



*Evaluation Guidance Note Series*

UNIFEM Evaluation Unit

December 2009

## **Guidance Note on Defining Evaluation Types and Modalities**

## Introduction

This guideline explains evaluation types and modalities of UNIFEM in order to help programme managers and partners make strategic decisions about evaluations. This guideline describes why evaluation is important for UNIFEM and how to decide an evaluation type, and then presents types of evaluations and modalities that are commonly conducted in UNIFEM.

### Why evaluation? Making a decision

Evaluation is critical for UNIFEM to progress towards advancing women's rights. Through the generation of "evidence" and objective information, evaluations enable managers and partners to make decisions and plan strategically. When evaluations are used effectively, they support to make a decision on programme improvements, knowledge generation and accountability.

### How to decide an evaluation type

The type of evaluation you undertake depends on **what you want to learn about the programme**. Don't worry about what type of evaluation you need or are doing – worry about **what you need to know to make the programme decisions you need to make**.

When designing your evaluation type, you should not design your evaluation simply by choosing which of the evaluation types you will use – you should design your evaluation type by carefully addressing the below considerations:

- ✓ For what purpose is the evaluation being done, i.e. what do you want to be able to decide as a result of the evaluation?
- ✓ Who are the audiences of the information from the evaluation, e.g. beneficiaries, donors, board, management, staff etc.
- ✓ What kinds of information are needed to make the decision you need to make and/or enlighten your intended audiences, e.g. information to really understand the process of the programme (its inputs, activities and outputs), beneficiaries who experience the service and products, strengths and weakness of the programme, benefits to beneficiaries or partners (outcomes), how the programme failed and why, etc.
- ✓ From what sources should the information be collected, e.g. beneficiaries, staff, partners, programmes documentation, etc.
- ✓ How can that information be collected in a reasonable fashion, e.g. questionnaires, interviews, examining documentation, observing beneficiaries, conducting focus groups among beneficiaries and partners, etc.
- ✓ When is the information needed (so, by when must be collected?)
- ✓ What resources are available to collect the information?

## What are UNIFEM evaluation types and modalities?

### Evaluation Types

There are two main types of evaluations in UNIFEM: **Corporate Evaluations** and **Decentralized Evaluations**.

- **Corporate Evaluations** are independent assessments managed by the Evaluation Unit at HQ and conducted by external evaluators. They analyze performance and contribution to critical areas for greater effectiveness on gender equality and women's empowerment and/or attribution in the achievement of corporate outputs. Priorities for corporate evaluations are decided by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Evaluation Unit and the Management Team at HQ.
- **Decentralized Evaluations** are managed or conducted by Geographical Sections, Thematic Units, Sub-Regional Offices or Operational Units at HQ. They can be external conducted by independent evaluators, or internal through a self-evaluation conducted by staff. They provide evidence of processes and results at the different programmatic level, i.e. institutional, thematic, regional, sub-regional or country-level.

Evaluations are further defined according to **the following three sub-types**<sup>1</sup>:

- **Scope of Analysis:** output evaluations, outcome evaluations or impact evaluations.
- **Timing:** ex-ante evaluations, mid-term evaluations, final evaluations, ex-post evaluations, evaluability assessments, formative evaluation or summative evaluation.
- **Use of Analysis:** institutional, policy, strategy, plan evaluations, cluster/thematic evaluations, programme/project evaluations or meta-evaluation.

### Evaluation Modalities

Both corporate and decentralized evaluations are further defined by **modalities related to who manages** and **who conducts the evaluation**:

- **Individual Evaluations** are conducted and managed by only one organization, i.e. UNIFEM.
- **Joint Evaluations** are co-managed by a UNIFEM Section/Unit/office and at least one other organization. This can be in the context of joint programme, including the UNDAF and /or Delivering as One UN programmes.
- **External Evaluations** are evaluations conducted by external specialists who are independent from the programme being evaluated. They provide a more objective analysis of the intervention and increase the credibility of the findings.
- **Self Evaluations/Assessments** are leading tools that act as periodic progress reviews to critically assess the achievements and constraints in implementing programme/project interventions. They are conducted by those responsible for implementation without the support of external specialists and are more often used in conjunction with smaller projects and/or as the first step in a large independent evaluation.

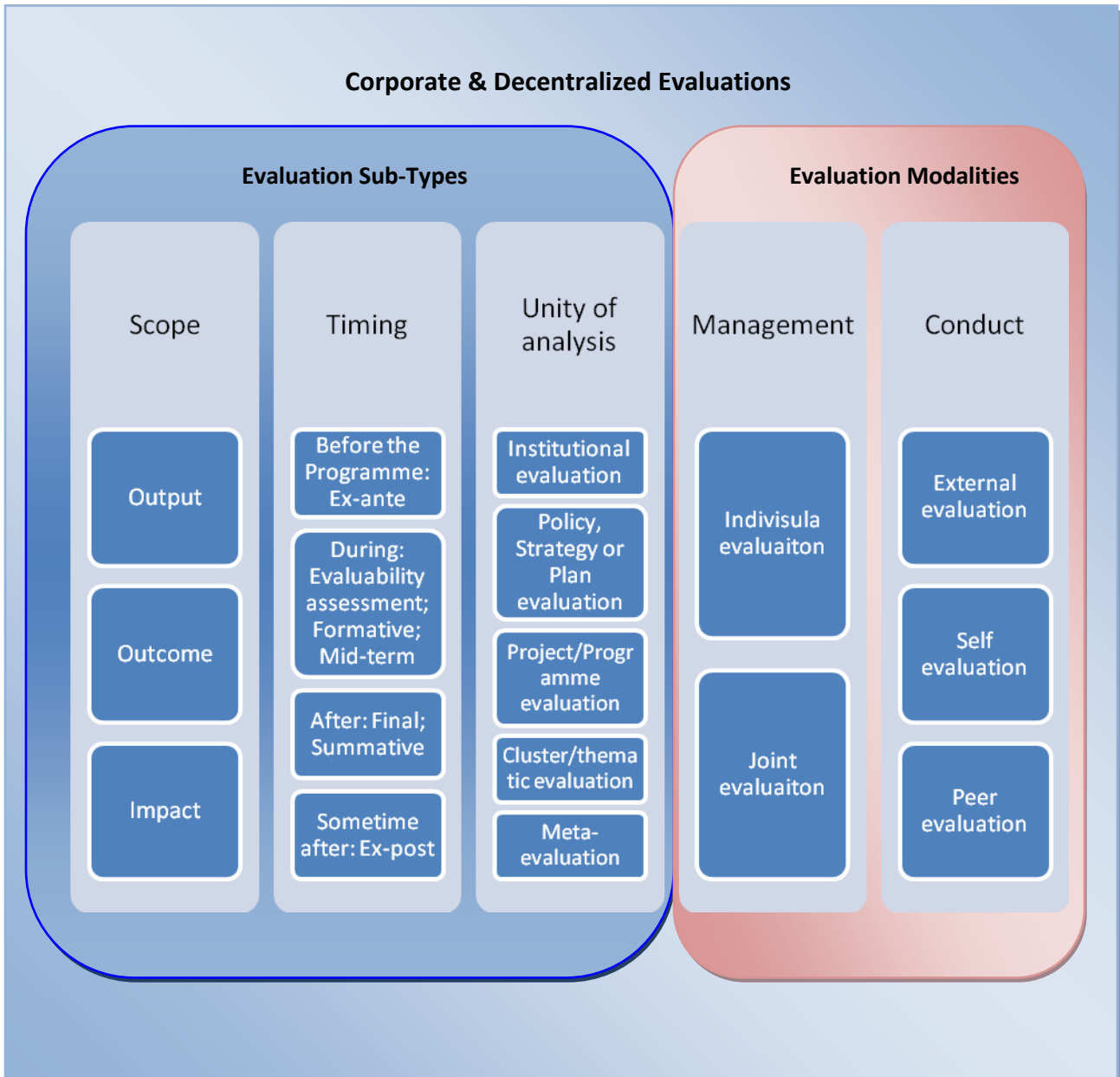
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<sup>1</sup> This is with the understanding that a single evaluation can be defined by one or more of the sub-types below.

- **Peer Evaluations** are conducted by teams composed of external evaluators and programme staff. Often formative, they combine internal understanding with external expertise.

UNIFEM’s evaluation types and modalities are summarized as below:

**UNIFEM’s evaluation types and modalities**



The UNIFEM Evaluation Unit is mandated to carry out independent evaluations. They are referred to as independent since the Evaluation Unit is independent from programme management and is not part of subsequent decision-making process regarding the subject of an

evaluation. The Evaluation Unit is also requested to conduct regional and global programme evaluations, and thematic evaluations in accordance with the programme of work.

Geographic Sections, Thematic Units, Sub-Regional Offices or Operational Unit at HQ carry out various types of decentralized evaluations and ensure that they provide adequate information about the overall performance of UNIFEM support in a given context. In doing so, they draw from a range of evaluation types that are based on units of their development assistance at the country, sub-regional, regional and global levels. These include UNDAF, country, sub-regional, regional or global programmes, outcomes, thematic areas and projects. **The most common decentralized evaluations in UNIFEM are project and outcome evaluations.**

**Evaluation Sub-Types – definitions, when to use and questions to address**

As mentioned above, when defining your evaluation type(s), information you collect through an evaluation needs to assist you to make the programme decisions you need to make.

In order to support managers and programme managers, the terms and definitions of the UNIFEM evaluation sub-types, when to use the type and questions to be addressed are explained as below.

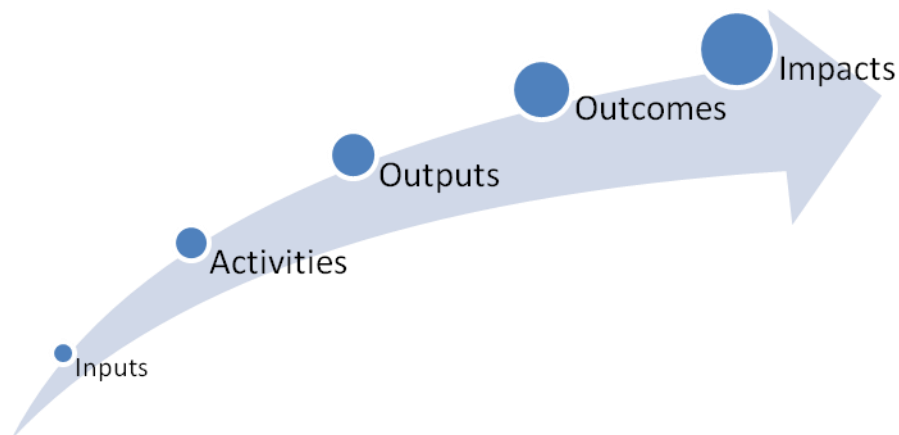
**Sub-Type 1: Categorizing evaluation by Scope**

<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>When used</b>	<b>Questions addressed</b>
Output evaluation	An evaluation which assesses goods and services that are results of the inputs of a development intervention.	Most useful when preceded by formative evaluation.	Were deliveries of services provided in a timely manner?
Outcome evaluation	An evaluation which is focused on the change brought about (mostly behavioral change) by the programme or intervention to be evaluated or its results regarding the intended beneficiaries.	Immediately following the end of an activity or intervention cycle – used to determine the programme’s short term influence.	Did the programme achieve its results? Did the programme generate unintended results? Did the programme make a difference?
Impact evaluation	An evaluation that focuses on the broad, long-term impact or effects, whether intended or unintended, of a programme or intervention. It is usually done some time after the programme or intervention has been completed.	After a programme has concluded – at least a year after activities have ended.	What is the effect of programme on outcomes? How much better off are beneficiaries because of the intervention? How would outcomes change under alternative programme design?

			Who have benefited and who have not? Does the programme impact people differently? (e.g. women, men, poor, minorities)
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Evaluation type by Scope can be explained in a **logic model** as below:

### Evaluation Sub-Type 1 Evaluation by Scope in a logic model



### Sub-Type 2: Categorizing evaluation by Timing

Evaluations defined by level of results can be further defined by the timing. When considering an evaluation by Timing, the below six types of evaluations can be conducted.

UNIFEM Programme Cycle	Terms	Definition	When to use	Questions addressed
Formulation	Ex-ante evaluation <sup>2</sup>	An evaluation which seeks to predict the likelihood of	Formulation – helps test the logic used in	Will the activities meet the needs? Can

<sup>2</sup> Ex-ante evaluation is a tool for improving the quality of new or renewed programme. Therefore, it is important to start ex ante evaluation work early on in the process when options for programme formulation are still open. Ex-ante evaluation should be done to analyze the programme logic and potential effects before the programme is actually implemented. It will assess the programme formulation and how the programme will effect.

		achieving the intended results of a programme, intervention or activity to be evaluated.	planning.	the programme be improved before implemented?
Before or during implementation phase	Evaluability assessment <sup>3</sup>	An evaluation which helps to identify whether a programme can be meaningfully evaluated, i.e. whether the necessary conditions are present to assess key aspects of the programme's processes and results.	Before any evaluation takes place, or as an initial stage of it in order to ensure that evaluations are useful and to define what types of evaluations would be feasible.	Are the gender inequality factors and women's needs clearly and explicitly identified? Are the objectives clear and realistic? Are they measurable (quantitatively or qualitatively)? Do they respond to the needs identified?
Evaluation phase	Formative evaluation <sup>4</sup>	An evaluation which is designed to provide some early insights into a programme or intervention to inform management and staff about the components that are working and those that need to be changed in order to achieve the intended objectives.	During implementation – used to understand what is occurring in service delivery. The focus is on the process.	What is actually happening compared to what was planned? How are interventions related to outcomes?
	Mid-term evaluation <sup>5</sup>	An evaluation conducted half-way through the lifecycle of the programme or intervention to be evaluated.	During the implementation – used to understand how a programme works, how does	Is the programme working well? Should it be revised in any way? Is the

<sup>3</sup> Evaluation Guideline Notes Series, No.4 Carrying out an evaluability assessment

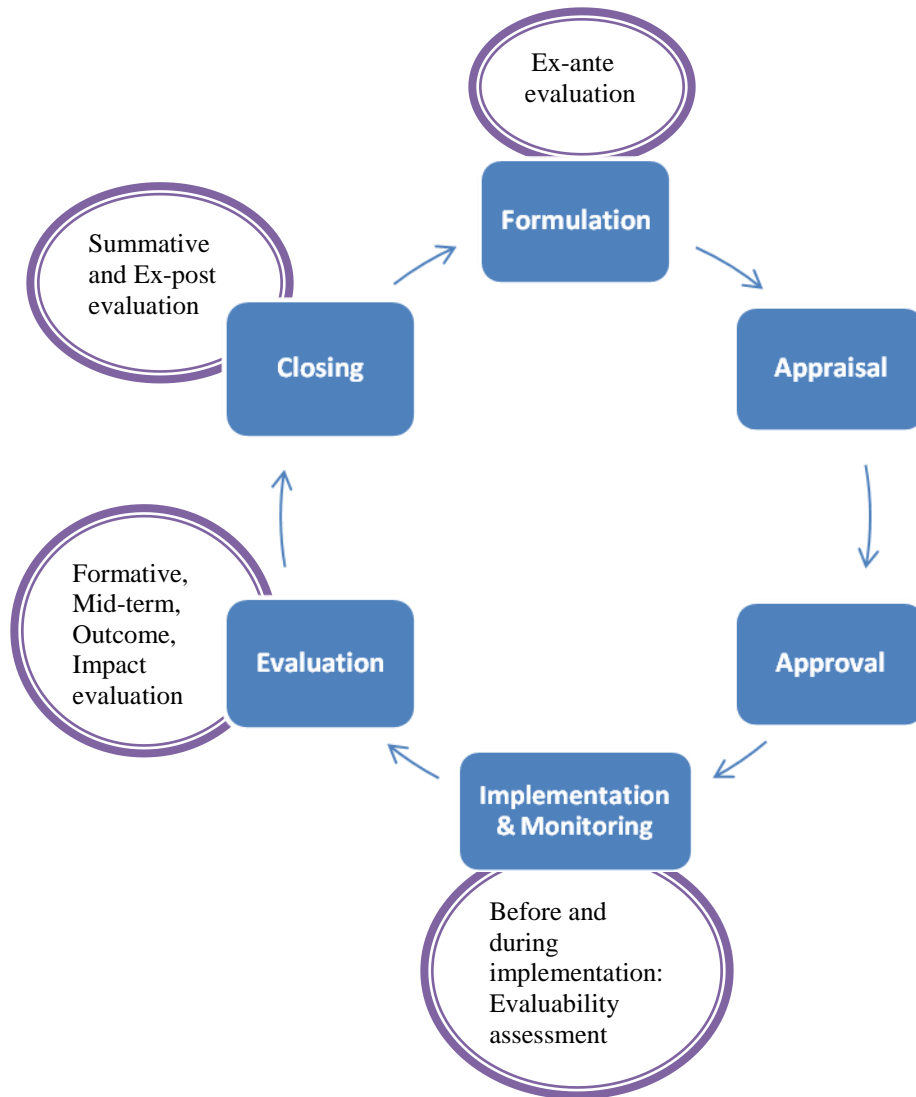
<sup>4</sup> In practice, “formative evaluation” and “mid-term evaluation” can happen at the same time – in fact, this is commonly the case.

<sup>5</sup> Same as footnote 3.

			it produce the results that it does. It is useful if the program is long-standing and have changed over the years. The focus is on the process.	programme effectively reaching all the targeted beneficiaries?
Closing phase	Final evaluation	An evaluation which usually is conducted at the end of implementation.	Immediately following the end of an activity or intervention cycle –used to determine the programme’s short term influence. The focus is on the outcome.	Is the programme achieving the predicted changes? Is the programme achieving any stated objectives?
Closing phase	Summative and Ex-post evaluation	An evaluation which usually is conducted some time after the programme or intervention has been completed or fully implemented. Generally its purpose is to study how well the intervention served its aims, and to draw lessons for similar interventions in the future.	After a programme has concluded – at least a year after activities have ended.	Is the programme making a difference over the long run? What are the results of the programme, both intended and unintended? Have the immediate effects been sustained over time?

These evaluation types by Timing can be shown in **UNIFEM Programme Cycle** as below:

### Evaluation Sub-Type 2 Evaluation by Timing in UNIFEM Programme Cycle



### Sub-Type 3: Categorizing evaluation by Unit of Analysis

UNIFEM support and services consist of programmes, projects, partnerships and “soft assistance” such as policy, advocacy, coordinating support, which may or may not be delivered within a programme framework. Evaluation categorized by Unit of Analysis will assist to examine results which are outside of the programme framework.

<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Institutional evaluation	An evaluation of an organization's or other institution's capacity for innovation and change. It involved examining its decision-making processes and organizational structures and institutional capacities.
Policy, Strategy or Plan evaluation	The evaluation of policies and procedures. It analyzes the design, coherence and long term impact of a set of programmes within a particular framework.
Project/programme evaluation	The evaluation of a programme or project <sup>6</sup> .
Cluster/thematic evaluations	An evaluation which assesses a specific theme and encompasses a group of projects or programmes that support that particular theme.
Meta-evaluation	Two processes are often referred to as meta-evaluation: (1) the assessment by a third evaluator of evaluation reports prepared by other evaluators; and (2) the assessment of the performance of systems and processes of evaluation.

### Evaluation Modalities – definitions and how to use

Both corporate and decentralized evaluations and all sub-evaluation types are defined by evaluation modalities related to who manages and who conducts the evaluation.

#### Sub-category 1: Categorizing evaluation modalities by Management

Evaluation Modalities are categorized by who manages the evaluation. Management includes three steps, preparation, conduct, and using the evaluation.

UNIFEM has two evaluation modalities: Individual evaluation and Joint evaluation. The common UNIFEM evaluation is individual evaluations, however, joint evaluations are becoming important in the UN context.

<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Individual evaluation	An evaluation which is conducted and managed by only one organization, i.e. UNIFEM.
Joint evaluation	An evaluation which is co-managed by a UNIFEM Section/Unit/office and at least one other organization. This can be in the context of joint programme, including the UNDAF and /or Delivering as One UN programmes.

Joint evaluation is one modality of carrying out an evaluation to which different partners contribute. Any evaluation can be conducted as a joint evaluation. There are various degrees of "jointness" depending on the extent to which individual partners cooperate in the evaluation process, merge their evaluation resources and combine their evaluation reporting.

<sup>6</sup> Please see category 1 (categorizing evaluation by Scope) and 2 (categorizing evaluation by Timing).

## Benefits and challenges in joint evaluations

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthened evaluation harmonization and capacity development: shared good practice, innovative and improved programming.</li> <li>▪ Reduced transaction costs and management burden (mainly for the partner country).</li> <li>▪ Improved donor coordination and alignment: increase donor understanding of government strategies, priorities and procedures.</li> <li>▪ Objectivity and legitimacy: enables greater diversity of perspectives and a consensus must be reached.</li> <li>▪ Broader scope: able to tackle more complex and wider reading subject areas.</li> <li>▪ Enhanced ownership: by providing opportunities for bringing together wider stakeholders, learning from evaluation becomes broader than simply for organizational learning and also encompasses advancement of knowledge in development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More difficult to subjects to evaluate (complex, many partners, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Processes for coordinating large number of participants may be difficult to reach consensus. Lower-level of commitment by some participants.</li> </ul>

### Sub-category 2: Categorizing evaluation modalities by Conduct

Evaluation Modalities are categorized by who conducts the evaluation. Conducting evaluation means drafting an inception report, collecting and analyzing data and drafting a final evaluation report.

Terms	Definition	How to use
External evaluation	An evaluation which is conducted by external specialists who are independent from the programme being evaluated.	They provide a more objective analysis of the intervention and increase the credibility of the findings.
Self evaluation	An evaluation which acts as periodic progress reviews to critically assess the achievements and constraints in implementing programme/project	They are conducted by those responsible for implementation without the support of external specialists

	interventions.	and are more often used in conjunction with smaller projects and/or as the first step in a large independent evaluation.
Peer evaluation	An evaluation which is conducted by teams composed of external evaluators and programme staff.	Often formative, they combine internal understanding with external expertise.

Evaluation Modalities by Conducts depends on the purpose of the evaluation. The common UNIFEM evaluation is an external evaluation.

Self-evaluation is process through which a programme or organization seeks to understand and assess the value of its own work. Self evaluation has 5 distinctive features:

- It is initiated from the beginning of the activity.
- It is an ongoing process of review – responding to change.
- It provides a greater sense of ownership of the evaluation process.
- It is an empowering process – developing skills and reflective learning.
- It involved stakeholders – providing enhanced participation and feedback.

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Resources that informed the preparation of the guideline:

1. Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results (2002) Evaluation Office. UNDP.
2. Results based management in UNIFEM: Essential Guide (2005) UNIFEM
3. Standards for Evaluation in the UN system (2005) United Nations Evaluation Group .
4. Stufflebeam, D.L. and Shinkfield. A.J. (2007) *Evaluation Theory, Models and Applications*. John Willey&Sons.
5. Synthesis and Mapping Exercise: existing guidance for integrating a human rights and gender equality perspective in evaluations (2008) United Nations Evaluation Group.
6. UNDP guidelines for the Terms of Reference (2007) UNDP.
7. UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results (2009).
8. Evaluation Technical Notes (2002). UNICEF Evaluation Office.
9. UNESCO guidelines for Developing the Terms of Reference for Internal and External Evaluations (2007) Internal Oversight Service. UNESCO.
10. Waldorf, L. , Arab, C. and Guruswamy, M. (2007) *CEDAW and the Human Rights Based approach to Programming: a UNIFEM Guide*. UNIFEM.
11. Draft UNIFEM Evaluation Policy
12. Evaluation Guideline Notes Series, No.4 Carrying out an evaluability assessment
13. Basic Guide to Program Evaluation, Free Management Library
14. Community Connections, Helping Cross Community Groups Self-Evaluate