5

REPORTING PHASE

The evaluators must review the information they have collected, and filter, categorize and interpret it so that it can be used to develop findings. These findings will be the building blocks in formulating evidence-based answers to the evaluation questions. The answers to the evaluation questions will, in turn, form the basis for conclusions and recommendations.

The following sections describe the main steps of the analytical and reporting process of CPEs in greater detail.

5.1 CONSOLIDATING THE EVALUATION MATRIX

The evaluation matrix (*Tool 1*) should be seen as a "living document" that evaluators must use throughout the data-collection process with a view to structuring and recording all collected information.

Throughout the field phase, each member of the evaluation team will have (gradually) completed her/his individual copy of the evaluation matrix with the data and information collected during document reviews, interviews and focus groups. To ensure that information from all team members is entered into the final, consolidated evaluation matrix, the team can take the following steps:

- Under the guidance of the team leader, each team member enters information from her/his individual summary table (and other sources) into the consolidated evaluation matrix (*Tool 1*) for the question for which s/he is responsible.

- In addition, every individual team member briefly reviews the information for the other evaluation questions, and adds any relevant data from her/his own files (clearly indicating – in colour or "track changes" – where data has been added and by whom).

- The team leader reviews and finalizes all of the information into one consolidated evaluation matrix.

- The team leader sends the table to the evaluation manager for fact-checking by the country office. The country office is expected to formulate comments on factual inaccuracies and omissions only, and provide supporting documentation.

- The table, as commented upon by the country office, is analysed by the whole team, to serve as the basis for future data analysis.

At the end of the field phase, and with the commencement of the review and analysis of all gathered information, the evaluators have to ensure that the data and information for each evaluation question are properly consolidated. The final document needs to contain all of the data and information that the team collected for each evaluation question.

5.2 FROM DATA TO FINDINGS: CONSTRUCTING THE ANSWERS TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The consolidated evaluation matrix (*Tool 1*), containing all of the information and data from interviews, focus groups and document reviews, is the starting point for the process of elaborating the answers to the evaluation questions. In short, this process consists of the following steps:

- Evaluators need to **review all of the data in the consolidated evaluation matrix** and decide what information is: (a) necessary; and (b) of sufficient quality to inform each evaluation question indicator. Data that is found to be unnecessary or unreliable should be removed from the evaluation matrix.

- The findings should logically flow from the information related to indicators.

- Finally, evaluators need to **construct complete chains of reasoning: from evidence** to findings **to answers to the evaluation questions as shown in the figure below**.

FIGURE 9   *From data collection to evidence-based answers to the evaluation questions*

From data to answers
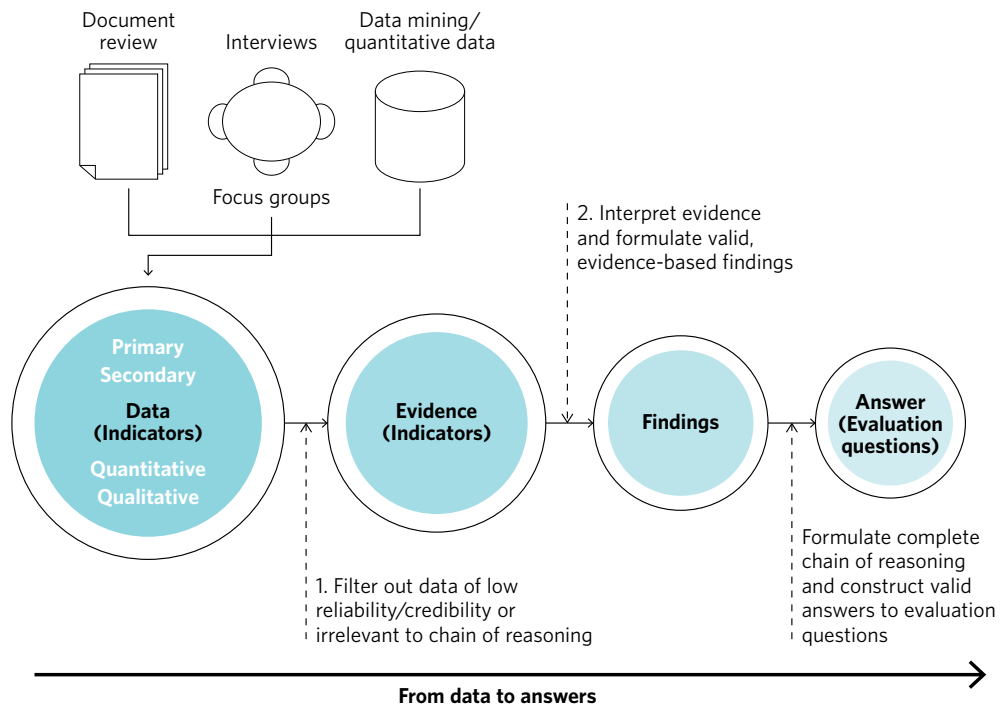
The quality of answers to evaluation questions is typically assessed on the basis of their validity – i.e., the extent to which the answers are "well-grounded in logic, truth or fact"[24] (i.e., evidence-based answers).

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24   Adapted from WordNet at http://wordnet.princeton.edu/

📋 Readers who are interested in learning more about the concept of validity, and its significance for evaluations, can find more information in the online Research Methods Knowledge Base (http://www.socialresearchmethods.net). The knowledge base provides a very good and clear Introduction to validity (http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/introval.php), explaining the concept as such, as well as the different types of validity.

Each of the three analytical steps (see *Figure 9*) explained above represents a unique challenge for evaluators in ensuring that their answers to the evaluation questions can be accepted as "valid".

The table below shows how the analytical work at each of these steps is linked to specific threats to validity.

TABLE 13 *Overview of the most important threats to validity during the analysis phase of UNFPA CPEs*

Analytical steps	Significance for validity of evaluation questions	Threats to validity
Filter out data of low reliability or irrelevant to chain of reasoning	Identifies the evidence to inform each indicator.	• Collected information has low/no logical connection to indicator(s), and, therefore, cannot inform the indicators. • Data is of low quality – e.g., is contradictory or comes from only a few, potentially biased sources (e.g., from implementing partners only).
Interpret evidence and formulate evidence-based findings	Allows evaluators to formulate their findings – i.e., a reasoned assessment of the UNFPA interventions.	In addition to the above issues: • Evaluators do not discuss and resolve contradictions stemming from data and information. • Evaluators do not have evidence to explain how UNFPA is logically connected to the observed changes (e.g., in the availability of midwives in health centres).
Formulate answers to evaluation questions based on complete chains of reasoning	Combines the findings into coherent and comprehensive answers to the evaluation questions.	In addition to the all the above issues: • Answers to evaluation questions may not logically flow from the findings. • Evaluators omit or do not clearly refer to findings.

## 5.3 FORMULATING CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the evidence-based and valid answers to the evaluation questions, UNFPA CPEs are expected to draw conclusions on the performance of the country programme. These conclusions typically cut across the individual themes or topics of the evaluation questions. Conclusions are the basis for practical and concrete recommendations.

5.4 DEVELOPING CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are meant to point out the "factors of success and failure of the evaluated intervention" and do so by drawing on "data collection and analyses, woven together in a transparent chain of arguments".[25]

For UNFPA CPEs, this means that conclusions have to logically flow from the findings (drawing on the data collected and analysed up to that point). It also means that conclusions are an opportunity for evaluators to identify the factors of success and failure, which are cross-cutting, and "systemic" – e.g., rooted in the planning process of UNFPA or of individual country offices, the status of organizational resources and the way they are used, organizational culture, implementation arrangements, etc.

FIGURE 10 *Conclusions on "systemic" topics and themes*
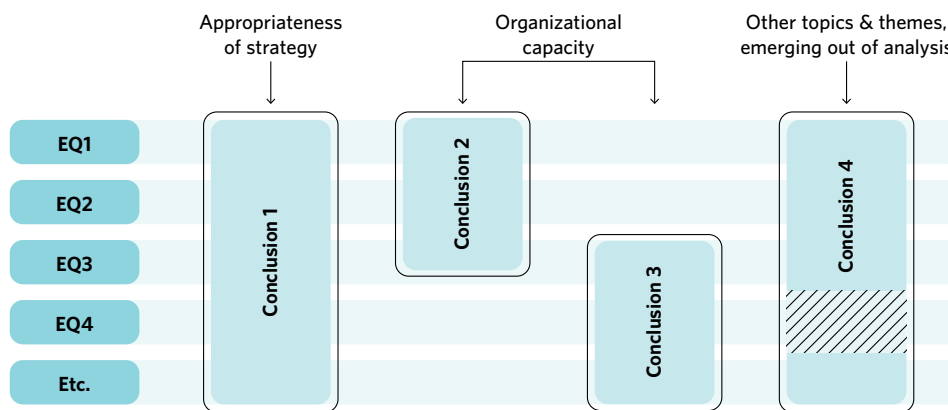
It is the evaluators' responsibility to identify topics or themes for the conclusions during the course of the evaluation. The team, at the different stages of the evaluation, discusses and identifies:

- Common patterns in different thematic areas

- Possible common causes of weaknesses in the UNFPA programme

- Specific success or failure factors.

Over time, these individual issues will allow the team to identify overarching themes and topics for the conclusions – and subsequently for the recommendations (see *Figure 10*).

25 *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*, OECD/DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, 2002.

5.5 DEVELOPING ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

The prospective users of the final evaluation report expect to receive concrete suggestions for taking UNFPA support forward in the next programming period. However, developing specific and actionable recommendations is often a challenge.

Although recommendations are meant to be based on the results of the evaluation, their formulation also requires information about UNFPA, the programmatic alternatives and the organizational context, all of which go beyond the knowledge that evaluators have gained throughout the CPE process (see *Figure 11* below). This is particularly true since recommendations are required to be specific and actionable, which in turn requires a working knowledge of UNFPA programming and operations.

FIGURE 11   *The degree of operationality of recommendations and related information requirements*
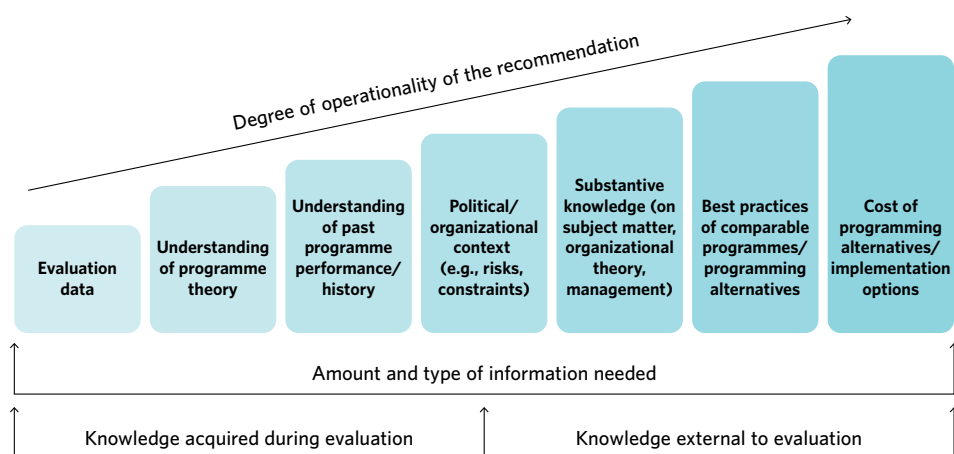
As shown in *Figure 11*, global recommendations can be based solely on the knowledge that the evaluators acquired throughout the evaluation process. The data and information they collected provide them with:

- A good understanding of the intervention logic of the programme

- Details of the past/historical performance of the programme and its components

- An insight into the applicable risks and constraints rooted within UNFPA, the country office or its environment.

This information allows evaluators to recommend possible options for future support (such as the suggestion to invest more into one particular sub-sector – e.g., maternal health, emergency obstetric and newborn care/EmONC, etc.), albeit without going into the details of implementation.

More **specific, actionable recommendations** require additional knowledge about matters that are beyond the scope of a specific CPE:

- While evaluators will have learned about some aspects of the organizational and political context of the country programme, other elements will be unknown to them (as outsiders to the organization and, possibly, to the programme country). It will thus be difficult for them to clearly assess the operational, political, social and economic risks and constraints for programming changes.

- Moreover, evaluators are not necessarily familiar with the latest developments in the field they are evaluating, or with specific "best practices" for the activities that need to be refined; this will limit their ability to propose specific changes.

- Finally, certain operational information, such as the costs of alternative programming options or associated human resource requirements, is well outside the reach of evaluators.

Ensuring that CPEs can yield concrete and actionable recommendations is an undertaking that starts before the analysis **and reporting phase of CPEs**. As early as the stage of selecting the evaluation team, attention must be paid to the ability of the evaluators to develop useful and operational recommendations, based on such elements as their academic background, their experience of evaluation, their knowledge of the region/country, their knowledge of UNFPA, etc.

Most importantly, the development of recommendations is a **participatory, cooperative task**. It requires an exchange of ideas between the evaluators and the managers and staff of UNFPA, who have more insights into the risks, constraints and opportunities associated with different programming options. In practice, this has the following implications for the work of the evaluators:

- Throughout the evaluation, and in particular during the field phase, evaluators should discuss practical options for programming alternatives with relevant stakeholders; first and foremost with UNFPA managers and staff, but also with the main implementing partners

- Towards the end of the field phase, the evaluators should discuss the emerging concrete ideas for recommendations and review them for utility, feasibility and required conditions for success. Subsequently, the evaluators should also share and discuss the more developed (more concrete) draft recommendations with UNFPA managers and staff

- Finally, the evaluators and the evaluation manager need to consider how best to use the feedback and comments from the reference group on the draft final report as an opportunity to refine their recommendations, and to make them more concrete and actionable. For this purpose, the evaluation manager should specifically encourage members of the reference group to consider the feasibility of the recommendations, and make concrete suggestions for their refinement.

Once recommendations have been finalized, they should be clustered and prioritized as well as detailed in terms of time frame and target audience. The link of recommendations to one or several conclusions should be clearly indicated.[26] The evaluation team should also clearly acknowledge where changes in the desired direction are already taking place in order to avoid misleading readers.

5.6 DELIVERING THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

The final evaluation report is the main deliverable of the reporting and analysis phase and of the evaluation overall. At the core of the report is: (i) the presentation of the findings, formulated as answers to the evaluation questions; (ii) the conclusions deriving from the findings; and (iii) the recommendations. The supporting evidence is presented within the evaluation matrix (*Tool 1* and *Template 5*), which must be annexed to the final report. The report also explains the purpose, objective, scope and methodology of the evaluation, and provides an overview of the country context, and the UNFPA country programme.

All final evaluation reports of UNFPA CPEs follow a common outline, which is presented in the table below.

TABLE 14   *The outline of the final evaluation report*

Section	Title	Suggested length
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		5 pages max
CHAPTER 1: Introduction		
1.1	Purpose and objectives or the CPE	
1.2	Scope of the evaluation	5–7 pages max
1.3	Methodology and process	
CHAPTER 2: Country context		
2.1	Development challenges and national strategies	5–6 pages max
2.2	The role of external assistance	
CHAPTER 3: United Nations/UNFPA response and programme strategies		
3.1	United Nations and UNFPA response	
3.2	UNFPA response through the country programme	
3.2.1	Brief description of UNFPA previous cycle strategy, goals and achievements	5–7 pages max
3.2.2	Current UNFPA country programme	
3.2.3	The financial structure of the programme	

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26   See example of recommendations in the CPE Madagascar located at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/admin-resource/ MadagascarReport1_FR_7.pdf

Section	Title	Suggested length
CHAPTER 4: Findings: answers to the evaluation questions		
4.1	Answer to evaluation question 1	
4.2	Answer to evaluation question 2	25–35 pages max
4.3	Answer to evaluation question 3	
4.4	Answer to evaluation question X	
CHAPTER 5: Conclusions		
5.1	Strategic level	
5.2	Programmatic level	6 pages max
CHAPTER 6: Recommendations		
	Recommendation # 1, #2, #3	4–5 pages max
Total number of pages		**55–70 pages**

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Terms of reference

Annex 2 List of persons/institutions met

Annex 3 List of documents consulted

Annex 4 The evaluation matrix

Annex 5 Methodological tools

ⓘ For more detailed information on each of the sections and chapters in the outline of the final report of UNFPA CPEs, and guidance on writing them, see *section 7.2.2*.

The Evaluation Office has developed an Evaluation Quality Assessment (EQA) grid, which is used for the assessment of the quality of all final CPE reports. The grid, along with an explanatory note, is available in *Template 13*. Evaluators are encouraged to use this grid as a checklist when drafting the final evaluation report. Evaluation managers must use this grid to assess the quality of the final report (at draft and final stages). The regional M&E adviser should also use this grid to perform his/her assessment.

BOX 12: OVERVIEW OF QUALITY CRITERIA FOR FINAL EVALUATION REPORTS

In summary, all final evaluation reports of UNFPA CPEs are assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- **The clarity, logical structure and comprehensiveness of the report**, ensuring user-friendliness and ease of access to particular topics
- **The completeness and concision of the executive summary**, which should be written as a stand-alone document, and present the main evaluation results
- **The explanation and justification of the design and the methodological approach** used for the evaluation, including clear descriptions of techniques and tools for data collection as well as of constraints and limitations
- **The reliability of the data**, based on the soundness of the data-collection process, and the identification of types of sources used and the explanation of limitations
- **The soundness of the analysis and credibility of findings**, including the explicit link of findings to evidence, the identification of assumptions made, a consideration of contextual factors and a clear investigation of robustness of cause-and-effect links between UNFPA interventions and reported results
- **The validity of the conclusions**, i.e., the extent to which they have been derived from clearly identified findings
- **The usefulness and clarify of the recommendations**, their logical flow from the conclusions and their feasibility
- **The degree to which the evaluation has met the needs** identified in the ToR of the CPE.

i For the complete EQA grid, and the associated explanatory note, see *Template 13*.

5.7 SUMMARY: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EVALUATION MANAGER AND THE EVALUATORS DURING ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The table below summarizes the responsibilities of the evaluation team and the evaluation manager throughout the analysis and reporting phase.

TABLE 15 *Summary of responsibilities of the evaluation manager and evaluators during analysis and reporting*

Main activities	Responsibilities	
	Evaluation team	Evaluation manager
Consolidation of the evaluation matrix	• Compile information from all individual matrices into one consolidated evaluation matrix.	• Assist evaluation team in the collection of remaining information; liaise with appropriate UNFPA staff and contacts as required.
Constructing answers to evaluation questions	• Review/filtering of data, analysis of evidence, development of evidence-based findings and answers to evaluation questions.	• Respond to any substantive questions from evaluation team (e.g., on structure of UNFPA/country office; factual questions on country programme), or refer questions to specific staff in country office, or to the reference group.
Formulation of conclusions and recommendations	• Develop cross-cutting judgements on the main factors for success or weaknesses of country programmes, on the basis of evaluation findings and answers to evaluation questions. • Develop concrete and operational recommendations (in consultation with UNFPA managers and staff).	• Facilitate exchange of evaluators with relevant stakeholders (reference group, other internal and external parties) on utility, practicability and feasibility of recommendations.
Writing final evaluation report (draft)	• Develop draft version of final evaluation report, in accordance with UNFPA outline, and quality criteria for CPE final reports.	• Respond to substantive questions of evaluation team or refer them to reference group. • Ensure that the draft final evaluation report is provided in line with outline (*Table 14*) and in accordance with the agreed deadline. • Check completeness of report, and basic quality (using the EQA grid), and forward to reference group for review.

Main activities	Responsibilities	
	Evaluation team	Evaluation manager
Commenting and review of final evaluation report (draft)	▪ N/A	• Solicit timely feedback from reference group and regional M&E adviser on draft final evaluation report. • Consolidate feedback from reference group with own feedback, and forward to evaluators. • Agree on deadline for delivery of final version of evaluation report.
Writing of final evaluation report (final)	• Review comments from evaluation manager and reference group. • Integrate relevant comments into evaluation report; produce final version of evaluation report. • Provide justification for comments from reference group and evaluation manager that were not integrated into evaluation report.	• Clarify comments from reference group and other parties, where necessary. • Ensure that final evaluation report (final version) is delivered according to agreed outline and deadlines. • Share report with regional M&E adviser and solicit his/her EQA. • After EQA, forward final evaluation report to reference group. • Prepare report for dissemination (see *Chapter 6* for more details)

5.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ASSESSMENT DURING REPORTING AND ANALYSIS

The quality of the final evaluation report is assessed on the basis of the EQA grid of the UNFPA Evaluation Office. The leader of the evaluation team should use this grid to quality assure the evaluation report during the analysis and reporting phase as well as to assess the quality of the draft final report prior to submitting it to the evaluation manager.

The quality assurance process then continues along the following stages:

- The evaluation manager performs quality assurance of the draft final report and also sends the draft final report to the regional M&E adviser for his/her quality assurance (using the Evaluation Office grid)

- Based on the assurance performed by the regional M&E adviser and the comments from the evaluation manager and those of the evaluation reference group, the evaluators produce the final evaluation report

- Once all comments are addressed and a final report has been produced, the evaluation manager sends the final evaluation report to the Evaluation Office

- The Evaluation Office performs a quality assessment of the final evaluation report, using the same EQA grid. The Evaluation Office EQA is published in the UNFPA evaluation database, along with the final evaluation report.

i   The EQA grid for the final evaluation report and an accompanying explanatory note can be found in *Template 13*.

Division of labour for quality assurance

Table 16 summarizes the responsibilities of the team leader (evaluation team) and the evaluation manager for quality assurance at the different stages of the evaluation process.

TABLE 16 *Summary of responsibilities of the team leader (evaluation team) and the evaluation manager*

Main activities	Responsibilities	
	Evaluation team leader	Evaluation manager
Design report	• Check contributions from team members for adherence to quality criteria and design report template.	• Comprehensive quality assurance of the draft design report, all chapters (see above).
Data collection	• Ensure that the team uses the evaluation matrix to produce appropriate interview guides and other data-collection tools. • Ensure a balanced selection of interviewees and other information sources. • Ensure that interview protocols are adequate; and that other records reflect the required level of detail.	• Review and check the selection of interviewees and information sources. • Provide preliminary feedback on the validity of hypotheses/preliminary answers to evaluation questions.
Final evaluation report	• Ensure adequate quality of contributions from all team members. • Draft the evaluation report in accordance with the quality criteria outlined in the EQA grid.	• Review quality of draft evaluation report against the EQA grid and explanatory note. • Share report with regional M&E adviser for quality assurance (using the EQA grid). • Finalize quality assurance of final report. • Send final report for quality assessment.