Guidance in Support
of the Operationalization
of the Evaluation Policy

Evaluation Terms of Reference

Technical Evaluation
Reference Group
ADAPTATION FUND

This guidance note is part of a series of technical guidance from the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) supporting reliable, useful, and ethical evaluations aligned with the Adaptation Fund's Evaluation Policy. AF-TERG guidance documents are intended to be succinct, but with sufficient information to practically guide users, pointing to additional resources when appropriate. Additional AF-TERG evaluation resources on various topics can be accessed at the online AF-TERG Evaluation Resource Webpage. Feedback is welcome and can be sent to AF-TERG-SEC@adaptation-fund.org.

The Adaptation Fund was established through decisions by the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. At the Katowice Climate Conference in December 2018, the Parties to the Paris Agreement decided that the Adaptation Fund shall also serve the Paris Agreement. The Fund supports country-driven projects and programmes, innovation, and global learning for effective adaptation. All of the Fund's activities are designed to build national and local adaptive capacities while reaching and engaging the most vulnerable groups, and to integrate gender consideration to provide equal opportunity to access and benefit from the Fund's resources. They are also aimed at enhancing synergies with other sources of climate finance, while creating models that can be replicated or scaled up. www.adaptation-fund.org

The Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) is an independent evaluation advisory group accountable to the Fund Board. It was established in 2018 to ensure the independent implementation of the Fund's evaluation framework, which will be succeeded by the new evaluation policy from October 2023 onwards. The AF-TERG, which is headed by a chair, provides an evaluative advisory role through performing evaluative, advisory and oversight functions. The group is comprised of independent experts in evaluation, called the AF-TERG members. A small secretariat provides support for the implementation of evaluative and advisory activities as part of the work programme.

While independent of the operations of the Adaptation Fund, the aim of the AF-TERG is to add value to the Fund's work through independent monitoring, evaluation, and learning, www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/

AF-TERG, [2022]. [Title of the Report]. Adaptation Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG),

Washington, DC.

The unedited [type] report was finished [Date].

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Acronyms

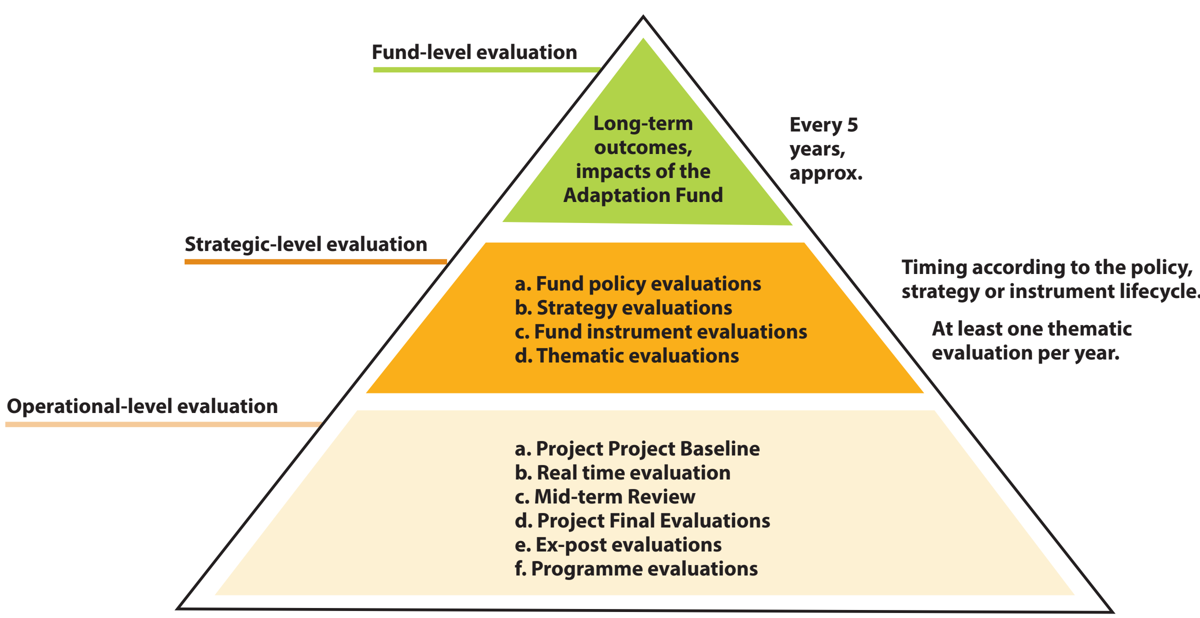
AF-TERG	Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
ECD	Evaluation capacity development
EP	Evaluation Policy
EQ	Evaluation Questions
Fund	Adaptation Fund
IEs	Implementing Entities
MEL	monitoring, evaluation, and learning
TOR	Terms of Reference

1. What is this guidance note?

The purpose of this guidance note is to support the preparation of an evaluation term of reference (ToR) for an evaluation of the Adaptation Fund's work. The guidance note will be most helpful to those with the responsibility to commission and manage a Fund evaluative activity (**Figure 1**) contracted by a Fund Implementing Entity (IE) or the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG). More generally, this guidance note may also be useful to those developing a ToR for an evaluative activity that falls broadly within climate change adaptation and related areas of work.

This guidance note covers ToR guidance for all levels and types of evaluation outlined in the Fund's Evaluation Policy, including baseline studies and mid-term reviews – see **Figure 1**. While the emphasis is on developing ToRs for evaluation purposes, the ToR guidance can apply to other activities across the Fund portfolio. However, it is important to acknowledge that this guidance note is not exhaustive, and additional resources on ToRs are provided at its end.

Figure 1: Fund-evaluation levels and indicative types



2. What is an evaluation terms of reference (ToR)?

A ToR is a document that provides an overview of what is expected in an evaluation, serving as its first point of reference. It is used to create and communicate a shared understanding for the evaluation, and provides the bases for recruiting evaluators, whether internal for self-evaluation, or external consultant for independent evaluation.

The specific contents of a ToR will vary according to evaluation type and need. **Box 1** provides an illustrative summary of the ToR's, which is explored in more detail in Section 6 and Annex 1. Key elements of a ToR include a description of:

1. What Fund evaluation category is being commissioned (independent, self-conducted, or semi-independent)
2. What it intends to accomplish
3. How it will be accomplished
4. Who will be involved in the evaluation
5. What are the deliverables and expected timeline for the evaluation
6. Any additional relevant background information, such as key guiding principles, existing resources and capacities, etc.
7. How to apply for the evaluation when the ToR is used to recruit external evaluators [1]

BOX 1: Illustrative ToR Contents

1. Summary
2. Background / Context
3. Evaluation purpose, scope, and audience
4. Evaluation criteria and questions
5. Evaluation outputs
6. Evaluation approach (methodology)
7. (illustrative) evaluation timeline
8. Evaluation management and quality assurance
9. Evaluator competencies
10. Application procedures
11. Annexes

It is worth noting that ToRs are also used for other exercise in addition but related to evaluations. This includes baseline studies, evaluability studies, needs assessments, evidence reviews, research, organizational capacity assessments, technical advisory groups, audits, and more. As such, this guidance may also be used to guide the development of such other ToRs.

1. Adapted from IEG (2011) Writing a Terms of Reference for An Evaluation: A How-To Guide

3. What are the benefits of a ToR?

Taking the time to write a thoughtful ToR can mean the difference between the success and failure of an evaluative activity. Potential benefit of a high-quality ToR include:

✓ **Establishes and manages clear expectations for the evaluation,** helping to avoid and clarify misunderstandings and ensure the evaluation stays on track.

✓ **Distils critical evaluative questions.** Knowing what and why you want to evaluation is important, but a ToR forces stakeholders to drill down to the specific evaluation questions to be answered by the evaluation, (even if they may later be refined or revised – see **Box 2**).

✓ **Reinforces ownership and support for the evaluation.** Strategic consultation about and communication of the TOR with key stakeholders socializes the evaluation and its purpose, creating a shared understanding and buy-in to sustain and support the evaluation.

✓ **Increases accountability and compliance** not only to deliverables and their timeline, but a TOR can also be used to explicitly acknowledge and showcase core principles and priorities, such as the Adaptation Fund's Evaluation Principles.

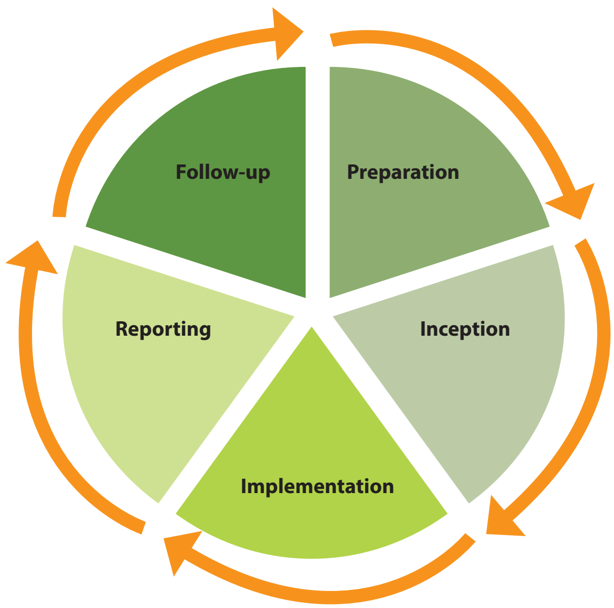
BOX 2: ToR Tip

The ToR should not straitjacket the evaluation. It provides an overview to help set up the evaluation, but during the context analysis and stakeholder consultation in the evaluation's inception phase, the evaluation team may recommend changes to the evaluation questions, methodology, timeline, and deliverables envisioned in the ToR. This is okay, as long as the rationale for such changes are clearly understood, agreed, and approved by the evaluation commissioners.

4. When to develop ToR?

A ToR should be prepared early as part of the Preparation Phase of an evaluation (see **Figure 2**). Ample time should be given for ToR development because it involves not only drafting the text, but consulting with key stakeholders for input, review, and approval.

Figure 2: The key phases of evaluation



5. Who develops a ToR?

A ToR is a written document, but its process is one for building shared understanding, consensus, and buy-in from stakeholders. Under the direction of the Evaluation Manager (or Management Team), an evaluative ToR should be developed through a consultive process within the commissioning entity and involving any other relevant stakeholder groups. This can include different beneficiary groups, program staff, partners, local and national governments, bi-lateral organizations, and international, national, and local civic society organizations. Stakeholder participation can take many forms, from commenting on the TOR, to establishing a small task force of key stakeholders to assist in preparing the TOR and in supporting the evaluation once it is commissioned and implemented.

6. How to develop and disseminate a ToR?

This section frames more general recommendations for the overall process to successfully develop and disseminate a ToR, (whereas more specific detail is provided in Section 7 for drafting a ToR, as well the Checklist for Fund evaluation ToRs presented in Annex 1). Once finalized, the ToR will be a primary reference point for the evaluation across stakeholder groups, so it must be thoughtfully approached, drafted, reviewed, and disseminated. The following recommendations are provided to support this process:

✓ **Refer to and uphold the Fund's evaluation principles**. As the first primary deliverable for the evaluation, the ToR not only frames the exercise, but can pivotally uphold and reinforce the Fund's seven evaluation principles (see Figure 3) identified in its Evaluation Policy, and elaborated in the Fund's Evaluation Principles Guidance Note. Understanding how these principles apply to the evaluative activity and ToR development is the responsibility of those involved in managing the ToR development process. Explicit references in the ToR should be made to the Fund's evaluative principles, typically in the ToR section devoted to the evaluation approach (see section 7.6 below).

✓ **Be concise in the ToR content.** Section 7 below and the ToR checklist in Annex 1 provide specific guidance for writing the ToR, but a key overall recommendation is to keep it concise and user-friendly to navigate and read. Include only what is necessary and sufficient to convey relevant information for the given evaluation exercise and (when appropriate) how potential evaluator(s) can apply. A typical ToR is between five to fifteen pages in length.

✓ **Strategically manage time.** An evaluative activity is often a complex undertaking. Setting adequate time expectations is one of the most important functions of a ToR. Ensure that time is generously budgeted to ensure a high level of quality is maintained throughout the evaluative activity. This includes starting the drafting of the ToR itself early; do not underestimate the time required to develop and review a ToR.

✓ **Engage stakeholders.** Stakeholder engagement in the ToR development upholds the Fund's evaluation principles of relevance and utility, transparency and equitable and gender-sensitive inclusivity. More fundamentally, when stakeholder engagement is done in a meaningfully inclusive manner, the process can build understanding, credibility, legitimacy and support for the evaluative activity.

Figure 3: The Adaptation Fund's 7 Evaluation Principles

✓ **Be realistic.** A ToR sets expectations about goals, time frames, budgets, and other resources. Finding the correct balance between all of these factors can be challenging, especially when a high level of rigour is required. An evaluability assessment can help set realistic expectations, but if this is not possible, an iterative process of consultation and reflection is highly recommended.

✓ **Be adaptive.** Per the Fund's evaluation principle for complexity, it is important to be flexible with unexpected contingencies that may arise. Wherever possible, the ToR should provide flexibility to allow for unanticipated problems and opportunities. As Box 2 reminds us, the ToR should not straitjacket or confine the evaluation.

Box 3: ToR Tip – Utilize an online review

Utilizing an online shared document for the ToR review (e.g., SharePoint, OneDrive, Google Docs, or Dropbox) can have several advantages. In addition to being open, transparent, and therefore reinforcing credibility in the review process, using a shared online document for review can help streamline reviewer input, consolidating feedback, reducing duplicative comments, and helping reviewers build upon and learn from each other's feedback.

✓ **Strategically review the ToR to ensure the utility of and socialize and build support for the evaluation.** Relevant stakeholders should be informed ***beforehand*** as to when they are expected to review the draft ToR. A peer review utilizing a Reference Group or Steering Committee (see the Commissioning and Managing an Evaluation Guidance Note) can also be useful to uphold quality assurance for the ToR, while also building legitimacy and ownership for the exercise when membership strategically engages key stakeholder groups (per point above).

✓ **ToR dissemination.** Once the ToR is finalized, the strategic dissemination of the ToR can not only support the recruitment of competent evaluator(s), but also serve to socialize the evaluation, building understanding, ownership, and support for it. Box 4 summarizes some key outlets for disseminating Fund evaluation ToRs when recruiting external, independent evaluations. However, keep in mind that the ToR is also useful to inform stakeholders of the evaluation before, during and even after it takes place. For example, the ToR can be attached to any email introduction of the evaluator(s) sent out to stakeholders to prepare them to be involved in the data collection.

Box 4: ToR dissemination outlets

The dissemination of the ToR for a Fund evaluation will vary according to evaluation purpose, but some common outlets to consider include:

✓ **Through the commissioning entities and their networks –** i.e., the ToR can be posted on the appropriate webpage (e.g., "jobs") of an implementing entity or the Fund, and sent by email to internally as well as to partner public agencies, civil society organizations, and relevant universities and research centres.

✓ **Among partner organizations –** i.e., the ToR can be sent by email to relevant public agencies, civil society organizations.

✓ **Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) -** , i.e., regional VOPEs such as the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) or European Evaluation Society (EES), and national VOPEs such as the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) or the American Evaluation Association (AEA). VOPEs encompass the associations and societies advancing evaluation as a profession, and a VOPES Directory can be found on the website of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE).

✓ **Online communities of practice,** such as the Peregrine Jobs discussion group hosted by EvalPartners; the Cross Cultural Evaluation (XCeval) listserv; Reliefweb's Jobs webpage; ALNAP'S Jobs and Opportunities webpage; and Devex's Find a Job webpage.

✓ **LinkedIn** – Many discussion groups post jobs and consultancies, such as the "Monitoring and Evaluation Professionals" group.

7. What to include in a terms of reference?

There is no standard formula or template for writing a ToR, and ultimately each ToR should be tailored according to the evaluation's specific purpose and need. However, recommended sections of a ToR are described below, and **Annex 1** provides a Checklist for Adaptation Fund Evaluation ToRs, with guiding questions to support writing these sections. Following is an explanation of each section recommended for a Fund evaluation ToR.

Box 5: ToR Examples

The Fund has assembled a Library of Example TORs accessed on the online at the AF-TERG Evaluation Resource Webpage, which also has a Word version of an illustrative TOR template using the sections discussed below."

1. Summary

This section summarizes key aspects of the **evaluative exercise,** allowing the reader to quickly grasp the evaluation type (e.g., project baseline, thematic evaluation, Fund policy evaluation, etc.), its purpose, scope, audience, timeframe, location/s, who is commissioning it, the activity/purchase order number,[2] and any other essential information. This information will be elaborated in the other sections of the ToR, but this section is useful, for example, to let potential consultants quickly determine whether to read the full ToR as a potential applicant, or to post on forums with a hyperlink to the full ToR.

2. Background and context

This section provides sufficient **information necessary for an informed understanding of the evaluand** or evaluation object and context. It should include information about the executing entity or entities and any other strategic partners; the intervention being evaluated, including its design (e.g. theory of change), target population (beneficiaries), expected or realized

2. The activity/purchase order (PO) number is a unique number at the Fund used to identify the activity, although some IE's may also use another nomenclature.

timeframe, expected contribution to the Fund's Strategic Results Framework and the implementing entity's strategic goals, its current status, any prior evaluation of the intervention, and any other background information of factors that may directly impact the evaluative activity, including social (e.g., ongoing civil conflict), cultural (e.g. local languages), economic (e.g., high inflationary context), political (e.g., election schedule), and other factors that can impede or support the evaluation.

3. Evaluation purpose, scope and audience

This section **clearly states why an evaluative activity is being conducted (purpose) and why it is important, its primary and any secondary audience, and how evaluation outputs will be used.** Per the Evaluation Policy, the Fund generally pursues evaluative activities that contribute to learning, decision-making and accountability. Delineating the scope of the evaluation helps to refine and clarify what will and will not be included in the evaluation; this includes the unit of analysis to be assessed (e.g., a single or cluster of workstreams), the time period of the intervention to be evaluated, the geographic coverage or locations to be included in the evaluation, and the demographic scope or target populations to be included in the evaluation.

4. Evaluation criteria and questions

This section **specifies what the evaluation will assess,** detailing the evaluation purpose with specific areas of inquiry (criteria) and evaluation questions to be answered. The Fund's Evaluation Policy identifies nine evaluation criteria, summarized in **Box 6,** which are discussed in detail in the Fund's Evaluation Criteria Guidance Note. An evaluation criterion is a broad standard that provides a basis for evaluative judgement, and at the Fund it is used to guide the development of evaluation questions, steer data collection and analysis, and present conclusions and recommendations.

As noted in the Fund's Evaluation Policy states, "(I)f an evaluation commissioner or evaluator considers any of the policy's criteria or principles to be inapplicable to a specific evaluation, they must justify the evaluation terms of reference or inception report/evaluation design to the AF-TERG." This provision highlights the importance to the Fund of the nine evaluation criteria, as well as the ability to adapt evaluation criteria accordingly.

Box 6: Summary of Evaluation Criteria

1. Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right thing?

2. Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?

3. Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

4. Efficiency: How well are resources being used?

5. Impact: What difference does the intervention make?

6. Equity: Are the benefits of the intervention shared fairly between groups and geographies?

7. Adaptive management: Does the intervention make evidence-based decisions?

8. Scalability: Can the intervention be replicated at a greater scale?

9. Human and ecological sustainability and security: Does the intervention affect the ability of human and natural systems to support the equitable life of all species on the planet?

Evaluation questions are high-level questions that an evaluation is designed to answer - not specific questions that are asked in an interview or a questionnaire. At the Fund, the evaluation criteria are used to guide the development of the evaluation questions; or in other words, the evaluation questions elaborate how the evaluation criteria are to be assessed relative to the specific intervention being evaluated. Thus, they focus the data collection and analysis required to answer them.

For example, in accordance with the evaluation criteria for *equity and human and ecological sustainability and security,* which embody key priorities of the Fund's Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy, the evaluation should include evaluative questions designed to assess the differential impacts on gender. The guiding questions in the Evaluation Criteria Guidance Note for the evaluation criteria provide useful examples to help design evaluation questions for each criterion.

The formulation of precise evaluation questions requires careful consideration. Questions that are poorly worded or contain terminology with vague meaning are likely to produce evaluative judgements that are equally imprecise. For example, words like "objectives", "results", "success", "sustainable", "relevant" or "effective" are easily misconstrued and should be clearly defined (e.g., define "success" as reaching a quantitative target).[3]

3. If an evaluability assessment has been conducted to inform the feasibility and focus of the evaluation, this is a valuable resource to inform the design of evaluation questions. For more detailed guidance on designing evaluation questions, refer to BetterEvaluation, (Accessed 2022), "Specify the Key Evaluation Questions," and Eval Academy, (Accessed 2022), How to Write Good Evaluation Questions.

5. Evaluation outputs (or deliverables)

This section specifies the evaluation's **expected outputs,** also referred to as products or deliverables. This includes the evaluation draft and final inception report (with evaluation workplan and data collection tools); the draft and final evaluation report; any debrief, validation, or lessons learned workshops; an outreach and dissemination plan for evaluation findings and learning; and any additional evaluation outputs, such as communication products to support wider evaluative learning and follow-up, e.g., briefs, blogs, videos, etc. If there are different people responsible for different deliverables, it is recommended to identify those responsible for each deliverable. It is also recommended to identify specific dates for the deliverables, which can be reflected in the timeline section of the ToR (see below).

6. Evaluation approach and methods

Firstly, this section should identify the Fund's seven evaluation principles, (see **Figure 3** above), which embody the core tenets for how evaluation is to be pursued and practiced at the Fund. This can be as minimalist as listing the seven principles and referencing the Fund's Evaluation Policy and it Evaluation Principles Guidance Note for more detailed advice on upholding the principles, or it can be a more descriptive explanation of the principles in relation to the specific evaluation.

Secondly, this section should outline the key data sources, and methods of data collection and analysis anticipated for the evaluation. Evaluation methods will vary depending on the evaluation type and purpose. For a midterm review or real-time evaluation conducted during intervention implementation, different methods may be required than for a final or ex-post evaluation.

Particular attention should be given to Evaluation Principle 7 to ensure evaluation methods lead to credible and robust evaluative judgments. This typically entails triangulating primary and secondary data sources and using a combination of (mixed) qualitative and quantitative methods appropriate for dynamic and complex contexts in which climate change adaptation work is typically pursued. However, evaluation data sources and methods will also need to be realistic, including the availability of data, budget, and time for the exercise.

While a methodological preference can be specified in the ToR, this can be refined or revisited by the evaluator or evaluation team during the inception period of the evaluation. It is recommended to solicit input on evaluation methods from someone experienced in evaluations. Also, the Fund's Evaluation Resource Webpage has guidance notes on specific evaluation types (e.g., final evaluations, midterm reviews, real-time evaluations, and ex post evaluations) as well as other relevant topics, such as commissioning and managing an evaluation, which provide addition advice on evaluation methods.

7. (Illustrative) evaluation timeline

This section summarizes the timing of key evaluation activities and **milestones**, including the start and end date of the evaluation, the submission of specified deliverables (see Section 5 above), and key activities such as the inception phase, data collection and analysis, the drafting and review of reports, etc. [4] If there is flexibility in the timeline or it is anticipated it will be confirmed as part of the evaluation's inception phase, then "illustrative" can preface the title of this section.

The evaluation timeline can be presented in a variety of formats. **Figure 4** below illustrates a Gantt Chart format for a timeline for an evaluation of a five-month duration, with a column to specify key evaluation deliverables. The detail of the timeline will often depend on how well the methodology and related requirements are known at the TOR stage (i.e., prior to consultation with the evaluators hired for the assignment). Typically, a more detailed timeline is included in the evaluation management plan in the evaluation's inception report (see Fund Evaluation Inception Report Guidance Note).

4. For a more detailed list of evaluation milestones, refer to the Fund Commissioning and Managing an Evaluation Guidance Note.

Figure 4: Illustrative Evaluation Timeline

Year/Month		May-23				Jun-23				Jul-23				Aug-23				Sep-23			
Week	**Deliverables**	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Inception Phase																					
Desk review of background documents																					
Evaluation kick-off meeting/briefing																					
Conduct stakeholder and landscape analysis																					
Determine recommended evaluation methodology and develop data collection tools																					
Draft Inception report for review	Draft inception report																				
Approved Inception report	Inception report																				
Data collection and analysis																					
Conduct key informant interviews	Interview recording/ transcription																				
Conduct and analyse online survey	Survey data analysis																				
Conduct participatory assessment workshop/s	Workshop delivery																				
Reporting																					
Draft evaluation report	Draft evaluation report																				
Review of draft evaluation report																					
Evaluation validation workshop	Validation Workshop																				
Final evaluation report	Evaluation report																				
Optional oral presentation, video, etc. to support dissemination and learning	TBD																				

8. Evaluation management and quality assurance

This section specifies the governance and management arrangements to ensure quality assurance for the evaluative activity. This includes identifying the Evaluation Manager or Evaluation Management Team with oversight of the evaluation. It also includes any other roles and responsibilities, such as arrangements for the review and approval of evaluation deliverables using an Evaluation Reference Group or Evaluation Advisory Group. For an outline of indicative management roles, refer to the Fund [Commissioning and Managing an Evaluation Guidance Note].

This section may also outline what support and/or resources will be provided to the evaluator(s) and by whom. For example, the Evaluation Manager typically facilitates the introduction to key stakeholders, provision of background documentation, logistical support, trouble-shooting and other relevant activities.

9. Evaluator(s) competencies

As stated in the Fund's Evaluation Policy, **evaluations must be "conducted by suitably competent evaluators."** This section of the ToR clarifies the expected skillsets, experience, and any other qualifications of the evaluator(s) to competently conduct the evaluative activity. In doing so, it also clarifies the expected size and composition of the evaluation team in relation to whether it is an independent, self-conducted, or semi-independent evaluation.

Evaluator(s) competencies and qualifications will depend on the specific evaluation and context (evaluand). When a team is involved, sometimes this section is written to specify minimum requirements for expected team roles, such as the evaluation team leader. Although not exhaustive some examples of different qualifications include: expertise using the anticipated evaluative methodologies, regional or country experience, technical subject knowledge, language fluency, gender knowledge and capacity to assess the gender equality performance, team management skills and so on. The checklist in Annex 1 provides more detail to assist drafting this section of the ToR, and a particularly useful resource UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework listed in Annex 2.

10. Application and selection process

This section explains any application and selection process associated with the recruitment of the evaluator(s) for the evaluation. Typically, it is included in a ToR to recruit external, independent evaluators, but it can also be used if recruitment is required for an internal, self-conducted Fund evaluation. As such, this section of the ToR should clarify the specific procedures, materials, and deadlines for potential applicants to submit their application. In addition to the evaluators' resumes or curricula vitae (CVs), application materials can include a letter of interest or a more detailed proposal, relevant writing examples, references, and more – see ToR Checklist in Annex 1.

The selection process framed in the ToR can play an important role upholding the Fund evaluation principles for transparency, credibility, and impartiality (see **Box 7**) by reassuring stakeholders that a fair and open process exists for evaluators to be selected based on merit, competencies, and experience

Box 7: Evaluation Principle 4, Impartiality and Objectivity

"(T)he selection and behaviour of evaluators, and transparency of decisions, should minimize bias in data collection and analysis. Any pre-existing interests of evaluation personnel to the Fund, the evaluated intervention, or entity should be avoided for independent evaluations and declared in planning and reporting for semi-independent and self-conducted evaluations".

appropriate for the evaluation (rather than personal preferences). As such, other aspects of the selection process can be identified, such as the use of interviews and a Selection Committee, or the weighting of selection criteria, such as the methodological approach, proposed budget, etc.

11. Annexes

Annexes provide additional information relevant to the ToR, such as a hyperlinked bibliography of background documents (including the Fund's Evaluation Policy, Evaluation Principles Guidance Note, and Evaluation Criteria Guidance Note), a theory of change or other design framework, geographic or stakeholder map for the project to be evaluated, and more – see ToR Checklist in Annex 1.

ANNEX 1. Checklist Adaptation Fund Evaluation ToRs

This checklist consists of guiding questions to support the drafting of a ToR for a Fund evaluation. The guiding questions are not exhaustive, but rather intended to initiate critical thinking about the ToR content. Questions should be selected and tailored according to evaluation purpose, needs, and context. Please refer to Section 7 above for further explanation of the ToR sections.

Checklist for Adaptation Fund Evaluation ToRs
Process reminders for developing a ToR for a Fund evaluation
☐ **Evaluation principles** – Has the ToR development been informed by a sound understanding of the Fund's evaluation principles? (See the Evaluation Principles Guidance Note) ☐ **Stakeholder engagement** – Have key stakeholder groups been identified and involved in the ToR development? ☐ **Time management** – Has ToR development started early enough with adequate time for drafting, review, dissemination, and meaningful stakeholder engagement? ☐ **Evaluability assessment.** – If an evaluability assessment has been conducted, to what degree has it been consulted and does it inform the ToR development? ☐ **Realistic** – Does the ToR frame an evaluation that is realistic to the given time, budget, personnel, and other resources available for the exercise? Has a budget for the evaluation been projected and allocated? ☐ **Concise and user-friendly** – Is the ToR written in a concisely and user-friendly manner to navigate and read, avoiding vague or unclear terminology? ☐ **Strategic ToR review** – Has a peer review process been used (e.g., a Reference Group or Steering Committee) to ensure the ToR is useful for and owned by key stakeholder groups? Does the review process utilize an online shared ToR document to streamline reviewer input in an open and transparent manner? ☐ **Strategic ToR dissemination** – Has the ToR not only been disseminated to appropriate platforms to support the recruitment of competent evaluator(s), but also to socialize the evaluation, building understanding, ownership, and support among key stakeholder groups? (See Box 4 above for illustrative dissemination outlets.) ☐ **Adaptive** – Does the ToR reflect adaptability per the Fund's complexity evaluation principle to flex to best achieve the evaluation's purpose?
Illustrative ToR Outline
1. SUMMARY ☐ **Title** – Is the title descriptive of the intended evaluative activity/type? ☐ **Content** – Does the content concisely summarize the evaluation's purpose, scope, audience, timeframe, location/s, who is commissioning it, the activity/purchase order number,[5] and any other essential information?

(continued)

5. The activity/purchase order (PO) number is a unique number at the Fund used to identify the activity, although some IE's may also use another nomenclature.

2. BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

☐ **Institutional setting** – Is adequate background information provided about the Fund and any implementing entity for the evaluation?

☐ **Funding** – When applicable, is the budget and funding source for the given intervention identified?

☐ **Intervention design and current status** – Are the specific objectives of the intervention to be evaluated identified, including the expected contribution to the Fund's Strategic Results Framework and any implementing entity's strategic goals, as well as the current status of implementation?

☐ **Key stakeholders** – Is the interventions target population or beneficiaries identified, as well as any implementing partners (civic, public, private, local and international, etc) or other relevant stakeholders?

☐ **Intervention's temporal and geographic scope** – Is the realized or expected timeframe (duration) of the intervention identified, as well as the locations in which it is being implemented?

☐ **Additional contextual information** – Are relevant cultural, political, legal, economic, and environmental factors identified? For example, local language policy and regulatory settings, gender or power dynamics, or community perceptions relevant that can affect the intervention or its evaluation?

☐ **Relevant background documents** – Have key background documents, such as any prior baseline or midterm review reports, project inception reports, or annual reports, been identified and (when applicable), hyperlinked?

3. EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE, & AUDEINCE

☐ **Purpose** – Is there a clear and concise statement of why the evaluation is to be conducted, why it is important, and how it will be used?

☐ **Audience** – Is the primary audience(s) identified for the evaluation, as well as any secondary audiences as well?

☐ **Scope** – Is the timeframe, location, and population groups to be included in the evaluation clearly identified? Also, is the thematic scope identified to clarify what is and is not to be evaluated, i.e., a single or cluster of workstreams or objectives?

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

☐ **Evaluation criteria** – Are evaluation criteria clearly identified and defined, drawing upon the Fund's nine evaluation criteria, (see the Evaluation Criteria Guidance Note for more detail)?

1) Relevance
2) Coherence
3) Effectiveness
4) Efficiency
5) Impact
6) Equity
7) Adaptive management
8) Scalability
9) Human and ecological sustainability and security

☐ **Evaluation questions** – Are evaluation questions provided that elaborate the criteria, specifying what is to be assessed and information generated from the evaluation?

5. EVALUATION OUTPUTS

☐ **Evaluation deliverables** – Are the outputs or products clearly identified for the evaluation, such as:

- Draft and final inception report (with evaluation workplan and data collection tools)
- Draft and final evaluation report
- Any debrief, validation, or lessons learned workshops
- An outreach and dissemination plan for evaluation findings and learning
- Any additional evaluation outputs, such as related communication products, e.g., briefs, blogs, videos, etc.

☐ **Timing and responsibility for deliverables** – Are the deadlines and responsibilities identified for each output?

(continued)

6. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

☐ **Evaluation principles** – Are the Fund's seven evaluation principles identified and explained as relevant for the evaluation, (see the Evaluation Principles Guidance Note for more detail)?

1) Relevance and utility
2) Credibility and robustness
3) Transparency
4) Impartiality and objectivity
5) Equitable and gender-sensitive inclusivity
6) Complementarity
7) Complexity

☐ **Methodological approach** – Does the ToR specify methods for both data collection and analysis to respond to the evaluation criteria and questions, or the role the evaluator(s) will play in selecting the methodology?

☐ **Mixed methods** – Are a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods recommended that are realistic given the evaluation's purpose, scope, and available time and resources?

☐ **Data sources** – Are secondary and primary data sources identified, with attention to ***triangulation*** or combining different data sources for enhanced rigor?

☐ **Additional considerations** – Are there any other key considerations affecting the data collection an analysis? For example, will data collection need to be conducted remotely through online surveys and/or interviews, or will data collection tools need to be in the local language?

7. (ILLUSTRATIVE) EVALUATION TIMELINE

☐ **Milestones and deadlines presented in a table or diagram** – Are key activities, targets, and deliverables for the evaluation assigned an expected date for completion?

☐ **Adaptability and manageability** – Is the evaluation doable given the proposed timeframe, with deadlines identified understanding that they may be revised in the evaluation plan contained in the inception report, or to allow for flexibility to respond unforeseen contingencies?

8. EVALUATION MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

☐ **Roles and responsibilities** – Are key responsibilities clarified for the management and communication for the oversight of and conducting the evaluation, e.g., the Evaluation Manager or Evaluation Management Team?

☐ **Additional resources** – Does the ToR state any additional resources and support that will be provided for the activity?

☐ **Review and approval of deliverables** – Are those involved in and responsible for the review and approval of evaluation outputs identified, e.g., will an Evaluation Reference Group or Evaluation Advisory Group be employed?

9. EVALUATOR(S) COMPETENCIES

☐ **Evaluation team composition** – If there is a preference for an evaluation team versus an individual evaluator, is this clearly expressed, and if so, the expected size and composition of the team suggested (or is this information purposefully left to the discretion of the applicants to detail)?

☐ **Qualifications and experience** – Have relevant qualifications and experience been identified for the evaluation's purpose and context (evaluand)? This will vary according to evaluation, but some illustrative content to consider for this section includes:[6]

- *At least < insert > years of experience in evaluation or as an evaluation team leader.*
- *Demonstrated experience planning and implementing < insert evaluation type > required.*
- *Relevant subject matter expertise in < insert, e.g., climate change adaptation >, or Familiarity with trends and developments in < insert >*
- *Minimum qualification of a < insert, e.g., PhD, MA > degree or combination of education and relevant work experience in < insert discipline >*

(continued)

6. These example competencies are not exhaustive and not applicable to all evaluation contexts, and ultimately listed competencies should be tailored according to evaluation and need.

- Gender knowledge and capacity to assess the gender equality performance of the reviewed projects and programmes.

- Proven track record conducting quantitative data collection and analysis, including survey design and enumeration, statistical analysis (e.g., using (SPSS, Stata, SAS), and the use of data visualization for reporting

- Experience in all aspects of household survey management, including training and management of enumerators, instrument design, validity testing, pilot testing, quantitative analysis, etc.

- Proven track record conducting qualitative data collection and analysis, including the development of interview schedules and questionnaires

- Experience in participatory evaluation, i.e., training local partners to conduct data collection and analysis

- Excellent written and spoken English skills required or Excellent analytical, writing and presentation skills.

- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills required.

- Working knowledge of < insert language > required or preferred.

- Experience working in < insert location, e.g., country or region > strongly preferred.

- Knowledge and experience working with Adaptation Fund project / programmes preferred

- Demonstrated capacity to work both independently and as part of a team, managing multiple relationships

- Strong interpersonal and communication skills

10. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

☐ **Application instructions** – Does this section clarify the specific procedures, materials, and deadlines for potential applicants to submit their application? Illustrative items identified for applicants to provide include:

- Curricula Vitae (CV) for all applying evaluators.

- Cover letter summarizing evaluator experience relevant, the proposed approach for the evaluation, the daily rate, and three professional references, OR…

- Proposal including a brief description of the evaluation team or firm; a technical proposal reflecting an understanding and interpretation of the TOR, the proposed methodology, a time and activity schedule; and a proposed budget stating consultancy fees (daily rates) and estimating costs for the evaluation, and three professional references.

- Professional references with contact information.

- Writing sample of at least one example evaluation report most relevant to the given evaluation.

☐ **Impartiality** – Per the Fund's Evaluation Policy, does the ToR make clear that applicants for independent evaluations should not have any pre-existing interests to the Fund, the evaluated intervention, or entity?

☐ **Transparency** – Does the application process reflect a fair and open process for evaluators to be selected based on merit, competencies, and experience (rather than personal preferences)? Is a Selection Committee identified, or a weighting of selection criteria?

11. ANNEXES

☐ Bibliography of background documents (preferably hyperlinked) including the Fund's Evaluation Policy, Evaluation Principles Guidance Note, Evaluation Criteria Guidance Note, and Evaluation Reporting Guidance Note

☐ A theory of change, logic model, or other existing framework summarizing the intervention's design.

☐ A geographic or stakeholder map for the project to be evaluated

☐ A list of persons/organizations to be interviewed (as applicable)

☐ An evaluation schedule (if felt more appropriate to presented here rather than above)

☐ A suggested report outline (see Evaluation Reporting Guidance Note).

☐ Etc.

ANNEX 2. Additional Resources

While not exhaustive, the resources below provide additional guidance and insights to support the development of ToRs for Fund evaluation activities:

- AF-TERG. 2022. Evaluation Policy of the Adaptation Fund. https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Evaluation-Policy-of-the-Adaptation-Fund.pdf
- AF-TERG. 2023. Evaluation Criteria Guidance Note. https://www.TBD
- AF-TERG. 2023. Evaluation Principles Guidance Note. https://www.TBD
- AF-TERG. 2023. Evaluation Reporting Guidance Note. https://www.TBD
- Better Evaluation. Accessed 2022. **Terms of Reference.** https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/generaTOR.
- Independent Evaluation Group. 2011. **Writing terms of reference for an evaluation: A how-to guide.** https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/doc/05102016/prep_writing_tor.pdf
- USAID. Accessed 2022. D**eveloping an Evaluation Statement of Work (SOW).** https://usaidlearninglab.org/evaluation/evaluation-toolkit/planning-evaluation/developing-evaluation-sow
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation. 2017. **The Step-by-Step Guide to Evaluation.** https://www.wkkf.org/~/media/62EF77BD5792454B807085B1AD044FE7.ashx.
- UNEG. 2016. **Evaluation Competency Framework.** http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1915
- UNEG. 2010. **Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports.** http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/608