



# UNEG Norm and Standard on Environmental and Social Impacts

The Norm and Standard for Environmental and Social Impact was prepared by the UNEG Environmental and Social Impact Working Group.

The Norm (11) and Standard were **approved** at the UNEG Annual General Meeting 2025, as an addendum to the full Norms and Standard document.

## Norm 11 - Integrating Environmental and Social impacts

The interdependence of social, economic, and environmental dimensions is a cornerstone of sustainable development, as recognized by the UN General Assembly Resolution A/76/L.75, which established the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The interdependence is also referenced in international conventions, protocols, agreements, and other global commitments<sup>1</sup>. It is the responsibility of evaluators and evaluation managers to ensure assessment of any positive and negative, intended and unintended, environmental effects and related social and economic consequences of UN programming, with special attention to people in vulnerable situations<sup>2</sup>. This may involve consideration of the effects of climate change, unsustainable management and use of natural resources, pollution of air, land and water, unsound management of chemicals and waste, and the loss of natural habitats and biodiversity. Evaluations should address such effects at multiple levels, as appropriate, from global to local, with a special attention to the knowledge and perspectives of indigenous people and local communities. Evaluations should also aim to minimize their own environmental footprint.

### Standard 4.8 Mainstreaming consideration of environmental and social impacts

In July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly declared that everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment. In accordance with this, evaluation offices should always evaluate environmental and social considerations as part of their agency's commitment to human rights. Evaluators and Evaluation Managers should:

Adopt and incorporate:

- An evaluation approach and data collection methods that ensure a holistic assessment of UN programs, recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental, social, gender and economic dimensions.
- Environmental considerations under evaluation criteria, whenever they are used.
- Competencies to address environmental sustainability and related social impact in evaluations.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation and adaptation, Bonn Declaration on the urgency of mitigating climate change and enhancing adaptive capacities, Kunming Global Biodiversity Framework, outlining targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, General Comment 26 CRC/C/GC/26 (2023) and General Comment No. 39 (2023) on the Rights of the Child and Climate Change and concerned with preventing exposure to harmful pollutants and chemicals, ensuring a safe and healthy environment for children.

<sup>2</sup> Groups in situations of vulnerability is used to refer to those often left furthest behind including women and girls, children, youth, LGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV and AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants, among others.

- Approaches to data collection and dissemination that minimize the environmental footprint of evaluation practice with due consideration to ensuring evaluation rigour and outreach.

Assess:

- Positive or negative intended or unintended environmental and related social effects associated with the evaluand, and give special attention to the impacts on people in the most vulnerable situations.
- Environmental and social dimensions related to UN programmes and policies, ensuring that relevant environmental and related social impacts are included in the analysis.
- The application of relevant safeguards.
- The environmental ‘footprint’ of UN activities.

Promote:

- Use of evaluation findings and recommendations that contribute to long-term environmental and social benefits through improvements to UN programming.
- The incorporation of environmental dimensions, and their social consequences, within Theories of Change for all interventions.