender equity, youth, human rights and climate change issues? Consider also application of environmental and social safeguards.  The inclusion of any of the cross-cutting issues should continue to cascade down the evaluation report and be obvious in the data analysis, findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.		
18. Are the levels of stakeholder consultation described?		
19. Is there an attempt to construct a counterfactual or address issues of contribution / attribution?		
20. Does the methodology facilitate answers to the evaluation questions in the context of the evaluation?		
21. Are methodological limitations acceptable for the task at hand?		

### Section V: Findings and Conclusions

Question	Comments	Quality Score
23. Are findings of results clearly presented by outputs and outcomes (and impacts where appropriate) and extent to which each expected accomplishment is achieved.  Findings should tell the whole story of the evidence and avoid bias. Expected accomplishment are rated in terms of achievement (not achieved, partially achieved, achieved).		
24. Are delivery gaps and limitations discussed?		
25. Do the findings address all of the evaluation's stated evaluation criteria and provide rating of level of satisfaction?  Key evaluation criteria include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact outlook		
26. Do the findings address all of the stated evaluation questions?		
27. Does the evaluation assess the extent to which the implementation of the evaluated project was monitored in terms of gender, youth, human rights or climate change issues?		
28. Are unexpected findings discussed?		
29. Does the evaluation make a fair and reasonable attempt to assign contribution for results to identified stakeholders?		
30. Are casual reasons for accomplishments and failures identified as much as possible?  Causal reasons should be based on the theory of change, which outlines causal pathways.		
31. Do conclusions summarize level of achievement of expected accomplishment and rating of performance based on evaluation criteria?		
32. Do the conclusions present both the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated project?		

- 
33. Do the conclusions represent actual insights into important issues that add value to the findings?
- 
34. Do conclusions take due account of the views of a diverse cross-section of stakeholders, including gender-based and youth and are views of the evaluator clearly indicated?
- 

#### Section VI: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Question	Comments	Quality Score
35. Are lessons learned correctly identified and based on project experience?	Findings and conclusions to the evaluated project are not lessons learned.	
36. Are lessons learned generalized to indicate what wider relevance they may have?	Lessons are contributions to general knowledge.	
37. Are the recommendations supported by the evidence, findings and conclusions reported?		
38. Are recommendations relevant to the project subject and the purpose of the evaluation?		
39. Are recommendations clearly stated and prioritized?		
40. Does each recommendation clearly identify the target group and action?		
41. Are the recommendations realistic in the context of the evaluation?		

## 5.8 MANAGING SELF-EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Self-evaluation is undertaken at the closing of the project, if the project value is under USD 1 million and above USD 300,000. For projects under USD 1 million, it is optional to conduct a full evaluation, but self-evaluation is required. The self-evaluation helps documenting performance and results achieved.

The process of self-evaluation is managed by the project manager or project implementing office with support of the project team. The project manager oversees the collection of data for filling the self-evaluation template

(Template 3), and is responsible for the rating of the project's performance in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact outlook.

In the template, the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact outlook should be recorded in a methodologically rigorous way. The extent to which cross-cutting issues (gender, youth, environment and human rights) were integrated in the project is also addressed and opportunities, challenges and lessons learned are identified. A good quality self-evaluation template uses: concrete supporting examples, data sources for verification.

### TEMPLATE 3: UN-HABITAT SELF-EVALUATION TEMPLATE

#### Instructions:

The purpose of the Project Narrative Self-Assessment Closure Report is to summarize the operational, administrative and substantive activities undertaken to implement projects. In order to provide a complete picture of project implementation activities, reports provide specific examples and anecdotes or attach supplementary materials. We will compare the information provided in this report with the signed project document. Please explain in full any changes in project implementation vis-a-vis the approved design and especially the project Logframe. We will review the report and will request additional information, if needed.

1. Title of Project/Programme (State the formal title based on the approved documents):

2. Project Leader/Manager:

3. Reporting Date:

4. Region/Country/Location of Project:

5. UN-Habitat Implementing Branch/Section/Unit:

6. Other UN Agency Implementing partner:

7. Project Duration (start and end date):

8. Total Project Approved Budget (USD):

9. Funding Source:

10. Project Extension:  Yes  No

11. Project Main Objective(s):

12. Project's Theory of Change or Strategy Description:

13. UN-Habitat Strategic Plan EAs link and Work Programme Outputs Delivered:

14. Cross-Cutting Issues Addressed and Strategy. (Briefly describe the issues, preferably using sex-disaggregated data.

What changes or results were/are planned in relation to the issues and what was achieved?).

15. Key Local/National Implementing Partners

16. Target beneficiaries (Briefly describe those who are targeted to benefit directly from the project institution and/or community).

17. Relevance (briefly describe how the project related to national priorities and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (if country level).

18. Effectiveness and efficiency (describe extent to which the project achieved its intended results and if the approach applied was efficient).

19. What impact/changes/benefits did/will the project create for the beneficiary communities and/or institutions (Briefly describe, sex-disaggregated where available). Describe Progress and/Achievements towards project i) EAs ii) Objectives and iii) gender issues addressed.

20. Sustainability and Replicability (Briefly describe how the project will keep and sustain the gains made by the project and the potential replicability/upscaling of the project).

21. Knowledge Products from the Project (List publications, tool kits and audio-visual materials produced from the project in their full bibliographical entry and/or with their web-links; who are target users of each of these).

22. Media Coverage and Outreach (List links or urls)

23. Any changes in project implementation vis-à-vis the approved design?

24. Lessons Learned: What did you learn that surprised you or you did not expect in the implementation of this project (provide lessons learnt that can inform other projects.)

a. What worked exceptionally well during implementation and why?

b. What did not work well during implementation and why? How can it be improved?

c. What surprised you or you did not expect?

25. Recommendations: Any action points for follow-up?

It is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure that the data and information in the self-evaluation template are correct and based on evidence. The completion of the template should be entrusted with project team members, who were involved in designing and delivery of the projects or are familiar with them.

The project manager can choose to involve the Evaluation Unit in the self-evaluation process and may also use a consultant to help collect the data, if resources were allocated for monitoring and evaluation in the budget of the project (Box 12).

### **BOX 12: SELF-EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED MUNICIPAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN AFGHANISTAN**

The Community-Based Municipal Support Programme (CBMSP) in Afghanistan exemplifies the strategic progression of UN-Habitat's work in Afghanistan to focus more on good governance rather than direct provision of basic services through communities. The Programme demonstrated the importance of not only 'talking' but also delivering services directly to vulnerable and excluded communities; delivering concrete outputs on the ground are essential to build trust and improve living conditions of the urban poor.

For the self-evaluation of the Programme, a project consultant was tasked by the UN-Habitat Afghan country office to help prepare and complete the self-evaluation template, and collect additional data by undertaking field visits to communities in cities of Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif to gauge perceptions of direct beneficiaries, and conducting interviews with the CBMSP programme team. Interviews were held with 16 beneficiaries and 15 project related staff,

including members of the Programme team, the Senior Human Settlements Officer at UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) responsible for oversight and from donor side, the portfolio manager at the Embassy of Japan in Kabul.

Preliminary findings and lessons emanating from the evaluation of the Programme were presented and discussed during a UN-Habitat Afghan Office Management meeting held on 19 March 2015. The Evaluation Unit at UN-Habitat's Headquarters provided support during the evaluation process and reviewed the quality of the template and reviewed the internal evaluation report that was produced based on the information collected in the self-evaluation template.

*Source: Evaluation Unit, UN-Habitat (2015), Internal Evaluation of the community-based Municipal Support Programme.*



## SUMMARY

- Supporting the evaluation team should not interfere with the evaluation in progress in ways that could jeopardize the evaluation's impartiality. For that reason, a project manager should not accompany evaluators or participate in individual interviews with stakeholders or other data collection (unless it is a self-evaluation or participatory data collection method), as it may result in biased results and affect the credibility of the evaluation.
- Some common risks to an evaluation conduct include: Evaluator proves incompetent or displays inappropriate ethics, stakeholders are alienated by the evaluator, time is too short, budget is too low, logical framework is missing, or documentation is scattered or unattainable.
- As project manager there are ways to mitigate these common risks. For example, by taking corrective action to end the contract of the evaluator or add expertise to the evaluation team or try finding appropriate ways for engaging stakeholders as part of the inception report. Invest time in discussing the terms of reference during the initial phase so that evaluation design matches time schedule and budget available.
- The inception phase is important during the evaluation as it helps forging a common understanding between the project manager and the evaluator on the design of the evaluation and how it will be implemented. The inception phase culminates in an inception report produced by the evaluator. The inception report serves as a road map for managing the evaluation process. Inception reports include sections with introduction, background, purpose and theory of change, approach and methodology, summary of key aspects of evaluation and what will be evaluated and how, work plan, and responsibilities, logistics and support. The inception report should undergo a rigorous review before it is approved by the project manager or Evaluation Unit (*see checklist for inception report – Table 5*).
- The evaluation report is the main output of the evaluation. The evaluation report should be logically structured, containing evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations, and free of information that is not relevant for overall analysis. UN-Habitat evaluation reports follow a standard outline (*see checklist for evaluation report, Table 7*).
- For the review of the draft report, the project manager or the Evaluation Unit invites stakeholders to review the report to identify factual errors, omissions and misinterpretation of information and review the recommendations to ensure they are feasible.
- Centralized evaluation reports are subject to quality review by the Evaluation Unit. For decentralized evaluation reports, the project manager and branch or regional office evaluation focal point should check the evaluation report for quality. In addition, a central quality review of evaluation reports will be carried out on annual basis by an external evaluation consultant (*see Template 2*).
- For self-evaluations, the process is managed by the project manager or project implementing office with the support of the project team. The project manager oversees the collection of data for filling the self-evaluation template (*see Template 3*), and is responsible for the rating of the project's performance in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact outlook. The project manager can choose to involve the Evaluation Unit in the self-evaluation process and may also use a consultant to help collect the data, if resources are available.

## 6. USING EVALUATION FINDINGS AND FOLLOW-UP

Evaluations make essential contributions to managing for results and to organizational learning for improving planning and implementation. The value of evaluation depends on its use, which is determined by key factors such as relevance, quality, credibility, acceptance of recommendations, appropriateness of practice in the management response, dissemination and use of evaluation findings.

Good use of evaluation results revolves around management and the project manager responding to recommendations in a management response and engaging with stakeholders to implement change. Following-up on evaluation recommendations is a systematic process ensuring evaluation evidence informs decision-making and is used as an effective tool to support managing for results. Use entails implementing recommendations and learning for planning for future programmes and projects and disseminating evaluation findings.

Evaluations are undertaken for different purposes, each with their own intended use. Use should be considered in the context of addressing the recommendations of the project being evaluated and in the context of broader learning for UN-Habitat and other stakeholders. Evaluations of UN-Habitat projects are used to inform the design of new projects and future operational and strategic planning. However, evaluations may also be used to change ideas and understanding about an issue, transform relationships among stakeholders, empower communities, inform decision-making processes, and provide justification for political action.

It is the responsibility of UN-Habitat management at all levels to ensure evaluation use by acting on evaluation recommendations and using lessons learned for future policy and project design and development. The evaluation management response is a key tool for institutionalizing the use of evaluation and it records how UN-Habitat project managers and the responsible branch coordinator or regional director intend to apply the lessons learned and implement recommendations. The purpose of developing management responses is that UN-Habitat strategies and policies, including the strategic plan, programme of work, regional strategic plans, and Habitat Country Programme Documents should reflect lessons learned from UN-Habitat's evaluations.

The organization's management is responsible for providing a formal management response to the evaluation. UN-Habitat has a mechanism in place, which is overseen by the Evaluation Unit, for the Senior Management Committee to review and endorse draft management responses to centralized evaluations before approval by Management Board. For decentralized evaluations, project managers with the branch coordinator or regional director are responsible for following up by developing a management response and reporting on the implementation of the management response and corresponding action plan.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The Evaluation Unit is responsible for tracking on a six monthly basis the progress of implementation of recommendations from corporate centralized evaluations. It monitors the implementation of the action plan and report to management and governing bodies on compliance.

## 6.1 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

The use of evaluations for accountability and organizational learning is facilitated through the development of a management response and the follow-up action. All UN-Habitat evaluations should be followed by a management response and an action plan for implementing accepted recommendations. Basically, the management response and action plan constitutes the baseline for monitoring of accepted recommendations and proposed actions, which inform follow-up reports on the status of implementation. The action plan specifies what will be done, by whom and by when.

If the project manager and responsible branch coordinator/ regional director reject any of the recommendations of the evaluation, or plan to implement certain recommendations in different ways than those proposed by the evaluators, the reasons for such modification should be clearly explained in the management response. The Evaluation Unit is readily available to supporting the preparation of the management response. The standard format for evaluation management response is found in Template 4.

For decentralized evaluations, the project manager should coordinate (or appoint a focal point to coordinate) the preparation of the project evaluation management response and action plan. The relevant branch or regional office evaluation focal point should monitor the implementation of the action plans and report to the branch coordinator or regional director and the Evaluation Unit on progress.

The development of the management response is mandatory for all evaluation reports. The management response is a formal tool for UN-Habitat to respond to the evaluation recommendations and specify how it will follow-up, who is responsible, and by when the action will be implemented in order

to improve the overall performance and quality of ongoing and future projects.

The management response must be concrete and actionable. The management response consists of two parts and is normally disclosed together with the evaluation report. The first part is the overall response, which is prepared from the perspective of UN-Habitat management on the evaluation and its results. This can include comments regarding the relevance and usefulness of the results. It may also highlight any differences of opinion with regard to the evaluation findings and the extent to which the recommendations are accepted.

The second part provides a response from management to each individual recommendation, resulting in either acceptance (full or partial) or rejection of each recommendation. In case of partial acceptance or not accepting, the reason should be explained, as well as broader implications for UN-Habitat in particular in relation to project planning and implementation.

Evaluation follow-up actions are identified for each accepted recommendation. The expected completion dates and responsible office are stated for each follow-up action and with status of implementation.

### Engaging stakeholders in the development of the management response

The participation of project stakeholders in the development of the management response is critical to ensuring evaluations are learning exercises and contribute to project improvements and evidence based decision making. The development of the management response provides an opportunity to hold a dialogue with all evaluation stakeholders to reflect on evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons and to incorporate them in ongoing projects and project formulation.

**TEMPLATE 4: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN****Title [evaluation title]**

Overall response (draft prepared by project manager)

Example... UN-Habitat welcomes the evaluation of this project. The evaluation found that the project achieved its expected accomplishments and found that the overall performance of the project to be satisfactory. The project design was relevant and project was delivered in a highly effective and efficient way. Challenges that occurred during implementation were addressed in a timely way by the project team.

UN-Habitat acknowledges the five recommendations made by the evaluation and accepts all five recommendations. The implementation of the recommendations will be done in consultation with the regional office and relevant substantive branches. The expected timeframe for implementation of the recommendations is 12 months.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Acceptance of recommendation</b> (Accepted/Partially accepted/Not accepted)	<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b> (max. 3 years from time of evaluation)	<b>Responsible Office /Unit</b>	<b>Status of Implementation and Action Taken</b> (implemented, in progress, not started)
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Example... The branch should ensure that its new projects meet expected design standards before they are signed.	Accepted	-To strengthen branch internal review process of project concepts and proposals before submitted to PAG	June 2018	Branch coordinator and unit leaders	In progress: Training of staff in project design plan for start of 2018.
<b>Recommendation 2:</b>					
<b>Recommendation 3</b>					

The management response can be an opportunity to create a stronger project and to work closely with project partners to make the necessary changes.

The preparation of the management response should be done in a consultative manner with feedback from different levels and partners of the respective project. Inputs should be sought from all parties to whom specific evaluation recommendations are addressed, including partners (government, non-governmental organizations, etc.) and donors. While UN-Habitat is ultimately accountable for implementation of the management response, stakeholders' engagement may also enable the office to explain the rationale for addressing acceptable or non-acceptable

recommendations. The investment of time and resources involved with the development of the management response needs to be considered and planned in the timeframe for the evaluation by the project manager and relevant branch or regional office commissioning the evaluation.

UN-Habitat responsibilities are as follows:

- The management response must be developed within four weeks after completion of the evaluation report.
- For decentralized evaluations, the UN-Habitat director of the regional office or branch coordinator that commissioned the evaluation is ultimately responsible and accountable for the management

response development, approval and implementation.

- The evaluation manager is responsible for facilitating the process for developing the management response and annual update on the status of its implementation to the evaluation focal point.
- The evaluation focal point is responsible for sharing the management response with the Evaluation Unit and annually updating its status in consultation with the evaluation manager/ project manager.

- For centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Unit will lead the process of preparing the management response and consulting with relevant stakeholders for input.

**Follow-up to implementation of evaluation recommendations**

The main purposes of institutional follow-up processes to evaluations are to strengthen the use of evaluations, increase stakeholder and management buy-in to improve performance, and facilitate in-depth dialogue about evaluation findings to influence the planning and implementation of new projects.

**TEMPLATE 5: ANNUAL REPORTING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCEPTED DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Title:** [evaluation title]  
**Overall responsible:** [name of regional director/branch coordinator]  
**Project manager:** [name of staff]

Recommendation		Timeframe (max. 3 years from time of evaluation)	Responsible for implementation of the recommendation	Year	Year 2 : 2017	Year 3 : 2018
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The branch should ensure that its new projects meet expected design standards before they are signed.	Accepted	-To strengthen branch internal review process of project concepts and proposals before submitted to PAG	June 2018	Branch coordinator/ regional director/ unit leader/ project manager	In progress. The branch has set up an internal control system. New staff are recruited with project design skills.	Implemented. New staff was recruited with project design skills and held training for the Branch, since then, Branch's new projects approval time and revisions through PAG has decreased.
<b>Recommendation 2:</b>						
<b>Recommendation 3:</b>						

For decentralized evaluations, the project manager should use template 5 and report to the branch or regional office focal point.

The implementation of accepted and partially accepted recommendations should be monitored and reported on annual basis by the project manager using template 5 to the branch or regional evaluation focal point. The evaluation focal point will share the reporting sheets with the Evaluation Unit.

The annual reporting is done until each recommendation is implemented by providing status of implementation (not started, in progress, implemented), action taken and information on use / improvements made or results from learning applied based on the evaluation's recommendations and actions taken. Annual reporting will go on for up to 3 years after the evaluation after which the recommendations are considered outdated and its status is reported as 'not implemented and closed'.

### Follow-up to joint evaluations or donor-led evaluations

UN-Habitat regional offices and branches should take the lead or participate in the development of a management response to joint evaluations where UN-Habitat participates. Even when partner entities do not want to develop a joint management response, UN-Habitat should still develop its own management response. In the case of joint evaluations, the management response may either follow the UN-Habitat format or the one suggested by partners. (Box 13)

The responsible UN-Habitat regional office or branch should take responsibility for developing a management response for recommendations directed to UN-Habitat, as well as facilitating and supporting partners in developing their own response.

### BOX 13: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE 'PARTICIPATORY SLUM UPGRADING PROGRAMME II' CONDUCTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

The mid-term evaluation of 'the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme II (PSUP II)'—a project funded by the European Union (EU)—was conducted in 2015 by an external evaluation team hired and managed by the EU. The evaluation team found that PSUP II had made significant and commendable progress towards achieving its purpose of strengthening local, national and regional decision makers, institutional and key urban stakeholders' capacities in slum improvement and prevention. The report presented three sets of recommendations for follow-up: Strategic recommendations for PSUP, operational recommendations for PSUP, and recommendations for the EU.

In follow-up, the recommendations were reviewed with the Steering Committee of the PSUP. As a result an evaluation action plan was developed. Some recommendations were relevant for immediate implementation during the current programme implementation period such as stronger emphasis on documentation (i.e., impact stories, quick guides with material and videos, etc.), and more focused technical advice in some countries—by scaling down the number of countries and cities and no longer aiming at equally servicing 160 cities and 35 countries. Some countries made commitments to provide their own financing to continue and upscale activities and expand capacity development through UN-Habitat. Further, the recommendations were considered in the design of the new PSUP III and in the design of other programmes.

**Source:** PSUP, UN-Habitat

The joint evaluation report and only the section of the management response where UN-Habitat is accountable should be shared with the Evaluation Unit. The joint management response process may require more time than the management response process for UN-Habitat managed decentralized evaluations.

The Evaluation Unit, through the evaluation focal points, can provide advice on how to formulate and manage the process for an effective management response. However, the main responsibility for the actual content of the management response rests with the regional office director or branch coordinator and project manager for decentralized evaluations.

## 6.2 UN-HABITAT SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE FOLLOW-UP AND USE OF EVALUATION

The Evaluation Unit is dedicated to facilitating the use of evaluation at UN-Habitat. It does this through several mechanisms that are considered good practice. Electronic platforms have proven to be a successful tool for sharing evaluation reports and tracking the actions taken in response to the recommendations of an evaluation. The recommendation tracking system also has the ability to generate reports and disaggregated analysis on status of implementation of the recommendations. The list of electronic platforms include:

- Project Accrual and Accountability System—Evaluation reports, evaluation recommendation tracking system
- Integrated Management and Document Information System (IMDIS)—Evaluation reports
- UN-Habitat corporate web-site—Evaluation reports and management responses
- Intranet Habnet—Evaluation reports and management responses
- Evaluation Updates—a quarterly newsletter on evaluation reports and ongoing evaluations
- Other dissemination fora and ‘brown-bags’

From 2013, tracking of implementation of evaluation recommendations is done through the Project Accrual and Accountability System (PAAS). In addition, PAAS has a repository of evaluation reports in menu folders ‘evaluations’ and ‘knowledge resources’.

### TIP: USE DISCLAIMER TO COVER FOR EVALUATION LIABILITY

The disclaimer below should be included in the evaluation report on the inside front matter page.

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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## Disclosure

All reports of evaluations (including the management responses) are made available internally on UN-Habitat intranet *Habnet* and externally on UN-Habitat’s corporate website under [www.unhabitat.org/evaluation/](http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluation/) with the aim of enhancing transparency, ownership and internal accountability (Box 14).

Evaluation reports are also posted on IMDIS as evidence for accomplishment accounts.

The *UN-Habitat Evaluation Updates*, is a quarterly/ six monthly newsletter addressed to all staff drawing attention to recent evaluation reports and other evaluation matter. The newsletter is also published on the intranet *Habnet*.

**BOX 14: DISCLOSURE POLICY**

The *UN-Habitat evaluation policy* states that “All evaluation reports of external evaluations undertaken by UN-Habitat must be made publically available, except if the reports contain material of a confidential nature” (paragraph 65). All evaluation reports are published to ensure the public has every access. This is a fundamental requirement to fulfill evaluation’s public accountability purposes.

It is important already at the stage of developing the Terms of Reference to make all relevant stakeholders aware of UN-Habitat’s evaluation disclosure policy to ensure consensus on the evaluation process and wording and findings of the report so that only one version of the report is approved and published.

Other common dissemination fora for evaluation results are UN-Habitat regional public websites, social media, relevant evaluation list servers, websites and knowledge networks, regional and national planning meetings, trainings, information packages and materials sent to donors, etc., annual reports, meetings with beneficiaries, communities and groups, and stakeholder seminars or workshops specifically planned to disseminate and discuss results.

Regular discussions on the status of implementation of recommendations are essential to ensuring relevant stakeholders are aware of the findings and proposed actions that are planned or implemented. Such discussions on the follow-up to evaluations have taken place at meetings with the senior management team, the subcommittee on Policy and Programme of Work and the Working Group on Programme and Budget as well as donor consultation meetings.

At branch or regional level, it is recommended to organize internal staff briefing sessions or ‘Brown Bags’ to share and highlight important evaluation findings, recommendations and their follow-up.

**6.3 COMMUNICATING EVALUATION RESULTS**

UN-Habitat publishes all evaluation reports to the public after completion. Sharing evaluation results creates the potential for improving development and operational performance, and helps to build shared meaning and understanding, develop programming support and generate widespread learning opportunities. The credibility of UN-Habitat increases and it generates greater pressure for recommendations to be implemented, when results are shared openly.

The project manager is responsible for finalizing the evaluation report for publication, including the incorporation of the final management response, as a requirement.

Evaluation reports should meet minimum editorial standards. The report must include front matter consisting of cover page with full evaluation title, UN-Habitat logo and month and year of publication. Inside matter should include a disclaimer and acknowledgements of author (evaluator or evaluation team), (if relevant) editor, and design and layout. The document must include information on how to obtain a copy of the full report of the evaluation. The report must contain list of content, list of acronyms and abbreviations, list of figures and box, executive summary, main report and annexes. Annex 1 is always the Terms of Reference of the evaluation.

Effective communication and dissemination of evaluation results will not only contribute to greater accountability for UN-Habitat, but also enable partners to learn about UN-Habitat work and contribute to broader knowledge generation on programming for sustainable urbanization and the new urban agenda.



## Learning and contributing to knowledge development

Systematic mechanisms for follow-up, follow-up should be complemented by other incentives and less formal mechanisms for facilitating learning and knowledge development from evaluations are considered good practices and include: evaluation reports, evaluation briefs and newsletters with short summaries. Knowledge products should contain the key findings and recommendations, be tailored to the audience and facilitate the use of information through clear and easy to understand language.

## Evaluation dissemination plan

An evaluation dissemination plan is a road map for disseminating evaluation results to key internal and external stakeholders through diverse, effective, creative and barrier-free methods. It is recommended that every evaluation have a plan (usually done by the evaluation manager/ project manager and maybe in coordination with a communications officer). However, the evaluation reference group or other relevant stakeholders may also play a role in providing inputs for the plan and disseminating the results through their

respective channels. The development of the evaluation dissemination plan begins when initiating evaluation and should be finalized and implemented during the final stage of the evaluation.

The project manager needs to consider and use audience appropriate means for sharing the evaluation results, in order for stakeholders to understand and participate in plans to act on recommendations. For example, language and accessibility to Internet and connectivity issues need to be explored when matching the type of communication to the audience.

Evaluation knowledge products identified in Table 8 are recommended for UN-Habitat evaluations.

Feedback and learning to gauge the effectiveness of the dissemination strategy and quality of the particular knowledge product can be collected by the branch and regional office. For example, UN-Habitat Evaluation Unit annually conducts a quick survey among the recipients of evaluation knowledge products as an opportunity for users to provide their feedback on the use of evaluations.

**TABLE 9: KEY EVALUATION PRODUCTS AND TARGET AUDIENCE**

Key Evaluation Product	Description	Main Audience
Evaluation report with executive summary	The main product for accountability purposes	UN-Habitat regional office or branch overseeing and managing the evaluation Reference group Donors and other partners
Evaluation brief	Outlines the key evaluation findings, lessons learned and commendations in a short and reader friendly manner	UN-Habitat senior managers and other staff members Reference group Donors and other partners Other external audiences
Newsletter	Highlights recent evaluations and other relevant evaluation development	UN-Habitat senior managers and other staff members Reference group Donors and other partners Other external audiences
Multi-media presentations	PowerPoint, webinar, video illustrate key findings or case-study through accessible audio visual means	UN-Habitat senior managers and other staff members Partners and NGOs Beneficiaries National counterparts Other external audiences Reference group Donors and other partners

## SUMMARY

- Good use of evaluation results revolves around management and the project manager responding to recommendations in a management response and engaging with stakeholders to implement change.
- All UN-Habitat evaluations should be followed by a management response and an action plan for implementing accepted recommendations. The management response must be developed within four weeks after completion of the evaluation report. The management response and action plan constitutes the baseline for monitoring on progress of implementation of accepted recommendations and proposed actions. The action plan specifies what will be done, by whom and by when. UN-Habitat uses a standard format for evaluation management responses (see Template 4: Management response and action plan).
- Status of implementation of recommendations is reported on annual basis for decentralized evaluations and every six months for recommendations of centralized evaluations (see Template 5).
- For decentralized evaluations, the project manager coordinates (or appoint a focal point to coordinate) the preparation of the project evaluation management response and action plan. The preparation of the management response should be done in a consultative manner with feedback from different levels and partners of the respective project. For centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Unit will lead the process to prepare the management response and action plan and consult with relevant stakeholders for input.
- In the case of joint evaluations, the management response may either follow the UN-Habitat format or the one suggested by partners.
- The Evaluation Unit uses various electronic platforms to facilitate the use of evaluations such as PAAS for tracking the implementation of evaluation recommendations, IMDIS for reporting on evaluation outputs, UN-Habitat's corporate web-site for sharing evaluation documents, reports and management responses, UN-Habitat intranet, Habnet, for sharing terms of reference of on-going evaluations, reports and management responses, Evaluation Updates for sharing news with UN-Habitat staff, and 'brown-bags' for staff with evaluation themed presentations.
- UN-Habitat publishes all evaluation reports to the public after completion. It is recommended that every evaluation has an evaluation dissemination plan; usually done by the project manager and maybe in coordination with a communications officer. The evaluation reference group or other relevant stakeholders may also play a role in providing inputs for the plan and disseminating the results through their respective channels.

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*Note: Intranet refers to documents available only on habnet.*

*Should you encounter problems downloading any of these documents, please contact the Evaluation Unit.*

*All evaluation reports are available at <http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluation>*



HS/070/17E

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