



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/EFC.30/8  
3 October 2022

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Adaptation Fund Board  
Ethics and Finance Committee  
Thirtieth Meeting  
Bonn, Germany, 11-12 October 2022

Agenda Item: 5 a)

**DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
EVALUATION POLICY GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS**

**TECHNICAL EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP OF THE  
ADAPTATION FUND (AF-TERG)**

## Background

1. The Adaptation Fund Board (hereafter ‘the Board’) endorsed the Evaluation Framework (EF), which currently guides the evaluation function of the Adaptation Fund (hereafter ‘the Fund’), at its thirteenth meeting (March 2011 – Decision B.13/20.a) and approved its revised version at the fifteenth meeting (September 2011 – Decision B.15/23).

2. In May 2020, the Board approved a multi-year work programme (FY21-FY23) of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG), which included the plan to conduct a review of the EF (Decision B.35.a-35.b/29). The review, which was presented to the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) of the Board in March 2021 (document AFB/EFC.27/7), concluded the EF had become outdated and recommended the development of an Evaluation Policy (EP) to replace it. In March 2021, having considered the findings of the review, and recommendation of the EFC, the Board decided:

*“To request the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG), in consultation with the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat, to prepare a draft evaluation policy for the Adaptation Fund that would replace the current Evaluation Framework.”*

(Decision B.36/32)

3. In accordance with the above decision, the AF-TERG developed the Evaluation Policy in collaboration with the Adaptation Fund Board secretariat (hereafter ‘the secretariat’). The AF-TERG also established an Evaluation Policy Advisory Group with participants from Implementing Entities, the CSO Network, the secretariat, and the Board. The Advisory Group serves as an informal, voluntary forum that brings together different stakeholder perspectives in a shared space. It advised the AF-TERG on the preparation of a draft, fit-for-purpose Evaluation Policy.

4. At the thirty-eighth meeting (March 2022), having considered the draft Evaluation Policy document (AFB/EFC.29/6/Rev.1) presented to the EFC by the AF-TERG, the Board decided:

*(a) To approve the draft evaluation policy of the Fund set out in annex 1 to document AFB/EFC.29/6/Rev.1, as amended by the Board, as the Fund’s evaluation policy, which shall not prejudice the Board’s future consideration of the budget implications of the implementation of the evaluation policy;*

*(b) To request the Adaptation Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG) to work in consultation with the secretariat to introduce the Fund’s evaluation policy to the Fund’s stakeholders;*

*(c) To request the AF-TERG to develop, in consultation with the secretariat, evaluation guidance documents for the implementation of the Fund’s evaluation policy, including budget implications, and to submit them to the EFC for consideration at its thirty-first meeting.*

(Decision B.38/48)

5. Pursuant to the Board Decision B.38/48, the AF-TERG is preparing the socialization and institutionalization of the Fund's new Evaluation Policy. To do so, it is developing guidance documents to support the operationalization and uptake of the EP from October 2023 onwards.

## Introduction

6. This document updates the Board on findings from the inception phase, progress on developing the EP guidance, and it also highlights the main considerations, steps and recommendations for the development of guidance resources, based on the inception report.<sup>1</sup>

7. In December 2021, the AF-TERG hired a consultant to help frame the approach and to subsequently develop Evaluation Policy Guidance (EPG) in anticipation of the approval of the new policy. Following the approval of the new Evaluation Policy of the Fund, the AF-TERG started the work for the development of guidance resources. The work takes place in two consecutive phases:

- An inception Phase (completed) – to identify evaluation guidance needs for the Fund and an approach for the development of guidance resources
- A guidance document development Phase (under implementation) – to produce quality and suitable evaluation guidance documents for the Fund

8. The work includes two distinct but complementary workstreams, namely the development of a core set of Evaluation Policy Guidance (EPG) documents to support the operationalization of the EP; and development of Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) resources to further guide Fund stakeholders in applying the guidance. This could include different delivery formats including documentation, in-person workshops, training, online forums, exchange visits, and applied learning.

9. The inception Phase was conducted between January and August 2022 in a consultative and participatory manner. It consisted of collecting and analysing data to understand and validate a realistic and coherent approach for the development of fit-for-purpose EPG documents for the Fund. An inception report, upon which this document is based, was developed and is the primary deliverable of the inception Phase.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AF-TERG, 2022. Evaluation Policy Guidance Development - Inception Report. Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/publications/evaluations-and-studies/evaluation-policy-guidance-development/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Framework for the development of EPG documents

10. The inception Phase was guided by the AF-TERG work principles,<sup>3</sup> including Principle 8 to work synergistically through constructive and respectful dialogue with stakeholders. Several stakeholder consultations (key informant interviews, online survey) and a desk review of documents were conducted and highlighted the needs and preferences for the development of the EPG material. Among the main findings were:

- The development of EPG is premised around the Fund's current evaluation status and emerging needs. Based on the concept of organizational lifecycle modelling (organised around four stages of initiate, stabilize, growth, and amplify), the Fund's evaluation status could be considered at the 'growth' stage. This assumes that Evaluation systems and process exist and are used to support program expansion and impact, but capacity and performance gaps remain.
- Evaluation guidance approaches should embrace the complexity and ambiguity of climate change and adaptation interventions, and as such go beyond conventional methodologies;
- ECD needs were identified across all evaluation levels and types, with varying capacity gaps across Fund stakeholder groups;
- There is a strong appetite for ECD across Fund stakeholders, with interest in an assortment of evaluation topics rather than a select few;
- Fund stakeholders prefer multiple ECD delivery options that extend beyond EPG documents to include live and recorded mediums. However, stakeholders also expressed a strong preference for guidance in document formats.

11. Based on those findings, the consultant advised the AF-TERG on the most relevant approach to frame the development of the EPG and the ECD. The inception report therefore proposes the following recommendations:

12. **Recommendation 1 –The overall approach:** Adopt a balanced and strategic approach such that it puts the emphasis on both usability of deliverables and their greater role in supporting improved accountability, lesson learning and adaptive management, and ultimately the Fund's mission, goal, and vision, including the Paris Agreement. To do so, the framework for developing EP guidance should follow a principle-focused approach that resonates with the Fund's Evaluation Policy:

- *Utilization-focused:* the development of EPG resources should lead to useful and used resources if, ultimately, the guidance is to contribute to reliable, useful, and ethical evaluation that upholds the EP;

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<sup>3</sup> AF-TERG, 2020. Work Principles. Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/work-principles-of-the-af-terg/>

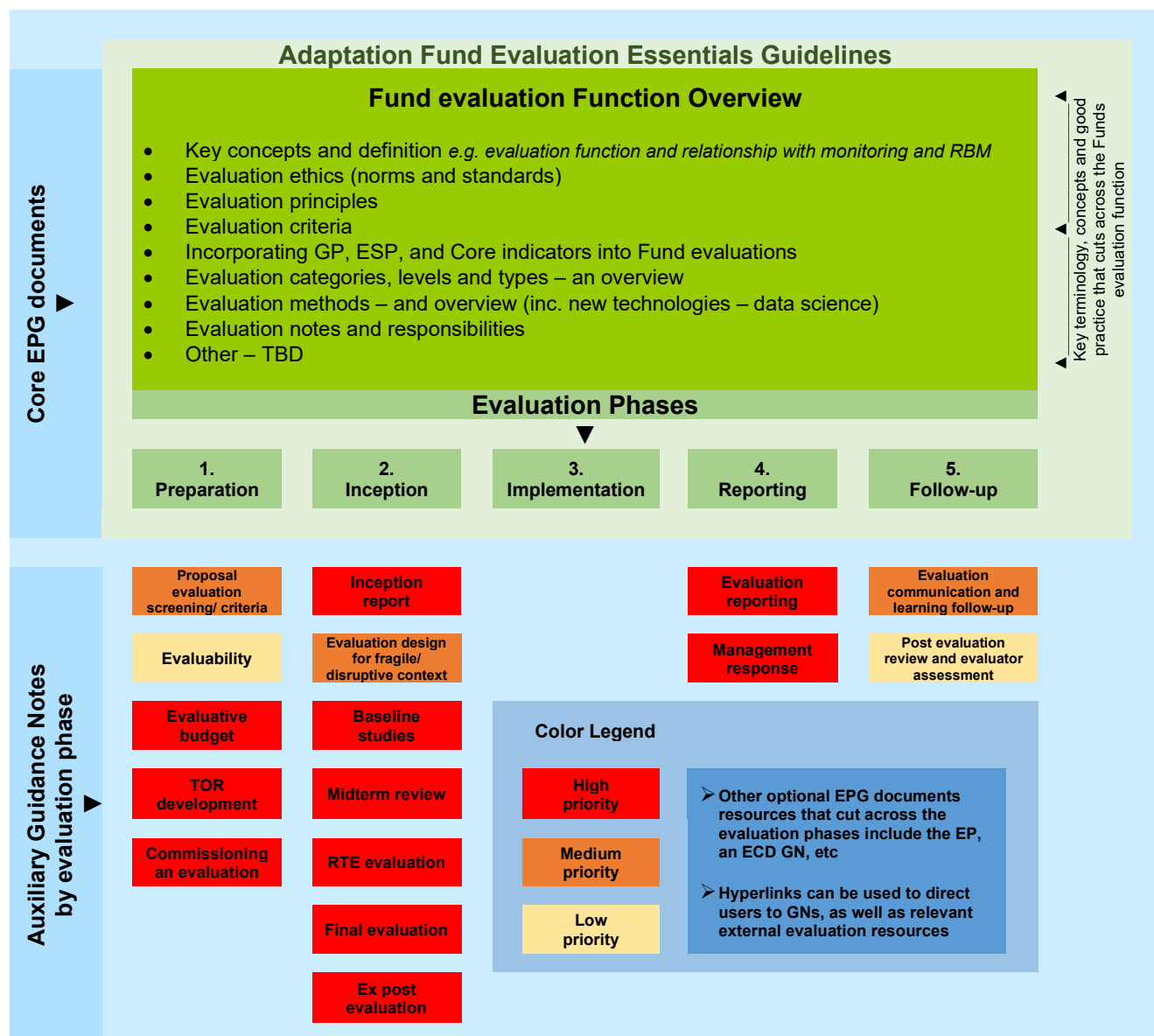
- *Systemic and strategic*: the development of EPG resources should be part of a coherent strategic approach to ECD that recognizes the larger system in which evaluation operates and in which its capacity development occurs;
- *Adaptive oriented*: the development of EPG resources should adapt to changing stakeholder needs based on emergent learning and feedback, and any unexpected challenges encountered;
- *Inclusive participation*: the development of EPG resources should be based on active stakeholder input to ensure resources remain fit-for-purpose to the users' needs and contexts;
- *Differentiated learning and mixed ECD methods*: the development of ECD resources should be tailored to different learners' needs, levels and abilities;
- *Recycle rather than reinvent the wheel*: the development of ECD resources should be efficient and take into consideration the availability of already developed resources, if adoptable or adapted to the Fund's needs;
- *Efficient and non-extractive*: the resources/ time burden of the participatory development of EPG resources should be minimal and cost-effective on all involved.

13. **Recommendation 2 – On resources format**: Develop a suite of EPG documents rather than a single document, in the interest of maintaining a user-friendly interface. This should include a core EPG document that covers evaluation concepts and practices cutting across the Fund's evaluation levels and types and be supported by complementary Guidance Notes (GNs) to be developed on targeted topics and that meet the needs of related audiences. The GNs will also contain supplementary templates, checklists, examples, and other tools.

14. The key phases that characterize evaluations – preparation, inception, implementation, reporting, and follow-up – will serve as the organizing architecture through which to present GNs, reinforcing a coherent, intuitive sequence based on how users would approach an evaluation. In addition to Fund-developed GNs, other relevant evaluation resources can also be presented using this overarching organizing architecture, with hyperlinks to appropriate external resources, as well as the Fund's EP and eventual ECD resources (see Figure 1).

15. **Recommendation 3 – Resources content**: Following the consultation of stakeholders' needs and priorities, the inception report proposes 18 guidance notes (GNs) on various targeted topics, such as developing an evaluation budget, baseline studies, and evaluation reporting. Annex I summarizes the potential EPG documents to consider, taking into account their priority and key considerations to support further deliberation and planning for EPG development. Priority was identified based on the need, demand and urgency for specific EPG documents emerging from primary data collection.

Figure 1 – Illustrative EPG Document &amp; Topic Architecture



16. Based on the high priority rating, eleven recommended EPG documents were identified to be initially developed. This list is expected to evolve over time based on stakeholder inputs and emergent learning during the GN development and its application:

- |                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (a) Core EPG document                | (e) (GN) Inception report     |
| (b) (GN) Evaluation Budget           | (f) (GN) Baseline studies     |
| (c) (GN) TOR Development             | (g) (GN) Midterm review       |
| (d) (GN) Commissioning an evaluation | (h) (GN) Real-time evaluation |

- |     |                         |     |                           |
|-----|-------------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| (i) | (GN) Final evaluation   | (k) | (GN) Evaluation reporting |
| (j) | (GN) Ex post evaluation |     |                           |

17. **Recommendation 4 – On resources access:** EPG resources should be made available through an online platform, thus serving to link with related ECD resources and with other learning mediums and activities, such as trainings, webinars, etc. When the ECD approach and resources get developed, the platform could consider having a discussion board, feature posts/blogs, a library with example evaluation products for learning purposes (e.g., evaluation TORs, baseline studies, reports, etc.).

18. Given the dynamic nature of developing such a platform, it will be important to iteratively review, update, and revised the EPG resources over time (i.e., adding hyperlinked titles to new resources as they are developed or identified).

### **Considerations for the development of ECD resources**

19. It is important to approach the development of the EPG documents strategically as part of a comprehensive approach to capacity development that extends beyond guidance documents. Whereas the EPG resources help operationalize the EP, additional ECD resources and activities will help operationalize the EPG guidance. For example, as individual EPG documents (e.g., GNs) are developed, it will be important to socialize them through a communication plan that introduces them to users. ECD resources will be developed after the establishment of an ECD strategy.

20. Several delivery mediums and outlets are available for ECD, ranging from recorded webinars and podcasts to self-tutorials. The development of future ECD resources should consider the following key elements:

- Learn from what works, does not work, and why, especially from the direct experience of previous capacity development and delivery initiatives with Fund stakeholders;
- Consider Implementing Entity evaluation (or Monitoring and Evaluation) capacity assessment exercises as a strategic part of the ECD;
- Develop a menu or toolbox with a variety of ECD media in different formats;
- Pursue ECD that is not siloed but rather woven into other Fund capacity development initiatives;
- Utilize collaborative, peer learning;
- Utilize online learning delivery for key concepts, and face-to-face learning delivery when learners need hands-on experience and practice applying concepts and newly acquired skills;
- Utilize narrated slide presentations on key topics such as a cost-effective and adaptive medium for ECD eLearning delivery;

- Incorporate certificates into ECD training or other appropriate capacity development engagement;
- Consider capitalizing on the investment in a face-to-face training workshop to include other activities to support ECD.

### **Next steps and timeline**

21. The development of EPG resources will be done in a phased manner, with the development of high priority documents aimed to be completed for submission for consideration by the EFC at its thirty-first meeting in March 2023. The development of some resources has already started, to be able to complete the full exercise in time. Medium priority documents will be developed as a second step, after the approval of high priority documents by the Board and before the operationalization of the Fund's Evaluation Policy in October 2023. This period will also be the time during which the first EPG documents will be disseminated and socialized, in order to ensure a prompt uptake of the policy.

22. The AF-TERG plans to recruit more consultants to comply with this timeline. The development of resources will be supported by the EPG advisory group comprised of wider representation from the Fund's stakeholder groups, similarly to the model used for the development of the Evaluation Policy. Each stage of development will be followed by a review phase, during which the AF-TERG and the secretariat will review proposed guidance for quality and alignment with the OPG, results-based management processes and the new Evaluation Policy.

### **Recommendations**

23. The Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) may want to consider and recommend that the Board decides to:

- (a) Acknowledge and take note of the information provided by the AF-TERG on the overall approach for Evaluation Policy Guidance development, and the proposed format, content and access environment for resources, as presented in document AFB/EFC.30/8 on the Draft Framework for the Development of Evaluation Policy Guidance Documents;
- (b) Request the AF-TERG to:
  - i. Continue the development of Evaluation Policy Guidance documents, in consultation with the secretariat;
  - ii. Present the developed documents identified in document AFB/EFC.30/8 as high priority guidance documents to the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) for its consideration at its thirty-first meeting in March 2023;
  - iii. Present the remaining guidance documents for consideration by the EFC either intersessionally between its thirty-first and thirty-second meetings, or at its thirty-second meeting in October 2023.



## Annex I Potential EPG Documents

This annex identifies potential EPG documents to consider for development, with columns for priority, and key considerations to support further deliberation and planning for EPG development. Priority ratings are at this stage formative and more illustrative, based on the identified need, demand and urgency for specific EPG documents emerging from primary data collection. This list should be considered illustrative and is expected to evolve and be revised based on stakeholder input and emergent learning and needs.

EPG Document	Priority 1 (low), 2 (medium), 3 (high)	Key considerations
<b>Crosscutting EPG Resources</b>		
0. Core EPG document	3	— Contents and length need to be vetted. For instance, whether GP, ESP, and Core Indicators will be covered in this document or in separate GN.
1. [GN] Evaluation Capacity Development, ECD	1	— Encompasses the ECD of team/org members. — Received high response rate for utility in EPG survey but does not seem urgent.
2. [GN] Data science for evaluation	1	— Encompasses Big Data, AI, machine learning, etc. Can also encompass digital data collection and data management but overlaps with monitoring and RBM.
<b>Evaluation Preparation Phase</b>		
3. [GN] Proposal evaluation screening/ criteria	2	— Received high response rate for utility in EPG survey.
4. [GN] Evaluability	1	— This is an example of an organization-level evaluation. It can overlap with a meta-evaluation of key recommendations from other evaluations, and contribute to a meta-evaluation of the evaluation function itself.
5. [GN] Evaluation budget	3	— Identified for the STC to develop first, for which initial work has begun. — Fund example projects are expected to be needed to build a relevant example for GN.
6. [GN] TOR Development	3	— Fund can start to locate example TORs to include with the GN for different evaluation types.
7. [GN] Commissioning an evaluation	3	— Encompasses recruiting an evaluation team (internal or external), and can be collapsed with the TOR GN above. Includes recruitment checklist, interview questions, etc.
<b>Evaluation Inception into Implementation Phases</b>		
8. [GN] Inception report	3	— Fund can start to locate example TORs to include with the GN for different evaluation types.
9. [GN] Evaluation design for fragile/ disruptive contexts	2	— Wealth of examples guidance on this topic after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but GN should be expanded to evaluation amid other disruption types.

10. [GN] Baseline studies	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identified as a critical and much-needed guide but need to develop with careful coordination with RBM guidance development workstream.</li> <li>– Needs to locate practical teaching examples, include Fund Core Indicators, and inventory sector-specific indicators.</li> </ul>
11. [GN] Mid-term review	3	
12. [GN] Real-time evaluation	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Given the RTEs can be a form of MTR, this can potentially be included as part of the MTR GN. However, this risks diluting the RTE content.</li> </ul>
13. [GN] Final evaluation	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– May make sense to develop this at the same time and with the same STC as the Baseline studies GN, given that baseline data are typically compared with endline data to access impact (when appropriate) as part of a final evaluation.</li> </ul>
14. [GN] Ex post evaluation	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Given the Fund's work on the ex post pilot training, this may not be a high priority if the training can meet immediate ECD needs. GN development may take less time given the material (and conceptualization) from the ex post eval training development.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Reporting Phase</b>		
15. [GN] Evaluation reporting	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Prioritize, given that mandatory evaluation report templates are one of the key points called-out in the EP's "Provision for the evaluation guidance document" (EP, Section 8).</li> <li>– Fund can start to locate exemplary/shareable example evaluation reports to include with the GN for different evaluation types.</li> </ul>
16. [GN] Management response	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Within the Fund, the primary user of this is the secretariat, with the AF-TERG the secondary user.</li> <li>– Fund can start to locate exemplary/shareable example MR reports to include with the GN for different evaluation types.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Follow-up Phase</b>		
17. [GN] Evaluation communication and learning follow-up	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Received high response rate for utility in EPG survey.</li> <li>– May want to bump-up to high priority given the interest and importance of this GN.</li> </ul>
18. [GN] Post-evaluation review and evaluator assessment	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Encompasses checklists of evaluator competencies that are also useful to share prior to evaluation to help frame expectations with evaluator/s.</li> <li>– Can be expanded to identify key elements of successful evaluation exercise to rate the evaluation itself.</li> </ul>