



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Internal Oversight Service  
Evaluation Section**

**IOS/EVS/PI/83  
Original: English**

## **Guidelines for Managing External Evaluations**

*March 2008*

These guidelines describe the stages involved in managing external evaluations of which there are two broad sets: (1) those managed directly by IOS; and (2) those managed by the sector<sup>1</sup>. Part I of these guidelines refers to the first set, while Part II refers to the second.

### *Part I: IOS-managed evaluations*

All strategically significant evaluations, such as those contained in the C/4 and C/5 Evaluation Plans, are managed by IOS. These evaluations are typically conducted by an external evaluator as is standard practice in UN agencies and must meet [UNEG Norms and Standards](#).

## **Stage 1 Preparation**

- ❑ **IOS prepares for the evaluation** by discussing and determining:
  - the timeframe of the evaluation
  - the budget and the sources of funding for the evaluation
  - evaluation objectives
  - the broad scope of the evaluation
  - potential risks in conducting the evaluation
  - the roles and responsibilities of the sector and IOS and their focal points
  - potential external evaluators
  - whether UNESCO or other UN agencies have undertaken or are planning similar evaluations.

## **Stage 2 Desk study**

- ❑ **IOS conducts a desk study** to objectively set out basic, but essential, information for developing the Terms of Reference and guiding the external evaluator. The desk study checklist is available on the IOS website. IOS prepares the desk study for all strategically significant evaluations. The Sector ADG provides assurance that the desk study is a complete and accurate representation of what is being evaluated.

## **Stage 3 Evaluation Reference Group**

- ❑ **IOS forms an Evaluation Reference Group** for large and complex evaluations that involve multiple stakeholder groups. A reference group for a strategically significant evaluation comprises the relevant sector, IOS, stakeholders and experts and has the following responsibilities:
  - Advise on the Terms of Reference
  - Advise on the composition of the external evaluation team
  - Provide feedback on draft evaluation reports
  - Ensure the integrity and rigor of the evaluation process and the quality of the deliverables
  - Provide guidance on appropriate action to be taken in response to evaluation findings.

---

<sup>1</sup> This may also be field office, category I institute or centre. For simplicity, this document refers solely to sector.

#### Stage 4 Terms of Reference

- ❑ **Sector prepares a draft Terms of Reference** that clearly sets out objectives and tasks of the evaluation and the criteria the evaluator must meet. All relevant parts of UNESCO, including Field Offices, and key stakeholders should be consulted. Refer to Guidelines for Developing Terms of Reference for more information.
- ❑ **IOS finalizes the Terms of Reference** through discussion with the sector. Include the desk study as an annex to the Terms of Reference.
- ❑ **IOS approves the Terms of Reference.**

#### Stage 5 Tendering

- ❑ **IOS establishes the appropriate procurement procedure** according to [Procurement Guidelines of UNESCO](#).
- ❑ **IOS establishes a shortlist** based on an Expression of Interest (EOI), a prequalification process, or the findings of market research and analyses using existing supplier rosters and databases. If the estimated budget is USD 100,000 or more, a procurement notice or advertisement that takes the form of a request for expression of interest (EOI) is required. For further information refer to [Procurement Guidelines of UNESCO](#).
- ❑ **IOS issues a Request for Proposal (RFP)** to short-listed evaluators. If the estimated budget is USD 100,000 or more, a sealed tender process must be followed. A deadline of eight weeks is normally given for the receipt of proposals. A minimum of three responsive and technically compliant proposals are required.

#### Stage 6 Selecting evaluator

- ❑ **IOS assess the proposals** according to the technical and qualification criteria set out in the Terms of Reference.
- ❑ **IOS checks the referees of the evaluators** and examine recent evaluations conducted by the evaluators.
- ❑ **IOS selects an evaluator**, in accordance with [UNEG Standards 3.13 and 3.14](#), the established criteria in the Terms of Reference and the relevant UNESCO procurement procedures. IOS approves the selection of the evaluator. Agree on:
  - the most appropriate way to deliver on the TOR
  - the timing and phases of the evaluation, including the date for submission of all deliverables .
- ❑ **IOS signs the contract.** The sector providing the budget provides IOS the appropriate budget code authorizing IOS to make payment on the approved deliverable.

## Stage 7 Inception Report

- ❑ **IOS sends the full desk study, relevant documentation and lists of documents and key stakeholders** to the evaluator.
- ❑ **IOS and the sector discuss methodology and individual phases** of the evaluation with the evaluator. This may involve the evaluator visiting UNESCO.
- ❑ **Evaluator drafts an inception report** by undertaking a review of relevant documentation and possibly visiting UNESCO and discussing the evaluation with relevant staff. For more information refer to the Inception Report Guidelines.
- ❑ **Evaluator submits an inception report** consisting of an evaluation plan and a list of reviewed documentation.
- ❑ **IOS approves inception report.**

## Stage 8 Conducting evaluation

- ❑ **IOS and the sector prepare necessary logistics** by providing background materials, arranging site visits, providing office space, etc.
- ❑ **IOS and the sector inform stakeholders and those participating in the evaluation process** that the evaluation is to commence to ensure smooth passage of the evaluation.
- ❑ **Evaluator conducts the evaluation** according to the evaluation plan in the inception report. The evaluator should undertake to inform the sector (and get the necessary agreement on how to proceed) of any issue likely to have a substantial effect on the conduct of the evaluation: unavailability of a member of the evaluation team, evaluator delays or changes in undertaking field visits, etc. This part of the evaluation often includes at least one progress meeting at which the consultants highlight emerging important issues encountered during the evaluation. This stage should be guided by [UNEG Standard 3.15](#).

## Stage 9 Evaluation report

- ❑ **Evaluator submits a first draft** of the report to the Director of IOS.
- ❑ **IOS and the sector review the first draft** of the report, looking in particular at the extent of the data and information collected and its reliability, the clarity and flow of the report, the findings and their interpretations, conclusions drawn, and the recommendations made. The report should contain a satisfactory response to the evaluation questions in the ToR and the recommendations should be supported by the findings and their implementation should be feasible. It should meet [UNEG Standard 3.16 and Standards 4.1 to 4.18](#).
- ❑ **IOS writes a Quality Assurance Report (QAR)** describing the extent to which the entire evaluation process, including the deliverables, are in accordance with quality standards (in particular, UNEG Standards 3 and 4). IOS sends the QAR to the sector requesting them to provide comments on the draft report. IOS consolidates the comments and sends the QAR to the evaluator.

- ❑ **Evaluator submits a second draft** of the report to the Director of IOS. The second draft should take into consideration the comments received on the first draft with the evaluator making revisions to the report where s/he sees fit.
- ❑ **IOS and the sector review the second draft** of the report and send comments to the evaluator if necessary with the evaluator then providing a further draft.
- ❑ **IOS approves the report** when the Terms of Reference and quality standards have been met. If the quality standards have not been met, IOS produces a brief paper that outlines how the report does not meet the UNEG quality standards. The paper is inserted into the final report.

## **Stage 10 Preparation and submission of Action Plan**

- ❑ **IOS, in consultation with the evaluation reference group, determines which sector** ADGs and / or Directors need to submit an Action Plan. It should be noted that some evaluations of a thematic or cross-cutting nature may require a coordinated management response among sectors / field offices within the organization.
- ❑ **Sector completes a table** (see guidelines for follow-up to evaluation report recommendations) indicating whether they agree with or reject the evaluation report recommendations. Good reasons must be given as to why a particular recommendation is not accepted.
- ❑ **Sector develops an Action Plan** containing the recommendations to be followed up, the planned actions, estimated cost of actions, responsibilities and expected date of implementation completion. A good practice is to invite the external evaluator to facilitate a one-day workshop with the sector to assist them in the development of the action plan (this needs to be budgeted for in the planning stage).
- ❑ **IOS enters the data into a data base** used to monitor progress in implementation. The database will be located on the UNESCO Intranet for viewing by all UNESCO staff and Permanent Delegations.
- ❑ **Sector posts Action Plans** for strategically significant evaluations into SISTER.

## **Stage 11 Dissemination of evaluation results**

- ❑ **IOS submits evaluation report** and Action Plan to the Director-General with copy to all other relevant UNESCO stakeholders.
- ❑ **IOS posts evaluation reports** which satisfactorily meet quality standards on the IOS website and on UNESCOMMUNICATION.
- ❑ **IOS distributes the report** directly to all those who participated in the evaluation, including interviewees and focus group participants. Sectors distribute the report to any other stakeholders. Any reference to the report on the sector website should contain a link to IOS's site.

- ❑ **Consider organizing workshop** for dissemination of findings. For example, at Headquarters strategically important evaluations can be presented to Permanent Delegations at an Information Session.

#### **Stage 12 Submission to Executive Board**

- ❑ **IOS submits a summary** of the evaluation report of strategically significant evaluations to the Executive Board (this board paper is titled Comments by the Director-General on evaluations undertaken during the biennium). The Executive Board traditionally requests the Director-General to report back on the progress made in the follow-up to the evaluation recommendations.

#### **Stage 13 Monitoring implementation of recommendations**

- ❑ **Sector monitors progress** in the implementation of its Action Plans.
- ❑ **IOS monitors progress** in the implementation of Action Plans for all strategically significant evaluations.
- ❑ **IOS periodically shares** a status report on the implementation of Action Plans with the College of Assistant Director Generals (CADG) for their information and possible action.
- ❑ **IOS periodically reports** to the Executive Board on progress in the implementation of Action Plans in its Annual Report.
- ❑ **IOS conducts a review** each biennium to assess progress in the follow-up to recommendations.

## *Sector-managed evaluations*

UNESCO sectors<sup>2</sup> manage all evaluations not managed by IOS. The evaluations can be externally or internally conducted. Regardless of the size and scope of the evaluation, the sector must inform IOS of the evaluation as early as possible to determine the best approach to managing the evaluation and to discuss the proposed budget. For all evaluations conducted at UNESCO, IOS plays an important advisory role and assists the sector by providing the necessary technical support and tools. All evaluations must follow [UNEG Norms and Standards](#).

### **Stage 1 Preparation**

- Sector prepares for the evaluation** by discussing and determining:
  - the timeframe of the evaluation
  - the budget and the sources of funding for the evaluation
  - evaluation objectives
  - the broad scope of the evaluation
  - potential risks in conducting the evaluation
  - the roles and responsibilities of the sector, the field office, IOS, and any other key stakeholders
  - potential external evaluators
  - whether UNESCO or other UN agencies have undertaken or are planning similar evaluations.

### **Stage 2 Desk study**

- Sector conducts a desk study** to objectively set out basic, but essential, information for developing the Terms of Reference and guiding the external evaluator. The desk study checklist is available on the IOS website. The Sector ADG provides assurance that the desk study is a complete and accurate representation of what is being evaluated.

### **Stage 3 Evaluation Reference Group**

- Sector forms an Evaluation Reference Group** for large and complex evaluations that involve multiple stakeholder groups. A reference group can have the following responsibilities:
  - Advise on the Terms of Reference
  - Advise on the composition of the external evaluation team
  - Provide feedback on draft evaluation reports
  - Ensure the integrity and rigor of the evaluation process and the quality of the deliverables
  - Provide guidance on appropriate action to be taken in response to evaluation findings.

### **Stage 4 Terms of Reference**

---

<sup>2</sup> This may also be field office, category I institute or centre. For simplicity, this document refers solely to sector.

- Sector prepares a draft Terms of Reference** that clearly sets out objectives and tasks of the evaluation and the criteria the evaluator must meet. All relevant parts of UNESCO, including Field Offices, and key stakeholders should be consulted. Refer to Guidelines for Developing Terms of Reference for more information.
- Sector finalizes the Terms of Reference** through discussion with the sector and IOS. Include the desk study as an annex to the Terms of Reference.
- Sector approves the Terms of Reference.**

## Stage 5 Tendering

- Sector establishes the appropriate procurement procedure** according to [Procurement Guidelines of UNESCO](#). Consult your Administrative Officer (AO) to confirm you are using the appropriate procedure.
- Sector establishes a shortlist** based on an Expression of Interest (EOI), a prequalification process, or the findings of market research and analyses using existing supplier rosters and databases. If the estimated budget is USD 100,000 or more, a procurement notice or advertisement that takes the form of a request for expression of interest (EOI) is required. For further information refer to [Procurement Guidelines of UNESCO](#).
- Sector issues a Request for Proposal (RFP)** to short-listed evaluators. If the estimated budget is USD 100,000 or more, a sealed tender process must be followed. A deadline of eight weeks is normally given for the receipt of proposals. A minimum of three responsive and technically compliant proposals are required.

## Stage 6 Selecting evaluator

- Sector assesses the proposals** according to the technical and qualification criteria set out in the Terms of Reference.
- Sector checks the referees of the evaluators** and examine recent evaluations conducted by the evaluators.
- Sector selects an evaluator**, in accordance with [UNEG Standards 3.13 and 3.14](#), the established criteria in the Terms of Reference and the relevant UNESCO procurement procedures. Agree on:
  - the most appropriate way to deliver on the TOR
  - the timing and phases of the evaluation, including the date for submission of all deliverables .
- Sector signs the contract.**

## Stage 7 Inception Report

- Sector sends the full desk study, relevant documentation and lists of documents and key stakeholders** to the evaluator.



- Sector discusses methodology and individual phases** of the evaluation with the evaluator. This may involve the evaluator visiting UNESCO.
- Evaluator drafts an inception report** by undertaking a review of relevant documentation and possibly visiting UNESCO and discussing the evaluation with relevant staff. For more information refer to the Inception Report Guidelines.
- Evaluator submits an inception report** consisting of an evaluation plan and a list of reviewed documentation.
- Sector approves the inception report.**

#### **Stage 8 Conducting evaluation**

- Sector prepares necessary logistics** by providing background materials, arranging site visits, providing office space, etc.
- Sector informs stakeholders and those participating in the evaluation process** that the evaluation is to commence to ensure smooth passage of the evaluation.
- Evaluator conducts the evaluation** according to the evaluation plan in the inception report. The evaluator should undertake to inform the sector (and get the necessary agreement on how to proceed) of any issue likely to have a substantial effect on the conduct of the evaluation: unavailability of a member of the evaluation team, evaluator delays or changes in undertaking field visits, etc. This part of the evaluation often includes at least one progress meeting at which the consultants highlight emerging important issues encountered during the evaluation. This stage should be guided by [UNEG Standard 3.15](#).

#### **Stage 9 Evaluation report**

- Evaluator submits a first draft** of the report to the Sector.
- Sector reviews the first draft** of the report, looking in particular at the extent of the data and information collected and its reliability, the clarity and flow of the report, the findings and their interpretations, conclusions drawn, and the recommendations made. The report should contain a satisfactory response to the evaluation questions in the ToR and the recommendations should be supported by the findings and their implementation should be feasible. It should meet [UNEG Standard 3.16 and Standards 4.1 to 4.18](#).
- Evaluator submits a second draft** of the report to the Sector. The second draft should take into consideration the comments received on the first draft with the evaluator making revisions to the report where s/he sees fit.
- Sector reviews the second draft** of the report and send comments to the evaluator if necessary with the evaluator then providing a further draft. Repeat this step if necessary.
- Sector approves the report** by determining whether the Terms of Reference and quality standards have been met.

#### **Stage 10 Preparation and submission of Action Plan**

- ❑ **Sector determines which recommendations** it will follow up. Good reasons must be given as to why a particular recommendation is not accepted.
- ❑ **Sector develops an Action Plan** containing the recommendations to be followed up, the planned actions, estimated cost of actions, responsibilities and expected date of implementation completion. A good practice is to invite the external evaluator to facilitate a one-day workshop with the sector to assist them in the development of the action plan (this needs to be budgeted for in the planning stage).
- ❑ **Sector submits the Action Plan** to IOS.
- ❑ **IOS enters the data** into a data base used to monitor progress in the implementation. The database will be located on the UNESCO Intranet for viewing by all UNESCO staff and Permanent Delegations.

### **Stage 11      Dissemination of evaluation results**

- ❑ **Sector submits the final evaluation report** to IOS, External Relations and Cooperation (if the evaluation of an extrabudgetary evaluation), and any other relevant UNESCO stakeholders.
- ❑ **Sector posts evaluation reports** which satisfactorily meet quality standards on the sector website and on UNESCOMMUNICATION.
- ❑ **Sector distributes the report** directly to all those who participated in the evaluation, including interviewees and focus group participants. Sectors distribute the report to any other stakeholders. Any reference to the report on the sector website should contain a link to IOS's site.
- ❑ **Sector considers organizing workshop** for dissemination of findings. For example, at Headquarters evaluations can be presented to Permanent Delegations at an Information Session.

### **Stage 12      Monitoring implementation of recommendations**

- ❑ **Sector monitors progress** in the implementation of the Action Plan.
- ❑ **IOS monitors progress** in the implementation of all Action Plans.
- ❑ **IOS periodically shares** a status report on the implementation of Action Plans with the College of Assistant Director Generals (CADG) for their information and possible action.
- ❑ **IOS reports** to the Executive Board on progress in the implementation of the Action Plans in its Annual Report.
- ❑ **IOS conducts a review** each biennium to assess progress in the follow-up to recommendations.