



Evaluation Guidance Note Series

UNIFEM Evaluation Unit

December 2009

Guidance Note on Carrying Out an Evaluability Assessment

1. Introduction

A purpose of this guidance is to introduce programme managers to the concept of evaluability assessment. Even if the programme does not undergo a formal evaluability assessment, the concept and ideas are important to understand what makes a programme evaluable and what the managers have to take into account before the evaluation process.

2. What is an evaluability assessment and when to do it?

The evaluability assessment is a systematic process that helps to identify whether a programme is in a condition to be evaluated, and whether an evaluation is justified, feasible and likely to provide useful information. Its purpose is not only to conclude if the evaluation is to be undertaken or not, but also to prepare the programme to generate all the necessary conditions to be evaluated.

It is advisable to undertake this type of assessment before any evaluation takes place, or as an initial stage of it in order to ensure that evaluations are useful. It can also be undertaken as part of the mid-term review of the programme in order to identify areas for improvement towards its evaluation. It is important to note that **evaluability assessment does not replace good programme design and monitoring functions**; rather, it is a tool that helps managers to verify whether these elements are in place and to fill any common gaps.

The evaluability assessment is a process that requires knowledge of and commitment to the programme. Depending on the depth of the assessment it needs to be undertaken fully by a professional evaluator, it could also be facilitated by him/her, or done by managers with strong RBM and evaluation skills.

3. Is programme evaluable?

The evaluability assessment provides recommendations on how the programme could be improved to make it ready for an evaluation, or it reaches conclusion that the programme is not ready for an evaluation. Frequently the shortcomings of the programmes are connected to three areas: programme design; availability of relevant information; and conduciveness of the context. The evaluability checklist below indicates what conditions should be met for an effective evaluation. These conditions usually constitute the key parameters for an evaluability assessment.

A Checklist for Programme Evaluability		
Evaluability parameters	Key questions	
Programme Design	Does the programme clearly define the problem that it aims to change?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are the gender inequality factors and women's needs clearly and explicitly identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Has the beneficiary population of the programme been determined?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the programme have clear theory of change/logic model?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the results framework of the programme coherently articulated? Do the outputs, outcomes and goal follow results chain logic?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are the objectives clear and realistic? Are they measurable (quantitatively or qualitatively)? Do they respond to the needs identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do proposed programme activities lead to goals and objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of information	Does the programme have capacity to provide data for evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the programme have SMART indicators on key areas of intervention?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the baseline information exist?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does the programme have a monitoring system to gather and systematize the information with defined responsibilities, sources and periodicity?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	What are the likely costs of such data collection and analysis (dollar costs in terms of the time of evaluation staff, programme managers and staff, and partners)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	What kind of information do the key stakeholders request?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	What kind of information on women's rights is accessible and how it can be collected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conduciveness of the context	Is the context conducive to conduct the evaluation, both external and internal to the programme, including the	<input type="checkbox"/>

	stakeholder's implication?	
	Are there resources available to undertake the evaluation such well trained staff, financial resources, equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do evaluation capacities and expertise exist to undertake the evaluation from a gender equality and human rights perspectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How is evaluability assessment performed?

An Evaluability assessment generally deploys qualitative data collection methods such as desk reviews, secondary data analysis, and interviews with key stakeholders. Depending on the time available and the magnitude of evaluation effort it can take days, weeks, or months. To keep the project moving, some literature proposes the following steps in an evaluability assessment¹:

1. Involve intended users of evaluation information.
2. Clarify the intended programme from the perspectives of policymakers, programme managers, those involved in service delivery, and other stakeholders.
3. Explore the programme reality, including the plausibility and measurability of programme goals.
4. Reach agreement on any needed changes in programme activities or goals.
5. Explore alternative evaluation designs.
6. Agree on evaluation priorities and intended uses of information of programme performance.

5. How can programme managers ensure that programmes are evaluable?

Programmes do not necessarily have the funds for both an evaluability assessment as well as an evaluation. However, it is still very important for programme managers to be aware of the key elements discussed above. Each UNIFEM programme should have a theory of change/model of how change is supposed to happen that is clearly structured. The results chain should be

¹ The key steps for conducting evaluability assessment are adopted from Wholey, J.S., Hatry, P.H and Newcomer (2004) Handbook of Practical Programme Evaluation. P 33- 41.

logical, coherent and clearly articulated. Programme managers have to think critically about what data can be collected and provide evidence that programme objectives are met in the complex and constantly evolving environment of the programme. Overall, the evaluability assessment should help programme managers to ensure that the programme meets the stakeholder needs, that the programme has the model and clearly defined results, that they collect relevant data and in consistent fashion, that they have adequate human and financial resources, that programme activities are implemented as designed, and that the context of the programme is conducive to evaluation.