

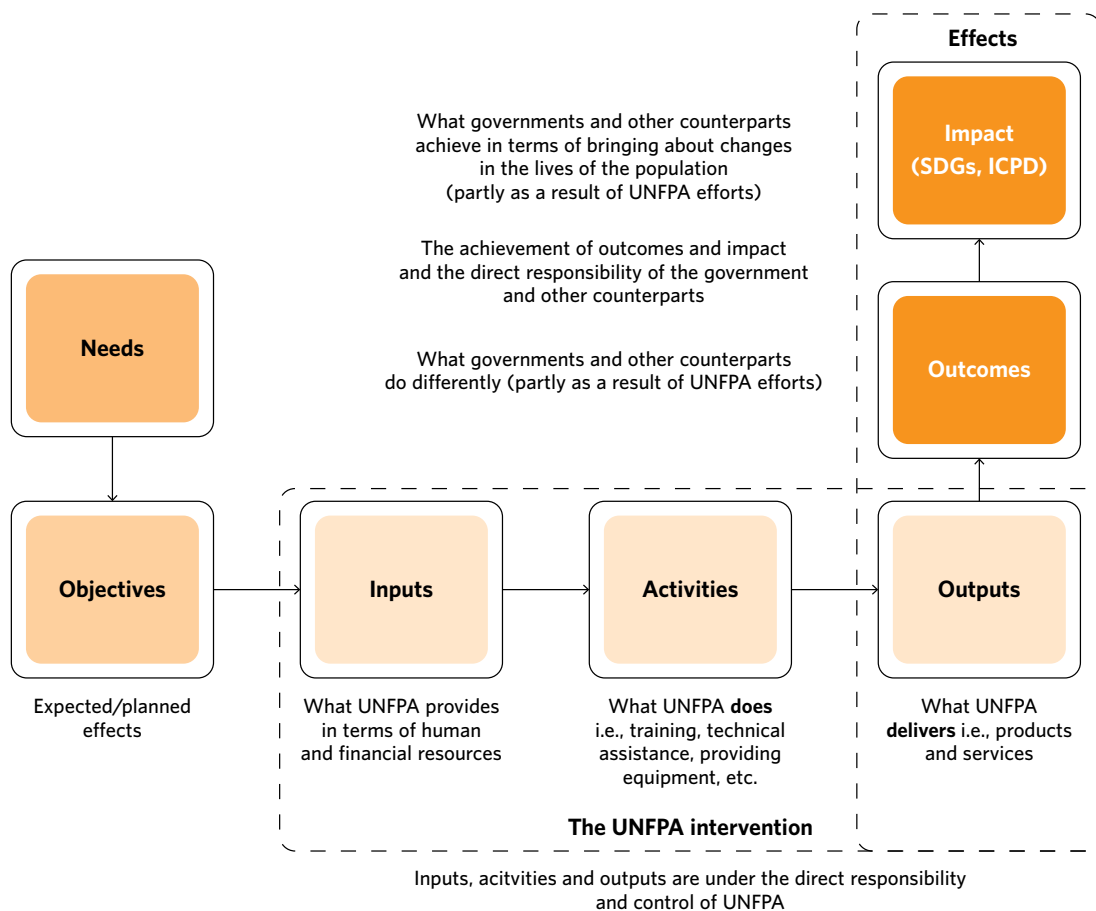
Annex I: Elements of theory

This section provides further explanation on evaluation concepts, approaches and techniques.

INTERVENTION LOGIC

The rationale behind the country programme can be described in terms of its intervention logic. The logic of intervention describes, by means of hypothetical cause-effect linkages, how the programme is expected to attain its objectives. In the design phase, evaluators should study and examine in detail the logic of intervention for each programmatic area. The main elements of an intervention logic in the UNFPA context are illustrated in *Figure 13*.

FIGURE 13: *The components of the intervention logic*



Needs correspond to the demands, problems or challenges to be addressed by UNFPA-funded interventions and the objective(s) (i.e. the planned effects) should respond to the needs. Evaluators may find information on the initial needs in the CPD. The CCA and the UNDAF also contain information on the main country priorities and needs, but their scope goes beyond UNFPA programmatic areas. Further information on needs will be retrieved during the field phase.

Inputs are the financial, human and material resources made available by UNFPA to carry out activities. The evaluators will find information on inputs in the AWP and in Atlas.⁶⁰

Activities are actions carried out or work performed, by means of which inputs are mobilized to produce specific outputs. In UNFPA country programmes, activities may consist of: training sessions, provision of technical assistance, procurement of equipment and medicines, support for consultation and government planning processes, etc. AWP should provide information on the planned activities.

Outputs correspond to the deliverables - i.e., the products and services that result directly from interventions funded by UNFPA. As such, outputs are fully attributable to the country office interventions. The description of the expected country office outputs can be found in the CPD and in AWP.⁶¹

Outcomes are short-term and medium-term effects stemming from UNFPA programme outputs combined with interventions from other development actors. Outcomes are also affected by external factors that are outside the control of the country office (national socio-economic and political context, climatic events, etc.). They correspond to tangible improvements compared to the baseline situation of target beneficiaries. They imply an improvement in the quality of life of beneficiaries and/or the extent to which beneficiaries do things differently (in a better way). The description of the expected outcomes can be found in the CPD.

Impact corresponds to higher-level effects, usually described in terms of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals or progress towards the fulfilment of the commitments adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

⁶⁰ Atlas is the integrated management information system used by UNFPA.

⁶¹ It is easier to use the CPD because it includes all of the outputs in a single document. AWP include information on the output(s) to which they (the AWP) contribute.

BOX 23: WHY DOES UNFPA EXCLUDE THE ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT FROM ITS CPEs?

UNFPA CPEs do not require the assessment of the long-term societal effects of UNFPA support, but instead focus on the identification of the more immediate results of its assistance. This is done for the following reasons:

- **The challenge of attributing impact (or showing contribution to impact):** The intended impacts of UNFPA support (and that of other development partners) generally concern changes in high-level societal conditions, such as reduced poverty or other improvements in the socio-economic situation of women (or other beneficiary groups). These changes are often hard to measure and even harder to link to the support of a single development actor, such as UNFPA. The increased use by UNFPA of joint programmes and other aid harmonization mechanisms to deliver its assistance exacerbates this attribution challenge. Under these conditions, CPEs are not the appropriate tool to try to assess the impact of UNFPA country programmes.
- **The focus of CPEs on generating programming lessons for the next country programme:** CPEs are primarily intended to produce concrete findings and conclusions as well as actionable recommendations for the subsequent country programme. CPEs are supposed to improve the programming of UNFPA over time and highlight approaches that have worked well, identify the concrete UNFPA practices that have contributed to this success and promote these practices for adoption in other country programmes. However, learning from impact assessments is difficult as societal changes are far removed from UNFPA programming decisions.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMMATIC AREAS

Relevance

In *Figure 14*, relevance would be the correspondence between the needs and the objectives boxes. In a CPE, evaluators will usually be assessing relevance in a **dynamic** manner: they will verify the continuous correspondence between the programme objectives and evolving needs. It is important that evaluators define the point when relevance is assessed given that needs may change over time. Evaluators should place special emphasis on assessing the present relevance of the programme; in other words, comparing the objectives of the programme with the present needs (at the time of the evaluation).

Evaluators need to look at a wide range of aspects and features of relevance:

- Relevance towards the needs of final beneficiaries must be assessed in a distinct or separate manner since their needs may not be reflected in national government priorities. Moreover, evaluators may want to distinguish between beneficiaries at different levels. For example, evaluators may want to assess the relevance of the programme towards: (i) the needs of pregnant women living in communities; (ii) the needs of their village representatives; and (iii) the needs as perceived by staff working at district-level primary health centres. Indeed, perceptions of what the needs are may not be the same for different beneficiary groups.
- Relevance of the programme's objectives towards the priorities of the government.
- Relevance may also include the consistency of the programme in terms of international agendas, policies and plans.

Other aspects that may be examined under the relevance criterion are:

- Whether geographical strategies and the distribution of interventions across the country are consistent with the needs of the UNFPA main target group – i.e., the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. If not, find out whether there is a legitimate reason for this.
- Whether the programme takes account of regional disparities – e.g., underserved and marginalized groups – and also whether it takes account of imbalances (in access to services, for example) rooted in ethnic and cultural factors.
- Whether there is a balance between policy-level and project-level initiatives, and a balance between interventions at the central level (capital city) and local level.

Effectiveness

The minimum set of aspects that evaluators should look at when assessing effectiveness includes: (1) the degree of achievement of outputs and outcomes; (2) the breadth and depth of outputs and outcomes; and (3) the unintended effects.

1. The degree of achievement of outputs (and if possible, the contribution of outputs to outcomes), which involves a two-step process:

- Assess the degree of achievement of the outputs as set out in the CPD
- Analyse and explain how actual outputs have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes: (i) examining whether there has been a (positive) contribution; (ii) and then, whenever possible, assess the extent of such contribution.⁶²

2. Breadth and depth of outputs (and if possible, outcomes), which includes several topics:

- Check to what extent UNFPA support has effectively reached the intended beneficiary target groups. This implies examining to what extent beneficiaries have been taking advantage of the benefits provided by UNFPA interventions and assess whether there have been any significant and tangible changes for them as a consequence of the interventions.
- An aspect of particular importance is to assess the factors behind access and use: check whether all planned beneficiaries have actually taken advantage of UNFPA support. If that is not the case, examine why. If beneficiaries have access to services, examine whether they are using them/benefiting from them as formulated in the planned outputs and outcomes. It is also important to look at the different degrees of access and use within beneficiary groups. For example, when assessing an outcome such as “increased utilization of high-quality reproductive health services”, evaluators should examine whether the increase in utilization has benefited all intended groups equally or some more than others, and find out the reasons why.
- Check whether the benefits of interventions have been localized/concentrated or widely spread across regions. Also assess whether the benefits have reached some government levels (local, central) more than others and examine the implications.

⁶² The depth of the analysis of this “extent” will depend on the availability of data on indicators of output and outcome.

- Analyse how the types and quality of UNFPA partnerships with other development partners, including other United Nations agencies, has contributed to maximizing the breadth and depth of the outcomes. Assess whether and how these partnerships have translated into a higher or lower degree of effectiveness.

3. Check whether there have been any unintended effects.

The analysis of effectiveness should not be limited to identifying effects that correspond to those foreseen in the formulation of the CPD. When identifying and assessing actual outputs and outcomes, it is very important to identify unintended effects – positive or negative, direct or indirect – and attempt to find out why they were generated and with what consequences.

Efficiency

Efficiency is the relationship between: (i) inputs – expressed as costs – and outputs; or (ii) between inputs and outcomes, depending on the scope of the definition.

For efficiency, evaluators should consider the relationship between what has been achieved and the costs of achieving it. Evaluators should look at the process that generates the outputs: “inputs (costs) → activities → outputs”. The scope of the efficiency criterion is centred on the relation between inputs and outputs.

1. Assessing how inputs are converted into activities involves analysing how appropriately and adequately available resources (funds and staff) are being managed and used to carry out activities. The main issues to be covered here are:

- Assess the financial structure of the programme in terms of the resource allocation, that is, how resources have been allocated by: (i) programmatic area; (ii) priority within each programmatic area; and (iii) type of implementation modality (provision of equipment and commodities, training, technical assistance, etc.) and examine whether this distribution has been conducive to producing good-quality outputs. This includes looking at whether there has been a concentration or a dispersion of funds and the extent to which this has affected the quality of the activities and, ultimately, the quality of the outputs, the outreach of the outcomes and the optimization of the overheads
- Check whether resources have been provided in a timely manner or, if there have been delays, the reasons why and the implications of such delays
- Check whether there have been cost overruns and deviations from the planned budget, the reasons why and the possible repercussions
- Check whether workflows have been smooth or whether there have been bottlenecks in any areas
- Check whether the number of staff and their capacity has been adequate to ensure smooth implementation and monitoring of inputs and activities.



Reminder: The central focus of the evaluation is on outputs and how these contribute to the achievement of the outcomes. CPEs are neither project-level evaluations nor performance audits of country offices. Evaluators should delve into the analysis of organizational aspects only when these appear to be the main factors behind the good or poor quality of the outputs.

2. Assessing how activities are converted into outputs requires analysing the extent to which activities are being managed to ensure the delivery of outputs. The main issues to be addressed are:

- Analyse deviations between annual work plans and actual implementation:
 - Check whether any planned activities have been cancelled, the reasons why and the implications in terms of producing good-quality outputs
 - Check whether there have been any newly added activities, the reasons why and the implications in terms of producing good-quality outputs
 - Check whether any of the planned activities have been reformulated or (partially) redesigned, the reasons why and the implications for producing good-quality outputs
- Check how well activities have been managed and supervised – by both implementing partners and the country office – to ensure the delivery of outputs
- Check the role and contribution of soft activities in producing the outputs.

Sustainability

Sustainability can be assessed only if the effects of the intervention have been generated for a reasonable period of time. Given that the time span covered by CPEs ranges from three to four years of implementation, sustainability will often be assessed in a prospective manner⁶³ – i.e., evaluators will analyse the **prospects for sustainability** (of the effects of the country programme) rather than actual sustainability. However, there will be cases where evaluators can look into the actual sustainability of specific interventions when these have been terminated prior to the end of the CP.

The main broad question to be answered here is “to what extent are the benefits of the country programme likely to continue beyond the programme completion?” An answer to this question should incorporate an analysis of factors such as: political decisions, economic and financial aspects, environmental factors, national ownership and national capacity.

Evaluators should consider the following two aspects when assessing sustainability:

⁶³ See the last set of tables in Annex III, *Glossary*, for a consideration of the retrospective and prospective analysis of evaluation criteria.

1. Check whether the programme design incorporates sustainability factors.

This involves examining the extent to which factors affecting sustainability have been incorporated from the beginning, in the design of the country programme, that is, in its activities and its outputs. Evaluators should:

- Check whether risks and assumptions were identified at the design phase of the programme – e.g., the potential consequences of political developments, changes in legislative frameworks, institutional restructuring processes, etc.
- Assess whether factors ensuring ownership were factored into the design of interventions
- Check whether country programme interventions foresaw a handover or exit strategies⁶⁴ and assess the consequences of the approach taken with regard to sustainability.

2. Assess whether national capacity development considerations are being taken into account.

The extent to which the benefits generated by UNFPA interventions will continue after funding has ceased is associated highly with the capacity of the national counterparts. Assessing how UNFPA has contributed to build such capacity is not only a core aspect of the UNFPA corporate strategy, as set forth in the strategic plan, but also a very important dimension to be analysed under the sustainability criterion. Evaluators should:

- Assess the extent to which the country office has supported its partners and beneficiaries in developing their institutional capacity to ensure the durability of outputs and outcomes
- Check what measures and coping strategies have been taken to minimize the effects of external factors affecting national capacity (such as high staff turnover in beneficiary institutions or the existence of a “brain drain” phenomenon in the country)
- Check to what extent the government and the implementing partners have planned sufficient financial resources for continued support whenever this is required – e.g., maintenance of facilities, procurement of medicines, conducting refresher training sessions, etc. In the event of shortcomings in this regard, assess whether UNFPA has taken mitigating measures/strategies
- Analyse the in-house capacity of the UNFPA country office in areas in which the organization is supposed to transfer expertise to the national counterparts – e.g., planning systems and methodologies, results-based management approaches, monitoring and evaluation systems

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

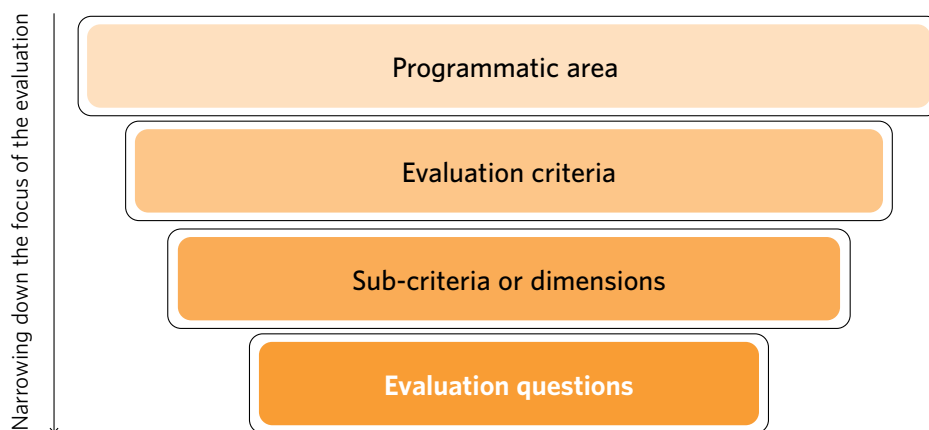
The evaluation questions are used to refine the focus of the evaluation. They are at the core of the CPE exercise. Answers to the evaluation questions will constitute the main body of analysis in the evaluation report and will provide the main inputs that the evaluation will offer for the next programming cycle.

⁶⁴ An exit strategy is a set of measures and arrangements aimed at minimizing the consequences on the completion of interventions once funding is discontinued.

While evaluation criteria encompass a wide range of aspects and features, the evaluation questions are used to focus the evaluation on specific aspects. Evaluators should use the evaluation questions to further narrow the evaluation criteria, enabling them to focus the evaluation work on a limited number of key points. Establishing a set of evaluation questions will allow for a more targeted data-collection process, a more concentrated and in-depth analysis and, eventually, a more focused and useful evaluation report.

Formulating evaluation questions is a crucial step in **determining with more precision what evaluators should assess** when conducting the data-collection and analysis phase. The evaluation questions function as the reference point to specify the type of data to be collected, the sources and, in turn, what methods should be used by the evaluators to collect the data.

FIGURE 14: *Evaluation Questions for the Programmatic Areas*



Evaluation questions can be **formulated for one or more programmatic areas and evaluation criteria**. Whenever evaluation questions for two or more programmatic areas coincide, they may be grouped together. However, evaluators should be very careful when grouping questions as there is a risk of formulating questions that are too generic, resulting in answers that are less useful for the next programming cycle.

Note: Types of evaluation questions:

Descriptive: these relate to “what has happened”, without implying any judgement or analysis of how or why it happened – e.g., “What measures have been introduced to mitigate any undesirable negative effects in the area of gender equality?”

Causal: these are associated with the cause-effect relationships between the effects and the intervention, or between elements of the interventions – e.g., inputs and activities or inputs and outputs. “Through which mechanisms have UNFPA-funded interventions contributed to enhance the capacity of national service providers to promote behaviour change for improved reproductive health?”

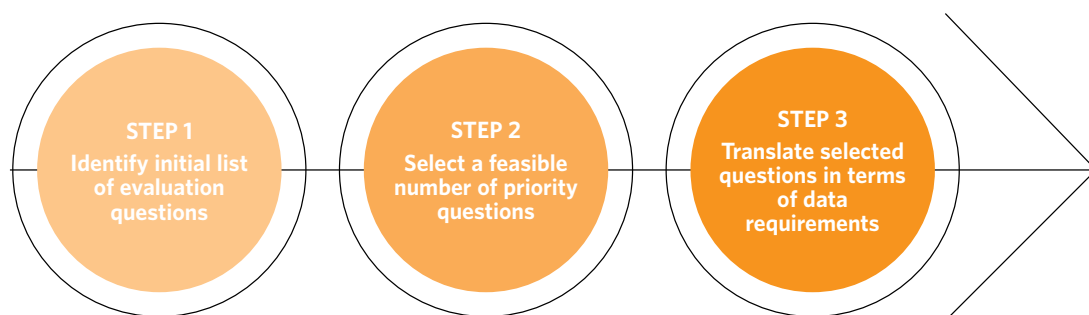
Normative: these ask whether the effect is satisfactory or not and thus imply a judgement – e.g., “Has the technical capacity of national counterpart staff in charge of integrated management information systems in the area of population and development been strengthened as planned?” This question could also end with “Has the (...) been strengthened to a satisfactory extent?” or formulated as “To what extent has the objective of strengthening the technical capacity (...) been achieved?” Answering the question implies establishing a benchmark separating what would be “to a good extent” from “to a poor or unsatisfactory extent” in order to make a judgement. Using objective benchmarks – as opposed to subjective ones – and indicators will enable evaluators to make objective and evidence-based judgements/assessments.

In practice, evaluation questions are often a combination of these types of questions, that is, they may have both a descriptive and a causal element – e.g., “In the event of unintended effects, what were those effects and what measures were adopted to mitigate negative consequences?” Or they combine a causal and a normative element at the same time – e.g., “To what extent has the utilization of high-quality reproductive health services increased and how did UNFPA contribute to that?”

In the design phase, evaluators should not only identify and select evaluation questions but also use them **as a means to determine the data requirements**. Evaluation questions will help:

- Determine what type of data (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, primary, secondary) evaluators will look for during the data and analysis phase
- Identify the sources of this data
- Determine, on the basis of the type of data needed, the most suitable collection methods.

FIGURE 15: *The three steps from evaluation questions to data requirements*



Identify evaluation questions

An initial list of evaluation questions should be drawn up. This step implies that evaluators have previously identified the needs, objectives, inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes as well as their logical cause-effect relationship sequence.

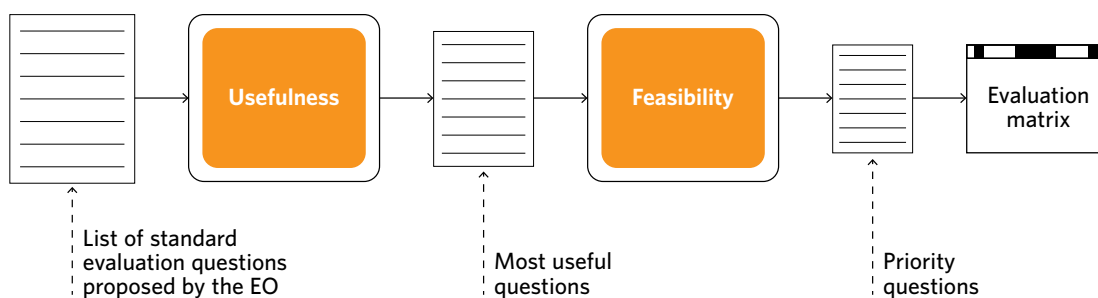
In the ToR of the evaluation, the evaluation manager should include a first list of evaluation questions based on issues identified by the country office, and by the reference group where present. The evaluation team should review them and add or replace questions as appropriate. Additions and withdrawals should be justified in the design report.

The main documentary sources upon which evaluation managers can draw when producing the initial list of evaluation questions are:

- The list of evaluation questions proposed by the UNFPA Evaluation Office
- The analysis of the country programming documents (CPD, AWP) as well as framework documents related to strategic positioning, e.g., UNFPA strategic plan, UNDAF, national development strategy, previous evaluations
- The analysis of progress reports such as the workplan progress reports and the COAR.

During the design phase, evaluators should first identify the most useful questions and then assess whether or not they are feasible.

FIGURE 16: *The process of selecting the evaluation question*



To assess **the potential usefulness of the questions**, evaluators should:

- Check who will use the answer and what the answer will be used for. Questions put forward by either the country office or by national counterparts addressing issues related to the next programming cycle are particularly useful in the context of a CPE. Questions providing feedback on strategic issues of relevance to headquarters should also be considered
- Check whether the question deals with an issue that is particularly urgent or important to address. For example, this includes questions related to controversial aspects, to the identification of best practices, or to the effects of pilot interventions.

When it is clear that the usefulness of the answers will be high, evaluators should, however, ensure that there are no redundancies or overlaps. In this regard, evaluators should check:

- Whether the answer to the question is already known. This applies particularly to questions that have been added by the evaluators (prior to receiving feedback from the country office or the reference group)
- Whether there is any other assessment (evaluation, review, study), either ongoing or to be launched in the near future, that is likely to provide an answer to the question.

Evaluators should then assess the feasibility of the evaluation questions

The way in which evaluation questions are formulated (their scope) has direct implications in terms of the data required to answer them in an objective and evidence-based manner. Data requirements will, in turn, determine the time and resources needed. Choosing a feasible set of questions means selecting questions that may be realistically answered given the time and resources available for the evaluation.

There are several aspects that make evaluation questions more or less feasible. Evaluators should consider the following:

- The availability of data, which in turn will depend on whether the country office has functional internal monitoring and information management systems producing data on implementation aspects as well as on outputs and outcomes
- The amount of data needed to answer the questions in a credible manner
- Whether answering the question requires predominantly primary data or secondary data. Primary data is usually more expensive and time-consuming to gather than secondary data, but it is more up to date and free from previous interpretation⁶⁵
- Access to key informants whose availability may vary
- Whether the intervention has produced tangible effects at the time of the CPE. Some questions on the degree of effectiveness, for example, may not be feasible if effects have not been generated

65 Usually, primary sources provide the raw data and secondary sources help understand it.

- The complexity of the question: questions that enquire about intricate cause-effect relationships may be too cumbersome to assess given the time, availability of data, expertise and financial resources available for the evaluation.



Tip: Checking the feasibility of the questions implies considering them in terms of resources. The evaluation matrix may be used as a supporting tool during this process.⁶⁶ Evaluators could use the “assumptions to be assessed”, the “sources of information” and the “methods and tools for data collection” columns in the matrix to assess how feasible it will be to answer the questions. Often, two or more questions may be associated with the same sources of data and/or use the same data-collection methods. Using the evaluation matrix can help visualize these considerations.

In order to facilitate discussions during the selection process, it would be advisable to classify the evaluation questions as high, medium or low feasibility. Combining the feasibility and potential usefulness classifications in a double-entry table would help the selection process as it provides a quick snapshot of the distribution of the initial list of questions according to both characteristics.



Tool 5 in Tools for structuring information provides an example of how an evaluation question selection matrix could be used when selecting priority questions.

Evaluation questions related to UNFPA support in humanitarian settings

The list of evaluation questions for UNFPA support in humanitarian settings (in *Table 6*: list of examples of evaluation questions for CPE) is derived from the “Humanitarian Response Strategy – Second Generation” of UNFPA adopted in January 2012⁶⁷ (the content of which is reflected in the humanitarian related outcomes, outputs and indicators of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021).

More specifically, the evaluation questions for humanitarian programming cover the six outputs from the results framework of the Humanitarian Response Strategy, which outline the areas in which the capacity of UNFPA and its partners for humanitarian programming and assistance is meant to be strengthened.

⁶⁶ This does not mean that evaluators should complete the evaluation matrix at this stage, as the evaluation matrix will be filled out with the priority questions. It means instead that the format of the matrix can be regarded as a useful supporting tool to assess the feasibility of the questions in terms of data requirements.

⁶⁷ The overall goal of the Humanitarian Response Strategy is “[m]ainstreamed humanitarian programming that contributes to UNFPA’s overarching goal of achieving universal access to SRH (including family planning) to promote reproductive rights; to reduce maternal mortality; and to accelerate progress on the ICPD agenda and MDG 5 (A and B), in order to empower and improve the lives of underserved populations, especially women and young people (including adolescents)”. In effect, the five outcomes of the Humanitarian Response Strategy are directly associated with five of the seven outcomes of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2013. The main aim of the Humanitarian Response Strategy is to facilitate an operational shift in the leadership and management of humanitarian programming from headquarters to regional, sub regional and country offices. The goal is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of UNFPA preparedness, response and recovery programmes. Pursuing the five substantive outcomes of the UNFPA strategic plan in humanitarian settings is therefore primarily a matter of developing the appropriate organizational capacity within UNFPA country offices and other relevant entities at country level (and within regional and sub regional offices) to enhance their ability to deliver humanitarian assistance in a flexible manner and in concert with the other actors within the humanitarian sphere.

Outcomes and outputs from the UNFPA Humanitarian Response Strategy (2012)

Outcomes	Related outputs
<p>Outcome 1: Increased access to and utilization of quality maternal and newborn health services</p>	<p>Output 1: Increased capacity of UNFPA regional, subregional, country offices and partners to implement the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) in humanitarian settings</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Increased access to and utilization of quality HIV- and STI-prevention services especially for young people (including adolescents) and other key populations at risk</p>	<p>Output 2: Enhanced capacity of country offices for planning, implementation and monitoring of prevention programmes to reduce the transmission of STI and HIV/AIDS in humanitarian settings</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Gender equality and reproductive rights advanced particularly through advocacy and implementation of laws and policy</p>	<p>Output 3: Strengthened country office capacity for implementation of international agreements, national legislation and policies in support of gender equality and reproductive rights in humanitarian settings</p> <p>Output 4: Strengthened national capacity for addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and provision of quality services, including in humanitarian settings</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Improved access to SRH services and sexuality education for young people (including adolescents)</p>	<p>Output 5: Strengthened programming for essential SRH services for marginalized adolescents and young people in humanitarian settings</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Improved data availability and analysis around population dynamics, SRHR (including family planning) and gender equality</p>	<p>Output 6: Enhanced capacity of regional, sub regional, country offices for the production, utilization and dissemination of quality demographic data on population dynamics, youth, gender, SRHR, in humanitarian programming</p>

Annex II: Additional methodological guidance

How to account for overly ambitious country programme outputs when analysing the country programme intervention logic

A problem common to the results frameworks of UNFPA country programmes is that **outputs are formulated at too high a level in the theory of change**, and as such, it is unlikely or impossible for UNFPA to achieve them through its work alone (i.e., without contributions from third-party projects). In these instances, outputs often read more like development outcomes (or even development goals) since they describe societal changes that (might) occur in response to concrete UNFPA interventions, although they are neither directly nor exclusively linked to these interventions. This situation contradicts the expectation that the outputs of country programmes should **directly result from UNFPA-supported interventions**.

If evaluators were to base the design of the CPE on these “high-level” outputs and outcomes and were to assess whether such outputs had actually been achieved, they would likely conclude that the country programme outputs had not been achieved and the country programme had performed poorly. In doing so, they **would miss other, more realistic and nuanced contributions** the programme may have made to improve development results.

Correcting for overly ambitious outputs in the design of UNFPA CPEs

For this reason, the design of the methodology of the CPE should not be based on the “flawed version” of the intervention logic. Instead, evaluators need to revise and **reconstruct** the intervention logic to make it coherent and consistent, and to close potential gaps in the cause-and-effect logic of the country programme. In order to perform a **fair assessment** of the country programme, evaluators must:

- Interview all programme officers and gather all necessary documentation to obtain an accurate overview of the actual interventions and expected outputs with respective indicators
- Discuss the final reconstructed intervention logic with, and receive validation from, the evaluation reference group
- Select the evaluation questions, indicators and appropriate data-collection methods on the basis of this new reconstructed and logically consistent version of the intervention logic
- Present the reconstructed programme intervention logic in the design report
- Cite the programmatic flaws (i.e., inconsistencies in the levels of the chain of effects of the programme) identified by the evaluators as part of the findings and conclusions, leading to a specific recommendation in the final evaluation report.

What to be aware of when working with AWP

Evaluators need to be aware of a number of challenges associated with the analysis of a UNFPA country programme on the basis of AWP:

- Whereas each output in the CPD should have at least one associated AWP, de facto one AWP may contribute to more than one output.⁶⁸ Evaluators may thus encounter either AWP associated with a single output and/or AWP linked to more than one output.
- When several implementing partners work on a specific output, the country office may sign one AWP with multiple implementing partners or choose to sign a separate AWP with each implementing partner. Consequently, evaluators may find, for example, three AWP for the same year, with each one being signed with a different implementing partner.
- The UNFPA Policies and Procedures Manual for the implementation of country programmes strongly recommends that when an implementing partner is involved in the achievement of several outputs, a separate AWP should be prepared for each output.⁶⁹

Not all activities carried out during a programming period are necessarily included in AWP. New activities are often added and/or adjustments take place in response to demands from counterparts after an AWP has been signed, yet often the AWP is not updated in light of such changes. Also, AWP do not list the un-costed “soft activities”, such as advocacy, policy dialogue, national consultations and institutional mediation (see below).

Challenges and constraints related to UNFPA CPEs

Challenges and constraints	Implications for CPEs
At UNFPA, the term “project” is a financial concept used to designate projects in Atlas rather than development projects in the traditional sense of the term. This means that annual work plan (AWP, the UNFPA equivalent of project documents) do not clearly stipulate and delineate their underlying intervention logic and theory of change linking activities to results.	The study of AWP and CPDs alone will not allow evaluators to fully understand the intervention logic and theory of change of a UNFPA country programme. Most significantly, the evaluators will not be able to readily understand how individual activities (presented in AWP) were meant to contribute to the achievement of the different outputs and outcomes in the CPD. Evaluators will therefore need to complement the desk study of these documents with interviews of UNFPA staff in country offices to be able to understand and reconstruct the intervention logic of the programme.

⁶⁸ When this happens, the AWP contains the description of all of the outputs to which it contributes.

⁶⁹ The rationale of this recommendation lies in the fact that when activities are transcribed into Atlas, the financial information is recorded per output, not by implementing partner.

Challenges and constraints	Implications for CPEs
<p>The outputs in CPDs often resemble development outcomes, in the sense that these are at too high a level (in terms of effects) in the (implicit) chain of effects to be directly connected to any set of UNFPA-supported activities. This adds to the challenge of appropriately understanding and reconstructing the intervention logic of UNFPA country programmes.</p> <p>In many country offices, the monitoring systems for UNFPA support are weak. Data is either not available, is insufficiently disaggregated, or does not appropriately document the entire logical chain between UNFPA-supported activities and sought-after societal changes. Frequently, baselines specific to the scope of UNFPA-supported activities are not available. It is therefore more challenging to determine the contributions of UNFPA-supported activities to societal changes.</p>	<p>Evaluators need to “fill in the gaps” in the stated hierarchy of effects in UNFPA programme documents. In cooperation with UNFPA managers and staff, evaluators have to try to logically link the higher-level (societal) effects of UNFPA support and the concrete activities UNFPA has supported or intends to support. Filling in the missing links will often require identifying the particular deliverables (e.g., a new curriculum) or assets (e.g., equipment, training materials) associated with UNFPA-supported activities; and describing the desired changes in behaviour that the provision of these assets was meant to trigger (e.g., adapting the content of training courses for health cadres based on the new curriculum, or using the new equipment to provide improved health services to patients).</p> <p>UNFPA CPEs have to rely on the collection of primary qualitative and quantitative data to fill the gap in the UNFPA monitoring data.</p>
<p>The time and resource constraints in UNFPA CPEs do not allow the use of field surveys to collect representative data from UNFPA beneficiaries.</p>	<p>CPEs are based primarily on secondary quantitative information, using existing data sets from national surveys and censuses, or from surveys that were carried out by members of the development community. Information on health outcomes at community level can be collected only through interviews and focus groups. While these can provide useful illustrations of changes at the beneficiary level, and can examine the contributing causal mechanisms, this data is not statistically representative of the entire population of UNFPA beneficiaries.</p>

Annex III: Glossary

DEFINITIONS OF THE MAIN METHODOLOGICAL TERMS

DEFINITIONS

Intervention logic A reasoned description of how the programme is expected to attain its objectives. It uses hypothetical cause-effect linkages to show the chain of expected effects between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and, ultimately, impact.

Needs The demands, problems or challenges to be addressed by the UNFPA-funded interventions.

Objectives Expected planned effects.

Inputs The financial, human and material resources UNFPA makes available to carry out activities.

Activities Actions taken or work performed through which inputs are mobilized to produce specific outputs. In UNFPA country programmes, activities may consist of: training sessions, provision of technical assistance, procurement of equipment and medicines, support for consultation and government planning processes, etc. AWP should provide information on the planned activities.



Tip: The actual activities being implemented under a country programme go beyond those included in annual work plans (AWPs) for two reasons: they include soft activities not specified in AWPs; any activity that changes during the course of the implementation may not be reflected in the AWPs

Effects Intended or unintended changes due directly or indirectly to an intervention. Effects correspond to the actual outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Outputs The deliverables (products and services) that result directly from interventions funded by UNFPA. The generation of outputs is under the full responsibility and control of the country office. Outputs are first-level immediate effects.



Tip: In the UNFPA context, an output is not the result of a single AWP but the result of implementing several AWPs plus soft-aid activities over the five-year period of a country programme. When we refer to outputs we mean outputs as they are formulated in the CPD results framework.

DEFINITIONS

Outcomes

The deliverables (products and services) that result directly from interventions funded by UNFPA. The generation of outputs is under the full responsibility and control of the country office. Outputs are first-level immediate effects.



Tip: In the UNFPA context, an output is not the result of a single AWP but the result of implementing several AWPs plus soft-aid activities over the five-year period of a country programme. When we refer to outputs we mean outputs as they are formulated in the CPD results framework.

Impact

Higher-level effects usually described in terms of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals or progress towards the fulfilment of the commitments adopted in the International Conference on Population and Development. CPEs do not encompass the assessment of impact.

Development results

Development results mean sustained improvement in the lives of people in developing countries – e.g., more children educated, fewer infants dying, more families lifted out of poverty. In the UNFPA framework, development results are strategic objectives and intended high-level effects as defined in UNFPA strategic documents and determined by the country context and national development challenges.



Tip: “Impact” is a generic word for development results. In the context of a CPE, these can be regarded as equivalent terms.

CLARIFICATIONS

On methodological concepts and approaches

The importance of the distinction between actual and planned

An important part of any evaluation consists of comparing what was planned or expected with what happened in reality. In other words, comparing actual outputs, outcomes, activities, inputs with those planned at the start of the country programme.

Evaluators will find planned outputs, outcomes, activities and inputs in the programming documents (CPD, strategic plan, UNDAF and in AWP). The term “objectives” in programming documents is used to designate expected outcomes and expected outputs. On the other hand, the actual outputs and the actual outcomes (effects) can be observed and assessed only during the data-collection and analysis phase, and not by simply looking at programming documents during the design phase.⁷⁰ Data collection is about retrieving information on actual outputs, outcomes, activities and inputs.

The focus of CPE is on outputs, not on activities

The degree of achievements of the outputs – and their contribution to the outcomes – is at the core of CPEs. Evaluators should be acquainted with activities and inputs, yet CPEs are not project-level evaluations and therefore do not entail using activity checklists to verify meticulously whether activities have been implemented or not. Activities and inputs should be examined while bearing in mind that the focus is the outputs and their contribution to the planned outcomes (provided outcomes have already been generated at the time of the CPE).



Tip: Analyse activities to the extent that they explain the quantity and quality of the outputs. Never lose the focus on outputs. Details of a particular training session conducted in one district or the number of kits provided by UNFPA in a particular community are not relevant.

⁷⁰ The only exception would be looking at past evaluations and end-of-project reports. However, this implies looking at past secondary data and could only provide partial evidence of the overall picture for the actual outcomes.

Should evaluators assess the degree of achievement of outcomes under the effectiveness criterion?

Assessing the degree of achievement of outcomes is beyond the scope of CPEs. Evaluators will assess the degree of achievement of outputs and, if possible, the contribution of the outputs to the planned outcomes.

Whenever it is possible to assess the contribution of the outputs to the planned outcomes, evaluators should try to find out the extent to which positive changes (outcomes) are a consequence (at least in part) of UNFPA interventions. Evaluators should not attempt to conduct an attribution analysis;⁷¹ instead, they should explore whether there are indications of the UNFPA contribution.

Moreover, when assessing the contribution of the outputs to the planned outcomes, evaluators should also look at the extent to which the quality and value of UNFPA partnerships (with other development partners, including other United Nations agencies) has contributed to the achievement of planned outcomes.



Reminder: Whereas outputs are the full responsibility of the country office and are under UNFPA control, outcomes are outside of the control of UNFPA. The mandate of country offices is to support governments and other direct counterparts in undertaking actions that ultimately have an impact on beneficiaries. Achieving the outcomes will require partner country actions and decisions, as well as support from other development partners.

Retrospective and prospective analysis and the evaluation criteria

Some evaluation criteria allow only for backward-looking assessments (retrospective analysis) whereas others allow both backward- and forward-looking assessments (prospective analysis). Evaluators may assess the extent to which effects have been sustainable – provided that the effects have been already generated – but also look at the prospects for sustainability, i.e., the likelihood that the effects of UNFPA interventions will continue once the funding comes to an end.

The same happens with effectiveness: evaluators may assess the extent to which objectives have been achieved or the extent to which objectives are likely to be achieved.

Relevance and efficiency allow only for retrospective assessments because future needs cannot be assessed and the actual/real costs incurred cannot be inferred beforehand.

In CPEs, evaluators are expected to conduct retrospective assessments for the most part, i.e., analyse what has happened and the reasons why, but prospective assessments are also an option. However, whenever evaluators choose to conduct prospective assessments, they should explicitly indicate this in the methodological chapters of the design and final reports. Evaluators should also explain the reason for choosing a prospective assessment.

⁷¹ An attribution analysis would entail explaining which part of the achievement of the outcomes is directly attributable to UNFPA.





Ensuring rights and choices for all


**United Nations Population Fund
Evaluation Office**

605 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10158 USA

 evaluation.office@unfpa.org

 www.unfpa.org/EvaluationHandbook

 [@unfpa_eval](https://twitter.com/unfpa_eval)

 UNFPA Evaluation Office