



Guidance in Support  
of the Operationalization  
of the Evaluation Policy

# Evaluation Principles



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](#). The development of the initial series of the evaluation guidance notes was led by Scott Chaplowe (independent consultant) who is also the author of this guidance note. The focal points for this work were AF-TERG members Susan Legro and Carroll Patterson. Special thanks are also extended to all the members of the AF-TERG, Dennis Bours (AF-TERG Secretariat Coordinator in the period July 2019 – April 2023), Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat, and all other stakeholders who provided support in the delivery and finalization of this guidance note.

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](mailto: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](http://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 full-time 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/](http://www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/)

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# Acronyms



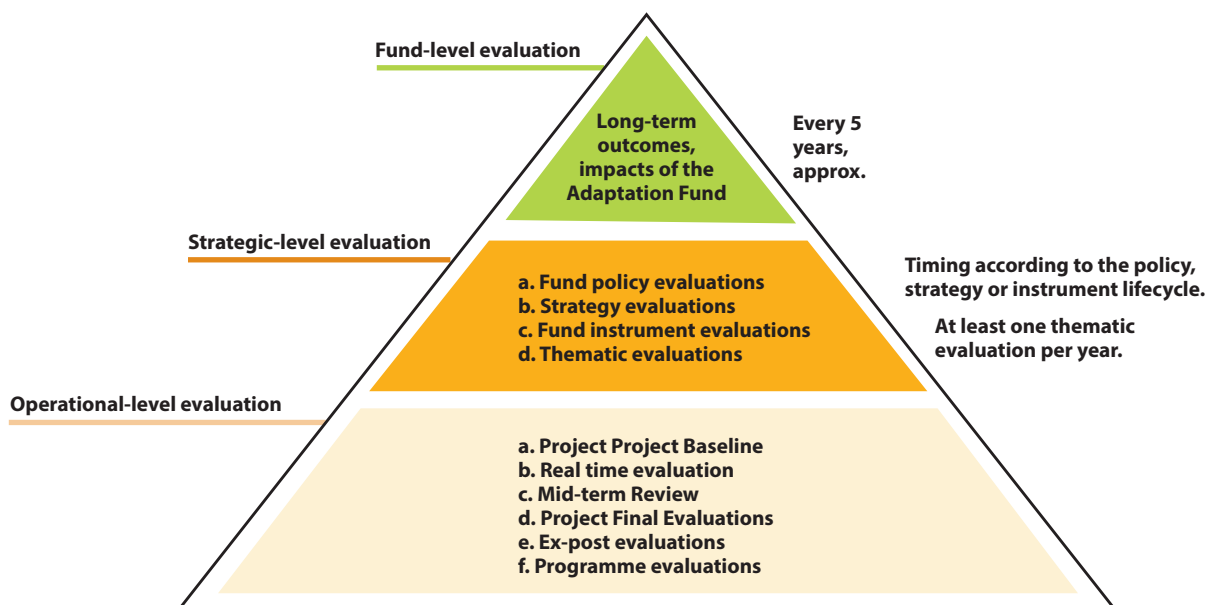
<b>AF-TERG</b>	Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund
<b>Fund</b>	Adaptation Fund
<b>IEs</b>	Implementing Entities
<b>MTR</b>	Mid-term review
<b>RTE</b>	Real-time evaluation
<b>UN</b>	United Nations



# 1. What is this guidance note?

This guidance note elaborates the seven evaluation principles introduced in the Fund’s [Evaluation Policy](#). The guidance note will be most helpful to those who are preparing, commissioning, managing, conducting or assessing the quality of a Fund evaluative activity (see **Figure 1**) contracted by a Fund Implementing Entity (IE) or the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG). The guidance note first looks at what are and when to use the Fund’s evaluation principles, and then examines each principle individually with guidance for its operationalization provided in the annexed checklist. It is important to acknowledge that the discussion is not exhaustive, and additional resources are included as an annex at the end of this guidance note.

**Figure 1: Fund evaluation levels and indicative types to be pursue**



## 2. What are the Fund's evaluation principles?



**The evaluation principles identify the Fund's values, norms, and global best practice** to guide evaluation practice. The Evaluation Policy introduces seven evaluation principles (see **Figure 2**) to reinforce the Fund's values, niche, and the Paris Agreement to guide evaluation practice. This is to ensure high quality fit-for-purpose evaluation processes and products, and to support processes of effective application of practical lessons and recommendations for achieving the aspirations of the Fund.

**Figure 2: The Adaptation Fund's 7 Evaluation Principles**



Three important points to note about the Fund's evaluation principles are:

- **The evaluation principles were identified with attention to the Fund's specific niche** financing concrete adaptation and resilience projects and programmes in the most vulnerable communities of developing countries around the world. As such, the principles stress evaluation good practice that are accountable to and meaningfully engage the diversity of Fund local partners.
- **The evaluation principles are interrelated.** For instance, the credibility of an evaluation will partly depend on how robust, transparent, impartial,

objective, and equitable an evaluation was executed. Collectively, the evaluation criteria provide a holistic framework of core priorities to steer the evaluation function at the Fund.

● **The evaluation principles are related but distinct from other principles at the Fund,** For instance, the evaluation principle for equitable and gender-sensitive inclusivity is aligned with the principles identified in both the Fund's [Environmental and Social Policy](#) and its [Gender Policy](#). Nevertheless, each set of principles reflect different priority areas in the Fund's work. For instance, whilst the [AF-TERG's Ten Work Principles](#) guide its work to ensure the independent implementation of the Fund's Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Principles guide the specific evaluation practice itself among all parties involved in Fund evaluations.



### **What is the difference between the Fund's Evaluation Criteria and Evaluation Principles?**

The **evaluation principles** are used to guide and ensure quality oversight of how the evaluation is planned and conducted, whereas the **evaluation criteria** and related evaluation questions focus the evaluation on what it will examine and assess. For example, while "relevance" appears as both an evaluation criteria and principle, it is used to mean different things based on whether it is applied to inform the evaluation process as a principle or the assessment of the subject of evaluation as a criterion. As a principle, relevance means the relevance of the evaluation and as criteria is the relevance of the operation or activity under evaluation.

### 3. When to apply the Evaluation Principles?



The evaluation principles apply throughout the five phases of an evaluation and should inform them, from evaluation preparation and inception to implementation, reporting, and follow-up, including key processes such as preparing an evaluation's terms of reference, the selection of evaluators, the evaluation design and implementation, the assessment of evaluation products, the management response to evaluation, and the preparation, dissemination, and use of evaluative products. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the evaluation process to uphold the Fund's evaluation principles, from those involved in commissioning and managing evaluations to those who conduct and report on evaluations.

The application of evaluation principles is paramount. However, the Evaluation Policy (p. 11) states: "If an evaluation commissioner or evaluator considers any of the policy's criteria or principles to be inapplicable to a specific evaluation, they must justify in the evaluation terms of reference or inception report/ evaluation design to the AF-TERG." In this case, the commissioner or evaluator should communicate with the AFTERG Secretariat to receive feedback on the justification. The AFTERG Secretariat, in consultation with the AFTERG members, would provide comments on how the criterion could be included or agree with the exclusion. This communication should be done within two weeks timeframe. This provision highlights the importance to the Fund of the seven evaluation principles, while also embodying the complexity sensitive and adaptive principle by remaining flexible and adaptive to evaluation context and needs.



## 4. How to apply the Evaluation Principles?



It is the responsibility of all those involved in the evaluation function to ensure the Funds evaluation principles are respected, addressed, and promoted. This includes those who commission and manage Fund evaluations (i.e., implementing entities, the AF-TERG, and the Fund secretariate), as well as those who conduct evaluations (whether external independent or internal evaluators). This section examines in more detail each principle to support this process, first stating the principle verbatim as it appears in the Evaluation Policy, followed by further explanation. It is then complemented by the **Checklist of Guiding Questions for each evaluation principle in Annex 1** to help operationalize the principles during an evaluation.

**1. Relevance and Utility Evaluation Principle.** Each evaluation should respond to the interests and decision-making needs of its intended users at the different levels in the Fund; country and front-line adapters; and the wider CCA community.

### **Further Explanation:**

A useful evaluation, its findings, lessons and recommendations, is one that is used and acted upon with added value to learning, decision-making, and accountability. This means evaluations must be relevant to and serve the information needs of intended users. Evaluations should be timely and presented in a practical format and should be embedded in the operational processes. At the Fund, this includes immediate stakeholders, such as IEs, DAs, the Board, the secretariat, the AF-TERG, civil society organizations, and other partners, but it also included generating knowledge for the wider climate change adaptation and sustainable development community.

**The Board encourages the use of evaluation-generated evidence in global discussions related to CCA [climate change adaptation], and to promote the Fund's CCA expertise, lessons, and achievements. (Evaluation Policy, p. 18).**

It is important to recognize that the relevance and utility of evaluations will depend on how the exercise is perceived by stakeholders, which is affected by other evaluation principles. For example, if project teams feel the evaluation

1. UNEG. 2016 UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation

is credible, robust, transparent, and impartial, they will be more likely to own evaluative learning and support evaluation use and follow-up. This, in turn, can then contribute to the uptake and influence of evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations.

**2. Credibility and Robustness of Evaluation Principle.** Evaluations should apply justifiable approaches and methods for data collection, analysis, and presentation, conducted by suitably competent evaluators.

**Further Explanation:**

The credibility or legitimacy of an evaluation is an essential prerequisite if it is to be useful and used, and the robustness or rigor of an evaluation is a key determinant of an evaluation's credibility. The robustness of an evaluation refers to the degree its design, methods, and processes result in reliable, accurate, fair, and unbiased assessment, enhancing the confidence in findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Other key factors that affect an evaluation's credibility include the actual and perceived level of impartiality, objectivity, transparency – each discussed separately for the following principles.

Evaluation methods should follow global and internationally agreed norms and standards<sup>1</sup> that are adapted and applied to the context of the Fund's operations. Rigour implies that methods are systematic and verifiable. For example, evaluations should include details on the evaluation design and chosen methodology, including disclaimers on limitations - (related to Principle 2, below).

**3. Transparency.** Evaluation should be transparent for “building and maintaining public dialogue, increasing public awareness, enhancing good governance, accountability and ensuring programmatic effectiveness.

**Further Explanation:**

Transparency is an essential feature at all stages of the evaluation process, consisting of clear communication concerning what, why, when, how, and with whom to evaluate, and the evaluation methods, findings, and recommendations. Transparency establishes trust and reinforces credibility,

enhances stakeholder ownership and evaluation use, and increases public accountability. There should be constant communication with stakeholders during the entire evaluation cycle regarding decision making. Also, while the evaluation team should maintain the confidentiality of data collected there should be transparency on how the data was analysed.

**4. Impartiality and Objectivity.** The 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.

**Further Explanation:**

All stages of evaluations should strive for impartiality and absence of bias, providing a comprehensive and unbiased assessment that takes into account the views of different stakeholders. Recognizing that evaluation is inherently embedded in and affected by the social contexts in which it is pursued, all procedures and those involved in the evaluation – from commissioning to conducting and reporting evaluations – should endeavour to minimize and be free from political, personal, and organizational influence. Impartiality contributes to the reliability, credibility, support, and use of evaluations.

At the Fund, oversight and guarantee of evaluation independence is a key mandate of the AF-TERG.<sup>2</sup> Evaluators should not be biased towards the subject to be evaluated and methods should not be biased towards the achievements and challenges. Evaluator(s) should not have been (or expect to be) directly responsible for policy-setting, design or management of the evaluation subject. Another important aspect of impartial and objective evaluation is the independence of the evaluation function so that evaluators have full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially without undue influence by any party.

**5. Equitable and Gender Sensitive Inclusivity.** Evaluation methods and tools will be designed and deployed to ensure gender-disaggregated data collection is culturally sensitive and evidence generated is balanced and representative of different relevant stakeholder groups, with particular

2. [Terms of Reference of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund](#) (2018)

**attention to the Fund’s GP and equity priorities. Stakeholder engagement and cogeneration in evaluation – especially country partners and the most vulnerable segments of front-line adapter communities – and incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge, is expected to increase the relevance, understanding, support, and use of evaluation findings.**

**Further Explanation:**

Equitable and gender sensitive inclusivity refers to the fair inclusion of people’s perspectives and participation in evaluation (design and implementation as well as reporting) with attention to gender norms, roles, and relations, as well as other differences between people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized – i.e., differences due to race, ethnicity, colour, age, genetic features, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, medical or psychological status, language, education, economic status, religion or belief, nationality, political orientation, or some other demographic characteristic.

The equitable inclusion of multiple perspectives in evaluation is critical to inform a more complete, accurate, and relevant assessment of climate change adaptation work. It is especially important for climate change adaptation work because those most vulnerable people targeted in Fund operations are often those marginalized from power and resources due to gender and socio-economic differences. Therefore, it is essential that evaluation prioritizes their perspective and input. Inclusive and diverse stakeholder engagement is also empowering and can build stakeholder capacities, ownership, credibility, support for and the use of evaluation.

**The Fund’s commitment to gender equality**

“All Fund project and programmes subject to final and mid-point evaluation, “need to include an assessment of the project/programme’s contribution to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls,” [Gender Policy and Action Plan of the Adaptation Fund](#) (2021, p. 17). “As an important part of the gender mainstreaming process of an adaptation intervention, the evaluation should review whether gender concerns have been integrated into every stage of the project/programme cycle, determine strengths and weaknesses of the actual implementation and can recommend lessons learned for the future,” [Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy](#) (2021, p. 33).

**6. Complementarity.** Where feasible, each evaluation’s objectives, processes, and lessons should be aware of and contribute to cross-organizational learning with country partners, within the Fund, and between the Fund and its partners or other climate finance delivery channels.

**Further Explanation:**

The Funds EP stresses a **whole-of-Fund** approach to the evaluation function, “that engages all Fund entities in contributing to generating and optimizing the use of better quality evidence and learning across Fund operations,” (EP 8). In essence, the whole-of-Fund approach underscores the Fund’s commitment to the complementarity principle to promote collective knowledge generation and sharing that supports inclusive evaluative learning throughout the Fund and beyond, (rather than narrow, siloed use of evaluation findings). This includes program teams and workstreams within the Fund, the Board, secretariat, and AF-TERG, national, multilateral, and regional IEs, government officials acting as Designated Authorities and other country partners, the Adaptation Fund CSO Network, and any stakeholder groups with a vested interest in and affected by the Fund’s evaluation work.

Complementarity also implies acknowledging that stakeholders and ecosystems involved in Fund operations may be subject to evaluations from other funding organizations. Therefore, the Fund and its EIs should strive to reduce the burden of evaluation tasks, such as stakeholder data collection and participation in interviews and surveys. Related, identifying concurrent evaluations from other organizations can provide opportunities for collaboration in data collection, capitalizing on resources and effort while reducing stakeholder burden.

**7. Complexity Sensitive and Adaptive.** Fund interventions occur in dynamic and complex contexts, as do their evaluation. Fund evaluations will be prepared to flex and adapt around the needs of stakeholders, emergent learning, and any unexpected challenges during the evaluation exercise. This approach will maintain the commitment to usability and with attention to the systems orientation inherent in transformational change work.

**Further Explanation:**

Climate change adaptation work is subject to constantly evolving human behavior, involving multiple actors, entities, and processes operating across multiple levels (scales) as well as changing ecosystem processes that take place

at different scales with varying climate change impacts. As such, evaluators should take into account the larger social and human ecosystems in which the climate change adaptations interventions they evaluate are delivered. For example, coral reefs, one of the most sensitive ecosystems, may be negatively affected by human behavior that is not related to climate change impacts (e.g., dumping of untreated waste), but nevertheless increases the vulnerability of these ecosystems.

Climate change adaptation operations rarely follow linear processes overtime, but are instead characterized by rapid change and therefore unpredictability. Furthermore, as the past decade has underscored, the frequency and magnitude of disruption is increasing, from pandemics and large scale weather events to recession, social unrest, and war. The increasing complexity and disruption underscores the relevance of the Fund's work to help developing countries adapt to the vulnerabilities of climate change.

It also underscores the evaluation's important role to provide timely and relevant learning that informs decision making so that Fund interventions can flex and adapt to best support climate change adaptation. But it also underscores that evaluation itself needs to be responsive to unexpected changes that inevitably arise during the evaluation process. This is the essence of the principle for evaluation that is complexity sensitive and adaptive; for evaluation to be useful, it needs to remain alert to, respond and adapt to the inevitable changes that occur in the evaluand (context) that evaluation occurs.

# ANNEX 1. Checklist – Guiding Questions for Evaluation Principles

<b>Checklist – Guiding Questions for the Adaptation Fund’s Evaluation Principles</b>		
<p>This checklist consists of guiding questions to help operationalize the Fund’s evaluation principles. It complements Section 4 above, which explains individual evaluation principles in more detail. The guiding questions below are not exhaustive, but rather intended to initiate critical thinking about the application of the evaluation principles.</p>		
<b>1. Relevance and Utility</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>To what degree is the evaluation demand-driven</b> , serving users’ practical needs for learning, decision-making, and accountability?	
<b>2</b>	<b>Is the evaluation planned and delivered in a timely manner to meet stakeholders’ information needs</b> , i.e., Real Time Evaluations Midterm Reviews to support adaptive management and course correction during implementation, and final and ex post evaluations to support longer term strategic decision making?	
<b>3</b>	<b>Is evaluation relevance and utility planned and designed from the start?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what degree is the intended audiences consulted early on, and is the evaluation’s intended use and audience clarified during the evaluation scoping, defined in the TOR, and informs the evaluation’s design of what to evaluate, when, how, and with whom?</li> </ul>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Is evaluation relevance and utility monitored and managed throughout the evaluation process</b> , supporting adaptive management so that the evaluation is responsive to emergent needs and learning inherent to the dynamic and complex contexts that characterize climate change adaptation (see Complexity Principle)?	
<b>5</b>	<b>Are report evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations formulated with attention to evaluation follow-up and use?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do recommendations specify who and what they target, why, who needs to implement them, when, and how?</li> </ul>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Is a quality assurance system mechanism used to ensure that evaluation deliverables are practical and useful?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are key stakeholders responsible for evaluation follow-up consulted to ensure evaluation recommendations are fit-for-purpose, feasible, and likely to be accepted and useful?</li> <li>• Or are recommendations unlikely to be accepted and implemented because they are impractical, burdensome, or excessively prescriptive?</li> </ul>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Are evaluation learning and recommendations strategically disseminated and communicated</b> in editorial style, formats, and channels appropriate for all audiences to optimize their timely use, (related to Transparency Principle)? Is there clarity from the evaluation TORs on how and when the findings, lessons, and recommendations will be disseminated/disclosed?	
<b>8</b>	<b>Is an evaluation management response or some other mechanism used to support evaluation follow-up?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does organizational management and the governing bodies ensure that evaluative learning is used to inform future operations and strategies, as well as course correction ongoing implementation?</li> </ul>	
<b>9</b>	Is evaluative evidence incorporated into any efforts to promote knowledge management and sharing across the organization? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, would the evaluation promote learning through workshops, working groups or knowledge products to share evaluation evidence across the organization?</li> </ul>	

(continued)

<b>2. Credibility and Robustness</b>		
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Are all stakeholders meaningfully involved</b> to support shared understanding and ownership that contribute to the evaluation's credibility and legitimacy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Are processes sufficiently inclusive and consultative during all evaluation phases</b> (preparation, inception, implementation, reporting, and follow-up) to reinforce stakeholder understanding, ownership, and evaluation credibility?</li> <li>• <b>What stakeholder engagement mechanisms are utilized</b>, i.e., consultation meetings on evaluation design, validation workshops on preliminary findings and post-evaluation learning workshops, reference, steering, or advisory groups to review and approve evaluation deliverables?</li> </ul>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Do recruited evaluators (whether external or internal) exhibit the professional, ethical, and cultural expertise, sensitivities, and competencies</b> appropriate for the evaluation's purpose, scope, methods, evaluand and stakeholder groups? (<b>Cultural competence/sensitivity should not be underestimated</b> as it can greatly enhance an evaluation's credibility and rigor when evaluators understand the local context and cultural norms to ensure appropriate sensitivity during the evaluation (related to Equitable and Gender Sensitive Inclusivity Principle).</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Has an evaluability study or equivalent been conducted early in the evaluation preparation phase</b> to determine which aspects of the evaluated intervention's theory (i.e., logic model or theory of change) can be realistically evaluated given time and resources?</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Do the evaluation's design and methods adhere to the technical standards required by the intended use of the evaluation?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are methods and procedures clearly identified, documented, systematic and replicable when possible, ensuring that information is valid, reliable, defensible, and upholds impartiality?</li> </ul>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Does the evaluation provide multiple sources of evidence</b>, drawing upon (triangulating) different primary and secondary data sources and using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) appropriate to the evaluation's purpose, timeframe, and resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the evaluation clearly indicate what benchmarks will be used for data analysis to assess each evaluation criteria or question?</li> </ul>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Are evaluation quality assurance mechanisms in place and used to monitor and assess both evaluation products and processes?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there timely and meaningful processes to review and validate evaluation findings for accuracy with relevant stakeholder groups (see above)?</li> </ul>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Does the evaluation include an analysis of potential unanticipated or negative consequences</b> in its findings and recommendations, (an important element for credibility)?</p>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Are evaluators able to state independent opinions and evaluative judgements?</b> (Credibility in the evaluation process entails that evaluators maintain their independence, and while inaccuracies in evaluation findings must be addressed in the review process, evaluators should have the right to report conclusions and recommendations that reflect their professional opinion.)</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Does evaluation reporting reflect and support evaluation credibility and robustness?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is evaluation reporting logically coherent to allow others to understand, interpret, and critique the work?</li> <li>• Does it provide sufficient evidence to establish the reliability of the evaluation, including adequately identifying the evaluation's design, methodology, and limitations?</li> <li>• Does the reporting appropriately reflect the different perspectives and voices of various stakeholders involved?</li> <li>• Are reported recommendations realistic and credible given the existing time, resources, and capacities for implementation?</li> </ul>	

(continued)



<b>3. Transparency</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Is information about the evaluation process, procedures, and decision making transparently communicated and made publicly available?</b> (For instance, conveying who commissioned the evaluation, its purpose, audience, and intended use; the recruitment and selection of evaluators; the evaluation’s design, methodology, and limitations; procedures for the evaluation’s review, management response process, and follow-up.)	
<b>2</b>	<b>Are evaluation products publicly accessible and strategically disseminated among relevant stakeholder groups, including a full disclosure of evaluation findings and recommendations?</b> (At the Fund, key evaluation products (including terms of reference, inception reports, evaluation reports, and management responses are made available on its website and shared with relevant stakeholders and partners. <sup>3</sup> )	
<b>3</b>	<b>To what degree does the preparation and dissemination of evaluation products consider the readability, languages, formats, and outlets</b> to most effectively make evaluation information accessible to different audiences, including local populations?	
<b>4</b>	<b>Are quality assurance processes in place to ensure the evaluation adheres to the transparency principle?</b> For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Has the commitment to report a clear and transparent accounting of findings been formally established with the evaluation team</b> (i.e., in their contract)?</li> <li>• <b>Are data sources substantiating findings clearly identified</b>, i.e., interview records should be maintained to verify sources for specific findings, (while adhering to data protection and confidentiality good practices)?</li> <li>• <b>Is a range of reviewers utilized to review and feedback on draft deliverables</b>, with input incorporated when appropriate, and a clear edit/revision history maintained of evaluation written products?</li> <li>• <b>Does a protocol exist and is it clearly communicated for handling competing interests, differences of opinion, disputes, and grievances in a transparent manner?</b></li> </ul>	
<b>4. Impartiality and Objectivity</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Is the evaluator selection process unbiased and conducted in open and transparent manner to ensure evaluators are chosen based on merit, competencies, and experience appropriate for the evaluation (rather than personal preferences)?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was a selection committee used composed of members representative of key stakeholder groups, and were clear selection criteria identified and consistently used for all evaluator candidates?</li> </ul>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Are the evaluators impartial and unbiased, without conflict of interests or extreme predisposed opinions on the subject of evaluation?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has it been confirmed that evaluators have not been (or expect to be in the near future) directly involved in and responsible for the policy setting, design, or management of the evaluation subject?</li> <li>• <b><i>Do evaluators exhibit and embody the professional integrity and ethical conduct necessary for impartial evaluations absence of bias?</i></b></li> </ul>	
<b>3</b>	<b>To what degree does the evaluation acknowledge the inherent social and normative values among its team members to strive for neutral, fair, and objective assessment?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this reflected in the methods section of the report as a potential limitation, and does it inform the proposed approaches used?</li> </ul>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Are evaluation methods and tools for data collection and analysis designed and used to ensure the absence of bias?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are objective criteria identified and used consistently to minimize bias in evaluative judgments?</li> </ul>	

(continued)

3. Depending on the nature of the evaluation and its content, exceptions may be made to the open disclosure of Fund’s evaluation products, i.e., when evaluation information may threaten individual security, breaches confidentially, or violates and data protection laws.

5	<p><b>Does the evaluation triangulate data sources and incorporate (triangulate) multiple data sources and perspectives to minimize bias in analysis and assessment?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do evaluators listen to, test, and incorporate competing explanations to avoid bias and errors in judgement?</li> </ul>	
6	<p><b>Are evaluators able to impartially conduct their work and express their opinion without personal or professional threat?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do evaluators have cooperation and access to relevant information and stakeholders during data collection, without interference or pressure.</li> <li>• Similarly, do they have full discretion in reporting evaluations findings, conclusions, and recommendations?</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>Is evaluation reporting balanced and unbiased in the presentation of evidence, findings, lessons, conclusions, and recommendations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does reporting consider both strengths and weaknesses of the subject of evaluation (project, program, policy, strategy, etc.)?</li> </ul>	
<h2>5. Equitable and Gender-sensitive Inclusivity</h2>		
1	<p><b>Does the evaluation adequately assess equitability and gender sensitive inclusivity</b> in both substantive (content and goal-oriented) and administrative and management (process) aspects of the evaluated intervention?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will it contribute to and promote a culture of mindfulness of the intersectionality of social categorisations such as gender, race, and class, in creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage?</li> </ul>	
2	<p><b>To what degree does the evaluation uphold Fund principles and priorities embodied</b> in the Gender Policy and Action Plan of the Adaptation Fund and elaborated in the Guidance document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy (2021)?</p>	
3	<p><b>Does the evaluation itself model and uphold equitability and gender sensitive inclusivity in its design, data collection, analysis, and reporting,</b> taking into consideration different stakeholder needs and perspectives, especially those of marginalized populations, such as indigenous peoples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For instance, are equitability and gender sensitive indicators and criteria utilized, and is beneficiary and activity level data disaggregated where possible by social criteria (e.g., sex, ethnicity, age, disability, geographic location, income, or education) to account for potential discriminations and exclusions?</li> </ul>	
4	<p><b>Are equitability and gender considerations sufficiently integrated in the terms of reference (ToRs) for both the evaluator and the evaluation process?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, does the ToR specify evaluator competencies for gender expertise and a commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment?</li> </ul>	
5	<p><b>Does the composition of the evaluation team have an appropriate gender balance and cultural and linguistic competence</b> to sufficiently understand, engage with, and capture the perspectives of a diversity of stakeholders relevant to the evaluand (subject of evaluation)?</p>	
6	<p><b>Do recruited evaluators (whether external or internal) exhibit professional, ethical, and cultural competencies,</b> acting with tolerance, sensitivity, and respect for individual and cultural differences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When appropriate, are evaluators trained or briefed to understand the local context, gendered subject matter and other cultural norms to ensure appropriate sensitivity when undertaking the evaluation?</li> <li>• Do evaluation team members themselves should also consider and pursue the equitable distribution of evaluation tasks?</li> </ul>	

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7	<p><b>Does the evaluation meaningfully engage a diversity of stakeholders</b> (as beneficiaries, implementers, users, community members, regulators, decision-makers, etc.)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the evaluation planned and conducted to address the involvement of potentially marginalized stakeholder groups due to their low gender, literacy level, language skills, and other socio-economic differences, as well as time and logistical constraints to their participation?</li> <li>• To what degree does stakeholder involvement go beyond consultation as a data source to include meaningful engagement in evaluation planning, design, data collection, reporting and follow-up?</li> </ul>	
<b>6. Complementarity</b>		
1	<p>To what degree is the evaluation planned and conducted to be compliment and contribute to learning with other interventions and workstreams within and beyond the Fund?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the evaluation plan have clear protocols and mechanisms supporting timely and relevant co-generation and sharing of evaluative learning across the Fund, with immediate partners, and other actors in the climate change adaptation and sustainable development space?</li> </ul>	
2	<p>Do those commissioning, managing, and conducting the evaluation sufficiently understand the role of an intervention within the given system (organization, sector, thematic area, country) to support broad complementary learning, (rather than an exclusively intervention- or institution-centric perspective)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they work collaboratively and respectfully of the knowledge and experience of participants and stakeholders (per the Equitable and Gender Sensitive Inclusivity Principle)?</li> </ul>	
3	<p>Does the evaluation establish and nurture relationships that optimize synergies for cross-organizational, collaborative learning within and between country partners and the Fund?</p> <p>To what extent are relevant stakeholders invited to and participate in evaluation planning, data collection, analysis, and reporting to support collaborative learning, (as well as enhance the validity, ownership, and utility of findings – per the Credibility and Robustness Principle)?</p>	
4	<p>To what extent does evaluative learning feed into and is supported by knowledge management systems that make evaluation findings accessible at the right time and in appropriate formats?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, are appropriate evaluative learning points shared within an organization or with partners through email or internal social media outlets (e.g., Teams or Slack) prior to completion of the publication of the final report so that they can be acted upon?</li> <li>• Do team meetings within an organization and with its implementing partners include real-time evaluative learning updates as part of the agenda?</li> </ul>	
5	<p>Does evaluation reporting (in both content and format) support cross-organizational learning within the Fund and beyond?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are evaluation findings broadly disseminated and strategically communicated through different outlets and channels to support knowledge sharing and learning with relevant internal and external target audiences?</li> </ul>	
6	<p>To what degree are different workstreams across the Fund, country partners, and other relevant stakeholders consulted and included in follow-up plans to evaluation findings and recommendations, especially follow-up actions related to institutional and sector learning?</p>	
7	<p>To what extend does evaluative learning meaningfully inform decision making within the Fund and among its partners and peers in climate change adaption work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does evaluative learning feed into planning cycles, the design of new operations, policy formulation, and institutional learning processes?</li> </ul>	
<b>6. Complementarity</b>		
1	<p>Are assumptions for the evaluation process identified in the evaluation inception report, monitored during implementation, and responded to when they do not hold?</p>	

(continued)

2	<b>To what degree does the evaluation adapt evaluation processes, techniques and tools based on feedback during the evaluation?</b>	
3	<b>Does the evaluation seek to understand the big picture</b> , challenging the “boundaries of the operation,” for example, as well as the context of the operation, and focusing on the “forest as well as the details of any tree”? (Establishing meaningful connections within and between systems, and observing how elements within systems change over time, not only informs the evaluation of the given intervention, but also supports context monitoring to inform and adapt the evaluation itself.)	
4	<b>Does evaluation quality assurance include mechanisms that monitor and solicit input on the evaluation process (per the Relevance and Utility Principle above)?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there processes for evaluation stakeholders to provide feedback or report grievances about the evaluation process itself, including non-adherence to the Fund’s Evaluation Principles?</li> <li>• For instance, are consultation meetings with reference, steering, or advisory groups comprised of stakeholder representation utilized to track, oversee, and provide feedback on evaluation processes?</li> <li>• Are data collection methods and tools piloted and revised based on user input?</li> </ul>	
5	<b>Does the evaluation monitor short-term, long-term, and unintended outcomes (positive or negative) in the evaluation process?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it look ahead and anticipate not only the immediate results of evaluation actions but also the effects down the road?</li> </ul>	
6	<b>Are evaluation commissioners and managers receptive to changes in the evaluation plan and methodological design based on emergent learning and feedback during evaluation implementation?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there permission and room to make “safe-to fail” errors and mistakes in search of what does and does not work?</li> </ul>	
7	<b>Do the evaluators display adaptive capacity?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they receptive to and motivated by feedback, experimentation, and learning-by-doing rather than strict adherence to “plan the work and work the plan”?</li> </ul>	

## ANNEX 2. Additional Recommended Resources

While not exhaustive, the resources below provide additional guidance and insights on the topic of evaluation principles, as well as some other relevant topics to support the application of evaluation principles at the Fund.

- AEA. [Guiding Principles For Evaluators](#)
- Adaptation Fund. 2013. [Environmental and Social Policy](#)
- Adaptation Fund. 2021. [Gender Policy and Action Plan of the Adaptation Fund](#)
- Adaptation Fund. 2022. [Updated Gender Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy](#)
- Adaptation Fund. 2021. [Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy](#)
- EIGE. 2016. [Gender Impact Assessment: Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit](#)
- GCF Evaluation Standards 2022
- ILO. 2020. [Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation](#)
- IMF. 2018. [How to Operationalize Gender Issues in Country Work](#)
- IOM. 2018. [Guidance for Addressing Gender in Evaluations](#)
- OECD. [Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality](#)
- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Poverty, [Social Inclusion webpage](#)
- UN Women. 2018. [ISE4GEMs. Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender Equality, Environments and Marginalized Voices. A new approach for the SDG era](#)
- UNEG. 2014. [Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#)
- UNEG. 2016 [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)
- UNEG. 2020. [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#)
- World Bank. 2006. [World Bank Report 2006: Equity and Development.](#)
- World Bank. 2011. [World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development](#)
- World Bank. 2013. [Inclusion Matters : The Foundation for Shared Prosperity](#)
- World Bank Group. 2019. [World Bank Group Evaluation Principles](#)