

## UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Qualitative Feedback by criteria

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**Entity name:** United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

**External Consultant:** Julia Niggebrugge

**Evaluation Officer:** Elisa Calcaterra

**Scope:** 35 evaluation reports from 1 January to 31 December 2015

**Rating of the Performance Indicator:** 2.9

**Scoring:** Missing requirement

### Introduction

The rating represents an improvement compared to 2014 (2.2), but still highlights that there are major areas for improvement. It should be noted that the evaluation methodology was updated in 2015, but all the reports assessed during this period, except two, used the old methodology. It is expected that the introduction of the new ToRs in 2015 will lead to improvement in the ratings for criterion 2 and 4 (please see below for further details). Planned efforts to provide increasing guidance to evaluation consultants should also lead to more comprehensive observations and the preparation of increasing number of lessons and recommendations to support better design, implementation and evaluation. However, it is important to stress that the overall unsatisfactory rating can be largely attributed to the fact that the projects that were evaluated had no Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) element in their design from the onset. This is further confirmed by a recent project design quality assessment of 37 UNEP project documents approved between 2011 and April 2014, which has revealed that even projects with good gender analyses did not necessarily have gender-responsive activities in their work plans (and the pertaining financial allocation).

### **1<sup>st</sup> evaluation criterion: “GEEW is integrated in the Evaluation Scope of analysis and Indicators are designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data will be collected.”**

The overall unsatisfactory scoring (2.9 = “missing requirement”) of the 2015 UNEP Evaluation reports can be largely attributed to the fact that the projects that were evaluated had no Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) element in their design from the onset. Apart from one case (“Outcome Evaluation of Barcelona Convention/ UNEP - MAP”) the standard UNEP Evaluation ToR all required an ascertainment of the gender dimensions of the projects.

In response to this, 23 out of 35 evaluation reports stated that their projects had no gender component that could be assessed within the scope of the evaluation. Seven reports mentioned that the gender components were only small and at the output level with indicators like e.g. the ‘number of female workshop participants’.

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This disconnect between analysis and practical implementation is further shown in the fact that projects with defined locations had the best gender *analyses*, but that the projects that actually had GEEW relevant *activities* and/ or outputs were not exclusively national projects. (Only three of the

projects that scored above 5 points were implemented in one country (Cuba, Gambia, and India)). This shows a need to enhance *practical* GEEW integration at the project management level to close the gap between theory and application.

Recommendation:

- More guidance on gender analysis and the translation of the same into meaningful and *actionable* gender interventions into the projects' work plans is needed among project staff in UNEP.

**2<sup>nd</sup> scoring criteria: "Evaluation Criteria and Evaluation Questions specifically address how GEEW has been integrated into the design, planning, implementation of the intervention and the results achieved".**

That the overall low scoring is mostly due to a lack of GEEW in project design is further supported by the observation that evaluation reports for projects with a gender component also had gender responsive questions and indicators. These, however, were in the beginning of the year 2015 limited to their complementarity with 'UNEP programmes and strategies' as stipulated in the standard template of the UNEP Evaluation ToR. The ToR template has already been amended in 2015 and now includes GEEW in each evaluation criteria. As the evaluation reports for this review have been initiated earlier in the year, all apart from two still followed the old template. Those two scored well in this criterium.

UNEP project evaluations are conducted by external consultants who are asked to attach brief CVs to their reports in which they list the information deemed relevant for the assignment. Only four consultants mentioned gender-working experience in their CVs. In that light, not listing gender experience in a CV could be a reflection of their perception that GEEW is not of great relevance to the evaluation work they signed up for.

One evaluator attempted a gender-responsive evaluation method during his visit in Uganda by interviewing male and female beneficiaries but failed to meet the women as he had planned to interview them during a time when "women were busy with their families". This shows a lack of experience and the need to train consultants not only on the application of gender-sensitive evaluation methods but to also how to *plan* for them.

Recommendation:

- Recruitment could look for GEEW qualifications among consultants as an asset; and, once selected, brief consultants on the special attention they need to pay to GEEW, also in preparation of their field trips. Training for consultants on GEEW in evaluations should be offered, if needed.
- Out of 35 evaluations 24 were done by men, nine by women and two Subprogramme evaluations had mixed teams. There was no correlation between the sex of the evaluator and the amount of attention paid to GEEW in the reports. However, a better gender balance in the recruitment of consultants would be desirable.

**3<sup>rd</sup> evaluation criterion: “A gender-responsive Evaluation Methodology, Methods and tools, and Data Analysis Techniques are selected.”**

Gender-responsive evaluation methods were mostly limited to desk reviews of project outputs and interviewing men and women (and sometimes this may even have been done coincidentally). Gathering and interpretation of primary data can, of course, be challenging for an evaluator if the project management has not systematically engaged in GEEW monitoring and data collection during project implementation. One evaluation report explicitly points out, that “without gender disaggregated data the evaluator can only provide observations” but will hardly be able to go much beyond the description of trends.

The UNEP standard ToR for project evaluation ask evaluators for data triangulation and a mixed-method approach. Hence, a more GEEW appropriate approach (that could have included validation of GEEW findings, comparison with existing data, large sampling, inclusion of most vulnerable, and surveys) could be integrated fairly easily in the overall efforts of the evaluation.

However, it would require resources (if not funds, then at least time and human capacity) for GEEW data gathering. This however, should not be done through a “flat rate“ but rather needs to happen proportionally to the relevance that is giving to GEEW by the particular project. If little importance were giving to GEEW, a fully-fledged, gender-focused evaluation methodology would be disproportionate.

Initiating an evaluation, the degree to which the evaluator is asked to look at GEEW and the amount of resources allocated to the undertaking should depend on the emphasis that was given to GEEW in the project’s design and implementation. UNEP has already started to individually adjust evaluation ToRs for projects that have a clear gender focus.

Recommendation:

- Next to the inclusion of GEEW into the interventions’ design, project documents need to establish gender specific baseline data and targets in the logical framework, in order to make progress measurable.
- Human and financial resources in UNEP should be utilized to support mainstreaming of GEEW in project outputs and outcomes. Training of staff on GEEW, particularly in the areas of project implementation and monitoring, should be done organization wide.

**4<sup>th</sup> evaluation criterion: “The evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendation reflect a gender analysis.”**

Most reports had no lessons learnt or recommendations because they had no GEEW findings in the first place. But even those who had made GEEW related observations in the “Gender” chapter did not translate these into recommendations (only one report did so). This will most likely change as the new ToR template asks for this.

Findings can be grouped in three categories:

- 1) GEEW was not part of the project design but should have been;

2) Female participation of women was not enough encouraged (or even discouraged as in one regional project that discouraged potential female participants by choosing a non-conducive first workshop location (Iran));

3) Women's participation in alternative livelihood support projects depends on sustainable funding.

Recommendation:

- Knowledge and information management on GEEW should be practiced internally and with project partners so that best practices can be established and replicated. Best practices and lessons learnt should be systematically documented and shared.
- Evaluators need to be reminded that findings or observations on GEEW (even if the finding is the *absence* of GEEW) need to be extracted and phrased as lessons learnt or recommendations. The new ToR template that explicitly asks for such extraction will facilitate this.
- There is a tendency among evaluators to concentrate on the weaknesses of a project when collecting recommendations albeit a positive GEEW observation is equally valuable when identified as a lesson for best practice – another point that is stipulated in the revised evaluation ToR.