# ANNEX 1A

# Template: Terms of Reference (TORs) for project evaluations

> ***Who is this Template for?*** *This Template is for staff who manage evaluations to prepare the Terms of Reference for both OED-managed and evaluations under Budget Holder's responsibility. It is valid for both Mid-Term and Final Evaluations, but only for <u>non-GEF projects</u>.*
>
> ***What is the purpose of this Template?*** *This template suggests a structure and provides guidance on content. It sets out to harmonise content and ensure quality for evaluation Terms of Reference.*
>
> ***How should this Template be used?*** *This template is used alongside the Project Evaluation Manual to ensure that OED quality standards are adequately followed.*
>
> ***How is this Template structured?*** *Within this Template:*
>
> - *Guidance to complete each section*
> - *Specific sections outlining differences between OED-managed and decentralised evaluations are included when relevant.*

**PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES**

# Terms of Reference for the Final/Mid-Term Evaluation of [*Name of Project*]

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**
**OFFICE OF EVALUATION**
[Date]

# Contents

# List of Boxes, Figures and Tables

No table of figures entries found.

# Acronyms and abbreviations

*[Insert your acronyms and abbreviations here. Check through the whole document and list all the acronyms and abbreviations you have used. Do not include acronyms and abbreviations that are not in the document.*

*When an abbreviation is used for the first time in the text, it should be explained in full; it will be included in the list of acronyms when it is used repeatedly within the report.]*

| | |
|---|---|
| BH | Budget holder |
| CPF | Country Programming Framework |
| EM | Evaluation Manager |
| EOI | Expression of Interest |
| ET | Evaluation team |
| ETL | Evaluation team leader |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FPMIS | Field Project Management Information System |
| FR | Follow-up Report |
| LTO | Lead technical officer |
| LTU | Lead technical unit |
| MR | Management Response |
| MTE | Mid-term evaluation |
| OED | FAO Office of Evaluation |
| PC | Programme Committee |
| PEC | Project Evaluation Coordinator |
| PTF | Project Task Force. |
| RO | Regional office |
| SO | FAO Strategic Objective |
| SRO | Sub-regional office |
| TCI | FAO Investment Centre |
| TCSR | Donor Liaison and Resource Mobilization Team |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |

# Introduction to the template

*This document is the template for developing evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) of projects and programmes funded through voluntary contributions by resource partners. It provides information on the process of conducting an evaluation and specific guidance on how to complete each chapter of the ToR.*

*The primary intended users of the evaluation ToR are: FAO staff responsible for the project, including the Budget Holder (BH) who initiates the evaluation process, the Project Task Force (PTF), and the designated Evaluation Manager (EM).*

*This template in a living document that can be modified to adapt to the context of a specific evaluation, as well as to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation process.*

*Please note the following formatting requirements:*

*Please note the following formatting requirements:*

> ➢ Body paragraphs should be numbered by applying the *Paragraph OED* style (Home tab, Styles, Style Gallery)

> ➢ For numbered lists use the *List Number* style (Home tab, Styles, Style Gallery)

> ➢ For bulleted lists use the *List Bullet* style (Home tab, Styles, Style Gallery)


> ➢ *The text in italics is provided as guidance and should not be included in the final version of the TOR.*

# 1. Background and Context of the Project/Program

*This section should provide evaluators with an overview of the developmental context in which the project is implemented.*

*This includes critical social, economic, political, geographic and demographic factors directly related to the project. The section should be focused and concise (<u>a maximum of one page</u>), making clear what is being evaluated.*

*The section should include the following descriptors:*

    i  The name/title of the project under evaluation;
   ii  Description of the project:

        a  When and how the project was initiated;
        b  Brief description of the different project components;
        c  Geographic location and intended beneficiaries (if possible broken down by component);
        d  Project duration and its implementation status within that timeframe;
        e  Resources: human and financial, specifying contributions from FAO, donors and other funding sources; and
        f  Key stakeholders involved in the project, including the implementing agencies and relevant partnerships.

   iii  Description of the context.

        a  Context (region, country, landscape, where relevant also challenges);

   iv  How the subject fits into the national policies and priorities, as well as FAO priorities (Country Programming Framework, Strategic Objectives, Regional Initiatives, etc.).

*Indicate which type of evaluation (Mid-Term or Final) as well as how this evaluation relates to previous or ongoing evaluations, if applicable.*

## 1.1 Theory of change

*A theory of change (ToC) helps to identify evaluation objectives and questions. Include here the project theory of change, if available. A post-facto ToC can also be developed for the purposes of the evaluation and with OED's support, if necessary.*

## 1.2 Results achieved

*This sub-section highlights results achieved since the beginning of the project implementation. Avoid listing activities and choose instead to focus on what has been accomplished (following the ToC presented, if available). The purpose of the section is to indicate to the evaluation team the current level of progress in project implementation.*

# 2. Evaluation purpose

*The purpose of the evaluation explains why the evaluation is being conducted and why at this particular point in time. It should answer the question: "why are we doing this evaluation?" If the purpose section is short, you can merge "Evaluation purpose and scope" into one section.*

*Identify the primary intended users of the evaluation, stakeholders who can use the findings of the evaluation to affect change. This can include the BH, PTF, FAO technical staff, the donor, and other external stakeholders. The PTF and in particular the EM should seek to elaborate the purpose of the evaluation in a consultative manner, in collaboration with all primary intended users and specifying how they intend to use the evaluation results. Please note the utility of the evaluation and related products may vary by stakeholder.*

*It is possible to address several purposes and uses in a single evaluation design. However, it is necessary to decide during the evaluation design phase where resources will be primarily focused.*

# 3. Evaluation scope

*The scope of the evaluation identifies the "evaluand", or the object of the evaluation (what is being evaluated). It also defines the parameters of the evaluation: the time frame, the segments of the target population to be included; geographic areas of focus; stakeholders to be involved; and which (if not all) components of the project will be included.*

*To the extent possible, an explanation should be provided to justify choices made, e.g. a focus on a selected component or geographic area.*

# 4. Evaluation objective and key questions

*The **objective** of the evaluation describes what the evaluation is expected to achieve. For example, objectives may be to assess the extent to which a pilot project has achieved its intended results and identify design and implementation issues that need to be addressed before scaling up the project model.*

*While the evaluation objective summarizes what the evaluation will assess, the questions identify what needs to be looked at to meet these objectives. The evaluation questions target the key information needs of the evaluation, the answers for which the primary intended users of the evaluation can use to make decisions, take action or add to knowledge.*

## 4.1 Evaluation questions

*Evaluation questions should be based on the project objectives and on the Theory of Change (ToC). Questions should be sufficiently broad but at the same time help focus the evaluation, telling a comprehensive story by presenting the evaluation's main findings.*

*Evaluation questions must be agreed upon by the Evaluation Manager and principal stakeholders, and refined in consultation with the evaluation team.*

*Below are examples of evaluation questions:*

- *Were stated outcomes[1] or outputs achieved?*

- *What factors contributed to achieving or not achieving intended outcomes?*

- *To what extent have FAO outputs and assistance contributed to outcomes?*

- *Has the FAO partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?*

- *What factors contributed to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the project?*

- *Was gender equality and other equity issues mainstreamed in the project?*

- *Is the causal relation-ship between inputs (resources) and outputs adequate and coherent?*

*Questions related to mainstreaming gender equality in line with FAO Gender Policy, should be included in all cases in which gender is relevant to the evaluated project/programme. Examples of questions to assess the project's alignment with FAO Gender Policy are the following:*

- *Were gender equality considerations reflected in project objectives and design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of both women and men, and in the identification of beneficiaries?*

- *Were gender equality considerations taken into account in project implementation and management?*

- *Have gender relations and equality been or will be affected by the project? Particular attention will be devoted to the four FAO's Gender Equality Objectives attainable at the level of initiative or thematic area: i) Equal decision-making; ii) Equal access to productive resources; iii) Equal access to goods, services and markets; iv) Reduction of women's work burden.*

# 5.    Methodology

*This section should identify how information will be collected and specify how to answer each evaluation question.*

*The ToR elaborates an overall approach to conduct the evaluation, including on how to address questions, data sources and evaluation tools likely to yield the most reliable and valid answers to the evaluation questions, given resource limitations and other constraints.*

*The evaluation should adhere to the UNEG Norms & Standards[2] and align with OED Manual, procedures and methodological guidelines.*

*The methodology described in the ToRs, as well as the identified ToC, should be based on the following:*

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[1] Outcome definition: behavioural changes, among the 'boundary' partners of a project. Identifying the behavioral changes that a project aims to deliver becomes synonymous with its outcomes, and part of a wider process of focusing on how change happens.

[2] http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21

- objectives and intended/unintended outcomes[3] of the project/programme and its activities;

- strengths and/or challenges related to design and implementation of the project/programme given the specific context;

- factors that facilitated or hindered the outcomes;

- actual and potential limitations in carrying out the evaluation (time available, lack of documentation, baseline and/or monitoring system, e.g.) and;

- the significance of outcomes vis-à-vis the achievement of national and CPF objectives.

*For complex evaluations and in all cases which foresee an inception mission, the ToC and the methodology should be further refined and if possible tested by the evaluation team during the inception mission.*

*Depending on the size of the evaluation, each question can be divided into sub-questions, creating an evaluation matrix[4]. The evaluation team is responsible for developing the evaluation matrix.*

*Final decisions about the design and methods for the evaluation should emerge from consultations among the project team, OED, the evaluators, and key stakeholders about what is appropriate and feasible to answer the evaluation questions, meeting the evaluation purpose and objectives*

*The evaluation should adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered will underpin its validation, and analysis and will support conclusions and recommendations.*

# 6.    Roles and responsibilities[5]

*This section describes the different roles that key stakeholders play in the design and implementation of the evaluation in the case of OED-led evaluation and in the case of decentralised evaluations.*

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[3] Un-intended outcomes are those not foreseen and "intended" by a purposeful action but still occurring thanks to it. A useful reading on Outcome Harvesting can be found at the following link:
http://www.managingforimpact.org/sites/default/files/resource/outome_harvesting_brief_final_2012-05-2-1.pdf

[4] See Annex 4 of the OED Project Evaluation Manual for Evaluation Matrix template.

[5] On evaluation roles, responsibilities and quality assurance, please refer to OED Manual for Decentralised Offices

## 6.1 For OED-managed evaluations

1. The **Office of Evaluation (OED)**, in particular the Evaluation Manager (EM), develops the first draft ToR with inputs from the PTF and other stakeholders, and based on document review. The ToR includes the Evaluation Theory of Change.

2. The OED EM is responsible for the finalization of the ToR and for the identification of the evaluation team members[6]. The OED EM shall brief the evaluation team on the evaluation methodology and process and will review the final draft report for Quality Assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the ToR and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided as well as for the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation report.

3. OED also has a responsibility in following up with the BH for the timely preparation of the Management Response and the Follow-up to the MR.

4. The **Project Task Force (PTF)**, which includes the FAO Budget Holder (BH), the Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and the Team of the project to be evaluated, are responsible for initiating the evaluation process, providing inputs to the first version of the Terms of Reference, especially the description of the background and context chapter, and supporting the evaluation team during its work. They are required to participate in meetings with the evaluation team, as necessary, make available information and documentation, and comment on the terms of reference and draft evaluation report. Involvement of different members of the PTF will depend on respective roles and participation in the project. The BH is also responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management Response and the Follow-up Report to the evaluation, fully supported in this task by the LTO and by other members of the PTF. OED guidelines for the Management Response and the Follow-up Report provide necessary details on this process.

5. The **Evaluation Team (ET)** is responsible for drafting the inception report, further developing and applying the evaluation methodology, for conducting the evaluation, and for producing the evaluation report. All team members, will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits, and will contribute to the evaluation with written inputs for the final draft and final report. The evaluation team will agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process, based on the template provided by OED. The ET will also be free to expand the scope, criteria, questions and issues listed above, as well as develop its own evaluation tools and framework, within time and resources available and based on discussions with the EM, consults the BH and PTF where necessary. The ET is fully responsible for its report which may not reflect the views of the Government or of FAO. An evaluation report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO although OED is responsible for Quality Assurance of all evaluation reports.

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[6]The responsibility for the administrative procedures for recruitment of the team, will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

6.   The ETL guides and coordinates the ET members in their specific work, discusses their findings, conclusions and recommendations and prepares the final draft and the final report, consolidating all inputs[7].

## 6.2   For Evaluations under Budget Holder's responsibility

- The BH is responsible for launching the evaluation, informing OED, and assigning key responsibilities throughout the process. The BH, should appoint an **Evaluation Manager**, who will be responsible for: ensuring all steps of the evaluation are carried out.

- developing the first draft evaluation ToR, ensuring input from all project stakeholders (including the donor);

- incorporating OED's comments and finalizing the ToR;

- identifying and recruiting the Evaluation Team, with backstopping as needed from OED;

- briefing the ET at the beginning of the evaluation on process, methodology and tools, with support from OED focal point;

- ensuring wide availability of all project information and documentation, including available baselines, progress reports, monitoring data, background information on project context, stakeholder analysis, etc.;

- organizing meetings with relevant stakeholders and partners for the ET;

- organizing the field mission(s), including all logistical aspects;

- circulating draft evaluation report for comments to OED and to all project stakeholders and make sure these are addressed by the Evaluation Team;

- ensuring communication among all evaluation stakeholders, as well as for timeliness of key evaluation deliverables.

- share the final report with OED and with the BH

7.   The BH is responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management Response and Follow-up Report to the evaluation, with support and inputs from PTF members and other FAO or non FAO stakeholders, as relevant.

8.   The **Office of Evaluation (OED)** will appoint an OED evaluation focal point to provide technical backstopping through the evaluation process, including guidance and punctual support to the EM and to the PTF on technical issues related to evaluation. In particular, OED shall support the EM/PTF in the identification of the evaluation team members[8], participate in interview panels, brief the ET on the evaluation process and discuss, if necessary, evaluation methodology and tools with the ET. In addition, OED

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[7] For further details related to the tasks of the ETL and ET members, please refer to Annex 2A of OED Manual for Decentralised Offices - "Template job descriptions"

[8] The PTF will be responsible for the administrative procedures related to the ET's recruitment.

reviews the draft ToR and draft report for Quality Assurance purposes to review presentation, coherence with the ToR, and finally review the quality, clarity and soundness of evidence and analysis upon which evaluation conclusions and recommendations are based.

9.      The **Evaluation Team's (ET)** roles and responsibilities are the same as outlined in section 6.1 (paragraphs 5-6).

# 7.      Evaluation team composition and profile

*This section details the skills and competencies needed in the ET team, the expected structure and composition of the ET, and the roles and responsibilities of the ET members.*

*The section also should specify the type of evidence (resumes, work samples, references) that will be expected to support claims of knowledge, skills and experience. The ToR should explicitly demand evaluators' independence, and ensure lack of involvement in the design, execution or advising of any aspect of the project that is the subject of the evaluation.*

# 8.      Evaluation products (deliverables)

*This section describes the key evaluation products the evaluation team will be accountable for producing. At the minimum, these products should include:*

  *i   Evaluation Matrix*

  *v   Evaluation inception report (for all complex project or programme evaluations) — an inception report should be prepared by the evaluation team before going into the main data collection phase. It should detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, explain how each evaluation question will be answered by detailing methods, sources of data and data collection procedures. The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables, designating a team member with the lead responsibility for each task or product.*

  *vi  Draft evaluation report—the project team and key stakeholders in the evaluation should comment on the draft evaluation report.*

  *vii Final evaluation report[9]: should include an executive summary and illustrate the evidence found that responds to the evaluation questions listed in the ToR. The report will be prepared in English/French/Spanish[10], with numbered paragraphs, following the OED template for report writing. Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report when considered important to complement the main report. Translations in other languages of the Organization, if required, will be FAO's responsibility.*

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[9] See Annex 3A of the Project Evaluation Manual for the evaluation report outline.

[10] Select as appropriate.

*viii Evaluation brief and other knowledge products or participation in knowledge sharing events, if relevant.*

# 9.    Evaluation timeframe

*This section lists and describes all tasks and deliverables for which evaluators or the evaluation team will be responsible and accountable, as well as those involving the commissioning office, indicating for each the due date or time-frame (e.g. briefings, draft report, final report), as well as who is responsible for its completion.*

| Task | Dates | Duration | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|
| Launch of the evaluation | 6 months before the project NTE | | BH/PTF |
| ToR finalization | | | PTF and OED for comments and quality control |
| Team identification and recruitment | | | PTF |
| Mission organization | | | PTF |
| Reading background documentation provided by PTF | | | ET |
| Briefing of ET | | | PTF, supported by OED when necessary |
| Organization of the Evaluation Mission (travel arrangements, meetings arrangements with project stakeholders and partners, field visits, etc.) | | | PTF |
| Evaluation mission | | | ET |
| Evaluation Report first draft for circulation | | | PTF and OED for comments and quality control |
| Evaluation Report final draft for circulation | | | PTF and OED for comments and quality control |
| Validation of the recommendations | | | ET to the PTF (OED may attend) |
| Final Report, including publishing and graphic design | | | PTF |
| Management Response | 1 month after the Final report is issued | | PTF |
| Follow-up report | 1 year after the MR is issued | | PTF |

# 10. Annexes

*Annexes can be used to provide additional detail about evaluation background and requirements to facilitate the work of evaluators. Some examples include:*

1. *Overview of the Available Documents*: For the evaluation team to have a good overview of all the documentation available here an updated list is provided.

2. *Project Results Framework and Theory of Change*: Provides more detailed information on the project being evaluated.

3. *Key stakeholders and partners (Stakeholder Mapping)*: A list of key stakeholders and other individuals who should be consulted, together with an indication of their affiliation and relevance for the evaluation and their contact information. This annex can also suggest sites to be visited.

4. *Documents to be consulted*: A list of important documents and webpages that the evaluators should read at the outset of the evaluation and before finalizing the evaluation design and the inception report.

5. *Evaluation Matrix*: The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as a map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details the evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer; data sources & data collection methods; analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source & data collection method; and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

6. *Project evaluation report outline*: Here their main outline for the evaluation report should be provided, with reference to the outline for project evaluations.

7. *FAO Strategic Objectives, Results and core functions, 2010-2019*: Outcomes that are related to the strategic objectives are described here: http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/027/mg015e.pdf