



UNEG

United Nations Evaluation Group

Evaluation Competency Framework



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SECTION 1. BACKGROUND

Purpose of the document

This document provides revised evaluation competencies for the United Nations system. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) originally published the evaluation competencies in 2008 for heads of evaluation departments and evaluators.¹ These revisions reflect the substantial consensus that evaluation competencies are important not only for evaluators and evaluation unit heads, but also for evaluation commissioners and users. This guidance document recognizes that evaluations are commissioned by a wide range of stakeholders at different levels and in varying contexts, including a governing body/donor that commissions an evaluation to an independent evaluation office; an evaluation officer (not necessarily independent) that commissions an evaluation to an external evaluator; and a programme manager that commissions an evaluation to an external evaluator.

Further, this guidance document recognizes that evaluation users consist of a broad range of stakeholders and stakeholder groups. Today, the evaluation community aims for evaluations to be widely used by, for example, decision makers, parliamentarians and civil society leaders in programme countries. While this guidance document does not highlight competencies that are specific to users, it nonetheless recognizes the importance of competencies related to evaluation use, such as ability to engage in evaluative thinking.

Efforts have been made to simplify the evaluation competencies, while ensuring that they remain sufficiently specific so that they can be clearly applied within the United Nations system. This document provides potential usages of the competencies (with annexed examples for reference) and common and specific competencies for evaluators, evaluation unit heads and commissioners of evaluation. The competencies are intended to ensure that United Nations agencies have skilled evaluation staff who are able to conduct or manage high-quality evaluations, particularly those concerned with progress made on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations evaluation competencies were revised in light of the changing global context and in light of the revised United Nations Norms and Standards for Evaluation.² Furthermore, the revised United Nations competencies mutually reinforce the newly adopted United Nations norm on professionalism:³

Evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. Professionalism should contribute towards the credibility of evaluators, evaluation managers and evaluation heads, as well as the evaluation function. Key aspects include access to knowledge; education and training; adherence to ethics and to these norms and standards; utilization of evaluation competencies; and recognition of knowledge, skills and experience. This should be supported by an enabling environment, institutional structures and adequate resources.

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- 1 In 2005, UNEG commissioned its Evaluation Capacities Development Task Force to prepare a competency profile of evaluators within the United Nations system.
 - 2 United Nations Evaluation Group, 2016, United Nations Norms and Standards for Evaluation. Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/2016-Norms-and-Standards>
 - 3 Ibid., Norm 10: Professionalism.

What are competencies?

Competencies can be defined as “clusters of related knowledge, skills, abilities and other requirements necessary for successful job performance.”⁴ Every position has its own set of competencies. In identifying competency requirements, it is important that the degree of mastery is related to the level of position in terms of level of responsibility, complexity and autonomy (i.e. it is unrealistic to expect junior and senior officers to possess the same level of competencies).

Approach taken in revising the competencies

This revision of the competencies⁵ incorporates ideas that emerged from the UNEG ‘Professionalization of Evaluation Concept Paper’, a review of existing competencies frameworks (including those developed by the American Evaluation Association, Canadian Evaluation Society, Department for International Development, European Evaluation Society, International Development Evaluation Association, International Labour Organization, Japan Evaluation Society, South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association, Thailand Evaluation Network and UNEG), and the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation (as revised in 2016). The revision provides competencies that are common for evaluators, evaluation unit heads and commissioners of evaluation. This revision includes competencies that are required for the evaluation function and does not cover competencies that are common to other functions within the United Nations system.

The context

Recognizing that evaluation is essential for advancing development and enabling change in the context of the SDGs, and further recognizing the need for evaluation to distinguish itself as a profession, it is imperative that UNEG continues to develop national evaluation capacities and to strengthen the strategies and mechanisms of evaluation in the United Nations system.

The UNEG professionalization stream of work has several goals, including making a stronger difference in beneficiaries’ lives; producing high-quality evaluations; fostering competent evaluators, commissioners, managers and users of evaluation; and instilling credible and distinct evaluation functions in the United Nations system.

Consideration of all of the above contextual factors provides the rationale for the revision of the evaluation competencies for the United Nations system.

In addition, conducting high-quality evaluations involves a broad range of stakeholders (evaluators, commissioners, evaluation unit heads and users). While there is some overlap in the competencies required, there are also unique aspects, depending on the role. Definitions of these roles are attached in Annex A.

⁴ United Nations Evaluation Group, 2008, Core Competencies for Evaluators of the United Nations System, p.5.

⁵ In 2014, UNEG commissioned its Professionalization of Evaluation Group to revise the competency framework and to conceptualize a professionalization framework.

SECTION 2: POTENTIAL USAGES OF EVALUATION COMPETENCIES

Recruitment and hiring

In job postings, recruiting and hiring, the competencies should be used to form the core of job descriptions for evaluators and should be included as part of job descriptions for heads of evaluation units, commissioners of evaluations and, to a lesser extent, users of evaluation internal to the organization such as programme staff (see Annex B for examples of job descriptions that incorporate the competencies). Job descriptions may be tailored to fit specific circumstances, but should always reflect the expectations related to the intent of the competencies.

Learning and development

Performance development tools are used to assess the strengths of individuals and to determine areas that need development. The competencies should form the basis of performance development tools that managers use to assess the learning and development needs of evaluators. The competencies should also be included as part of performance development tools for evaluation managers, commissioners and, to a lesser extent, evaluation users internal to the organization (see Annex C for an example of a performance development tool for evaluators).

Promotion and career advancement

Promotion and career advancement are a means to recognize and appreciate competencies. Individuals and their managers can apply the competencies in order to assess their potential for career advancement. Meeting expectations for most competencies and exceeding expectations for some others indicate that a person is likely ready for a promotion within the evaluation field.

Formal recognition of competencies in an individual

Formal recognition of evaluation competencies can be done through a peer review process, credentialing or licensing. In a peer review process, a panel of peers provides a formal recognition of competencies. This is particularly useful for independent consultants who do not have regular performance development reviews. Credentialing, a more formal process, involves review by a panel of expert evaluators. It provides a designation of ‘credentialed evaluator’ and requires ongoing professional development activities to maintain the designation. Licensing is the most stringent approach, as it requires supporting legislation and a regulatory body. A primary purpose of licensing is to protect the users of a service from incompetent practitioners, for which formal complaints and review processes exist.

Currently, there is no central United Nations mechanism for formal recognition of evaluation competencies. A number of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation have developed formal mechanisms, which are at varying levels of implementation (e.g. the Canadian Evaluation Society, European Evaluation Society, Japanese Evaluation Society, Italian Association for Evaluators and the Thailand Evaluation Network); some voluntary organizations are in the process of developing competency frameworks (e.g. the International Development Evaluation Association and the South

African Monitoring and Evaluation Association). The International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation is currently exploring the possibility for the development of global competencies and a global credentialing system.

United Nations agencies could support these efforts by encouraging evaluators to obtain such credentials through the voluntary organization for professional evaluation with which they are affiliated (if such a process exists). Through this revision, UNEG is strengthening its contribution to the development of global competencies and participating with the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation Professionalization Working Group. Due to global inconsistencies in the availability of such formal processes, credentialing should not be a requirement for hiring evaluators or engaging evaluation consultants within the United Nations System. However, if such credentialing becomes globally available, consideration should be given to making it a requirement for evaluators who are senior and intermediate officers, with more junior officers being required to obtain it within three to four years of employment.



SECTION 3: EVALUATION COMPETENCIES

This section is organized by competency, indicating expectations for different levels of evaluators, evaluation unit heads and commissioners. The competencies are intentionally stated as abilities and skills and not as a list of actions or tasks.

It is based on the assumption that evaluators must have the requisite professional foundations and technical skills in order to ensure that evaluation design and processes are consistent with ethical requirements, that evaluations meet the appropriate UNEG norms and standards, that evaluations are managed efficiently and that findings are communicated clearly in a manner appropriate for the audience.

However, although evaluators have the greatest responsibility for the quality and credibility of evaluations, evaluation unit heads and commissioners also play key roles. The roles of evaluation users are also important, as users are involved in identifying the need for evaluations, securing finances and in promoting the use of information from evaluations into evidence-based programming in order to improve achievements towards the SDGs.

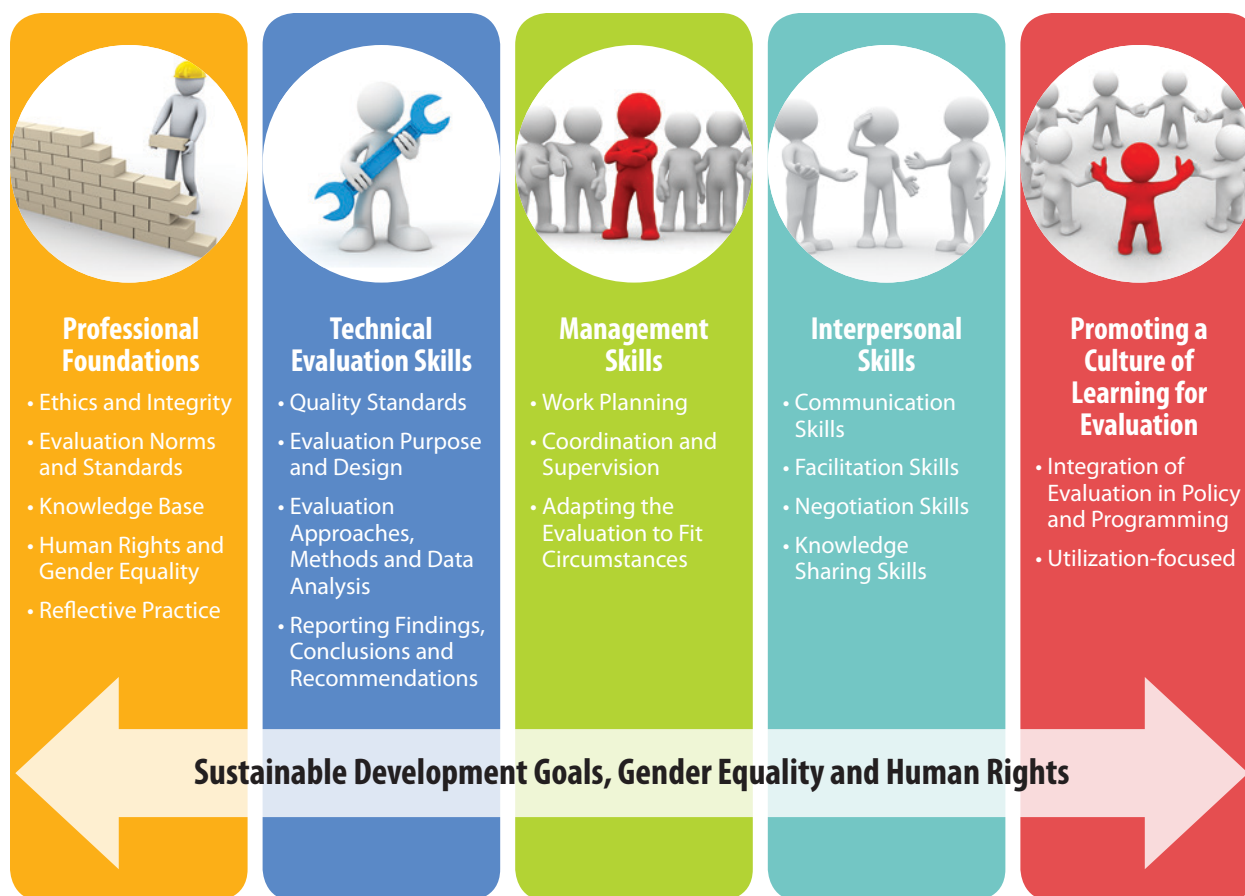
However, it is the evaluators who must have the professional foundations and technical skills to ensure that evaluation design and processes are consistent with ethical requirements, meet standards and are managed efficiently. Evaluators must also have the professional foundations and technical skills to ensure that evaluation findings are communicated clearly in a manner appropriate for the audience.

The competencies framework

The competencies framework assumes that the primary function of an evaluator is to produce high-quality evaluations that make a difference. It also assumes that evaluation unit heads and commissioners of evaluations contribute to these evaluations. The diagram on the following page provides an overview of the evaluation core competencies, keeping in mind that evaluators, as professionals, have the greatest responsibility to making the difference.

The following pages provide the competencies associated with the five domains:

- Professional Foundations
- Technical Evaluation Skills
- Management Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Promoting a Culture of Learning for Evaluation



Skill levels

Although United Nations agencies use a variety of terms to describe different levels of evaluator positions, this competency framework uses ‘Senior Officer’, ‘Intermediate Officer’ and ‘Officer’ to indicate three distinct levels with different expectations depending on level of responsibility, complexity and autonomy. Required competencies for Evaluation Unit Heads and Commissioners are also included. Each United Nations agency will need to determine its equivalents for each level.

At an overall level, definitions of the different levels used in this document are:

Senior Officer

- Possesses prolonged and extensive knowledge and experience through the practice of a particular competency;
- Demonstrates high levels of autonomy and integrity;
- Has demonstrated experience to work in highly complex contexts and to take a lead role;
- Is widely recognized across the organization as a source of knowledge and skills of the competency; and
- Acts as a mentor, adviser and role model for the competency.

Intermediate Officer

- Has thorough knowledge and experience of a competency gained through training and practice;
- Exercises independent judgement and appropriate application of the competency;
- Applies the competency consistently across the organization to facilitate desired outcomes; and
- Shares knowledge of the competency with others.

Officer

- Has knowledge of the competency through education, training and practice; and
- Is capable in using the competency consistently, but may require advice and guidance on using advanced aspects of the competency to deal with more complex situations and contexts.

TABLE 1: PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Professional foundations are those competencies that are fundamental to evaluation practice. They include ethics, standards, a knowledge base and reflective practice. Everyone involved in the evaluation process should be familiar with the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation. Evaluators are, however, responsible for in-depth knowledge of the standards and putting them into practice.

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Ethics and integrity of evaluation processes			
Has knowledge about ethical guidelines, is able to understand the ethical guidelines' implications for evaluation processes and communicates this to others Is able to ensure the protection and confidentiality of evaluation subjects, including that the evaluation will not place the individual/organization in harm	Has excellent, up-to-date knowledge and is able to consistently apply this knowledge in all evaluations Is able to ensure that ethics are incorporated into evaluation processes and is able to uphold ethics under pressure	Has solid knowledge of evaluation ethics and is able to apply this knowledge in most evaluations Is able to ensure that ethics are incorporated into evaluation processes	Has knowledge of evaluation ethics and is able to apply this in simple evaluations
Is able to promote the independence and impartiality of evaluation processes	Is able to maintain independence and impartiality under pressure	Is able to maintain independence and impartiality under pressure	Is able to identify challenges to independence and impartiality and seek appropriate advice
Evaluation norms and standards			
Has knowledge about the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation and seeks to apply them consistently, ensuring that the appropriate standards are incorporated into evaluation design and implementation	Has excellent knowledge about UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, can communicate the essentials of the norms and standards to others and applies them consistently in all settings	Has solid knowledge about UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation and applies them appropriately, seeking advice where appropriate	Is able to support the incorporation of the appropriate UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation into evaluation design and implementation

TABLE 1: PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATIONS (continued)

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Knowledge base of evaluation			
Has a solid understanding of evaluation theory and practice in the context of United Nations evaluation practice, including the aims, processes and intended results of evaluation	Is able to critically analyse current issues in evaluation practice and theory	Understands current issues in evaluation practice and theory	Is aware of current issues in evaluation practice and theory
Has knowledge of humanitarian and global geopolitical issues as they relate to the evaluation mandate	Has excellent understanding of humanitarian and global geopolitical issues as they relate to the evaluation mandate	Has solid understanding of humanitarian and global geopolitical issues as they relate to the evaluation mandate	Has understanding of humanitarian and global geopolitical issues as they relate to the evaluation mandate
Is able to understand the issues concerning the evaluability of the SDGs	Understands and applies the parameters of social science research in complex evaluations	Understands and applies the parameters of social science research in moderately complex evaluations	Understands and applies the parameters of social science research in simple evaluations
Integration of human rights and gender perspectives into evaluation			
Has knowledge of United Nations and own agency's policies related to human rights and gender equality and consistently uses methods and approaches that support human rights and gender equality, including analysis of underlying inequalities	Has excellent knowledge of human rights and gender equality and is able to ensure that evaluation design, questions and analysis incorporate this knowledge into all settings	Has solid knowledge of human rights and gender equality and is able to ensure that evaluation design, questions and analysis incorporate this knowledge in most settings	Has knowledge of human rights and gender equality and is able to ensure that evaluation design, questions and analysis incorporate this knowledge in simple settings
Consistently integrates human rights and gender perspectives into evaluation processes, from planning to communication and use of results	Consistently integrates human rights and gender perspectives into evaluation processes in all settings	Consistently integrates human rights and gender perspectives into evaluation processes in most settings	Consistently integrates human rights and gender perspectives into evaluation processes in simple settings
Reflective practices			
Aware of and acts on own knowledge, skills and disposition and reflects on competencies and areas for growth	Pursues professional networks and self-development in order to enhance competencies and skills	Pursues professional networks and self-development in order to enhance competencies and skills	Proactively seeks assistance in developing knowledge, skills and disposition and reflects on competencies and areas for growth
Supports the professional development of other evaluators	Provides mentoring to evaluators, drawing on own experiences and self-reflection Contributes to global evaluation practices, including through generation of knowledge and guidance for UNEG	Provides peer support and mentoring to evaluators, drawing on own experience and self-reflection	Pursues mentoring opportunities in order to develop own competencies and skills

Competencies for Evaluation Unit Heads

Evaluation Unit Heads should have the same level of professional foundational knowledge as that of a Senior Officer. Evaluation Unit Heads are responsible for ensuring the consistent application of these fundamental competencies to evaluation practices through sound leadership and mentoring. In addition, they should be able to speak to the importance of foundational knowledge at senior management and executive meetings.

Competencies for Evaluation Commissioners

Evaluation Commissioners should have solid knowledge of the professional foundational competencies. Evaluation Commissioners need to have sufficient knowledge of ethics, norms and standards, human rights and gender equality in order to assess the knowledge base of evaluators being commissioned to undertake an evaluation. Evaluation Commissioners should also be able to take a leadership role in maintaining the integrity of the selection process when engaging evaluators.

TABLE 2: TECHNICAL EVALUATION SKILLS

Technical evaluation skills are fundamental to ensuring high-quality evaluations that are relevant, reliable and that support the translation and use of evaluation findings to inform and influence future programme and policy decisions. Technical evaluation skills include: knowledge on identifying evaluation needs and developing evaluation designs with focused evaluation questions; solid knowledge on evaluation approaches and methods; and the analytical skills to interpret findings and to formulate conclusions and, if relevant, recommendations that are clearly related to the findings and conclusions.

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Identifying evaluation needs			
Is able to identify evaluation needs from various stakeholders and has knowledge of the importance of understanding contextual factors and their possible implications on the evaluation and its findings Is able to analyse the existing evidence base and identify requirements to collect additional evidence	Has excellent abilities to identify and analyse the existing evidence base and to identify needs for evaluative work Consistently applies a contextual perspective and ensures that this is integrated into the analysis of evaluation needs	Has solid ability to identify and analyse the existing evidence base Recognizes the importance of a contextual perspective	Has knowledge of identifying evaluation needs and of analysing existing evidence
Is able to work with stakeholders to understand and identify the components of a theory of change or logic model in order to demonstrate the theoretical underpinnings of the programme or policy and in order to facilitate evaluative thinking among stakeholders	Has excellent knowledge of various types of theories of change and logic models and is able use a systems approach in order to identify, recreate and facilitate the development of theories of change and logic models for complex programmes, policies or initiatives and in order to facilitate evaluative thinking among stakeholders	Has solid knowledge of various types of theories of change and logic models and is able apply an understanding of systems thinking in order to identify and facilitate the development of theories of change and logic models for moderately complex programmes and policies and in order to facilitate evaluative thinking among stakeholders	Has knowledge of theories of change and logic models and is able to facilitate development of theories of change and logic models for simple programmes

TABLE 2: TECHNICAL EVALUATION SKILLS (continued)

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Upholding quality standards			
Comprehends the importance of upholding high standards of quality for evaluation by applying the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation	Has excellent understanding of and demonstrates experience in ensuring that the relevant evaluation quality assurance mechanisms are in place and is able to uphold the standards under pressure	Has solid understanding of and is able to establish the relevant evaluation quality assurance mechanisms for upholding high-quality standards	Has understanding of and understands the importance of evaluation quality assurance mechanisms for upholding high-quality standards
Defining evaluation purposes and design			
Is able to work with relevant stakeholders in order to identify the purposes of the evaluation, looking at who will use the findings and what types of decisions will be made based on the findings	Has excellent ability to develop high-quality terms of references for complex evaluations Demonstrates an ability to prioritize and focus evaluation questions	Has solid experience in developing high-quality terms of references for moderately complex evaluations, including clear and focused evaluation questions	Has the knowledge and ability to develop terms of references and to facilitate the development of evaluation questions
Is able to understand and make use of best practices in evaluation design and to identify technically and culturally appropriate design for evaluations based on the purpose of the evaluation and the data and resources available, ascertaining the strengths and limitations of the design	Has excellent knowledge of elaborating designs for complex evaluations, drawing on existing best practices as well as developing innovative approaches	Has solid knowledge of elaborating evaluation designs for moderately complex evaluations, modifying existing designs to fit the context	Has knowledge of appropriate evaluation designs
Evaluation approaches and methods and analysing the data			
Is able to understand and apply qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analyses Is able to identify, collect and analyse primary and secondary sources of data, ensuring accuracy, neutrality and fairness with the ability to identify methods that address the needs of diverse constituencies and communities	Demonstrates excellent knowledge and the ability to apply and interpret a range of evaluation methods and approaches, both quantitative and qualitative Ensures that appropriate evaluation data collection and analysis methods are used Understands and ensures the appropriate use of multiple and mixed methods	Has solid knowledge and the ability to apply a range of evaluation data collection and analysis methods, and is able to use methods appropriate for the given context Recognizes the importance of multiple and mixed methods	Has knowledge of a range of evaluation data collection and analysis methods Has knowledge of multiple and mixed methods

TABLE 2: TECHNICAL EVALUATION SKILLS (continued)

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Evaluation approaches and methods and analysing the data (continued)			
Understands the importance of data reliability to make explicit possible biases and delimitations that are affecting the evaluation analyses Shows sensitivity to, and reflects on possible risks of discrimination and other ethical concerns during data collection	Has excellent knowledge and confidently analyses data from diverse sources, identifying key trends and gaps in information Is able to ensure that data and information used in evaluations are appropriate, accurate, of high quality and collected and analysed from an ethical perspective	Has solid knowledge and experience in analysing data from diverse sources and identifying key trends Is able to validate data accuracy and data quality and to ensure that data collection and analysis have been conducted ethically	Has knowledge of how to analyse data from diverse sources Understands the importance of data being accurate, of high quality and analysed from an ethical perspective
Understands the importance of data being analysed and interpreted systematically and logically, based on described assumptions and with unintended results identified Has analytical skills to elaborate credible findings and to synthesize data Places the analysis and findings within its context	Demonstrates extensive analytical skills to elaborate credible findings where evidence can be traced through the analysis into findings, which are placed within their context Uses analytical skills to synthesize data where relevant Identifies unintended results	Has solid knowledge of and experience in analytical work and in elaborating credible findings placed within their context	Has knowledge of analytical work and how to elaborate credible findings
Reporting evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations			
Is able to clearly report credible conclusions related to findings and substantiated by evidence and recommendations that flow logically from the conclusions Understands the value of clear, realistic and feasible recommendations targeted at the intended users Has knowledge about and is able to support the dissemination and use of evaluation findings to feed into programme and policy decisions	Has excellent ability in reporting highly credible conclusions substantiated by evidence Demonstrates the ability to develop clear, realistic and feasible recommendations, and proactively contributes to dissemination in order to ensure the use of findings to inform future programme and policy decisions	Has solid ability in reporting credible conclusions substantiated by evidence Has the ability to develop clear, realistic and feasible recommendations and understands the importance of using findings to inform future programme and policy decisions	Has knowledge and ability in reporting evaluation conclusions Is aware of the importance of the use of findings to inform future programme and policy decisions

Competencies for Evaluation Unit Heads

Evaluation Unit Heads should have technical skills and knowledge similar to a Senior Officer. In addition, Evaluation Unit Heads should be responsible for insuring that there is a quality assurance system put in place for evaluations. An appropriate quality assurance mechanism looks at evaluation processes and at products, and is typically invoked at the design and finalization stages of an evaluation. Evaluation Unit Heads should also have excellent knowledge of emerging global issues and evaluation trends that impact on the work of their office and the skills necessary to advance the technical skills of the evaluation profession within the United Nations and with the larger evaluation community.

Competencies for Evaluation Commissioners

Evaluation Commissioners should have knowledge of all the required technical evaluation skills, but not necessarily the in-depth skills of all competencies. Commissioners should, however, have sufficient skills to assess the technical skills of evaluators being commissioned to undertake evaluations; the technical quality of the evaluation design; the proposed evaluation approach and methodology; evaluation implementation; and evaluation reports. In addition, Evaluation Commissioners should be able to identify evaluation needs, initiate and develop terms of reference for evaluations and, after an evaluation has been finalized, should be able to support thorough dissemination and use of evaluation findings in order to inform and improve programming.

TABLE 3: MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Management skills are critical to leading teams conducting evaluations (e.g. to be the evaluation team leader) and to manage or in other ways supervise evaluation implementation. While management skills include many of the skills required to manage any project, management skills for evaluation relate to skills specific for managing evaluations.

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Work planning			
Is able to determine the scope of an evaluation and develop strategies, policies and plans to support timely and effective implementation	Has an excellent ability to determine the scope of an evaluation and to develop mechanisms to implement the evaluation	Has a solid ability to determine the scope of an evaluation and to develop mechanisms to implement the evaluation	Has an ability to determine the scope of an evaluation and to develop mechanisms to implement the evaluation
Is able to budget and manage the financial aspects of evaluation resources	Has an excellent ability to develop a realistic work plan for a complex evaluation, to adjust the work plan as needed and to effectively oversee the budgeting and the use of evaluation resources	Has a solid ability to develop a realistic work plan for a moderately complex evaluation, to adjust the work plan as needed and to effectively manage the budgeting and the use of evaluation resources	Has an ability to develop a realistic work plan for simple evaluations and to create and monitor an evaluation budget plan

TABLE 3: MANAGEMENT SKILLS (continued)

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Coordination and supervision			
Is able to manage and supervise the work of an evaluation team and evaluation processes in order to ensure evaluation timeliness and quality Demonstrates people and relationship management skills to ensure effective work and the meeting of deadlines Identifies and practices risk management Is able to set up and manage governance and management mechanisms for evaluations in order to ensure that evaluations are performed with high quality and that there is engagement with stakeholder groups	Has an excellent ability to coordinate and supervise complex evaluation processes Establishes relevant management and governance stakeholder groups and consults and manages these to ensure engagement Demonstrates an ability to establish and assess risk and to build and apply contingency plans where relevant	Has a solid ability to coordinate and supervise evaluation processes in order to establish relevant stakeholder groups and to manage these in order to ensure engagement Has solid knowledge of assessing risk and of building and applying contingency plans where relevant	Has knowledge of coordinating evaluation processes and relevant stakeholder groups Understands the importance of risk management
Adapting the evaluation to fit circumstances			
Is able to identify conflicts and issues and to develop problem-solving strategies Has conflict resolution skills and is able to analyse and articulate the lessons learned	Has excellent and demonstrable abilities to identify and manage conflicts Has highly developed conflict resolution skills and excellent skills in drawing out lessons learned from challenging situations	Has solid ability to identify and manage conflicts Has well-developed conflict resolution skills and solid skills in drawing out lessons learned from challenging situations	Understands the importance of identifying and managing conflicts Is beginning to develop conflict resolution skills and skills in drawing out lessons learned from challenging situations
Is able to ensure that evaluations are implemented in a manner that respects local customs, religious beliefs and practices, gender roles, and ethnicities while maintaining sensitivity to disability and age	Has excellent understanding of and knows how to respect local customs, religious beliefs and practices, gender roles and ethnicities, while maintaining sensitivity to disability and age	Has a solid understanding of and knows how to respect local customs, religious beliefs and practices, gender roles and ethnicities, while maintaining sensitivity to disability and age	Has understanding of and knows how to respect local customs, religious beliefs and practices, gender roles and ethnicities, while maintaining sensitivity to disability and age

Competencies for Evaluation Unit Heads

Evaluation Unit Heads should have management skills at the same level as a Senior Officer. In addition, Evaluation Unit Heads should have the skills to coordinate, supervise, network and provide support to evaluators through mentoring, coaching and promoting a positive work environment and a deeper understanding of how to foster learning in order to improve the effectiveness of the evaluation function.

Evaluation Unit Heads, in their role as overall manager, should also be able to define and adapt an evaluation to support and align with the SDGs and to cultivate effective relationships with Member States, donors and programme managers.

Competencies for Evaluation Commissioners

Evaluation Commissioners should have sufficient skills to be able to manage the evaluator selection process and to supervise the evaluators throughout the evaluation process. In addition, evaluation commissioners should be able to manage relevant governance mechanisms (e.g. reference groups, risk measures and contract management).

TABLE 4: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Interpersonal skills are important in ensuring that engagement with stakeholders involved in the evaluation process at all stages is effective and that the subsequent use of evaluation is strengthened. These skills are often referred to as 'soft skills' that help improve the influence that the evaluation has with its stakeholders. Skills include communication, facilitation, negotiation and knowledge sharing.

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Communication skills (written, oral, listening)			
Is able to articulate clear results and play key roles in brokering the acceptance and understanding of evaluation findings Writes clearly and concisely and can communicate complex technical evaluation concepts and results in ways that non-experts can easily understand Is able to adapt communication to different audiences Has the ability to actively listen to others and encourages comprehensive responses from evaluation participants Is able to communicate the needs of others, building strong cross-functional alliances	Has high ability and demonstrates excellent communication skills, including to present results in a clear and user-friendly way as well as to write up evaluation reports Is effective in engaging and communicating with senior management and stakeholders Is excellent at asking probing questions and actively listening to responses Is able to mentor others in developing these skills	Has solid knowledge and the ability to communicate and present results in a clear and user-friendly way as well as to write up evaluation reports Is effective at asking probing questions and actively listening to responses	Has knowledge and understanding of the importance of articulating clear and user-friendly presentations and reports Has the ability to ask probing questions and actively listen to responses

TABLE 4: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS (continued)

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Facilitation skills			
Has the ability to employ mechanisms to engage users and beneficiaries in evaluation processes using techniques that support open and honest dialogue	Demonstrates excellent meeting and facilitation skills that engage stakeholders and support dialogue	Has solid facilitation skills that engage stakeholders and support dialogue	Has knowledge on how to engage stakeholders and support dialogue
Is able to integrate diverse perspectives and deal with challenging dynamics	Has excellent ability and works collaboratively to address challenging dynamics, to address controversial issues, to ensure understanding and clarity of issues and to ensure that diverse perspectives are integrated into the evaluation	Has solid ability to address challenging dynamics and to ensure that diverse perspectives are integrated into the evaluation	Has knowledge on how to address challenging dynamics and to ensure that diverse perspectives are integrated into the evaluation
Negotiation skills			
Is able to assist evaluation commissioners and users in setting evaluation priorities and methods that are consistent with the purposes of the evaluation and the resources available Is able to negotiate conditions and circumstances that are conducive to effective and high-quality evaluation processes without compromising ethical conduct	Has excellent ability to negotiate evaluation priorities within the resources available Demonstrates excellent negotiation skills to ensure effective and high-quality evaluation processes without compromising ethical conduct	Has solid ability to negotiate evaluation priorities within the resources available Ensures effective and high-quality evaluation processes without compromising ethical conduct	Is able to negotiate evaluation priorities within the resources available
Knowledge-sharing skills			
Is able to develop a communication plan that shares the knowledge gained through the evaluation in order to ensure appropriate dissemination of evaluation findings to all relevant stakeholders Is able to build networks and partnerships with various stakeholders in order to leverage greater results and use of evaluations	Demonstrates strong ability to develop and implement communication plans to ensure appropriate dissemination Supports others in their development of communication plans Excellent ability to build and use networks to disseminate evaluation findings Demonstrates effective engagement with senior stakeholders, such as executive boards and senior executives within the organization in order to advance evaluation results and use	Has solid knowledge-sharing skills and an ability to develop and implement communication plans Is able to build networks and use these to disseminate evaluation findings Is able to engage with senior stakeholders for evaluation knowledge-sharing purposes	Has knowledge of developing and implementing communication plans Is able to build networks and share evaluation knowledge

Competencies for Evaluation Unit Heads

Evaluation Unit Heads should have the same communication, facilitation and interpersonal skills as that of a Senior Officer and should be able to use those skills at senior management and executive meetings. Evaluation Unit Heads should be able to promote and cultivate effective communication, an organizational learning culture and the widespread use of evaluation results both internally and externally.

Competencies for Evaluation Commissioners

Evaluation Commissioners need to have sufficient knowledge and skills in order to develop and implement a communication and dissemination strategy. Evaluation Commissioners should be able to demonstrate these skills in communicating evaluation issues and key evaluation messages. Evaluation commissioners also need to have effective communication and facilitation skills in order to manage governance mechanisms and to supervise evaluators.

TABLE 5: PROMOTING A CULTURE OF LEARNING FOR EVALUATION

Skills to promote a culture of learning for evaluation within an organization, to engage users and beneficiaries in evaluation processes and to broaden the use of evidence in decision-making are important, as some of the main purposes of evaluation.

	Senior Officer	Intermediate Officer	Officer
Integrating evaluation into policy and programming			
Is able to communicate to stakeholders the value of evaluation as a vital component of policy and programming in the achievement of the SDGs	Has excellent knowledge of and ability to demonstrate to stakeholders the value of evaluation for policy and programming in the achievement of the SDGs	Has solid knowledge of and ability to communicate to stakeholders the value of evaluation to policy and programming in the achievement of the SDGs	Understands the value of evaluation to policy and programming in the achievement of the SDGs
Is able to support stakeholders in integrating evaluation into policy and programme development and management through knowledge of learning organizations	Has excellent knowledge of policy and programme monitoring, evaluation and mechanisms to promote learning within organizations	Has solid knowledge of policy and programme monitoring and evaluation and mechanisms to promote learning within organizations	Has knowledge of policy and programme monitoring and evaluation and mechanisms to promote learning within organizations
Using utilization-focused approaches			
Is able to consistently promote the engagement of users and beneficiaries in evaluation processes in order to promote evaluative thinking and the wide use of evaluation findings	Has excellent knowledge of utilization-focused evaluations and demonstrates excellent ability to promote the engagement of users and evaluative thinking	Has solid knowledge of utilization-focused evaluations and the ability to promote the engagement of users and evaluative thinking	Understands the value of utilization-focused evaluations and evaluative thinking

Competencies for Evaluation Unit Heads

Evaluation Unit Heads should have the same level of skill and knowledge as that of a Senior Officer in order to support the promotion of a culture of learning, including utilization-focused evaluations. Through sound leadership and mentoring, Evaluation Unit Heads have an important role to promote evaluation as one component of the programming process and to encourage the promotion of wide engagement in the evaluation process. They are able to demonstrate strong leadership in building an evaluation culture within their organizations.

Competencies for Evaluation Commissioners

Evaluation Commissioners should have sufficient skills to promote and support the engagement of users in evaluation processes and the use of evaluations for learning and accountability.

ANNEX A: DEFINITIONS OF ROLES

Although the distinction among these roles is important for the UNEG evaluation competency framework, the reality in the United Nations system is that some roles are overlapping. For example, the evaluation commissioner may also often be the evaluation manager; an Evaluation Unit Head may also be an evaluator; and an evaluator may also be an evaluation manager. The Joint Inspection Unit's Analysis of the Evaluation Functions in the United Nations System⁶ benchmarked the diversity of evaluation function arrangements, including the organization of roles related to evaluation. An evaluator who is in a position where there is a hybrid role would need to have the core evaluation competencies plus the competencies associated with any other roles.

Evaluator

An evaluator is anyone who is directly involved in planning and conducting an evaluation, including researchers, team leaders and team members. The work of an evaluator includes elaborating the evaluation design, proposing the evaluation approach and method, developing the inception report, collecting and analysing data, interpreting evaluation findings, drawing appropriate conclusions, making recommendations and communicating evaluation findings through reports, presentations or other means of dissemination.

Evaluation Unit Head

Evaluation unit heads are responsible for managing evaluators carrying out specific evaluations. Most will review key deliverables in order to ensure appropriateness and quality. Evaluation unit heads also become involved directly in an evaluation if issues arise. Therefore, unit heads need to have knowledge of evaluation along with other knowledge and skills in order to support their supervision of evaluators. It is assumed that an evaluation unit head would have the competencies equivalent to a Senior Officer.

The evaluation unit head is responsible for supporting evaluators in carrying out their work and ensuring excellent performance. The work of an evaluation unit head includes recruiting and hiring evaluators, conducting performance appraisals, supporting professional development plans and reviewing the work carried out by evaluators.

Evaluation Commissioner

The evaluation commissioner is the person often associated with the programme who arranges for the evaluation to occur, whether through internal resources or the hiring of external consultants. The work of an evaluation commissioner includes determining the programmes to be evaluated, ensuring the evaluation purposes meet the needs of those responsible for implementing the programme, ensuring that the evaluation is consistent with United Nations policies and engaging evaluators to carry out the evaluation.

⁶ United Nations Joint Inspection Unit, 2014, Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System, JIU/REP/2014/6. Available at: https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2014_6_English.pdf

Commissioners of evaluation are often the liaison between the programme and the evaluators. Commissioners are well-positioned to support a positive attitude towards the evaluation and to support the use of credible findings. As such, they need knowledge of the evaluation process, familiarity with the technical skills required to conduct an evaluation, awareness of the value of evaluation and excellent facilitation and negotiation skills. It is assumed that a commissioner of an evaluation would have the competencies equivalent to an officer, or in some instances, an intermediate officer.

Evaluation Manager

The evaluation manager's responsibilities include ensuring quality assurance processes, using internal resources and hiring external consultants. The role of evaluation management may be subsumed by other roles, such as that of an evaluator, evaluation commissioner or the evaluation unit head, for example, depending on organizational context and arrangements.

The evaluation manager needs skills similar to those required for general project management. However, evaluation requires such skills to be distinct and adjusted to the specific evaluation context. It is assumed that an evaluation manager would have the competencies equivalent to an officer, or in some instances, an intermediate officer.

Evaluation Users

Users of evaluation can be distinguished between three main types:⁷

- I. **Individuals or groups who have decision authority over the programme**, including policymakers, funders, advisory boards, parliamentarians and civil society leaders in programme countries.

In the United Nations context, this user group is composed of senior management, governing bodies, donors and partner governments. This group is responsible for responding to evaluation recommendations, and is ultimately responsible for their implementation.

- II. **Individuals or groups who have direct responsibility for the programme**, including programme developers, administrators in the organization implementing the programme, programme managers and direct service staff.

In the United Nations context, this user group is composed of programme staff. This group is responsible for supporting evaluation processes and for taking action to implement the recommendations approved by senior decision-makers. Evaluation users are not expected to have core evaluation competencies. It is the responsibility of evaluators to guide evaluation users.

- III. **Individuals or groups for whom the programme was designed**, often referred to as the target population or programme users. Any changes to programmes or initiatives resulting from the evaluation will impact these people or groups.

When an open participatory approach is used, programme beneficiaries can use an evaluation to advocate for change.

⁷ UNEG, 2015, Evaluation Use in the United Nations System, UNEG SO2 Group.

ANNEX B: EXAMPLE OF USE IN A JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Profile: Intermediate Evaluation Officer Responsibilities and Functions

1. Conduct and/or manage evaluations that are impartial, independent and credible and that meet professional standards
 - Carry out evaluations of projects, programmes and policies;
 - Supervise evaluations conducted by staff members and consultants;
 - Apply high professional standards in line with evaluation policy and the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation;
 - Apply evaluation quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis tools, techniques and approaches;
 - Keep abreast of developments in the area of evaluation; and
 - Cooperate with other United Nations evaluation units and professional evaluation bodies.
2. Promote evaluations that are useful and ensure that evaluation findings and recommendations are followed up
 - Report to management on evaluation findings and recommendations;
 - Organize meetings, workshops and other discussion fora in order to establish a dialogue on evaluation results, recommendations and lessons learned;
 - Ensure that evaluation results are taken into account in the continued implementation of projects and programmes and in the design and appraisal of new projects and programmes; and
 - Ensure that project and programme managers respond to recommendations and monitor the follow-up on evaluations.
3. Promote the evaluation function in the organization
 - Provide training on evaluation, self-evaluation, monitoring and results-based management within the evaluation office and in other organizational units;
 - Provide advice, information and guidance to management and project or programme managers on evaluation; and
 - Contribute to the development and review of evaluation-related policies, guidance, systems, procedures and tools.
4. Effectively deploy human and financial resources of the evaluation office
 - Plan evaluations and prepare evaluation budgets for individual evaluations;
 - Manage the effective and efficient use of evaluation resources;
 - Select evaluation consultants based on post requirements; and
 - Supervise evaluation consultants and staff.

The Evaluation Officer will perform other related duties and assignments as and when required.

Required Competencies

Essential:

Knowledge of the United Nations system, particularly:

- Gender equality within the United Nations context and how to incorporate it into all aspects of work;
- Human rights within the United Nations context and how to incorporate it into all aspects of work;
- Application of evaluation norms and standards; and
- Evaluation ethics and their consistent application and maintaining evaluation impartiality and independence.

Technical evaluation skills, particularly:

- The ability to identify evaluation needs and to recognize the importance of a contextual perspective;
- The knowledge and experience of elaborating evaluation designs, including clear and focused evaluation questions; and
- The knowledge of and ability to apply a range of evaluation data collection and analysis methods, using multiple and mixed methods.

Management skills, particularly:

- The ability to determine the evaluation scope, develop a realistic work plan and create mechanisms to implement the evaluation;
- The ability to coordinate and supervise evaluation processes and to establish and manage relevant stakeholder groups; and
- The knowledge of assessing risk and building and applying contingency plans where relevant.

Interpersonal skills, particularly:

- Facilitation skills that engage users and support dialogue;
- Knowledge-sharing skills and an ability to develop and implement communication plans; and
- The ability to build and use networks in order to disseminate evaluation findings.
- Promoting a culture of learning for evaluation, including:
- Knowledge of programme monitoring and evaluation and mechanisms to promote learning within organizations.

Desirable:

- Knowledge of and ability to communicate the value of evaluation to programme managers in the achievement of the SDGs;
- Understanding of and ability to establish the relevant evaluation quality assurance mechanisms by applying UNEG norms and standards;
- The pursuit of professional networks and self-development in order to enhance competencies and skills; and
- The provision of peer support and mentoring to evaluators that draws on own experiences and self-reflection.

Education and Experience

- Advanced university degree in social science or related field, or combination of first level degree with relevant experience;
- A minimum of seven years of professional experience in evaluation;
- A background in international relations and knowledge of current development issues is preferable; and
- Experience related to the organization's mandate and activities is an asset.

ANNEX C: EXAMPLE OF USE IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Professional Competency Tool

Name:

Date:

Position:

- ☐ Director Level
☐ Professional P-5 Level
☐ Professional P-4 Level
☐ Professional P-3 Level
☐ Professional P-2 Level
☐ Professional P-1 Level
☐ Other (Please specify: _____)

Please complete the following table by checking the level of competency for each factor. In the Remarks section, indicate what the implications are in terms of your work and your personal career goals. For more information, please refer to the UNEG Core Evaluation Competencies (2016). The assessment should be based on what is expected at your position and level.

Evaluation Competencies	Needs substantial improvement	Needs some improvement	Meets expectations	Occasionally exceeds expectations	Consistently exceeds expectations	Remarks
Professional Foundations						
Ethics and integrity of evaluation processes						
Evaluation norms and standards						
Knowledge base of evaluation						
Integration of human rights and gender perspectives into evaluation						
Reflective practices						

Evaluation Competencies	Needs substantial improvement	Needs some improvement	Meets expectations	Occasionally exceeds expectations	Consistently exceeds expectations	Remarks
Technical Evaluation Skills						
Identifying evaluation needs						
Upholding quality standards						
Defining evaluation purposes and design						
Evaluation approaches and methods and analysing the data						
Reporting evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations						
Management Skills						
Work planning						
Coordination and supervision						
Adapting the evaluation to fit circumstances						
Interpersonal Skills						
Communication skills (written, oral, listening)						
Facilitation skills						
Negotiation skills						
Knowledge-sharing skills						
Promoting a Culture of Learning for Evaluation						
Integrating evaluation into policy and programming						
Using utilization-focused approaches						

Source: Based on UNEG Core Evaluation Competencies

Professional Development Planning Tool

Name:

Date:

Completed by:

Career Goals			
1.			
2.			
3.			
Priority Development Goal	Ways to Address Goal	By When	Indicators that Goal has been Met

Date:

Signature of Staff: _____

Signature of Manager: _____







UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) is a professional network that brings together the units responsible for evaluation in the UN system including the specialized agencies, funds, programmes and affiliated organizations. UNEG currently has 47 members and three observers. UNEG aims to promote the independence, credibility and usefulness of the evaluation function and evaluation across the UN system, to advocate for the importance of evaluation for learning, decision-making and accountability, and to support the evaluation community in the UN system and beyond.

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