1. **Purpose**

This note provides Development Account (DA) implementing entities with guidance on the planning, conduct and follow-up to the terminal evaluations of 14th tranche projects. Drawing on the lessons learned and good practices from recent DA project evaluations, the note supplements the [DA Project Evaluation Guidelines](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20(Final).pdf) (October 2019), presenting clarification and adjustments to certain guidance in the Guidelines, in line with the Administrative Instructions on Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat (ST/AI/2021/3). The note also includes instructions on how to request the allocation of evaluation funds for the projects selected for evaluation (Section 5).

The guidance below applies to all the 12 projects under the 14th tranche that are selected for evaluation (see Annex 1 for the list of the selected projects). For the evaluation of jointly implemented projects, which represent five out of the 12 selected projects, this note should be read in conjunction with the [DA guidance note on terminal evaluation of joint projects](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/Guidelines/DA%20guidance%20note%20on%20terminal%20evaluation%20of%20joint%20projects%20v1.pdf).

1. **Overview of the project evaluation process**

The 12 projects listed in Annex 1, which represent a half of the 14th tranche projects, were selected for terminal evaluation by the implementing entities at the beginning of 2024 (third year), taking into account the strategic importance and relevance of each project to the entity’s mandates, pressing knowledge gaps and other pertinent factors considered by the management. The joint project “Resilient and agile national statistical systems to meet post-COVID-19 data needs to recover better” (2225A), implemented by DESA (lead), the five regional commissions, UNEP and UNODC with a budget of USD 3 million, was automatically included in the selection, based on the requirement to evaluate all projects with a budget of USD 1 million or more.

The remaining key steps of the 14th tranche project evaluations and timelines are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Project phase** | **Projects with less than USD 1 million** | **Projects with USD 1 million or more** |
| **2025** | **4th (final) year of project implementation** | * *Issuance of guidance note on T14 project evaluations, incl. guidance on request for allocation of evaluation budget* *(****March****)* | |
| * **Allocation of evaluation budget** (**May**) * **Collection of project documentation** (**Q2-3**) * Development of **evaluation TOR** (**Q2-3**) | * **Collection of project documentation** (**Q2-3**) * Development of **evaluation TOR** and **DA-PMT review and approval** (**Q2-3**) * **Allocation of evaluation budget** (**Q2-3**) |
| * **Recruitment of evaluator(s)** and **evaluation initiation** (**Q4**) | |
| **2026** | **Completion and follow-up to evaluation** | * **Evaluation report** due by **30** **June** * **Management response** due **within 3 months of evaluation completion** | * **Evaluation report** due by **30 September** * **Management response** due **within 3 months of evaluation completion** |

1. **planning of a terminal evaluation**

**3.1 Management of the evaluation**

Both the ST/AI/2021/3 (para 2.6 (a)) and the [DA Project Evaluation Guidelines](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20(Final).pdf) (para 64) require the management of the evaluation process to be removed from (i.e., not the same person as, and not reporting to) the project manager or project team in order to ensure impartiality and independence. **It is strongly encouraged that the evaluation process be managed or overseen by the evaluation unit of the implementing entity.** In particular, the selection of the evaluation consultant should be overseen or supported by the evaluation unit to ensure that the selection is based on the required skills and qualifications.

**All DA project evaluations are also encouraged to use an advisory or reference group, composed of the project’s key internal and/or external stakeholders and tasked to provide relevant insight and advisory support to the evaluation**, with a view to helping enhance the relevance, quality and credibility of the evaluation process, as well as supporting stakeholder engagement and buy-in. The advisory or reference group may be utilized to help address the often-experienced difficulties with engaging evaluators who possess technical expertise in both evaluation design and methods, and the subject matter of the project being evaluated. The inclusion of internal or external stakeholders with expertise in the subject matters of the project, human rights and/or gender equality in the advisory or reference group, where feasible, would strengthen the credibility of the evaluation. In the event that the responsibility for the management of the evaluation rests with another unit within the entity, it is crucial that the evaluation unit of the implementing entity participate in the advisory or reference group to support the process.

For an evaluation of a joint project, it is strongly encouraged that the evaluation units of all the jointly implementing entities participate in, or support, the management of the evaluation process to ensure that the design and conduct of the evaluation take into account the operational environments of each participating entity (including regional contexts and specific language requirements), and facilitate communications with relevant stakeholders and the development of a management response to the recommendations that are addressed to the entity. Options for the management structure for an evaluation of a DA joint project include: 1) joint management through an evaluation management group composed of all jointly implementing entities; 2) joint management through an evaluation management group composed of some of the jointly implementing entities (i.e., the lead entity and one or more jointly implementing entities, e.g., co-lead entities) with support from an evaluation advisory group composed of the evaluation units of all the other jointly implementing entities; and 3) single entity-led management with an evaluation advisory group, composed of the evaluation units of all the other jointly implementing entities. The most effective management structure for any joint project evaluation would depend largely on the design, scope and complexity of the project, and the number of entities involved, since reaching a collective decision among a large number of entities at each stage of the evaluation could be difficult and time-consuming. The evaluation units of the lead entity and all the other jointly implementing entities should decide on the optimal management structure for each joint project evaluation. For further guidance related to the management of the evaluation of a joint project, see sub-section C “Arrangements of the management of and support to the evaluation” under Section 2.2 “Development of a detailed tentative evaluation plan” of the [DA guidance note on terminal evaluation of joint projects](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/Guidelines/DA%20guidance%20note%20on%20terminal%20evaluation%20of%20joint%20projects%20v1.pdf).

**3.2 Engagement of the project manager/team and collection of project documentation**

Timely engagement of the project manager/team in the preparation for the evaluation is essential to ensuring that required project documentation is made available to the evaluators in a timely manner. With a view to minimizing the burden on the project manager/team during the project closure phase and mitigating risks associated with staff moves, **it is strongly encouraged that the preliminary list of documentation required for the evaluation be shared with the project manager/team 3-6 months prior to the project completion date**. The typical desk review material that should be made available to the evaluators for a DA project evaluation is presented in Annex 2. The final versions of the concept notes, project documents and annual progress reports for the 14th tranche projects are also available in the [T14 folder](https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/DevelopmentAccount441/Document%20Repository/1_Project_Related_Documents/T14?csf=1&web=1&e=cyWwJf) in the [Document Repository](https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/sites/DevelopmentAccount441/Document%20Repository) on the [DA SharePoint site](https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/sites/DevelopmentAccount441).[[1]](#footnote-2)

**The project manager/team should be fully engaged in the evaluation process, including in finalizing the scope of the evaluation, identifying and facilitating the engagement of the project’s key stakeholders, validating the evaluation findings and developing recommendations that are relevant to the purpose of the evaluation and the work of the implementing entity(ies), supported by evidence, and actionable.** For an evaluation of a joint project, regardless of the evaluation management structure adopted, the evaluation unit of each participating entity should ensure that the project focal points and other relevant stakeholders within the entity are provided an opportunity to validate the evaluation findings and participate in the development of the recommendations they will be responsible for implementing.

**3.3 Development of evaluation terms of reference (TOR)**

The evaluation manager is responsible for developing evaluation TOR based on a review of project documentation and consultations with the project manager/team and other key stakeholders. **The development of the evaluation TOR should commence 3-6 months (at least 6 months for a joint project) ahead of the project completion, in order to have sufficient time to solicit inputs from all key stakeholders.**

It is recommended that TOR for a DA project evaluation include the following elements:

1. evaluation purpose
2. context and description of the project
3. evaluation objectives and scope
4. evaluation criteria and tentative questions
5. evaluation methodology, including the availability of monitoring data to support the evaluation
6. list of key stakeholders to be engaged in the evaluation
7. organization of evaluation, including evaluation management, roles and responsibilities, workplan (key stages/steps and timelines), and deliverables
8. dissemination strategy
9. evaluation budget
10. required qualifications for the evaluator or evaluation team

Human rights and gender equality should be integrated into all stages of the evaluation, upholding the principle of ‘no-one left behind’.[[2]](#footnote-3) In addition, disability perspectives should also be integrated into the evaluation process to the extent possible.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Guidance related to specific elements of TOR for a DA project evaluation is presented below. For the evaluation of a joint project, see additional guidance in Section 2.2 “Development of a detailed tentative evaluation plan” and Section 3.1 “Development of evaluation TOR” of the [DA guidance note on terminal evaluation of joint projects](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/Guidelines/DA%20guidance%20note%20on%20terminal%20evaluation%20of%20joint%20projects%20v1.pdf).

**Evaluation purpose**

In accordance with the [DA Evaluation Framework](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/2256_1571321768_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Framework%20(Final).pdf) and the [DA Project Evaluation Guidelines](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20(Final).pdf), half of projects under each tranche, including all projects with a budget of USD 1 million or more, are evaluated upon their completion.

DA project evaluations are designed to promote both accountability for results and learning. With a view to ensuring that the evaluation generates evidence that is useful in determining the project’s performance and informing future programming, the evaluation TOR should specify the target users of the evaluation results and how they are expected to use them, including any knowledge gaps the evaluation is intended to address. **The primary target users of a DA project evaluation are the management and staff of the project’s implementation entity(ies). The evaluation report should present recommendations that are derived from the evaluation findings and directed to the management and staff of the implementing entity(ies).**

The evaluation TOR should also identify other stakeholders who may benefit from the knowledge generated and to whom the evaluation results will be disseminated (secondary target users). The Development Account Programme Management Team (DA-PMT) is a key secondary user of all project evaluations. DA-PMT conducts a synthesis of the lessons learned and good practices identified through project evaluations from each tranche that have applicability beyond the specific implementing entities, with a view to helping facilitate the dissemination of the knowledge and informing future programming at the programme level.

On an exceptional basis, and based on a discussion with DA-PMT at the stage of developing the evaluation TOR, an evaluation of a joint project with a budget of USD 1 million or more may be designed to generate recommendations to the DA Programme Manager, or DA-PMT on his/her behalf, that are applicable to all DA projects or all DA joint projects in a specific thematic or functional area. Such an evaluation, for which the DA Programme Manager or DA-PMT is identified as one of its primary target users, may be warranted when a joint project involves a large number of DA implementing entities, covers all relevant regions and focuses on a broad thematic or functional area. Such an evaluation should include all relevant programme (DA)-level documentation in the desk review and involve a wide range of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, DA-PMT and DA focal points of the implementing entities, in various stages (e.g., in the review of the TOR, inception and evaluation reports, in the development of recommendations, interviews and other relevant data collection activities).

**Evaluation criteria and tentative questions**

**DA project evaluations are expected to examine criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability**. In addition, they should address, either as a separate evaluation criterion or as an evaluation question under one of the four main criteria, human rights and gender equality. An additional criterion of coherence may also be considered in line with the [OECD/DAC evaluation criteria](https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm).

**Evaluation methodology**

**Evaluations should apply multiple methods and cross-check information and data from different sources to ensure confidence in the findings (triangulation).** A DA project evaluation typically applies a combination of some of the following methods: a desk review; interviews (in person or by telephone/video); focus group discussions (in person or by telephone/video); online surveys; field visits to select project countries; observation of an in-person or online workshop or meeting held during the final stage of the project implementation; and an analysis of recordings of workshops or meetings. **The methodology should be selected for each evaluation, taking into consideration the availability of monitoring data, the modalities, activities undertaken, geographic scope and thematic focus of the project, as well as the available budget.** In general, travel conducted by the evaluators should be limited to field visits to select project countries to collect beneficiary feedback, which may not be easily collected remotely, and in-person observation of a workshop or meeting; it is recommended that the evaluators’ meetings with the evaluation manager and the project manager/team be conducted remotely unless in-person meetings are possible without additional travel. The tentative methodology is expected to be refined and finalized in the inception phase of the evaluation, reflecting the results of a preliminary desk review and initial consultations with key stakeholders conducted by the evaluators.

**Dissemination strategy**

The evaluation TOR should specify how the evaluation results will be disseminated to the intended primary and secondary users. The DA evaluation report template (see the annotated report template in Annex 3) includes an executive summary as a stand-alone section of 3-4 pages. The development of other promotional materials, aimed at widely disseminating the evaluation findings and promoting their use, is encouraged and may be included in the evaluation budget.

**Evaluation budget**

**The evaluation budget is 4% of the final project budget** (see Annex 1 for the list of projects selected for evaluation with the approved budget as of 1 February 2025).

Starting with the 14th tranche, an evaluation budget is not included in the project budget allocated at the beginning of the 4-year project cycle. **An evaluation budget, equivalent to 4% of the final project budget, for each project selected for evaluation is allocated to the implementing entities in May of the final year (May 2025 for the 14th tranche).** In the event that the project budget has been changed since the beginning of the project, the evaluation budget will also be adjusted to ensure that it does not exceed 4% of the final project budget. An evaluation budget exceeding 4% of the final project budget may be approved only under exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. See Section 5 for the instructions on how to request evaluation funds.

1. **evaluation report and follow-up**

In line with ST/AI/2021/3, **all DA evaluation reports and management responses are published on the** [**DA website**](https://da.desa.un.org/evaluation), starting with the 12th tranche.

**4.1 Evaluation report**

The evaluation report should be prepared in accordance with the DA project evaluation report template (see the annotated report template in Annex 3). Should any entity have its own standard evaluation report template endorsed by its governing body and/or executive head, and the use of the template be mandated for all evaluations, this may be used instead. However, all the required elements of the DA evaluation report template must be included in each DA project evaluation report, either by incorporating them into the entity-specific template, or by submitting the extra requirements for the DA evaluation report in an attachment. Lessons learned and good practices identified through the evaluation that have applicability beyond the implementing entity(ies) should be presented in Section 8 “Lessons learned and good practices” in order to support their dissemination.

**The deadline for the submission of the evaluation report to DA-PMT is 6 months after the project completion date, except for joint projects with a budget of USD 1 million or more, for which the deadline is 9 months after the project completion date**.

**4.2 Management response and follow-up**

A management response is a crucial step to ensure the timely and effective use of evaluations. The implementing entity is responsible for developing a management response to the evaluation in accordance with its evaluation policy and procedures, and using its standard template or the suggested DA template in Annex 4. The approving authority is responsible for monitoring and ensuring the implementation of the planned actions included in the response in accordance with the entity’s policy and procedures.

An evaluation of a project jointly implemented by multiple DA entities may present recommendations that are addressed to all or any of the implementing entities, or a mixture of them. Each participating entity is responsible for developing and submitting to DA-PMT a management response, which responds to all the recommendations directed to it, and monitoring and ensuring the implementation of the planned actions, in accordance with its evaluation policy and procedures.

**The deadline for the submission of the management response to DA-PMT is within 3 months of the finalization of the evaluation report.**

1. **request for the allocation of evaluation Funds**

**Each entity is required to complete the attached T14 Project Evaluation Funds Allocation Request Form and submit it to DA-PMT by Wednesday, 30 April 2025**.

**For all joint projects with a budget of USD 1 million or more, a DA-PMT review and approval of the evaluation TOR, including a detailed tentative methodology and evaluation budget, is required**. Evaluation TOR should be submitted along with the completed Form.

**In the event that any entity has a 15th tranche project selected for evaluation that is expected to end earlier and that the evaluation is scheduled to commence before June 2026, an evaluation budget, equivalent to 4% of the final project budget, should be included in the T14 Project Evaluation Funds Allocation Request Form.** Please note that unless it is included in the T14 Allocation Request Form submitted by 30 April 2025, 15th tranche project evaluation funds will not be allocated before May 2026.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Code** | **Title** | **Implementing Entity** | **Jointly implementing entities** | **Final project budget** (as of 1 February 2025) | **Funded Programme/WBSE\*** |
| 2225A | Resilient and agile national statistical systems to meet post-COVID-19 data needs to recover better | **DESA** | ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, UNEP, UNODC | $3,000,000 | SB-020874.01 |
| 2225B | Smooth transition beyond graduation for least developed countries in Africa and Asia and the Pacific in a post-COVID-19 environment | **DESA** |  | $500,000 | SB-019218 |
| 2225E | Sustainable smart ports for African countries, including small island developing States, to “recover better” from COVID-19 | **UNCTAD** |  | $600,000 | SB-019420 |
| 2225F | TrainForTrade blended learning strategy to boost the digital economy in small island developing States of Africa, the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific | **UNCTAD** |  | $600,000 | SB-019251 |
| 2225G | Nature-based solutions for enhanced resilience to COVID-19 and urban air pollution in the Western Balkans and Central Asia and Asia and the Pacific | **UNEP** | UNHABITAT | $430,000 | SB-019625.01 |
| 2225J | Voluntary local reviews: evidence for greener, resilient and sustainable urban recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition | **UNHABITAT** | ECE, DESA | $570,000 | SB-020347.01 |
| 2225L | Catalysing the post-pandemic resurgence of the tourism industry in East Africa | **ECA** |  | $500,000 | SB-019500 |
| 2225M | Food-water-energy nexus support to post-COVID-19 recovery in Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa | **ECE** | ESCAP, ESCWA, ECA, UNEP | $700,000 | SB-019629.01 |
| 2225O | Resilient and inclusive public management systems for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean | **ECLAC** |  | $500,000 | SB-019633 |
| 2225R | Digital and transport connectivity for the socioeconomic resilience of rural communities post-COVID-19 in Asia-Pacific countries | **ESCAP** |  | $500,000 | SB-019064 |
| 2225S | Sustainable debt financing strategies to enhance fiscal space and financing for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region | **ESCWA** |  | $370,000 | SB-019660 |
| 2225U | Blockchains for facilitating trade and enhancing competitiveness | **ESCWA** | ECE, ESCAP, ECLAC, ECA, UNCTAD | $663,000 | SB-019635 |

\* For joint projects, this refers to the Funded Programme/WBSE for the lead implementing entity.

* **Planning documents:**
  + Concept note
  + Project document
* **Project reports:** 
  + Annual progress reports
  + Final report – draft (to be shared as soon as completed) and finalized version
* **Information on financial and other resources:**
  + Project budget and expenditures by object class, as required in the final report template
  + Information on non-DA resources, financial and in-kind, brought in by the implementing entity(ies)
  + Information on resources, financial and in-kind, contributed by partners/donors (including information requested under the “supplementary funding” section in the progress reports)
* **Contact list of key project stakeholders** (name, title, affiliation, gender and email address), including:
  + Project team members (staff of the implementing entity(ies))
  + Partners (DA and non-DA entities)
  + Other relevant stakeholders
* **List of completed project activities and details about each activity, including:**
  + Agenda, participant list (name, title, affiliation, country, gender, email address), minutes/report, handouts, and outcomes document, workshop survey results and any other participant feedback collected, for each in-person or online workshop/meeting
  + Description of each advisory service, beneficiaries (including contact details of the focal points), any outputs/deliverables produced and any beneficiary feedback received
  + List of publications, research papers and other knowledge products developed, details on how each product was disseminated and/or used, contact list of recipients/users of the product and contact information and any user feedback collected
  + List of eLearning courses developed, details of how each course was made available to potential participants, contact list of those who completed the course and any user/participant feedback collected
* **Documentation related to the relevant work of the implementing entity(ies) and partners:**
  + Relevant sub-programme and/or programme of the implementing entity(ies)
  + Relevant projects/activities undertaken by the implementing entity(ies) and partners in the target countries and/or regions
* **Requests for assistance/services received:**
  + Requests received from the target countries
  + Requests for relevant/similar assistance/services received from the countries that were not targeted by the project

**Annex 3. Annotated Template for DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT Project Evaluation Report**

Shape

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

*Report completed on: Month YYYY*

*Evaluation conducted by: “Evaluator(s) names”*

*Add implementing entity’s logo here*

**United Nations Development Account**

**Terminal Evaluation of Project ID**

*“Project title”*

*(Start year-End year)*

Evaluator: “Evaluator name(s) and title(s)”

Evaluation Manager: “Evaluation manager name(s), title(s) and division(s)/office(s)”

[Name and contact information of the implementing entity]

[Acknowledgements]

This report was commissioned by [Entity]. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this report are those of the external evaluator and do not necessarily reflect the views of the [Entity].

**Table of Contents**

[**List of Acronyms and Abbreviations** 4](#_Toc128044830)

[**Executive summary** 5](#_Toc128044831)

[**1. Introduction** 6](#_Toc128044832)

[**2. Description of the Project** 7](#_Toc128044833)

[**2.1 Background** 7](#_Toc128044834)

[**2.2 Project objectives and expected results** 7](#_Toc128044835)

[**2.3 Project strategies and key activities** 7](#_Toc128044836)

[**2.4 Beneficiaries and target countries** 7](#_Toc128044837)

[**2.5 Key partners and other key stakeholders** 8](#_Toc128044838)

[**2.6 Resources** 8](#_Toc128044839)

[**2.7 Link to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** 8](#_Toc128044840)

[**2.8 Innovative elements (if applicable)** 8](#_Toc128044841)

[**3. Evaluation objectives, scope and questions** 8](#_Toc128044842)

[**3.1 Purpose and objectives** 8](#_Toc128044843)

[**3.2 Evaluation scope, criteria and questions** 9](#_Toc128044844)

[**4. Methodology** 9](#_Toc128044845)

[**5. Findings** 10](#_Toc128044846)

[**6. Conclusions** 11](#_Toc128044847)

[**7. Recommendations** 12](#_Toc128044848)

[**8. Lessons learned and good practices** 13](#_Toc128044849)

[**Annexes** 13](#_Toc128044850)

[Evaluation TORs 13](#_Toc128044851)

[Project results framework 13](#_Toc128044852)

[Evaluation matrix 13](#_Toc128044853)

[Data collection instruments 13](#_Toc128044854)

[List of individuals interviewed 13](#_Toc128044855)

[List of documents reviewed 13](#_Toc128044856)

*List contents of the report, including annexes, boxes, graphs, figures, and tables with page references.*

**List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

*List all acronyms and abbreviations used in the report.*

**Executive summary**

*A stand-alone section of 3-4 pages, including:*

* *A brief overview of the project*
* *Evaluation purpose, objectives, scope, and intended users/audiences*
* *Evaluation methodology*
* *A summary of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations*

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Report structure: Is the report well structured, logical, clear and complete?**

22. The executive summary is a stand-alone section with a clear structure along the key elements of the report: subject, purpose and objectives of the evaluation; methodology; main results; conclusions; and recommendations. It is reasonably concise.

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Report structure: Is the report well structured, logical, clear and complete?**

23. The report is well-structured:

* Easily readable (i.e. concise, avoids complex language and unexplained acronyms);
* Cohesive and logical;
* Contains relevant graphics for illustrating key points (e.g. tables, charts and pictures);
* Includes annexes where applicable on methodology such as the Terms of Reference, evaluation matrix, bibliography, and a list of people consulted; and
* States when the evaluation was conducted (period of the evaluation and by whom the evaluation (evaluator names not required).

**1. Introduction**

*Provide the following information:*

* *A brief overview of the project, including the start and end dates, the DA implementing entity(ies) and other collaborating UN entities/agencies*
* *Background to the evaluation, including the reason for the evaluation\* and the time frame of the evaluation*
* *Purpose and objectives of the evaluation, and the primary users/audiences\*\**

*\* For the 14thtranche, half (11) of its 21 projects were selected for terminal evaluation at mid-term (at the beginning of 2024). In line with the DA Project Evaluation Guidelines, one project with a budget of over USD 1 million was automatically selected for evaluation, while the other projects were selected by the implementing entities, taking into account the strategic importance and relevance of each project to the entities’ mandates, any pressing knowledge gaps and other pertinent factors considered by the management.*

*\*\* In line with the DA Project Evaluation Guidelines, the primary users/audiences of DA project evaluations are the implementing entities themselves.*

**2. Description of the Project**

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Background: Are the evaluation’s subject, context, purpose objectives and scope sufficiently clear to frame and guide the evaluation?**

1. The report clearly specifies the subject of the evaluation, and for programmes or projects: intervention logic or theory of change; budget; human resources; time frame; implementing partners, modalities and status.

2. The report provides sufficient information for understanding the context within which the subject of the evaluation operated (e.g., key social, political, economic, demographic and institutional factors) and describes the key stakeholders involved in the evaluation’s subject.

**2.1 Background**

*Briefly describe the project context, including the issues addressed by the project and the relevant key social, political, economic, demographic and institutional factors.*

**2.2 Project objectives and expected results**

*Briefly describe the project objectives and expected outcomes that were included in its results framework. Provide sufficient details on changes, if any, that were made to the project objectives and/or expected outcomes during implementation, and the reasons for the changes.*

*Note that the project results framework should be included in the annexes.*

**2.3 Project strategies and key activities**

*Briefly describe the actual project strategies and key outputs and activities, including any significant changes that were made during implementation, and the reasons for those changes. The project strategy should include an explanation of how the project was designed to contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as the realization of human rights, with an emphasis on “leaving no one behind”.*

**2.4 Target countries and beneficiaries**

*Describe the project’s target countries and beneficiaries. For the purpose of the DA, “target countries” are those that receive targeted, national-level capacity development support through the project. These are separated from other beneficiary countries that benefit from the project in a broader sense, such as through regional/sub-regional knowledge dissemination.*

**2.5 Key partners and other key stakeholders**

*Describe key partners (DA implementing entities, other collaborating UN entities/agencies and non-UN organizations, and national and/or local governments), and their roles in the project.*

**2.6 Resources**

*The project budget (approved DA funding) and other human, financial and/or in-kind contributions (e.g., XB, RPTC and other resources that were mobilized by the implementing entities to support the project). For in-kind contributions, provide an estimated financial value, if available. See the information presented in the project’s final report under “Supplementary funding” and “Estimated staff resources” sections.*

**2.7 Link to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

*List the key SDG targets the project intended to address.*

**2.8 Innovative elements (if applicable)**

*DA projects are designed to help test new and innovative development approaches, allowing successful ideas to be scaled up and replicated broadly. If and as applicable, describe the specific new methodology and/or theory that was applied in the project.*

**3. Evaluation objectives, scope and questions**

**3.1 Purpose and objectives**

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Background: Are the evaluation’s subject, context, purpose objectives and scope sufficiently clear to frame and guide the evaluation?**

3. The report clearly specifies the purpose and objectives of the evaluation.

*Describe the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, the intended users/audiences, and the expected use of its results by each user/audience. In line with the DA Evaluation Framework, DA evaluations are designed to promote both accountability for results and learning. As currently designed, the primary users of the DA project evaluations are the implementing entities themselves.*

**3.2 Evaluation scope, criteria and questions**

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Background: Are the evaluation’s subject, context, purpose objectives and scope sufficiently clear to frame and guide the evaluation?**

4. The report specifies the scope of what the evaluation covers (e.g., time span, geographical coverage).

**Methodology: Is the methodology used for the evaluation clearly described and is the rationale for the methodological choice justified?**

5. The report specifies and explains the chosen evaluation questions, criteria, performance standards or other criteria.

**Gender, human rights and disability: Are gender, human rights and disability perspectives integrated and well addressed in the process of the evaluation as well as in the evaluation report?**

18. Gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) is integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEWE related data will be collected.

21. Human rights considerations are integrated in the following, where applicable: evaluation scope of analysis; evaluation criteria and questions design; methods and tools, and data analysis techniques; evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

*Describe the evaluation scope, criteria and questions. If the evaluation involved reducing the scope (e.g., geographical coverage) and/or did not cover all the mandatory criteria for DA evaluation reports (i.e., relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and efficiency), explain the specific reasons (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, which involved the travel restrictions and/or created the need to reduce burdens on stakeholders, adverse security conditions in participating countries).*

*Note that the evaluation TORs and the evaluation matrix should be included in the annexes.*

**4. Methodology**

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Methodology: Is the methodology used for the evaluation clearly described and is the rationale for the methodological choice justified?**

5. The report specifies and explains the chosen evaluation questions, criteria, performance standards or other criteria.

6. The report methodology clearly describes the level of stakeholder participation, data sources, and data collection and analysis methods.

7. The chosen methodology is adequately robust/appropriate for answering the key evaluation questions, including adequate measures to ensure data quality/validity.

8. The methodology addresses methodological challenges and/or limitations, and the report mentions ethical standards that were considered during the evaluation (e.g., informed consent of participants, confidentiality, avoidance of harm, evaluator’s ethical obligations).

**Gender, human rights and disability: Are gender, human rights and disability perspectives integrated and well addressed in the process of the evaluation as well as in the evaluation report?**

19. A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.

21. Human rights considerations are integrated in the following, where applicable: evaluation scope of analysis; evaluation criteria and questions design; methods and tools, and data analysis techniques; evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

*Provide the following information:*

* *The methodological approach and rationale, including methods for data gathering and analysis and data sources (including stakeholder groups interviewed and/or surveyed disaggregated by gender, and if applicable, by special country designation, e.g., least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states), data availability and reliability*
* *Sampling strategy for qualitative and quantitative data collection methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, field visits), and, if applicable, response rates*
* *If applicable, the criteria used to select countries for field visits or in-depth assessments*
* *Ethical standards applied, and if applicable, ethical concerns and how they were handled*
* *How gender, human rights and disability perspectives were integrated in the data collection methods and tools, and the data analysis techniques*
* *Limitations to the methodology and how they were addressed*

*Note that the data collection instruments used for the evaluation (e.g., interview guides, survey questionnaires), the list of individuals interviewed and the list of documents reviewed should be included in the annexes.*

**5. Findings**

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Findings: Are the findings clearly presented, relevant and based on evidence and sound analysis?**

9. Findings are presented with clarity, logic and coherence (e.g., avoid ambiguities).

10. Findings clearly relate to the evaluation criteria and questions defined in the scope in terms of report structure and substance.

11. Findings are objective and are supported by sufficient evidence reflecting systematic and appropriate analysis and interpretation of the data; they are free from subjective judgements made by the evaluators.

12. Findings uncover underlying causes for accomplishments/difficulties and opportunities to build on.

**Gender, human rights and disability: Are gender, human rights and disability perspectives integrated and well addressed in the process of the evaluation as well as in the evaluation report?**

20. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

21. Human rights considerations are integrated in the following, where applicable: evaluation scope of analysis; evaluation criteria and questions design; methods and tools, and data analysis techniques; evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

*Present the evaluation findings in relation to the evaluation criteria and questions, as defined in the evaluation TORs, with supporting evidence. Only the findings supported by sufficient evidence should be presented, reflecting systematic and appropriate analysis and interpretation of the data, and not subjective judgements of the evaluator.*

*Data analyzed should be presented in a gender-disaggregated manner, as much as possible and when there are significant differences between genders. Gender analysis should be reflected in the findings.*

**6. Conclusions**

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Conclusions and lessons learned: Are the conclusions clearly presented based on findings and substantiated by evidence?**

13. Conclusions are clearly presented and logically linked to the findings.

14. Conclusions reflect reasonable judgements of the evaluator(s) in relation to the main evaluation questions and add value to the findings (e.g., include lessons learned; focus on significant issues; answer the evaluation’s big questions).

**Gender, human rights and disability: Are gender, human rights and disability perspectives integrated and well addressed in the process of the evaluation as well as in the evaluation report?**

20. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

21. Human rights considerations are integrated in the following, where applicable: evaluation scope of analysis; evaluation criteria and questions design; methods and tools, and data analysis techniques; evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

*Present the general conclusions that logically follow from the findings and respond to evaluation questions, including insights and lessons learned pertinent to the decision-making of the intended users of the evaluation. The conclusions should reflect the evaluator’s professional opinion in relation to the main evaluation questions and add value to the evaluation results.*

**7. Recommendations**

**UN Secretariat Quality Assurance Framework (Guidelines on ST/AI/2021/3 – October 2021)**

**Recommendations (if any): Are the recommendations well-grounded in the evaluation and clear?**

15. Recommendations are logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions.

16. Recommendations are clear, realistic (e.g., reflect an understanding of the subject’s potential constraints to follow-up) and manageable (e.g., avoid providing a laundry list or being overly prescriptive).

17. Recommendations are actionable (e.g., specifies who should implement them) and formulated with their use in mind.

**Gender, human rights and disability: Are gender, human rights and disability perspectives integrated and well addressed in the process of the evaluation as well as in the evaluation report?**

20. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

21. Human rights considerations are integrated in the following, where applicable: evaluation scope of analysis; evaluation criteria and questions design; methods and tools, and data analysis techniques; evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

*Provide clear, practical and feasible recommendations, directed to the intended users of the evaluation and supported by the evidence presented in the Findings section around key questions addressed by the evaluation. Recommendations should be logically derived from the findings and conclusions and identify the users/stakeholders to whom they are addressed to. As stated under Section 3.1, the primary users of the DA project evaluations are the implementing entities themselves, and the recommendations should be directed to the management and staff of the implementing entities.*

**8. Lessons learned and good practices**

*Present lessons learned and good practices identified by the evaluation with potential use and applicability to broader audiences beyond the intended primary users of the evaluation.*

**Annexes**

Evaluation TORs

Project results framework

Evaluation matrix

Data collection instruments

List of individuals interviewed

List of documents reviewed

**Annex 4. Suggested Template for Management Response and REcommendation Action Plan for DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT project evaluation**

**Management Response to the Terminal Evaluation of the Development Account 14th Tranche Project**

***Project title and ID: “the title of the project (project ID number)”***

**Entity name: “the name of the implementing entity”**

**Overall Remarks by Management**

*The overall remarks may include a summary or highlights of the evaluation findings and conclusions that are of the most relevance to the entity, and a statement of the entity’s (or its specific division/unit) commitment to implementing the recommendations. If management rejects any of the recommendations, the reason should be stated.*

**Recommendation Action Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | **Management response[[4]](#footnote-5)** | **Planned action** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Target completion date** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Title | Signature | Date |
|  |  |  |  |

*(Please remove this table before submitting for publication on the DA website. While having a senior manager sign a management response is a common practice used to demonstrate the management’s commitment to the planned actions outlined in the document and promote accountability for use of evaluation results, it has been decided that the name and signature of the manager be not published on the DA website to protect privacy and safeguard against risks of misuse of signatures.)*

1. Please note that access to the DA SharePoint site is only granted to the staff of the DA implementing entities. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The [UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicators Technical Note (April 2018)](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2148) includes the following three criteria against which all evaluation reports should be assessed: 1) “Gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) is integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEWE related data will be collected”; 2) “A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected”; and 3) “The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis”. In addition to these GEWE criteria, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) also applied the following criterion for the quality assessment of UN Secretariat evaluation reports as part of its biennial Dashboard exercise in the past (note that OIOS did not conduct a quality assessment of Secretariat evaluation reports as part of its biennial report 2022-2023): “Human rights considerations are integrated in the following, where applicable: evaluation scope of analysis; evaluation criteria and questions design; methods and tools, and data analysis techniques; evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. ST/AI/2021/3, in para 5.5(b), requires all heads of Secretariat entities to “ensure the integration of respect for gender equality and disability inclusion in evaluation procedures and practices”. While the quality assurance system for evaluation reports established in the Guidelines on the ST/AI (October 2021) did not include a rating criterion specific to the integration of disability perspectives in the evaluation process or evaluation report, the OIOS biennial review on the status of evaluation in the Secretariat for 2020-2021 included an assessment of the integration of disability inclusion and environmental issues in the evaluation report quality assessment exercise, specifically for the purpose of creating a baseline (the ratings on the integration of these two additional cross-cutting issues did not count towards the overall score given to each report). The [UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) “Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator](http://www.uneval.org/document/download/3818)” (January 2022) established six elements to be incorporated into a reporting entity’s evaluation guidelines in order to “approach” (i.e., short of “meet”) the requirements of the Framework in relation to Indicator 10 on Evaluation. These six elements are: a) the ToRs of evaluations pay adequate attention to disability inclusion; b) evaluation teams must have knowledge and/or experience of disability inclusion, where relevant; c) evaluation questions should cover different aspects of disability inclusion; d) stakeholder mapping and data collection methods should involve persons with disabilities and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs); e) evaluation findings and analysis should provide data and evidence on disability inclusion; and f) the conclusions and/or recommendations must reflect their findings on disability inclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Accepted, partially accepted, or rejected. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)