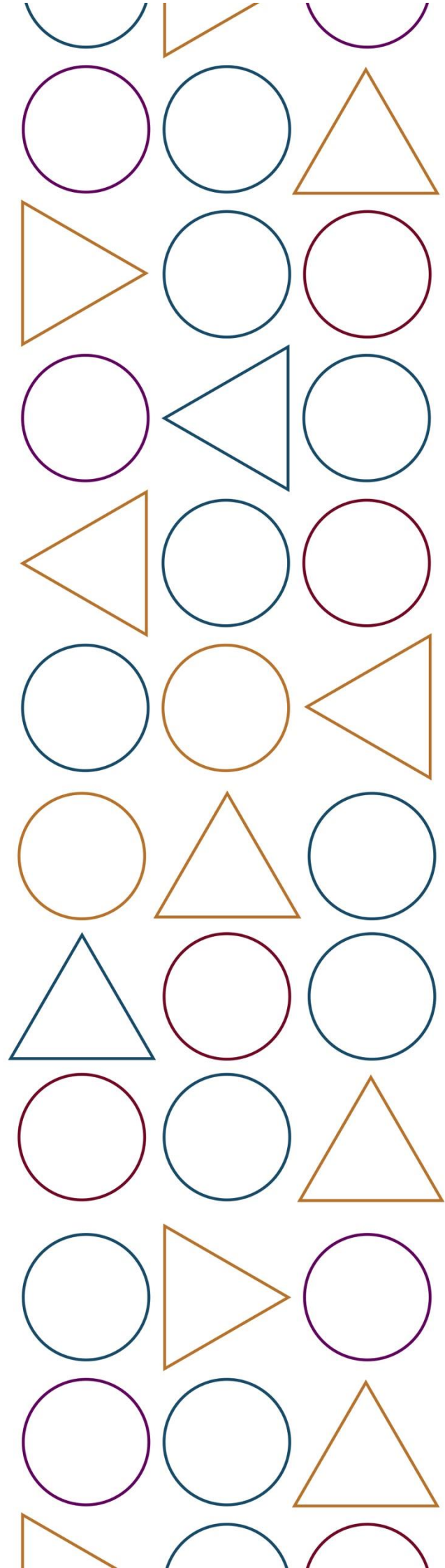




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Evaluation Trust Fund Guide

Frequently
Asked
Questions



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

About the Office of Evaluation Trust Fund Guide

30 June 2023

1. What is the evaluation threshold?

It is the U.S. dollar amount that OED uses to determine if your project should be assessed by OED to determine if and how it will be evaluated.

2. What is the current evaluation threshold?

The evaluation threshold is USD 6.2 million (CL 172/REP).

3. I thought the evaluation threshold was USD 4 million. Is that not correct?

Yes and No. The evaluation threshold was established by the FAO Council in 2007. At that time, it was set at USD 4 million. As of 30 June 2023, the threshold is USD 6 200 000.

4. I am confused. How often does OED revise the evaluation threshold?

The evaluation threshold is updated at least once a year, by April 15, between the Fall and Spring meetings of the Programme Committee. At a minimum, the threshold is adjusted for inflation.

5. What happens if the budget of my project is above the evaluation threshold?

OED will assess your project to decide whether it will be evaluated. Please contact OED-clearance@fao.org as soon as possible! FAO personnel should reach out to OED when formulating their project to enable OED to design an evaluation and develop a budget, if it will be evaluated. This is critical for OED to develop an accurate and appropriate budget to be included in the project budget, and provide clearance for the project in a timely manner.

6. What happens if the budget of my project is equal to or below the evaluation threshold?

You should include 0,8 percent of your project budget as a mandatory contribution to OED Trust Fund (line 6116). You do not need to contact OED, unless you want to request an evaluation. In that case, contact OED-clearance@fao.org as soon as possible for OED to assess the possibility of evaluating your project. If so, OED will provide guidance on the evaluation budget and text to include in your project document.

7. My project budget is between USD 4 and 6.2 million. What should I do?

Projects below the evaluation threshold and above USD 4 million are no longer automatically selected for evaluation; therefore, if you currently have a project budget that is between 4 and 6.2 million, already received OED clearance, and you believe an evaluation may not be needed, please contact OED-Clearance@fao.org.

8. My project is being developed with severe time constraints in response to an emergency. What should I do?

OED appreciates the unique nature of emergency and resilience projects, in particular their time sensitivity. In cases of emergency funding with short turnaround, special requests from project formulators, or recommendations from OED personnel, OED will expedite the clearance process. Please write to OED-Clearance@fao.org as soon as possible.

9. Why is OED no longer charging a management fee for projects above the evaluation threshold that are subject to an evaluation?

OED used to charge a USD 10 000 fee for management of evaluations of development projects. These projects included an evaluation budget for all other evaluation expenses. As of June 2023, OED management costs are to be integrated into evaluation budgets similar to all other expenses related to the evaluation.

10. How does this guidance apply to GCF projects that require an evaluation?

All projects funded by the GCF will be assessed by OED (even if below the evaluation threshold) per the accreditation agreement between FAO and the GCF. As a result of OED's assessment, an evaluation budget will be established and set aside in the project budget. GCF readiness grants are considered as non-project entities, and are therefore not evaluated and waived from contributing to the OED Trust Fund.

11. How does this guidance apply to GEF projects?

The GEF requires FAO to conduct an evaluation of all projects with a budget above a certain threshold. OED is working closely with the GEF coordination unit to establish an approach to complying with this requirement. As indicated under FAQ 16 below, GEF preparation grants, as non project entities, are not evaluated and are waived from contributing to the OED Trust Fund.

12. My project must contribute to the OED Trust Fund. In which budget line do I record the required contribution of 0,8 percent of my project budget?

Please use budget line 6116.

13. My project received additional funding. Should I adjust the contribution to the OED Trust Fund?

No. Contributions and decisions about separate independent evaluations are made once during the formulation/clearance phase.

14. My project will not be evaluated separately. Is there standard text that can be used in the project document to explain the required contribution to the OED Trust Fund that must be included in the project budget?

Yes, here is the text you should include in your project document under Evaluation:

"The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) requires a contribution from every project to support evaluations conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation (OED) in alignment with priorities for learning and accountability. Unless otherwise stipulated through FAO agreements with donors or by OED, an allocation of 0.8 percent of the total project budget is set aside as a contribution to fund evaluation activities (such as portfolio evaluations) and will be transferred to the OED Trust Fund. For examples of OED's work, please visit fao.org/evaluation."

15. My project will be evaluated separately by OED. Is there standard text that can be used in the project document?

Yes, here is the text you should include in your project document under Evaluation:

"The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) will conduct an independent evaluation of this project. To this end, an allocation of XXX USD [*insert here the budget that has been agreed with OED*] has been set aside for the evaluation. The budget should be transferred to the Office of Evaluation Trust Fund at the beginning of the project, unless otherwise agreed."

16. My project will not be evaluated separately by OED and is exempted from contributing to the OED Trust Fund. What text should I include in the project document?

No specific text is required. If text is needed, please include the following: The Office of Evaluation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will not conduct a separate independent evaluation of this project.

17. Who do I contact to discuss the text to include in my project document about the evaluation budget?

Please write to OED-clearance@fao.org

18. Are any projects exempt from contributing to the OED Trust Fund?

Yes, please contact OED-clearance@fao.org to confirm and receive an exemption from contributing to the OED Trust Fund if your project meets one of the following conditions:

- Projects created under the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).
- Projects supporting coordination mechanisms, such as the Secretariat and Article VI and Article XIV statutory bodies.
- Non-project entities—namely, Junior Professional Officers Programme, Formulation Funds, Project Preparation Grants and Readiness Grants.
- Short-term projects (under one year in duration) providing funding for critical life-saving relief operations and programmes.

19. Projects like mine used to be exempt from contributing to the OED Trust Fund but I do not see an exemption that applies to my project now. What should I do?

Please write to OED-clearance@fao.org

20. I am not able to transfer the evaluation budget at the beginning of my project. What should I do?

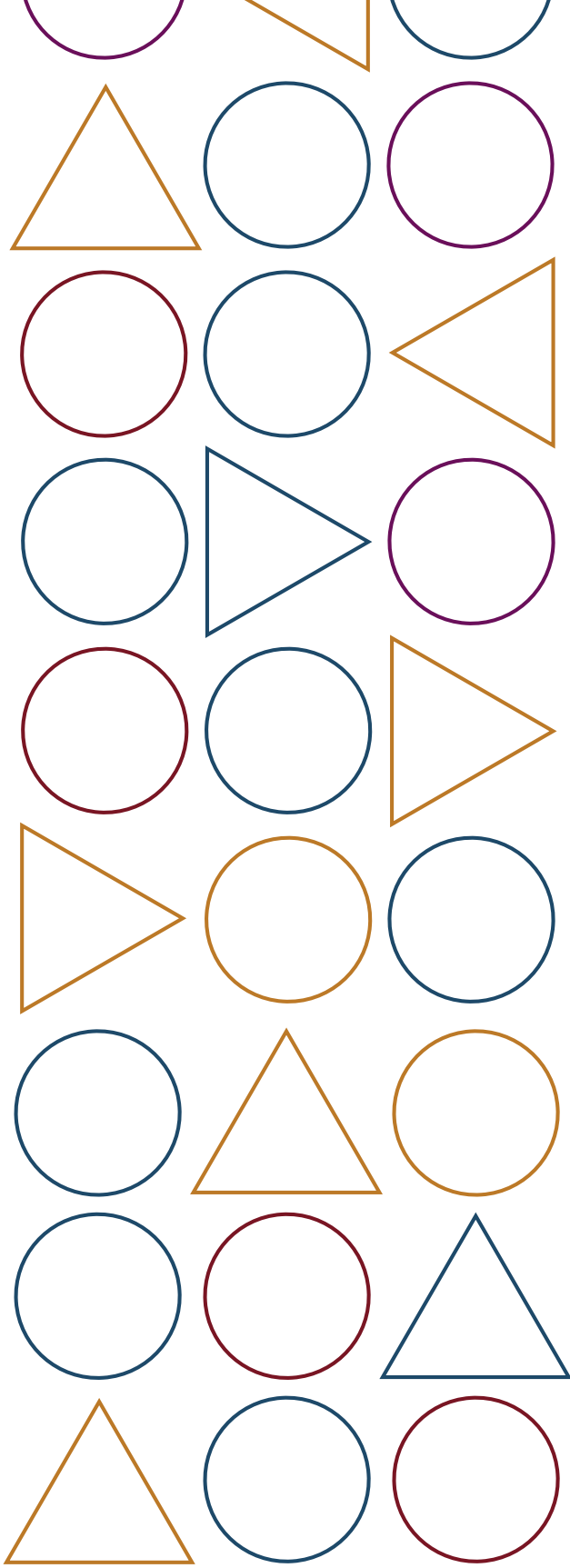
Please write to OED-clearance@fao.org

21. The funding that had been set aside for evaluation is no longer available in full. What will happen to the evaluation?

Budget holders are responsible for ensuring that the agreed evaluation budget is available for OED to conduct the evaluation. OED is not responsible for conducting evaluations for which the needed budget is no longer available.

22. Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please write to OED-clearance@fao.org



Office of Evaluation
E-mail: evaluation@fao.org
Web address: www.fao.org/evaluation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy