Guidance in Support of the Operationalization of the Evaluation Policy

Mid-Term Review

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 co-author of this guidance note together with Bruce Ravesloot (TANGO International) and Anna Maria Augustyn (independent consultant). 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.

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 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/

Table of Contents

Headline here

AF-TERG	Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund
Fund	Adaptation Fund
MTR	Mid-term review
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference

1. What is this guidance note?

The purpose of this guidance note is to support the planning and implementation of fit-for purpose project mid-term reviews in accordance with the Adaptation Fund's Evaluation Policy. The intended audience for this guidance note is people who plan and manage Fund evaluation activities, primarily within Fund Implementing Entities, the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG), and the Fund secretariat and Board. This guidance note may also be useful to others conducting a mid-term review or interested in the topic of mid-term reviews and evaluations in the climate change adaptation community and wider.

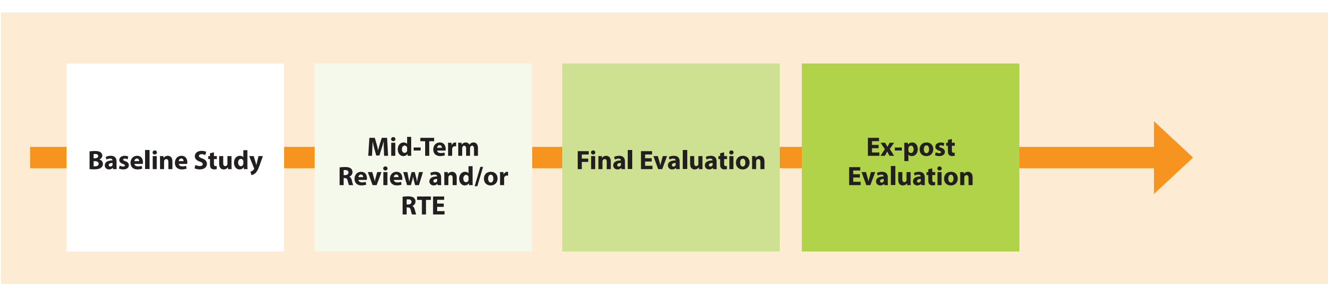
This guidance notes outlines what is an MTR, when does it occur, who is involved, and how to plan and implement project MTRs. The accompanying annexes provide a general checklist for planning, illustrative inception and MTR report outlines, an illustrative evaluation matrix, and an illustrative management response template. Acknowledging that this guidance note is not exhaustive, recommended resources for selecting an appropriate methodology, collecting evidence, and analysing data are also included in Annexes.

2. What is a mid-term review?

At the Fund, a mid-term review (MTR) is a formative evaluation to assess project performance and context to inform project management decision-making and course correction during the remaining implementation period. MTRs are key tools to monitor project progress during their lifecycle and are mandatory for any project with four or more years of implementation. While an MTR is optional for projects less than four years in duration, it may be especially useful if the project has encountered challenges in implementation. The MTR may be conducted independently or semi-independently in projects with four or more years of implementation, or self-conducted in projects with shorter durations.

As Figure 1 conveys, an MTR may be just one of several evaluations or tools used to assess project impacts and outcomes. While not mandatory, real-time evaluations (RTE) can be used as a MTR methodology to provide timely feedback during implementation. Regardless of which tools are used, findings from other evaluation activities can be used to inform the MTR, as the MTR may also be used to inform other evaluations. If a baseline study was conducted prior to project implementation, the baseline results may be compared to MTR findings to assess progress and achievement. In turn, findings from the MTR can inform the final evaluation and be used to assess progress made since the project midpoint. If an ex-post evaluation is used to assess long-term outcomes and impacts, the MTR may serve as a source of comparison for ex-post findings.

Figure 1: Evaluation tools



The scope of MTRs should be tailored to the specific project/programme context and evaluation needs and identified in the evaluation's ToR. However, an essential part of each Fund evaluation is the assessment of the project/programme relative to the Fund's nine evaluation criteria:[1]

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? Is the intervention sensitive to conflict and fragility?

If an evaluation commissioner or evaluator considers any of the evaluation criteria to be inapplicable to a specific evaluation, per the Fund's Evaluation Policy, this must be justified in the evaluation's ToR or inception presented to the AF-TERG.

1. Evaluation Criteria GN for further details.

3. What are the benefits of a mid-term review?

MTR findings are an important tool for implementing entities and stakeholders to:

✓ **Identify what works and why and what isn't working and why** to timely inform project implementation, course correction, and strategic decision making.

✓ **Recognition of successes and best practices,** as well as areas with potential for upscaling or replication.

✓ **Identify challenges or problems before they worsen and reveal good practices and strengths** for that implementing entities to expand their successes.

✓ **Improve project performance and bolster its impact and sustainability** of results over the remainder of the project's life.

✓ **Organize and synthesize experiences and lessons.** As the MTR involves learning during project implementation, experiences and lessons identified can be readily acted upon to improve project impacts and outcomes. Lessons also help to improve and instruct future climate change adaptation interventions.

4. When to conduct a mid-term review?

The Fund mandates that implementing entities conduct an MTR for any project that is four or more years in duration, while MTRs are optional for projects of shorter duration. The MTR report should be finalized within six months of the mid-point in the project implementation cycle. To ensure the report deadline is met, **planning for the MTR should begin with project planning.** Additional timing considerations to inform when to conduct an MTR as well as its duration include:

- Current progress of project activities,
- Availability of key stakeholders,
- Seasonality issues (e.g., rainy season, etc.),
- Other logistical constraints (e.g., elections, etc.).

5. Who is involved in a mid-term review?

Implementing entities commission and typically manage the MTR, whereas evaluations can be conducted either independently, semi-independently, or as a self-evaluation. The type of MTR will determine whether the implementing entity needs to commission independent evaluators - see **Table 1**.

Project beneficiaries and other stakeholders also play an important role by participating in data collection and by reviewing findings. The Evaluator(s) may also include local stakeholders, ensuring their knowledge of the context and project is captured.

Often other groups may be engaged to support the evaluation process. For instance, an **Advisory Group** helps to steer the evaluation and review and approve draft deliverables. Members can include programme managers, technical experts, representatives from partner and peer organizations, funding partners, and beneficiary groups. When comprised of members representative of different stakeholder groups, Advisory Groups can support transparent decision-making and reinforce the evaluations credibility and legitimacy.

Table 1: Types of MTR

<table>
<tr><th>Type of MTR</th><th>Description</th><th>Fund Requirements</th></tr>
<tr><td>Independent</td><td>Independent MTRs are conducted by external consultants, personnel from the AF-TERG or an implementing entity’s own independent evaluation office. Independent MTRs provide objectivity and/or targeted expertise and serve primarily an accountability function but can also contribute to learning.</td><td rowspan="2">Mandatory MTRs (for projects with four or more years of implementation) must be conducted independently or semi-independently.
The implementing entity may also choose to conduct non-mandatory MTRs either independently or semi-independently.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Semi-independent</td><td>An MTR whose evaluation team combines 1) an independent evaluator and 2) personnel within the management or operational structure of the entity being evaluated. The team may also include other stakeholders. Semi-independent MTRs may optimize the learning benefits of combining technical or evaluation expertise with insiders’ intimate knowledge of the context, history, and stakeholders of the evaluand. Semi-independent MTRs may be useful for generating deeper formative lessons to inform decisions around an initiative’s design and reforms.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Self-conducted</td><td>An MTR conducted by personnel within the management or operational structure of the entity being evaluated and which may include other stakeholders. Self-conducted MTRs are recommended for refining the project/initiative when relatively rapid and/or continuous learning is required to optimize implementation effectiveness.</td><td>Only non-mandatory MTRs (projects less than four years in duration) may be self-conducted.</td></tr>
</table>

Implementing entities must ensure quality assurance throughout the MTR process (see **Box 2**). Therefore, implementing entities should be familiar with:

✓ The Fund's Evaluation Policy, including evaluation principles and criteria,

✓ Evaluation norms, standards, and ethical guidelines,

✓ The evaluation budget,

✓ Procurement requirements for evaluators, and

✓ All stakeholders who should be included on the evaluation team and/or consulted during the MTR.

Independent evaluators may be responsible for conducting the MTR with support from the implementing entity or serve as a member of the evaluation team along with project personnel. The Commissioning and Managing an Evaluation Guidance Note contains additional information on evaluator responsibilities, recruitment and selection. At a minimum, independent evaluators should possess the following qualifications:

✓ ***Adequate technical evaluation skills*** – The evaluator should have the ability to design useful and feasible evaluations that respond to the specific evaluation questions and criteria, to conduct a thorough analysis using appropriate analytical techniques, to interpret findings and limitations, and to use evidence to draw conclusions and make recommendations. Understanding and/or experience with climate adaptation is preferable.

✓ ***Professionalism*** – The evaluator should act ethically throughout the MTR, including adherence to data management and safeguarding policies. Evaluators should demonstrate timely and effective communication when working with both the implementing entity and project stakeholders or beneficiaries.

✓ ***Cultural and linguistic competencies*** – The evaluator must possess knowledge of the local context, customs, and language(s) to effectively carry out data collection and communicate with project stakeholders and beneficiaries.

BOX 2: The importance of quality assurance

Throughout the entire MTR process, it is important to take steps to ensure the credibility, independence and impartiality, and utility of the evaluation. Quality assurance is important in all evaluations.[2] Following are some considerations for MTRs:

✓ When choosing the evaluation methodology, the evaluation principles and cross-cutting themes (e.g., Gender and Environmental and Social Policies) should be considered and incorporated into the evaluation's design and appropriately reflected in its findings and recommendations.

✓ Evaluators should consult relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries to ensure their perspectives are incorporated into findings.

✓ The findings and conclusions and recommendations should be based on valid analysis and should be logical and coherent. Recommendations should also be practical.

✓ Initial findings should be shared with stakeholders and feedback and recommendations should be incorporated into the final MTR report.

✓ Reports should be concise, easy to read and understand to facilitate use.

2. For further details on evaluation quality assurance, see: UNFPA. 2020. Evaluation Quality; UNEG. 2017. Norms and Standards for Evaluation

6. How to plan for a mid-term review?

Planning for the MTR begins early when the evaluation budget is estimated during the project proposal stage in the project template. In addition to earmarking sufficient funds for the MTR evaluation, early planning also ensures the utility and feasibility of the exercise. During project implementation, the implementing entity may refine plans for the MTR based on changes made to the project/programme during implementation, changes in the context (e.g., due to crises), and other sources of emergent learning and need.

The Fund identifies five phases for evaluation, as represented in Figure 2. The exact duration of an MTR to cycle through these phases will vary depending on the project/programme and contextual factors.

Figure 2: Illustrative MTR timeline

1) Preparation phase: Scope the evaluation, draft the Evaluation Management Plan, develop and disseminate the evaluations ToR (which provides an overview of what is expected the evaluation), recruit the evaluator(s).

2) Inception phase: Orient evaluator(s), review background documents, stakeholder/landscape analysis, development inception report (which confirms and details data collection and analysis methodology), and develop data collection tools.

3) Implementation: Includes data collection, continued review of secondary sources (as required), and data analysis.

4) Reporting phase: Reporting can occur as relevant findings emerge, but it culminates in the review, approval, and dissemination of the evaluation report.

5) Follow-up phase: Actions taken, and outlets used to support evaluative learning and use, including the submission of required management response within six months of receiving the MTR report.

Annex 1 includes a Checklist for MTRs, which identifies key tasks organized by the five phases for the evaluation. **Table 2** below describes in more detail key tasks critical for planning the evaluation. These tasks are interrelated, sometimes concurrent, and other times iterative. For example, determining the evaluation's methodologies will inform the ToR development as part of the preparation phase of the evaluation, but once evaluators are recruited, the methodologies used in the evaluation may change based on findings and learning from the inception phase.

Table 2: Key tasks for the preparation phase of the mid-term evaluation

Task	Description	Link to Additional Resources
1. Review Fund's Evaluation Principles	The Fund's seven principles encompass the values, norms, and best practices to guide a reliable, ethical, and useful evaluation function that contributes to learning, decision making, and accountability for the Fund to pursue its mission, goal, and vision. It is important to ensure the evaluation principles are upheld throughout all phases of the mid-term review.	Evaluation Principles Guidance Note Environmental and Social Policy Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy
2. Develop the Evaluation Management Plan	Developed to guide the management of an evaluation, this plan includes management related details, such as roles and responsibilities, and the evaluation's intended timeline and key evaluation outputs and milestones. This plan should be regularly reviewed and revised according to the stage of the evaluation, and emergent needs and learning.	Commissioning and Managing Guidance Note
3. Review existing project design framework	The theory of change, logic model, results framework, results chain, or other project design framework can be reviewed during planning to help inform the evaluation questions, criteria, and indicators to assess, as well as provide a framework for analysis and reporting.	Describe the theory of change Developing a Project Logic Model Designing a Results Framework
4. Determine evaluation criteria and questions to be evaluated	The Fund's Evaluation Policy lists a set of nine evaluation criteria to guide the focus of evaluations. The AF-TERG should approve the design and tailoring of different evaluation criteria for specific evaluation purposes. Compared to other evaluation types, MTRs tend to be more focused on relevance, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness, versus impact.	Evaluation Criteria Guidance Note Evaluation Policy Specifying Key Evaluation Questions
5. Confirm indicators to be measured and evaluated	It is not necessary that the MTR measure and evaluate the indicators. However, during planning, relevant indicators should be identified from the project design framework and included to inform the assessment.	Results-based Management Framework Strategic Results Framework

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6. Determine methodology	There is not one methodology that is appropriate for all mid-term evaluations. Compared to other evaluation types, MTR methodologies tend to be more focused on relevance, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness, versus impact. Linked are some resources which may be useful for determining an appropriate methodology.	Rainbow Framework UNEG Compendium of Evaluation Methods Reviewed
7. Develop ToR	A Terms of Reference provides an overview of what is expected in an evaluation to communicate a shared understanding and provide the basis for recruiting evaluators.	Terms of Reference Guidance Note
8. Select an independent evaluator or team	Independent evaluators should have the technical and cultural expertise and experience to conduct the mid-term review efficiently and effectively according to the MTR purpose and context. The implementing entity should also identify which management or operational personnel from the evaluated entity and any stakeholders who will serve on the evaluation team, if the MTR will be semi-independent or self-conducted.	Commissioning and Managing Guidance Note

7. How to conduct data collection during a mid-term review?

Following the preparation phase of the MTR, the inception phase establishes the data collection and analysis methodology and identifies methodological limitations. The **Inception Report** is typically the first major deliverable for the evaluation. It should demonstrate a clear understanding and realistic plan of work for the evaluation, checking that the evaluation plan is in agreement with the TOR, or if changes are proposed, that they are in agreement with the evaluation commissioners and other stakeholders. See the Fund's Inception Report Guidance Note for further detail.

The methods used to collect evidence should be tailored to the MTR purpose and scope and do not need to mirror the baseline study, although baseline findings can be used to inform an MTR. The Evaluator(s) will utilize two general approaches to data collection: **1) primary data collection** and **2) review of secondary data sources,** summarized in **Table 3**. These two processes are often iterative during the MTR, although the secondary data review often provides a foundation on which primary data collection builds and elaborates, probing further into relevant areas of inquiry surfaced from the review of secondary data.

Table 3: Approaches to data collection

Approach	Definition and Purpose	Illustrative Examples
Primary Data Collection	***Primary data*** is information collected directly from the source (often project stakeholders and beneficiaries) for the purpose of the MTR. How evaluators collect primary data (e.g., via surveys, interviews, pictures, etc.) will be dependent on the evaluation questions to be answered and the indicators to be analysed. Primary data can be used to illustrate the state of beneficiary communities at the time of the MTR or to better understand the context. This data can be compared to baseline data to assess program achievement and progress made towards targets.	o Surveys or questionnaires o Interviews o Focus groups o Observations o Stories of change or case studies o Pictures or videos o Direct measurement
Secondary Data Review	***Secondary data*** is information that has been collected or produced for some purpose other than the project MTR. It is imperative that secondary data sources are relevant and reliable. Secondary sources should include the baseline study report, if conducted, and other relevant project monitoring and performance reports. Baseline and monitoring data serve as a point of reference with which to compare primary data from the MTR. They illustrate the state of beneficiary communities at the start of the project and can demonstrate progress and achievements. Secondary data also provide information to examine the project context, which can help ground the significance and relevance of results.	o Project baseline report o Statistics from other agencies such as the United Nations, a government Ministry, or a partner organization (e.g., population census, housing information) o Research studies and academic literature

Evaluation good practice recommends combining (**triangulating**)[3] different data sources and using different (mixed)[4] methods to provide different perspectives using various types of analysis for more credible and robust evaluations. Ultimately, the evaluation's methodological design will also be informed by what is realistic and feasible given the MTR's specific purpose, scope, timeframe, and existing capacities and resources to support the MTR.

MTRs provide timely feedback on project implementation; therefore, they can be most effective when they actively engage stakeholders in the data assessment to reinforce their understanding, ownership, and use of evaluative learning. Interactive, participatory methods of data collection that provide opportunities for meaningful engagement are often employed, utilizing participatory workshops, video and photography.

There is no shortage of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods for evaluation data collection and analysis – see **Box 3** and additional recommended resources in **Annex 6**.

BOX 3: Evaluation Methods

There are an assortment of evaluation data collection and analysis methods or approaches that can be used for MTRs. Per the Fund's Evaluation Policy (p. 24), "IEs may make their own decisions about the utility and application of the Fund's evaluation methodology guidance resources relative to and in line with their guidance and other sources." Ultimately, the evaluation methods selected should be based on the evaluation purpose, scope, time and resources, with attention to Fund's evaluation principle for credibility and robustness. Below are three resources providing an overview and further links for evaluation methods and approaches:

1. Evaluation Methods and Approaches, (BetterEvaluation).
2. Compendium of Evaluation Methods Reviewed (UNEG)
3. Broadening the Range of Designs and Methods for Impact Evaluation (DIFID)

NOTE: While used interchangeably, **there is a distinction between evaluation methodology, methods, tools and approaches.** An evaluation **approach** (also referred as evaluation design) is the overall framework for the evaluation. Evaluation **methods** details what information should be collected and why, and how that information is analyzed towards evaluation questions. Evaluation **tools** (also known as data collection tools) are ways in which data is collected, such as qualitative or quantitative techniques. Evaluation **methodology** is the rationale and justification for the approach, methods, approach, and tools. See the WFP Technical Note for a short introduction of these concepts for evaluations.

3. See INTRAC. 2017. Triangulation
4. USAID. 2013. Conducting Mixed-Method Evaluations

The chosen evaluation methods and data collection tools should be presented as an Evaluation Matrix in the Inception Report. The Evaluation Matrix aligns evaluation criteria, questions, indicators, sources, and methods to detail how evaluation questions are identified and will be measured – see **Annex 4** for more information and an illustrative matrix template.

8. How to analyse evidence during a mid-term review?

The MTR's analytical framework or approach is explained in the inception report, and should be selected to best answer the evaluation questions and test the project design framework. The Fund's Evaluation Criteria play a central role in data analysis, focusing it on nine priority areas (discussed in Section 2 above). Given the timing of an MTR, assessment of the relevance, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness criteria is central. It is important to consider that given the MTR occurs midway through project implementation, assessment of criteria such as project impact, scalability and sustainability may focus more on trajectories of projections of project performance.

In addition, if data from a baseline study is available, the MTR can analyse data against earlier findings to help assess progress. Data analysis may employ quantitative or qualitative approaches, depending on the analytical framework and data collection methods and tools. As with data collection, participatory are often utilized to involve stakeholders to provide additional context, offer input on and validation of findings, and sustain their engagement throughout the MTR process.

9. How to use the mid-term review?

The following strategies may be used to ensure the utility of the MTR for the implementing entity, beneficiaries, and other relevant stakeholders:

✓ **Sensemaking / Validation** – Sensemaking is a process in which people jointly make sense of information and develop a shared understanding.[5] As MTRs are intended to provide feedback on the very projects being evaluation, collective sensemaking to inform timely decision making is critical. Evaluators and implementing entities may choose to organize a validation workshop to gather stakeholders and beneficiaries' perspectives. Through sensemaking and validation of the MTR findings, evaluators may develop a deeper and more reliable understanding of the data.

✓ **Development of Recommendations** – The development of recommendations should involve stakeholders and beneficiaries to ensure recommendations are actionable and concrete. Stakeholders' participation can also increase the likelihood that recommendations will be applied. Final recommendations should be limited to those that are evidence-based and feasible. **Recommendations should be specific, practical, and feasible for implementation.** They should also be relevant for the evaluation's intended purpose and use, written to support management response and other evaluation follow-up and learning.

✓ **Reporting** – MTR reporting should be timely for more immediate learning and incorporation of recommendations into the remaining implementation period. Tailor evaluation reporting formats and outlets to different stakeholder audiences, and remember that evaluation need not be restricted to the formal written evaluation report, but can be provided through in-person and online workshops and webinars, short 2-page evaluation briefs or blogs, newsletters, emails, etc. These formats can complement a written report: it is important to select a combination of formats to best communicate results and properly internalise lessons and recommendations with the intended audience. See **Annex 3** for an illustrative MTR report template. Additional information on reporting can be found in the Evaluation Reporting Guidance Note.

● **Revision of design framework** – Since the MTR is conducted during project implementation, MTR findings also present the opportunity to revisit

5. INTRAC. 2017. Sensemaking

and revise the design framework to incorporate learning. This will ensure that the methodology for future evaluations (e.g., final or ex-post evaluations) is most relevant and appropriate for the project.

- **Within six months of receiving the MTR report, implementing entities are required to submit a management response to the Fund secretariate.** The management response should describe what, why, and how MTR learning and recommendations will be incorporated into the remaining project implementation period. **Annex 5** provides an example template for an evaluation management response.

Additional information on how to use evaluations can be found in the Evaluation Follow-up and Use Guidance Note.

ANNEX 1. Mid-term Review Checklist

This checklist provides a quick reference of key tasks to consider when conducting an MTR, as well as who will likely lead the task. When using the checklist, it is important to remember that it is not exhaustive, and it should be tailored according to the MTR context and needs. Refer to the Commissioning and Managing GN for more details on responsibilities for the management of evaluations at the Fund.

Mid-Term Review Checklist	
Key Tasks	**Responsibility**
1. PREPARATION	
1) Identify the Evaluation Manager or Management Team	Implementing Entity
2) Review relevant policy, principles, and guidance to competently an successfully commission and manage an evaluation	Implementing Entity
3) Scope the evaluation	Implementing Entity
4) Crosscheck the evaluation budget	Implementing Entity
5) Draft an Evaluation Management Plan	Implementing Entity
6) Develop and disseminate an evaluation ToR	Implementing Entity
7) Recruit the evaluator(s)	Implementing Entity
8) Contract the evaluator(s)	Implementing Entity
2. INCEPTION – see the Fund's Evaluation Inception Report Guidance Note for more detail	
9) Orient the evaluator(s)	Implementing Entity
10) Provide relevant background documents/literature, including the Fund's evaluation principles and evaluation criteria	Implementing Entity
11) Agree on methodological approach, roles, responsibilities, and timeline	Implementing Entity & Evaluator(s)
12) Develop and evaluation matrix, aligning evaluation criteria, questions, indicators, sources, and methods – see Annex 4	Implementing Entity
13) Review background (secondary) data and conduct relevant consultations to inform the inception report	Evaluator(s)
14) Develop data collection tools	Evaluator(s)
15) Write inception report	Evaluator(s)
16) Review and approve the inception report	Implementing Entity

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3. IMPLEMENTATION	
17) Revisit and revise the Evaluation Management Plan (based on the Inception Report)	Implementing Entity
18) Socialize the evaluation (with key stakeholders targeted for data collection)	Implementing Entity
19) Provide support, oversight, and quality assurance	Implementing Entity
20) Collect primary data, (ensuring relevant stakeholders are consulted)	Evaluator(s)
21) Collect primary data, (in preparation for report drafting)	Evaluator(s)
4. REPORTING – see the Fund's Evaluation Reporting Guidance Note for more detail	
1) Analyse evidence against evaluation criteria, key evaluation questions and indicators	Evaluator(s)
2) Prepare a draft MTR report following the Fund's evaluation template	Evaluator(s)
3) Complete round(s) of review and revision of draft MTR report	Implementing Entity & Evaluator(s)
4) Present initial findings to stakeholders	Evaluator(s)
5) Revise the report incorporating stakeholder feedback and comments, as applicable and submit final draft	Evaluator(s)
6) Share the final MTR report and evaluation findings with stakeholders, beneficiaries, and promote usage	Implementing Entity
5. FOLLOW-UP	
7) Conduct evaluation communication and learning follow-up activities	Implementing Entity
8) Conduct post-evaluation review and evaluator assessment	Implementing Entity
9) Required management response – see Annex 5	Implementing Entity
10) Incorporate learning into current project implementation and future AF Fund work	Implementing Entity

ANNEX 2. Illustrative Evaluation Inception Report Template

This template provides an illustrative structure for an evaluation inception report for the Fund. The template can be tailored according to the evaluation needs and structure. Please refer to the Fund's Inception Report Guidance Note for more detailed on each item in the outline.

Adaptation Fund Illustrative Evaluation Reporting Template and Checklist
1. Title page
2. Optional front material ☐ **Preface** ☐ **Acknowledgements**
3. Table of contents
4. Acronyms
5. Executive summary – standalone, concise overview of the essential parts of the report in two to five pages. ☐ **Introductory overview** of the evaluation's purpose, scope, audience, intended use, time period, geographic coverage, and target population groups. ☐ **Summary of the report and contents** (to assist readers to navigate the document)
6. Evaluation background ☐ **Object of evaluation** – describes the intervention being evaluated (e.g., project or strategy), and why ☐ **Implementation context** – describe the larger context in which the intervention is being implemented ☐ **Stakeholder analysis** – describes the needs, expectations, and potential risks associated with relevant stakeholder groups for the evaluation
7. Evaluation criteria and questions ☐ **Evaluation purpose and scope** ☐ **Evaluation criteria** that specify the standards that provide the basis for evaluative judgment ☐ **Evaluation questions** that elaborate the evaluation criteria, specifying what is to be assessed ☐ **Evaluation Matrix** that details how each evaluation is answered, what indicators to measure and which data collection tool will be applied – see Annex 4.
8. Evaluation approach and methods ☐ **Evaluation principles** – the Fund's seven evaluation principles are identified in its Evaluation Policy and elaborated in its Evaluation Principles Guidance Note ☐ **Evaluation data sources** – primary and secondary information sources for the evaluation ☐ **Evaluation data collection methods** – quantitative and qualitative collection methods and their procedures, including a discussion of the rational for their selection ☐ **Evaluation data analysis** – the analytical framework or approach that will be used to synthesize and interpret evaluation findings ☐ **Evaluation stakeholder engagement,** including the level and type of engagement ☐ **Ethical considerations** related to data collection and use ☐ **Methodological limitations** –, their implications for the evaluation, and any mitigation measures taken in response.

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9. Evaluation work plan and management ☐ **Evaluation work plan** ☐ **Evaluation timeline, milestones, and deliverables** ☐ **Roles and responsibilities** ☐ **Quality assurance** ☐ **Risk management and mitigation measures** ☐ **Outreach and dissemination plan**
10. Annexes ☐ **Evaluation's ToR** ☐ **Detailed timeline (if applicable)** ☐ **Detailed methodology (if applicable)** ☐ **Evaluation matrix** ☐ **Data collection tools** ☐ **Evaluation timeline** ☐ **Evaluability assessment (if applicable)** ☐ **Detailed ToC/Results Framework** ☐ **Detailed stakeholder analysis (if applicable)** ☐ **Bibliography / reference list** ☐ **Any other information relevant to the MTR evaluation report**

ANNEX 3. Illustrative MTR Report Template

This template provides an illustrative structure for an evaluation inception report for the Fund. The template can be tailored according to the evaluation needs and structure. Please refer to the Fund's Evaluation Reporting Guidance Note for more detailed on each item in the outline.

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1. Title page
2. Optional front material ☐ **Preface** ☐ **Acknowledgements**
3. Table of contents
4. Acronyms
5. Executive summary – standalone, concise overview of the essential parts of the report in two to five pages.
6. Introduction and background ☐ **Evaluation features** – provides an introductory overview of the evaluation's purpose, scope, audience, intended use, time period, geographic coverage, and target population groups. ☐ **Report introduction** – introduces the report structure and contents ☐ **Object of evaluation** – describes the intervention being evaluated (e.g., project, programme, or strategy) ☐ **Implementation context** – describe the larger context in which the intervention is being implemented
7. Evaluation scope and objectives ☐ **Evaluation scope** clearly delineating what is and is not to be included in the evaluation ☐ **Evaluation criteria** that specify the standards that provide the basis for evaluative judgment. ☐ **Evaluation questions** that elaborate the evaluation criteria, specifying what is to be assessed ☐ **Evaluation Matrix** that details how each evaluation is answered, what indicators to measure and which data collection tool will be applied – see **Annex 4**.
8. Evaluation approach and methods ☐ **Evaluation principles** – the Fund's seven evaluation principles are identified in its Evaluation Policy and elaborated in its Evaluation Principles Guidance Note ☐ **Evaluation data sources** – primary and secondary information sources for the evaluation ☐ **Evaluation data collection methods** – quantitative and qualitative collection methods and their procedures, including a discussion of the rational for their selection ☐ **Evaluation data analysis** – the analytical framework or approach that will be used to synthesize and interpret evaluation findings ☐ **Evaluation stakeholder engagement,** including the level and type of engagement ☐ **Ethical considerations** related to data collection and use ☐ **Methodological limitations** –, their implications for the evaluation, and any mitigation measures taken in response.

(continued)

9. Evaluation findings and conclusions

- ☐ **Findings and conclusions should respond to the evaluation criteria and questions.**
- ☐ **Findings and conclusions should provide insights to inform solution analysis and recommendations**
- ☐ **Findings should include unanticipated outcomes and impacts.**
- ☐ **Findings and conclusions should be presented in a logical, coherent format**
- ☐ **The logical relationship between findings and conclusions should be reinforced**
- ☐ **Findings and conclusions should be individually numbered,** so they can be readily cross-referenced elsewhere

10. Optional lessons learned – a section devoted to lessons learned can be a useful way to highlight learning that is not specific to the evaluated intervention and context (evaluand), but applicable to the wider Fund and climate change adaptation community.

- ☐ **Lessons should be concise and presented in a logical, coherent manner,** individually numbered for cross-referencing
- ☐ **Clearly identify the relevance of the lesson and intended audience/use.**
- ☐ If appropriate, explain **how and why the lesson was learned.**

11. Evaluation recommendations

- ☐ **Recommendations should respond to the evaluations intended purpose and use,** written to support management response and other evaluation follow-up and learning
- ☐ **Recommendations should be supported by evidence** linked to the evaluation's findings and conclusions that substantiates the proposed actions
- ☐ **Recommendations should be specific, practical, and feasible for implementation**
- ☐ **Recommendations should identify who is responsible for follow-up and by when.**
- ☐ **Additional information can be used to elaborate recommendations,** such as prioritizing recommendations or the resources and budget required to achieve a recommendation.
- ☐ **Recommendations should be presented in a logical, coherent manner,** individually numbered for cross-referencing. Consider using a table to format and present recommendations, as illustrated below

Example recommendation matrix

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibilities	Priority	Timeframe

12. Report Annexes

Examples of annexes include:

- ✓ Evaluation Terms of Reference (or Evaluation Inception Report)
- ✓ Additional methodological information
- ✓ Theory of change, logframe, or results framework
- ✓ Stakeholder or landscape analysis / mapping
- ✓ Summary of performance data to date
- ✓ Summary of budget data to date
- ✓ List of secondary data sources consulted (e.g., background documents)
- ✓ List of primary data sources, (e.g., participant/stakeholder list or interview schedules)
- ✓ Data collection tools
- ✓ Evaluation timeline
- ✓ Bibliography / reference list (consistently use a suitable style or format, e.g., APA)

ANNEX 4. Illustrative Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix (also known as evaluation framework) facilitates a systematic approach to how each evaluation question is answered. Against each evaluation question, the matrix identifies the corresponding evaluation criteria, indicators to measure, data sources that have/will be consulted and techniques of collection. The evaluation matrix is developed as part of the inception report, and it should be included in the final report with any changes/additions. An example of an evaluation matrix is presented below.

Lines of Inquiry / Sub-Question	Evaluation Criteria	Indicators / Data Points	Data Sources	Data Collection Techniques
Evaluation Question: *Overarching Evaluation Question*				
Sub-questions that expand upon the overarching evaluation question.	*Relevant AF evaluation criteria*	*Points of data that to be analyzed as evidence in answering the question(s).*	*Sources of information, ranging from documentation to key stakeholders, that will be consulted.*	*How data will be collected, for example: literature review, key informant interview, focus group discussion.*

ANNEX 5. Illustrative Management Response Template

Following the submission of the MTR report, Implementing Entities are required to submit a Management Response to the secretariat and the DA or DAs within six months of receiving the final report, describing what, why, and how evaluation learning will be utilized. An example template is presented below:

Evaluation title:			
Commissioning entity:			
Evaluation report submission date:			
Recommendation #: < insert recommendation >			
Management Response	**Actions Planned**	**Responsibility**	**Timeframe**
Indicate if: • *Accepted* • *Partially accepted* • *Rejected* (If recommendation is partially accepted or rejected, an explanation must be provided in the 'Comments' section below).	*Indicate the concrete actions/deliverables planned to implement the recommendation*	*Specify the entity responsible for implementing the planned actions*	*Specify the completion date for the planned actions.*
Comments: provide any additional information or clarification regarding the recommendation and how it has been interpreted, any progress already made, or actions taken to address the recommendation, or the reasons for not accepting or partially accepting the recommendation.			

ANNEX 6. Recommended Resources

There exist many resources for each phase of the evaluation process. The following are recommended for readers to find additional guidance.

- Adaptation Fund. 2016. Environmental and Social Policy
- Adaptation Fund. 2017. Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy.
- Adaptation Fund. 2022. Evaluation Policy
- Adaptation Fund. 2023. Commissioning and Management Guidance Note
- Adaptation Fund. 2023. Evaluation Budgeting Guidance Note
- Adaptation Fund. 2023. Evaluation Follow-up and Use Guidance Note
- Adaptation Fund. 2023. Evaluation Principles Guidance Note
- Adaptation Fund. 2023. Evaluation Reporting Guidance Note
- Adaptation Fund. 2023. Inception Report Guidance Note
- Adaptation Fund. 2023. Terms of Reference Guidance Note
- Better Evaluation. 2022. Evaluation Methods and Approaches
- Better Evaluation. 2022. Manager's guide to evaluation
- Better Evaluation. 2022. Rainbow Framework
- Independent Evaluation Group (IEG). 2012. Designing a Results Framework for Achieving Results: A How-to Guide.
- INTRAC. 2017. Real Time Evaluation
- INTRAC. 2019. M&E Universe
- UNEG. 2016. Norms and Standards for Evaluation
- UNEG. 2020. Compendium of Evaluation Methods Reviewed (Volume 1)
- USAID. 2017. How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model