

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

MDG-F Joint Programme Final Evaluations

1. Is there a roster we can use to find highly rated consultants?

We encourage joint programmes to hire national consultants, provided they meet MDG-F qualification requirements outlined in the final evaluation TORs and have demonstrated high quality of work. To this end, joint programme teams may undertake an open recruitment process or invite applications through the implementing agencies' local rosters.

Where qualified national candidates are not available, joint programme teams also have the option of recruiting international ones. In view of identifying candidates with relevant qualifications, the MDG-F recommends using its evaluators' roster or that of an implementing UN agency. The Secretariat has shared a list of recommended consultants with joint programme teams. This list is based on positive reviews of consultants' previous evaluations of the Fund's joint programmes.

The MDG-F roster is actually a UNDP roster, as the Secretariat is administratively located within UNDP. However, this roster is separate from the UNDP evaluators' roster, which has been developed by the UNDP Evaluation Office. All UNDP staff members can access the UNDP roster as an additional resource. Staff from other UN agencies should be able to access rosters established by their respective agencies.

2. Is it possible to add new consultants to the MDG-F roster?

No, we cannot add new consultants to the MDG-F roster. The MDG-F roster is the product of an open selection process, which is now closed. Nevertheless, the joint programmes have the option of hiring a consultant from outside the MDG-F roster, by following their own procurement processes.

3. What is the process for hiring a consultant?

As each joint programme evaluation is conducted by a different agency, the process for recruiting a consultant will be based on the procurement rules of the respective agency. In general, you will need to take into consideration the minimum number of consultants you need to contact for the procurement process as well as the required technical and financial criteria to be considered, according to agency rules.

4. Are there any requirements for the selection criteria for consultants, or the configuration of the selection panel if hiring from the MDG-F roster?

Recommended selection criteria for consultants are included in the final evaluation TORs (*Section 12: Qualifications of the Consultant*). In addition, the selected candidate should be independent, meaning that s/he has not had any previous

engagements with the object of study (the joint programme) in the design or implementation process. Consultants who have previously evaluated the joint programme are suitable (and even preferred, if rated highly).

The actual configuration of the selection panel is up to each joint programme team.

5. In the "Evaluation Process Timeline" of the final evaluation TORs, does the suggested number of days refer to actual working days or the overall evaluation timeframe?

The timeline included in the generic TORs provides an overall time-frame for the evaluation process. This is generally estimated at 3 months, including the evaluation quality assurance and feedback process. By contrast, the total number of working days needed for the consultant to complete the evaluation deliverables is estimated at 38-46 days (the 20 days estimated for the evaluation mission refer to working days only, not calendar days).

Both the evaluation time-line and the estimated number of working days should be included in the joint programme evaluation TORs and the consultant's contract.

6. Should the consultant's bid indicate the total period of the evaluation process or the amount of working days?

In their economic bid, consultants should indicate both, the evaluation time-frame or calendar as well as the total number of working days, but should be clear about the distinction between both. The consultant's bid should be based on their daily rate, calculated according to the estimated number of working days.

7. What is the best time to start the evaluation?

The joint programme should start planning and designing the final evaluation 6 months before the end date of the programme. The evaluation itself takes 3 months to complete. The final evaluation should be finished before closure of the programme.

8. Is it possible to start the final evaluation process near/after the programme closure date?

At the latest, you should plan to conduct the final evaluation during the last three months of programme implementation – setting aside prior time for the evaluation design.

Note that all contracts must be completed by the end date of the joint programme, although outstanding payments may be processed afterwards. Please plan accordingly to this timeline.

HANDS-ON TIPS FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Phase I: Design

- The evaluation is commissioned by the Resident Coordinator's (RC) office. The **RC office should lead the evaluation process from the beginning in order to ensure full independence of the exercise**. The RC office is responsible for convening the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) meetings and should continuously follow up on the implementation process, including hiring consultants, preparing the evaluation mission and reviewing the draft report.
- Use and adapt the generic TORs provided by the Secretariat. Your programme is part of the MDG-F global portfolio of 130 joint programmes that, together, are making a contribution to the achievement of the MDGs and the Fund's respective goals at the thematic level. **Adapting the generic TORs shared by the Fund is easier than developing a new one and will provide important common ground for drawing cross-cutting conclusions from various different programmes.**
- **Secure enough financial resources for the final evaluation.** The final evaluation is not another tick of the box on a "to do list". Rather, it is the basis upon which the overall achievements of the joint programme, as well as its prospects for sustainability, will be assessed. **Each joint programme final evaluation will also serve as input into the thematic and global evaluations of the MDG-F.**
- **Don't take the risk of hiring under-qualified or poorly rated consultants.** Consultants are the cornerstone of a good evaluation; aim to recruit the best even if they are more expensive. Inquire about the candidate's past work and experience, ask for references, and read their past evaluation work. If hiring an international consultant to conduct the evaluation, we suggest also hiring a national consultant to assist him/her.

Phase II: Implementation

- **Allow enough time for consultants to work and find hard evidence on the joint programme's development results.** With a budget of up to 3% for M&E, and after 3-4 years of continuous monitoring, there should be some good data to be shared.
- **Allocate enough time and resources for the ERG to conduct a thorough technical review** of the draft report. Be systematic and apply the UNEG standards for evaluation¹ in the review process.

Phase III: Dissemination

- **The RC office should develop a dissemination and communication strategy in the planning phase of the evaluation**, to be incorporated into the adapted TORs. Use the evaluation to showcase your programme's achievements -- celebrate the good news and use the not-so-good news to draw lessons for the future. Define additional intended uses of the evaluation. Evaluations, for instance, can be used to raise new funds or advocate for relevant causes. They can also serve as the basis for further research and analysis or as a model for the design of policy and programmes.
- Be creative about developing dissemination and communication tools: draft one-page summaries of key findings and recommendations, organize an event, write a PowerPoint presentation, and use the internet and social media.
- **However, in order to be able to do everything mentioned above, you will need to have a good evaluation report, so work hard to get the best quality possible; it is in your best interest.**

¹ See UNEG Guidance Document "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System", UNEG/FN/Standards(2005).
http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22