

ESCAP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Guidelines

2023 Edition



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Acronyms

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
AI	Administrative Instruction
CPC	Committee on Programme and Coordination
DMSPC	Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance
EDM	Executive Direction and Management
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OES	Office of the Executive Secretary
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PME	Planning, monitoring and evaluation
PPBME	Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation
PPR	Programme performance report
RBM	Results-based management
RPTC	Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation
SPMD	Strategy and Programme Management Division
UNEDAP	United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-wide Action Plan
XB	Extrabudgetary

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ESCAP is committed to strengthening its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) function to inform programme and project planning, design and implementation, facilitate organizational learning, and improve reporting of results. As part of this commitment, ESCAP establishes its internal M&E policy and procedures in line with the UN Secretariat-wide monitoring and evaluation requirements and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards.

The present document serves as the third edition of the ESCAP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Guidelines. It describes the overall mandate for conducting M&E at ESCAP, establishes the institutional structure and the associated roles and responsibilities, and details the requirements for the management, conduct and use of M&E. It reflects the latest monitoring and evaluation requirements in the UN Secretariat, including:

- The Administrative Instruction (AI) on Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat ([ST/AI/2021/3](#)) issued in August 2021.
- The change in the UN Secretariat programme planning from a biennial to an annual period beginning with the programme budget for 2020 and associated changes in the monitoring requirements.
- The new requirement to integrate disability inclusion in all phases of the evaluation process.
- The development of new monitoring tools, including the Programme Monitoring Tool, the ESCAP Programmatic Dashboard and the Senior Management Dashboard.

The AI on Evaluation in the UN Secretariat describes the organization's requirements and procedures for the management, conduct and use of evaluations. It puts into effect the Secretary-General's intention to strengthen the evaluation capacity of the Secretariat. The present document responds to the requirement of the AI on Evaluation for all UN Secretariat entities to have an evaluation policy consistent with the AI.

The document is in a much more concise and accessible format than the previous editions. Detailed procedures, guidelines and descriptions of monitoring and evaluation tools are posted separately in the SPMD Gateway.

The document is divided into three sections: Introduction, Monitoring, and Evaluation. The Introduction provides background information on M&E and places it in the context of results-based management (RBM) at ESCAP.

Section 2 introduces monitoring. It starts by defining the concept, explains its use, identifies the monitoring roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, highlights the importance of staff participation, and briefly introduces key support systems. Subsequently, the monitoring requirements and milestones are detailed at the level of the organization, subprogrammes and projects, respectively.

Section 3 defines evaluation, explains its purpose and use, identifies the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, describes the different types of evaluation activities of ESCAP, highlights the most relevant evaluation norms, standards and criteria, explains the evaluation planning and budgeting, specifies the management arrangement and presents several mechanisms to use evaluation results for accountability and organizational learning.

2. INTRODUCTION

Programme and project management at ESCAP follows results-based management (RBM) approaches. This focuses on achieving realistic expected results; monitoring progress toward their achievement; evaluating outcomes; integrating lessons learned into management decisions and reporting on performance.

Monitoring and evaluation are integral components of RBM and function as distinct mechanisms for oversight and accountability. Performance monitoring measures progress towards achieving results planned for in programmes and projects, while evaluation assesses the worth of an intervention. Evaluations draw on data generated through monitoring during the programme or project cycle. Examples include baseline data, information on the programme or project implementation process, and measurements of results. Different aspects of monitoring and evaluation, including related responsibilities, are compared in Table 1.

The knowledge generated by monitoring and evaluation provides the basis for decision-making. This can mean decision-making in the short term – making adjustments to implementation plans - or the development of long-term development strategies. Lessons learned and recommendations need to be captured by the ESCAP knowledge management system with a view to (a) defining and redefining the desired development results to be achieved by the organization and (b) strengthening the methods, processes or modalities through which such results are to be achieved. To be used in managing for development results, knowledge gained from monitoring and evaluation must be made available and disseminated within the organization.

Table 1. Comparison between monitoring and evaluation at ESCAP

	MONITORING	EVALUATION
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses programme/project implementation for making necessary adjustments and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses subprogramme/project results and performance for external and internal accountability and organizational learning
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme/project managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPMD through its Evaluation Unit
Use of findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take corrective action to ensure that subprogramme/project objectives are met Ensure accountability to member States and donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate lessons learned in the strategic planning and decision-making Ensure accountability to member States, donors and development partners
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of results Timely implementation of deliverables, outputs and activities within planned resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of objectives and outcome level results
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed programme budget, Senior Manager Compact, SWAP reporting Progress and terminal reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation reports with findings, lessons learned and recommendations
Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Division, project stakeholders and, at important milestones, member States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCAP secretariat, donors and other stakeholders Intranet; Internet
Quality assurance and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy and Programme Management Division (SPMD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), UNEG

	MONITORING	EVALUATION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SPMD, Reference group

3. MONITORING

The present section introduces monitoring at ESCAP. It defines the concept, explains its use and identifies the monitoring roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. Furthermore, the different types of monitoring activities the organization is undertaking are explained.

3.1 Definition

Monitoring is defined as “a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds” (OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Manual, 2014)¹. It is part of the Secretariat’s obligation to achieve high quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner, to fully implement and deliver on all mandates approved by the United Nations intergovernmental bodies.

3.2 Purpose of monitoring

Monitoring is a key element of results-based management. Broadly speaking, it pursues two main functions: firstly, learning - it allows ESCAP programme managers to improve their interventions and secondly, accountability – it provides different stakeholders with information concerning the value addition of ESCAP’s interventions. As an *ongoing* management function, monitoring activities answer the question “Are things going according to plan?”.

Monitoring serves as a continuous assessment that aims at providing programme/project managers with the ability to proactively track and measure the substantive and financial performance and the timely implementation of deliverables against the approved programme of work and/or project plan within allocated resources. The ongoing collection of monitoring data based on the performance measures or output and outcome indicators gives an indication of project progress toward achieving the planned results and stated objectives. Furthermore, effective monitoring enhances the efforts to focus on results while supporting ESCAP’s commitment to transparency and accountability. Monitoring activities also allow processes and experiences to be documented to derive lessons learned for evidence-based decision-making on programme/project adjustments and the design of future programmes and/or projects.

Use of monitoring and links to evaluation

Data and information collected through monitoring activities are used by ESCAP to:

- Improve subprogramme and project management, by identifying bottlenecks and taking corrective action(s), as required, to ensure that results are met within a given budget and timeframe.
- Support the conduct of evaluations and organizational learning, inform decision-making and strengthen future strategic and programme planning by documenting and sharing findings and lessons learned internally and externally.
- Hold ESCAP accountable to member States and donors by providing evidence of the efficient and effective use of funds and staff resources.

¹ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/images/oios-ied_manual.pdf

In addition, at the level of the United Nations Secretariat, results from monitoring are presented in the annual Proposed Programme Budget and are considered by the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly.

3.3 Roles and responsibilities

Implementing divisions/institutions/offices are responsible for implementing programme and project monitoring. The monitoring responsibilities are described in the job descriptions of relevant staff members, and specific monitoring tasks are to be included in the performance appraisal.

- **The Executive Secretary and Deputy-Executive Secretaries** oversee the work of the divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions. They are accountable to member States for the achievements of ESCAP's objectives and the delivery of results.
- **Division directors, Heads of subregional offices and Heads of Regional Institutions** are responsible for managing the programme of work of their respective subprogramme, including monitoring functions. In particular, they approve divisional submissions related to monitoring before sending them to the Strategy and Programme Management Division (SPMD).
- **Programme/project managers** are responsible for the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of projects or activities under the subprogramme. They systematically collect information to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of implemented activities and monitor the planned results through performance indicators. This could include, for example, tracking the preparation of workshops, funds committed and spent, and the delivery of outputs by consultants and partners in line with the milestones and monitoring plan.
- **Planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) coordination teams** advise all colleagues in their respective divisions, subregional office and regional institutions, including senior managers, on planning, monitoring, and evaluation-related matters; coordinate and review the quality and accuracy of data before sending it to SPMD; and act as a focal point for coordination and communication with SPMD. Their role is further defined in an [interoffice memorandum](#) dated 25 July 2022 from SPMD.
- **Certifying Officers** in each division, subregional office and regional institution have the responsibility to ensure that only expenditures and activities approved by the donor or governing bodies are certified or cleared for further action. They also have the responsibility to ensure that outputs have been delivered by implementing partners or consultants before the issuance of any payments. Please also see Administrative Instruction 2004/3² on the financial responsibility of staff members for gross negligence.
- **The Strategy and Programme Management Division (SPMD)** plays a technical support and coordination role and has an overall quality assurance function vis-à-vis the Commission and Headquarters. SPMD is responsible for supporting the preparation of the programme of work and project proposals providing tools, templates, and guidelines to follow. It also reports ESCAP's programme implementation to Headquarters, supports project managers in preparing progress and terminal reports and manages project monitoring solutions on behalf of ESCAP. It provides capacity building on results-based management to ESCAP staff and the members of the PME coordination team. It ensures that the planning, monitoring and evaluation activities of ESCAP follow established quality standards. SPMD also supports the financial monitoring of ESCAP's expenditures.
- **Member States** play a role in monitoring ESCAP's delivery through the feedback they provide

² <https://www.undocs.org/ST/AI/2004/3>

to the Commission and its subsidiary committees on the quality and direction of the work of ESCAP. Participants in intergovernmental meetings, expert group meetings and capacity building activities also provide feedback on the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of those through standardized questionnaires and surveys.

3.4 Types of monitoring activities

3.4.1 Organizational monitoring – Senior Manager’s Compact

The Senior Manager’s Compact is an annual agreement between each head of department of the United Nations Secretariat and the Secretary-General. Compacts set specific programmatic objectives and managerial targets for a given year, thereby ensuring accountability at the highest levels. For each senior manager, Compacts include key objectives related to the specific mandate of each department, office, Regional Commission or mission, including objectives from relevant budget documents.

On an organizational level, Compacts identify strategic goals that are shared by all departments, offices and missions, such as the efficient management of financial resources and the implementation of oversight body recommendations.

The monitoring of the implementation of the Compact is mainstreamed across programmatic and administrative monitoring activities, including that of the Human Resources Scorecards and the programme budget. The preparation of the Compact and the reporting against its objectives is led by the Office of the Executive Secretary and is mainstreamed with the regular monitoring and reporting exercises of ESCAP supported by SPMD.

Compacts are reviewed annually by the Management Performance Board, which advises the Secretary-General on issues related to the performance of his senior managers.

The Board assesses each senior manager’s performance against the targets set in his/her compact and presents its findings and recommendations to the Secretary-General, who takes action as necessary.

The Board also sends a letter to each senior manager noting his/her accomplishments and shortcomings and publishes the detailed assessment results on [iSeek](#). Each senior manager is asked to submit an action plan to address his/her weaknesses. Innovative approaches are shared with the other senior managers to strengthen individual as well as organizational performance.

3.4.2 Semi-annual discussions

On a six-monthly basis, SPMD organizes meetings with substantive divisions and offices to review the programme, project and budget performance and address any implementation issues. The semi-annual discussions are an internal monitoring milestone to allow regular conversation between senior and programme managers on performance and are expected to improve the achievement of results as bottlenecks are identified and addressed in a timely manner.

The first semi-annual discussion, typically happens between April and May, focuses on challenges in implementing the programme and budget, on ongoing and pipeline projects as well as evaluations. It provides an opportunity to subprogrammes to request additional resources.

The second semi-annual discussion, that is held around September, focuses more on the progress towards planned results, the identification of the need for project extensions, potential budgetary savings for redeployment and includes a discussion to identify new results for the preparation of the subsequent programme plan.

3.4.3 Programme monitoring

The main planning document at ESCAP is the Proposed Programme Budget. It contains the programme

of work of ESCAP for a specific year and presents results and deliverables to the member States for their approval. The programme of work is monitored on an ongoing basis.

3.4.3.1 Monitoring results

A result is a describable or measurable change in a state or condition that derives from a cause-and-effect relationship. In results-based management, results are planned for at three different levels.

At the impact level, results imply a change in people’s lives. They are the intended long-term effects of implementing planned interventions for a country in achieving the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and national development priorities. Impacts are directly linked to national development priorities, regional frameworks, the SDGs and SDG targets.

At the outcome level, results represent key institutional, behavioural or legislative changes that are critical for catalysing progress towards the desired impact and to which ESCAP and other development stakeholders can collectively make a substantial contribution.

The lowest result category is the output level that reflects changes in capacities, knowledge of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new or improved products and services that result from the contribution of ESCAP and its partners towards the outcomes.

For each result, ESCAP defines performance measures/indicators that demonstrate the change in the situation for the beneficiary. Performance measures can be either quantitative (in the form of a graph) or qualitative (in the form of a table) in nature but need to be able to measure advancement towards the planned result. No matter which type of performance measure is most appropriate, ESCAP establishes a baseline that spans the two previous years and identifies realistic and time-bound targets for the next two years to show progress within the planning period. In developing performance measures, ESCAP programme managers are requested to strongly consider aspects of inequalities in their data sources and data collection methods.

Programme managers are responsible for monitoring whether they are on track to achieve their planned results on an ongoing basis and recording the results of their monitoring activities at least at mid-year and year-end. Details for the monitoring requirements and reporting against results can be found on the [SPMD Gateway](#).

Monitoring performance measures/indicators helps programme managers to document and register all achievements in a specific area of work. The evidence that is collected can also be used for other reporting requirements and can inform programme and project planning. Evidence is in essence a repository of records that will be used for evaluation purposes. Programme managers may wish to highlight specific deliverables, groups of deliverables or sequencing of deliverables that were particularly effective for achieving results, as well as best practices in substantive or operational areas. Programme managers are also invited to use supplementary indicators or other compelling information to further document lessons learned for achieving results.

3.4.3.2 Monitoring deliverables and activities

Deliverables are final products and services that ESCAP provides to member States or external stakeholders with a view of achieving the planned results. In the Proposed Programme Budget deliverables are grouped into different categories and subcategories, all of which have a distinct unit of measure (Table 2). Details on the definition of the deliverable categories can be found in the [Guide on monitoring and reporting deliverables](#).

Table 2. Categories and subcategories of deliverables in the Proposed Programme Budget

Category	Subcategory	Unit of measure
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A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies	Parliamentary documentation	(number of documents)
	Substantive services of meetings	(number of three-hour meetings)
B. Generation and transfer of knowledge	Field and technical cooperation projects	(number of projects)
	Seminars, workshops and training events	(number of days)
	Publications	(number of publications)
	Technical materials	(number of materials)
C. Substantive deliverables	Consultations, advice and advocacy	
	Databases and other substantive digital materials	
D. Communication deliverables	Outreach programmes, special events and information materials	
	Media and external relations	
	Digital platforms and multi-media content	

Deliverables are further associated with activities which are tagged to different analytical lenses, such as ESCAP's core working areas, their contribution to the SDGs and/or SDG targets, their contribution to cross-cutting areas such as gender and countries in special situations, as well as disability inclusion.

In addition, monitoring requirements for each of the deliverable subcategories vary slightly. For instance, monitoring the deliverable in the subcategories of substantive services of meetings and seminars, workshops and training events, also includes reporting on the location of the meeting, as well as its format of delivery (in-person, hybrid or virtual). It is also critical to monitor the number of participants using sex-disaggregated data. Moreover, participants in ESCAP-organized meetings and capacity-building events are systematically invited to provide feedback on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the event.

This allows the meeting organizer/the trainer to analyse and understand whether the event reached the right target audience, whether the team had the right mix of skills to effectively deliver the meeting/achieve the learning objectives, and whether the organization of the event could be improved. Feedback from participants also allows to identify follow-up actions to augment the impact of the event. A standard feedback questionnaire for each type of meeting has been developed and programme managers are encouraged to tailor these questionnaires to their particular purpose. The standard assessments are available as duplicable Microsoft Forms on the [SPMD Gateway](#).

Monitoring the implementation of deliverables is required at the 6-months and 12-months mark, although programme managers are highly encouraged to monitor the implementation of planned deliverables and activities in an ongoing manner. The latter will allow agile and flexible adjustment of planned deliverables to achieve the expected results. For details on the monitoring requirements of the different deliverables subcategories, please go to the [SPMD Gateway](#).

3.4.3.3 Monitoring work months

Programme managers are also required to track the work months spent by staff members in the Professional (P) and Higher category (D) as well as Regional Advisors (RA), National Officers (NO), Junior Professional Officers (JPO) and Non-reimbursable Loan (NRL) experts on the delivery of deliverables and activities, irrespective of funding sources. The information is used to account for the allocation and use of staff resources (professional staff).

3.4.4 Project monitoring

The basis for project monitoring is provided by the project document that contains a results framework, a monitoring and evaluation plan, a reporting arrangement, a work and monitoring plan and a budget. In addition, there are also specific monitoring and reporting milestones, the purpose of which is to keep project officers, management, partners and other stakeholders informed about the project's progress. These milestones usually include the organization of a project inception meeting,

the delivery of an output, the submission of the annual progress report and terminal report and the semi-annual consultations between SPMD and divisions/offices.

To aid project monitoring, the following should be developed during the project inception period:

- A detailed monthly work and monitoring plan, outlining the key activities, milestones, deadlines and responsibilities;
- A budget implementation tracker; and
- A methodology to measure the indicators of achievement of the project outputs and outcomes, including data items to be collected, sources of data, methods of data collection, timing and frequency of data collection, allocation of responsibilities and budget for monitoring.

During the course of project implementation, monitoring of delivery of project outputs and outcomes with reference to the indicators of achievement planned in the project document, including gender equality and women's empowerment perspective and disability inclusion if applicable, should be carried out on a quarterly basis, and monitoring of project activities should be performed on a monthly basis.

It is essential that the indicators of achievement are included in all assessments performed, including any beneficiary survey or feedback. This is to ensure that the required data is available when preparing annual progress reports and terminal reports for submission to the donors. Furthermore, gender-disaggregated data is to be collected for all projects, and disability inclusion is to be reflected in the data collection exercise for projects with disability inclusion marker.

Similarly to reporting activities under other budget sources (Section 19, Section 35 and XB), all activities carried out under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC, Section 23), including training, seminars and workshops, should be reported in the programme monitoring tool twice a year (mid-July and mid-January of the following year).³ Feedback from participants should be obtained through a questionnaire to be administered after the event and using the ESCAP standard survey template for training, seminars and workshop. All advisory services (virtually or in person) using RPTC funds should be reported electronically within 14 days of completion, with the incoming request for technical assistance attached. Feedback from the beneficiary office should also be obtained using the ESCAP standard survey template for advisory services. Missions undertaken by Regional Advisers are to be reported in the mission report database.

3.4.5 Financial monitoring

The financial monitoring of programmes and projects is the responsibility of the respective programme manager. Managers ensure that expenditures under the different budget sections are aligned with the respective approved programme plans and/or project documents.

Managers are encouraged to regularly monitor and review the status of the implementation of their budgets and expenditure to ensure full programme delivery. Regular monitoring and review also enables timely corrective actions (such as in the case of over or under expenditure, or in response to programme/project changes), should they be necessary.

For budget section 19 (Programme Plan and Budget) and budget section 23 (Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation), the resources are approved by the General Assembly on an annual basis and are to be expended in line with the approved amounts and instructions. Expenditures for budget

³ RPTC reporting is coordinated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and common standards of reporting across all RPTC implementing entities are being developed. Those are to be finalized in 2023-2024 and may lead to further adjustments in our reporting processes, as necessary.

section 35 (the Development Account) are to be in line with the approved project document and in coordination with the lead implementing agency. For projects funded through extrabudgetary voluntary resources, the expenditure must be in line with the approved project document and corresponding trust fund agreements. Proposals for change to approved budgets for any of the budget sections should be discussed with SPMD at the earliest moment possible and with sufficient justification.

Alongside managers, implementing divisions' Certifying Officers have the responsibility to ensure that the expenditure and activities approved or certified by them are in line with the relevant programme or project documents (including trust fund agreements) as well as organizational rules and regulations. Certifying Officers also ensure the availability of sufficient funds to meet the commitments and obligations for the expenditures and activities.

To support managers in fulfilling their financial monitoring obligations, SPMD publishes status of expenditure report for all funds on its [SharePoint page](#) on a weekly basis. In addition, implementing divisions and offices can access Umoja, the UN Secretariat-wide Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System anytime to check the expenditure rates/funds balances for their programmes or projects.⁴

3.4.6 Guidelines

Guidance on the project document, progress report and terminal report, including relevant deadlines and annotated templates, is detailed in the [Project Management Guidelines for ESCAP Staff](#). For information and support on financial monitoring aspects contact the Budget Officers and staff in SPMD.

3.5 Monitoring systems

ESCAP uses a number of support systems that are relevant to monitoring the implementation of the programme, the budget and the projects of the organization. These systems are briefly introduced below.

3.5.1 Programme Monitoring Tool and Programmatic Dashboard

The Programme Monitoring Tool (PMT) is ESCAP's internal information system designed to facilitate the monitoring of results, projects and deliverables and captures the monitoring information to support reporting on the performance of all ESCAP budget sections. Data from the PMT is used to respond to secretariat-wide reporting requirements as well as information requests by member States, preparation for bilateral meetings and communication with partners

The ESCAP Programmatic Dashboard aims to be a reliable source of information for ESCAP staff to assess programme implementation. It analyses the information held in the PMT and visualizes the programme through different angles such as the programme's contribution to cross-cutting areas⁵, to south-south and triangular cooperation, and to disability inclusion. It also provides information on the substantive geographical scope of ESCAP's work, the beneficiary countries/territories that benefitted from the work of ESCAP and the distribution of human resources in work-months among core work categories.

⁵ As per ESCAP/RES/71/1, the following areas are mainstreamed into the work of the Commission: Sustainable Development Goals, the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, gender equality and the priority need of countries in special situations.

Every six months, ESCAP publishes the monitoring data from the PMT onto its dashboard. Prior to publishing the data, the PME Coordination Teams of each subprogramme are responsible to provide evidence that supports the progress towards the achievement of results and the implementation of deliverables/activities which will be verified by SPMD.

Instructions for using the system are provided on the [SPMD Gateway](#).

3.5.2 Senior Management Team Dashboard

The Senior Management Team Dashboard presents a wide range of information, including on human resources, budget and expenditure, ESCAP's environmental footprint, travel, meetings etc. It is designed to provide ESCAP senior managers with these key pieces of information to support them in their management and oversight of their respective subprogrammes.

This dashboard collates information from a range of sources and updates automatically. Some information, such as budget expenditure are updated more frequently, while other information, such as on environmental indicators are updated less frequently.

3.5.3 Umoja

Umoja, the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software of the UN Secretariat provides a harmonized and streamlined approach to core organizational functions.

The system has dedicated modules to support all administrative processes, including budget and finance management, as well as strategic and project management, which also covers programme planning and monitoring, project cycle management, implementing partner management and donor relations.

Tracking and recording of expenditures are undertaken in different Umoja modules, which capture information including the type of expenditure, purpose, amount, budget period, the implementing division, etc.

The monitoring of the programme of work is undertaken in the Strategic Management Application (SMA) of the Umoja solution. Reporting programme implementation in SMA is required on a quarterly basis and is monitored through the Senior Managers Compact. In doing so, ESCAP uses the data entered by Programme Managers in PMT.

Projects are monitored in the Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR) solution of the Umoja suite, which is a powerful yet complex tool for project monitoring. IPMR contains a series of interlinked modules for each step along the project cycle management.

The roles in relation to organizational planning and monitoring are manifold, as is the Umoja solution. Qualified staff that requires access to the system for fulfilling professional functions and has undertaken relevant training can request access to Umoja through the [Bangkok Service Hub](#).

New programme managers requiring access to Umoja are encouraged to take the training on Financial Management (FM) and Grants Management (GM) modules. Training on Umoja and its diverse modules is available on the [iLearn UMOJA platform](#).

4. EVALUATION

The Secretary-General issued the Administrative Instruction (AI) on Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat ([ST/AI/2021/3](#)) that sets out how Secretariat entities should manage, conduct and use evaluation to better inform programme planning and reporting on programme performance. The AI prescribes instructions and procedures for the implementation of article VII, Evaluation, of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation, and the Methods of Evaluation ([ST/SGB/2018/3](#)), otherwise known as PPBME.

Consistent with the above documents, the present section presents the evaluation policy at ESCAP. It defines evaluation, explains its purpose and use, identifies the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, describes the different types of evaluation activities of ESCAP, highlights the most relevant evaluation norms, standards and criteria, explains the evaluation planning and budgeting, specifies the management arrangement and presents several mechanisms to use evaluation results for accountability and organizational learning.

4.1 Definition

As per the PPBME (Regulation 7.1), the objective of evaluation is:

- a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives.
- b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.

Evaluation as per UNEG is defined as an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance⁶. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria described in Section 4.6 below. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations, and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.

4.2 Purpose and use of evaluation

The purposes of evaluation at ESCAP are as follows:

- To facilitate internal assessment and reflection on how to enhance the effectiveness and performance of ESCAP,
- To support ESCAP management and member States' decision-making processes with independent and credible evaluative evidence,
- To provide an independent perspective on results achieved of ESCAP programmes and projects for accountability purposes,
- To identify lessons learned to effectively mainstream UN commitments to gender equality and disability inclusion,
- To inform the design and implementation of regional frameworks or action plans, programmes, and projects,

⁶ UNEG (2016) [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)

As per the PPBME (Regulation 7.2), all activities programmed shall be evaluated over a fixed time period. Similarly, member States of ESCAP call for periodic evaluations of the secretariat's programme of work, including the work of divisions, subregional offices, and regional institutions⁷. On certain occasions, member States also mandate the secretariat through a resolution to conduct an evaluation of a specific theme or area of work in support of its decision-making processes.

4.3 Roles and responsibilities

The following organizational roles and responsibilities govern evaluation at ESCAP:

- **The Commission:** Provides overall guidance and oversight of ESCAP's work. The Commission also requests the Executive Secretary to conduct independent evaluations through resolutions.
- **The Executive Secretary:** Assumes a critical leadership role in ensuring an empowered evaluation function with sufficient resources to carry out periodic evaluations and use evaluation findings to enrich strategic planning, improve organizational learning and strengthen accountability. He/she approves the ESCAP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Guidelines, the annual ESCAP evaluation plan and signs off on the management response and follow-up action plan to evaluation recommendations.
- **Senior management:** Integrates evaluation in its substantive areas of work, supports the conduct of evaluations as a member of the evaluation reference group, and ensures the implementation of follow-up actions to evaluation recommendations.
- **Strategy and Programme Management Division (SPMD):** SPMD, through its Evaluation Unit, manages the evaluation function at ESCAP. It manages the planning, conduct and follow-up to evaluations, develops evaluation tools and guidelines, communicates evaluation results and builds evaluation capacities and culture at ESCAP.
- **Programme Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Coordination Team:** Provides guidance to their colleagues on requirements for evaluation during the design and implementation phase of programmes and projects, supports the conduct of evaluations of their programme of work, facilitates dissemination and use of evaluation results and coordinates the monitoring and reporting on follow-up actions to evaluations by their division or office.
- **Programme/project managers:** Integrates evaluation in its substantive areas of work, supports the conduct of evaluations, uses evaluation results to inform programme planning and delivery and ensures the implementation of follow-up actions to evaluation recommendations.

ESCAP has a dedicated Evaluation Unit situated within the Strategy and Programme Management Division. The Evaluation Unit is staffed by the Chief of Unit, an Associate Programme Management Officer, and a Programme Management Assistant. The Unit reports to the Director of SPMD, who in turn, reports directly to the Executive Secretary of ESCAP. The Executive Secretary is accountable to the member States through the Commission.

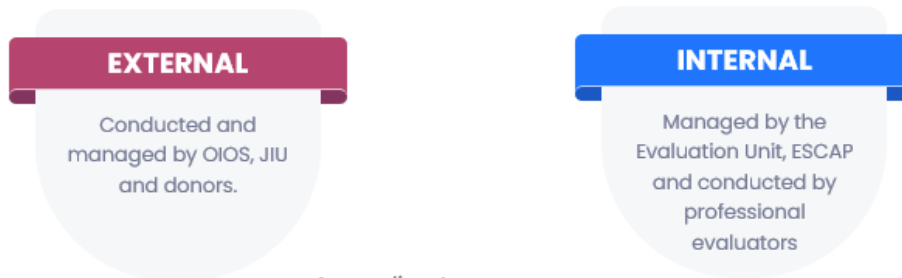
4.4 Types of evaluation activities

At ESCAP, there are several types of evaluation distinguished based on who manages them and their coverage as illustrated below.

⁷ Resolution 66/15, "Strengthening of the evaluation function of the secretariat of the Commission"

Types of evaluation

According to its management



According to coverage



4.5 Evaluation norms and standards

Evaluations at ESCAP align with the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation. Selected norms and standards are presented below with a brief description of its application in the ESCAP context.

Norms and standards for evaluation



- **Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets (UNEG norm 1).** Evaluations should promote and contribute to the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At ESCAP, evaluations are designed to assess ESCAP's contributions to the implementation of the SDGs and other internationally agreed goals by member States and offer recommendations towards greater alignment of its programme of work with the SDGs.

- **Utility (UNEG norm 2):** There should be a clear intention to use the evaluation results. ESCAP facilitates a planning process of each evaluation to clarify the use of the evaluation at the outset, i.e. for organizational learning to feed into future programmes and projects, accountability to member States and donors, informing decision making and policy changes, operational improvements, etc.
- **Independence (UNEG norm 4):** External evaluations are managed and conducted by organizations other than ESCAP (e.g., OIOS, JIU and donors) and can be considered truly independent. Internal evaluations are managed by SPMD, through its Evaluation Unit, and conducted by external professional evaluators (consultants) who have the full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially and have access to information on the subject being evaluated.
- **Transparency (UNEG norm 7):** Transparency is necessary in all stages of the evaluation process to build ownership and facilitate consensus. Evaluation reports (including the terms of reference and management response) are available to major stakeholders and are public documents accessible from the [ESCAP evaluation webpage](#).
- **Human rights and gender equality (UNEG norm 8):** ESCAP upholds the integration of universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality throughout its work. ESCAP commits to mainstream a gender perspective into all stages of evaluation in line with the evaluation performance indicator included in the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality and women's empowerment. ESCAP evaluation tools, such as the standard evaluation TOR, inception report, report template and quality criteria, ensure the integration of gender equality perspectives in evaluations at ESCAP.
- **Disability inclusion:** In June 2019, the UN Secretary General launched the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNIS) to ensure transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations. The Strategy consists of a system-wide policy and an accountability framework organized in 15 performance indicators. At ESCAP, the Executive Secretary issued the ESCAP Disability Inclusion Policy and Implementation Plan in August 2020 to operationalize UNIS. Under the Policy, ESCAP commits to integrating disability inclusion in all phases of the evaluation process and in every type of evaluation. ESCAP evaluation tools, such as the standard evaluation TOR, inception report, report template and quality criteria, ensure the integration of disability inclusion in evaluations at ESCAP.
- **Professionalism (UNEG norm 10):** Evaluation should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. Professionalism is ensured through rigorous selection processes of professional evaluators (external consultants) and rigorous evaluation methodologies and quality assurance system. ESCAP engages evaluators who have prior evaluation experience and produced evaluation reports that meet the UNEG quality standards.
- **Management response and follow up (UNEG standard 1.4):** ESCAP commits to addressing the findings and recommendations of each evaluation through a management response and follow up action plan. The management response provides senior management's views of the evaluation recommendations, including whether and why management agrees or disagrees with each recommendation. The management response details specific actions to implement those recommendations that were agreed to by the management. SPMD, through its Evaluation Unit, coordinates the preparation of the management response and monitor the implementation of agreed follow-up actions.

4.6 Evaluation criteria

ESCAP uses the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as the basis for evaluative assessment. Each of the six criteria is summarized by a broad question, which illustrates its overall meaning⁸:

- Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things?
- Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?
- Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?
- Efficiency: How well are resources being used?
- Impact: What difference does the intervention make? (See Box 1)
- Sustainability: Will the benefits last?

Moreover, as per the AI on Evaluation, ESCAP integrates gender equality and disability inclusion in evaluation procedures and practices. Towards this end, ESCAP refers to the [UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#) and [Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Indicator](#). Evaluations can use the most relevant criteria. If all are used, the evaluation terms of reference should identify which are a priority.

Box 1 Impact

Impact criterion is defined by the OECD as the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. OECD suggests that impact criterion can be used loosely to mean “results” in the broadest sense. It also clarifies that the use of impact criterion should not be confused with the term “impact evaluation”, which refers to specific methodologies for establishing statistically significant causal relationship between the intervention and observed effects. ESCAP uses the impact criterion to assess its contribution to changes in policies, strategies, norms, and standards in its member States in the medium term.

4.7 Evaluation planning and budget

In line with the AI on Evaluation, ESCAP develops an annual evaluation plan and ensures adequate allocation of funds for evaluation capacity to deliver the plan. The AI on Evaluation also mandates each entity to establish clearly the specific regular periodic basis within which all subprogrammes under their responsibility are evaluated and indicates that each subprogramme is evaluated at least once every eight years. In this context, ESCAP prepares an annual evaluation plan that identifies the topics for evaluation and required financial resources. The plan shall be strategic in identifying the topics for evaluation and should justify why the topics are selected. These topics shall be derived from:

- Mandates from member States, including through a resolution,
- Information needs of ESCAP management,
- Results of previous evaluations and lessons learned,
- Requirements of ESCAP management, development partners and donors to conduct evaluation of selected capacity development projects, and

⁸ OECD (2021) [Applying evaluation criteria thoughtfully](#)

- Planned external evaluations to be undertaken by OIOS and JIU.

SPMD, through the Evaluation Unit, is responsible for preparing the annual evaluation plan and submits it to the Executive Secretary for review and approval. Once approved by the Executive Secretary, it is circulated to senior management through a memorandum. The ESCAP annual evaluation plan is also posted on the ESCAP website and the SPMD Gateway.

Staff and financial resources are required to conduct of evaluations at ESCAP. Staff resources are needed to manage and support the entire evaluation process and financial resources are used in contracting external consultants, including consultancy fees, travel of consultant, and cost of editing, translating and disseminating evaluation outputs. The financial resources for conducting evaluations at ESCAP are derived from two sources:

Evaluation budget in SPMD. ESCAP has allocated a dedicated budget in SPMD for the conduct of at least two (2) subprogramme or thematic evaluations mandated by member States or required by ESCAP management annually.

Project budget. ESCAP utilizes earmarked project funds to conduct evaluations of capacity development projects funded from the United Nations Development Account or extrabudgetary sources. In line with its guidelines, each Development Account project selected for evaluation allocates at least two per cent of its total budget for conducting an evaluation.

ESCAP management requires that every capacity development project funded from extrabudgetary sources allocates a dedicated budget for evaluation if any of the following criteria is met: 1) the project has a total budget of US\$400,000 or more and a duration of two years or longer; and 2) the project has a total budget of US\$800,000 or more, regardless of its duration. An evaluation budget of approximately 3 to 4 per cent of the total project budget, with a minimum floor of US\$12,000, is recommended which can be increased depending on the size of the project budget, the scope of the evaluation and any other applicable criteria such as required language skills for the evaluator.

4.8 Evaluation management

The AI on Evaluation requires a management arrangement for each evaluation that ensures impartiality and independence. One key element of independence is to designate an evaluation manager and team members who are not part of the team that designs or manages the implementation of the programme or project being evaluated. In compliance with the AI on Evaluation, ESCAP puts in place the following arrangement for managing evaluations:

4.8.1 Evaluation manager

SPMD, through its Evaluation Unit, is responsible for managing all types of evaluation commissioned by ESCAP. As the evaluation manager, the Evaluation Unit has the following responsibilities:

- Oversees and manages the entire evaluation process,
- Establishes the evaluation reference group (ERG) and organizes their meetings,
- Prepares the terms of reference and coordinates inputs from the evaluation reference group,
- Provides a shortlist of suitable candidates of professional evaluators to the evaluation reference group for selection. Candidates should have the professional and solid experience in conducting evaluations in the UN and other international development organizations,

- Manages interactions and communications between the evaluator and the evaluation reference group,
- Ensures the quality of the inception and evaluation reports, and coordinates comments or inputs from the evaluation reference group,
- Coordinates the preparation of the management response and follow-up action plan.

For external evaluations conducted by OIOS, JIU and ESCAP partners, SPMD, through its Evaluation Unit, serves as the main focal point to coordinate ESCAP's engagement and input to the evaluation.

4.8.2 Evaluation reference group

ESCAP uses an ERG to support the conduct of evaluations and enhance ownership of evaluation results. The ERG comprises the following members:

For subprogramme or thematic evaluations, the Executive Secretary or the concerned Deputy Executive Secretary chairs the ERG. Other members include the Director, SPMD, subprogramme manager, a staff from the subprogramme, and the Evaluation Unit. With the Chair's approval, other staff members may be requested to join the reference group.

For project evaluations, the ERG comprises the Director/Head/Section Chief of the implementing office, staff responsible for implementing the project, staff from collaborating divisions/offices and the Evaluation Unit.

SPMD, through its Evaluation Unit, initiates the establishment of the ERG in consultation with the team responsible for the subprogramme or project being evaluated. The group shall ensure gender representation and an appropriate mix of skills and perspectives.

The roles and responsibilities of the ERG group include:

- Supports the evaluation process and guides the overall focus and direction of the evaluation,
- Reviews the terms of reference and the selection of the evaluator/evaluation team based on a shortlist provided by the Evaluation Unit,
- Facilitates stakeholder identification and consultations, and provides access to information sources (documents and interviewees) to support data collection,
- Reviews the draft evaluation report following the ESCAP quality checklist for evaluation reports,
- Guides and provides input to the preparation of a management response and follow-up action plan,
- Promotes the use and dissemination of evaluation results.

External stakeholders may be invited in the ERG to provide different perspectives and knowledge on the subject, identify additional stakeholders for consultation and interviews and promote the use and dissemination of evaluation results to relevant stakeholders. External stakeholders do not take part in the selection of the evaluator and approval of the evaluation products.

4.8.3 Programme/project manager

In addition to participating in the ERG, the subprogramme/project manager has the additional tasks:

- Identifies a focal point to coordinate inputs and engagement to the evaluation process,
- Provides the evaluator with a stakeholders list and relevant information needed to undertake the evaluation,
- Facilitates engagement of selected stakeholders through interviews, focus group discussions and surveys,

- Compiles other data and information requested by the evaluator.

4.9 Selection of evaluators

The AI on Evaluation requires that each entity should use qualified external and internal evaluators with relevant professional competencies and experiences. In accordance with the [UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework](#), ESCAP selects evaluators who have the following profile:

- Good professional and technical foundation on evaluation, including familiarity with the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation, solid knowledge of evaluation design, approaches and methods and analytical skills to interpret findings and formulate conclusions and recommendations demonstrated through several years of experience in conducting evaluation for UN entities and other international organizations and preparation of evaluation reports that meet the UNEG quality standards for evaluation reports.
- Evaluators must also have knowledge of the United Nations System and its principles, values, goals and approaches. ESCAP also seeks to find evaluators who have some experience in the subject matter being evaluated although they might be difficult to find at times.
- To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators must not have been involved in the design, management, and implementation of the programme or project being evaluated, nor expect to be in the future.

For subprogramme evaluations, the Executive Secretary is responsible for selecting the evaluator from a shortlist provided by the Evaluation Unit, in consultation with the ERG. For project evaluations, the ERG selects the evaluator from a shortlist provided by the Evaluation Unit.

The Evaluation Unit maintains a roster of evaluation consultants who have good professional and technical foundation on evaluation and several years of experience conducting evaluations for UN entities, including ESCAP, in the Asia and the Pacific region. It also has access to evaluation consultant rosters maintained by other UN entities, including the Evaluation Consultant Resource maintained by the Evaluation Section, DMSPC and those maintained by members of the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific.

ESCAP adheres to the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#) and [Code of Conduct](#) in evaluation and all staff and consultants engaged in evaluation are required to uphold these standards. To this end, ESCAP develops a Consultants Agreement form for evaluators to sign off as part of the contracting process.

4.10 Quality assurance

The AI on Evaluation requires an appropriate evaluation quality assurance system. A quality assurance system is also called for in UNEG norms and standards for evaluation (Standard 5.1). Producing high-quality evaluations is key to improving performance, generating knowledge, and supporting accountability and credibility of programmatic results. ESCAP has put in place the following quality assurance mechanisms in its evaluations:

- During the design stage of evaluation: Evaluation Unit ensures that the evaluation term of reference complies with the ESCAP standard template and contains all the necessary elements and the evaluator selected to conduct the evaluation meets the required qualifications.
- During the final stage of evaluation: Evaluation Unit ensures that evaluation reports are reviewed against the ESCAP quality checklist for evaluation report, including an assessment of the quality of evaluation recommendations.

4.11 Use of evaluation results and follow-up

ESCAP promotes the use of evaluation results through an interactive process that involves key stakeholders, including managers and staff in the subprogramme/project being evaluated. ESCAP also ensures that recommendations, findings and lessons learned are considered in programme planning and are integrated into organizational policies and procedures.

4.11.1 Prepare a management response and action plan

ESCAP prepares a management response and follow-up action plan to each evaluation, in accordance with the AI on Evaluation. The management response is a formal written response from the organization to the evaluation recommendations and ensures the timely and effective use of evaluations results.

ESCAP management's participation in the preparation of management response and follow-up action plans and signing the final document constitutes an organizational commitment to the implementation of follow-up actions to evaluations.

The Evaluation Unit initiates and coordinates the formulation of the management response by seeking inputs from key stakeholders within 2-3 months after the completion of the evaluation report. The final management response is included in the published evaluation report.

The chart below presents the internal ESCAP accountability chain to ensure follow-up actions are fully implemented.



4.11.2 Disseminate evaluation results

To ensure transparency and promote organizational learning and accountability, evaluation findings should be disseminated in accordance with the following policy:

- Once an evaluation report is prepared, the evaluation reference group organizes a meeting to present the evaluation results, provides feedback to the evaluator and assesses the relevance

and utility of the evaluation recommendations. The reference group may invite other staff members as well as external stakeholders to the meeting to promote organizational learning and the use of evaluation results.

- All evaluation reports (including the management response) are made available to ESCAP stakeholders through the [ESCAP evaluation database](#) accessible from the ESCAP website. These reports are also uploaded to the [UNEG database](#) on evaluation reports as required under the UNSDG compact.
- SPMD also organizes internal briefings on evaluation results for ESCAP management and staff to highlight important evaluation findings and recommendations, particularly where they are of strategic importance. The lead evaluator or staff members may give such briefings.
- Evaluation results are summarized in the biennial report on the evaluation activities of the Commission and considered under a dedicated agenda item at the annual Commission session of ESCAP. The biennial report includes a summary of the main findings and recommendations contained in evaluations conducted during the biennium and the steps taken by the secretariat to address those recommendations. It also contains an outline of the efforts made by the secretariat to strengthen the evaluation function.
- Evaluation reports that are mandated to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies (i.e., the Commission, Governing Councils etc.) are also prepared in the proper format and editorial standards for pre-session documents.

4.11.3 Inform programme and project design

ESCAP also incorporates results and lessons learned from previous evaluations in preparing the annual programme plan and reports on its planned evaluation for the subsequent year. It also requires the preparation of capacity development projects to explain how lessons learned and recommendations from relevant evaluations have guided the development of the proposed projects.

4.12 Partnerships

ESCAP promotes coherence and synergies on evaluation within the UN system by actively participating in the work of the global United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the regional United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP). ESCAP co-organizes the annual UNEDAP Regional Course on Evaluation in the UN context which is aimed at building evaluation capacities and promoting coherence in evaluation practices in the UN system. Within the United Nations Regional Commissions (ESCAP, ECLAC, ESCWA, ECE and ECA), the Monitoring and Evaluation Focal Point Network has been established for sharing evaluation resources and experiences and aligning evaluation procedures and practices.

4.13 Evaluation resources

The Evaluation Unit produces evaluation guidelines, templates, and instructional videos to facilitate the evaluation process and help ensure high quality evaluation products. The following materials are available from the [Evaluation section of the SPMD Gateway](#):

INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS	TEMPLATES	GUIDELINES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of project monitoring and evaluation at ESCAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation terms of reference • Evaluation matrix • Evaluation Inception report • Evaluation report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for an evaluation • Evaluation criteria and questions • Quality checklist for evaluation report • Common evaluation limitations

INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS	TEMPLATES	GUIDELINES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting a project evaluation (10- step process) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management response and follow-up action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for preparing a management response and action plan and monitoring implementation of actions • Mainstreaming gender in evaluations at ESCAP • Integrating disability inclusion in evaluations at ESCAP