



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United  
Nations

## Office of Evaluation

### Step-by-step procedures for the separate evaluation of voluntary-funded initiatives

OED guidelines

## **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

### **Office of Evaluation (OED)**

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## 1 Background

1. FAO Governing Bodies consistently expressed interest and support for the systematic evaluation of all voluntary-funded initiatives, which on average represent 50% of FAO's overall financial resources.
2. The Charter of FAO Office of Evaluation assigns (OED) the responsibility for ensuring the compliance of all FAO evaluations with the principles set-out in the Charter itself to the Office of Evaluation. However, the separate evaluation of voluntary-funded initiatives requires active contributions by different stakeholders in the Organization.
3. This document illustrates the key steps to be followed in such a process and the roles and responsibility of each stakeholder. It will be updated as required, based on feedback received from FAO stakeholders on the efficiency and effectiveness of the process.

## 2 Institutional framework

4. Below are the key references to the FAO official documents and statements that provide the framework for the current rules and procedures on the evaluation of separate voluntary-funded initiatives in FAO.

**Box 1.** *Charter of FAO Office of Evaluation, Section III - Types of Evaluation in FAO, paragraph 16*

**Evaluations of individual programmes and projects, usually funded from extra- budgetary resources.** Results of such evaluations are directly used by stakeholders including managers, funders and others directly concerned, often at country level.

**Box 2.** *Council resolution at its 132<sup>nd</sup> session, June 2007, paragraph 76*

“a) the inclusion of a mandatory budget line for evaluation in all extra-budgetary projects on a published scale. Two Trust Fund pool accounts would be established for this purpose: one for emergency and rehabilitation projects, and another for technical cooperation for development projects. The exception to this would be those projects of technical cooperation for development over US\$ 4 million which would continue to be evaluated separately; and  
b) the institutionalisation of the arrangements for evaluation of emergency and rehabilitation programmes and the extension of similar arrangements to projects of technical cooperation for development. While respecting the independence of evaluation and the role of the Evaluation Service in this, these institutional relationships would include comprehensive dialogues with stakeholders, in particular funders and partner countries, on the selection of evaluations and their conduct.”

**Box 3.** *FAO Field Programme Circular 2011/1*

The purpose of this Circular is to set out arrangements for the funding of the evaluation of voluntary funded technical cooperation for development activities. A separate funding arrangement, for the evaluation of emergency and rehabilitation activities, was established in 2006. Under both arrangements, evaluation costs are treated as direct or average direct costs, as per agreed practice in the context of the UNDG-HLCM Finance and Budget Network. Evaluation services form part of the technical support provided by FAO. They do not qualify as administrative and operational support services.  
It is the responsibility of the project formulator to ensure evaluation costs are budgeted at agreed rates;  
It is the responsibility of the budget holder to confirm the availability of funds, including for evaluations, and to authorize commitments and expenditure in support of the project work plan and in line with FAO rules and regulations

5. Hence, as of 2011, the following rules apply for the evaluation of voluntary-funded initiatives:

- i. all technical cooperation for development projects with budget above USD 4 million, will be evaluated separately and funding for the full cost of the evaluation/s will be included in the project budget;
- ii. all GEF-funded medium and full size projects and all GEF-managed funds will be evaluated separately, as per the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy.<sup>1</sup> A mid-term and final evaluation are required for all projects with a budget greater than USD 1 million (full-size projects); a final evaluation is required for all projects with budgets less than USD 1 million (medium-size projects); all initiatives will include a budgeted evaluation plan approved by OED and set-up a baby-project for evaluation to be managed by OED.
- iii. all technical cooperation for development projects with budget in the range USD 200.000-4 million should contribute to the OED-managed Trust Fund for Evaluation of Technical Cooperation for Development<sup>2</sup> and be evaluated through thematic, strategic and country evaluations, funded from the TF; a sample text for Project Documents is suggested in Section 4 below; and
- iv. all emergency and rehabilitation projects should contribute to the OED-managed Trust Fund for Evaluation of Emergency and Rehabilitation Operations,<sup>3</sup> for thematic, strategic and country evaluations, unless provisions for a stand-alone evaluation are made on an exceptional basis. In such cases, funding for the full cost of the project evaluation will be included in the project budget.

6. OED in FAO is independent from management and its staff is never involved in project/program identification, preparation, appraisal, implementation or monitoring. Therefore, OED staff can participate in separate project evaluations in the role of team member or team leader, where to they bring evaluation skills and competences, knowledge about FAO and, in some cases, also technical competence.

7. Project Task Forces (PTF) play a key role in separate evaluations. A PTF includes: the Budget Holder; the Lead Technical Officer and Lead Technical Unit; the project manager; the Funding Liaison Officer; other technical officers as Task Force members. In the case of GEF-funded initiatives, TCI GEF coordination unit is always included in the PTF. Each PTF will appoint a focal point for the evaluation, responsible for taking all necessary actions to contribute to the smooth implementation of the evaluation, in close collaboration with OED.

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<sup>1</sup> The GEF M&E policy applies to all projects funded by the GEF Trust Fund and/or managed by the GEF Secretariat, namely the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. They will be collectively called GEF-funded initiatives in this document.

<sup>2</sup> MTF /GLO/350/FZP

<sup>3</sup> MTF /GLO/170/FZP

### 3 Procedures for a separate project evaluation process in FAO: roles and responsibilities

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing and deadlines</b>	<b>Complementary action; comments</b>
<i>Planning for separate evaluation in project life</i>	Project formulator and Project Task Force (PTF)	Early project/programme formulation	Include evaluation(s) in project work plan with associated budget; consultation with OED is advisable
<i>Advice on evaluation provisions for new projects</i>	OED officer	Within 2 days from receiving a request	Possible direct contact with OED officer or through OED Director; Consultation with OED Director is advisable in the case of complex projects and programmes
<i>Planning and assignment of project evaluations to OED staff</i>	OED Director; information obtained from FPMIS	January and July/August each year	Assignments of project evaluations can be reflected in PEMS
<i>Contact for initial planning of evaluation with Project Task Force</i>	OED officer	As soon as evaluation assigned	Topics: tentative timing, budget, scope. OED to share template ToR; if requested, share good relevant examples; if appropriate, OED to prepare a concept note on the evaluation
<i>First draft ToR</i>	PTF upon trigger by OED officer	At least three months before evaluation due to start	Based on this, if useful publish through OED website and other channels a call for expression of interest from consultants
<i>Revise and finalize ToR</i>	OED officer in a leading role, with PTF	First response to project within 7 days from receiving first draft ToR from PTF	Involves extensive consultation between the parties
<i>Circulate final draft ToR to Government and donor for comments</i>	PTF upon trigger by OED officer	As soon as final draft ready	Maximum two weeks for comments; OED officer finalizes and/or endorses final version
<i>Identify team members, finalize team composition and draft individual ToR in NSHR template</i>	OED officer in collaboration with Project manager, LTU and Budget Holder	To be completed within 3 weeks from finalizing ToR	Decision to be made on OED's participation or not as member of the evaluation team; OED should take the lead in contacting potential candidates
<i>Recruitment team members</i>	Budget Holder; or OED in the case of GEF-funded projects and in the case of ad-hoc arrangements with BH.	To be completed at least two weeks before starting date of mission	Includes provisions for consultants' travel, OED to send the Declaration of Interest to team members, that should be signed and mailed back to OED
<i>Make project documentation available to team</i>	PTF	Upon signature of contracts	By email, CD-Rom or shared external drive
<i>Briefing team leader/team member on evaluation</i>	OED officer or alternate; PTF	By phone, two weeks before mission starts; or	OED's briefing must include reference to UNEG norms and standards, principles and criteria for evaluation, line of

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<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing and deadlines</b>	<b>Complementary action; comments</b>
		When team leader/team goes through HQ before travelling to the country/ies	accountability of the evaluation team and specific issues to be assessed during the evaluation. PTF briefing must also include reference to FAO Strategic Framework elements relevant to the project.
<i><b>Organization of evaluation team's work</b></i>	PTF in consultation with OED officer and Team Leader	Two-three weeks before mission starts	Includes: consultation on team's work plan; identification of categories of stakeholders to be interviewed; definition of criteria for selection of sites to be visited; briefing of team leader/team by FAO officers in HQ/RO/SRO;
<i><b>Data gathering at country/ies level</b></i>	Evaluation team	As per ToR	Project and FAO staff in countries visited will provide logistic support, facilitate meetings and access to documentation and will be available for any required meeting with the team.
<i><b>Debriefing team leader/ team</b></i>	OED officer or alternate	As soon as possible upon conclusion of mission	
<i><b>Comment on draft report before circulation to other stakeholders</b></i>	OED officer	Within 7 days from receiving draft from team leader	
<i><b>Circulate final draft to all FAO stakeholders: PTF; any other unit concerned by recommendations</b></i>	OED officer	Within 2 days from receiving revised final draft from team leader	Two to three weeks for comments; team leader finalizes
<i><b>Circulate final report to PTF</b></i>	OED officer or team leader upon agreement with OED officer	Upon receiving final report from team leader	OED officer to request OED Monitoring System Manager to upload in OED website and FPMIS
<i><b>Circulate final report to donor/s and government/s</b></i>	Upon trigger from OED, as appropriate: FAO Representatives; TCI GEF coordination units; TCSR;	As considered appropriate	In transmitting the final report, FAO should alert recipients that Management Response will follow soon.
<i><b>Authorize payment of team members</b></i>	OED officer	Upon circulation of final report	Email to Budget Holder, together with completed quality assessment of consultant
<i><b>Request Management Response (MR) to PTF</b></i>	OED officer	Upon circulation of final report	Send template for MR; see Responsibilities and procedures for the management responses and follow-up report on evaluations at <a href="http://www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-about/en/">http://www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-about/en/</a>
<i><b>PTF to coordinate preparation of Management Response upon trigger from OED</b></i>	PTF	Deadline suggested by OED, usually 4 weeks from trigger	Requires coordination for gathering comments and commitment from all units concerned by recommendations; consultation with Government/s and/or donor/s may be also advisable.
<i><b>Follow-up on Management</b></i>	OED officer	Follow-up on fortnightly basis after	If adjustments are necessary or desirable, OED officer

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<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing and deadlines</b>	<b>Complementary action; comments</b>
<i><b>Response and quality assurance</b></i>		first month until received	follows-up and consults with BH until result is satisfactory. Management Response considered final when compliant with standard template and quality. If MR not prepared after three months, inform OED Director. OED officer to request OED Monitoring System Manager to upload in OED website and FPMIS the Management Response.
<i><b>Request Follow-up Report to Budget Holder</b></i>	OED officer upon trigger by OED monitoring system manager	Write BH 12 months after finalization of MR, requesting the Follow-up Report.	Send template for Follow-up Report. See Responsibilities and procedures for the management responses and follow-up report on evaluations at <a href="http://www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-about/en/">http://www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-about/en/</a>
<i><b>PTF to coordinate preparation of Follow-up Report upon trigger from OED</b></i>	PTF	Deadline suggested by OED, usually 4 weeks from trigger	Requires coordination for gathering information from all units responsible by the implementation of accepted recommendations.
<i><b>Follow-up on Follow-up Report and quality assurance</b></i>	OED officer	Follow-up on fortnightly basis after first month until received	If adjustments are necessary or desirable, OED officer follows-up and consults with BH until result is satisfactory. Follow-up Report considered final when compliant with standard template and quality. If Follow-up Report not prepared after three months, inform OED Director OED officer to request Monitoring System Manager to upload in OED website and FPMIS the Follow-up Report.

#### 4 Evaluation provisions for new voluntary-funded initiatives

8. In the case of new voluntary-funded initiatives that are planning to include or must include separate evaluations, TCSR, TCI GEF coordination unit or other units in FAO formulating projects should request OED's advice on evaluation plans and budgetary provisions to be included in the Project Document. The timing and number of evaluations to be foreseen in each case will depend on: the complexity and innovativeness of the initiative; its overall scope and geographical coverage; any specific request by the donor; and overall budget availability.

9. To facilitate this task, a standard text for projects with separate evaluation is included in Box 4 below, which will require adjustments to different circumstances. Two real-life examples are also to be found in Examples 1 and 2 below.

**Box 4.** *Standard text on evaluation in new Project Documents with planned separate evaluation*

An independent 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.

OR: An independent Final Evaluation is recommended to be completed within six months prior to the actual 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 project activities.

In both cases:

FAO Office of Evaluation will be responsible for organizing and backstopping both/the Mid-Term and Final Evaluation in consultation with project stakeholders, including: clearing the ToR, selecting and backstopping the team and ensuring quality of the final report.

**Example 1.** *GCP/RAF/463/MUL, total budget USD 13 million*

An independent Mid-Term Evaluation will be undertaken when delivery will reach 50% of the initial total budget to review efficiency and effectiveness of implementation in terms of achieving project objective, outcomes and outputs. The MTE will be instrumental for bringing improvement in the overall project execution strategy by formulating operational and strategic recommendations for the remaining period of the project's term if necessary.

FAO Office of Evaluation will be responsible for organizing and backstopping the Mid-Term Evaluation in consultation with project stakeholders, including: clearing the ToR, selecting the team and ensuring quality of the final reports. The evaluation will, *inter alia*:

- assess relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of project design and implementation;
- assess project actual and potential impacts and sustainability;
- assess project performance in gender mainstreaming and achievements on gender equality;
- identify issues requiring decisions and remedial actions;
- identify lessons learned about project design, implementation and management;
- highlight technical achievements and lessons learned; and
- propose any mid-course corrections and/or adjustments to the implementation strategy as necessary.

Estimated cost of the MTE evaluation: USD 100,000



**Example 2.** *Strengthening National Policy and Knowledge Framework in Support of Sustainable Management of Brazil's Forest Resources, GCP/BRA/079/GFF, total budget USD 65 million*

An independent Mid-Term Evaluation will be undertaken at the end of the third year of the project to review progress and effectiveness of implementation in terms of achieving project objective, outcomes and outputs. Findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations and will be instrumental for bringing improvement in the overall project design and execution strategy for the remaining period of the project's term if necessary. FAO will arrange for the Mid-Term Evaluation in consultation with project management. The review will, inter alia:

- a) review the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation;
- b) analyze effectiveness of implementation and partnership arrangements;
- c) identify issues requiring decisions and remedial actions;
- d) identify lessons learned about project design, implementation and management;
- e) highlight technical achievements and lessons learned; and
- f) propose any mid-course corrections and/or adjustments to the implementation strategy as necessary.

An independent Final Evaluation will be carried out three months prior to the terminal review meeting of the project partners and will focus on the same issues as the Mid-Term Evaluation. The final evaluation would aim to identify the project impacts and sustainability of project results, and the degree of achievement of long-term results. This evaluation would also have the purpose of indicating future actions needed to assure continuity of the process of forest monitoring and sustainable forest management.

Estimated costs of both evaluations: USD 120,000

10. In the case of projects with a budget up to USD 4 million and which will not have a separate evaluation, a standard text is suggested in Box 5 below.

11. For ease of reference, the table contained in FPC 2011/1 illustrating the evaluation budget provisions that Voluntary Funded initiatives must contribute to the Evaluation Trust Fund is also included in Box 6 below.

12. TCSR will provide advice and guidance to FAO units in the case of resource partners who do not agree to include evaluation provisions in projects without a planned separate evaluation.

**Box 5.** *Standard text on evaluation in new Project Documents without planned separate evaluation*

According to FAO policy on evaluation and in consideration of the budget size, no separate project evaluations are anticipated during the duration of the project. In compliance with FAO Field Programme Circular 2011/11, the project will contribute to the OED-managed Trust Fund for evaluation of Technical Cooperation for Development (MTF /GLO/350/FZP). If during project implementation the parties subsequently deem a separate evaluation necessary, this will be organised after inclusion of an appropriate budgetary allocation, with MTF/GLO/350/FZP paying into it the project's contribution received at an earlier stage.

**Box 6.** *Evaluation Budget Provisions from Voluntary Funded Initiatives to be transferred to the Evaluation Trust Fund*

Total project Budget (USD)	Budget provision for evaluation (USD)
Below 200 000	Zero
200 000 – 300 000	2 500
Over 300 000 – 500 000	4 000
Over 500 000 – 1 000 000	8 000

Over 1 000 000 – 2 000 000	15 000
Over 2 000 000 – 4 000 000	35 000

Source: FAO FPC 2011/1

## 5 Additional OED staff internal responsibilities

13. All OED officers involved in the management of separate project evaluations are required to comply with the following procedures:

- a. In case of consultants not recruited by OED, the backstopping officer will send the OED Declaration of Interest for signature to all team members and forward it to the OED monitoring system manager and OED-registry upon receipt;
- b. OED backstopping officer should send to the OED monitoring system manager and OED-registry the matrix used for scoring the pool of potential candidates, with a covering email explaining rationale for final selection (see a suggested model in Example 3 below);
- c. On a monthly basis, update the spreadsheet circulated by the OED monitoring system manager on evaluation progress;
- d. Correspondence on evaluation milestones, including timing, ToR, team composition, draft and final report, Management Response and Follow-up report, should all be copied to OED-Registry and to the OED monitoring system manager;
- e. A separate email should be sent for requesting the OED monitoring system manager to upload final report, Management response and Follow-up report in OED website and FMPIS;
- f. In the case of requests for backstopping project evaluations coming directly to individual officers, these will be referred to the OED Director for internal assignment.

**Example 3.**    *Matrix for scoring candidates*

**Candidate: Name**

Unit (as appropriate)	Main degree and experience	Experience in technical area A	Experience in technical area B	Experience in region/country	Experience in evaluation	Languages	Comments	Nationality	Sex
<i>OED</i>									
<i>PTF</i>									
<i>Project</i>									
<b>Total</b>									

Scoring: 1= very poor/none; 2= poor/little; 3= inadequate/below average; 4= adequate/above average; 5= good/high; 6= excellent/very high