Evaluation Handbook

2024 Edition

Driving evidence-based actions
Delivering rights and choices for all

UNFPA

IEO
Independent Evaluation Office

The evaluation handbook is a comprehensive guide for conducting rigorous and high-quality decentralized evaluations at UNFPA, including Country Programme Evaluations (CPEs). It offers step-by-step evaluation guidance and practical methods specifically designed for country-level operations. By fostering stakeholder engagement and a focus on utilization of evaluation, the handbook advances evaluation at UNFPA to drive better organizational outcomes.

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Foreword

At the midpoint to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are at a critical juncture. Progress has stalled amid the climate crisis, economic fluctuations, conflicts and the aftermath of the pandemic. These setbacks also threaten hard-won gains achieved since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo three decades ago.

To reignite progress towards this visionary agenda, we must amplify and scale up transformative solutions that deliver for those furthest behind. The UN 2.0 framework reflects this goal, emphasizing the role of cutting edge skills and forward-thinking culture that enable United Nations entities to better contribute to the SDGs. Aligned to this vision, evaluation plays a critical role in providing essential evidence and insights to accelerate the delivery of rights and choices for all, and the attainment of the SDGs. It is a key strategic driver to improve the efforts of UNFPA in delivering the priorities and commitments outlined in the UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025.

Strong evaluation needs strong capacities to deliver high-quality, credible and timely evaluations on the ground that are actively and strategically utilized for adaptation, learning, accountability and acceleration. In line with our commitment to the UNFPA evaluation policy and evaluation strategy, we are pushing the boundaries to build the skills, competencies and professional capacities in evaluation within UNFPA and beyond.

In this context, it gives me great pleasure to present the evaluation handbook, a practical guide to help evaluation managers systematically apply methodological rigour to UNFPA evaluations in the country offices. The Handbook is for UNFPA staff who conduct evaluations, it also contains practical tools and hands-on advice for wider users, including evaluators who carry out evaluations commissioned by UNFPA and other stakeholders involved in evaluation processes. The evaluation handbook can also serve as a guide for conducting other types of decentralized evaluations.

I am confident that the Handbook will further boost the quality and utilization of evaluation and will reinforce the ability of the organization to accelerate evidence-based decisions and programmes to deliver rights and choices for all.

Marco Segone

Director, Independent Evaluation Office
UNFPA

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The intention of the evaluation handbook is to propose a pragmatic approach well fitted to the operational context in which UNFPA operates at country level, and not the other way around. To this end, the Handbook has been developed following a consultative process, and has benefited from the contributions or comments of colleagues with different expertise and perspectives. I am deeply appreciative to those who generously shared their knowledge and insights: Karen Cadondon, Nsanshya Faith Chilupula, Oyuntsetseg Chuluundorj, Debora Di Dio, Ndeye Fatou diop, Jennet Appova, Loveena Dookhony, Patrick Duerst, Yamameh Esmaiel, Zipporah Gathiti, Luliana Gutu, Helen Jackson, John Sesay, Neha Karkara, Padma Karunaratne, Jae Hwi Kim, Rita Magawa, and Messay Tassew.

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Link to a website

Toolkit

Click on each resource to access.

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2. Evaluation questions workshop (presentation)
3. Letter of nomination to the evaluation reference group
4. ToR for the evaluation reference group
5. ToR template - young and emerging evaluator
6. Call for evaluation consultancy - young and emerging evaluator template
7. Young and emerging evaluator grid
8. Evaluation matrix for the design report
9. Field phase agenda
10. List of UNFPA centralized evaluations
11. Key facts table
12. Consent form, assent form
13. Onsite observation checklist
14. Evaluation matrix for data collection during the field phase
15. Recommendations protocol and worksheet
16. Evaluation matrix for the evaluation report - Annex 1
17. Audit trail
18. Invitation to the recommendations workshop (letter)
19. Guidelines and structure for a CPE brief
20. Guidelines and structure for a CPE executive summary
21. Communication plan template for a CPE
22. CPE Roadmap

Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AWP	Annual work plan
CO	Country office (of UNFPA)
COAR	Country office annual report
CSO	Civil society organization
CPD	Country programme document
CPE	Country programme evaluation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
DHS	Demographic and health survey
EQA	Evaluation quality assurance
EQAA	Evaluation quality assurance and assessment
ERG	Evaluation reference group
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GBV	Gender-based violence
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office (of UNFPA)
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other
LNOB	Leaving no one behind
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MH	Maternal health
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
R2U ToR	Ready-to-use terms of reference
RO	Regional office (of UNFPA)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
ToR	Terms of reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WHO	World Health Organization
YEE	Young and emerging evaluator

Introduction

The UNFPA evaluation policy sets out the role of evaluation in the organization and highlights its main purposes: demonstrating accountability to stakeholders on achieving development results; supporting evidence-based decision-making; and contributing key lessons learned to the existing knowledge base on how to accelerate implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. As such, amid an ever-changing and challenging environment, evaluation helps UNFPA become more agile and adaptive to reach the furthest behind.

At UNFPA, evaluations fall under two main categories. Centralized evaluations are independent exercises undertaken by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). They address organization-wide issues, and include thematic, institutional, joint and United Nations system-wide evaluations and synthesis studies. They also consist of evaluations of major UNFPA-wide programmes and global trust funds, with a view to assessing their contribution to achieving the goals of the UNFPA strategic plan. Decentralized evaluations, on the other hand, are managed by the business units responsible for the concerned programmes. By large, they consist of country and regional programme evaluations to assess progress towards outcomes at country or regional level and generate learning to inform the design and implementation of the forthcoming programming cycle.

The IEO is the custodian of the UNFPA evaluation function. It has overall responsibility for the implementation of the evaluation policy, and, in particular, for developing a comprehensive methodological framework, as well as setting quality assurance mechanisms.

The evaluation handbook provides guidance throughout the different phases of a country programme evaluation (CPE). It takes the reader step-by-step through the practice of preparing, designing, implementing, managing a CPE, as well as reporting, disseminating and facilitating the use of the evaluation results. As such, the Handbook reflects the commitment of the IEO to clearly present and structure the evaluation process and to respond to the actual needs of UNFPA staff and stakeholders. While primarily geared towards the country office (CO) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officer tasked with managing a CPE and the consultants commissioned to carry out the evaluation, the Handbook promotes a participatory approach and advises on how to engage other actors throughout the CPE process. It shows how useful it is to involve

various CO staff as well as country programme stakeholders in, for instance, the identification of the evaluation questions, the data collection or the drafting of recommendations. A stronger sense of collective ownership of the CPE process and outcome is more likely to result in a greater use of the evaluation results.

Figure 1: *UNFPA methodological framework*

The evaluation handbook adopts a pragmatic approach and presents the most appropriate methods to fit the operational context in which UNFPA operates at country level. The mixed methods presented in the Handbook draw on contribution analysis as part of a well-developed theory of change that clearly sets out the causal pathways by which the country programme works to produce outputs and influence outcomes. Furthermore, the Handbook is complemented by a suite of material that provides detailed information on selected topics. This material is available in the form of templates, presentations, checklists and complementary guidelines, gathered in a toolkit.

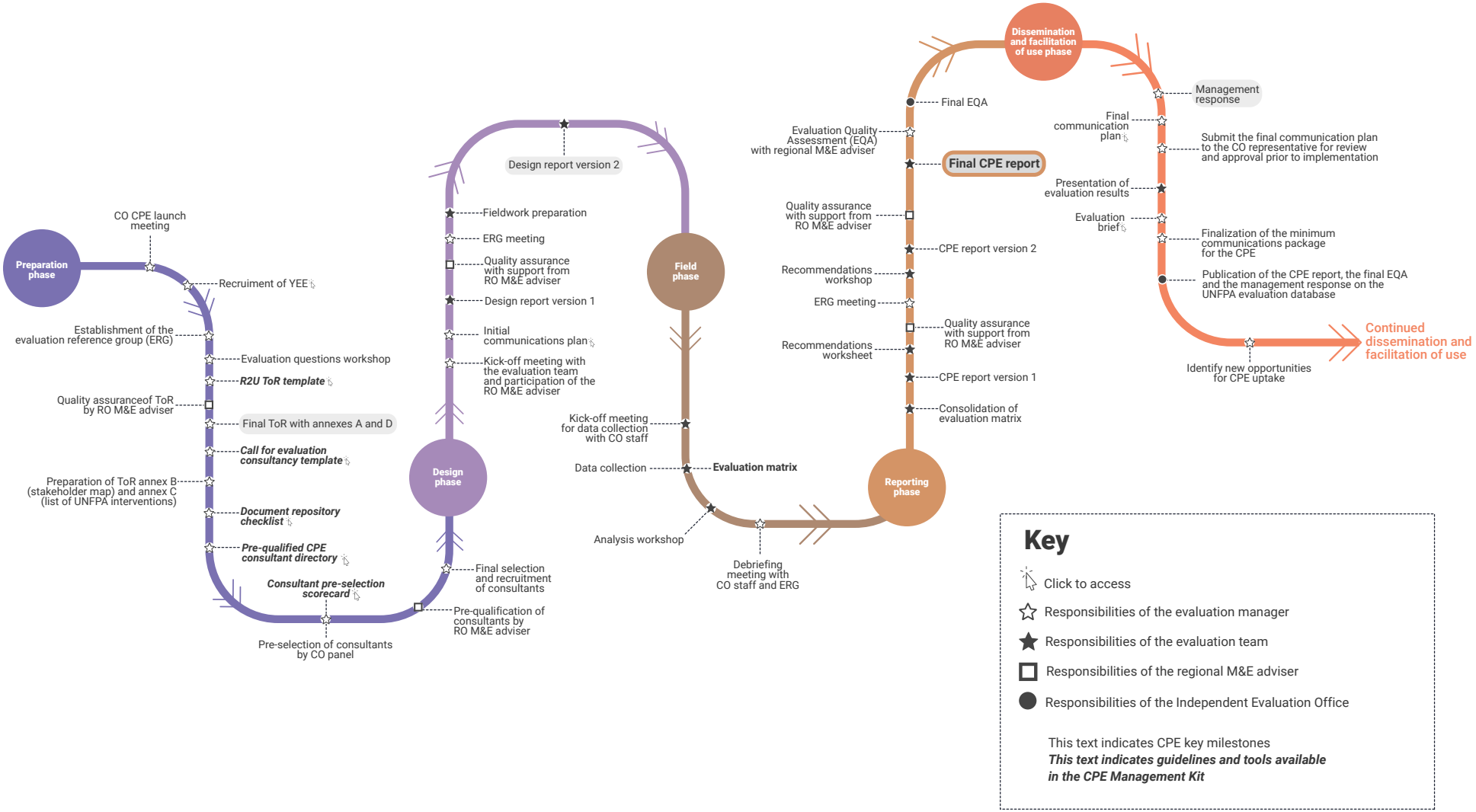
As illustrated in the CPE roadmap (below), the Handbook takes its users through the five phases of the evaluation: preparation, design, field work (data collection), reporting, as well as the dissemination and facilitation of use of the evaluation results. Each phase is the subject of a dedicated chapter intended as a desk reference that will allow the M&E officer, consultants and other CPE stakeholders to deepen their knowledge at any point of the evaluation process. Thus, the Handbook intends to support learning (and collaboration within the CO, among the consultants team and with the evaluation stakeholders) and to contribute to their improved understanding of how to conduct a theory-based contribution analysis of the UNFPA country programme in regards to specific outcomes. It also aims at strengthening the rigorous application of research methods, analytical skills, and reporting techniques to deliver a quality, timely and credible evaluation report. Finally, the Handbook will allow its users to improve their capacity to communicate and enhance the use of the evaluation results for greater accountability, evidence-based decision-making and learning.

Managing a CPE is one among many other responsibilities and duties in the diverse and demanding portfolio of a M&E officer in a UNFPA CO. Yet, undertaking a CPE should not be an additional chore on top of an existing busy work schedule, but, instead should be approached with a positive outlook and self-confidence. To that end, the Handbook equips M&E officers with the knowledge, tools and skills for effectively preparing and managing a CPE. It also aims at showing to all evaluations stakeholders (consultants, UNFPA staff and partners) that evaluation is a valuable and creative function, which, by inviting an in-depth reflection on what works, for whom, under what circumstances and how, brings considerable added-value to UNFPA. Therefore, senior managers in UNFPA regional and country offices have a special role in empowering M&E staff to become successful CPE managers.

The evaluation handbook is primarily designed for CPEs at UNFPA. However, the guidance and handy tools it provides can serve as a useful methodological framework for other types of evaluations within UNFPA, such as regional programme evaluations or project evaluations in country offices. Further, within the United Nations system, the approach presented in the Handbook can also inform, and be adapted for the preparation and implementation of joint and system-wide evaluations.

The preparation phase of the CPE consists of all of the activities that are performed by the country office in advance of the evaluation itself. This involves drafting the terms of reference (ToR), assembling and maintaining background documentation, consulting with stakeholders and establishing the evaluation reference group (ERG), and recruiting the evaluation team.

Figure 2: *CPE Roadmap: Milestones, guidelines, tools and evaluation deliverables*



Phase 1
Preparation

The preparation phase has its specific set of methodological guidance, tools and templates located in the CPE Management Kit. Adopting a step-by-step approach, the kit aims to ensure that the CPE is launched in a timely manner, implemented according to the planned schedule, and conducted in line with the methodological guidance provided in the present Handbook.

The importance of the preparation phase should not be underestimated. Without adequate preparation, it is unlikely that the CPE implementation will go well and according to schedule or will lead to a good quality evaluation report.

Table 1: *Main activities and responsible entities in the preparation phase*

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Getting ready	• Read the CPE Management Kit • Read the present Handbook in its entirety • Read United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards as well as ethical guidelines[1] • Complete the UNFPA e-learning course on country programme evaluations	CPE manager

1 The UNEG Ethical code of conduct; UNEG Ethical guidelines; UNEG Norms and standards for evaluation

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
CPE launch	CO meeting to launch and orient staff on the CPE process, timeline and deliverables	CO representative with support from CPE manager and guidance from regional office (RO) M&E adviser. All CO staff attend
Recruitment of a YEE	• Call for YEE • Selection of candidates • Interview of shortlisted candidates • Recruitment of the YEE	CPE manager, selection panel and CO operations team
CPE announcement	Officially notify the country programme stakeholders about the commencement of the CPE	Government partner or CO representative (on behalf of government partner) sends announcement letter
CPE budget	Securing the evaluation budget (see costed evaluation plan submitted with the country programme document (CPD), and ring-fenced funding for the CPE as built into the annual country programme ceiling)	CPE manager with CO representative/deputy representative and operations manager
	Adoption of a procurement method and plan that details clear timelines for evaluation-related procurement tasks	CPE manager and CO operations manager
Evaluation reference group	Establishment of the ERG	CPE manager in consultation with the relevant government partner that coordinates the country programme and CO staff. Government partner or CO representative (on behalf of government partner) sends formal invitation letter
Evaluation questions workshop	CO engages select country programme stakeholders in the identification of key topics and development of the CPE evaluation questions	CO representative calls workshop; CPE manager organizes and leads. All relevant CO staff as well as select stakeholders and RO M&E adviser participate
Terms of reference	Drafting of the ToR using the R2U ToR template following the two-step approach presented in the R2U explanatory note (in CPE Management Kit).	CPE manager with support from deputy representative and CO staff on dedicated sections of the ToR

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Recruitment of consultants	• Call for consultancy • Pre-selection of candidates • Submission of pre-selected candidates to RO for pre-qualification • Final selection among those pre-qualified by the RO • Interviews • Recruitment of the evaluation team	CPE manager, selection panel and CO operations team
Document repository	Setting up and populating the document repository	CPE manager with participation of relevant CO staff
Country programme interventions	Setting up the list of country programme interventions (see annex C of R2U ToR)	CPE manager
Stakeholder map	Development of the country programme stakeholder map (see annex B of R2U ToR)	CPE manager with all CO programme staff
Consultants on-boarding	• Consultants are given the complete ToR with all annexes (R2U ToR) • Consultants have access to the fully filled document repository • Consultants take UNFPA e-learning course on country programme evaluation • Consultants take the UN e-Learning courses BSAFE and Prevention of sexual harassment and abuse	CPE manager with support from relevant CO staff

1.1 The country programme evaluation launch meeting

The CO representative nominates the CPE manager. Where this post exists, the CO M&E officer acts as the CPE manager. Where this post does not exist, the CPE manager is a CO staff member designated by the representative in consultation with the RO M&E adviser.

The CO representative gathers the CO staff and the RO M&E adviser in a launch meeting to communicate the preparations needed for the CPE and the level of efforts required from all. To this end, the CPE manager makes a presentation and uses the CPE roadmap to take the participants through the five phases of the evaluation: preparation, design, fieldwork (data collection), reporting, and the dissemination and facilitation of use of the evaluation results. The roadmap will help the CO staff visualize the CPE process, identify its key milestones, and determine what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and how and when to do it.

During the preparation phase, shared tasks include, in particular, (a) the contribution of programme, operation and communication staff to specific sections of the CPE ToR and annexes; and (b) the collection of background documents and filing into a document repository. The input of participants in the launch meeting is also needed: (c) to identify the country programme stakeholders who should take part in the evaluation reference group and those who will participate in the evaluation questions workshop (see section 1.3), as well as (d) to form a panel for the selection of the consultants (evaluation team). Finally, the CO representative, in consultation with the CPE manager and the RO M&E adviser, sets a realistic time schedule for the evaluation. Basically, the time schedule reflects all activities at each phase indicated in the CPE roadmap, and the corresponding expected initiation and completion times for each activity (see R2U ToR, section 10). The time schedule is estimated in a manner to ensure that the CPE report will be ready in time to inform the preparation of the subsequent programming cycle. The CO should allow enough time (11 months minimum), so that if unforeseen delays occur, it will still be possible to meet the final deadline. After the launch of the CPE, the government partner or CO representative (on behalf of the government partner) circulates an official letter to inform all key stakeholders about the commencement of the CPE.

Box 1: CPE launch meeting checklist

- ☑ The Ready-to-Use (R2U) ToR template are shared with and presented to all CO staff
- ☑ The **role and responsibilities** of CO staff members are established at each phase of the CPE; there is clarity on who needs to contribute what to the development of ToR and annexes (as well as related activities - e.g. document repository) and by when
- ☑ The role of **the ERG** is explained (see ERG ToR) and its membership is discussed and agreed upon
- ☑ The overall composition/profile of the **external evaluation team** (see R2U ToR, section 12) is agreed upon. The possibility to contract a **consultancy firm** (instead of hiring individual consultants) should also be looked into (together with the cost and procurement implications)
- ☑ The composition of the **panel to select the consultants** is set out
- ☑ The **CPE timeline** is fixed
- ☑ The list of participants and a date for the **workshop to identify the evaluation questions** is announced.

1.2 The evaluation team (stage 1)

Assembling the CPE evaluation team follows a two-stage process. At stage one, the CPE manager, in consultation with the CO representative, considers recruiting a young and emerging evaluator (YEE). The YEE recruitment should be initiated at the beginning of the preparation phase, immediately after the CPE launch meeting. While the YEE is expected to participate in all the phases of the country programme evaluation,[2] their early engagement in the process reaps significant advantages. In particular, they will be able to support the CPE manager in the implementation of the numerous (and time-consuming) activities of the preparation phase. Joining the CO during the preparation phase will also provide time for the YEE to get a good orientation of the UNFPA mandate and country programme, the UN system as well as the CPE process and methodology.

2 See the guidance on leveraging the power of youth in evaluation.

A junior professional (below 35 years of age) with less than 5 years of professional experience, a YEE is well-versed in evaluation methods and new technologies, and can bring a valuable external perspective and innovative ideas to the table (e.g. use of AI in data management and analysis etc.). From a budgeting point of view, the cost of employing a YEE is advantageous since their fee expectations are lower than those of the more experienced consultants in the evaluation team. In return, adding a YEE to the evaluation team provides young people with a unique opportunity to put their knowledge into practice, consolidate their evaluation skills, foster their professional development, while also contributing to the advancement of national evaluation capacities.

Once the rest of the evaluation team is recruited (stage 2 - see section 1.6), the CPE manager and the team leader reflect on how to meaningfully engage the YEE in the activities of the CPE (from the design of the evaluation to the dissemination and facilitation of use of its results), as well as how they will ensure dual supervision and undertake a mentoring role throughout the entire process. In consultation with the YEE, and based upon their skills, experience and qualifications, the CPE manager and the team leader will define the role and responsibilities of the YEE in a manner that also provides opportunities for learning and growth.

The CPE manager should ensure that the selection and recruitment of the YEE follows a transparent and competitive process that is also inclusive of youth from groups that are least represented or left behind. Once the CO representative has approved the YEE ToR, the CPE manager, in consultation with the CO operations staff, publishes a call for consultancy for young and emerging evaluators. After the closing of the call, the CPE manager initiates the selection process with a view to organizing interviews with the shortlisted candidates and then proceeds with the recruitment of the selected YEE.

1.3 The evaluation questions workshop

Undertaking a CPE is about asking questions that matter, and an important task in the preparation phase is to reflect on what the evaluation users need to know and why. To be relevant and useful, the CPE must focus on issues reflecting the perspective, insight and information needs of people with diverse responsibilities in the design and implementation of UNFPA interventions, as well as their intended beneficiaries. It is therefore important to engage the country programme stakeholders in the development of the evaluation questions and focus the CPE work on a limited number of key topics, thus allowing for more targeted data collection, more in-depth analysis and a more useful report.

To this end, the CO representative calls relevant CO staff, select stakeholders (e.g. government partners, implementing partners, development partners, representatives of rights-holders organizations, etc.) as well as the RO M&E adviser, and select RO technical advisers, in an evaluation questions workshop. The workshop allows for opening up the discussion on the country programme theory of change and hearing about whether there is a common agreement -- or diverse views -- on whether it is well articulated (causal mechanisms) and leads to well-defined outcomes (based on realistic assumptions and external factors/ context). Subjecting the country programme theory of change to a “reality check” (4 or 5 years after it was designed) and asking if links between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes are logical and plausible, aims at identifying possible gaps and weaknesses, blind spots and exaggerated expectations. It also allows for recognizing deviations or changes that may have occurred over the course of the implementation of the country programme.

Reflecting on the country programme theory of change to generate salient evaluation questions is important for two main reasons. First, it helps focus the CPE on the most relevant and meaningful aspects of the country programme and avoid leveling down the evaluation to an assessment of activities implementation

or outputs achievements. Second, it accounts for the evaluation approach resting on the theory of change of the country programme to collect evidence and establish a credible cause-and-effect assessment and measure the extent to which interventions have contributed to the desired changes (see section 2.2).

To identify those key topics that should be the subject of evaluation questions, participants in the workshop should reflect on issues such as:

- Is the country programme theory of change known by all, understood and currently used?
- If the theory of change is not being used, is this because of perceived inadequacies? Which?
- If the theory of change is being used, what has been learned about it in use?
- Is there agreement about the intended results or do different stakeholders have different views?
- Is there disagreement about how valid or comprehensive the theory of change is?
- How well does the theory of change make explicit the change theories underpinning it? (e.g. behavior changes, such as increased uptake of family planning services, can come about through one or more change theories: changing social norms; capacity development for health providers, removal of various barriers, etc.)
- Can participants point at gaps or errors in the theory of change?
- Can participants identify links where the causal chain seems to break (where achieving a particular intermediate outcome does not seem to lead to the subsequent outcome)? Are some causal links not well established?
- Has the country's context changed in significant ways, for example following a humanitarian crisis, and how does it affect the theory of change?
- Have reviews or monitoring missions undertaken in the course of the country programme implementation highlighted specific issues (such as: contextual factors indicating that some interventions work well at certain sites or for certain groups of people only) in which the CPE needs to probe further?
- Has stakeholders' understanding of how the country programme works developed further since the original theory of change was developed?

When discussing the country programme theory of change, participants should also consider the main drivers of change or inhibitors to realize the UNFPA transformative results[3] in the country context:

- How effectively has UNFPA positioned itself and employed strategies in relation to the key accelerators: human-rights based and gender transformative approaches; innovation and digitalization; partnership and South to South cooperation, and financing; data and evidence; leave no one behind (LNOB) and reaching the furthest left behind first; resilience and adaptation, and complementarity among development, humanitarian and peace-responsive efforts?[4]
- Are strategic choices to trigger transformative shifts envisioned in the theory of change?
- Any key factors that contributed to the success of the country programme; the main stumbling blocks to accelerating progress towards the three transformative results; the main areas the CO should do more

3 UNFPA has set out to achieve three world-changing, transformative results by 2030: Zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal death, and zero gender-based violence, including harmful practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation.

4 UNFPA strategic plan 2022-2025.

of (scale up), accelerate (speed up) or do differently (change the way it does business – e.g., innovation) to reverse or accelerate trends in the next cycle

- Game changers to address deep-seated socio-cultural barriers towards bringing systematic and transformative actions in relation to the three zeros
- Mechanisms to leverage domestic resources and co-financing with governments, and to establish strategic partnerships
- How effectively and efficiently institutional management (e.g. the number, skills set, and capacity of staff, the partners selected, geographic focus and decentralized presence/structure has supported the integrated delivery of the county programme results, including responding to emerging megatrends (e.g. demographic shifts such as a rapidly aging population and low fertility, increased frequency of, overlapping and protracted humanitarian emergencies; people on the move/migration, urbanization and climate change)?

Once a consensus has emerged around what should be the CPE key questions, the CPE manager must ensure that participants collectively determine which questions should be prioritized. The evaluation questions are organized around criteria which provide different lenses or perspectives through which the country programme interventions can be assessed: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and, for country programmes that include circumscribed and limited humanitarian and/or emergency interventions, the criteria of coverage and connectedness (see section 2.2.2.1).

Formulating and selecting the evaluation questions is an essential part of the CPE preparation phase. As they form the backbone of the CPE, the evaluation questions must be relevant, useful, feasible, and integrative.

- **Relevant:** the questions should not simply replicate questions typically asked in diverse CPE reports undertaken by other COs, or already covered as part of other project evaluations (undertaken by the CO) or UNFPA centralized evaluations. Instead, it is essential that each evaluation question is grounded in the country programme (its theory of change and its implementation context), and is of direct interest to UNFPA, its partners and the country programme stakeholders.
- **Useful:** the questions must address high-level or strategic themes or concerns and help resolve issues in decisions to be made by the CO in consultation with its governmental partners and the programme stakeholders. The response should provide information to be used for evidence-based decision-making, notably for the formulation of the next country programme.
- **Feasible:** the questions must be within the ability of the evaluators to carry them out, bearing in mind the CPE methodology, as well as time and funds available. It is important to be realistic about the scope of the CPE and ensure that the collection of data (as well as their analysis) can be completed within the limited time and resources available to the evaluation team. Sometimes, an evaluation question may appear feasible, but, as the evaluators undertake the design phase, it can prove otherwise. In this situation, the evaluation team, in consultation with the evaluation manager and the ERG, will rephrase and refocus the question.
- **Inclusive:** reflecting the contextual factors of the country programme interventions and as the key groups that are "left behind" have been identified, the questions should incorporate issues of human rights, equity, gender equality, disability inclusion, and the principle of LNOB. The responses should generate learning and knowledge in respect to how to promote and address the needs of those marginalized and vulnerable groups in a more systematic and effective manner in the next country programme.

To narrow the evaluation questions down to a list of 6 to 8 questions, the workshop participants need to consider issues such as:

- Does the question focus on a critical or major issue, or is the question merely of interest at this specific point in time?
- Does the question focus on higher-level (contribution to outcomes) transformative results of strategic importance rather than activities implementation and output targets?
- Will the CPE purpose and objectives (see R2U ToR, section 4) be compromised if this question is dropped?
- Is it possible to adequately answer the question within the timeframe and budget limits of the CPE?
- Who will use the response to the evaluation question? (every stakeholder has a vested interest in that which is being evaluated, and not all stakeholders are in a position to use the information generated by each question; it may therefore be necessary to discuss with some stakeholders if it is not feasible to retain some of their preferred evaluation questions, and find common ground).
- Will the question provide information that can be acted upon to make improvements in the next programming cycle?
- Is the response to the evaluation question not already known? Is there another evaluation likely to provide the answer?

As potential users of the evaluation findings, the input of the country programme stakeholders is essential to establishing the focus and direction of the CPE. By inviting them to share their opinions, interests, concerns and priorities, the results of the CPE are more likely to address their specific information needs and be useful for a range of purposes, first among them to inform the design of the next programming cycle. Having the country programme stakeholders participate in the formulation and prioritization of the questions is also a means of fostering their greater involvement in the evaluation process and more active collaboration with the evaluation team. They will more actively cooperate with the evaluation team during data collection. Those who are members of the ERG will be more willing to provide feedback on the evaluation deliverables (design report, CPE report). They will also more readily participate in the co-creation of the recommendations (see section 4.3), will be more active in the communication of the evaluation results, and will be more inclined to make a tangible use of the evaluation results.

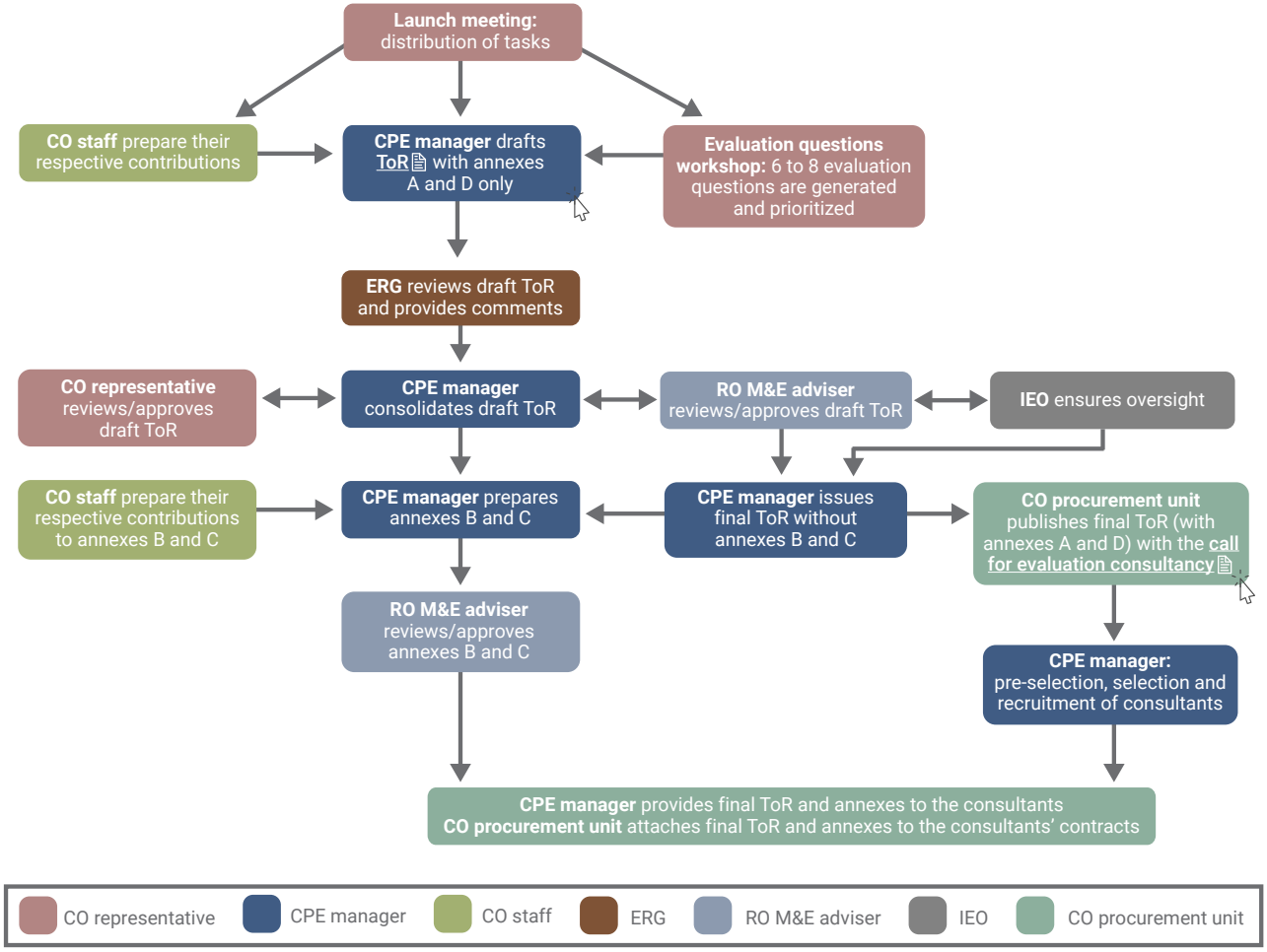
1.4 Drafting the terms of reference

The development of the ToR is a critical step in the implementation of the CPE. The ToR provides the framework for the conduct of the CPE: it defines the objectives and scope of the evaluation; spells out the evaluation criteria and specifies the preliminary evaluation questions; and presents a tentative time frame and work plan (annex D of the ToR). The ToR also articulates the qualifications and experience requested from the evaluation consultants, as well as their roles and responsibilities and those of the CPE manager and other stakeholders. As the basis for the contractual arrangements with the evaluation consultants, clear, comprehensive and well-written ToR are crucial to ensure the smooth implementation of the CPE.

The CPE manager must use the R2U ToR template to draft the CPE ToR. The R2U ToR template provides fully drafted sections that require minimal adaptation. Thus, the template aims at streamlining the preparation phase, allowing COs to focus on the most critical aspects of the ToR, most importantly the development of context-specific evaluation questions through a participatory process. It also helps to reduce the lead time

in the drafting, review and approval of CPE ToRs. Ultimately, this should help avert delays, enable the CO to recruit an evaluation team in time so that the evaluation can start as planned, and ensure a CPE report is available in time to inform the design of the next country programme cycle.

Figure 3: *Process for drafting the CPE terms of reference*



It is important to note that the development of a CPE ToR (including the annexes) is a team effort. Under the leadership of the CO senior management and the guidance of the CPE manager, the development of the ToR (and its annexes) requires the contribution of many staff in the CO. The CPE ToR should be developed in two stages:

1. **ToR - main body:** the CPE manager uses the R2U ToR template to draft the main body of the CPE ToR (incl. section 14: Bibliography and Resources), with the contributions of relevant CO staff and with quality assurance by the regional M&E adviser. Once the ToR is approved by the RO, the CO publishes the call for the evaluation consultancy, using the final ToR (with its annexes A and D).[5]

2. **ToR - annexes:** as the call for evaluation is published and the selection of consultants proceeds, the evaluation manager, with the contributions of all relevant staff in the CO, proceeds with the completion of the annexes. Upon recruitment of the evaluation consultants, the evaluation manager shares all annexes with the evaluation team, as these are crucial for the development of the design report.

5 The CPE ToR annexes B and C and will be inserted in the ToR provided to the selected consultants upon their recruitment. See R2U ToR explanatory note.

This two-stage process ensures that: (i) annexes, which may contain confidential information, are shared with the selected evaluation team only; and that (ii) the evaluation manager has more time to seek input from relevant CO staff and to complete all annexes (e.g. stakeholder map and the list of interventions). Meanwhile, (iii) the process (at times, lengthy) for pre-selecting, pre-qualifying, selecting and recruiting the consultants can start.

1.5 The evaluation reference group

The ERG is formed by key internal and external evaluation stakeholders who act as technical advisers throughout the evaluation process. They review and provide comments on the ToR as well as the design report and CPE report. They also participate in the formulation of the CPE recommendations (see section 4.3) and support the dissemination of the evaluation results. As representatives of key stakeholders of the UNFPA country programme, selected members of the ERG will also be interviewed by the evaluation team.

The ERG is composed of both internal and external experts and stakeholders and reflects a balanced representation of the stakeholders with whom the CO has engaged in the course of the design and implementation of the country programme. Within UNFPA, the ERG should include the deputy (head of programmes) or assistant representative, lead technical CO staff from all outcome areas, the operations manager, the CPE manager and the RO M&E adviser as well as select RO technical advisers. In addition, and in consultation with the relevant government partner that coordinates the country programme, the ERG includes implementing partners, key government institutions, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors and other development (and humanitarian, where applicable) partners, representatives of rights-holders organizations (with specific attention to marginalized groups and young people[6]), and external people (such as academia) with expertise in thematic areas relevant to the country programme or in evaluation methodology.

Once identified, the UNFPA government partner or the CO representative (on behalf of the government partner) sends a formal invitation to the proposed ERG members, together with: (i) the CPE draft ToR, and (ii) the ToR for the ERG, prepared by the CPE manager.

1.6 The evaluation team (stage 2)

The selection of consultants for a CPE must be conducted in a transparent and competitive manner, whether contracting a professional consultancy firm or recruiting individual consultants. The call for evaluation consultancy template and guidance for publication provides the format and process for advertising the evaluation assignment. The CPE ToR (with its annexes A and D) are attached to the call for consultants.

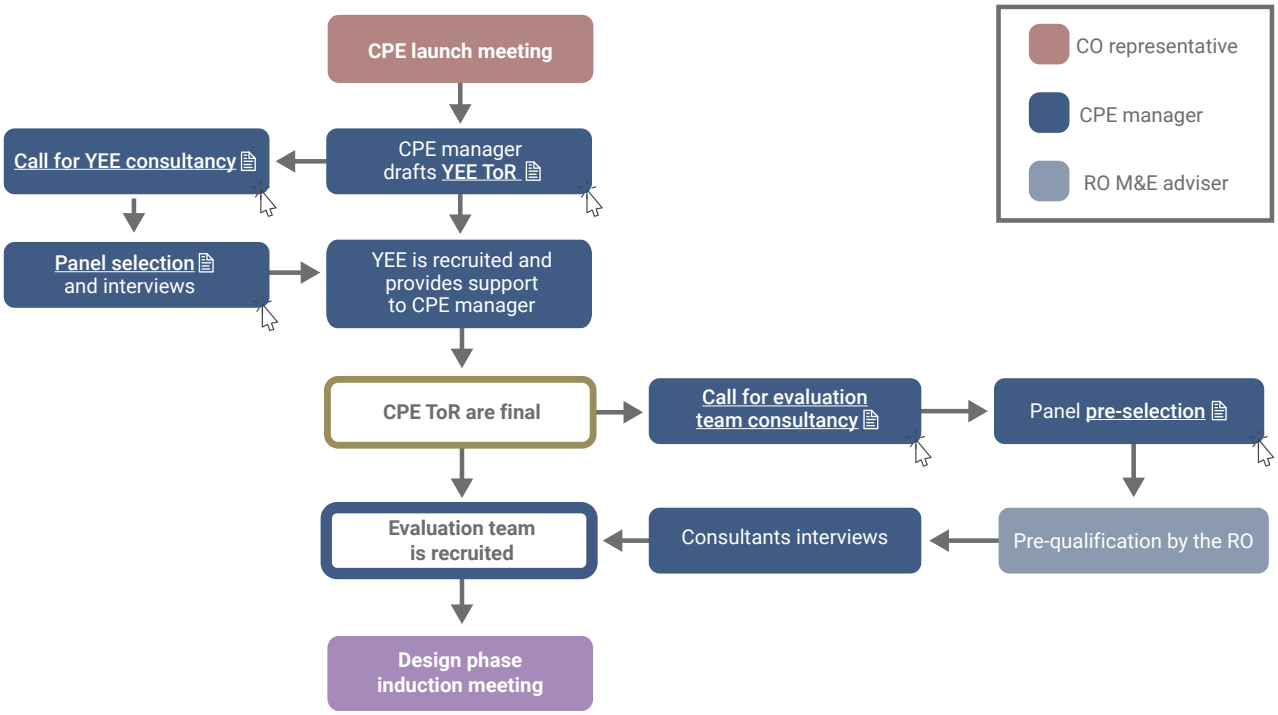
The CPE manager may invite applications from suitable potential candidates included in: the pre-qualified CPE consultant directory; the UNFPA consultant roster; consultant rosters of the UN resident coordinator Office or other UN agencies; among candidates recommended by the RO M&E adviser or other individuals in the CPE manager's network; or among members of teams who have conducted evaluations managed by the UNFPA Independent Evaluation Office. The most recent Policy and Procedures for Contracting Individual Consultants (2022) provides detailed guidance to the CPE manager on the recruitment process of individual consultants. The policy sets out the conditions and procedures for contracting the temporary services of individuals as international and local consultants at all UNFPA locations. The CPE manager is

6 On the engagement on youth in the CPE process, see the guidance on leveraging the power of youth in evaluation.

required to familiarize him/herself with this policy for the recruitment and onboarding of consultants. Please note that the Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) is necessarily a "living document" subject to changes and updates, therefore, the CPE manager is required to check the PPM for the most updated policy on contracting individual consultants at the inception of the evaluation process.

After the closing of the call for evaluation consultancy, the CPE manager initiates the pre-selection process. They invite the assessment panel[7] to review the applications (placed in a folder on an Online Document Repository to which the panel members have access). The CPE manager chairs the panel, instructing members how to assess each applicant's CV and how to complete the Consultation Pre-Selection Scorecard with a view to ensuring a balanced, transparent recruitment process based on consultants' qualifications, experience and skills. The CPE manager shares the completed scorecard and related CVs with the RO M&E adviser for pre-qualification. It is highly recommended that the CPE manager and the panel conduct interviews of those candidates pre-qualified by the RO prior to making the final decision and proceed with the recruitment of the evaluation team.

Figure 4: *Process for recruiting the evaluation team*



In addition to having the appropriate combination of experience and skills, all evaluators must also be free of any conflict of interest (actual or perceived) that could render them ineligible to participate in the CPE. This means that those who cannot be recruited are: (i) any person who has participated in the design or implementation of the country programme under evaluation (actual conflict of interest); (ii) ex-UNFPA staff from the CO (real or perceived conflict of interest); (iii) current government employees (perceived or actual conflict of interest). On the other hand, consultants who have participated in monitoring and/or evaluation work related to the country programme can be considered.

7 The panel of at least 3 people should include one external person (e.g. M&E staff from the government partner coordinating the country programme, an M&E officer serving in another UN agency, etc.).

The evaluation team typically consists of an international or regional team leader and two national team members with experience in one or more thematic areas pertaining to the UNFPA strategic plan. However, should the panel identify a national consultant presenting all credentials to take on the role of team leader and having no conflict of interest, the CO may consider having a team composed of nationals only. The team must be multidisciplinary and demonstrate that, together, they have the skill mix necessary to address the UNFPA thematic areas relevant to the country programme (often, a combination drawn from sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equality and women's empowerment, adolescents and youth, and population dynamics). In countries facing humanitarian situations, at least one consultant should have expertise in this area, with relevant in-country humanitarian experience and understanding of the humanitarian sector reform and architecture.[8]

Collectively, the team - and notably the team leader - should also have experience and skills in evaluation methodology, including experience in conducting gender and human rights-responsive evaluations. They should have proven experience in collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data, and in conducting key informant interviews and focus group discussions, as well as implementing surveys. The team must have a good knowledge of the social, economic and cultural context of the country, with at least one or two members having extensive relevant in-country work experience.

Of particular importance is that all team members, and especially the team leader, have strong analytic, writing and presentation skills in the language in which the final report is to be delivered. The team leader must also be able to support team members to implement a sound theoretical approach to evaluation. They must demonstrate a command of mixed-method approach to identify the contribution UNFPA interventions have made to a set of changes (at outcome level), as based on the country programme theory of change (see section 2.2). The team leader will also cover one thematic area, which can vary depending on the availability of other thematic consultants and the expertise of the team leader selected. The full requirements of the team leader and each team member (including the YEE in the event that they were not recruited at the beginning of the preparation phase - see section 1.2) are provided in the R2U ToR (see sections 12.1 and 12.2). Under no circumstances shall the YEE be hired as a thematic expert covering a programmatic area of the CPE.

Box 2: Process for the pre-selection, pre-qualification, selection and recruitment of consultants

- ☑ Publish call for evaluation consultancy with CPE ToR (with annexes A and D only)
- ☑ Invite suitable applicants to apply
- ☑ Place applications on the online document repository and alert assessment panel
- ☑ After close of the call, instruct the panel on how to assess consultant CVs against the consultant pre-selection scorecard
- ☑ Share completed scorecards and CVs with the RO M&E adviser for input and approval
- ☑ Undertake selection of consultant team among those candidates pre-qualified by the RO M&E adviser
- ☑ Initiate the process for recruitment of consultants with CO operations staff in full compliance with UNFPA Policy and Procedures for Contracting Individual Consultants

8 See ALNAP Evaluation of humanitarian action and Handbook for coordinating gender-based violence interventions in emergencies as useful sources of guidance.

Prior to starting their assignment (see Phase 2: Design), the CPE manager must ensure that:

- Each consultant takes the UNFPA e-learning course on country programme evaluations
- Each consultant takes the UN e-learning courses BSAFE and Prevention of sexual harassment and abuse
- The CO issues a facilitation letter for obtaining a visa (if required) in a timely manner for consultant(s) recruited internationally
- The CO provides assistance to the consultants in organizing their accommodation in the capital city
- Electronic name badges (or visitor passes) are ready so consultants can easily enter the UN premises during their stay
- A security briefing for the consultants is scheduled in application of mandatory UNDSS requirements.

1.7 The document repository

It is crucial to identify the core documentation required for the CPE ahead of time and ensure it is readily available to the evaluators (via an Online Document Repository) as soon as they begin the assignment. The CPE manager, with the support of the YEE and in collaboration with relevant CO staff, must use the document repository checklist and file all requested documents. The checklist provides a detailed overview of the folder structure and the key documents within each folder. It also helps track the filing status and indicates the persons or units responsible to upload each document. Without a comprehensive set of well-organized and easily accessible documents, the evaluators will not be able to undertake the documentary review necessary to design the CPE.

1.8 The catalogue of UNFPA interventions

The CO annual reports, annual results plans, and annual work plans (AWPs)[9] form the basis for consultants to gain a comprehensive overview of the activities planned and undertaken by the CO and implementing partners to address each output and outcome during the period of evaluation. These documents indicate the extent of completion of planned activities and the main challenges faced, allowing the evaluators to reflect on how far the country programme achieved meaningful outputs and has contributed to the intended outcomes. All these documents should be accessible in the document repository. UN joint programmes and joint work plans and reports are also to be included for the evaluators' review.

With the support of the CO staff and the YEE, the CPE manager must compile (in Excel format) a list of all intervention budgets and expenditures for the period under evaluation and share this with the evaluators at the start of the design phase. A template is available in the R2U ToR annex C, with a guidance note on Establishing the list of UNFPA interventions. The evaluators need to review the annual financial data on intervention budgets and expenditures, and must gain a clear understanding of all that was planned and/or implemented (including revisions to the original country programme) during the programme cycle. The list of interventions will also help evaluators identify key partners and stakeholders that should be consulted as part of the evaluation process.

9 AWPs to be submitted to the evaluators include the CO AWPs (in their original and revised versions) as well as the implementing partners AWPs.

1.9 The stakeholder map

The CPE manager and the evaluators need a comprehensive overview of the country programme stakeholders: government, non-governmental organization (NGO) and civil society organization (CSO) partners, women- and youth-led organizations, donor partners, UN agencies, academia, and rights-holders, including representatives of different population groups among UNFPA country programme intended beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable. The stakeholder map includes people who have been involved in both the preparation and the implementation of the country programme, as well as those who have been directly or indirectly affected by its implementation.

The R2U ToR annex B provides two tables that the CPE manager (with the contribution of relevant CO staff) must complete, annex to the final ToR and make available to the evaluators at the start of their assignment. The stakeholders serve as essential sources of information for the evaluators, when, during the field phase, they collect quantitative data and qualitative data for the analysis of UNFPA support and contribution to each outcome of the country programme. The evaluators will use the stakeholder map as the basis to undertake the stakeholder sampling during the design phase (see section 2.3).

As explained in this chapter, the preparation phase lays the foundation for the implementation of the next phases of the CPE, from the design of the evaluation to the dissemination and facilitation of use of its results. The CPE manager must ensure that all preparation work is finalized before the contracted evaluators start the design phase (see Phase 2: Design). Notably, the CPE manager must provide them with the complete ToR with all annexes (R2U ToR), which includes the stakeholder map (ToR annex B) and the list of UNFPA interventions (ToR annex C). They must also give the evaluation team access to the fully filled document repository prior to the start of the design phase. The successful and timely completion of all tasks in the preparation phase increases the potential for delivering a good quality report and, thus, merits careful consideration on part of the CO representative, the CPE manager and the staff in the CO.

Phase 2
Design

During the design phase, the evaluation team sets the overall framework for the CPE. It consists in specifying the evaluation questions and identifying the required methods for collecting and analyzing the data that will allow the evaluators to provide evidence-based answers to the questions.

The CPE takes a pragmatic approach that draws on contribution analysis to help the evaluators analyze the link between observed changes and UNFPA interventions, and provide a credible cause-and-effect assessment. This approach relies on the country programme theory of change (the various levels of objectives and their translation into diverse levels of expected effects) and the ability of the evaluators to critically analyze its logic. The theory of change will guide the evaluators as they assemble reliable information and establish whether and how the UNFPA interventions produced the desired changes, while considering other factors that may also influence the county programmer outcomes.

Table 2: *Main activities and responsible entities in the design phase*

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Kick-off	**Induction meeting(s)** between CPE manager and evaluation team	CPE manager, evaluation team
	Orientation meeting with CO representative and relevant UNFPA staff with evaluation team	CO representative, evaluation team, CPE manager, CO staff, RO M&E advisor
Desk review	In-depth understanding of the UNFPA country programme through the review of wide-ranging documentation	Evaluation team. Support from CPE manager to obtain additional documents as needed

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
First round of interviews	Interviews with CPE manager, CO management and relevant CO staff, members of the ERG, and key stakeholders as appropriate	Evaluation team. Support from CPE manager to secure and organize meetings and interviews
Evaluation approach	• Critical analysis of the country programme theory of change • Refinement of evaluation questions (assumptions for verification) • Setting up the evaluation matrix • Development of the evaluation approach, including data collection tools and sampling method	Evaluation team
Fieldwork preparation	• Preparation of the stakeholder sampling and sites selection • Setting up the field phase agenda	Evaluation team assisted by CPE manager and relevant CO staff
	Making all logistical arrangements (see section 3.1)	CPE manager with support from relevant CO staff and implementing partners
Initial communications plan	Develop an initial plan for communication and facilitation of use of the CPE results	CPE manager and CO communication officer
Design report version 1	Drafting the design report (including annexes)	Evaluation team with guidance by CPE manager
	Quality assurance	Team leader
Quality Assurance	Quality assurance	CPE manager and RO M&E adviser
	Improvements are needed	• CPE manager requests a revision of the report; • Team leader makes changes (support from team members as needed)
	Design report version 1 passes the quality control	CPE manager shares the design report with the ERG

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
ERG meeting	Presentation of design report to the ERG (meeting)	CPE manager, ERG members, RO M&E adviser, evaluation team
	CPE manager consolidates comments and shares with evaluation team	CPE manager
Design report version 2	Revision of design report version 1 based on ERG comments	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance	Team leader
Quality assurance	Quality assurance	CPE manager with RO M&E adviser
	Improvements are needed	• CPE manager requests changes • Team leader makes changes (support from team members as needed)
	Design report version 2 passes the quality control	In consultation with the RO M&E adviser and the CO representative, **the CPE manager formally approves the design report**

2.1 Preliminary tasks in the design phase

2.1.1 Orientation

Depending on the country's context and circumstances (cost implications, environmental footprint, availability of the international consultant to travel, etc.), the CPE manager, after discussion with the CO representative, and in consultation with the team leader, may elect to organize part or all of the design phase remotely.[10] Should the CO opt for a design phase conducted in a remote manner, it is the responsibility of the CPE manager (with the support of the YEE and relevant CO staff) to ensure that all activities and actions described in this chapter can smoothly take place using the appropriate virtual team communication tools (video conferencing, file storage and collaboration tools, etc.). When in-country, the CPE manager must ensure that the evaluators have adequate working space and basic facilities (e.g. access to the internet and to a printer) in the CO.

In an **induction meeting**, the CPE manager welcomes the evaluation team and ensures they have a clear understanding of their assignment as well as easy access to all the documentation necessary to perform their tasks in the design phase. The main focus of the induction meeting should be an open discussion on

10 While the locally recruited consultants (team members and YEE) are in-country, the team leader (often recruited internationally) could lead the design phase remotely and could join the team in person for the field phase.

the CPE ToR (including annexes) and of the UNFPA CPE methodological guidance with a view to ensuring a common understanding of the CPE objectives, process and approach. The CPE manager and the team leader verify that all team members are well versed in the UNFPA methodology (as described in the Handbook), and provide additional explanation and support where needed. Induction is also the time for the CPE manager to explain the CPE governance structure and quality assurance process, including the role, responsibilities and membership of the evaluation reference group (ERG). The CPE manager presents the CO organogram with a detailed list of the CO staff (including in sub-offices), with their contact information and position. The evaluators and the CPE manager agree on a tentative timeline for the design phase, the submission of the design report (version 1) and the first ERG meeting. Finally, the CPE manager shares the UNEG Code of conduct[11] for the evaluators' review and signature.

The CPE team induction includes the assignment, by the team leader in concertation with the CPE manager, of roles and responsibilities (e.g. who will be responsible for drafting specific sections of the design report) bearing in mind the number of days allocated to each consultant and to the YEE. This is also the time to set the rules of interaction (communication within the evaluation team and with the CPE manager and other CO staff) for an effective implementation of the CPE. Finally, the evaluation team prepares for the upcoming orientation meeting with the CO. In particular, evaluators should identify the key issues and questions to raise during the orientation meeting, which will mark their first interaction with the CO senior management and personnel.

The **orientation meeting** brings together (virtually and/or in the CO premises) the CO staff and the evaluation team. The CPE manager (in collaboration with the relevant CO staff) has prepared a presentation and should invite the respective CO programme leads and operations staff to present the slides relevant to their areas of responsibility. The meeting addresses the main thematic areas of the UNFPA country programme, UNFPA positioning, management, financial and administrative structures as well as the CPE objective, scope and approach.

Box 3: Presentation made by the CO staff to the evaluation team during the orientation meeting

1. Objectives of the CPE
2. Geographical map of UNFPA programme areas
3. Roadmap of the CPE (with indicative dates for each deliverable and meeting)
4. Main roles and responsibilities of CPE manager, evaluation team, CO staff, RO M&E adviser, IEO
5. The ERG: composition and responsibilities
6. Theory of change of the country programme
7. The CPE approach: a contribution analysis based on the country programme theory of change
8. Overview of each country programme thematic area (outputs, contribution to outcomes, progress achieved, challenges)
9. Cross-cutting issues: human rights-based approach, gender equality, LNOB and reaching the furthest behind

11 The CPE manager will call the attention of the evaluators to the UNEG Norms and standards for evaluation, Ethical guidelines for evaluation, Code of conduct for evaluation in the UN system, and Guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations.

10. Overview of CO management structure (including sub-offices)
11. Overview of the country programme financial structure[12]
12. Preliminary evaluation questions
13. The evaluation matrix
14. What the CPE is *not* (stressing that the CPE is not an assessment of activities implementation or outputs achievements)
15. The CPE stakeholder map
16. Structure of the design report
17. Next steps in the design phase.

2.1.2 Desk review and first round of interviews

At the design phase, extensive document review forms the bulk of the evaluators' work, starting with the CPD, and an in-depth analysis of the country programme theory of change and integrated results and resources framework. The evaluators' documentary review also includes: CO annual work plans (AWPs) and annual reports (COARs), previous evaluation reports (earlier CPE, project evaluations and mid-term reviews, research studies), project documents (such as progress and monitoring reports), donor and joint programme reports, technical studies/reports, statistical reports, audit reports, etc. Evaluators must also review the national household surveys (DHS, MICS). Finally, the evaluation team must consult the UNFPA centralized evaluations that are germane to the country programme thematic scope.

The key documents for the evaluators' review are provided in the online document repository set up by the CPE manager. As they move forward in the design (and then field) phase, the evaluators will complement this initial batch with additional documents they will identify or that will be brought to their attention by CO staff, the country programme implementing and other partners (e.g., relevant evaluations by other UN agencies, international NGOs or other partner organizations, etc.). At the design phase, the evaluators must complement their document review with interviews (or group discussions) with the CO staff (senior management, programme officers, etc.) as well as members of the ERG. The evaluators must talk with stakeholders about how they understand UNFPA interventions work —or are intended to work – what are the intended outcomes and how stakeholders think they may be achieved. Thus, an indepth document review further informed by interviews with people being (or having been) involved in the design, management and supervision of the country programme interventions, constitute the requisite steps for the evaluation team to understand the logic of the UNFPA interventions and undertake a review of the country programme theory of change as set up at the beginning of the programme cycle.

2.2 The evaluation approach and methods

2.2.1 A theory-based approach to conduct a contribution analysis

The central tenet of the CPE is the country programme theory of change and the analysis of its logic and internal coherence. The evaluation team reviews the logical framework as set up at the beginning of the

12 The financial review should include at least: budget and expenditure over time (period of the evaluation); budget and expenditure by thematic area over time (by year); and budget and expenditure (by year) by core and non-core funding, by implementing agency/partner, by mode of engagement and by gender contribution.

programme cycle and analyzes the intervention logic, or how the programme is expected to bring about the intended results. As they analyze the theory of change, the evaluators pay particular attention to: the context in which the interventions take place; the needs to be met and problems to be addressed; the mode of engagements and the nature of implemented activities; the steps in the results chain (outputs and subsequent outcomes); the cause-and-effect assumptions behind the various links and the risks to those assumptions; as well as other external factors that may affect the results. Their comprehension of the theory of change is instrumental for guiding their data collection tools and analysis methods and assembling evidence about the contribution made by UNFPA to various levels of intended changes. Contribution analysis is based on the recognition that proving attribution is often not feasible or not practical, while assessing causal connections allows evaluators to consider progress towards outcomes, and to come to credible conclusions about the contribution made by UNFPA to the observed results. The contribution analysis will also guide the evaluators in their analysis of how and why the UNFPA interventions have made a difference – or not – and for whom.

Thus, the CPE consists of a contribution analysis of the country programme to specific outcomes in relation to the UNFPA three transformative results in the country. To this end, the focus of the evaluation must be placed on the level of achievements of outputs and how they have contributed to the achievement of outcomes. Evaluators should only assess activities (specific technical, financial, advocacy, partnership and dialogue inputs from UNFPA that combine with partner efforts to achieve the outputs) insofar as they account for the observed level of results achieved. Gathering data on actual outputs' achievement, and comparing them with planned outputs, is an important, albeit insufficient aspect of the evaluation. The evaluators must go beyond a measurement of outputs' achievement and must assess the extent to which the outputs have contributed to outcome level changes.

Box 4: UNFPA theory of change and the three transformative results

The theory of change addresses why and how change happens in the context of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025. The theory of change presents a holistic view of the causal and enabling conditions that must be in place to achieve the three transformative results that UNFPA committed to achieving by 2030:

1. End the unmet need for family planning, including modern methods of contraception
2. End preventable maternal deaths
3. End gender-based violence and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child marriage.

The theory of change also cites the research and evidence underpinning the relationships between these conditions and the three transformative results, and spells out the risks and assumptions that may impede the results chain from occurring.[13]

Adopting a contribution analysis framework will allow the evaluation team to explore attribution through assessing the contribution the UNFPA country programme has made to observed results. It aims at verifying the theory of change behind the country programme while, at the same time, explicitly recognising other factors which combine with UNFPA interventions to produce the intended effects. Causality is inferred from the following evidence:

13 A useful resource to help evaluators in their review of the theory of change can also be found at UNDAF - Guidance on theory of change.

- The country programme is based on a reasoned theory of change: the assumptions behind why the programme is expected to work are sound, are plausible, and are agreed upon by at least some of the key players
- The modes of engagement are appropriate
- The activities of the programme were implemented
- The country programme theory of change is verified by evidence: the chain of expected results occurred
- Other factors influencing the programme were assessed and were either shown not to have made a significant contribution or, if they did, the relative contribution was recognised.[14]

With a contribution analysis, evaluators will be able to assess the extent to which the UNFPA country programme (or components of it) made a difference in terms of being a necessary part of a (broader) package of factors which, together, brought about or contributed to important changes/transformations. When conducting their contribution analysis, the evaluators should also bear in mind the criteria that UNFPA introduced in the strategic plan 2022-2025.[15]

Box 5: Key features of the change story (strategic plan, 2022-2025[16])

In the strategic plan 2022-2025, UNFPA strengthened the focus on the theory of change as follows:

1. Anchoring the theory of change on the achievement of **three transformative results**
2. Factoring in the theory of change a **human-rights based approach** by prioritizing the three main human rights-based approach components: (a) non-discrimination and equality, (b) accountability and; (c) quality of services and reaching marginalized populations
3. Including **structural barriers or root causes** that can impede the achievement of results, even when the necessary conditions are in place
4. Demonstrating 'many to many' relationships between outputs and outcomes to promote **integrated programming**, without which achieving the 2030 commitments, including the achievement of the transformative results can be more difficult
5. Introducing fewer **determinants** that more directly influence the achievement of the transformative results that facilitates the acceleration of the Programme of Action of the ICPD
6. Introducing **intermediate results between the outcomes and outputs**, to complete the results pathway
7. Integrating the lessons learned from responding to the **COVID-19 pandemic**
8. Using the **'storytelling' approach** to communicate the change story of the strategic plan to a broader range of stakeholders in an effective manner

14 John Mayne, Contribution analysis: and approach to exploring cause and effect, ILAC Brief 16, May 2008.

15 UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025 (DP/FPA/2021/8), Annex 2: Change story of accelerating the three transformative results, p3.

16 UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025 (DP/FPA/2021/8).

9. Introducing a set of **accelerators that enhance performance** in achieving the strategic plan results
10. Improving alignment with the **2020 United Nations quadrennial comprehensive policy review** (QCPR) guidelines.

During the course of the implementation of the CPE, the evaluators will return to the country programme theory of change with a view to verifying further how it actually works in practice, identify its possible limitations, and reflect on how it might be strengthened. They might also identify possible unintended consequences (both positive and negative) arising from the achievement of outputs and contribution to outcomes as highlighted in the theory of change. Therefore, the country programme theory of change plays a central role throughout the evaluation process, from the design, throughout the data collection phase and, in the reporting phase, as evaluators develop findings, establish conclusions and formulate recommendations.

The design report dedicates a specific section to the evaluators' detailed analysis of the country programme theory of change (see section 2.4.4). Their analysis begins with the depiction of the causal links explaining how the activities of the interventions are expected to lead to desired results. The depiction of these causal links – or pathways from activities to results - forms the intervention logic of the UNFPA country programme. The analysis of the theory of change allows the evaluators to identify the causal assumptions behind the links (from activities to various levels of objectives and their translation into various levels of expected effects), meaning: what "has to happen" for the causal assumptions to be realized. It is, in fact, the combination of a well-constructed intervention logic and the identification of key causal assumptions (which will be clearly spelt out in the evaluation matrix) that characterizes a theory of change that can usefully guide the implementation of the CPE.

At the end of the CPE, the evaluators will insert, into the final evaluation report, a section dedicated to the country programme theory of change, based on their critical analysis of the interventions logic (at the design phase) and further refined during the course of the CPE as they have collected and analyzed data (see section 4.5).

2.2.2 Specifying the evaluation questions and developing the evaluation matrix

2.2.2.1 The evaluation questions and related assumptions for verification

The evaluation questions delineate the thematic scope of the CPE and form the basis to determine the data the evaluators need to collect. The preliminary evaluation questions developed by the CO (and presented in the CPE ToR at section 5) need to be further specified by the evaluation team during the design phase. The evaluation questions address five evaluation criteria stipulated by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC)[17], relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

17 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Criteria for evaluating development programmes.

Table 3: *Evaluation criteria*

Criterion	Definition
Relevance	The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to rights-holders, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change
Coherence	The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in the country, sector or institution. The search for coherence applies to other interventions under different thematic areas of the UNFPA mandate which the CO implements (e.g. linkages between SRHR and GBV programming) and to UNFPA projects and projects implemented by other UN agencies, international NGOs and development partners in the country
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and results, including any differential results across groups
Efficiency	The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. Could the same results have been achieved with fewer financial or technical resources, for instance?
Sustainability	The extent to which the net rights-holders of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue (even if, or when, the intervention ends)

Impact (the sixth DAC criterion) is beyond the scope of the CPE. Assessing impact requires a different time frame and a different methodology. However, by assessing the contribution of programme outputs to outcomes, the CPE will highlight the extent to which the programme contributes to UNFPA transformative results.

For country programmes that include humanitarian and/or emergency interventions, two additional criteria need to be addressed: coverage and connectedness.[18] These aim to assess the extent to which UNFPA has provided life-saving services to hard-to-reach populations affected by humanitarian situations, working across the humanitarian-peace-development nexus and contributing to build resilience. When assessing humanitarian interventions, the evaluators will not only consider the ability of UNFPA to respond to humanitarian crises but also the extent to which the CO has been able to apply a resilience approach by linking prevention, preparedness, response and early recovery with national capacity building.

18 See: Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria. An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies.

Table 4: *Additional criteria in humanitarian situations*

Criterion	Definition
Coverage	The extent to which major population groups facing life-threatening conditions were reached by humanitarian action. Evaluators need to assess the extent of inclusion bias – that is, the inclusion of those in the groups receiving support who should not have been (disaggregated by sex, socio-economic grouping and ethnicity); as well as the extent of exclusion bias, that is, exclusion of groups who should have been covered but were not (disaggregated by sex, socio-economic grouping and ethnicity)
Connectedness	The extent to which activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account, that is a nexus approach, and that also indicates the complementarity of UNFPA with other partner interventions

The assessment of humanitarian interventions within the framework of a CPE is possible only for crises that are geographically localized and/or limited in time and intensity. Large-scale and/or protracted humanitarian crises are beyond the scope of a standard CPE. These require a specific methodological approach, details of which can be found in the ALNAP Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide, 2016 and the guidance on humanitarian evaluations.

At the design phase, each evaluation question must be accompanied by a number of "assumptions for verification". Articulating these assumptions is a critical task in specifying the evaluation questions. The assumptions encapsulate how the country programme (specific interventions or components) is expected to influence or contribute to the intended results. Thus, for each evaluation question, and based upon their understanding of the theory of change (the different pathways in the results chain and the theory's internal logic), the evaluators formulate assumptions that, in fact, constitute the hypotheses they will be testing through data collection and analysis in order to formulate their responses to the evaluation questions. As they document the assumptions, the evaluators will be able to explain why and the extent to which the interventions did (or did not) lead towards the expected outcomes, identify the critical elements to success, and pinpoint other external factors that have influenced the programme and contributed to change. Ultimately, verifying the assumptions is critical for the evaluators' assessment of the strength and logic of the country programme theory of change.

2.2.2.2 The evaluation matrix

The evaluation matrix constitutes the CPE analytical framework. Within the matrix, the evaluators unpack each evaluation question and specify:

- the evaluation criteria the question addresses
- the assumptions for verification
- quantitative and qualitative indicators to verify or refute the assumptions
- the methods and tools for data collection.

The evaluation matrix is an essential tool for planning and implementing the CPE. It helps the evaluation team identify secondary and primary data, spot information gaps and how to fill them. With the matrix, the evaluators ensure that all data collected is analyzed and triangulated (see section 3.3) to support the development of evidence-based findings in the reporting phase. As such, the evaluation matrix is a key component of the design phase and the CPE manager must verify that the evaluation design is robust and comprehensive. The evaluation matrix is presented under section 4.2 of the design report.

Table 5: *The evaluation matrix template for the design report*

Evaluation question 1- example: To what extent has the UNFPA maternal health programme contributed to ensuring the education, training, and deployment of an adequately skilled/competent, motivated and sustainable midwifery workforce?		
Related to criteria(s): Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency		
Assumptions for verification[19] 1.1: UNFPA maternal health programme inputs regarding norms, standards, policies, and guidelines relating to midwifery contribute to a more enabled policy and regulatory environment for midwives	**Indicators:** 1.1 - National policies, strategies and plans to govern midwifery practice and workforce capacity development, (including: supporting midwifery autonomy, gender-sensitive policies, strategies and plans to recruit, deploy and retain midwives) are adopted and implemented 1.2 - Strengthened regulatory bodies that govern midwifery practice, certification, accreditation, monitoring and accountability and that regulate quality of care, client safety and satisfaction 1.3 - Strengthened policies, guidelines and standards related to supportive supervision, mentorship, professional development, and a safe and conducive work environment	**Methods and tools for data collection:** • Interviews with UNFPA MH/SRHR staff • Interviews with Ministry of Health; Midwives association • Documents review: including national policy, strategy, guidelines for midwifery supportive supervision and mentorship etc.
Note: *Evaluators enter the data that are strictly linked to the assumption and corresponding indicators. If the data is relevant to other assumptions (under another evaluation question), the data must be repeated. All data entries must be drafted in a clear and understandable manner, and are clearly referenced (yet de-anonymised - see sections 3.3 and 4.1).*		

19 An assumption is something that is accepted as true or certain to happen (e.g., if x is in place or done, then y follows). Verifying an assumption is, in effect, testing hypotheses, that is the reasoning behind the selection of a given intervention to achieve certain results. Each evaluation question must include a minimum of two assumptions to be tested for their validity in the implementation of the country programme.

Assumption 1.2: …	**Indicators:**	**Methods and tools for data collection:**
Corresponding data [to be filled during Field phase]		
Assumption 1.3: …	**Indicators:**	**Methods and tools for data collection:**
Corresponding data [to be filled during Field phase]		
Evaluation question 2: To what extent ….		
Related to criteria(s): indicate the criteria(s) the evaluation question relates to		
Assumptions for verification 2.1: ...	**Indicators:**	**Methods and tools for data collection:**
Corresponding data [to be filled during Field phase]		
Assumption 2.2: …	**Indicators:**	**Methods and tools for data collection:**
Corresponding data [to be filled during Field phase]		

The evaluation team together with the CPE manager (and with support from RO M&E adviser as needed) must reflect on whether the evaluation questions (as proposed in the CPE ToR) can realistically be addressed within the assigned time and with the resources allocated. Several factors must be considered, such as: (i) what data is available in secondary sources (documentation, including the internal monitoring and information management systems in the CO)? (ii) How extensive is the data needed to address the questions? (iii) Has sufficient time elapsed for certain interventions to demonstrate tangible effects? While primary sources are essential to provide qualitative data, the evaluation team and the CPE manager must make a realistic assessment of the extent to which it will be possible to access and exploit them. Collecting primary data is time consuming and relies on access to key informants (see section 3.2) and agile logistics (see section 3.1).

The evaluation questions are agreed upon in the design report (as formally approved by the CPE manager), yet fine tuning of the assumptions and/or indicators can still happen at the beginning of the field phase (based on initial data collected). During the field phase, the evaluation matrix is fixed and cannot be amended. As they move forward in data collection, the evaluators will populate the matrix with the (qualitative and quantitative) data obtained through interviews with key informants (incl. group interviews and focus groups discussions), on-site observations, surveys, and their continuing document review. All data will be presented in a clear manner, easy-to-understand by the different categories of CPE users, and entered in the matrix according to the assumption they correspond to. The completed evaluation matrix will be annexed to the final evaluation report (as annex 1).[20]

20 See examples of completed CPE evaluation matrices on the UNFPA evaluation database.

2.2.3 A mixed-method approach

The CPE manager must ensure that the evaluation design rests solidly on a mixed methodology for collecting and combining both quantitative and qualitative data, hence taking stock of the context in which UNFPA operates. The CO implements its interventions in a complex and dynamic economic, social and political environment that affects the ability of the country programme to contribute to UNFPA three transformative results. By using different methods and sources at various points in the evaluation process, the evaluation team will build on the strength of each type of data collection, hence minimizing the weaknesses of any single approach. A mixed-method approach will help the evaluation team increase the reliability of the data collected. The range of methods, their advantages and limitations as well as the benefits stemming from a mixed method design are presented in section 3.2.

The evaluation will primarily use qualitative methods for data collection, including extensive document review, interviews, group interviews and focus group discussion, as well as surveys and on-site observations during the field phase. Qualitative data obtained through a variety of sources and with diverse methods must be complemented with quantitative data to minimize bias and strengthen the validity of findings. The evaluators compile quantitative data through desk review of documents, websites and online databases with relevant financial data as well as data on key indicators that measure progress at output as well as change at outcome levels.

The evaluation matrix is useful to review the CPE design and ensure that, resorting to mixed and complementary methods, evaluators seek the perspectives or concerns of different population groups including marginalized groups, and integrate the principles of LNOB and reach the furthest behind in a systematic and meaningful way.

Box 6: Participation and inclusiveness

The CPE manager and evaluation team should actively seek to involve the UNFPA country programme stakeholders throughout the CPE process, from the preparation phase (evaluation questions) to the design, data collection and analysis, as well as the reporting and dissemination of results. A participatory approach empowers participants to better analyze their own situation which, in turn, leads to better capture and interpretation of data by the evaluators. Participation also helps evaluators produce more reliable findings, and strengthen ownership of the CPE results. Thus, justified from a pragmatic point of view, participation is also based on the fact that it is ethical to involve, in the CPE, those affected by UNFPA interventions. To this end, in its design and implementation, the CPE should be reflective of the principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind, and be inclusive of vulnerable groups and diverse voices. Particular attention should be paid to the participation of women, youth, people with disabilities, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) survivors, and key populations (including LGBTQIA+, sex workers etc.). The CPE manager and evaluators should consider which stakeholders should be involved – why their participation matters, at what stage of the process and in what form – in order to maximize the effectiveness of a participatory and inclusive approach.

Solid data collection methods (and their proper application), as well as an appropriate choice of techniques for data analysis, are key to formulating evidence-based findings (i.e. responses to the evaluation questions). Taking into account the CPE budget and timeline, the data collection methods are determined in connection with each evaluation question and the related assumptions for verification (all clearly spelt out in the evaluation matrix). As a minimum, the evaluation team must identify the appropriate mix of qualitative and quantitative methods that will allow them to gather and analyze sufficient data offering diverse viewpoints and making cross-checking (triangulation, see section 3.3) possible. This approach also helps the evaluators broaden and deepen their understanding of the processes through which results have been achieved, and how these have been affected by the context within which the country programme is being implemented. Finally, achieving an appropriate mix of qualitative and quantitative data is necessary to reduce bias and ensure good quality, validity, reliability, credibility and robustness of the analysis in the evaluation report.

2.2.3.1 Secondary data collection

Gathering secondary data through document review and analysis is the most efficient approach to gain substantial amounts of information in a short period of time. Interviews and discussions, in turn, permit to supplement already documented information, and provide first-hand opinions regarding the country programme. With interviews, the evaluation team will also obtain information and views on the level of achievement of the country programme outputs and UNFPA contribution to outcomes that may not be fully addressed in documents produced by UNFPA.

The in-depth review of internal documents, such as the CPD, UNFPA CO annual and quarterly work plans, annual reports (COARs), mid-term reviews, field mission reports (often contain a wealth of information and action points for improvements/to overcome challenges), or implementing partner work plan progress reports, etc. is an essential focus of evaluators' work during the design phase. The document review enables them to gain a clear understanding of the formal structure of the country programme implementation, coordination mechanisms, the stated objectives and targets of UNFPA support, and the country context in which UNFPA operates. However, evaluators must be well aware of the fact that it is not unusual that UNFPA COARs and other monitoring documents mostly inform activities (e.g., the numbers of midwives trained, upgraded health centers or equipment) and, by large, do not adequately capture the extent to which outputs are achieved and, most importantly, the extent of their contribution to outcomes. Yet, as already indicated, the CPE is not interested in the CO delivery of activities, its focus is on results – e.g. the extent to which staff trained are retained in post and using their new skills to provide better services; the extent to which new assets are being effectively utilized; the extent to which targeted groups benefit from UNFPA support, etc. Beyond UNFPA reports (and national household surveys that can provide some insight on how UNFPA contributed to moving the needle on some key indicators), individual and group interviews, surveys, as well as on-site observations will help the evaluators capture the extent of results actually achieved (see section 3.2).

Table 6: *Advantages and limitations of secondary data collection tool*

Tool	Advantages	Limitations
Documentary review	• Less expensive, time-consuming, and resource-intensive than primary data collection • Use of existing data helps to avoid duplication of efforts and resources and to increase the focus of primary data collection • Useful to identify existing knowledge gaps • Helps finding relevant data and statistics • Allows to validate or complement primary research • Combining and synthesizing the results of multiple studies on a similar topic or question (meta-analysis) helps identify common issues/trends • Referencing authoritative sources enhances the credibility and validity of findings.	• Available data may not be relevant, accurate, or up-to-date for a specific evaluation question or issue • Data may not match the current needs or goals of the CPE • Limited scope: data may not provide enough depth or insight into important qualitative aspects • Possible biases: data obtained from existing sources may be skewed or incomplete due to the agenda or perspective of the source • Possible inconsistencies or incompatibility among data sources due to different definitions or methodologies.

Note: *See Table 10 for advantages and limitations of primary data collection tools: Key informant interview, group interview, focus group discussion, survey, and on-site observation.*

2.2.3.2 Primary data collection

At the design phase, the evaluation team must aim at designing an effective package of mixed primary data collection methods presented in section 3.2. The CPE manager must ensure that, at minimum, the data collection methods include: interview guides for individual interviews, group interviews and focus groups discussions, survey questionnaires as well as standard checklists for on-site observation. To this aim, the evaluation team must first cluster key informants according to their relation to the country programme and the UNFPA CO – such as: programme implementers, UN agencies and other main donors, political decision-makers, rights-holders, and key players in the sector who are not involved in implementing the UNFPA programme. Note that the evaluation questions are not suitable questions for interviews or surveys. They form the basis or reference framework for interview guides or survey questionnaires which, in turn, focus on core issues and themes that evaluators must address with different categories of stakeholders. Preparing an interview guide for each cluster of key informants, will allow evaluators to probe for and obtain more precise and granular data during the interviews. Drafting a set of interview guides will also help the evaluation team cross-check the data obtained in interviews with different (types of) informants and also to ensure they follow up on points raised by interviewees.

Box 7: Developing interview guides: a quick checklist

Note: Although there is no specific number of issues or topics to include in an interview guide, the evaluators need to consider the time available for the interview – usually a minimum of 30-40 minutes for individual interviews, up to 1:30 hour maximum for group interviews and focus group discussions, notably with rights-holders (many are daily wage workers and data collection reduces their time available for income-generating activities).

1. Organize stakeholders by categories
2. Identify the issues or themes that must be raised with interviewees in each cluster, in line with the assumptions to be verified for the evaluation questions; organize them in order of priority
3. Draft questions for each cluster
4. In each cluster interview guide, organize the questions in order of priority
5. Ensure the number of questions is manageable in the time available
6. Ensure appropriate sequencing of the interview (see guidance in Box 12)
7. Ensure gender-sensitive and human rights-based language, approach and content are included (see Box 14).

A technique sometimes used to generate an interview guide is the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, seeking views on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats or limitations in diverse aspects of UNFPA interventions. During the field phase, the evaluators will be able to refine further and tailor the interview guides as they start meeting with informants for individual or group interviews or in focus groups.

The CPE manager must control that the evaluators have mixed the most appropriate data collection methods and have made all the preparatory work: interview guides for each stakeholder categories are drafted; themes for and composition of focus groups are set up; survey questionnaires are completed; checklists for on-site observation are ready, etc. All these tools must be annexed to the design report (annex 1). If the combination of tools is suboptimal, it will lead to an incomplete set of data, as the organization of a new collection approach during the field phase is very challenging. In essence, at the design phase, the methodology should be constructed with a range of practical tools and take into account their advantages and limitations, the conditions for their implementation (see section 3.2), as well as the validation process (see section 3.3 on regular team meetings and triangulation) taking into account the most important threats to the validity of data (see Table 11).

2.3 Stakeholders sampling, sites selection and the field work agenda

At the start of the design phase, the CPE manager provides the evaluation team with a detailed overview of all interventions that UNFPA supports (annex C of CPE ToR), the locations of these interventions, and the stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved as well as those who are affected by the implementation of the country programme. The evaluators must identify a sample of stakeholders and develop a realistic agenda that will allow them to meet with each of them. The evaluators should not aim at a statistically representative sample, but rather an illustrative sample.

The sampling is based upon the stakeholder map attached to the CPE ToR (annex B of CPE ToR). It also results from the evaluation team's documentary review and first round of interviews with the relevant CO management and staff. Hence, the sampling may also include other stakeholders (not initially listed in the CPE ToR annex B) that the evaluators consider important to consult.

Table 7: *Stakeholder selection criteria*

1.	All types of stakeholders relevant to each output/outcome – i.e., ministries and administrative entities, implementing partners and other organizations involved in implementation, execution agencies, donors, rights-holders (incl. the most vulnerable and furthest behind), academia and CSOs. In the case of a CPE that includes a humanitarian component, consider including humanitarian cluster/ sector leads and members in the stakeholder selection.
2.	Stakeholders involved in seemingly well-performing and poorly performing interventions of the country programme.
3.	For each output/outcome, stakeholders associated with ongoing UNFPA interventions as well as with interventions (as per CO AWPs) that have already been completed.
4.	Stakeholders related to interventions implemented in the country capital and interventions implemented in other regions/provinces/districts.
5.	Stakeholders associated with both financially large and financially modest AWPs.
6.	Stakeholders associated with both tested interventions and pilot interventions.
7.	Stakeholders associated with soft-aid activities carried out by the CO.
8.	Stakeholders who work in the same field as UNFPA (e.g. on SRHR, maternal health, or SGBV), but who are neither directly partnering with UNFPA, nor implementing partners.
9.	Whenever relevant, stakeholders that have been involved with interagency projects.

The selection criteria should apply to the actual relationship of the stakeholders to UNFPA outputs and contribution to outcomes (rather than be based on financially designated projects/activities). Once the sampling is done, the evaluators, in a short narrative, must explain the rationale for the selection of the retained stakeholders. They must also explain why some other groups or organizations have not been included, and the potential implications for the evaluation. The evaluators attach the stakeholder sample map to the design report (annex 3).

At the design phase, in consultation with the CPE manager and CO programme officers, the evaluation team will also select a number of sites to visit as part of the data collection work. A UNFPA country programme is typically implemented in different locations and the evaluators will only be able to visit a few. Therefore, the evaluation team needs to develop sound criteria for selecting municipalities, districts or provinces in the country. In the design report, they will present the criteria and provide the rationale for the site selection. The sample of sites should reflect the range of interventions that UNFPA supports, both in terms of thematic

focus as well as considering the varying contexts in which interventions are implemented. In the case of a CPE with a humanitarian component, the evaluation team should ensure that the number of selected sites also includes those where UNFPA has carried out a humanitarian intervention. The evaluation team should also document and justify the potential exclusion of such sites due to possible access, security or logistics constraints.

The sample of stakeholders and sites (and corresponding entries in the CPE agenda) will be consolidated within the final design report, based upon the ERG review and comments. After the initial selection of stakeholders and sites, each evaluation team member, under the supervision of the team leader, must fill a draft field work agenda in the format of a table (see below). When completed, the team leader reviews, makes the necessary amendments and consolidates them into the field phase agenda to be annexed to the design report (annex 6).

Table 8: *The field phase agenda*

Date	Activity/ institution	Person to meet	Position/ role	Stakeholder category	Link with CPD output and outcome	Site location	Telephone number(s)	Email address	Notes
Week 1									
Week 2									
Week 3 etc									

The process of developing the agenda is complex and time consuming. It requires extensive back-and-forth communications between the evaluators, the CPE manager and other CO staff and the country programme implementing partners. The CPE manager plays an instrumental role in setting-up the agenda. They prepare all necessary letters of request,[21] send the invitations to the selected stakeholders and seek confirmation of their availability for an interview (in cooperation with the relevant CO programme staff and implementing partners). Meanwhile, the team leader must ensure that diverse team members do not plan on meeting with the same people, but, instead, consult each other to rationalize and streamline team work. In some cases, it will be appropriate for two team members to interview the same person ; in other circumstances, one team member will undertake an interview and include some additional questions on behalf of another team member (who is covering a different thematic area).

If the field work agenda covers three weeks (duration is determined based upon the evaluation scope as well as the eventual recourse to virtual interviews for some key informants), at least the first two weeks of the agenda should be completed (with all meetings confirmed by the CPE manager) at the end of the design

21 Appropriate protocols must be followed with government senior staff (e.g. department or regional heads) for permission to interview staff under them; hence the selection of persons to interview may need to be made in consultation with the government.

phase. The third week will be finalized as the implementation moves forward; some flexibility is useful indeed as cancellations and/or rescheduling of interviews are unavoidable. Also, additional interviews (with new informants) or follow-up interviews may be necessary based upon the assessment, by the evaluators, of the data collected so far (gaps are identified, further cross-checking is needed, etc.). In fact, some interviews may take place beyond the three-week agenda, as the evaluators enter data analysis and report writing. Then, recourse to virtual interviews can greatly facilitate the final stages of the data collection.

As the sites are selected, the key informants are identified and the agenda is consolidated, it is the responsibility of the CPE manager to ensure that the corresponding logistics are in place. The CPE manager with support from the YEE, is responsible to ensure that all practical arrangements are made well in advance of the start of the field phase to ensure the smooth implementation of the data collection by the evaluation team (see section 3.1).

This is also the time for the CPE manager and the CO communication Officer to develop an initial communication plan to share the CPE results to internal and external audiences. To this end, they use the stakeholder map and define the preliminary target audience (to be revised and augmented as new opportunities for advocacy and communication are identified in the course of the CPE implementation). The CPE manager must present the initial communication plan, together with a provisional budget, to the UNFPA CO representative for their review and approval. Guidance on the communication plan is available in section 5.2.2.

2.4 Drafting the design report

The purpose of the design report is to ensure that there is a common understanding, among the evaluation team, the CPE manager, the CO senior management and staff, as well as the ERG members, of the purpose and scope (and its possible limitations) of the CPE. With the approval of the design report, all parties endorse the evaluation questions and related assumptions for verification and indicators (as presented in the evaluation matrix), the methodology and main research tools, the stakeholder sample and selected sites, as well as the work plan and timeline. The design report also provides an opportunity to the CPE manager and the ERG to check the level of understanding, by the evaluators, of the country context as well as of the UN and UNFPA response.

The drafting of the design report follows a process punctuated by two in-depth quality assurance stages performed on two versions of the design report.

2.4.1 Version 1 of the design report

Under the guidance of the team leader, the evaluation team members write their respective contributions to the first version of the design report, following the outline (and recommended page length) presented in section 2.4.4. The team leader assembles and finalizes the report, ensuring that the design report meets the quality criteria spelt out in: (i) the guidance on evaluation quality assurance and assessment that are relevant for the design report (specifically: the design and methodology criteria) and (ii) the quality assurance checklist (Box 8). After a thorough quality check, they share the report with the CPE manager.

The CPE manager conducts an in-depth quality control of the design report. They must share the report with the regional M&E adviser for their review and guidance.

- Where improvements are needed, the CPE manager requests a revision of the design report, stating those specific changes that need to be made by the evaluation team, and why
- If/when version 1 of the design report passes the quality control, the CPE manager shares it with the ERG members.

Box 8: Design report: quality assurance checklist

Note: The list below broaches the crucial questions the CPE manager must answer when undertaking the quality assurance of the design report. The CPE manager should share this checklist with the ERG members when circulating the draft design report.

- Have the evaluators correctly understood why UNFPA is doing this evaluation? Have they correctly interpreted the purpose and objectives of the evaluation?
- Have the evaluators correctly understood what is being evaluated?
- Does the report show that the evaluators have reviewed the entire country programme, and its components?
- Have they analyzed the country programme theory of change, its logic and internal coherence?
- Have they reviewed what elements of the country context are important to consider in the evaluation?
- Do the evaluation questions, the assumptions for verification and related indicators adequately take into account the relevant aspects of the programme?
- Have the evaluators convincingly explained how they intend to carry out the evaluation?
- Does the design report present a convincing evaluation methodology and approach? Are the tools for data collection adequate?
- Have the evaluators identified the adequate informants (annex 3) and sites to collect the required information with a view to answering the evaluation questions?
- Does the report identify the expected risks and constraints, and does it offer viable options to minimize their effects on the feasibility and quality of the evaluation?

The CPE manager sets the date, time and sends invitations for the ERG meeting.

2.4.2 Evaluation reference group meeting

In anticipation of the meetings, the CPE manager circulates the design report. When tabling the design report to the ERG members, the CPE manager must call their attention and specifically seek their input on some sections: the evaluators' review/critical analysis of the country programme theory of change and the evaluation matrix (for which ERG input is particularly important), as well as the chapters dedicated to the country context and UN/UNFPA response for facts checking. Finally, the CPE manager should invite those ERG members who have expertise in evaluation methods to dedicate much attention to chapters 4 and 5.

The team leader (with contributions from all team members and the CPE manager) prepares a presentation in view of the ERG meeting.

Box 9: Suggested outline for the presentation to the ERG

1. Introduction
2. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation
3. Evaluation roadmap (phases of the evaluation with timeline)
4. The evaluation approach: in-depth analysis of the country programme theory of change
5. Main evaluation criteria and refined evaluation questions with assumptions for verifications
6. Evaluation matrix structure and purpose
7. Data collection tools
8. Stakeholder sampling and sites selection
9. Evaluation report structure
10. Provisional timelines for key deliverables
11. Roles and responsibilities
12. Immediate next steps

The team leader must make sure that all the team members are ready to respond to questions and comments from the ERG relating to their respective areas of responsibility and expertise. The CO representative chairs the ERG meeting and moderates the discussion. The CPE manager is responsible for keeping track of all comments – expressed during the meeting and/or sent in writing – and compiles them in a document to share and discuss with the evaluation team.

2.4.3 Version 2 of the design report

The evaluation team takes stock of the comments received and revises the design report to produce a version 2 which is submitted to the CPE manager for their final review and to determine whether it can be accepted as a final deliverable for the CPE design phase. The CPE manager shares the report with the RO M&E adviser. In consultation with the Regional M&E adviser, the CPE manager conducts an in-depth quality control of the report:

- **Where improvements are needed**, the CPE manager requests a revision of the design report, stating those specific changes that need to be made by the evaluation team, and why
- **If/when version 2 of the design report passes the quality control**, the CPE manager approves the design report which content is now considered final.

2.4.4 Structure of the design report

The requirements for the CPE design report structure and content are detailed below. The maximum length of the report (excluding opening pages and annexes) is 55 pages.

Cover

- Country programme evaluation of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) *[name of country] [cycle of assistance: number]*th Country Programme
- Design report
- Date *[month, year]*

Note: The evaluation team must proofread the design report (correcting typos, grammatical mistakes, and other writing issues) before sharing it with the CPE manager. Evaluators must also pay much attention to the readability and style of the report. In the opening pages, attention will be paid to the spelling of names/ surnames and affiliations, acronyms and abbreviations (only those used in the report must be listed).

Guidance: United Nations editorial guidelines

Opening pages	Length
• Country map indicating areas of UNFPA programme implementation • CPE team and manager (presented in a table)	1 page

Evaluation Team	
Names	*Titles/position in the team*
Name	Evaluation manager, UNFPA *[name of country]* Country Office

• Evaluation Reference Group with detailed information (presented in a table)	1 page

Evaluation Reference Group		
Names	*Title/position*	*Organization*

Table of contents (including page numbering)	2 pages
Tables and figures (providing numbers, titles and page references)	2 pages
Acronyms and abbreviations	2 pages
Key facts table	2 pages

Note on key facts: The table provides information on: (a) basic geographical features (location, land mass, etc.); (b) the government, key political events (e.g. year of independence); (c) the economy (GDP, main economic sectors; unemployment (male/female/youth), health expenditure as % of GDP, inflation rate, Gini index; (d) Demographics: total population, population growth rate, life expectancy at birth (male/female), MMR, neonatal mortality, under 5 mortality rate, rural/urban balance, human development index, literacy rates, gender inequality index; (e) Youth: proportion of population aged under 18; male and female primary and secondary school attendance and/or completion rates, adolescent fertility rate; (f) Total fertility rate, contraceptive prevalence rate (modern methods), unmet need for family planning in currently married women 15-49, births attended by skilled personnel or percentage of births that are facility based; (g) HIV prevalence 15-49 (male and female), HIV prevalence 15-24 (male and female), rural/urban divide, HIV incidence by age group and sex, and by key population, HIV stigma index; (h) Harmful practices, e.g. rates of: child marriage, sexual and GBV, female genital mutilation; (i) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): include country data on all SDGs that are relevant to the CPD and UNFPA mandate. Key facts also highlight progress towards the SDGs obtained from (and referenced to) SDG country reports. For each data entry, the source and year of reference must be provided.

Total number of pages: 6 to 8 pages. Numbering for the report's opening pages is in Roman numerals.

Chapter 1: Introduction		Length
Section 1.1	Purpose and objectives of the evaluation	half page
Section 1.2	Scope of the evaluation: thematic (evaluation questions), geographic, and temporal	1 page
Section 1.3	Purpose of the design report	half page

Note: To draft this section, the evaluators must refer to, and update/augment the information provided in CPE ToR Section 4.

Total number of pages: 2 to 4 pages maximum. Arabic numerals start on page 1 of Chapter 1 to the end of the report (including annexes).

Chapter 2: Country context		Length
Section 2.1	Development challenges and national strategies	4 pages
Section 2.2	The role of external assistance	1 page

Note: Section 2.1 provides a clear presentation of the country context in all areas relevant to the UNFPA country programme, including humanitarian or emergency concerns. This section highlights the main challenges facing the country with regards to population and development, SRHR, adolescents and youth and GEWE (explanation of causal factors and data), as well as the national strategies to address them (how they have evolved over time, their main achievements and limitations). The section comments on those most vulnerable or left behind (e.g. people with disabilities, key populations, SGBV survivors, marginalized and impoverished populations, migrants and displaced populations, etc.). The section outlines national progress

on the benchmarks of the ICPD programme and relevant SDGs 3 and 5 (and other SDGs that influence them). Evaluators must demonstrate a solid command of the country's context and its challenges so they can measure the relevance and responsiveness of UNFPA programming and priorities. **Section 2.2** presents the role of external assistance (current and changes over time) and indicates the main development partners and UNFPA donors. The analysis presents the Official Development Assistance (ODA) dedicated to health and welfare.

Total number of pages: 4 to 6 pages maximum

Chapter 3: United Nations and UNFPA response		Length
Section 3.1	United Nations and UNFPA strategic response	1 page
Section 3.2	UNFPA response through the country programme	1 page
Subsection 3.2.1	The country programme	1 page
Subsection 3.2.2	The financial structure of the UNFPA country programme	3 pages

Note: The Agenda 2030 for sustainable development articulates the overarching UN development response. Of particular relevance for UNFPA, the ICPD, its evolving programmes of action and the commitments made by the country government. All UNFPA interventions are guided by the UNFPA strategic plan 2022-2025 (which has superseded the strategic plan 2018-2021. Evaluators need to take into account which strategic plan was in place when the country programme was developed and what shifts may have occurred to align the country programme with the current UNFPA strategic plan (see the key strategic shifts listed in the UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025). **Section 3.2.1** situates the UNFPA country programme (how it has evolved as compared to the previous programming cycle, and possibly during the current cycle) within the broader United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF), government strategic priorities, and the corporate strategic/normative framework of UNFPA as expressed in its strategic plan. In this section, evaluators also reflect on the UNFPA programme in relation to the SDGs and the ICPD benchmarks. **Section 3.2.2** provides a financial analysis of the programme budget by output and outcome, clearly distinguishing between resource targets (set out in the CPD) and the actual resources mobilized during the programme cycle. It must also address budget utilization by thematic area. The analysis must capture: (a) Assistance (US$) by thematic area (see CPD), and how this has evolved over the implementation of the country programme (further funds sourced etc.) (b) Total budget and expenditure over time (overall budget utilization each year; any significant under-utilization; budget utilization by output); (c) Evolution of budget and expenditure by thematic area/year(*) and analysis of utilization rates; (d) Budget and expenditure by core/non-core funding, implementing agency/ partner, mode of engagement, gender contribution.

**evaluators must single out management costs to the extent possible*

Total number of pages: 6 to 9 pages maximum

	Chapter 4: Evaluation approach	Length
Section 4.1	Analytical approach: contribution analysis and theory of change	5 pages
Section 4.2	The evaluation matrix	2 pages

Note: The CPE methodology (chapters 4 and 5) includes the specific approach that will be used, the evaluation standards that will be followed, the data collection and analysis methods and the rationale for their selection. It also presents considerations for the limitations and risks associated with the proposed methods.

Guidance: Section 2.2 (The evaluation approach and methods); Section 3.3 (The evaluation matrix); Section 4.1 (Developing findings)

Total number of pages: 6 to 8 pages maximum

	Chapter 5: Evaluation methods	Length
Section 5.1	Methods for data collection and analysis	3 pages
Section 5.2	Stakeholder sampling and site selection	3 pages

Note: In closing **Section 5.1**, the evaluators must present the limitations attached to the CPE design. It is expected that they should not seriously weaken the overall validity or the suitability of the methods chosen for data collection and analysis, however these come with inherent risks regarding, for instance: (1) The availability and accessibility of quantitative and qualitative data could be hampered by the inability for the evaluation team to travel and fully observe facilities and engage with community members and other key stakeholders with limited internet connection. To mitigate this, evaluators must maintain close relations with the CPE manager so the field work can be swiftly adjusted as needed; (2) Online surveys, while inexpensive and efficient, often struggle to achieve reasonably high response rates. To mitigate this, the evaluation team will work diligently at identifying the sample frame and, with the CPE manager, will use reminders to improve the response rate; (3) A humanitarian emergency could create a number of limitations, in particular for the evaluation team ability to visit sites, etc. For all limitations/risks identified, the evaluation team, with the CPE manager, must identify the most suitable mitigation measures.

Guidance: Section 3.2 (Data collection); Section 4.1 (Developing findings)

Total number of pages: 6 to 8 pages maximum

	Chapter 6: Evaluation process	Length
Section 6.1	Overview of the CPE process and next steps	1 page
Section 6.2	Evaluation governance: Team composition (with distribution of tasks), CPE manager, ERG	1 page

Chapter 6: Evaluation process		Length
Section 6.3	Quality assurance	half page
Section 6.4	Resource requirements and logistical support from the CO	1.5 page
Section 6.5	Work plan	1 page

References: To draft this chapter, the evaluation team should use a number of resource documents, such as the CPE roadmap and the present Handbook chapters related to the CPE phases (including related activities, deliverables); the CPE ToR on governance and workplan; and guidance on evaluation quality assurance and assessment. The CPE manager must contribute to this chapter, notably for information and specific dates for the completion of the tasks and milestones within the design, field and reporting phases; plan for dissemination and facilitation of use of the CPE results (with CO communication officer input); logistical support.

Guidance: Section 2.3 (Stakeholder sampling, sites selection and the field work agenda); Section 3.1 (Preparing the field phase)

Total number of pages: 5 to 7 pages maximum

Annexes
Annex 1: Data collection tools
Annex 2: List of UNFPA interventions
Annex 3: Stakeholder map
Annex 4: List of persons consulted at design phase and their organizational affiliations/institutions
Annex 5: Bibliography/list of documents consulted
Annex 6: Agenda for the field phase
Annex 7: CPE terms of reference

Note: The annexes include those already provided in the CPE ToR: **Annex 2** (the UNFPA interventions), **Annex 3** (the stakeholder map) as amended and augmented by the evaluation team. The evaluators develop: the data collection tools (**Annex 1**) which, at minimum, must include: interview guides for each stakeholder categories; themes for and composition of focus groups; survey questionnaires; checklists for on-site observation. The evaluators also prepare: the list of persons consulted during the design phase (**Annex 4**); the bibliography listing all documents consulted (**Annex 5**) and the field phase agenda (**Annex 6**). The evaluators may choose to add further annexes as deemed necessary by them in consultation with the CPE manager. Any additional annexes, however, should be placed before the CPE ToR, which must remain as the last annex in the design report.

Phase 3
Fieldwork

The field phase consists of collecting, structuring, and recording data in the evaluation matrix. The matrix allows the evaluators to organize data and map them out to provide a view of how they all fit together so they can be triangulated, analyzed, interpreted, and become meaningful and reliable information.

The field phase is the time when the evaluators collect primary data by means of tools and methods such as: individual and group interviews, focus group discussions, surveys and on-site observation, in accordance with the agenda for the field phase of the CPE, and based upon the stakeholder sampling and site selection carried out at the design phase. In addition, the evaluators continue to rely on secondary data already assembled and compiled during the course of their fieldwork.

A CPE field phase usually lasts about three weeks, depending on the scope of the UNFPA country programme, the geographic spread of the interventions, the number of partners and stakeholders to be interviewed, as well as country-specific challenges. The field phase closes with a debriefing meeting, during which the evaluation team presents the preliminary findings to the ERG and UNFPA CO staff.

Table 9: *Main activities and responsible entities in the field phase*

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Preparing the field phase	All logistical and practical arrangements for data collection are in place	CPE manager with support from CO operations staff, programme staff and field-based staff
Launching the field phase	Kick-off meeting to discuss the data collection work plan, tools, process, etiquette and expected results	Evaluation team with CPE manager (and participation of programme staff and field-based staff as needed)

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Collecting primary data	• Key informant interviews • Post-interview/follow-up questionnaires • Surveys • Group interviews and focus group discussions • On-site observation	Evaluation team with CPE manager's support and oversight
Supplementing with secondary data	Continued review of documentation gathered in the design phase and collected during the field phase	Evaluation team with support from CPE manager
Collecting photographic material	Take photographs during primary data collection	Evaluation team with CO communication officer and CPE manager support and oversight
Filling in the evaluation matrix	Entering data in the evaluation matrix by each team member. Team leader checks that data are recorded regularly, are well organized, triangulated and that gaps are identified and addressed	Evaluation team with quality assurance by team leader
	Regular evaluation team meetings to start analyzing and interpreting the data compiled in the matrix with a view to: (i) identifying recurring issues and emerging themes, as well as (ii) spotting information gaps and explore avenues for further data collection to fill gaps	Team leader calls and chairs team meetings *These meetings must take place at least every other day during data collection*
Analysis workshop	• Detailed review of data collected and assessment of their strength, validity and reliability. • Assessment of the extent to which the information recorded in the evaluation matrix allows for the verification of the assumptions corresponding to each evaluation question. • Spotting issues/areas that may still require further exploration and additional data collection and identification of effective ways to quickly fill gaps. • Identification of preliminary findings (in relation to each evaluation question) to be presented during the debriefing meeting	CPE manager and the evaluation team in a workshop (*to take place in the capital city upon return from the field)*

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Debriefing	• Organization and chair of, as well as note taking for a debriefing meeting with ERG and CO staff	CPE manager
	• Development of presentation related to the coverage and reliability of collected data, and the initial analyses as well as preliminary findings	Evaluation team
	• Participation in debriefing meeting	ERG members; CO staff (senior management, all relevant programme and operations staff and select implementing partners); Evaluation team leader (presenter) and members; CPE manager (chair)
Follow-up	• Consolidation of feedback / comments from debriefing meeting and communication to the evaluation team • Organization of follow-up interviews for the evaluation team • Ensuring access to additional documentation by evaluation team	CPE manager
	• Exit meeting to review: (i) CPE roadmap, agree on the next steps and related deadlines; (ii) the evaluation report structure ; (iii) the EQA grid. • The team leader indicates the distribution of tasks within the evaluation team and deadlines for each team member's contribution.	CPE manager with evaluation team
	• Review of the initial communication plan to make any adjustments as needed	CPE manager with the CO communication officer

3.1 Preparing the field phase

3.1.1 Logistics

The CPE manager is responsible for ensuring that all logistical and practical arrangements for data collection are in place before the start of the field phase. This includes: transportation and travel authorization (the

CPE manager must check requirements with CO Operation team); accommodation; further security briefing if needed; as well as provisions for refreshments and travel allowances for interviewees (in very remote areas, at times, people require a stipend to come to a place that can be reasonably reached by the evaluation team). The CPE manager must make sure that the evaluators complete a travel authorization and, when they return from the field, submit a travel expense claim with supporting documents (such as a vehicle log book, the final agenda of sites visited, receipts from accommodation and other outlays, flight tickets, etc). The CPE manager must follow-up with CO operations on approval of the evaluators' travel expense claims and ensure that they receive the corresponding DSA.

In addition, the CPE manager is responsible for verifying, well in advance, what government authorizations and permits may be needed for field visits at national and regional levels and to arrange any courtesy visits. Where needed, the CPE manager must also organize for a UNFPA staff member (or a government counterpart) to accompany the evaluators on their travels and make introductions. It is important to note, however, that no UNFPA staff, including field-based UNFPA staff (or UNFPA drivers who may provide transportation for the evaluation team), are allowed to participate in or attend any of the data collection activities in order to avoid or minimize the impact of bias during the evaluators' meetings with informants. In close consultation with the team leader, the CPE manager may elect to participate in some data collection activities based on the condition that their participation cannot negatively affect the outcome of the team work. This decision relies heavily on the informants' perception of the CPE manager and of their UNFPA affiliation. In some instances (e.g., focus groups with right-holders), informants may not be aware of the organization supporting the programme or interventions to be discussed and therefore the CPE manager's participation should not impact the discussion or their viewpoints.

Interpreters may also be needed so that evaluators can conduct interviews of rights-holders in local languages. The CPE manager should select interpreters who are well versed in the UNFPA mandate (SRHR, GEWE, PD, MH) and can demonstrate gender-sensitivity (e.g. in some contexts, interviews may need to be assisted by an interpreter of the same gender as the interviewee). To select and contract interpreters, the CPE manager must prepare ToR (including a confidentiality agreement) in line with UNFPA policies and procedures. In sum, the CPE manager must be well aware of and well-prepared for the fact that a CPE entails a noticeable amount of paperwork (e.g travel authorization are also needed for interpreters) to ensure operational compliance during the data collection phase.

In consultation with the relevant CO staff/ programme managers, and with the support of the YEE, the CPE manager must ensure that the meetings between the evaluators and all key informants (for interviews, group interviews or focus group discussions) are scheduled and organized well in advance. To this end, the CPE manager must send, in anticipation of the evaluators' visit, a letter from the CO representative announcing the CPE and kindly requesting stakeholders to make time for the evaluation team (this is especially important for government officials). The CPE manager must also organize the site visits, ensuring, in particular, that the personnel the evaluators need to meet will be on site and available to meet with them on the agreed dates (yet ensuring the evaluation causes no disruption of services). If key informant interviews cannot take place in the stakeholder's office, the CPE manager must ensure that a suitable alternative venue is identified. The CPE manager needs to secure appropriate space (ensuring privacy, refreshments, etc.) for group interviews (or focus groups) ahead of time.

For interviews with people with disabilities and SGBV survivors, a gender-sensitive approach and appropriate venue guaranteeing accessibility and a high level of privacy are necessary. SGBV is an especially sensitive topic to be explored as part of the CPE and the CPE manager must ensure that the evaluators

research this topic with due sensitivity, as well as full respect of ethical and safety considerations. The evaluation team must strictly follow the World Health Organization (WHO) ethical and safety guidelines[22], as a lack of attention could be distressing and put respondents (and potentially evaluators themselves) at risk. The CPE manager must make all necessary arrangements (e.g. access, privacy, modes of communication, etc.) ahead of time and keep the evaluation team leader well-informed. They also need to ensure that issues arising in humanitarian contexts are addressed in a timely manner and according to existing and contextualized guidelines where available. Finally, the CPE manager must ensure that the CO communication officer briefs the evaluation team on ethical photography during data collection (see section 3.2.5).

Box 10: CPE manager's checklist for field work preparation

- ☑ Travel authorizations (if required) are issued
- ☑ Ethical clearance from relevant national research body (if required) has been requested and obtained
- ☑ Security briefing has taken place
- ☑ Transportation of consultants to the sites is organized (hired vehicle or UNFPA car)
- ☑ Communication with evaluators when in the field are arranged (phone or SIM card to ensure continuity in case of internet connection breakdown) so the CPE manager and the team leader remain constantly in touch - e.g. to reschedule meetings, address unforeseen issues, in case of emergency, etc.
- ☑ Accommodations are booked
- ☑ Consultants have been informed to keep all receipts (accommodation and other outlays) for reimbursement
- ☑ CO representative's letter announcing the CPE to all stakeholders has been sent
- ☑ Letters of request for interviews/meetings are drafted and sent; receipt has been acknowledged
- ☑ Follow-up has been done to ensure all key informants have confirmed availability to meet with the evaluators
- ☑ Interpreters are contracted and their transportation to the site/facility and accommodation are taken care of (if required); they have been briefed on the topics/themes of the interviews/ meetings. Sign language interpreters can also be contracted to make sure people with hearing/ speaking impairments can participate
- ☑ Participants in group interviews/focus groups have confirmed they will be on site on scheduled day/time and this is coordinated by a UNFPA staff or implementing partner representative on the site
- ☑ Adequate venues for each meeting have been organized (ensuring privacy, access for persons with disabilities)

22 On this issue, please refer to WHO guidance: Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies (2007); Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women (2016).

- ☑ Refreshments have been planned
- ☑ Arrangement for defraying participants in group interviews / focus groups for travel expenses have been made
- ☑ Consent and assent forms (prepared by evaluation team leader) are printed and copies are in sufficient number
- ☑ Consent forms for photography have been prepared by CO communication officer
- ☑ CO staff member (or government delegate, or UNFPA implementing partner) has confirmed availability to accompany the evaluators, make introductions and *not* participate in meetings.

The CPE manager oversees the field phase and ensures that unexpected difficulties or obstacles (e.g. informants unavailability, delays, etc) are addressed in a timely manner and swiftly resolved so that the evaluators can collect all necessary data within the agreed timeline. If the security situation in the country has changed since the initial drawing up of the field phase agenda, the CPE manager and the evaluation team need to review the work plan accordingly and make the necessary adjustments (e.g. decision to resort to virtual interviews or select other sites). The CPE manager and the team leader must ensure that there is a back-up plan in case of unforeseen events or last-minute changes.

3.1.2 Evaluation team kick-off meeting

At the start of the field phase, the CPE manager brings the evaluation team (which includes the YEE) together to discuss the agenda for the field phase and expected achievements. This is an opportunity for the team leader to ensure that all team members are on the right track and to provide them with the opportunity to express concerns or needs for further clarification or guidance. As needed, the CPE manager may request select programme staff and field-based staff to participate in their meetings with the evaluation team on an ad hoc manner.

Box 11: Checklist for the evaluation team meeting

- ☑ Roles and individual (as well as collective) responsibilities within the team during field phase are clarified
- ☑ Review of field agendas and identification of outstanding issues to be raised with the CPE manager
- ☑ Final check of data collection tools and processes
- ☑ Guidance on note-taking and conducting individual and group interviews, focus group discussions, preparing and implementing surveys as well as on-site observations
- ☑ Review of the evaluation matrix: data logging ; identification of emerging themes/issues
- ☑ Communication channels within the team, with the CPE manager and persons assisting the team during the field work
- ☑ Setting indicative dates for team meetings during the field work

3.2 Data collection

As indicated in section 2.2.3, the CPE must rest solidly on a diversity of methods for collecting and combining both quantitative and qualitative data. The benefits stemming from a mixed-method design are many, notably:

- The validity of results can be strengthened by using more than one method to study the same issue. This approach is called triangulation (see section 3.3). When data from different sources converge and agree, this increases the validity and credibility of interpretation. When different data are not consistent, the evaluators explore further to understand the reason for the inconsistencies
- Combining methods helps sharpen the evaluator's understanding of the data collected. For instance, a focus group discussion may alert the evaluator to issues that should be further explored in a survey of program participants, which in turn should be followed by in depth interviews of select informants to clarify some of the survey findings
- The use of mixed methods can uncover inconsistencies and discrepancies in data and alert the evaluators to the need for modifying or expanding the data collection method and/or the range of stakeholders to be included in data collection
- An additional benefit is that a mixed-method approach is more likely to ensure buy-in from the CPE users.

In consultation with the CPE manager, the evaluation team must consider what is the best time allocation for the implementation of the field phase. Often, the first week of the field phase is devoted to the conduct of interviews with UNFPA programme, management and operations staff in the CO, as well as interviews with key stakeholders in the capital city. Travel to sites usually takes place during the second and third week of the field phase. Towards the end of the last week for the analysis workshop, the evaluators are back in the capital city to undertake additional interviews (if any) with stakeholders at national level, and for the debriefing meeting with the CO and the ERG. The sections below provide an overview of a minimal package of primary data collection methods which, in addition to documentary review to gather secondary data (see section 2.2.3), must be used in a CPE.

3.2.1 Key informant interviews

Interviews allow evaluators to collect different kinds of information: facts and information for the verification of facts, opinions and perspectives, analyses, suggestions, as well as reactions to the evaluators' hypotheses. The interview is mostly a qualitative device. Facts that can be checked, points of view, analyses and opinions should be clearly distinguished when processing the data collected through evaluations and entering them in the evaluation matrix.

Interviews allow the evaluators to meet a select number of informants and are an essential tool to understand the stakeholders' perceptions of the UNFPA interventions. Interviews also allow evaluators to find out if, and the extent to which diverse stakeholders agree with analysis presented in various documents, and to explore their views on various aspects of UNFPA performance (that are not explicitly addressed in official reports). For example, informants might draw the evaluators' attention to conflicting guidance from UNFPA vs. a partner agency and resulting consequences. They can also provide information on unintended results of UNFPA interventions or help identify gaps.

Interview is, however, a tool coming with the limitations related to the issue of the respondent's 'representativeness' (particularly for rights-holders, and notably the most vulnerable). The information collected must be systematically and thoroughly checked through other data collection tools and other sources. To this end, evaluators should ask the same question(s) to diverse interviewees representing different institutional viewpoints (such as government, implementing partners, rights-holders, CSOs, development and humanitarian partners, etc.).

The evaluators use the interview guides (developed in the design phase) to conduct semi-structured interviews. The interview guidelines provide a framework that is not binding on the evaluator who may adjust their approach based upon the informant, the context, the time allocated, and other factors.[23] On average, individual key informant interviews last 30 to 40 minutes, at times longer depending on the range of topics to be addressed and the availability of the interviewee. Group interviews are likely to take more time and the evaluators should arrange their agenda accordingly (including travel time, potential delays etc.).

Box 12: Interview sequencing

1. **Make a human connection:** friendly remarks before starting the interview
2. **Thank the interviewee(s)** for their time, introduce yourself and state the purpose of the interview, i.e., the evaluation of the UNFPA country programme to help guide the way forward, not an assessment of the interviewee(s) or their organization's performance
3. **Assure complete confidentiality,** stress that no information will be attributable to individuals and encourage openness. Also, if there is any question that the interviewee(s) are not comfortable with, provide assurance that they do not have to respond. This is particularly important in interviews with rights-holders, notably young people
4. Briefly **indicate the main areas of focus** of the interview (according to the interview guides), and check whether the interviewee(s) have any questions before starting
5. **Check the nature of the interviewee(s) role(s)** in relation to the UNFPA country programme and how long they have been involved with the UNFPA programme
6. **Go through each of the core issues of the interview framing them as questions** phrased appropriately for the interviewee(s). To some extent, this should feel like a focused conversation, but the evaluator should not express personal opinions nor criticize the opinions voiced by the interviewee(s). The evaluators should seek clarification by reframing or reflecting back on the interviewee's comments when needed. This is especially important if there appears to be contradictions in what has been said
7. **If the evaluator intends to undertake a SWOT analysis**, this might come early or late in the interview – if early, the feedback may stimulate probing around specific area of inquiry ; if late, this can be a way to corroborate what the interviewee(s) find most important, and serves to cross-check previous information

23 In addition to the present handbook, the reader can easily access a wealth of information on the role of interviews in evaluations, different types of interviews and different interview techniques. E.g. The Global Evaluation Initiative through the Better Evaluation network provides a detailed overview on interviews; The online Methodological handbook of Europe Aid/European Commission provides information on different types of interviews and their significance for theory-driven evaluation.

8. Before ending the interview, **ask if there is anything important or relevant that has not been addressed**, or a specific point which the interviewee(s) would like to draw your attention to or develop further
9. **Invite questions from the interviewee(s)**. These often relate to when the report will be due, will they see it, whether there will be a stakeholder meeting, etc. The evaluators must provide to the CPE manager the list of the key informants that have expressed an interest in being invited to the dissemination activities. The evaluators must indicate to the key informants the date of completion of the CPE and inform them that the evaluation report will be available on the UNFPA public website
10. **Reassure the interviewee on the confidential treatment of the information collected, thank the interviewee(s) again** and, if necessary, ask if there are other stakeholders they think the evaluation team should meet. Also check whether they would be willing to provide further information, e.g., by email, should the evaluators need further clarification, additional information or supporting documents.

During the interview, the evaluators need to:

- Avoid using technical jargon, particularly with rights-holders
- Address all key issues that are relevant to a given interviewee or group, with cross-checking of complex issues and probing around "why" and "how" as well as "what" and "when" (or "how often")
- Avoid asking leading questions that encourage interviewees to provide the answers they think the evaluator expects to hear
- Refrain from judging opinions that interviewees express, although it is often important to explore the basis of opinions
- Be open about issues that the evaluator does not know and be willing to ask follow-up questions.

The extent of field travel for data collection varies widely from country to country. In some cases, if travel is impracticable (because of distance, cost, security or health risks, poor data availability in the field or other factors), greater reliance may be placed on centrally available informants and extensive documentary review. During the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, almost all data collection for CPEs had to be conducted virtually and the UNFPA IEO developed guidance for data collection that needs to be undertaken virtually.[24] Although virtual interviews have some limitations (and are reliant on good connectivity), they can greatly lower investments in time and travel, and thus be a more efficient way of sourcing data. While they may allow for a greater number of stakeholders to be reached by the evaluation team, they can, however, restrict the participation of some vulnerable groups who are not likely to have the means to connect for such interviews. Typically, a CPE may involve a combination of face-to-face and virtual interviews. When an interview cannot be fully completed (because of lack of time, or bad connectivity when using virtual methods), evaluators must seek to follow up with a brief supplementary questionnaire sent via email. The role of the CPE manager is crucial to help the evaluators secure and set up virtual calls.

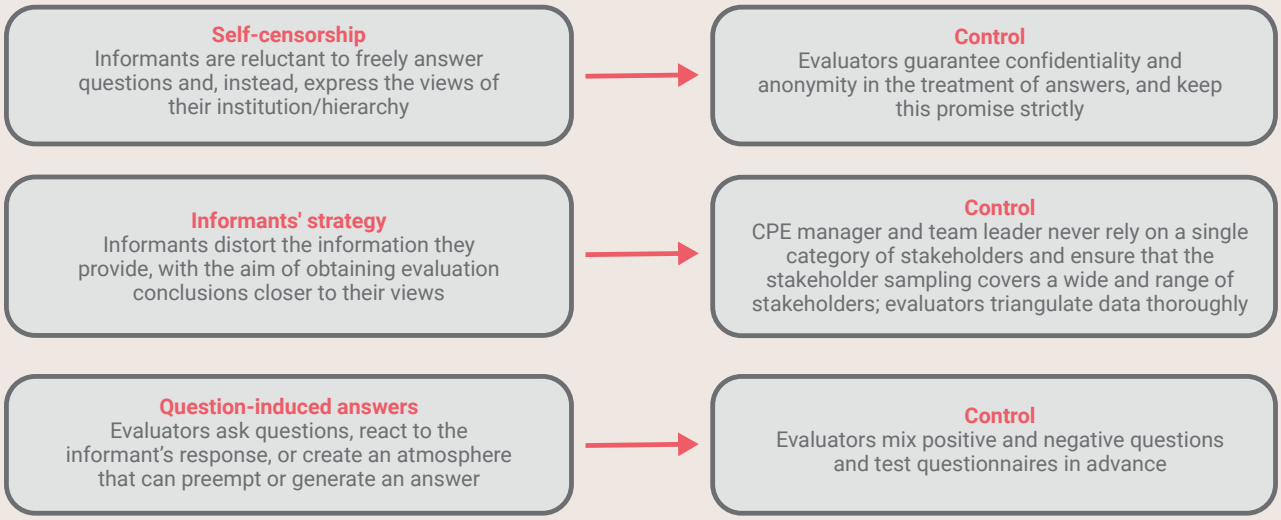
Throughout the field phase, the evaluators should check with key informants whether there are additional documents or data sources they should review or explore (and that the CPE manager and evaluators may

24 Methods and data sources for remote data collection during COVID-19: A compilation of resources. Further guidance developed in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, includes: Guiding principles on adapting evaluations to the COVID-19 pandemic and Guidance on adapting evaluation questions to the COVID-19 pandemic.

not have identified yet). For example, interviewees could share monitoring reports, field mission reports, administrative data, or point at policy documents, assessments, studies or research (dealing with a specific area under consideration or shared by an interviewee) or evaluations undertaken by other agencies or development partners of projects or programmes implemented jointly with UNFPA, or with UNFPA funding contributions. The evaluators must list all documents they have consulted in annex 2 of the evaluation report. Compilation of the CPE bibliography starts during the design phase and continues throughout the field phase and into the reporting phase (see section 4.5).

Box 13: Reliability of data

As they conduct fieldwork, the evaluators face various risks of biases, which may undermine the reliability of the data collected. Biases result from a tendency to seek out evidence that is consistent with the country programme interventions (their logic, how they are expected to produce the desired changes) rather than evidence that could disprove them. The evaluators focus on intended effects, while overlooking external factors, negative or unintended effects, interactions with other programmes and stakeholders other than the informants, alternative implementation options, etc. To avoid bias, the evaluation team needs to collect data as objectively as possible, and be well aware of self-censorship, informants' strategy and question induced answers.



3.2.2 Group interviews and focus group discussions

Focus group and group interviews are organized discussions with a selected group of individuals to gain a collective view about a certain topic. Group interviews are a way of gathering many opinions from individuals within a group setting, but are largely based on interaction between the interviewer and each individual in the group. By contrast, focus groups are interactive, and, for the evaluators, the group opinion is at least as important as the individual opinions. Concentrating on the role of the group in producing interaction and the role of the moderator in guiding this interaction, a focus group offers the possibility for the evaluators to uncover the "collective perspective" on a specific issue.

A focus group discussion offers the possibility to collect points of view and judgments from specific – socially homogeneous – categories of stakeholders. It provides a useful format for evaluators to understand the rationale behind the opinions expressed by the participants. In a CPE, focus group discussions can be particularly helpful for soliciting information from rights-holders of UNFPA-supported interventions

in communities (e.g., mothers, adolescent girls, key populations, small groups of particularly vulnerable or marginalized populations such as women with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ youth, etc), health centers (e.g., doctors, nurses, midwives, community health workers) and sites. Focus groups can also be a useful way to collect information from a small group of representatives from different CSOs to reflect on the needs orientation of UNFPA support, the quality and utilization of UNFPA-facilitated deliverables, the risk factors weighing on the continued benefits from UNFPA interventions after they end, etc.

In order to set up a focus group discussion, the evaluation team must identify the various interest groups among categories of stakeholders concerned by the assessed interventions. With the help of UNFPA staff (or its implementing partners) who can help identify individuals who can foster the debate, evaluators select a homogeneous group of about ten participants. The CPE manager takes care of all the related logistics (transportation, venue, refreshments, etc) and the evaluators can be assisted by a local moderator and interpreter if they do not speak the language of the participants.

A key benefit of focus group discussions with rights-holders is the opportunity they offer to understand first-hand their most pressing needs (and the capacities of duty-bearers to meet these needs) in any of the areas supported by UNFPA. A focus group is a forum where participants can express how they have benefitted from UNFPA interventions, the difference it has made in their lives, and what the main gaps or limitations are. Evaluators should draw out the main issues that the focus group identifies, noting the extent to which there appears to be unanimity in a particular viewpoint or understanding, and dissenting opinions. Focus group discussions can help evaluators accumulate a wealth of detailed information and nuanced perspectives that would not otherwise be captured. This method is also particularly useful to gain an understanding of the range of issues (related to a specific question/theme) which may require the evaluators to undertake more detailed inquiry (for example, through select key informant interviews).

Interviewing people in a group presents, however, a number of challenges. Some people may be influenced by the nature of the relationships among them, or by social and cultural norms, and therefore may find it hard to express their views as freely as they might in an individual interview. As for the evaluators, when conducting group interviews and focus group discussions with rights-holders, they need to be aware of the impact that their own age, gender, race, language, national or regional identity, dress and appearance may have on participants. This is particularly true when interviewing more vulnerable rights-holders, for instance those with disabilities, young mothers, adolescents and youth, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), or people in humanitarian situations. Other interpersonal factors to take into account are distance, posture, eye contact, tone of voice etc. in relation to different interviewees in the prevailing culture (e.g. in some settings, the gender of evaluators should match the gender of respondents).

Box 14: Ethical, human rights-responsive and gender-sensitive data collection

- Evaluators are trained in collecting sensitive information (if the topic is focused on sexual or gender based violence, they should be well aware of the WHO guidance[25] and preferably have previous experience in this area)
- All data collection tools are designed in a way that are culturally appropriate and do not create distress for respondents
- Evaluators are well aware of the gender and power relations inherent in the society and in relation to the interpersonal issues; they use appropriate, gender-respectful language

25 See Footnote 21

- Evaluators organize data collection at the appropriate time and place to minimize risk to respondents. They ensure that the interviews/discussion take place in a "safe space" (this is a prime consideration in establishing the location, and is dependent on different factors in relation to diverse participants)
- Evaluators ensure that there is nobody else in the room or space within earshot of the discussion except for a note-taker (as well as, if necessary, a local moderator or interpreter) whose respective roles should be made clear to the participants, and notably the fact that they will observe confidentiality and data protection
- Evaluators ask each participant to take some time to read and sign a consent form and assent form (as needed for those individuals not competent to give legally valid informed consent to participate)
- Evaluators should understand the ethical issues and approaches for informed consent when collecting information from adolescents and youth[26]
- They inform participants of the topics to be discussed, the manner and form in which data will be collected and how privacy and confidentiality are maintained. A word of caution is necessary and evaluators should invite participants to be careful about the information they wish to share in a group (this is particularly important for assessment of issues related to sexual health and SGBV, for instance)
- Evaluators in their interaction with participants, stress that there are no "right or wrong answers", and that it is not the participants who are being evaluated. They respect the right of participants not to answer any questions they find uncomfortable, and reassure them about this
- Evaluators avoid highly personal, potentially embarrassing or threatening questions and they are careful not to appear to endorse anyone's point of view
- Evaluators are able to provide information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support
- Evaluators inform participants of the date of completion of the CPE and indicate that the evaluation report will be available on the UNFPA public website.

Also see: Guidance on integrating the principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind in UNFPA evaluations

In group interviews and in focus group discussions, the evaluator should be supported by another member of the team to take on the role of note-taker and with whom they have agreed a process for documenting the discussion beforehand. Be aware that using recording devices can be inhibiting for some (categories of) participants. In the absence of recording, it can be interesting to organize a debriefing session with the evaluator(s), the note taker, the interpreter (if any), as well as the moderator (in the event the evaluation team need help to moderate the exchanges and ensure a balanced and relatively equal participation of all members of the focus group) in order to validate the content of the focus group's transcription.

3.2.3 Survey

A survey is an efficient tool to collect data from a sample of the broader population targeted by the evaluation. When the sample is randomly selected, findings can be confidently generalized to the entire group of which

26 UNICEF Guidance note on adolescent participation in UNICEF monitoring and evaluation (2019).

the respondents are members. To conduct a survey, the evaluation team must draw up a questionnaire that is sufficiently clear and straightforward for the respondents to answer with confidence. Such questionnaire usually consists of a combination of:

- **Structured questions:** To which respondents must answer in a specific way by choosing from a limited and predetermined set of responses. Questions aim at obtaining information about facts, to find out whether respondents agree to a suggestion, to record their opinions on a set of assertions, etc. A structured questionnaire gives the opportunity to make statistics out of data
- **A few open-ended questions:** Allow a variety of approaches and depth in response, yielding information that is more diverse and/or precise, but is less amenable to statistical analysis. Open-ended questions often begin with: "why," "how," "what," "describe," "tell me about…," or "what do you think about…" and depend heavily upon the interest and literacy level of respondents.

Surveys can be administered in a variety of ways: in-person using a paper format (e.g during a site visits), via mail, via the web (e.g. Survey Monkey, KoboCollect) via phone, etc. Regardless of the method retained, it is important to consider, from the point of view of the respondent, the factors that will maximize respondents' participation, including accessibility of the survey (when needed and feasible, these could be undertaken through SMS/text messages on mobile phones), convenience of format, and clarity of both the survey's purpose and questionnaire (length and flow, wording, ease of response, etc).

Once survey data are collected and compiled, analyses of the data may take a variety of forms. Analysis essentially entails looking at quantitative data to find relationships, patterns, and trends. It may involve comparison with data collected from other groups. When analyzing both quantitative and qualitative survey data (the latter typically collected from open-ended questions), the evaluators will be able to quantify and compare the importance of diverse opinions. It allows them to check whether the population agrees or not with these opinions and in what proportions. It is particularly suited to analyze the rights-holders' degree of satisfaction concerning specific UNFPA-supported services.

Carrying out a survey requires great care when developing the questionnaire, managing implementation (including ensuring logistical access of respondents) and the analysis and interpretation of findings. The evaluation team must verify that the sample of surveyed informants is large enough and representative of the targeted population. If well prepared, a survey is not only cost-effective but also time-efficient and will allow evaluators to dedicate time to other more time-consuming tasks.

3.2.4 On-site observation

Observation during site visits is a method for gathering data by watching people's interactions, processes or behaviors as they occur in their natural setting. It allows evaluators to gather data by watching peoples' directly (e.g service providers' interaction with patients) or indirectly, by observing the results of behaviors or interactions (e.g. checking equipment, health commodities stockouts, etc.). Site visits (and their environment) provide evaluators with an opportunity to see "what is actually happening" in locations where UNFPA interventions are implemented and can help increase the evaluators' understanding of these interventions and their effects.

At the design phase, the evaluators have planned carefully their observation activities and must refine them, as needed, during the field phase. In particular, they must determine the focus (i.e. the evaluation question(s)/assumptions for which data can usefully be collected through observation) and select specific areas of attention (e.g. how well training activities for health providers have led to changes in quality and uptake of services in the community; the focus areas could then be: interactions between service providers and rights-holders, and health providers' applied knowledge, new skills, and changed behaviors). Different issues will be in focus in accordance with the nature of UNFPA engagement in a specific site. It is therefore important that the evaluators understand what aspects relate to UNFPA contributions and which aspects do not.

Observation must be conducted using the on-site observation checklist prepared at design phase, and will allow evaluators to gain an understanding of information already gathered through other methods, on diverse issues such as: privacy for patients in a maternity unit or for HIV testing and counseling at sites where UNFPA has supported staff training; physical state of training materials and equipment that UNFPA has helped to develop or purchase; actual use of equipment and its maintenance (if equipment and materials are dilapidated or do not appear to be in use, this has implications for the effectiveness of UNFPA support and therefore needs further exploring); availability and storage of maternal and reproductive health commodities and supplies; accessibility of premises for people with disabilities or extent to which they are youth-friendly, availability of staff, opening hours, etc. The use of checklists will also facilitate the comparison of data collected at different sites.

Site visits should be conducted by more than one evaluator or by all members of the team to gain different perspectives and to take on different tasks. For instance, at a health center, an evaluator could gather administrative data (e.g. overall management of patients flow, handling of patients record, etc.), while some other team members could conduct brief interviews with service providers. Implementing a patient exit survey or a focus group discussion will also allow the evaluation team to obtain the rights-holders' views about the health center as they have experienced it. In sum, mixing methods - and roles within the team - may be the preferred approach so that, in addition to observation, different tools can be combined and various perspectives obtained to produce a more valid picture of the issues in focus during the site visit.

Evaluators, with the support of the CPE manager, must time their observation work appropriately as activities (for instance in health centers) typically follow a sequence (e.g. specific days/hours for family planning consultations etc.). When site visits are completed in a relatively short period of time, they may not allow the evaluators to be able to see or adequately understand the complexities of the situation or dynamics at work. A potential drawback of the limited time spent on site is also the possibility of people to "put on a good face" (e.g. in some contexts, the way teenage girls or key populations are serviced may differ on the day of the visit). However, careful observation completed by skillful interviewing and well-prepared surveys should help evaluators to counteract false impressions.

Table 10: *Advantages and limitations of primary data collection tools*

Tool	Advantages	Limitations
Key informant interview	• Relatively simple to organize • Private and confidential, allowing participants to express their opinions, including critical comments • Facilitates understanding of the stakeholders' perceptions of the programme, allows for in-depth discussion • Best suited to key stakeholders in policy, management and higher-level technical positions • Can be easily tailored to specific key informants (background, experiences, and communication style, etc.) ensuring a more personalized and relevant data collection process	• Takes time to cover many key informant interviews, (low cost effectiveness) • Requires interviewing skills (ability to build a rapport, to listen and maintain the momentum of the interview, to be reactive and get to the point quickly, to control the course of the interview) that all evaluation team members may not possess • Problems relating to the respondent's representativeness, particularly for social groups and rights-holders and notably adolescents and youth and the most vulnerable • Recall bias: participants may struggle to accurately recall past events or experiences • Limited generalizability
Group interview	• Saves time and is cost effective • Best suited to service providers or members of a particular structure (e.g. regional committee) supported by UNFPA, etc. Also well-suited for UNFPA staff • Group interaction fosters the participants' explanation, specification and justification of their testimonies	• Less private and risk of breach of confidentiality (by participants) • Requires skills from evaluators to avoid dominance of certain voices due to underlying power dynamics • Limited time for individual expression of opinions compared to individual interviews • More complex to organize (both timing and location) • Longer time commitment on both participants and evaluators • Requires a note-taker

Tool	Advantages	Limitations
Focus group discussion	• Useful in order to collect data from a group of rights-holders and especially to analyze the effect of UNFPA interventions on them • Group interaction fosters the participants' explanation, specification and justification of common and different viewpoints • It is time-saving: offers an efficient way to collect data from multiple participants simultaneously. Compared to individual interviews, focus group discussions can yield a larger volume of data in a shorter period, making them useful when time and resources are limited • May reduce stress for participants, notably young or vulnerable people. Gaining strength from the energy of the group, participants may feel able to talk about sensitive points in a way in which they would not do so in an individual or group interview. • Allow for the inclusion of diverse perspectives by bringing together participants with varying backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints. This diversity enriches the data by capturing a range of opinions and experiences related to a specific issue to be explored	• It has implementation costs (selection of participants; identification of a local moderator if necessary; organization and/or defrayal of transportation costs; etc.) • Require consent and/or assent forms • Less private and risk of breach of confidentiality (by participants) • Public expression could be limited by power dynamics and social norms, or impaired by the participants respective positions outside of the focus group setting • Each individual has less time to express opinions (than in an individual interview) • Requires moderation skills that may not be readily available within the evaluation team • Data collected have limited generalizability. They provide valuable insights into participants' experiences but they may not represent the views of all individuals in a given population • Requires a note-taker
Survey	• Affordable • Yields quantified and reliable data • Useful to identify changes and make comparisons between opinions • Enables the evaluators to reach a large number of persons • Respondents may be more honest in their responses (if survey is not administered in person) • Highly accessible/convenient for respondents	• Requires implementation time that may exceed the average time of the CPE data collection • Requires time to analyze the findings • May present difficulties during the development of representative sampling • Potential high abandonment rates (depending on user-friendliness of questionnaire) • Some groups (notably vulnerable groups) may not have easy access. • In humanitarian settings, extensive surveys may not be the most feasible method of data collection, especially in cases of population displacements, hard-to-reach areas and widespread insecurity

Tool	Advantages	Limitations
On-site observation	• Allows to collect data where and when an event or activity is occurring • Does not rely on people's willingness or ability to provide information • Allows evaluators to directly see what people do rather than relying on what they say they do	• People usually perform better when they know they are being observed • Can be time-consuming compared to other data collection methods • Observation only does not increase evaluators' understanding of why people behave as they do

Note: See table 6 for advantages/limitation of documentary review

3.2.5 Photography during data collection

Photographs from interviews, group discussions and site visits enhance evaluation reporting and support effective communication of evaluation results. Featuring photographs in evaluation products adds a human face to UNFPA interventions and to the evaluation exercise itself. It also makes the evaluation's key messages more memorable and impactful, facilitating the use of the evaluation results. In general, the evaluation team can take two kinds of photographs:

- Process pictures (with and without the evaluation team), for use in presentations and social media, e.g. focus group discussion in progress; interview in progress; meetings with officials; presentation to CO staff
- Programme pictures (with no evaluation team member visible), for use in the evaluation report and other products, e.g. rights-holders (individual or in a group) in their setting; services and supplies (kits, tents etc.) supported by UNFPA

People being photographed (especially if they can be identified), should give their permission to be photographed and for the use of their image in multimedia formats (such as written reports, videos, presentations, websites, and social media), including the use of their names in captions. To photograph children under 18 years old, parental or guardian consent must be sought. In addition, to protect the identity of individuals who may be put at risk due to being photographed, it is necessary to make sure that they cannot be identified in the picture and their personal information should be left out. The evaluation team should use the UNFPA multimedia consent form prior to taking photographs.[27]

After taking a photograph, it is important to record the date, site, and subject of the photograph along with a brief caption. All pictures should be communicated to the CPE manager and the CO communication officer through a shared drive. The photographs taken by the evaluation team during the data collection will be credited to UNFPA. The CPE manager ensures that the CO communication officer checks the photographic material, attends the debriefing meeting (see section 3.4.2). As the field phase comes to a close, the CPE manager and the CO communication officer revisit the CPE initial communication plan and make any adjustments as needed (e.g., additional target audiences, new advocacy and communication opportunities, etc.).

27 Also see: Guidelines on UN system photos (adapted for UNFPA); UNICEF ethical guidelines on reporting on children and young people.

3.3 The evaluation matrix

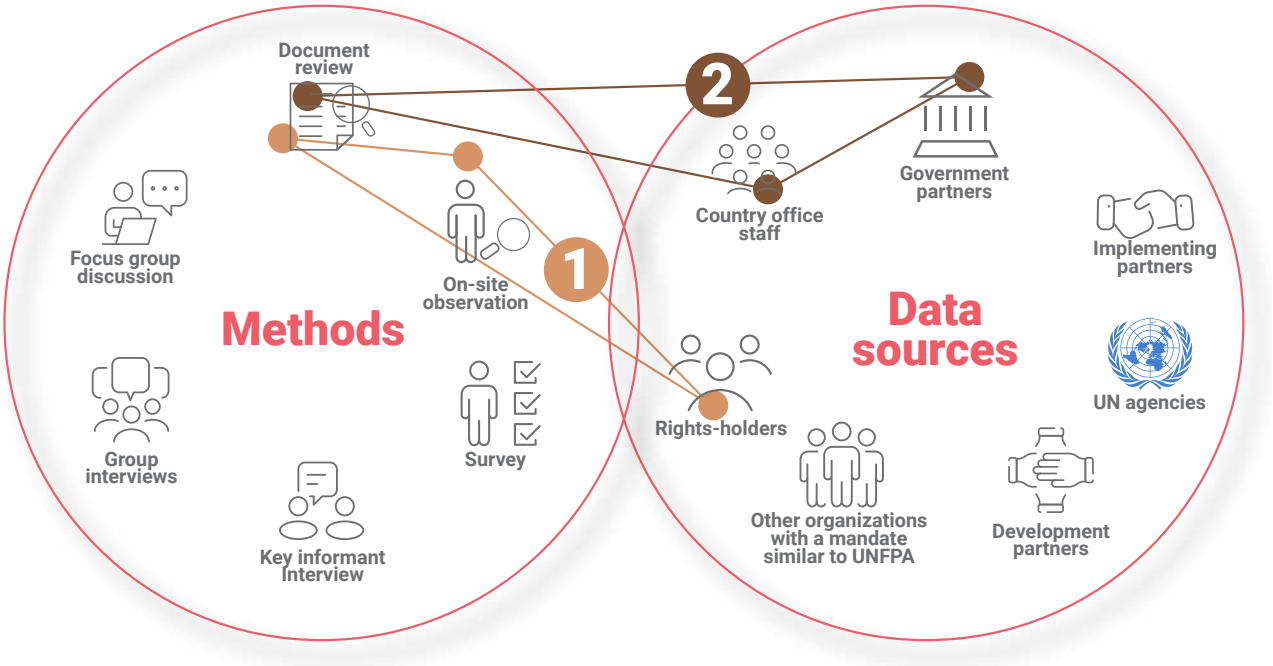
At the end of the design phase, the CPE manager places the evaluation matrix in a dedicated shared drive folder so it is accessible to all evaluation team members at all times. Throughout the field phase, the evaluation team leader monitors data entry in the evaluation matrix by each team member. They ensure that data are recorded regularly, are well organized, triangulated and that gaps are identified and addressed. In many countries, connectivity may be limited making it difficult for team members to routinely access the online matrix. They should then enter data in an offline version of the matrix, and periodically update the online evaluation matrix.

During the field phase, the team leader calls regular team meetings to start analyzing and interpreting the data compiled in the matrix with a view to identifying recurring issues and emerging themes, which may, in turn, lead to adjustments to the data collection work plan (e.g. identification of other sources; modification of interview guides; drafting of follow-up questionnaires, etc.). Those meetings are also a forum to address arising difficulties and discuss solutions within the team (and the CPE evaluation manager when needed). This is also the time when evaluators compare and share notes (data collected by one evaluator may be more relevant to the theme covered by another member of the team) and pay attention to potential biases and risks of unreliability of data and how to mitigate them.

The evaluation matrix is the repository of all data collected by the evaluators. The primary and secondary data presented in the matrix are of qualitative and quantitative nature and stem from documents review, individual and group interviews, focus group discussions, surveys and, when access restrictions cannot be overcome, other methods to collect data remotely. Entries in the matrix also consist of quotes and excerpts from documents, observation notes taken at sites visited, and may also include photos, links to social media posts and others. Recording and presenting authentic citations of informants can bring content to life. However, it is crucial that quotations are applied in a way that shows respect for participants' perspectives and are presented in a reliable manner, while maintaining participants' confidentiality. In both the evaluation matrix and the CPE report, evaluators must attribute quotes to a category of respondent rather than a specific person (e.g., "rural clinic nurse" or a "United Nations staff", "young peer educator" or "SGBV survivor" etc.). Where data are specifically relevant to verify more than one assumption to be tested (under diverse evaluation questions), the evaluators must record (repeat) them in all relevant places in the matrix (for each relevant evaluation question). For each assumption, the evaluators compile all relevant data that are strictly linked to the assumption and corresponding indicators. They are presented and drafted in a clear and understandable manner and are referenced (the sources are clearly indicated).

The evaluation matrix is also a key tool to triangulate the data collected. Triangulation is an essential part of the data collection process. It refers to the combination of multiple (qualitative and quantitative) data collection methods and sources in assessing the same issue for the purpose of increasing the credibility of findings. At a minimum, evaluators should use two different sources to corroborate information. For instance, one authoritative document combined with one interview, or two separate interviews from different categories of stakeholders will allow evaluators to argue that the analysis and interpretation of the data is valid.

Figure 5: *Triangulation of methods and sources*



1. **(a)** Documents indicate a significant increase in contraceptive uptake and the availability of modern contraceptive methods. **(b)** A focus group discussion with rights-holders and **(c)** on-site observation at health centres show that access to contraceptives has been limited due to recurrent stockouts and unwillingness by nurses to provide FP methods to non-married women and youth.

2. Interview with **(a)** CO GEWE staff indicates that UNFPA supported the government in enacting a legal framework prohibiting child marriage nationwide. Interview with the **(b)** government counterpart confirms the role of UNFPA in supporting the drafting and passing of the legal framework. **(c)** Documentary review shows that the legal framework lacks a clear national action plan, budget line, coordination mechanism, and monitoring system.

Data obtained via one method only and that is not corroborated by other sources (key informants belonging to different stakeholder categories, documentation review, transcript of focus group discussions, observations on site, etc.), should not be used to validate evaluation results. In the instances when triangulation is not sufficiently strong, the corresponding findings (within the CPE report) should be presented as "tentative findings", and any potential biases arising from the use of too few methods or insufficiently solid sources should be noted.

3.4 Preliminary analysis and debriefing

3.4.1 Analysis workshop

At the end of the field phase, upon return of the evaluators in the capital city, the CPE manager gathers the evaluation team in an analysis workshop to review the data collected and assess their validity and reliability. With the CPE manager, the evaluators review how far the information resulting from the evaluation matrix allows them to verify the assumptions corresponding to each evaluation question. As they consolidate the evaluation matrix, they identify those issues requiring further exploration and additional data collection. Where contradictions appear (when comparing the data obtained from equally reliable sources), they highlight the limitations in their use.

This workshop will allow the evaluators to identify preliminary findings (in relation to each evaluation question) to be presented to the ERG and relevant CO staff during a debriefing meeting. Based on their

preliminary findings, the evaluators must further assess the country programme theory of change and how it works in practice, identify its possible limitations, and reflect on how it might be strengthened. They might also identify possible unintended consequences (both positive and negative) arising from the achievement of outputs and their contribution to outcomes.

The table below provides an overview of some important steps the evaluators should consider during the analysis workshop.

Table 11: *Overview of threats to validity of findings*

Analysis steps	Significance for validity of findings	Threats
Field phase Filter out data of low reliability or irrelevant to chain of reasoning	Identifies the evidence to inform each indicator	• Information has low/no logical connection to indicator(s), and therefore cannot inform the indicators • Data are of low quality, e.g., are contradictory or based on few or with bias in sources (e.g., from one stakeholder category only)
Field and Reporting phases Interpret evidence and formulate evidence-based findings	Allows evaluators to formulate preliminary (field phase) and then definitive (reporting phase) findings	In addition to the above issues: • Evaluators do not discuss and resolve contradictions stemming from data collected • Evaluators do not have evidence to explain how UNFPA plausibly contributed to the observed changes
Reporting phase Formulate answers to evaluation questions	Present the findings into coherent and comprehensive responses to the evaluation questions	In addition to all the above issues: • Answers to evaluation questions are not evidence-based (they do not logically build on the data collected) • Data has not been sufficiently analyzed and interpreted to provide the necessary meaningful and reliable information in support of the findings

3.4.2 Debriefing meeting

Following the analysis workshop, the CPE manager organizes a debriefing meeting with the ERG and relevant CO staff. The debriefing meeting presents an invaluable opportunity for the evaluation team to present their preliminary findings orally and obtain feedback. It is also a time for the evaluators to expand, qualify and verify information as well as to correct misperceptions. Finally, the debriefing meeting is also instrumental for the CPE manager to strengthen ownership of the evaluation and its findings.

To open the debriefing meeting, the evaluation team prepares a presentation related to the coverage and reliability of collected data, as well as to its initial analyses and preliminary findings. In this presentation and

during the debriefing meeting, the evaluators refrain from formulating any conclusion (judgement) and from suggesting any recommendations.

Box 15: Proposed structure for the debriefing meeting presentation

1. Purpose of the debriefing meeting
2. Overview of the field work (key informant, group interviews, site visits implemented)
3. Challenges and limitations in data collection and mitigation efforts
4. Process for review and triangulation of data
5. Evaluation Question 1: preliminary findings
6. Evaluation Question 2: preliminary findings
7. Evaluation Question 3: preliminary findings
8. ….
9. Next steps: Analysis and reporting

Following the evaluation team's presentation, the CPE manager facilitates a Q&A session during which the participants are invited to seek clarification or to provide additional information. They will interrogate the evaluators on data triangulation and may question the accuracy of some information, as well as the quality of the evidence upon which some preliminary findings are based. The CPE manager must, indeed, invite participants to test the evaluators' interpretation and extrapolations and check if they are justified and supported by sound arguments. The ERG members and CO staff may point at gaps in the evaluation team's preliminary analysis that need to be addressed and they may be able to provide complementary information or indicate further data sources (documents, key informants etc.) and facilitate access. They may also rectify what they consider an inaccurate interpretation (e.g. cause-and-effect statements made by the evaluators), spot factual errors or omissions, or misunderstandings of "how things work" by the evaluators, etc.

3.4.3 Follow-up

After the debriefing meeting, the CPE manager writes meeting minutes and compiles the feedback obtained from the ERG and CO staff and shares it with the evaluation team. They must follow-up and obtain, from the ERG members (or CO staff), the documents in support of their statements (should these contradict or help refine the data already collected by the evaluators). The CPE manager must also facilitate access to new key informants (suggested during the meeting) and assist the evaluation team in organizing follow-up meetings or interviews, as well as their access to additional documentation.

At the end of the Field phase, the CPE manager calls an exit meeting with the evaluation team. Together with the team leader, they refer to the CPE roadmap, identify the next steps (e.g., the delivery of the draft final report, quality assurance by the CPE manager, presentation to the ERG, recommendation workshop, etc.) and agree on the related deadlines. They review the evaluation report structure (presented in section 4.5), and the CPE manager clarifies any pending question or need for clarification. The team leader indicates the distribution of tasks within the evaluation team and deadlines for each team member's contribution.

Phase 4
Reporting

The CPE report is the document in which the evaluation team presents the findings (organized around the evaluation questions), as well as the conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation. It provides the UNFPA CO and other stakeholders with a balanced and objective assessment of the country programme performance, its achievements, and challenges. Overall, the purpose of the report is to promote:

- **Accountability:** the report captures the extent to which the country programme has met its objectives and contributed to the intended outcomes. It holds stakeholders accountable for their actions, decisions, and resource investments.
- **Learning:** the report is a source of knowledge on what, in the country programme design and implementation, works, does not work, and why. It provides recommendations for improvement and helps the UNFPA CO staff and stakeholders make evidence-based decisions.
- **Communication:** the report is the core product to disseminate and facilitate the use of the evaluation results[28] by stakeholders (including UNFPA, its governmental partners, implementing partners, development partners, the rights-holders, and the general public), and to promote transparency as well as stakeholder engagement.

Table 12: *Main activities and responsible entities in the reporting phase*

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Field phase follow-up	Brainstorming session on feedback from debriefing meeting with ERG and CO and exit meeting with CPE manager	Evaluation team with CPE manager support if needed (virtual meeting)
Additional data collection	• Follow up interviews if required • Final document sourcing and review	Evaluation team with logistical support from CPE manager (and CO staff as needed)

28 As opposed to "findings" which refer to the responses to the evaluation questions only, "results" is used to describe the findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in the evaluation report.

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Evaluation matrix	Consolidation of the evaluation matrix	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance	Quality assurance by team leader Quality assurance by CPE manager
Findings (responses to the evaluation questions)	Drafting of the evaluation report's Findings section (chapter 4)	Evaluation team
	Peer review	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance	Team leader
	Revision (evaluators incorporate comments from team leader) and finalization	Evaluation team
Conclusions	Evaluation team members gather in a workshop to identify conclusions (Chapter 5)	Evaluation team (virtual meeting)
	Drafting of conclusions (based upon repartition of tasks by the team leader)	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance and finalization of conclusions	Team leader
Tentative recommendations	Evaluation team and CPE manager gather in a meeting to review the recommendations protocol and worksheet and identify tentative recommendations	Evaluation team with CPE manager (virtual meeting)
	Drafting of tentative recommendations using the recommendations protocol and worksheet (based upon repartition of tasks by the team leader)	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance and finalization of the recommendations protocol and worksheet	Team leader with CPE manager
Chapter 1: Introduction	Drafting of Chapter 1	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance	Team leader
	Finalization	Evaluation team

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Chapter 2: Country context	Drafting of Chapter 2	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance	Team leader
	Finalization	Evaluation team
Chapter 3: United Nations and UNFPA response and programme strategies	Drafting of Chapter 3	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance	Team leader
	Finalization	Evaluation team
Annexes	Compilation of annexes	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance	Team leader
	Finalization	Evaluation team
CPE report version 1 and recommendations protocol and worksheet	CPE report version 1 and the recommendations protocol and worksheet are completed and communicated to CPE manager	Team leader
	Quality assurance	CPE manager (with support from select CO staff) and RO M&E adviser
	If improvements are needed	• CPE manager requests a revision of the report and/or recommendations protocol and worksheet • Team leader makes changes (support from team members as needed)
	CPE report version 1 and the recommendations protocol and worksheet pass the quality control	CPE manager shares them both with the ERG
ERG meeting	Presentation of CPE report version 1 to the ERG	Evaluation team, CPE manager, ERG, CO representative
	CPE manager consolidates comments and shares with evaluation team	CPE manager
Recommendations workshop	Finalization of the recommendations	Evaluation team, CPE manager, ERG

Focus	Actions	Responsible entities
Communications plan	Updating the communications plan	CPE manager and CO communication officer
Revision of CPE report version 1	Revision of CPE report based on ERG comments	Evaluation team
	Inclusion of recommendations in CPE report	Team leader
	Drafting of the executive summary	Team leader
	Peer review	Evaluation team
	Quality assurance, finalization and communication to CPE manager	Team leader
CPE report version 2	Quality assurance	CPE manager and RO M&E adviser
	If improvements are needed	• CPE manager requests changes • Team leader makes changes (support from team members as needed)
	CPE report version 2 passes the quality control	In consultation with RO M&E adviser and CO representative, **the CPE manager formally approves the CPE report**
CPE report (final)	Quality assessment completed	CPE manager with RO M&E adviser
	CPE report and EQA grid are submitted to the UNFPA IEO	RO M&E adviser
	Final quality assessment	IEO

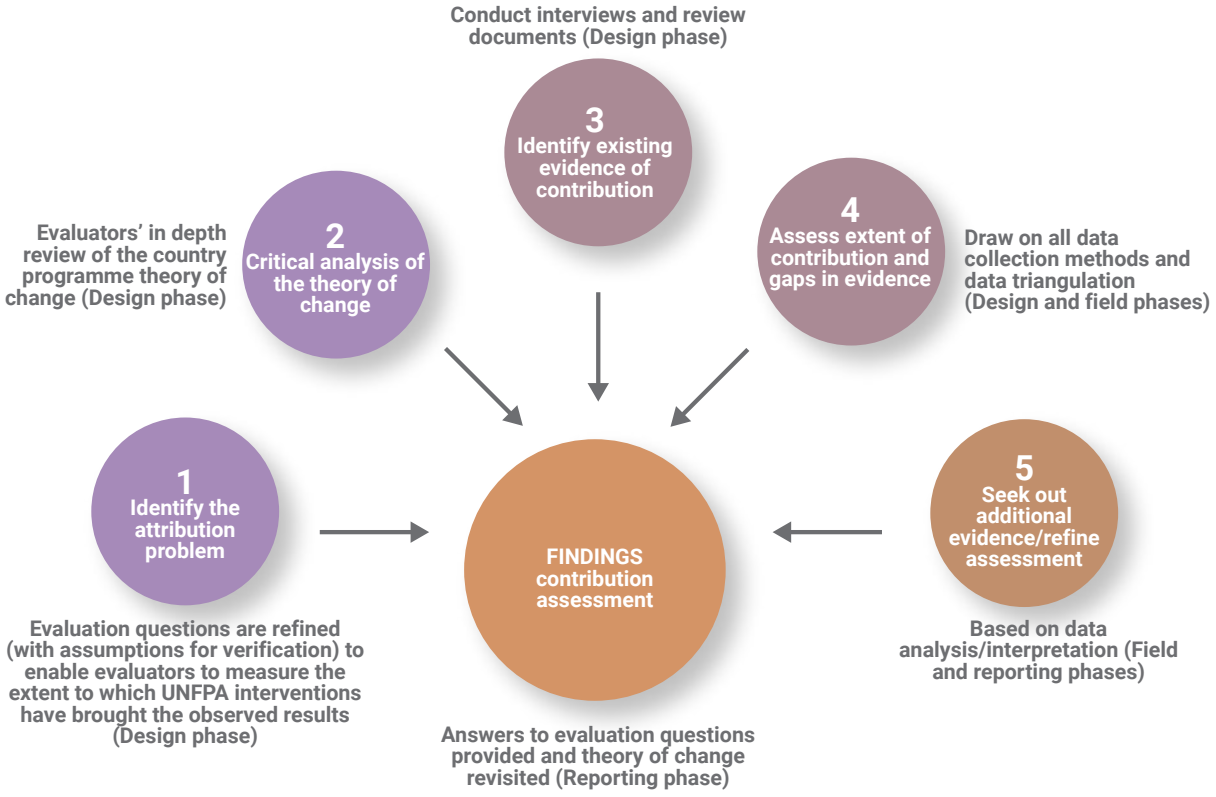
The CPE report must be clear, concise, and well-organized, following the structure and content detailed in section 4.5. One of the most important tasks in drafting the CPE report is to organize it into three interrelated, yet distinct, components: findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Together they represent the core of the CPE report.

4.1 Developing the findings

In order to draft the evaluation report, the evaluation team must first consider the data recorded in the evaluation matrix. The task is to sort, arrange, complement (if still necessary), process and weave the data into a meaningful account of events. To perform their analysis of the (quantitative and qualitative) data collected, the evaluators resort to diverse techniques, consisting of: describing, counting, factoring (identifying the variables that they believe influence the results), clustering, comparing, finding commonalities, finding differences, examining deviant cases/outliers, ruling out alternative explanations, etc. While data analysis and interpretation have already started in the field phase, they culminate in the reporting phase with the development of findings, that is: the formulation of detailed responses to the evaluation questions.

During the reporting phase, the evaluation team builds on their analysis and interpretation of data with a view to articulating and substantiating their findings. Findings include cause-and-effect statements related to the contribution of the UNFPA support to observed changes, as well as the plausible attribution of elements of the observed changes to specific country programme interventions. The evaluators must determine the extent to which specific interventions have played a part in a determined outcome, or how reasonable it is to conclude that they have made a difference to the problem (UNFPA interventions seek to solve). UNFPA cannot be solely responsible for outcome changes, yet the work of the CO consists in spurring, catalyzing and supporting the government's (and other partners) actions to achieve the intended outcomes and, ultimately, the transformative results. As already mentioned (see sections 1.2 and 2.2), the evaluators' analysis must, therefore, go well beyond checking whether the UNFPA country programme expected outputs were delivered. They must assess whether UNFPA interventions were influential (how, and why) in bringing about the results that they observed, taking other influencing factors into consideration, hence confirming (with supporting evidence) the assumptions about a direct influence (purported in the country programme theory of change).

Figure 6: *A contribution analysis to formulate findings*



Adapted from Mayne, John (2008), Contribution Analysis. An approach to exploring cause and effect. ILAC Brief

As each evaluation team member works on the findings for the evaluation questions for which they are responsible (in line with the division of labor decided in the field phase exit meeting), they must ensure that the responses to the evaluation questions are evidence-based. For instance, in their respective write-ups, evaluators should not merely cite a stakeholder's opinion on a specific issue or simply state their own point of view. Instead, their findings must be based on meaningful and reliable information; this makes up the internal validity of the evaluation findings (also see table 11). To ensure internal validity, evaluators must systematically interrogate their findings, as follows:

- Do they solidly rest on data that has been systematically triangulated (see section 3.3)?
- Could the changes they describe be explained by external factors unrelated to UNFPA interventions?
- Do they depart from (or contradict) findings of other evaluations (e.g. UNFPA centralized, thematic and programme evaluations, other UN agencies and INGOs' evaluations, UNDAF/UNSCDF evaluations, etc.) and how can this be explained?
- Do they address the comments received during the debriefing meeting at the end of the Field Phase?

Evaluators should only resort to quotations with a view to supporting the interpretations and explanations presented in their findings. In this sense, quoting deepens the understanding by means of enrolling the informant's voice. When well used, quotations enhance readability of the text, providing vividness to the evaluation report, hence facilitating communication. Quotations can also serve as evidence: original data help to serve the reader's assessment of the accuracy of the analysis presented in the CPE report, thereby strengthening the findings. It is important to stress, however, that data must remain confidential and must be de-identified when used in the report (and as recorded in the evaluation matrix annexed to the final report). Evaluators have access to the original data and know "who said what", but informants' identities are safeguarded by removing identifying information. Instead, quotes should be attributed to a category of respondents, rather than a distinct person in a specific organization or precise location (see section 3.3).

Maintaining rigor in analysis and interpretation can be achieved through continuous discussion among the evaluation team and between the team and the CPE manager throughout the reporting phase. Evaluators should exchange their respective write-ups as they move forward and act as peer reviewers for one another. The reliability of findings is also addressed by maintaining a meticulous record of all supporting data in a well-presented evaluation matrix. The CPE report readers should be able, at any time, to link the evaluation findings with the evidence gathered and presented in the evaluation matrix (see section 3.3).

4.2 Establishing the conclusions

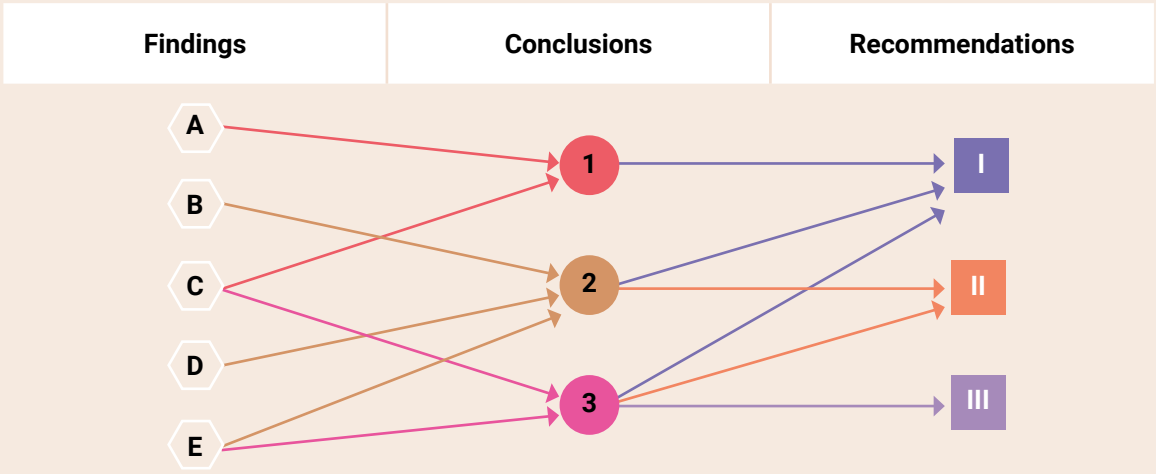
The CPE started with UNFPA CO and stakeholders asking a number of evaluation questions, and proceeded with the evaluation team collecting and assembling data in such a way as to build comprehensive and plausible responses. Ultimately, the evaluators must reach a set of evaluative conclusions as to the merit or performance of the country programme. Unlike findings, conclusions involve a value judgement on the part of evaluators as they point at the factors of success and failure, weakness and challenges of the evaluated interventions. Conclusions must, however, be free from personal bias or opinion and, instead, must be justified and supported by the evaluation findings.

A conclusion is not a summary or a re-statement of the evaluation findings, but a synthesis of key points, topics or themes, such as: common patterns in different programmatic areas; possible common or recurrent causes of weaknesses in the country programme; or specific success or failure factors. Therefore,

conclusions stem from the findings and derive from other crosscutting or transversal issues that have emerged in the course of data analysis and interpretation. The team leader and the CPE manager must also ensure that the conclusions do not entail action, but, instead, can be conducive to the formulation of constructive recommendations (which, in turn, can easily be traced back to one or a number of conclusions).

Box 16: Tracking linkages between findings, conclusions and recommendations

Weak connections between findings, conclusions, and recommendations can undermine the users' confidence in evaluation results. Therefore, the evaluation team and the CPE manager must ensure every conclusion is solidly based on a number of findings, and that every recommendation stems directly from one or a number of conclusions.



Unlike the findings chapter (which represents the bulk of the CPE report), the conclusion chapter should be brief. The CPE manager must ensure that the evaluators formulate a limited number of conclusions, concise and to the point. Conclusions should not offer unnecessary detail about the findings (nor should they comment on the methodology). The CPE manager must also ensure that conclusions do not derive from preconceived notions or opinions formed outside the evaluation (especially by team leaders who may have conducted other CPEs in other countries and may be tempted to "reuse" prior writings).

Finally, the evaluation team leader and the CPE manager verify that the conclusions are not systematically skewed towards positive views; negative aspects of evaluated interventions, weaknesses, bottlenecks, drawbacks and challenges must not be ignored. The evaluation team must be able to establish the reasoning process by which the judgement (positive and negative) they have reached in the CPE conclusions is transparent and supported by evidence-based findings. Taken together, the conclusions allow for an overall assessment of the country programme.

4.3 Co-creating the recommendations

Using the evaluation findings for learning how to improve the performance of the UNFPA country programme, hence demonstrating accountability (and transparency with respect to results) is the main purpose of the CPE. To this end, the report presents a set of recommendations describing actions to address the weaknesses of the programme or to build on its strengths as the CO embarks in the design of the next programming cycle. Stemming logically from the conclusions, recommendations must, however, focus on actions that are within the control of their intended users.

As the evaluation team comprises independent external experts, it is not equipped with the knowledge and insight necessary to effectively ensure that the recommendations consider all operational implications, and are fully actionable, technically sound, and consistent with ongoing and planned developments in the country programme or, more broadly, in the country's evolving context. To avoid one-size-fits all suggestions, and, instead, deliver effective action-oriented proposals tailored to the evaluation users and the setting in which they operate, the CPE manager must involve the ERG members in the co-creation of the CPE recommendations following the process described below.

Box 17: Recommendations co-creation process

Step 1. The CPE report version 1 does not contain recommendations. Instead, the evaluation team formulates a set of **tentative recommendations** in a dedicated worksheet.

Within the worksheet, along with each proposed recommendation, the evaluation team provides:

- The **rationale** or justification for each recommendation
- The **level of priority** assigned to each recommendation
- The **conclusion(s)** to which each recommendation is linked
- The **target audience** of each recommendation (the business unit(s) charged with implementing the recommendation)
- A short list of **operational implications** of each recommendation.

Step 2. After an in-depth quality assurance, the **CPE manager shares the completed recommendations protocol and worksheet with the members of the ERG together with the draft final report.** They invite the ERG members, after they have read the draft final report, to carefully review the tentative recommendations and provide input and feedback on each recommendation. Specifically, the ERG members are requested to:

- **Propose their own revisions by making any edits** (deletions and insertions) **directly into the proposed text.** ERG members can propose an alternative wording or draft an alternate recommendation.
- **Identify/modify the operational implications of the recommendation.** This would also include identifying additional, important operational implications, which the evaluation team could not possibly foresee.
- **Confirm/modify the priority** assigned to the recommendation or propose an alternative level.
- **Amend the target audience list** if they identify other/additional UNFPA business units that should be responsible or co-responsible for implementing the recommendation.

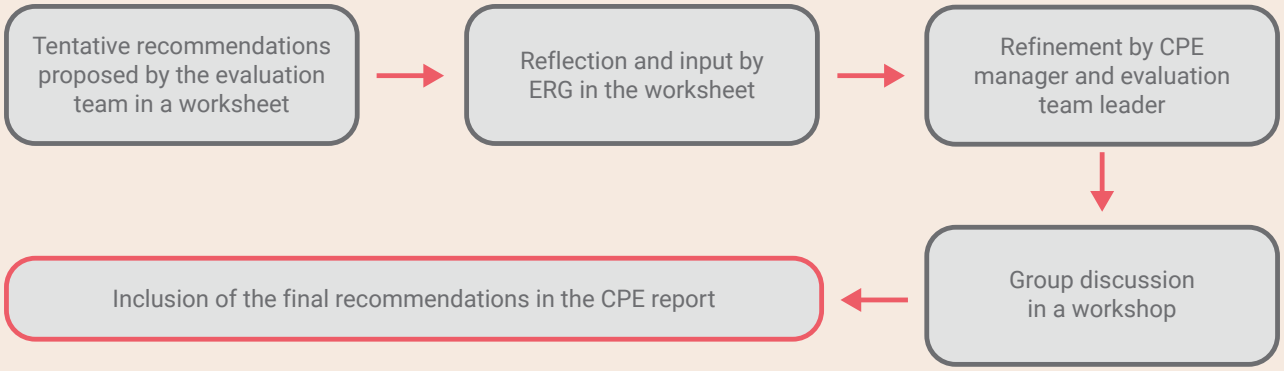
Note: The CPE manager must ensure that, when amending the proposed recommendations / filling in the worksheet, the ERG members make proposals (amendment to a recommendation; additional operational implications; new recommendation, etc.) that **strictly derive from the conclusions presented in the draft final report. Any suggestion for a recommendation that cannot be traced back to any of the CPE's conclusions must be rejected.**

Step 3. The CPE manager together with the team leader consolidate the input from the ERG members and amend/edit/complement the set of recommendations accordingly.

Step 4. The revised recommendations protocol and worksheet serves as the basis for a **recommendations workshop**. The workshop brings together the ERG members and takes place after the ERG meeting during which the Draft Final Report has been presented by the evaluation team (see section 4.4.2). During the workshop, each revised recommendation (together with its apparatus for implementation, and notably the operational implications) is reviewed and refined by the participants. The purpose is to reach an agreement from all members of the ERG on the wording of each recommendation and finalize them.

Step 5. The final recommendations are inserted in the **CPE report version 2.**

Involving the CPE stakeholders in a co-creation process is an effective way to increase adherence to the evaluation findings and ensure uptake of the recommendations. It expands ownership and empowers the evaluation users to develop those practical solutions that are best tailored to their circumstances. The five-step approach described above aims at ensuring that co-creators are committed and actively engaged in the process. It consists of an iterative exercise detailed below.



This sequence stimulates the collective reflection to incrementally specify the content of each recommendation. This interaction between the evaluation team, the CPE manager and the ERG is key to ensure that new and doable ideas to improve the design and delivery of the new country programme materialize during the CPE process.

4.4 Drafting the country programme evaluation report

Writing the CPE report is an iterative process during which the evaluation report is quality assured, revised, refined and improved until it meets the level of rigour and quality standards as spelt out in the ToR. It is the responsibility of the team leader to review the contributions of all the team members, point out flaws and areas for improvement, and provide guidance for revisions to ameliorate the text. Once the contributions of

all the evaluators have passed the team leader's first read, they perform a second, detailed read-through to prepare the report for submission to the CPE manager. This process is punctuated by two in-depth quality assurance stages performed on two versions of the CPE report.

4.4.1 Version 1 of the report

The evaluation team writes the first version of the CPE report. This document has the same structure and contents (see section 4.5) as the final version, with the exception of the executive summary (which can only be based upon a final version of the main body of the CPE report) and the recommendations. As indicated (see section 4.3), the evaluators' tentative recommendations are not part of version 1 of the CPE report. Instead, they are included in the recommendation protocol and worksheet that is used to guide the co-creation process with the ERG.

The evaluation team leader checks that the report meets the quality criteria spelt out in the guidance on evaluation quality assurance and assessment. After this thorough quality check, they send the report to the CPE manager, together with the evaluation matrix (that contains all the supporting evidence). The evaluation team leader also shares the duly completed recommendations protocol and worksheet (that contains the tentative recommendations).

The CPE manager conducts an in-depth quality control of the report and the recommendations protocol and worksheet against the criteria spelt out in the EQA grid; they seek assistance from CO relevant staff to ensure there are no factual errors, misinterpretation of data, etc. The CPE manager must also share the report with the regional M&E adviser for their review and guidance

- **Where improvements are needed,** the CPE manager requests a revision of the report and/or the recommendations protocol and worksheet, stating those specific changes that need to be made by the evaluation team, and why.
- **If/when version 1 of the report and the recommendations protocol and worksheet pass the quality control,** the CPE manager shares them both with the ERG.

The CPE manager sets the date, time and sends invitations for the ERG meeting and the recommendations workshop. Those two important meetings should take place on two successive days and the CPE manager should allocate sufficient time to them (half a day for the recommendation workshop).

4.4.2 Evaluation reference group meeting and recommendations workshop

In anticipation of the meetings, the CPE manager circulates the draft CPE report and the duly completed recommendations protocol and worksheet. When submitting the report to the ERG members for their review, the CPE manager should indicate those sections (findings and conclusions) for which their input is particularly important. The CPE manager allocates a minimum of 2 weeks (10 working days) to a maximum of 3 weeks (15 working days) turnaround for ERG members to provide their feedback. The CPE manager may elect to place the report on a shared Google Drive file so that all ERG members may provide their comments in the same document. As the CPE manager reviews/compiles the ERG members comments, they may remove those comments which are beyond the scope of the evaluation; this is a useful filtering that will help keep the evaluation team's work manageable as the deadline to complete the CPE approaches.

As they share the recommendations protocol and worksheet, the CPE manager stresses the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between the evaluation's findings and conclusions (which do not entail action) and recommendations, which the ERG must test in terms of: utility, feasibility and conditions of

success. recommendations must also be detailed in terms of priority as well as target audience (those who will be tasked with implementing them). For this reason, the CPE manager recalls that formulating the recommendations is a collective responsibility of the evaluation team and the members of the ERG. They invite the ERG members to follow the protocol's guidance and provide detailed input. ERG members must send back their duly completed recommendations protocol and worksheet to the CPE manager at a date set well in advance of the recommendations workshop, so the CPE manager and evaluation team leader can consolidate the ERG input and revise the worksheet (see Box 17, Step 3).

4.4.2.1 Evaluation reference group meeting

The team leader (with contributions from all team members and the CPE manager) prepares a presentation in view of the ERG meeting.

Box 18: Suggested outline for the presentation of CPE report (Version 1) to the ERG

1. Purpose and objectives of the ERG meeting
2. Evaluation roadmap (phases of the evaluation with timeline)
3. The country programme: map of UNFPA programme implementation areas (with indication of the the sites visited by the evaluation team)
4. The country programme theory of change revisited based upon evaluation findings
5. Methodological limitations
6. Evaluation findings for question 1: strengths vs challenges
7. Evaluation findings for question 2: strengths vs challenges
8. ...
9. ...
10. Conclusion #1
11. Conclusion #2
12. ...
13. Next steps: (i) Recommendations workshop; (ii) Production of the final CPE report

The team leader must make sure that all the team members are ready to respond to questions and comments from the ERG relating to their respective areas of responsibility and expertise. The CO representative chairs the ERG meeting and moderates the discussion. The CPE manager is responsible for keeping track of all comments – expressed during the meeting and/or sent in writing – and compiles them in a document to share and discuss with the evaluation team. Comments are collected in order to further check the factual basis of findings and conclusions, as well as the impartiality of the analysis and transparency of judgment. This ERG meeting is the last opportunity for stakeholders to have the evaluation team double-check factual data, further expand or detail their analysis (findings) and justify their judgement (conclusions).

4.4.2.2 Recommendations workshop

During the recommendations workshop (see Box 17, steps 4-5), the consolidated set of recommendations (taking stock of the ERG members suggestions in their respective worksheets) is reviewed and discussed in detail. The objective of the workshop is to test the utility and feasibility of each recommendation and to

finalize their wording (including the operational implications). The recommendations as they emerge from the workshop will constitute the final set of recommendations and will be inserted in the final CPE report.

The CPE manager (in consultation with the CO representative and the government partner that coordinates the country programme) may amend the list of participants in the recommendations workshop. In addition to ERG members, they may identify other UNFPA personnel and partners who may be responsible or co-responsible for implementing some recommendation(s) and, as a result, should be involved in the co-creation process.

Co-creating the CPE recommendations is an effective way to ensure their viability in terms of: consistency with the evaluation findings and conclusions; relevance in relation to the UNFPA programme moving forward; practicality in light of available resources for implementation and of the overall country context; and acceptability to the evaluation users. The co-creation process will also allow for political and interpersonal sensitivity in the wording of recommendations, avoiding "red flag" words (e.g., failure, lack, incompetence) and blame, and showing respect for the organization and cultural values. Finally, it will ensure that, when changes in the desired direction are already underway, these are acknowledged to avoid misleading readers and creating unease among, and backlash from the programme stakeholders.

As the evaluation team embarks into the revision and completion of the CPE report, it is the time for the CPE manager and the CO communication officer to revisit the initial communications plan (developed at design phase). They may adjust the plan's timeline for developing evaluation products (and the corresponding budget lines), and include new opportunities for advocacy and communication that may have emerged during the reporting phase, and notably during ERG meeting and the recommendations workshop with the country programme stakeholders.

4.4.3 Version 2 of the report

The evaluation team takes stock of the comments received and, without compromising the independence of its value judgements, revises the report to produce a version 2:

- Comments dealing with methodological quality and facts are systematically addressed. Evaluators double check and make necessary corrections to facts and ensure accuracy; where there are different or conflicting "facts", they make a judgement based on the provenance of data
- Comments dealing with the substance of findings and conclusions are addressed with a view to deepening the analysis and expanding findings to the extent supported by the available data
- Feedback on level of detail, language, and framing of the findings and conclusions is used to sharpen the findings and conclusions and ensure that the evaluation report is user-friendly
- Some comments may be rejected by the evaluation team. The team leader must explain the rationale for their dissenting views in a note ("audit trail") to the CPE manager.

The evaluation team inserts the recommendations (as finalized during the workshop) within the report.

As for version 1, the evaluation team follows the report outline and recommended page lengths (see section 4.5). This outline, together with the guidance on evaluation quality assurance and assessment, helps the team leader to control whether version 2 of the report fulfills all requested quality principles and criteria. Once the evaluators have completed version 2 of the CPE report, it is time to do a final read and make edits as needed. The evaluators should be looking for typos and spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes and ensure that, in presentation and style, the report fully abides by the United Nations editorial guidelines.

As the main body (findings, conclusions and recommendations) of the CPE report is finalized, version 2 of the report includes an executive summary (see section 4.5) and is submitted to the CPE manager for their final review and to determine whether it can be accepted as a final deliverable for publication and dissemination. To this end, the CPE manager conducts an in-depth quality control of the report against the EQA grid criteria. The CPE manager must also share the report with the regional M&E adviser for their review and guidance.

- **Where improvements are needed**, the CPE manager requests a revision of the report, stating those specific changes that need to be made by the evaluation team and why.
- **If/when version 2 of the report passes the quality control**, the CPE manager, in consultation with the RO M&E adviser and the CO representative, approves the report whose content is now considered final.

The CPE manager shares the final report and the duly completed EQA grid with the regional M&E adviser for their review. The final EQA grid is consolidated by the CPE manager based on the regional M&E adviser's feedback.

The regional M&E adviser shares the CPE report together with the final EQA grid with the UNFPA IEO. The IEO will undertake a quality assessment of the report. The CPE report will be published in the UNFPA evaluation database together with the quality assessment carried out by the IEO.

4.5 Structure of the evaluation report

To be useful, the CPE report must provide evidence-based responses to the evaluation questions that form the basis for justifiable conclusions, which, in turn, lead to actionable recommendations (see Box 16). The CPE report also reflects the use of sound data collection and analysis methods (indicating the limitations of each) and is structured in a manner to enable readers to find the information they need quickly and easily. A well-structured report follows a framework that also allows the evaluators to break down a relatively long document into more manageable sections to be drafted by different team members. The requirements for the CPE report structure and content are detailed below. The maximum length of the report (excluding, opening pages and annexes) is 80 pages.

Cover

- Country programme evaluation of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) *[name of country] [cycle of assistance: number]*th Country Programme
- Evaluation report
- Date *(year)*

Note: The CO communication officer develops the cover of the CPE report using the template available in both Adobe Illustrator and in Microsoft Word formats. The prescribed fonts and styles must be maintained for consistent branding of UNFPA CPEs. See section 5.2.3.

Opening pages	Length
• Country map indicating areas of UNFPA programme implementation • CPE team and manager (presented in a table)	1 page

Evaluation Team	
Names	*Titles/position in the team*
Name	Evaluation manager, UNFPA *[name of country]* Office

- Copyright and disclaimer

Copyright © UNFPA *[add year]*, all rights reserved.
The analysis and recommendations of this evaluation does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Population Fund.

• Evaluation Reference Group with detailed information (presented in a table)	1 page

Evaluation Reference Group		
Names	*Title/position*	*Organisation*

• Acknowledgements	1 page
• Table of contents (including page numbering)	2 pages
• Tables and figures (providing numbers, titles and page references)	2 pages
• Acronyms and abbreviations	2 pages
• Key facts table	2 pages

Note: The evaluation team must proofread the CPE report (correcting typos, grammatical mistakes, and other writing issues) before sharing it with the CPE manager. Evaluators must also pay much attention to the readability and style of the report. In the opening pages, attention will be paid to the spelling of names/ surnames and affiliations, acronyms and abbreviations (only those used in the report must be listed) and the key facts table, which may need to be updated (or expanded) based upon data collected throughout the CPE.

Guidance: United Nations editorial guidelines

Total number of pages: 10 to 13 pages. The report's opening pages are in Roman numerals.

Executive summary	Length
• Purpose and scope of the evaluation; intended audience	half page
• Methodology	half page
• Main findings	2 pages
• Conclusions	1.5 pages
• Recommendations	1.5 pages

Note: The executive summary should clearly state the purpose and scope of the evaluation, identify its intended audience and the salient methodological aspects. It highlights the major points of the report by condensing the main findings, the conclusions, and the recommendations. It should include enough information so the reader can understand what is discussed in the full report, without having to read it. It should be understandable as a stand-alone document that can also be disseminated separately from the full report. The executive summary is written to enable senior management to get vital information about the evaluation without having to read the entire report. The evaluation team leader and the CPE manager must pay much attention to the drafting of the executive summary as, because of its conciseness, it can be more influential and read by more readers than the main body of the report.

Important: The executive summary is drafted only for version 2 of the report, once the main body of the report (findings, conclusions, recommendations) is in its final (or close to final) stage. Version 1 of the report should not include an executive summary.

EQA: See Criterion A (4-5) Structure and clarity of reporting/executive summary

Total number of pages: 5 to 6 pages maximum. Arabic numerals start on page 1 of the executive summary to the end of the report (including annexes).

Chapter 1: Introduction		Length
Section 1.1	Purpose and objectives of the CPE	half page
Section 1.2	Scope of the evaluation: thematic (evaluation questions with assumptions for verification), geographic, and temporal	2 pages
Section 1.3	Evaluation approach	1 page
Section 1.3.1	Contribution analysis and theory of change	3 pages
Section 1.3.2	Methods for data collection and analysis	3 pages
Section 1.3.3	Stakeholders consulted and sites visited	2 pages
Section 1.3.4	Limitations and mitigations measures	1-2 pages

Note: The information presented in Chapter 1 is for the most part, already included in the design report; some information must be updated, refined (e.g sampling approach), expanded or shortened/summarized.

Guidance: Section 2.4.3 (version 2 of the design report). In sub-section 1.3.4, the evaluators report factors that have effectively restricted their access to information and, therefore, may have affected data (quantity and/or quality). Where limitations could not be mitigated, the evaluators must explain the extent to which it affects the validity and reliability of the evaluation results.

EQA: See Criterion D Design and methodology

Total number of pages: 9 to 11 pages maximum.

Chapter 2: Country context		Length
Section 2.1	Development challenges and national strategies	5 pages
Section 2.2	The role of external assistance	1 page

Note: The information presented in Chapter 2 is essentially included in the design report; some information must be updated, refined, expanded or shortened/summarized. See section 2.4.4.

Total number of pages: 5 to 6 pages maximum

Chapter 3: The United Nations and UNFPA response		Length
Section 3.1	United Nations and UNFPA strategic response	1 page
Section 3.2	UNFPA response through the country programme	1 page
Sub-section 3.2.1	Brief description of UNFPA previous programme cycle, goals and achievements	1 page
Sub-section 3.2.2	The current UNFPA country programme and an analysis of its theory of change	3 pages
Sub-section 3.2.3	The financial structure of the UNFPA country programme	3 pages

Note: Most of the information in Chapter 3 is already captured in the design report; some information must be updated, refined, expanded or shortened/summarized.

Guidance: Section 2.4.3 (version 2 of the design report). Sub-section 3.2.2 presents the country programme theory of change as reconstructed during the design phase and refined during data analysis and reporting, to show how the country programme interventions are understood to produce a series of results. In the CPE report, evaluators examine the clarity, validity and comprehensiveness of the pathways of change that the theory of change describes, identify any shortcomings and their consequences on implementation and the achievement of the intended results as articulated in the results and resources framework of the country

programme. Based upon their findings, the evaluators highlight where the pathways of change differed from what was initially projected by the UNFPA CO and the country programme stakeholders; as well as where key assumptions about external factors were overlooked, or insufficiently addressed.

EQA: See Criterion D Design and methodology/theory of change

Total number of pages: 7 to 10 pages maximum.

Chapter 4: Findings		Length
Section 4.1	Answer to evaluation question 1	4 pages
Section 4.2	Answer to evaluation question 2	4 pages
Section 4.3	Answer to evaluation question 3	4 pages
Section 4.4	Answer to evaluation question ...	4 pages

Note: In the Findings Chapter, each section corresponds to an evaluation question and must open with a summary (presented within a box). Underneath the summary box, the evaluators must provide the following information: For details of the evidence supporting findings in section 4.1, see Evaluation matrix: Assumptions X, Y, Z … (in annex 1).

Guidance: Section 4.1 (Developing the findings) As they draft this chapter, the evaluators must avoid common pitfalls such as: (a) Findings are not well organized and do not address the evaluation question (the reader must figure out where they fit); (b) Findings lack precision and/or context (the reader cannot interpret their relative strength); (c) Findings only respond partly to the evaluation question (only some assumptions appear to be tested); (d) Findings express judgements and are mixed with conclusions.

EQA: See Criterion E Analysis and findings

Total number of pages: 25 to 35 pages maximum.

Chapter 5: Conclusions	Length
Conclusion 1	half page
Conclusion 2	half page
Conclusion 3	half page
...	

Note: With the conclusions, the CPE readers will understand why the evaluation should matter to them and why its results should be used. Conclusions are neither a summary nor re-statement of findings; they are, instead, a synthesis of key points drawn from (and clearly based on) a number of findings. A conclusion

expresses the evaluators' judgement reached after considering all the relevant findings (responses to evaluation questions). As such, the conclusion section is the end-result of a process of analysis and reasoning grounded on evidence-based (data gathered during the field phase) findings. While the report structure keeps findings and conclusions separate from each other, evaluators must ensure the readers can see the clear and logical relationship between findings and conclusions. Conclusions must be presented in order of importance; they can also be organized in categories – e.g. strategic conclusions (focused UNFPA's ability to achieve its goals and objectives) followed by programmatic conclusions. For each conclusion, the evaluators must indicate: (i) Origin: Response to evaluation questions x, y, ..; and the (ii) Associated recommendation(s): x,y…

Guidance: Section 4.2 (Establishing the conclusions) ⚠ As they draft this chapter, the evaluators must avoid common pitfalls such as: conclusions (a) restating findings; (b) amounting to vague statements; (c) being based on one finding only; (d) containing recommendations or action points; (e) too long and offering unnecessary detail.

EQA: See Criterion F Conclusions

Total number of pages: 5 pages maximum.

Chapter 6: Recommendations	Length
Recommendation 1	1 page
Recommendation 2	1 page
...	1 page

Note: Chapter 6 is not included in version 1 of the CPE report. Instead, the evaluators formulate tentative recommendations in the recommendations protocol and worksheet which, in turn, will serve as the basis for the co-creation of the final recommendations with the ERG members. In version 2 of the CPE report, the content of this chapter results directly from the recommendations as finalized during the Recommendation workshop. Recommendations must be presented in order of importance. For each recommendation, the evaluators must indicate: (i) Type – e.g. strategic (outlining how UNFPA could better achieve its goals and objectives) vs. programmatic or operational recommendation; (ii) Priority (high/medium/low); (iii) Based on conclusions: x, y, z; (iv) Directed to: A, B; and the (v) List the operational implications. Note that the time frame for implementation will be provided in the management response.

Guidance: Section 4.3 (Co-creating the recommendations) ⚠ As they draft this chapter, the evaluators and the CPE manager must avoid common pitfalls such as: recommendations are (a) not supported by any conclusion (and, consequently, by any findings); (b) are unclear about the action to be taken (operational implications); (c) fail to specify who should take action; (d) are not realistic with respect to timing (priority level) and other implications (resources, political context etc.)

EQA: See Criterion G Recommendations

Total number of pages: 6 pages maximum.

Annexes
Annex 1: Evaluation matrix
Annex 2: List of documents consulted
Annex 3: List of persons met and their organizational affiliations/institutions
Annex 4: Data collection tools
Annex 5: CPE Terms of reference

Note: All the above annexes are mandatory. Should the evaluators include additional annexes, the CPE ToR must always come as the final annex.

EQA: See Criterion H Structure and clarity of reporting/annexes

Phase 5
Dissemination and facilitation of use

This phase focuses on strategically communicating the CPE results to targeted audiences and facilitating the use of the CPE to inform decision-making and learning for programme and policy improvement. This phase serves as a bridge between generating evaluation results, and the practical steps needed to ensure the CPE leads to meaningful programme adaptation to deliver on UNFPA priorities and commitments.

This phase involves two interrelated approaches:

1. **Strategic communication:** A purposeful and planned approach to communicating the CPE results in a timely and targeted manner to relevant stakeholders, with a view to maximizing the utilization of the CPE. While evaluation relevance, timeliness, quality, and credibility are prerequisites for evaluation utilization, strategic communication ensures that evaluative evidence is proactively communicated in a systematic and timely way to inform decision-making, support adaptation of strategies, programmes and policies.
2. **Facilitation of use of CPE results:** The intentional and deliberate steps towards actively engaging with stakeholders over the long term and incorporating advocacy efforts so that CPE results are effectively utilized to inform decision-making. Among several actions, this includes the development of the management response and follow-up on its implementation. Advocating for the use of CPE results fosters a culture of learning and adaptation based on evaluative evidence, with a view to accelerating the delivery of the transformative results of UNFPA.

While this phase is specifically dedicated to dissemination and facilitating the use of the CPE results, its foundation rests upon the activities implemented in the preceding phases of the evaluation. Table 13 recaps those activities (and related responsibilities) and indicates which specific tasks must be implemented in the last phase of the evaluation process.

Table 13: *Main activities and responsible entities in the dissemination and facilitation of use phase*

Phase	Action	Responsible entities
Preparation phase	• In the CPE ToR, detail all communication and dissemination components	CPE manager CO communication officer
Design phase	• Get familiar with the five key elements of strategic communication of a CPE (see section 5.2) • Consult with the evaluation team, ERG, regional M&E adviser and programme experts on the preparation of the initial communication plan • Use the CPE communication plan template to draft the initial communication plan • Use the stakeholder map (in the design report), to determine the target audiences for the CPE in the communication plan • Use the evaluation work plan (included in the design report) to develop the timelines and provisional budget for the preparation and rollout of the evaluation products	CPE manager CO communication officer
Field phase	• Take photographs during primary data collection and during the evaluation process (see section 3.2.5)	Evaluation team with CO communication officer and CPE manager support and oversight
	• Update the communication plan, if any new target audiences or opportunities for advocacy and communication of the CPE are identified	CPE manager CO communication officer
Reporting phase	• Refer to the editorial guidelines of the United Nations and the UNFPA IEO supplementary editorial guidelines to ensure high editorial standards of the evaluation report	Evaluation team
	• Update the communication plan if any new opportunities for advocacy and communication of the CPE are identified	CPE manager CO communication officer

Phase	Action	Responsible entities
Dissemination and facilitation of use phase	**Strategic communications** • Finalize the communication plan, with an adequate budget and updated timeline • Consult with the evaluation team, ERG and regional M&E adviser on the final communication plan • Submit the final communication plan to the CO representative for review and approval prior to implementation • Develop all evaluation products, as detailed in the communication plan (in line with the minimum communications package) • Ensure the timely and simultaneous release of all the evaluation products	CPE manager and CO communication officer, supported by the evaluation team as relevant
	Facilitating the short-term use of the CPE results • Development of the management response	CO representative, CPE manager, all relevant CO staff
	Facilitating the long-term use of the CPE results • Identify new opportunities for CPE uptake • Proactively continue to engage with stakeholders • Use the CPE as a powerful source of content to communicate UNFPA results • Continue to build an evaluation culture by supporting and advocating for use of the CPE results • Share evaluation lessons on process and outcomes widely	CPE manager, with support from the CO communication officer, in consultation with CO technical specialists

5.1 Roles and responsibilities for strategic communication and facilitation of use of the CPE results

The CPE manager and the CO communication officer are jointly responsible for the strategic communication on the CPE. The evaluation team plays an important role in providing the CPE manager key inputs during communication planning (such as: identifying audiences and context, defining the CPE key messages), developing some communication products (such as presentations; taking photographs during data collection), participating and presenting CPE results in face-to-face and/or during remote events (such as dissemination workshops, webinars, advocacy meetings). The CPE manager should consult with the evaluation team, the ERG, the regional M&E adviser and programme experts as the CPE communication plan is developed (see section 5.2.2). The CPE manager is also responsible for supporting the development of the management response and the long-term facilitation of the use of the CPE. Senior management and technical staff also play an important role in increasing the uptake of the evaluation.

5.2 Strategic approach to communicating the results of the CPE

5.2.1 Key elements

The five key elements for strategic communication on a CPE are as follows:

5.2.1.1 Early planning for strategic communication

Communication on the CPE results is most effective when planning for communication is strategically built into the evaluation process from the outset. This starts in the preparation phase, with the inclusion of communication elements in the ToR of the CPE. The initial CPE communication plan is then jointly developed, during the design phase by the CPE manager and the CO communication officer (in consultation with thematic experts, the ERG, the evaluation team and the regional M&E advisor), and is continuously refined throughout the field and reporting phases. The CPE communication plan is finalized and implemented during the dissemination and facilitation of use phase.

5.2.1.2 Audience-focused communication approach

Following an audience-focused or audience-centric communication approach means determining the target audience for the CPE, prioritizing the information needs of the audience when developing the messages, and packaging and delivering the messages in the most relevant way to a specific audience.

To strategically communicate CPE results, the CPE manager and the communication officer, along with the evaluation team and ERG, must identify internal and external audiences early in the evaluation process and reflect on how each audience will utilize the evaluation results and for what purpose. The stakeholder map fully completed at the design phase will help identify these audiences. For example, the internal audience will include senior management in the UNFPA CO, programme officers, technical specialists and the UNFPA RO. In addition, a range of external audiences may also find the CPE relevant for different purposes. For instance, the government, implementing partners, other development and humanitarian partners, donors, other UN agencies, civil society, academia, the media, rights-holders and the general public can make different use of the evaluation results, ranging from accountability purpose to decision-making and evidence-based advocacy. For each audience, the CPE manager and communication officer should determine the most suitable communication channels and platforms.

5.2.1.3 Relevant, innovative and diversified CPE products for different audiences

For each target audience, the CPE manager and the CO communication officer should consider what evaluation product are most relevant. Senior managers and policymakers will prefer an evaluation brief, a fact sheet, an executive summary and/or a presentation for easy and quick access to the key messages of the CPE. Programme officers, technical specialists, implementing partners or donors, on the other hand, may prefer having access to the full evaluation report, including other concise materials (such as an executive summary, brief, presentation and video). Meanwhile, the general public, rights-holders, the local evaluation community, and other national stakeholders can be reached through social media, radio, local television broadcasts, posters and pamphlets in local languages, local newspapers, etc. All audiences, however, may find a brief video (in national and local languages) of the evaluation highlights (objectives, process and results) useful as a quick audio-visual summary of the CPE. For more inclusive communication, the evaluation brief can also be translated into national and local languages. In addition, for internal audiences, the CPE manager and the CO communication officer may use email messages, webinars, posts

on the intranet (MyUNFPA), the M&E Net community and other thematic communities to share the CPE results. For examples of evaluation products, see section 5.2.3.

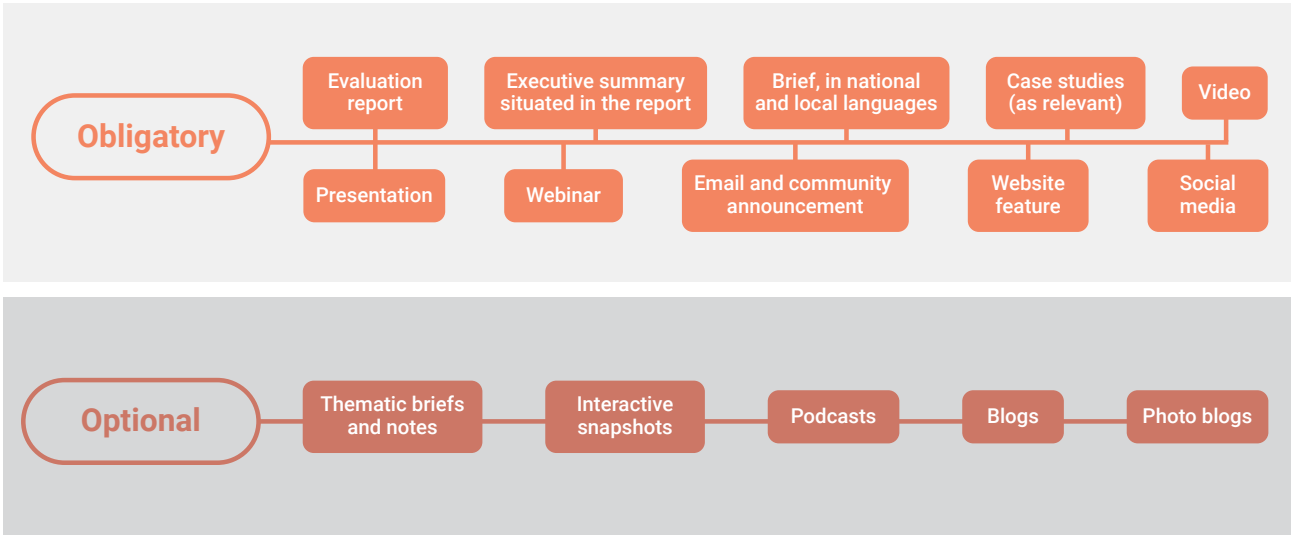
Diversifying and tailoring the evaluation products to a target audience does not mean altering the CPE results. It means presenting the evaluation results in clear, jargon-free language that is easily understandable to a wide audience, including non-technical experts. The key messages of the CPE should be contextualized to meet the knowledge needs of the specific audience, retaining a balanced and nuanced presentation of what works, what does not, why, for whom and under what circumstances. While evaluation results may be communicated in many formats such as an evaluation report, a video or a social media post to suit a specific audience, their substance remains unchanged and the evaluators' judgment is preserved. This audience-centric approach in communication is vital for increasing the utilization of the CPE results.

Since target audiences will need to access, read, process, and utilize the CPE results at different points in time, the CPE manager and the CO communication officer must ensure that CPE products are made available through several channels and remain easily accessible for future use. These channels may include publishing CPE products on the CO website and the UNFPA evaluation database and posting it on the M&E Net community and other external and internal databases and repositories. The CPE manager must also ensure that all CPE products are placed in an all-staff accessible folder in the Google Drive of the CO.

5.2.1.4 Minimum communications package for a CPE

To ensure effective communication for a CPE, it is essential to strike a balance between maintaining standardized communication practices across all UNFPA CPEs while ensuring the communication products are relevant and meaningful within their specific context. Therefore, while planning CPE communication, the CPE manager and communication officer should develop a minimum communications package (see Figure 7) consisting of a set of core obligatory (or minimum) communication products. Developing a minimum communications package for a CPE is mandatory. Additionally, optional communication products can be developed for the CPE, depending on the specific context and audience requirements. By combining standardized communication products with tailored approaches, the CPE manager and the communication officer will ensure consistent and impactful communication of the evaluation results. To enhance the visibility of the CPE, all communication products should be released simultaneously and in a timely manner.

Figure 7: *Minimum communications package for a CPE*



5.2.1.5 Timely access to evaluation results for decision-making

To strategically communicate the results of the CPE and facilitate its use, the CPE manager and the CO communication officer must be timely, and aware of key decision-making cycles as well as the opportunities to influence them, within UNFPA and beyond. At the very outset, the CPE process, its finalization and release should be timed with critical decision-making and advocacy events. For example, within UNFPA, the CPE report should be released in time to feed into the preparation of the next programming cycle, the drafting of the white paper and the CPD, to ensure that the evaluation results are fully taken on board. Aligning the release and communication of a CPE with a national policy development/revision process can also increase the uptake of the evaluation results by policymakers.

In addition, the communication officer should look into the possibility of communicating the results of the CPE (through various products) at the time of relevant international, regional and national advocacy days and events. For example, releasing a CPE on International Women's Day, World Population Day, 16 days of activism against GBV, Human Rights Day, or other (national and regional) celebration days or events that are directly relevant to UNFPA mandate and country programme, can help ensure that the CPE results reach a wider audience and are more widely known and used.

5.2.2 Preparing a strategic communication plan for the CPE

UNFPA is committed to transparency in communicating evaluations. This entails being open about the evaluation process, results and limitations. Moreover, when communicating on CPEs, it is crucial to present them as valuable opportunities for learning, growth, and improvement. Engaging key stakeholders from the outset and throughout the evaluation process also creates buy-in and ownership of the evaluation results. To effectively communicate on the CPE results, it is important that the evaluation is credible, high-quality and upholds ethical standards for evaluations so that communicated results are more likely to be trusted and valued by stakeholders. However, when planning, the CPE manager and the communication officer must also be cognizant of the political environment within which the evaluation has been undertaken, and any related risks attached to communication activities, as well as ways to mitigate them.

Taking into account the above-mentioned five elements of strategic communication for a CPE, the CPE manager and the communication officer should prepare a CPE communication plan, using the strategic communication plan template for a CPE. The final communication plan should be budgeted and must be approved by the CO representative.

Box 19: Components of the strategic communication plan

- The **communication objective(s)**, their corresponding **target audience(s)** and **evaluation products**, delineating all **dissemination modalities** (digital and in-person), with a clear timeline
- An adequately detailed **budget** required to produce and disseminate each evaluation product (incl. copy-editing of all materials and any related translation costs)

Note: To ensure adequate resources are made available, the CPE manager (in consultation with and the CO communication officer) must include an estimated communication budget in the overall CPE budget in the costed evaluation plan.

In communication planning, the CPE manager and communication officer should consider accessible and inclusive communication approaches. For example, they may include communication modalities to report back to the communities involved during the CPE implementation. This may entail translating evaluation products into local languages, playing the evaluation video during field visits undertaken by CO staff, making a presentation on CPE results and the management response to the communities, widely disseminating the evaluation brief in community gatherings and so on. Also, the CPE manager and the CO communication officer should engage young people meaningfully in developing the evaluation products, for example providing inputs on the communication plan, development of communication products and use of communication channels, key messages and dissemination modalities. Young people should also participate in the long-term facilitation of use of the CPE results (see section 5.3).[29]

The digital content accessibility guidelines for UNFPA (2020) provide guidance on accessible communication practices such as using accessibility features on the UNFPA website, making social media communications accessible, including international sign language in meetings and events, creating easy-speak versions of technical materials, adding closed captioning in videos, among others.

Based on the communication objectives and chosen communication modalities, the CPE manager and the communication officer should prepare a measurement framework to determine success in CPE communication. For the short term, they should consider indicators for audience reach and engagement, and for the long term they should include indicators to measure the utilization of the CPE. The measurement framework in the strategy to enhance evaluation use through communications and knowledge management 2022-2025 for centralized evaluations (p. 23) can be used as a basis to prepare a similar framework for CPEs. For each communication objective, the CPE manager and communication officer should track a set of indicators (e.g. social media engagement and web visits at the release of the CPE), including after key advocacy events. The communication officer will be able to use the data to inform on the use of the CPE results in the CO annual report and internal monitoring reports.

5.2.3. Tools to develop a minimum communications package for a CPE

The table below presents the tools, templates and guidance (as well as examples) for the production of the communication material included within the minimum communications package.[30]

29 See guidance on leveraging the power of youth in evaluation.

30 This section includes examples of evaluation products from centralized evaluations that can be adapted to a CPE. It also includes additional tools and how-to guides that are part of the 2020 study on the current practices of evaluation dissemination, developed by the Evaluation Support Service (ESS) of the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) of the European Commission.

Products in the minimum communication package	Communication tools (applications and software)	Guidance
Evaluation report Examples: All IEO reports	An InDesign template is available that can be used to professionally design a CPE report. This template has been developed for use by a professional designer To access the InDesign file, please write to evaluation.office@unfpa.org	UNFPA IEO supplementary editorial guidelines
Evaluation report **cover**	Editable template for CPE report cover is available for Microsoft Word and Adobe Illustrator	
Evaluation **executive summary** Example: Mid-term evaluation of the Maternal and Newborn Health Thematic Fund Phase III 2018-2022	An InDesign template is available that can be used to design a CPE executive summary. This template has been developed for use by a professional designer To access the InDesign file, please write to evaluation.office@unfpa.org	Guidelines and structure for an executive summary of a CPE
One-page **evaluation brief** Examples: Formative evaluation of the UNFPA engagement in the reform of the United Nations development system Formative evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth	An Illustrator template is available to professionally design a 1-page CPE brief. To access the Illustrator file, please write to evaluation.office@unfpa.org	Guidelines and structure for a CPE brief ESS/DEVCO How-to guide on evaluation briefs
Infographics to present key highlights; evaluation snapshot; data collection methods, etc. in the evaluation briefs Examples: Formative evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth Evaluation of UNFPA support to population dynamics and data	Canva Lucidchart	ESS/DEVCO How to guide on evaluation infographics

Products in the minimum communication package	Communication tools (applications and software)	Guidance
Videos Examples: UNFPA IEO YouTube Channel UNFPA IEO EvalPills videos on centralized evaluation highlights	Laptop camera, Zoom and mobile phones can be used to record videos remotely. Video editing apps: • Adobe PremierePro • Canva • DaVinci Resolve	Guidelines to recording a video on Windows 10 Remote video recording guidelines ESS/DEVCO How to guide on developing evaluation videos
X (formerly Twitter) Examples: UNFPA IEO X (formerly Twitter) handle See these hashtags for examples of tweets for centralized evaluations: #PopulationEval, #UNreformEval, #YouthEval	Canva	
Newsflash email Example: UNFPA IEO Newsflashes	Utilize CO external mailing tools	
Web articles Example: UNFPA IEO web articles on the release of centralized evaluation reports		UNFPA IEO supplementary editorial guidance
Presentations Examples: Presentation of the formative evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth Presentation of the evaluation of UNFPA support to population dynamics and data	CPE presentation template (see guidelines included in slide 1)	
Photos for use in evaluation products See photos featured inside centralized reports	UNFPA multimedia library	UNFPA multimedia consent forms

Products in the minimum communication package	Communication tools (applications and software)	Guidance
M&E Net community blogs See: M&E Net		ESS/DEVCO How-to guide on evaluation blogs
Podcasts		ESS/DEVCO How-to guide on evaluation podcasts

5.3 Facilitating the use of a CPE

5.3.1 The management response

The CPE management response is a document which presents the recommendations of the evaluation report and the CO's responses to these recommendations. Reflecting on and formulating responses to the CPE recommendations is a crucial step to foster ownership of the evaluation results and ensure their timely and effective use to address the weaknesses of the country programme and inform the design of the next programming cycle. Through the management response process, the CO staff together with select country programme stakeholders review the evaluation recommendations and agree on the actions (as well as process) to implement them.

The development of the management response is a team effort and **must be completed within six weeks of the communication of the final CPE report to the IEO.** Under the leadership of the CO senior management and the guidance of the CPE manager, the formulation of detailed responses to each CPE recommendation requires the contribution of many staff in the CO. To this end, the CO representative calls relevant CO staff, as well as select stakeholders (e.g. government partners, implementing partners, development partners, representatives of rights-holders organizations, etc.) in a CPE management response workshop. In this workshop, participants will consider each recommendation and, first and foremost, they should determine if recommendations are:

- **Fully accepted:** the recommendation should be completely implemented, and the response should indicate how, by whom and by when action will be taken.
- **Partially accepted:** some part of a recommendation is not realistic/suitable and the CO must explain why; meanwhile the CO will take action on other parts of the recommendation.
- **Not accepted:** the recommendation does not logically derive from the conclusion(s) of the report and/or calls for actions that are not within the control of its intended users; the reason for rejecting a recommendation must be explained.

Once a consensus has emerged on which recommendations should be accepted, partially accepted or rejected, the CO representative allocates the responsibility to formulate detailed responses to each recommendation to the relevant staff in the CO (e.g., the CO maternal health officer is tasked with formulating the response to the recommendation related to the maternal health component of the country programme, etc.). When drafting responses, the responsible staff must consult with concerned parties (e.g., governmental partners,

IPs, etc.) as appropriate. They must also consider which practical and implementable actions are called for, whether these are technically sound and consistent with ongoing and planned developments in the country programme and, more broadly, suited to the country's evolving context. Actions in response to recommendations should ideally be scheduled for implementation within a year or two of the finalization of the management response, as their purpose is to improve the design of, and jumpstart the new country programme (not track routine actions common to all country programmes).

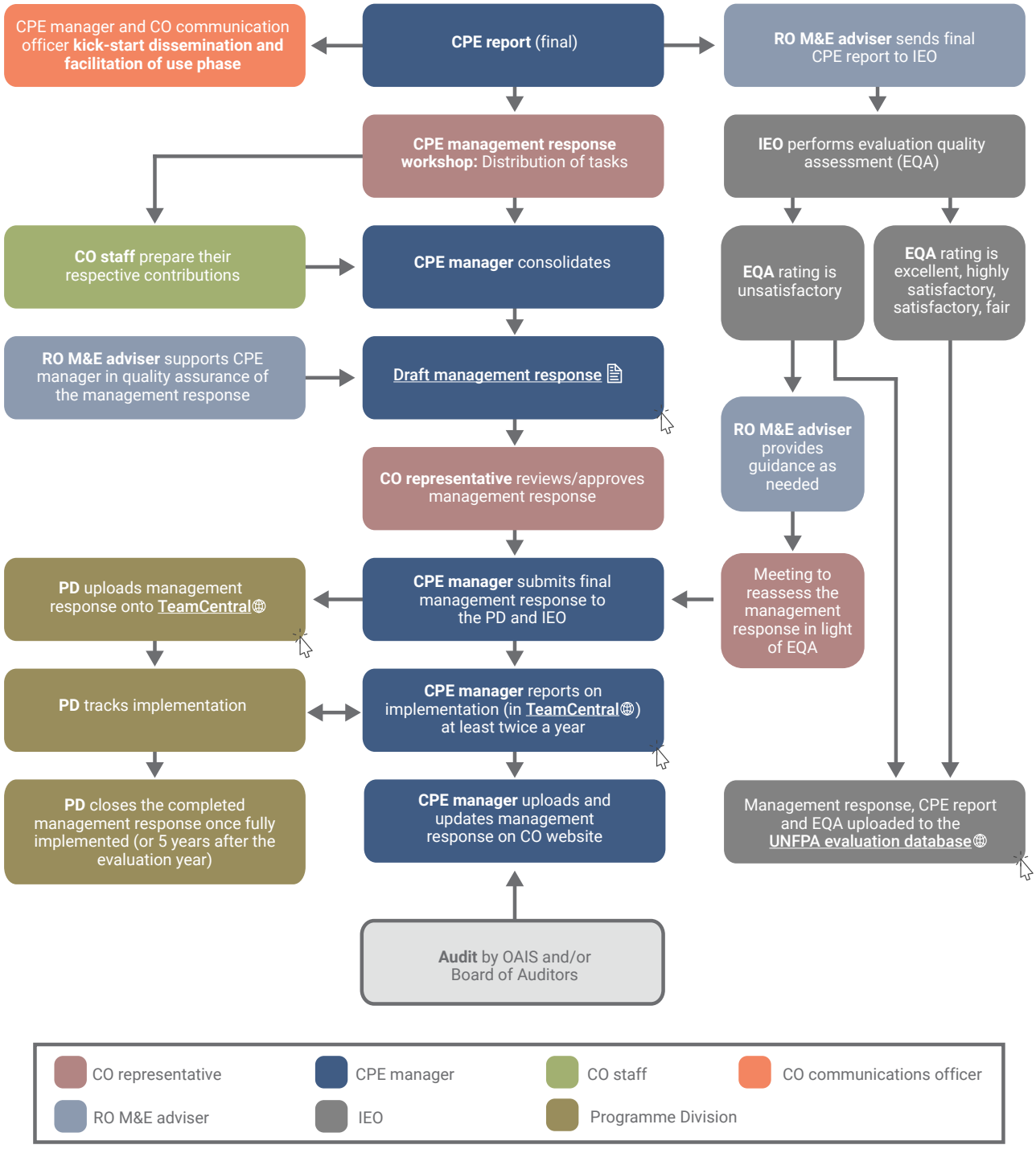
The CPE manager is tasked with coordinating and monitoring the process. They ensure that all CO staff provide their draft responses by the set deadline and compile them in the management response, following the guidance provided in the UNFPA Guide on development, reporting, and tracking of management responses to evaluation (specifically section 3 on elements of a good management response). In consultation with the regional M&E adviser, the CPE manager performs an in-depth quality assurance of the draft management response, and then submits it for their review and final approval. Once approved, the CPE manager sends the management response to the Programme Division's Strategic Planning Branch for review and uploading into TeamCentral, the UNFPA management response-tracking database.

The process for completing the CPE management response is separate from the evaluation quality assessment of the final CPE report by the IEO. However, in the event the CPE is rated as "unsatisfactory", the CO may want to reassess its proposed actions in response to a (or a number of) recommendation(s) in view of the level of confidence that should be placed in some of the evaluation findings, related conclusions and, ultimately, recommendations. In such circumstances, the CPE manager should seek guidance from the regional M&E adviser and the IEO and then advise the CO representative.

Under the authority of the CO representative, the CPE manager must report on the implementation of the management response (in TeamCentral) at least twice a year until all actions are implemented. PSIPB tracks the completion of management responses and reports to the UNFPA Executive Committee and Executive Board on the use and follow-up of evaluations. PSIPB is also responsible for closing completed recommendation actions in consultation with the CPE manager under the authority of the CO representative. The management response will be closed as soon as fully implemented (or no later than 5 years after the evaluation year). The management response and actions taken in response to recommendations (or lack thereof) can be subject to an audit by the UNFPA Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS) and/or the Board of Auditors.

Finally, the CPE manager and the CO communication officer must ensure that the management response is published along with the CPE report and the EQA (released by the IEO) on the CO website. The IEO, for its part, ensures that the CPE report, together with its management response (and the evaluation quality assessment) is publically available within the UNFPA evaluation database.

Figure 8: *Process for the development of the management response*



5.3.2 Long term utilization of the CPE

Beyond the release and initial communication of the CPE results, and with a view to further leverage the CPE for accelerating the transformative results of UNFPA, the CPE manager should cultivate and proactively sustain an advocacy approach in the long term. Hence, the CPE manager must actively and purposefully identify new opportunities and engage with stakeholders to integrate the evaluation results into decisions, programmes, strategies and policies, going beyond the implementation of the management response actions. This approach maximizes the value and significance of a CPE. To facilitate the long term use of the CPE, senior management, technical and communication staff must provide support to the CPE manager, notably to:

- **Identify new opportunities for CPE results uptake:** the CPE manager should continuously liaise with the CO technical staff and the country programme stakeholders (notably in the government and implementing partners), to identify any new opportunities to facilitate the uptake of the evaluation results and address any emerging knowledge needs they may have. For example, CPE results can be utilized in mid-year review meetings, implementing partner reviews, CO staff meetings, government workshops, donor meetings, UNSDCF meetings, among others. In the case of a CPE with a humanitarian component, the CPE report may become a key source of information for the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHEs) or for the development of Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs).
- **Engage stakeholders in a proactive and continuous manner:** Engagement of stakeholders takes place throughout the evaluation process, including at planning, data collection, and analysis stages, and must continue in the dissemination and facilitation of use phase and beyond. After the evaluation release, the CPE manager should continue to engage and provide ongoing support to stakeholders in using the evaluation results effectively, including in the implementation of the management response actions. This includes regular meetings and check-ins with stakeholders and the conduct of follow-up workshops, webinars or focus groups to discuss the evaluation results and their implications for decision-making, planning and programming. Collaborative discussions lead to a better understanding of the evaluation results and increase the likelihood of the results being used to inform decisions. As already indicated, the CPE manager should also identify meaningful ways to engage young people in the long-term uptake of the CPE results.
- **Use the CPE as a powerful source of content to communicate UNFPA results:** The CPE manager and the communication officer should consistently utilize the CPE as a compelling source of content that effectively conveys information on the work of UNFPA in the country and on its results (with a focus on learning and accountability). The CPE is valuable content that can serve as a foundation for crafting communication messages for the CO, including in donor reports and project proposals, commemorations of international advocacy days, speeches by senior management, social media outreach etc. By leveraging the CPE in wider communications, the CO can showcase its commitment to transparency, learning and accountability.
- **Build an evaluation culture**: After the communication plan has been fully implemented, the CPE manager should sustain efforts to communicate the evaluation results beyond the immediate country programme stakeholders, with a view to promoting broader learning and programme adaptation. In particular, the CPE manager should seek opportunities to raise awareness about the significance of the CPE for learning, accelerating progress and ensuring accountability. Highlighting the benefits of evaluation will increase the use of evaluation results in decision-making processes in the long term. To this end, the CPE manager should ensure that the CPE results are referred to in high-level meetings, in development of the CPD and in AWPs. Over the long term, the CPE manager should also ensure that the evaluation results and their use are part and parcel of the discussions among the CO staff and with the implementing partners.
- **Share knowledge on evaluation:** The CPE manager should also share lessons learned from managing and implementing a complex evaluation such as the CPE with other UNFPA evaluation staff, UN and cooperation agencies, sister agencies and international and national NGOs working on UNFPA mandate areas, government counterparts and youth groups. This cross fertilization of experience can contribute to driving stronger evaluation practices and to the wider efforts for building the national evaluation capacities.

Driving evidence-based actions

Delivering rights and choices for all

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