

Evaluation

UNEP is held accountable for the quality and delivery of its work through evaluations and other assessments, such as management-led Reviews. The evaluation function promotes learning and accountability and is a key source of credible, timely, evidence-based information for decision-making. It is a vital component of the organization's Results-Based Management (RBM) approach.





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Evaluation Function

In the context of UNEP, evaluation is defined as an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The mandate for evaluation in UNEP covers all projects of the Environment Fund, related trust funds, earmarked contributions and projects implemented by UNEP under the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or other donor and partnership agreements.

The Evaluation Office is the central coordinating unit of the UNEP evaluation function and is located as a separate unit of the Executive Office, reporting directly to the Executive Director. Independently, it plans, conducts, and follows up on evaluations that report on UNEP's performance in implementing the Programme of Work (PoW). The Evaluation Office carries out:

- Project-level Evaluations
- Strategic and cross-cutting thematic Evaluations (including sub-programme Evaluations)
- Impact Evaluations
- Programme/portfolio Evaluations
- Joint Evaluations.

To ensure transparency, full disclosure is a key guiding principle, and all evaluation reports are publicly disclosed.

Assessments of projects, programmes, strategies, policies, topics, themes, or sectors that are commissioned and overseen by UNEP staff outside of the Evaluation Office are termed management-led Reviews. In UNEP these are most commonly either project Mid-Term Reviews or Terminal Reviews. The principles and purpose of evaluation apply to management-led Reviews.

Detailed information on the evaluation function, can be found on the [Evaluation Office](#) page of WeCollaborate, and further information is available on the [Evaluation Office's](#) external website.

Evaluations and management-led Reviews serve three (3) key purposes:



Learning

A strong culture of evaluation is a prerequisite for a learning organization. Evaluation helps UNEP to learn from experience and better understand why – and to what extent – intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse their implications. This learning is the driver for innovation and continuous improvement



Accountability

Evaluation is an integral part of the accountability framework and is an important source to understand organizational performance. The transparent reporting of evaluation results enhances Member States' confidence in UNEP's ability to deliver on the mandates entrusted to it.

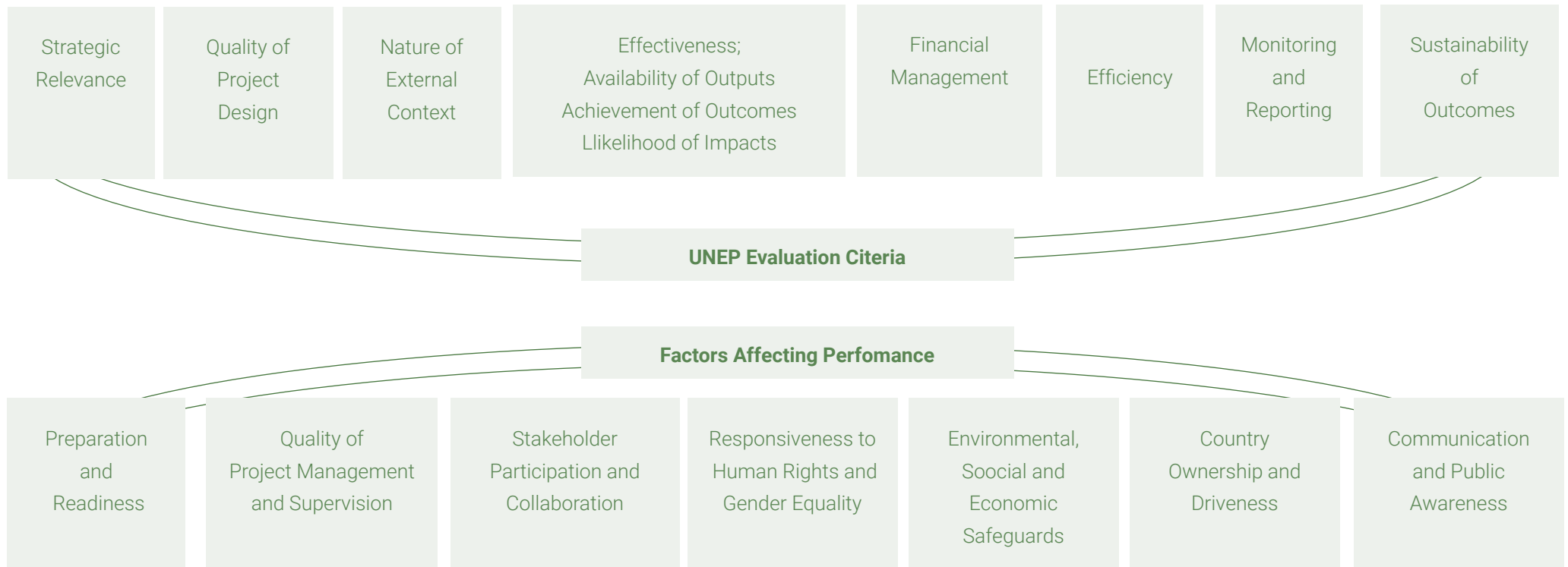


Evidence-based decision-making

Evaluation supports better decision-making. It is used to inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, and reporting and contributes to evidence-based policymaking and organizational effectiveness. Evaluation and feedback are critical to effective results-based management.

Principles and Criteria

UNEP's evaluation function is guided by principles at the core of international good evaluation practice as set out in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, UNEG ethical guidelines and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation. The UNEG norms for evaluation are Utility, Credibility, Independence, Impartiality, Professionalism, Ethics, Transparency, Human rights and Gender Equality. These norms and standards, codes and guidance are set out in the UNEP Evaluation Policy and are adhered to in the design, management and conduct of evaluations, and throughout the structures and operations of the evaluation function. In accordance with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, UNEP evaluations consider the human rights dimensions, including non-discrimination and equality issues as appropriate, across all evaluation criteria. In particular, the Evaluation Office recognizes the importance of gender equality, both as a human right and as a fundamental dimension of development.



UNEP Evaluation Types

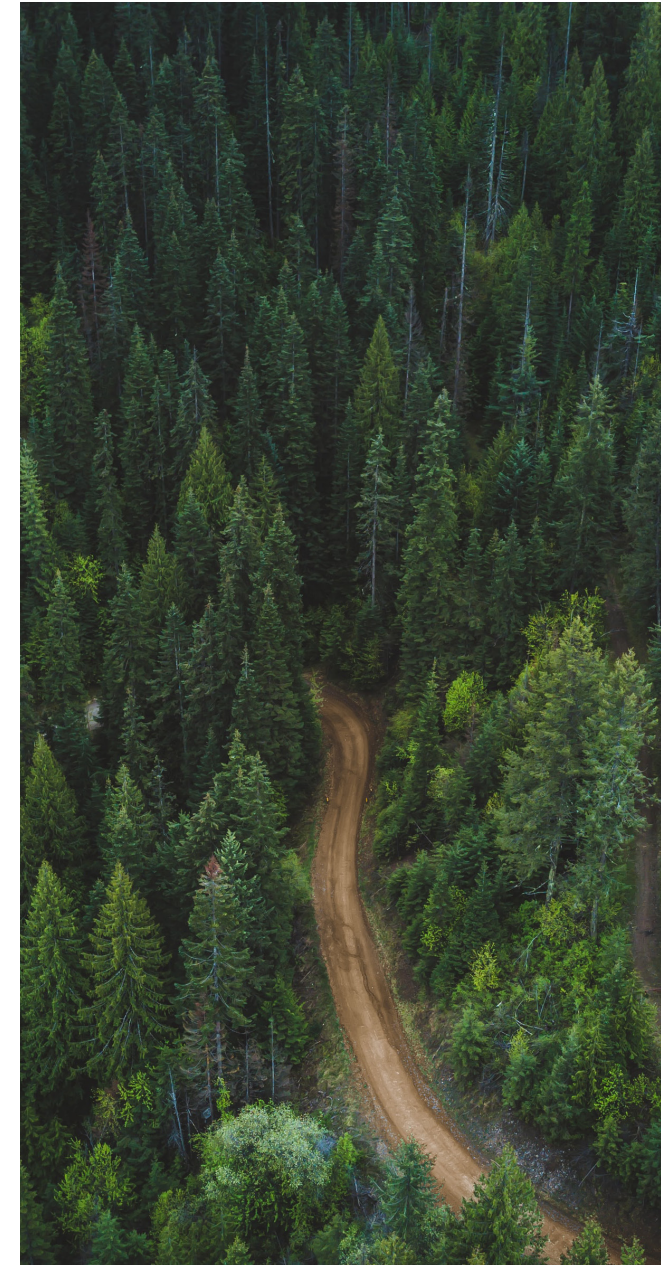
Project Evaluations

- **Mid-Term Evaluations or Reviews** are undertaken approximately half-way through the implementation of projects with a duration greater than 4 years. They analyze whether a project is on track, what problems and challenges the project is encountering and which corrective actions are required.
- **Terminal Evaluations or Reviews** of projects are undertaken at / after operational completion. They assess the overall performance of the project with respect to its agreed intent/goals.

Terminal and Mid-term project evaluations may be conducted by the Evaluation Office if it elects to do so. Where a project performance assessment is required according to internal UNEP or external donor requirements, and the project has not been selected for evaluation by the Evaluation Office, a management-led Review will be conducted. The responsibility for management-led Reviews rests with Divisions, and their Project/Task Managers or Programme Managers. All projects and programmes must include a budgetary provision from secured resources to support the costs of independent evaluations / management-led Reviews.

Project-level Evaluations and management-led Reviews issue recommendations that are tracked for compliance. They also identify lessons of operational relevance for future project design and implementation. Project level evaluations feed into evaluations

of programmes, portfolios and sub-programmes. Project level evaluations managed by the Evaluation Office are selected purposively to reflect UNEP's strategic intentions and results' commitments. When preparing its annual evaluation plan, the Evaluation Office requests information on upcoming project completions in the 4th quarter of the previous year. The request is sent / copied to Evaluation Focal Points and all relevant staff across UNEP Divisions and Offices. The Evaluation Office collates the information received from the Evaluation Focal Points and requests verification of the final lists from Divisional Directors.



Selection of a project for evaluation by the Evaluation Office is more likely where:

- » Projects make a large contribution to the UNEP PoW results framework

- » Projects contribute to parts of the UNEP PoW that have had less evaluative attention in the recent past

- » Projects that, together with others, form a coherent portfolio / cluster evaluation

- » Projects that represent an area of work of strategic importance to UNEP

- » GEF projects when UNEP acts as both the Implementing and Executing Agency

- » Projects that are implemented in geographic regions that have previously been less evaluated and / or projects are managed by Regional Offices

- » The selection of a project for evaluation contributes positively to a proportional balance of GEF and non-GEF projects

- » Projects that fall under the scope of upcoming strategic evaluations (e.g.: sub-programme evaluations)

Selection of a project for evaluation by the Evaluation Office is less likely where:

- » Organisational units and the work of Project / Task Managers have been exposed to frequent evaluation in the past

- » Projects have been evaluated frequently in previous phases

- » Projects have output-oriented designs

- » Projects have low levels of expenditure

The Evaluation Office prepares a scheduled evaluation plan, whereby the Evaluation Office prepares a list of the projects scheduled to reach operational completion in the coming year, and thereafter, a determination is made as to which projects will be independently evaluated and which will require management-led Reviews. Each Project Manager / Task Manager is informed of the decision pertaining to each project under their management authority. The decisions are communicated to the relevant Branch / Unit Heads, Portfolio Managers, Sub-programme and GEF/GCF Coordinators.

The Evaluation Office considers UNEP PRC-approved projects as the building blocks for delivery of the PoW and project evaluations are undertaken at this level. The Evaluation Office does not undertake evaluations for specific grants that may partially fund PRC-approved projects (Project Review Committee, PRC)

Portfolio and Programmatic Evaluations

When a cluster of thematically related projects require evaluation the Evaluation Office may, in the interests of cost efficiency, conduct a portfolio / programme evaluation where the performance of the cluster of projects is evaluated in a single exercise. In addition to assessing and rating the performance of the individual projects in the portfolio / programme, the evaluation will also assess whether opportunities for collaboration, complementarity and synergy have been fully exploited and if duplication of effort has been avoided between the projects.

UNEP's Evaluation Office plans and undertakes several other types of independent evaluations including strategic and thematic evaluations of the PoW and MTS, sub-programme evaluations, and impact studies and evaluations. Greater information on these types of evaluations can be found in the UNEP's [Evaluation Manual](#) and [Evaluation Policy](#) and other guidance documents on the [Evaluation](#) page of WeCollaborate.



Project-Level Evaluation/Review Requirements

How to determine the evaluation requirements of individual projects:

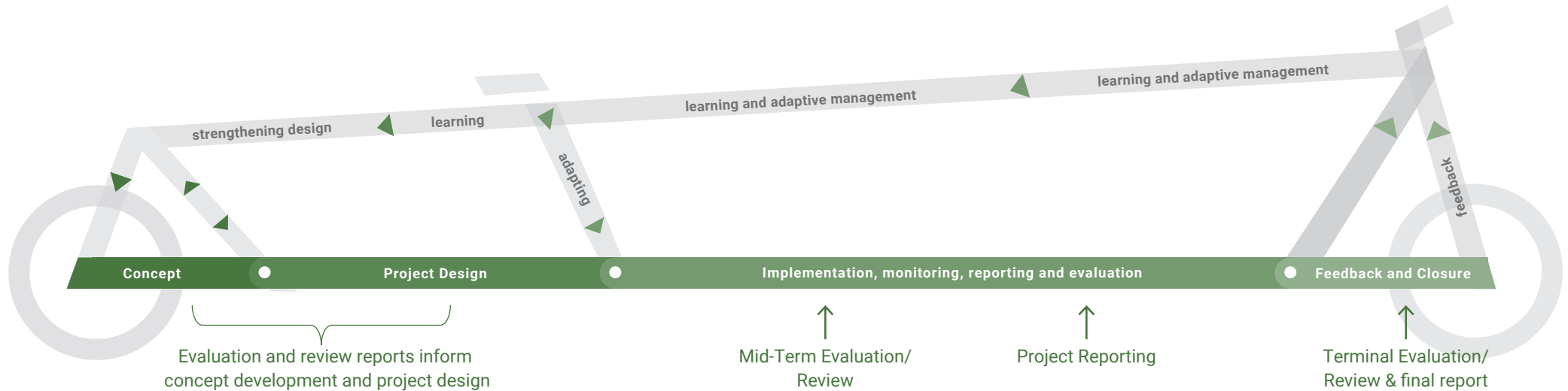
	MID-TERM EVALUATION	MID-TERM REVIEW	TERMINAL EVALUATION	TERMINAL REVIEW
Criteria for determining type of assessment	<p>Projects of less than four years' duration are not required to undertake a mid-term assessment as part of standard UNEP practice, although it may be required by a donor.</p> <p>Projects with four or more years' implementation must undertake a mid-term assessment (Evaluation/Review)</p>		<p>The Evaluation Office undertakes Terminal evaluations of a sample of completing projects. Terminal Evaluations selected at the discretion of Evaluation Office based on defined criteria.</p>	<p>Projects not selected for terminal evaluation will conduct a management-led Terminal Review.</p>
	<p>The Evaluation Office may select projects for Mid - Term Evaluation after consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual, potential, or perceived strategic significance or institutional risk • Requests from funding partners for performance assessments of projects implemented jointly with other agencies. 	<p>All other projects undertake a management-led Mid-Term Review.</p>		

	MID-TERM EVALUATION	MID-TERM REVIEW	TERMINAL EVALUATION	TERMINAL REVIEW
Assessment focus and scope	<p>Focus on operational improvement and accountability, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities within the implementation structure • Quality and accuracy of the results framework and Theory of Change • Rate of delivery of activities against the workplan and rate of expenditure • Quality and relevance of implementation activities • Main emerging challenges and early successes • Any need for corrective action 		<p>Focus on accountability and institutional learning, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall project performance • Actual and potential results • Outcomes' sustainability • Operational efficiency • Lessons of institutional learning for future project design and implementation 	
Responsibility	Evaluation Office	Project/Task Manager	Evaluation Office	Project/Task Manager
Procedure	Evaluation and Recommendation Compliance Procedure	<p>Project Manager supervises the review process.</p> <p>The Mid-Term Review can be undertaken as an internal process or by a contracted consultant.</p> <p>In the latter case, sample Terms of Reference and a suite of tools/guidelines are available from the Evaluation Office or on the Evaluation Office website.</p>	Evaluation and Recommendation Compliance Procedure	<p>Project Manager supervises the review process. As Terminal Reviews fundamentally assess the achievement of results, Evaluation Office validates the performance ratings assesses the quality of terminal review reports. The Terminal Review is an internally managed process.</p> <p>Consultants are contracted, sample Terms of Reference and a suite of tools/guidelines are available from the Evaluation Office or on the Evaluation Office website.</p>

	MID-TERM EVALUATION	MID-TERM REVIEW	TERMINAL EVALUATION	TERMINAL REVIEW
Budget	<p>The budgets, for both mid-term and terminal Evaluations/Reviews, must be established at the Project Design phase from secured funds during Project Review and Approval phase.</p> <p>The budget for Evaluation and Review must remain available until all project assessments have been completed and fully paid for. When the Evaluation Office notifies the project managers that a project has been selected for either a Mid-Term or Terminal Evaluation, the financial resources held in the project budget for that evaluation may be transferred to the Evaluation Office cost centre / service order catalogue.</p>			
Timeframe	<p>Where possible, immediately before mid-point of the planned and approved project implementation period.</p> <p>Any project revision that extends the implementation of the project to four or more years will require a commitment to undertake a mid-term assessment (Review/Evaluation) before the extension is cleared.</p>		<p>After project operational completion and prior to the project's financial close. Terminal Evaluations cannot be launched more than three months before a project's operational completion.</p>	
Follow up	<p>Evaluation recommendations are implemented by the project team under responsibility of the Project Manager with compliance monitored by the Evaluation Office.</p>	<p>Review recommendations are implemented by the project team under responsibility of the Project Manager with compliance assured by the Head of Branch/Unit.</p>	<p>Evaluation recommendations are implemented by the project team under responsibility of the Project Manager, or Head of Branch/Unit in the absence of a Project Manager. Compliance is monitored by the Evaluation Office.</p>	<p>Review recommendations are implemented by the project team under responsibility of the Project Manager, or Head of Branch/Unit in the absence of a Project Manager. Compliance is assured by the Head of Branch/Unit.</p>

	MID-TERM EVALUATION	MID-TERM REVIEW	TERMINAL EVALUATION	TERMINAL REVIEW
Disclosure	Evaluation reports and their management response are publicly disclosed on the Evaluation Office official website.	<p>Review reports are regarded as internal documents and are uploaded in UNEP's internal management systems (e.g.: IPMR and WeCollaborate).</p> <p>All review reports should be shared with Evaluation Office on completion and prior to external dissemination.</p>	Evaluation reports and associated management responses are publicly disclosed on the Evaluation Office official website.	<p>Review reports are regarded as internal documents and are uploaded in UNEP's internal management systems (e.g.: IPMR and WeCollaborate).</p> <p>All review reports should be shared with Evaluation Office on completion and prior to external dissemination.</p>
External Evaluations	<p>In the event of Evaluations or Reviews being led by donors or external parties the Project Manager should inform the Evaluation Office of the evaluation/review as early as possible.</p> <p>The Evaluation Office reviews the external Terms of Reference and considers whether UNEP evaluation requirements can be addressed under the same Terms of Reference. Where possible, revisions/additions to the Terms of Reference may be requested. In all cases, a copy of the final external Evaluation/Review report should be sent to the Evaluation Office.</p>			

Evaluation in Project Cycle Management



Key evaluation activities during the Project Cycle include the following:

Concept Development and Project Design

Evaluation reports and reports from management-led Reviews of previous similar or related projects should form part of the background information used to develop a new project. These reports will contain insights and lessons learned that can inform the design of any new intervention(s).

During project design the Evaluation/Review requirements of the project should be planned and budgeted for. The Project Document (ProDoc), or donor specific template must specify the anticipated timing of performance assessments and identify sufficient secured resources to meet mid-point and terminal Evaluation/Review requirements. For jointly implemented projects, the ProDoc should clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of UNEP and the other entity(ies) regarding evaluation arrangements, including which entity will lead the evaluation. Timing of Performance Assessments (Evaluation or Review) is governed by the following rules:

Type of Assessment	Timing
Mid-Term Evaluation/Review	Immediately before the mid-point of the project. Required for all projects of four-years or more in duration ¹ . Where a project is revised and the implementation period exceeds four years, a mid-term assessment must be included in the project revision including the commitment of secured funds to cover the direct costs of both the mid-term and terminal performance assessments.
Terminal Evaluation/Review	Terminal Evaluations and Reviews commence after project operational completion. Terminal Evaluations / Reviews cannot be launched more than three months prior to a project's operational completion.

All PRC-Approved projects including GEF and GCF projects must include a budget line to cover the direct costs of hiring evaluation/review consultants and their associated travel and subsistence for independent evaluation or for management-led review (Mid-term and Terminal). Budgeting for performance assessments should be guided by the following factors and considerations/costs:

Factor	Considerations/Costs
Scope of work	The following elements have the greatest effect on the composition of the evaluation team and, therefore, the required evaluation budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number/nature of technical sectors involved • Range of outcomes • Number/dispersal of implementing countries and • The range of language bases covered etc.
Consultant Fees	Evaluation consultant roles typically fall into either category C (USD 390 – 560 per day) or category D (USD 620 – 720). The Evaluation Office make its estimates based on the top level of category C (i.e., USD 560 per day). Where projects are implemented in a single country and focus on a single technical sector, it is possible for a single consultant to undertake the evaluation with a single field visit of 5 working days. This consultancy fee will be estimated at approximately 45 days.

¹ Some funding partners may have additional requirements.

Factor	Considerations/Costs
Technical Sectors	The more technical areas that are covered or the greater the volume of components (outputs and complex outcomes) in a project, the more it becomes unrealistic for one consultant to manage the work in a reasonable timeframe. Cost of an additional technically specialized consultant is estimated at USD 23,000
Country Visits	For each country to be visited travel/DSA costs are estimated at USD 5,000 for a 5 working day trip. A consultant will need to visit a selection of countries that can act as representatives of the project's Theory of Change but not necessarily all implementing countries.
Geographic Spread	Where implementing countries are widely dispersed and represent vastly different or highly specialized contexts and/or regions, and where different language skills are required, it is likely that more than one evaluation consultant will be required. It is recommended to add USD 15,000 for additional consultants who live and work within a country/region (i.e., with no international travel costs).
Translation	Where there is a wide range of language bases in the countries involved in implementation then either additional evaluation consultants and/or translators may need to be hired. A week's translation and/or data collection work is estimated at USD 2,500 per working week.

At the project design stage, the Evaluation/Review budget is estimated at 0.6%. Further guidance concerning budgeting for performance assessments can be found [Guidance on Estimating Project Evaluation Budgets](#) page on WeCollaborate and in the [UNEP Evaluation Manual](#).

Project Implementation

The Evaluation Office may select any ongoing project for a Mid-term Evaluation (MTE). If a project is selected for a MTE, the resources required may be transferred from the project budget to the Evaluation Office, and the Evaluation Office leads the process for completing the MTE. Further information about the process followed can be found in the [UNEP Evaluation Manual](#).

Management-led Mid-Term Reviews (MTR) are generally focused on reviewing progress made to date against approved plans, making any required course corrections and seeking opportunities to identify possible design and operational improvements. In delivering an MTR Project Managers can choose one of two options:

1. To follow a more formal approach using an independent external consultant. Recruitment of a consultant(s) should follow the guidance and timelines described in Chapter 9: Human Resources. If a formal approach is chosen, UNEP’s Evaluation Office has tools and guidance to support the process.
2. Prepare an MTR report that captures the proceedings and decisions of a project workshop that has reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of the project’s implementation to date and identified a series of agreed action points for adaptive management and improvement.

Project Completion

The key activities during this phase are the final project report and the project’s terminal evaluation or review. When the Evaluation Office has taken the decision to select a project for Terminal Evaluation (TE), the following roles and responsibilities exist:

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Evaluation Office	<p>Informs the Project/Task Manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision is communicated to the relevant Branch / Unit Heads, Portfolio Managers, Sub-programme, and GEF/GCF Coordinators. • Leads the evaluation process. • Responsible for evaluation recommendation and compliance procedures. • Further information about the process followed can be found in the UNEP Evaluation Manual.
Project FMO	<p>Arranges for the financial resources to support the direct costs of the TE (i.e.: consultant fees, travel etc.), that are held in the project budget, to be available to the Evaluation Office. Alternatively, the Evaluation Office may request the FMO to transfer the evaluation budget to the Evaluation Office cost centre.</p>

If the Evaluation Office has not selected a project for Terminal Evaluation, the Project Manager and other relevant Divisional or Regional Office staff are informed. The Project Manager should plan and deliver the Terminal Review as follows:

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Project/Task Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafts Terms of Reference for the Review and selects and contracts the Review Consultant. ToRs should follow the template provided by the Evaluation Office. Recruitment of a consultant(s) should follow the guidance and timelines described in chapter 9 of the manual. • Manages the Review Process - i.e., provides documentation, arranges field visits, sets up meetings, and oversees the work of the Consultant through Inception Report, implementation of the review and delivery of the Draft and Final Review Report. • Reviews the Final Review report for completeness and accuracy (a template is available from the Evaluation Office) and requests any revisions from the Consultant. Once the Review report has been approved within the relevant Branch/Unit, the Project/Task Manager shares the final Review Report with the Evaluation Office (in Word version). • Disseminates the final report once the Evaluation Office has completed a quality assessment and validation of performance ratings and provided the PDF version.
Evaluation Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For consultants new to UNEP’s Review process, the Evaluation Office may hold a separate call with the contracted Review Consultant to discuss/clarify the tools, guidance notes, and templates available and confirm the evaluation deliverables. Alternatively, a recorded overview may be provided. • Remains available for technical guidance throughout the review. • For Terminal Reviews only (but not MTRs), the Evaluation Office will perform a quality assessment of the final Review Report and will append it to the Final Report as an Annex. It will also validate the Review’s performance ratings based on the evidence presented. The Evaluation Office will return the final Report in PDF format to the Project/Task Manager. The report file name provided by the Evaluation Office should not be changed.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Consultant(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carries out the Review in accordance with the Terms of Reference and in compliance with the UN norms and standards for evaluation (United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards). • Liaises with the Project/Task Manager throughout the review and continuously communicates with them on key developments and emerging findings. • Delivers inception and draft reports, in accordance with contract and Terms of Reference, and revises them after consideration of consolidated comments from all relevant parties. • Delivers draft and final Evaluation Reports in accordance with contract and Terms of Reference.

Quality Assurance

The Evaluation Office is responsible for the quality of all UNEP evaluation reports, their findings and recommendations. Evaluation quality assurance includes opportunities for key stakeholders to highlight any factual inaccuracies in draft evaluation reports, an internal peer review process among evaluation professionals within the Evaluation Office, and, for larger more complex or strategic evaluations, an Evaluation Reference Group of internal and external stakeholders/experts as an added quality assurance measure.

The Evaluation Office undertakes a validation exercise for all final performance assessments of projects and programmes conducted through management-led reviews. Terminal Review validations undertaken by the Evaluation Office involve the examination of the evidence presented within a review report and assessment for consistency with the standards of evidence for performance ratings presented. The Evaluation Office assesses whether the review report complies with Evaluation Office guidance, formats and requirements and arrives at its own judgment regarding the quality of the review report.

Compliance with Recommendations

A follow-up procedure monitors compliance with recommendations formulated by the Evaluation Office. Its main objective is to verify that necessary corrective management actions are implemented to redirect actions toward the planned outcomes and long-term results, within the framework of UNEP's mandate and objectives.

Evaluations

After the Evaluation Office has finalised an evaluation report, a formal management response to the Evaluation is required. This takes the form of a Recommendations Implementation Plan that is sent by the Evaluation Office to management with a one-month deadline to respond. Whenever possible, the Evaluation Office will set up an appointment to discuss the evaluation recommendations with the individual responsible for the management response. Management may 'Accept', 'Partially Accept' or 'Reject' a recommendation. A recommendation may only be rejected where it is based on faulty evidence. The recommendation compliance period runs for 12

months from the date that the implementation plan is finalised by management and the Evaluation Office. Implementation of the agreed actions must be feasible within this timeframe. The Evaluation Office tracks the implementation status of the agreed actions. Further information can be found in the [UNEP Evaluation Manual](#).

Management-led reviews

Upon completion of a management-led review (Mid-Term or Terminal), project managers should ensure that their response to recommendations made in the review are recorded. Implementation of recommendations, and corresponding changes to the review should be documented, and described in project reports. If a project is selected for Terminal Evaluation by the Evaluation Office, the evaluation scope will include an assessment of responsiveness to any Mid-Term Review, and recommendations previously made. Management-led Terminal Reviews must also include this assessment.

