




Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

The background of the cover is a collage of four distinct textures arranged in a vertical stack, separated by curved lines. From top to bottom: 1. A close-up of green grass blades. 2. A cross-section of a piece of wood, showing its grain. 3. A close-up of a yellowish, textured surface, possibly a leaf or a piece of fabric. 4. A blue, weathered metal surface with significant rust and peeling paint. The right side of the cover is a large, light gray curved area that contains the title and subtitle.

# OED project evaluation manual for decentralized offices

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Planning and conducting  
project evaluations under  
Budget Holder's responsibility



# **OED project evaluation manual for decentralized offices**

**Planning and conducting project evaluations  
under Budget Holder's responsibility**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

BH	Budget Holder
EM	Evaluation Manager
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
QAP	Quality Assurance Process
TOR	Terms of Reference

## Glossary

**Decentralized Offices** – In this manual, are all offices (FAO Country, Sub-regional and Regional Offices, Lead Technical Services and Units at HQ) managing evaluations under Budget Holder's responsibility. The term, therefore, does not necessarily imply geographical decentralization.

**Evaluation** – An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.

**Evaluations under Budget Holder's responsibility** – These are evaluations managed outside the FAO Office of Evaluation; i.e. by FAO Country, Subregional and Regional Offices, but also by Units and Services at FAO HQ.

**Evaluation budget** – is the actual cost of the evaluation. The evaluation budget is formulated at evaluation planning stage, once the evaluation scope and purpose are defined. The evaluation budget may influence the choice of the evaluation design and vice versa.

**Evaluation Manager** – manages the entire evaluation process from the drafting of the evaluation terms of reference to the finalization of the evaluation report. The evaluation manager doesn't write the evaluation

report, which is the task of the evaluation team leader. He ensures that the evaluation follows the right procedures and that the evaluation process and deliverables meet the quality standards. The Evaluation Manager is responsible for overseeing the whole evaluation process and delivering an evaluation report of high quality.

**Evaluation provisions** – are funding for evaluations secured and set aside at project formulation stage. This manual makes a distinction between evaluation provisions and evaluation budget. The evaluation provisions are usually an estimate of the evaluation budget or direct contributions to the Evaluation Trust Fund.

**Evaluation purpose** – the main reason(s) for conducting an evaluation. It defines the use and the users of the evaluation and clearly states whether an evaluation will be used for accountability and/or for learning and by whom. It may be possible to address several purposes in a single evaluation design.

**Evaluation Scope** – defines the evaluand, the scale of the intervention, budget and resources allocated and stage of implementation, the geographical coverage of the intervention and its typology. Whether this is a project, a number of projects, a program.

**Evaluation Team Leader** – leads the evaluation. Assumes the main authorship of the evaluation report and is held accountable for the evaluation report. Roles and responsibilities of the team leader are defined by team leader terms of reference (ToR) part and parcel of the overall evaluation ToR.

**Final evaluation** – this evaluation is held at or near the end of a programme/project. Final

evaluations are undertaken for both accountability and learning purposes, and are often relevant to decision-making regarding programme/project extension. In the latter case, the evaluation should be held six to nine months before the scheduled closure date to allow for the timely consideration of evaluation results to inform future funding decisions.

**Mid-term evaluation** – this evaluation is typically held around the half-way point in the programme/project life. Such evaluations generally focus on implementation issues and are designed to facilitate mid-course corrective action.

**Peer review** – is an assessment carried out by professional evaluators, part of the quality assurance process. The peer review of project evaluations at FAO, is an internal peer review carried out by evaluation officers not directly involved in the evaluation. The peer review is following a peer review sheet including a set of standardized criteria.

**Project review** – is a periodic or ad-hoc assessment of the performance of a programmatic intervention, or a specific aspect of a programmatic intervention, to inform operational decision-making and/or support learning and accountability. A review tends to focus on operational issues and is typically managed internally to enable timely decision-making and adjustments to an on-going programme.

**Theory of change** – A ‘theory of change’ explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. It can be developed for any level of intervention – an event, a project, a programme, a policy, a strategy or an organization.

**UNEG** – The United Nations Evaluation Group is an interagency professional network that brings together programmes, and affiliated

organizations. FAO evaluations adhere to UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation.

**UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation**, is a foundational document, adopted in 2005 and revised in 2016. The UNEG Norms and Standards has been used to strengthen and harmonize evaluation practice ensuring that UNEG members adhered to shared basic. It comprises:

*General Norms for evaluation (10): 1 Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets; 2 Utility; 3 Credibility; 4 Independence; 5 Impartiality; 6 Ethics; 7 Transparency; 8 Human rights and gender equality; 9 National evaluation capacities; 10 Professionalism –*

*Institutional Norms for evaluation in the United Nations System (4): 11 Enabling environment; 12 Evaluation Policy; 13 Responsibility for the evaluation function and 14 Evaluation use and follow up.*

*Standards related to (19): Institutional framework (5); Conduct of evaluations (11); Quality (3)*



# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance on the planning, formulation and conduct of evaluations of Food and Agriculture of the United Nations (FAO) projects and programmes.

This manual is intended for:

- headquarters and decentralized offices staff who undertake their own evaluation processes with technical guidance and backstopping support from the Office of Evaluation (OED); and
- FAO project formulators, Budget Holders (BH) and Liaison Officers who need information related to project evaluation processes and principles.

This manual, the first of its kind, is based on feedback and lessons learned provided by OED staff and consultants who have managed or participated in project evaluations. It is also based on the experience of piloting a non-OED led evaluation approach with select FAO Services and Country Offices. To ensure wide use, this manual is available in English, French and Spanish.

The Evaluation Charter,<sup>1</sup> approved by the Programme Committee in 2010, confirms the mandate and governance of the evaluation function and establishes evaluation principles. This manual is in line with the OED Evaluation Manual (April 2015)<sup>2</sup> and with other OED guidance material.

The present manual outlines the key steps of project evaluations<sup>3</sup> from the evaluation formulation phase to the completion of the evaluation process. It makes a distinction between evaluations managed by OED and evaluations conducted under the Budget Holders' responsibility and clarifies the roles and responsibilities related to the two modalities.

Reviews<sup>4</sup> or other types of internal project assessments, e.g. supervision mission, are considered part of project management and do not necessitate OED involvement. They are therefore not addressed in this Manual.

## Box 1 • Evaluations and reviews (UNEG definitions)<sup>5</sup>

An **evaluation** is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.

A **review** is a periodic or ad hoc assessment of the performance of a project or programme, or of a specific aspect of the intervention. It is intended to inform operational decision-making and/or support learning/accountability. A review tends to focus on operational issues and is typically managed internally to enable timely decision-making and potential adjustments to an ongoing project.

1 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-k7774e.pdf>

2 Defining OED rules and procedures for the conduct of strategic, thematic and country programme evaluations

3 OED conducts project -, country -, thematic - and strategic evaluations. Project evaluations refer to individual projects, or project clusters, rather than larger, programmatic evaluations grouping multiple projects. Evaluations are conducted either at mid-term of the project life cycle or when the project is approaching closure, in the case of final evaluations.

4 Separate guidelines are available for the conduct of mid-term reviews of GEF funded FAO interventions (not yet published)

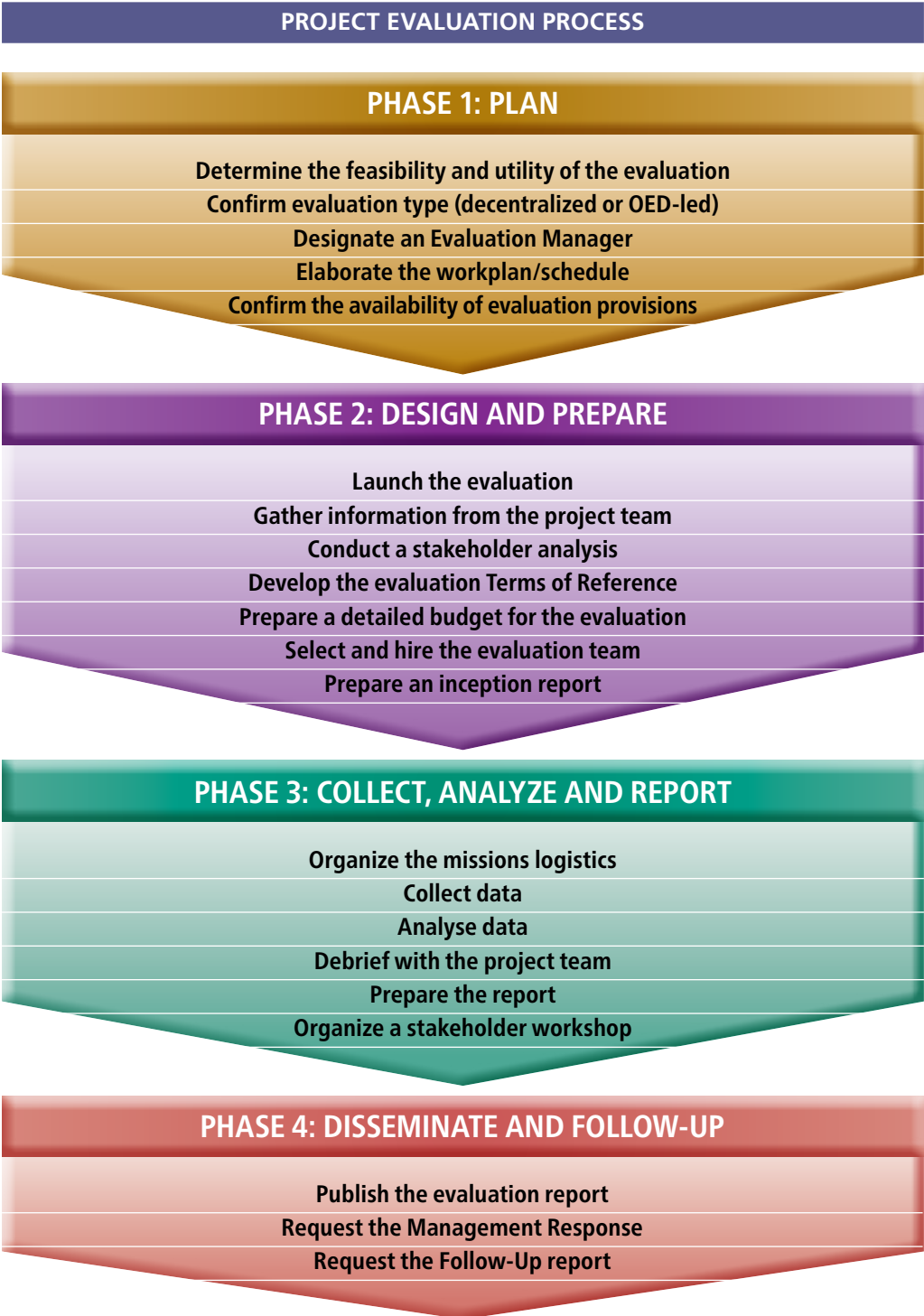
5 See United Nations Evaluation Group (2016) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/foundation-documents>



## 2. Structure of the manual

Following the introduction, section 3 describes FAO’s policy for project evaluations as well as the roles and responsibilities of different actors, while also giving guidance on how to determine evaluation provisions and selecting a management modality for the evaluation. Section 4 provides information related to budgeting for project evaluations. Section 5 details all phases and steps included in a project evaluation that is carried out under the Budget Holder’s responsibility.

Section 6 describes the quality assurance process as well as the procedures for ensuring adequate recording of primary data and evaluation deliverables into FAO corporate systems





## 3. Basic information about FAO project evaluations

### 3.1 In what circumstances should a dedicated project evaluation be planned?

Project and programme evaluations are a valuable tool for managers, donors and governments who are seeking to strengthen the quality of projects and programmes they are designing and supporting, and improve results and impact on beneficiary population. Learning from evaluations will contribute to informed decision-making and optimal use of resources. As such, project evaluations should preferably be part of yearly workplans of Decentralized Offices and Country Programming Frameworks.<sup>6</sup> Such yearly workplans should be regularly updated and shared with the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) for information and evaluation planning purposes.

The FAO Governing Bodies have stressed the importance of the systematic evaluation of extrabudgetary work of the Organization. Since 2007 all projects with a budget above USD 4 million are required to include a dedicated independent evaluation. This includes projects with a budget exceeding USD 4 million at formulation and those reaching the threshold of USD 4 million during their lifetime following a budget revision. In addition to the above, there are different reasons for conducting project evaluations, such as those listed below:

- Learn from piloting: managers, governments and resource partners may use evaluations to assess the piloting of innovations, technologies, approaches and methodologies. For example, evaluations can be used to assess a specific intervention method such as national execution.
- Learn from ex-post evaluations: resource partners may request to carry out evaluations in a particular geographical location or on a specific thematic area to assess the usefulness of long-term investment and for informed decision-making (such as, for example, support to seed production in Sierra Leone or dairy production in Afghanistan).
- Conduct of mid-term evaluations: managers may decide to carry out mid-term evaluations to collect information from partners and beneficiaries on how the project implementation is proceeding and on possible corrective actions that should be taken to ensure the achievement of the expected results by the end of the project. A mid-term evaluation could be useful to understand the cause of underperformance, or to revise the project design and logical framework if the implementation context has significantly changed since project formulation.
- Inform a second phase of an intervention: an evaluation could be useful to show results achieved, identify additional needs and define actions necessary to consolidate achievements of the first phase in case a second phase is under discussion.

In particular:

- a. **Projects with a budget over USD 4 million:** one independent evaluation is mandatory. OED will undertake the final evaluation of the project. In case also a mid-term evaluation is foreseen, and the resource partner agrees, this should be carried out under the Budget Holder's responsibility. OED may guide and quality check the decentralized evaluation process. OED may also manage the mid-term evaluation, if requested by the Budget Holder and/or the donor.
- b. **Projects with a budget below USD 4 million:** no mandatory evaluation (except for projects funded by the Global Environmental Facility - GEF) but evaluations can be carried out for all reasons listed above. If requested by the donor, OED will manage the final evaluation and may also manage the mid-term evaluation. If requested by the donor and/or by the Budget Holder, OED can also provide guidance and quality check evaluations carried out under the Budget Holder's responsibility.
- c. Initiatives contributing to corporate responses to a level 3 emergency do not need to be evaluated separately.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The "Synthesis of lessons learnt in the application of the Country Programming Framework" presented to the 124<sup>th</sup> session of the Programme Committee (21-25 May 2018) recommended to FAO to include monitoring and evaluation plans in the CPFs (in particular recommendation 2 on enhancing capacities and tools for estimation of resource mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation)

<sup>7</sup> Initiatives with a budget above USD 4 million, which are part of an Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme, will contribute to the Evaluation Trust Fund with 0.8% of their total budget identified for evaluation.

## 3.2 UNEG Principles

All evaluations should ensure adherence to UNEG Ethical Guidelines<sup>8</sup> and ensure respect of ethical principles.

### Box 2 • UNEG Ethical Principles

#### Respect for dignity and diversity

Evaluators shall:

- a) Respect differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and be mindful of the potential implications of these differences when planning, carrying out and reporting on evaluations, using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting.
- b) Keep disruption to a minimum while needed information is obtained, providing the maximum notice to individuals or institutions they wish to engage in the evaluation, optimizing demands on their time and respecting people's right to privacy.

#### Rights and fair representation

In including individuals or groups in the evaluation, evaluators shall ensure:

- a) Right to Self-Determination. Prospective participants should be treated as autonomous agents and must be given the time and information to decide whether or not they wish to participate and be able to make an independent decision without any pressure or fear of penalty for not participating.
- b) Fair Representation. Evaluators shall select participants fairly in relation to the aims of the evaluation, not simply because of their availability, or because it is relatively easy to secure their participation. Care shall be taken to ensure that relatively powerless, 'hidden' or otherwise excluded groups are represented.

#### Compliance with codes for vulnerable groups

Where the evaluation involves the participation of members of vulnerable groups, evaluators must be aware of and comply with legal codes (whether international or national) governing, for example, interviewing children and young people.

#### Redress

Stakeholders receive sufficient information to know: a) how to seek redress for any perceived disadvantage suffered from the evaluation or any projects it covers; and b) how to register a complaint concerning the conduct of an Implementing or Executing Agency.

#### Confidentiality

Evaluators shall respect people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality. Evaluators must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source so that the relevant individuals are protected from reprisals.

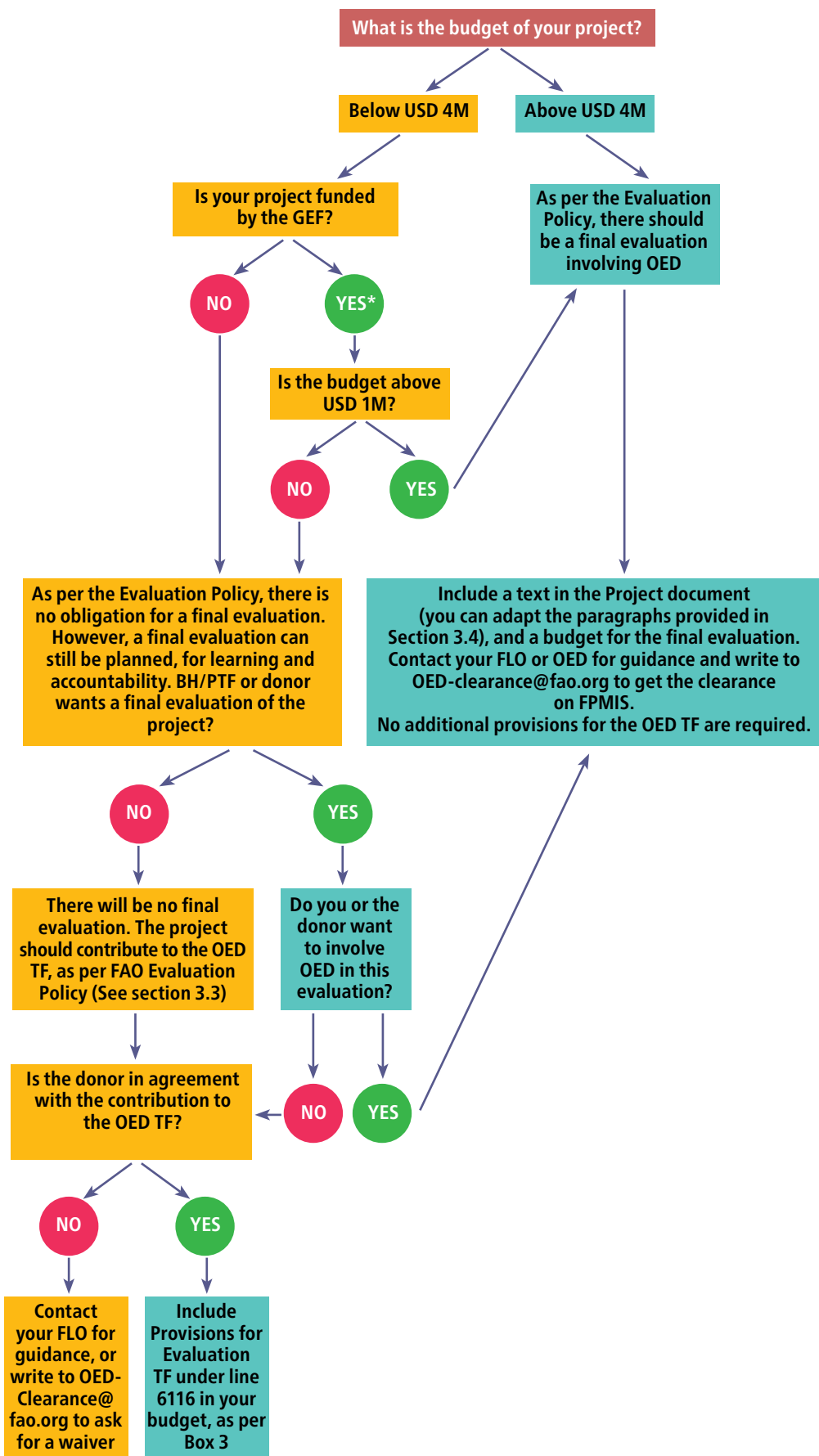
#### Avoidance of harm

Evaluations can have a negative effect on their objects or those who participate in them. Therefore evaluators shall seek to: minimize risks to, and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation; and seek to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms that might occur from negative or critical evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

**Figure 1** • When should project evaluations be conducted?



\*Please also refer to the FAO GEF guide on project Mid Term Review (MTR)



### 3.3 Contributions to the Evaluation Trust Fund

The FAO evaluation policy guidance document entitled “*Procedures for financing the evaluation of initiatives funded by voluntary contributions*”<sup>9</sup> (the evaluation funding policy), approved in November 2013, defines procedures for the contributions to the Evaluation Trust Fund (TF).

In line with FAO evaluation policy, all projects should contribute to the OED Trust Fund regardless of whether a separate evaluation is planned or not.<sup>10</sup> Whenever possible, the separate contributions will be merged for the conduct of cluster evaluations, or to look at the interventions in a larger framework such as thematic and strategic evaluations. TF contributions also provide for the evaluation quality assurance infrastructure.

#### Box 3 • Contributing to the Evaluation TF – in practical terms

All initiatives funded through voluntary contributions with a budget above USD 200 000 and without an OED-led evaluation are to contribute to the Evaluation Trust Fund.<sup>11</sup> The scale of this contribution is specified in the Procedures for financing the evaluation of initiatives funded by voluntary contributions.

The evaluation contribution should be budgeted under account 6116 “Project Evaluation Cost” and set up in the GL with the following accounting flexfield:

- Fund: as appropriate
- Organization: as appropriate
- Activity: as appropriate
- Account: 6116

*Note: The various components of the flexfield are determined by the department responsible for the activity.*

9 Procedures for financing the evaluation of initiatives funded by voluntary contributions. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca4000en/ca4000en.pdf>

10 Exceptions are Projects funded by the Global Environment Fund (GEF) and resource partners that do not allow contribution to pooled-funds for evaluations, and require that evaluation cost be directly related to the project, to be considered as an eligible cost; examples are Germany and the European Commission;

11 The Evaluation Trust Fund was established to pool the contributions for evaluation from all FAO initiatives funded through voluntary contributions.

### 3. Basic information about FAO project evaluations

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Contributions to the Evaluation TF are detailed in Table 1 below. This table cannot be used to calculate the evaluation budget of separate evaluations managed by OED.

**Table 1 • Scale of contributions to the Evaluation Trust Fund**

<b>Project Budget (USD)</b>	<b>Contribution to the Evaluation Trust Fund (USD)<sup>12</sup></b>
Below 200 000	0
200 001 – 300 000	2 000
300 001 – 400 000	2 800
400 001 – 500 000	3 600
500 001 – 600 000	4 400
600 001 – 700 000	5 200
700 001 – 800 000	6 000
800 001 – 900 000	6 800
900 001 – 1 000 000	7 600
1 000 001 – 1 500 000	10 000
1 500 001 – 2 000 000	14 000
2 000 001 – 2 500 000	18 000
2 500 001 – 3 000 000	22 000
3 000 001 – 3 500 000	26 000
3 500 001– 4 000 000	30 000

In case of further questions regarding the amount of the evaluation provision, the project Budget Holder is encouraged to contact [OED-clearance@fao.org](mailto:OED-clearance@fao.org).

#### **3.4 What text on evaluation should be included in the project document?**

For projects requiring one or more evaluations, a standard text is available to project design teams from the FAO evaluation funding policy. This text should be adjusted to the context and can be inserted into the project document. It is included below for ease of reference:

*A Mid-Term Evaluation will be undertaken when delivery will reach 50% of the initial total budget and/or mid-point of scheduled project duration, to review efficiency and effectiveness of implementation in terms of achieving project objective, outcomes and delivering outputs. The MTE will be instrumental for contributing through operational and strategic recommendations to improved implementation for the remaining period of the project's life. The MTE will be carried out by independent consultants under the overall responsibility of the Project Budget Holder. FAO Office of Evaluation will provide quality assurance of evaluation process and deliverables.*

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<sup>12</sup> The scale of contributions corresponds to 0.8% of the average of each budget range, e.g. USD 2 000 is 0.8% of USD 250 000, average between 200 001 and 300 000.

*An independent Final Evaluation is recommended to be completed within six months prior to the actual completion date (NTE date) of the project. It will aim at identifying project outcomes, their sustainability and actual or potential impacts. It will also have the purpose of indicating future actions needed to assure continuity of the process developed through the project. FAO Office of Evaluation, in consultation with project stakeholders, will be responsible for managing the final evaluation.*

### 3.5 What provision for the evaluation?

All FAO evaluations must be rigorous and evidence-based. The use of quantitative evaluation methodologies relies on the presence of a number of factors at formulation stage, including but not limited to sufficient timing and budget to use rigorous quantitative research methods. To ensure quality evaluations, projects need to adequately budget for them and include solid monitoring and evaluation systems. These systems should be based on an explicit theory of change and be logically linked to expected results. In addition to planning and budgeting for evaluations, all projects are required to ensure that a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is developed at project formulation stage.

The evaluation provision is usually estimated at around 1-2 percent of the project overall budget. However, in consideration of the fixed costs of each evaluation, in exceptional cases in which a project below USD 4 million will include one or two evaluators, it may require an indicative budget greater than 2 percent of the project budget (please refer also to section 5.2.6 for additional information on the evaluation budget).



### 3. Basic information about FAO project evaluations

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The timing, final budget<sup>13</sup> and type of evaluation to be foreseen in each project depends on:

- the complexity and innovativeness of the project;
- the geographical coverage of the intervention (e.g. national/regional/interregional, global) and the overall scope of the evaluation;
- the availability of monitoring and secondary data that can inform the evaluation;
- specific request by the donor;
- the evaluation methodology, and whether or not a quantitative impact evaluation will be included.

All evaluations need to be properly budgeted for at the design stage and based on a preliminary identification of the specific evaluation needs identified in consultation with key stakeholders involved. The amount of resources available may influence the level of an evaluation's rigour or the certainty of its findings. Adequate funding for mid-term and final evaluations should be provided to ensure a greater evidence base and resources for analysis, increasing the quality and usefulness of evaluation products. The budget should cover the time and travel of the evaluation team, costs related to the management of the evaluation (costs of the evaluation manager) and external quality assurance provided by external peer reviewers and OED, where applicable.

Annex 7 provides a template that can be used to define an evaluation budget.

The evaluation provisions defined in the project document should remain available until the time of the final evaluation.

OED service fees are estimated at around USD 5 000 in the case OED provides guidance and quality checks to evaluations under the Budget Holder's responsibility to external teams and USD 10 000 for OED-managed evaluations.

#### **Box 4 • Specific case scenario: donors unwilling to involve OED in evaluations**

*What should project formulators do when the donor of a project exceeding USD 4 million plans to carry out a separate evaluation without the involvement of OED and/or is unwilling to have an evaluation conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED)?*

Project formulators should be aware that a dedicated evaluation under OED's responsibility of all projects exceeding USD 4 million is an FAO obligation and policy for corporate learning and accountability. For examples such as the one listed above, OED is available to directly discuss with the donors during the project formulation phase in order to find valuable agreements such as joint evaluations.

During the project formulation phase, project formulators<sup>14</sup> should contact OED (OED-clearance@fao.org) to request advice on evaluation plans and budget and to obtain OED clearance. During this phase, FAO liaison officers (FLO), and for GEF projects the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit in close contact with project formulators are encouraged to remind the latter of this requirement and provide advice in view of facilitating clearance by OED.

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<sup>13</sup> See section 5.2.6 "Preparing a detailed budget for the evaluation"

<sup>14</sup> In the case of GEF projects, this also refers to the GEF-FAO Coordination Unit



## 4. Evaluation responsibility: OED or Budget Holder?

Evaluation responsibility can be with the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) or with Budget Holders.

### 4.1 How to decide on evaluation responsibility?

The decision on the responsibilities above will be taken by OED in consultation with the Budget Holder. The decision depends on a number of factors, including:

- i FAO policy on separate evaluations which foresees all projects above USD 4 million should be evaluated at least once by OED;
- ii resource partners' agreement to conduct an evaluation under the Budget Holder's responsibility;
- iii the type of evaluation (preferably, mid-term evaluations should be conducted under Budget Holders' responsibility<sup>15</sup> whereas final evaluations can be OED-managed or Budget Holder-managed; depending on the size of the project);
- iv the evaluation's input to country, thematic or strategic evaluations;
- v the time frame and budget of the evaluation;
- vi the capacity of the decentralized office to carry out an evaluation.

Evaluation responsibility should preferably be decided during the yearly evaluation workplan or at project formulation stage. If this is not done, then it should be decided at the evaluation planning stage (please refer to Phase 1 of this Manual).

Assigning responsibility for the evaluation of an intervention above USD 4 million requires donor agreement.

### 4.2 Project evaluations under Budget Holder's responsibility

An evaluation that is commissioned and managed outside the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) is under the ultimate responsibility of the Budget Holder. In this case, an Evaluation Manager (EM) is designated by the Budget Holder, in agreement with OED. The Evaluation Manager will manage the evaluation and receive overall guidance from OED (see table 2).

To ensure the independence of the process, the Evaluation Manager should not have been involved in the intervention to be evaluated. The Budget Holder may decide, in consultation with Offices involved, to appoint an evaluation manager based at Regional or Sub-regional level, or located in other FAO Divisions. Another option could be to hire an evaluation manager from the OED Taleo Roster. In order to effectively provide guidance, OED will still appoint an OED focal point to follow the process. In this case, OED does not play a role in the management of the evaluation. It does not clear evaluation deliverables but provides quality assurance and guidance to decentralized evaluation process. (OED is still responsible for the clearance of evaluation sections during project formulation).

*In an evaluation under the Budget Holder's responsibility to external teams and managed outside of OED, OED quality checks the report, but does not own it and clear it. OED will provide comments to the deliverables and rating of the final evaluation report. Ownership of the report lies with the Budget Holder, while the team leader of the evaluation is accountable for it.*

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15 All mid-term reviews of GEF-projects are managed by the BH.

### 4.3 Roles and responsibilities for OED-managed and evaluations under the Budget Holder's responsibility

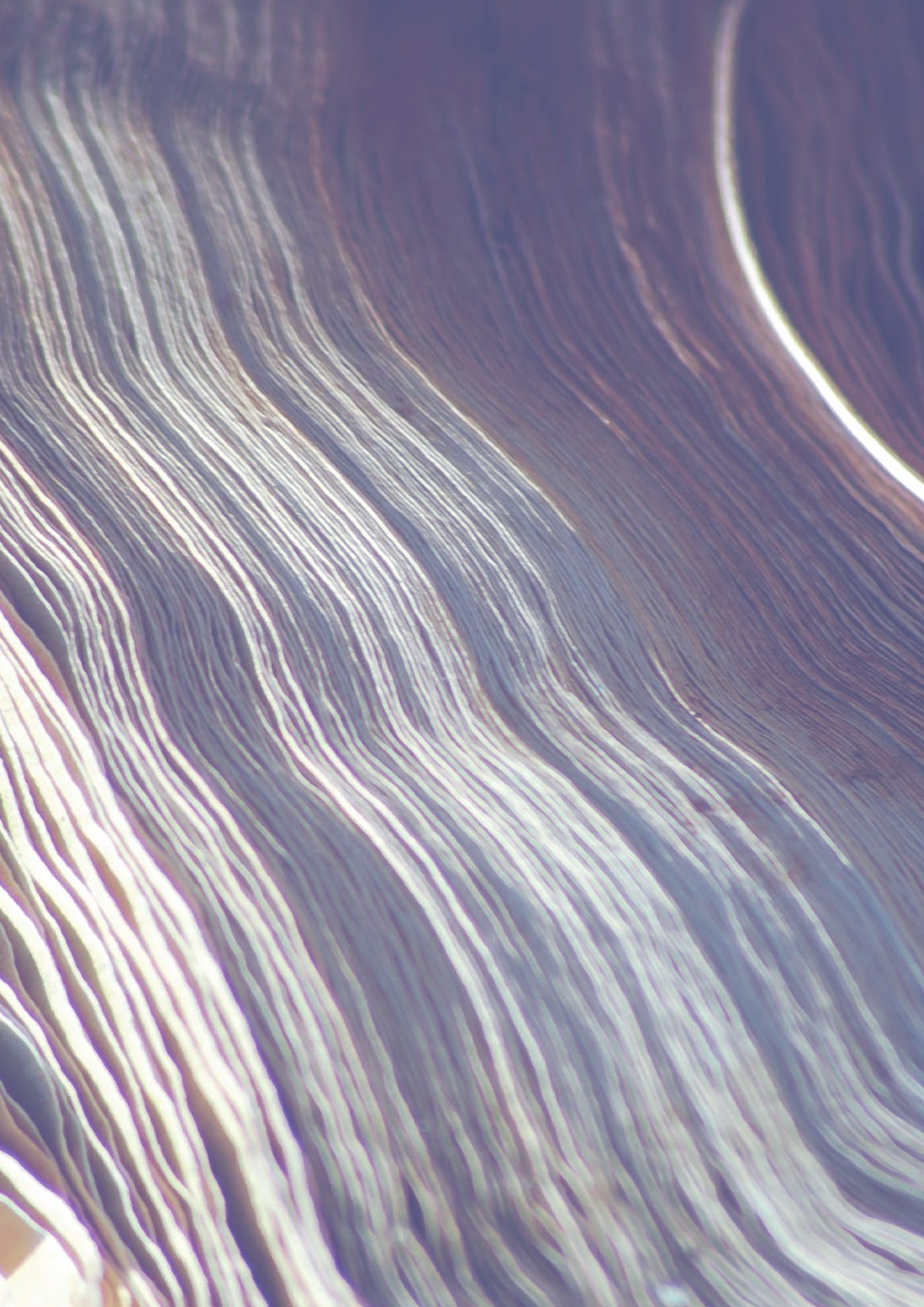
Roles and responsibilities change depending on the type of evaluation. Table 2 defines the roles and responsibilities for OED-managed evaluations and evaluations under the Budget Holder's responsibility.

Roles and Responsibilities	OED-managed Evaluations		Evaluations under BH's responsibility
	OED Management and Team Leader	OED Management only	
<b>Phase 1: Plan</b>			
Planning the evaluation at formulation stage	Project formulators and BH, in consultation with OED Project Evaluation Team (who provide clearance during formulation phase)		
Appointing the Evaluation Manager	OED Project Evaluation Coordinator		BH (in consultation with OED)
<b>Phase 2: Design and prepare</b>			
Drafting the TORs	OED Evaluation Manager and Team Leader with inputs from project team	OED EM with inputs from project team	BH-Appointed Evaluation Manager (EM) with guidance from OED
Selecting the Evaluation Team	OED EMTL	OED EM	EM with guidance and support from OED
Recruiting the Team	OED EMTL	OED EM	EM
Defining the evaluation methodology	OED EMTL + external consultant(s)	External Evaluation Team Leader	External Evaluation Team
<b>Phase 3: Collect and analyse data and drafting of Report</b>			
Organizing the field mission	OED EMTL	OED EM	EM
Conducting the Evaluation	OED EMTL + external consultant(s)	External Evaluation Team	External Evaluation Team
Drafting the Report	OED EMTL with inputs from the rest of the team	External Evaluation Team Leader with inputs from the rest of the team	External Evaluation Team Leader with inputs from the rest of the team (and quality assurance from OED)
Sending the evaluation report drafts for comments	OED EMTL	OED EM	EM
Integrating comments and finalizing the Evaluation Report	OED EMTL	External Evaluation Team Leader	External Evaluation Team Leader
Requesting the Management Response (MR)	OED EMTL	OED EM	EM
Preparing the MR	Project BH		
<b>Phase 4: Dissemination and follow-up</b>			
Submitting the Final Report and the Management Response to OED for disclosure	OED EMTL	OED EM	EM

4. Evaluation responsibility: OED or Budget Holder?

**Table 3 • Authorship and ownership of the final report**

	OED-managed		under BH's responsibility
	OED Management and Team Leader	OED Management only	
Authorship of the Final Report	OED EMTL	External Team Leader	External Team Leader
Ownership of the Final Report	OED Director	OED Director	BH



## 5. Phases of the project evaluation

The Table below provides a summary and estimated duration of each project evaluation phase.

Table 4 • Phases of the project evaluations			
	Starts	Ends	Expected duration
Phase 1: Plan	6 months before the project NTE or 3 months before a project mid-term	When the evaluation is assigned to the Evaluation Manager	1 month
Phase 2: Prepare and design	As soon as the evaluation is assigned to the Evaluation Manager	When the Inception Report is ready	1-2 months
Phase 3: Collect, analyse and report	When data collection starts	When all comments on the Draft Report have been received and integrated and the Report is finalized	3-5 months
Phase 4: Disseminate and follow-up	When Final Report is ready	When Final Report is on the web	2 weeks
			Total: 5.5-8.5 months

### 5.1 Phase 1: Plan

*This phase consists of determining the feasibility and utility of the evaluation, confirming evaluation type (whether OED-managed or under BH's responsibility) and designation of an Evaluation Manager.*

All separate evaluations should preferably be part of the yearly evaluation workplan of Decentralized Offices (please see section 3 of this Manual) and this should be mentioned in the project document.

Budget Holders of projects requiring an evaluation with OED involvement (OED-managed or not) should contact the OED as soon as possible and at least six months before the indicative start of the evaluation. The Budget Holder, the Project Team and OED should determine the feasibility and utility of the evaluation, and jointly establish a reasonable timeline.

#### Box 5 • Determining evaluation feasibility

Evaluation feasibility depends on the following factors, among others:

- stakeholder engagement
- data availability (linked also to quality of monitoring and reporting)
- access to key informants and beneficiaries (evaluations carried out after project completion may be limited by lack of access to key informants)
- access to project sites
- security
- political situation (meetings with Government)
- budget availability

**Box 6 • Determining evaluation utility**

This is a key step in the preparation process and should be defined in collaboration with the project team and primary stakeholders. The following questions can be used to determine the utility of an evaluation:

- How are the project team, internal and external stakeholders going to use the results of the evaluation?
- What are the information needs of the project team, internal and external stakeholders?
- How can the evaluation be most useful to you, your team, the country and the donor?
- What are some challenges the project has faced that the evaluation should particularly focus on and could be useful for lesson learning?

During this phase, if not already done during the yearly evaluation workplan or at project formulation stage, OED (in consultation with the donor and with the BH) will determine the preferred modality for the conduct of the evaluation (whether OED-led or under the BH’s responsibility).

Once the evaluation modality is determined, an Evaluation Manager is appointed by OED or by the BH. To maintain the independence of the evaluation process managed outside of OED, the Evaluation Manager should preferably not have been involved in project formulation, management or operations.

The timely identification of an Evaluation Manager is important in evaluations under the BH’s responsibility since some planning might be needed in case the Evaluation Manager is not locally available. This might be the case for small divisions or country offices (e.g. the Evaluation Manager might not be available at country level and might be located at regional or subregional level).

**The responsibility to launch this phase (and to ensure an evaluation is conducted) lies with the Budget Holder for both evaluation modalities.** To complement this, OED project team regularly monitors projects above USD 4 million and may alert the BH regarding the need to launch the preparation phase. The timing and budget of the evaluation should be outlined in the project document. In case of changes to the original work plans (due to budget revisions and/or project extension), **OED should be alerted by the BH** or by a delegated authority.<sup>16</sup>

**The following elements are defined or confirmed during this phase:**

- the evaluation provision
- a tentative time frame for the evaluation
- primary responsibility for evaluation (OED or BH)
- identification of the Evaluation Manager
- the scope of the evaluation
- the use of the evaluation and the primary intended users

<sup>16</sup> For GEF evaluations, evaluation preparation occurs during regular meetings held between the Project Evaluation Team and the GEF-FAO Coordination Unit.

### 5.2 Phase 2: Design and prepare

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*This phase includes: formally launching the evaluation, gathering information from the project team, stakeholder analysis, developing TORs, preparing a detailed budget for the evaluation and definition of a dissemination strategy.*

#### 5.2.1 Launching the evaluation

Once the above aspects have been agreed and clarified during the preparation phase, the evaluation can be officially launched. First, the roles and responsibilities should be defined, depending on the type of evaluation.

During this phase, for evaluations conducted under the Budget Holder's responsibility, OED will appoint a Focal Point responsible for backstopping the evaluation process.

In general, OED dedicates approximately ten working days to support this type of evaluation. The OED Focal Point will have the following tasks:

- review and comment on the evaluation TORs;
- provide advice on the selection of the evaluation team;
- review and comment on the inception report;
- review and comment on the first draft;
- score and comment on the final draft;
- answer to any query from the project or the evaluation team;
- provide additional guidance as necessary.

For GEF evaluations, the GEF-FAO Coordination Unit should be involved in evaluation planning discussions along with the BH and the Lead Technical Officer.

#### 5.2.2 Getting information from the Project Team

As soon as the evaluation is assigned, the Evaluation Manager should contact the project team to obtain relevant documentation for the development of the evaluation TORs.

The Evaluation Manager should collect available documentation through the Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS), and the project team should provide all other documentation not available on FPMIS. The Box below provides a list of documents to be compiled during this phase.

#### **Box 7 • Documentation and other information required during the planning phase**

- Background information from FPMIS
- Other information to be provided by the Project Task Force, including:
  - related project documents such as progress reports, technical reports, back to office (BTO) reports, budget revisions, terminal reports and other relevant reports
  - key results achieved
  - stakeholder list
  - list of community beneficiaries, if relevant and available
  - project sites (for planning itinerary and field work)
  - technical support provided by headquarters or regional offices
  - baseline and monitoring reports
  - other information, depending on donor requirements (e.g. policy documents)
  - FAO policy documents (e.g. related to FAO Strategic Objectives)

### 5.2.3 Developing the Terms of Reference for the evaluation

The Evaluation Manager, with inputs/comments from the project team and, when relevant, other stakeholders (e.g. donor), develops the evaluation TORs. The TORs template in Annex 1 should be used for this purpose.

During the development of the TORs, the Evaluation Manager defines the following key aspects, as these will form the basis of the evaluation. These aspects are outlined below (further detailed in the TORs template, Annex 1):

- scope of the evaluation
- evaluation questions
- indicative Methodology (an in-depth description of the methodology will be prepared by the Team Leader in the inception report)
- composition of the evaluation team

For Quality Assurance of evaluations under BH's responsibility the OED Focal Point comments on the evaluation TORs, and the BH clears the TORs.

After clearance, the Evaluation Manager shares the evaluation TORs with relevant stakeholders for information, including the Project Team, FAO Country Office, Decentralized Offices, Donor, Government, Liaison Officer and OED.

### 5.2.4 Creating a Reference Group (optional)

At the moment of developing the TORs, the Evaluation Manager, in consultation with the project team, might decide to establish an external reference group. Reference groups generally include representatives from government, resource partners, partners such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or research institutions involved in the project, or other agencies.



## 5. Phases of the project evaluation

The Evaluation Manager invites the Reference Group to comment on the TORs, and will be kept informed throughout the evaluation of progress made by the team. It is invited to participate in a debriefing with external stakeholders at the end of the project team mission and will have the opportunity to comment on the draft evaluation report. By establishing a Reference Group, the Evaluation Manager aims to ensure that all relevant stakeholders take part in the evaluation process, ultimately increasing the ownership and use of the evaluation results.

Depending on the type of project, there are various possibilities for the evaluation design. The Table below provides some examples of evaluations designs.

**Table 5 • Evaluation design according to the type of project**

Type of project/scope	Evaluation design
<b>National projects implemented in a single country</b>	Data collected in the capital city (FAO Office and implementing partners) and in a selection of project sites (beneficiaries and implementing partners)
<b>Regional projects implemented in a single region (in two or more countries)</b>	Data collected in all countries, or a selection (depending on their number). In each country visited, data should be collected both in the capital city and in a selection of project sites (beneficiaries and implementing partners)
<b>Interregional projects implemented in multiple regions (two or more regions) addressing national goals and regional priorities</b>	Data collected in all regions, and in a selection of countries in each region
<b>Global level implemented projects in at least one country per region, addressing national development goals and regional priorities</b>	Data collected at FAO headquarters, or in the location where the coordination is based. Visits to selected countries, if relevant

### 5.2.5 Team composition

Evaluations under the Budget Holder's responsibility might be commissioned to experienced national or regional research institutes or universities with proven evaluation capacity. In case of limited in-country capacity on evaluation and depending on the evaluation scope, international/regional and national experts could be hired instead. The Table 6 shows strengths and weakness related to the different options.

**Table 6 • Strengths and weaknesses of various evaluation teams options**

<b>Evaluation leadership</b>	<b>National Research Institute/ University</b>	<b>International Evaluation Team Leader supported by national consultant or team</b>
Logistics and organization of meetings	Depending on the context and Research Institute (RI)/Uni capacities, these tasks can fall under the responsibilities of the service provider.	The EM will support logistics and the organization of meetings.
Expertise and skill mix of the team	The skill mix of the team might be influenced by the expertise available at the RI/Uni. The RI/Uni may have little evaluation experience and may have a specialized knowledge.	EM has more flexibility in defining the skill mix of the team ensuring this matches evaluation needs.
Mission schedule/ Availability of team members	Under RI/Uni responsibility, the institution should do necessary adjustments in case of changes in plans.	The EM will need to coordinate with the team members to define the evaluation programme on the basis of their individual availability that can be subject to changes. Individual consultants might have conflicting evaluation schedules.
Flexibility to adapt to changing needs	Collaboration with RI/Uni is based on an initial overall contractual arrangement, Letter of Agreement that might be difficult to change during the course of the evaluation.	Collaboration is based on individual TORs that can be discussed with the team members and potentially modified in case of changing evaluation needs
Budget	Evaluation budget and deliverables are defined and agreed during the planning stage. In general, it will be a responsibility of the RI/Uni to cope with changes emerging during the evaluation within the budget agreed	Changes incurred during the evaluation (implying for example a change in the programme or delays in the data collection phase) might affect the budget in terms of additional costs for the logistic and for consultants' days of work and daily subsistence allowance (DSA).
Performance/ Reliability	Although only few national Ri/ Uni have internal expertise in evaluation, in general, institutions have a higher reputational risk as incentive to deliver good products.	Consultants' performances depend on individual capacity and may vary significantly.
Independence	Potentially more conflict of interest, since a national is assessing the performance of another national (possible colleague or friend).	Potentially more independence.
Dissemination of learning	Dissemination of knowledge is one of the main functions of RI/Uni, which typically have large networks that can be used to disseminate evaluation learning, but depending on the institution, might be specific and technical and not linked to key decision-making	In case of individual consultants, the capacity and likelihood of disseminating knowledge can vary significantly (factors include networks to which consultants have access, personal attitudes, etc...).

### 5.2.6 Preparing a detailed budget for the evaluation

An indicative evaluation provision is defined at project formulation stage as explained in section 3.5 of this manual. During the planning stage, the OED Focal Point and the Evaluation Manager agree on the evaluation budget. However, a detailed budget can be defined only after the finalization of the inception report. The evaluation budget depends on a number of factors and thus cannot be standardized. It is strongly linked to the scope of the intervention to be evaluated and to the evaluation methodology, as indicated above. Annex 7 provides a template for the definition of an evaluation budget.

The Evaluation Manager is responsible for budget monitoring.

### 5.2.7 Development of a dissemination strategy for the evaluation

The Evaluation Manager and the Project Manager should agree on the dissemination strategy for the evaluation. Depending on the users and use of the evaluation, the evaluation can be published and translated into different languages. The proofreading, translation and final publishing costs should be provided for in the evaluation budget.

During this phase the Evaluation Manager and the Project Manager will agree whether or not to conduct a stakeholder workshop to discuss and validate conclusions and recommendations. This could be done remotely, through videoconference or face-to-face during a restitution workshop.

### 5.2.8 Selecting and contracting the Project Evaluation Team

The selection and recruitment of the Leading National Institution or Evaluation Team should start before or during the preparation of the TORs. National institutions and research institutes can be contracted through the preparation of a Letter of Agreement, while evaluation firms should be selected through dedicated bids. The OED Focal Point can suggest institutions, evaluation firms or evaluation experts for consideration for the assignment. OED can support the dissemination of the call for expression of interest.

The Evaluation Manager ensures that the recruitment process is independent, transparent and in line with FAO rules and procedures.

### 5.2.9 Preparing an inception report

The Evaluation Team Leader is responsible for developing an inception report following guidance provided under Annex 10 in collaboration with the Evaluation Team Members and the Evaluation Manager. To inform the inception report, the Evaluation Team may need to meet or have Skype conversations with key stakeholders before starting the mission (e.g. donor, FAO technical officers, FAO-GEF Coordination Unit).

The methodology section of the inception report should include an Evaluation Matrix (Annex 4). The objective of the Evaluation Matrix is to detail how information will be collected for each evaluation question, outlining the following:

- sub-questions, indicators and/or comments related to specific aspects to be analysed under each question;
- information sources, how to collect information, who to interview, which locations to visit, which documents to review, etc.

The methodology section of the inception report explains:

- where to collect data
- who to interview
- selection criteria for project sites and interviewees
- how to interview stakeholders (focus group, semi-structured interviews, etc.)
- other methods used to complement the data collection (desk review, short stories, observation, online surveys, etc.)

The type and quantity of data collection tools depend on the fieldwork design that is strictly linked to the evaluation matrix. The selection of sites to visit and categories of people to interview in each site should be included in the inception report. The Evaluation Manager can advise on the feasibility of the field work design in relation to the budget available.

The inception report should also include a *stakeholder analysis*.

Annex 9 provides guidance for conducting a stakeholder analysis. The stakeholder analysis provides an overview of individuals and organizations actively involved in the project, and those whose interests may be affected as a result of the project (positively and negatively).

The stakeholder analysis will be used to design the evaluation, in particular to decide who to interview and what information to seek from each type of stakeholder.

The Evaluation Team should also prepare a list of people to interview based on the stakeholder analysis and the evaluation matrix and agree on a country report outline (in the case of regional or global evaluations). The list of informants should include all relevant FAO and non-FAO informants.

FAO informants include: Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer, Funding Liaison Officer, FAO-GEF Coordination Unit (in the case of GEF projects); other relevant technical divisions, Project Task Force.

Other informants may include: beneficiary communities and governments; institutional counterpart; implementing agencies; resource partner(s); agencies and development agents working in similar areas; NGOs; private sector; civil society.

<b>This Phase includes the following elements:</b>
• collecting reference material and secondary data
• revising the budget
• developing TORs (Evaluation Manager responsibility)
• developing a dissemination strategy for the evaluation
• selecting and contracting the project evaluation team
• advertising and selecting the Research Institute/Evaluation Team
• designing the field work (Team Leader responsibility)
• Preparing an inception report (evaluation matrix and stakeholder analysis)

### 5.3 Phase 3: Collect, analyse and report

*This phase includes data collection, data analysis, debriefing and the preparation of the evaluation report as well as the stakeholder workshop.*

#### 5.3.1 Organizing the mission logistics

Based on the inception report. The Evaluation Team Leader should prepare a detailed plan for the field work in consultation with the Project Manager and with the Evaluation Manager. The EM ensures support for the mission logistics. The plan should include briefings with the FAO representative, and meetings with local stakeholders and project beneficiaries. A priority, whenever relevant, is to devote sufficient time to meet with local communities and groups who either participated in the initiative or were impacted by it (either positively or negatively).

The Evaluation Manager plans the mission(s), facilitates scheduling of meetings and access to documentation, and he/she is available for any required meeting with the evaluation team.

Evaluations of GEF interventions, whenever relevant, should include meetings with the GEF Focal Points at country level.

*In case of evaluations commissioned to Research Institutes and Universities, it could be decided in the Letter of Agreement to include under the responsibilities of the service provider the logistic for the field missions and the organization of the meetings. This decision will depend on the capacities of the service provider and the context.*



### 5.3.2 Collecting the data

The data collection is under the responsibility of the Evaluation Team Leader, who ensures that data is collected independently and adequately triangulated.

In case of evaluations conducted by individual consultants, the Evaluation Manager facilitates the data collection and regularly monitors evaluation team progress according to the work plan. In case of evaluations carried out by Research Institutes/Universities, the Evaluation Manager will only have a facilitation role if needed, but his/her responsibility in this phase will be more limited.

To ensure independence and confidentiality, interviews should not be conducted in the presence of any project staff. If necessary, a Project Focal Point can accompany the Evaluation Team and introduce them at the beginning of the meeting, but should leave immediately after introductions are made.

### 5.3.3 Analyse data and report

Data analysis should be conducted by the Evaluation Team as soon as possible following data collection. It is recommended to use the evaluation matrix as a framework for data analysis. For project operated in multiple countries, the Evaluation Team Leader can decide to gather the evaluation team in one location (e.g. Rome) for an analysis workshop (if the budget permits).

### 5.3.4 Debriefing with the Country Office(s)

A debriefing with the Country Office, with the Project Team and, in the case of GEF-funded projects, with the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit should be organized at the end of the data collection phase, preferably immediately after data collection or, in case this is not possible, after data analysis.

Debriefings can also be held with the donor and any other relevant stakeholders. The objective of the debriefing is to present preliminary findings and gather feedback from the main users of the evaluation, and whenever feasible jointly define preliminary conclusions and recommendations. A face-to-face debriefing (rather than a remote one) facilitates an open and frank exchange of views.

A quick debriefing, after the fieldwork can be followed by an in-depth workshop after data analysis allowing detailed discussion on preliminary conclusions and recommendations.

### 5.3.5 Preparing a draft evaluation report

The Evaluation Team Leader, with inputs provided by other consultants in the team, is responsible for the preparation of the report. It is his/her responsibility to ensure coherence of the content,

adherence to the OED template, and delivery in accordance with deadlines outlined in the TORs. The evaluation report template is provided in Annex 3A<sup>17</sup>.

### 5.3.6 Circulating the draft report for comments

The draft report is shared with OED for comments (then becoming Draft 1). After the Evaluation Team Leader integrates OED comments, the Evaluation Manager circulates the report to the Project Task Force and other FAO stakeholders, including any other involved unit, for factual review and comments. The Evaluation Manager sends the draft report accompanied by a comments matrix (see Annex 6), encouraging stakeholders to synthesise their comments into a single matrix, e.g. one comment matrix per division. Two weeks is the suggested time allotted for stakeholder comments. It is the Evaluation Team Leader's responsibility to address comments provided by all FAO stakeholders. Following this, the Evaluation Manager shares the draft report (Draft 2) with non-FAO stakeholders (donors and government). Please refer to Table 7 on Quality Assurance.

### 5.3.7 Finalising the evaluation report

The Evaluation Team Leader should address feedback and comments received during the previous step to prepare the final report. The evaluation team will correct factual errors in the draft report and may revisit findings, conclusions and recommendations on the basis of the comments received, in case comments are accompanied by revised data sets and/or new evidence. There is no obligation to address opinions. The Evaluation Manager monitors whether all comments were addressed. Changes made to the draft report, both accepted and rejected comments, should be explained in the comment matrix.

In line with the initial planning, and if not already carried out during the debriefing, a stakeholder workshop can be conducted at this phase to present and discuss the main findings, conclusions and recommendations with stakeholders.

#### Box 8 • Stakeholder workshop

##### Why and how to conduct a stakeholders workshop?

For projects involving a large number of stakeholders, the Evaluation Manager is encouraged to organize a workshop at the end of the evaluation to present and discuss the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

This workshop can either be held *at the end of the data collection and analysis phase* (before drafting the report), *or once the final report is ready*. If organized before drafting the report, the workshop is useful to gather some reactions to preliminary findings, and will help the evaluation team refining the conclusions and recommendations. If held once the final draft is ready, the workshop is part of the report dissemination strategy, and will ensure that all potential users of the evaluation are informed of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. Brochures or other communication material about the evaluation and its conclusions can be distributed during the workshop. In some cases, the media can also be invited to join, and a facilitator can be hired, in order to structure the discussion around specific topics of interest.

In both cases, it is important to clearly define the objectives of the workshop well in advance, and to ensure that the most relevant stakeholders are invited. The list of participants should be prepared in consultation with the project team.

Stakeholder's workshops may have a duration from two hours to half-day, depending on the objectives and number of participants.

The Evaluation Manager and the Project Manager may decide regarding editing or translating of the evaluation report. Costs for the editing should be budgeted at the evaluation start.

*For Quality Assurance purposes, once the final report is ready, it should be sent to OED for final scoring and after BH's clearance, again to OED for record and repository.*

<sup>17</sup> GEF interventions have dedicated templates for both Final evaluation and mid-term reviews. For more information refer to the FAO-GEF Guidelines on GEF Mid-term Reviews

## 5. Phases of the project evaluation

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Once the report has been cleared by the BH, the Evaluation Manager can formally request a Management Response. It is the responsibility of the BH to coordinate the preparation of the Management Response in consultation with the project team.

### This Phase includes:

- organization of mission logistics
- data collection and analysis
- debriefing and preparation of the evaluation report (including editing and peer review)
- request and preparation of the Management Response

## 5.4 Phase 4: Disseminate and follow-up

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*Following clearance of the final report by the Budget Holder, the dissemination and follow-up phase begins. This phase includes the publication of the evaluation report, the Management Response and the Follow-up Report. This phase is entirely under the responsibility of the Evaluation Manager.*

### 5.4.1 Disseminate the project evaluation report

The Evaluation Manager can now circulate the final report with annexes to the Budget Holder and Project Task Force. The formatting, graphic design, publication and dissemination of the report will not be assured by OED; they are under the responsibility of the Budget Holder appointed Evaluation Manager (EM). For transparency, all evaluations should be publicly accessible and therefore the EM should share final reports and supporting material (such as annexes and appendixes) with OED for this purpose. OED provides access to externally produced evaluation reports through a repository on its website.

The dissemination should follow the dissemination plan agreed during the planning phase.

In the case of GEF evaluations, the final report should be sent to the GEF Secretariat.<sup>18</sup>

### 5.4.2 Translation

The evaluation report or its executive summary might be translated, as agreed in the planning stage. Any translation of the report should be charged to the project evaluation budget, as previously indicated.

All evaluation reports of GEF-funded projects must be available in English.

### 5.4.3 Request for follow-up report

The template for the follow-up report is in the document “Responsibilities and procedures for the management responses and follow-up report on evaluations” available on the OED website<sup>19</sup>.

### This Phase includes:

- dissemination of the final report
- translation (if needed)
- request for follow-up report

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18 FOR GEF projects please refer to the FAO-GEF guidelines on MTR

19 <http://www.fao.org/evaluation/resources/manuals-guidelines/en/>



## 6. Quality Assurance Process

This section details the Quality Assurance Processes (QAP) for evaluations under the BH's responsibility.

### 6.1 Peer review

Peer reviews of evaluations under BH's responsibility to external teams are not mandatory and the decision to establish a peer review process for such evaluations lies with the BH. OED strongly encourages the peer review of main deliverables (i.e. evaluation TORs and evaluation draft report) before submission to OED for comments. Project evaluations can be peer reviewed by internal or external panels. Depending on the office capacity, the peer reviewer could be a senior colleague with experience in evaluation, an external officer or consultant from another developing agency or from a private firm.

### 6.2 Submission to OED

OED ensures Quality Assurance of the main deliverables (TORs, inception report and evaluation report). In particular, OED comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference, the inception report and the draft report, and assesses the final evaluation report providing ratings against defined criteria and comments.

Evaluation reports are assessed using the criteria defined in the peer review and scoring matrix (Annex 8).

It should be noted that OED provides Quality Assurance but does not clear the evaluation final report, as this is the responsibility of the BH.

### 6.3 Key steps and time frame of the QAP for evaluations under BH's responsibility

The QAP of evaluations under the BH's responsibility does not require OED clearance at any stage. The QAP is based on the comments received from the OED Focal Point on the TORs, the inception report and the first draft of the evaluation report and the assessment and rating of the final report.

The Budget Holder should clear the final report before it is submitted to OED for records.

Table 7 details the key steps of the quality assurance process of evaluations under the Budget Holder's responsibility.

**Table 7 • Quality Assurance process for evaluations under BH's responsibility**

<b>1) Terms of Reference (TORs)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EM shares the TORs with the OED</li> <li>• OED provides comments on the TORs</li> <li>• EM addresses OED's comments to the Evaluation TORs</li> </ul>
<b>2) Evaluation Team</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OED advises on the consultants CVs and selection process (may participate in interviews if requested)<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>
<b>3) Inception Report</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TL prepares the inception report</li> <li>• EM shares the inception report with OED and OED provides comments</li> <li>• TL addresses OED's comments and finalises the inception report</li> </ul>
<b>4) Evaluation Report</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TL shares "Draft 0" with EM</li> <li>• EM provides comments to TL (→ Draft 1)</li> <li>• EM shares Draft 1<sup>20</sup> with OED</li> <li>• OED comments to the Draft 1</li> <li>• TL addresses the OED comments (→ Draft 2)</li> </ul>
<b>5) Circulation of the report for comments and finalisation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EM circulates Draft 2 to all stakeholders for comments</li> <li>• TL integrates stakeholders' comments into Final Draft and completes the comments matrix</li> <li>• OED assesses the Final Report and provides ratings and comments</li> <li>• EM submits the Final Report along with OED's assessment to the BH for clearance</li> <li>• The BH clears the Final Report taking into account the assessment provided by OED</li> <li>• EM sends the cleared Final Report to OED Project Evaluation Team for inclusion into web repository</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> OED can advise but has no official role or responsibility in the decisions related to the selection of the evaluation consultants.

## Annexes

Annex 1A – Template: Terms of Reference (TORs) for project evaluations

Annex 2A – Template: Consultants job description for Evaluations under the Budget Holder’s responsibility

Annex 3A – Template: Project Evaluation Report outline

Annex 4 – Evaluation Matrix template

Annex 5 – Note recording template

Annex 6 – Comments matrix

Annex 7 – Sample budget

Annex 8 – Peer review and Scoring matrix

Annex 9 – Stakeholder analysis

Annex 10 – Inception report guidance

Annex 11 – Theory of Change

Annexes and the management response are available to download at:  
[www.fao.org/evaluation](http://www.fao.org/evaluation)

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