IUCN Project Guidelines and Standards

Module 5
Evaluation and Closure

Version 2.2 – 2016

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Summary of supporting tools for Project Evaluation and Closure

All PGS tools can be downloaded from the Union Portal (click here)[1]

Tool	Section of the PGS Module for reference
• Evaluation Terms of Reference template (optional)	5.4 Scope and terms of reference for evaluations
• Management Response template (mandatory)	5.5.6 Facilitating the management response
• Checklist project closure (optional) • Project closure template (optional)	5.6 Project closure

Note: not all steps in identification or conceptualization are supported by a tool. See the table at the end of Module 1 for an overview of the mandatory tools and processes.

5 Project Evaluation

5.1 Definition and rationale

Project evaluation assesses a project's contribution to solving the conservation or development problem that it has targeted. Evaluation studies are usually undertaken as an independent examination of the background, strategy, objectives, results, activities, and means deployed, with a view to drawing lessons that may guide future work. Evaluation ensures that what is learned from running projects is captured and used for planning future projects, and can be used to ensure that projects comply with environmental and social safeguards[2]. Evaluation has three main purposes: learning and improvement, accountability, and evidence-based management.

[1] Full URL of the Union Portal page for the PGS Tools: **https://portals.iucn.org/union/node/5095**
[2] See the Environmental and Social Management Framework.

The IUCN M&E Policy defines evaluation as:

> *Evaluations are formal IUCN activities that provide evidence of the achievement of results and institutional performance. Evaluation is a periodic and systematic assessment, as impartial as possible, of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of an activity in the context of stated objectives. Evaluations can focus on different IUCN activities, including programmes, projects, policies and organizational units. Evaluations should provide credible, reliable and useful information, enabling timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons learned into relevant decision-making processes. (IUCN M&E Policy, 2015)*

5.1.1 When is evaluation required?

At IUCN project evaluations are undertaken as agreed with the project's donor(s), normally at the mid-term of the project schedule and at its termination. **Every IUCN project with a value over CHF500,000 requires an end of project evaluation. In addition, every IUCN project with a value over CHF2,000,000 will add a mid-term evaluation to its monitoring and evaluation plan.** (IUCN M&E Policy, 2015)

For GEF projects, two aspects of GEF guidance extend beyond current IUCN evaluation practice: a) all GEF-financed projects must receive a final (terminal) evaluation; and b) terminal evaluations of GEF projects include, at a minimum, ratings on a project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, monitoring and evaluation implementation, and the likelihood that results (outputs and outcomes) can be sustained.

All evaluations are subject to a management response that spells out the actions that will be taken to respond to the recommendations from the evaluation and is used to track follow-up.

5.1.2 What this section covers

This chapter of IUCN's Project Guidelines and Standards (PGS) aims to provide guidance for project evaluations. At IUCN project evaluations are generally outsourced to external experts, however the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PM&E) undertakes evaluations upon request and within available resources. PM&E is independent of all project management in IUCN and can offer a unique perspective for evaluation. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to guide the management of evaluation and complements the IUCN M&E Policy (2015). This section includes:

- Minimum standards for evaluation (relevant sections of the IUCN M&E Policy)
- Content of evaluations
- The evaluation process
- Templates for use in IUCN project evaluations
- List of resources for more information on evaluation

5.2 The Evaluation policy

Any evaluator conducting an evaluation of an IUCN project must adhere to the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2015) and it is IUCN's responsibility to support him/her in applying the principles and standards laid out within.

5.2.1 Evaluation criteria

IUCN evaluations explore the five major evaluation criteria outlined below. Section 5.4 on Scope and Terms of Reference for Evaluation provides guidance in selecting the appropriate evaluation criteria for the project.

> ***Relevance –*** *To what extent is the project contributing to the strategic direction of IUCN and/or its Members and partners? Is it appropriate in the context of its environment?*
>
> ***Effectiveness –*** *To what extent is the project meeting its objectives and performing well?*
>
> ***Efficiency*** *– To what extent is the project using its resources cost-effectively? Does the quality and quantity of results achieved justify the resources invested? Are there more cost-effective methods of achieving the same result?*
>
> ***Impact (and results) –*** *What are the positive, negative, primary, secondary and long-term effects of an intervention directly, indirectly, intended or unintended? Were negative environmental and social impacts adequately mitigated or avoided? In other words, what difference has the activity made? This can focus on results including direct project outputs, short- to medium-term outcomes, and progress toward longer term impact including global environmental benefits and local human well-being benefits.*[3]
> (See the M&E Policy for a discussion on cost of impact evaluation.)
>
> ***Sustainability*** *– Is the enabling environment within which the project operates supportive to its continuity? To what extent will the activities and outputs be maintained after development support is withdrawn?*

5.2.2 Guiding principles

A *summary* of the guiding principles is provided here and the principles in detail are available in the IUCN M&E Policy.

> **Results-oriented accountability**: Evaluations should make relevant links to the overall results and outputs of IUCN's programmes and policies.
>
> **Improving planning and delivery**: Evaluations must provide useful findings and recommendations for action by managers.

[3] While this definition is not included in the M&E Policy, "human wellbeing benefits" refers to benefits accrued to men and women (gender responsiveness) and to stakeholder groups identified in the project's design.

Quality control: M&E involves the systematic integration of a wide assortment of knowledge and information related to a set of questions posed. As a result of gathering, analyzing and making judgements, IUCN staff and their stakeholders make important decisions related to the quality of their work at the policy, programme, project and organizational level.

Supporting an evaluation culture: Evaluation is seen as a tool to help staff improve their work and results; it should be incorporated into ongoing work processes and incentive systems.

Working in partnership: Evaluations should consider the participation of members and other stakeholders.

Transparency: Evaluations require clear communication with all those involved in and affected by the evaluation.

Access: The results of evaluations should be readily available to members, partners, donors and other stakeholders between Congresses, and at the World Congress itself; all final reports, an management responses where available are uploaded on the IUCN website.

Ethics: Managers should carefully assess if evaluation is the appropriate tool to use in a given situation. Managers should remain open to the results, and consider the welfare of those involved in and affected by evaluations. External evaluators must receive a copy of The IUCN M&E Policy (2015). The confidentiality of stakeholders' inputs should be ensured.

Impartiality: Evaluations should be fair and complete and should review strengths and weaknesses. The procedures should aim to minimize distortion caused by personal biases.

Independence: The M&E function should be independent to ensure credibility and maximize benefits. The evaluation function shall be separate from IUCN's management and report to Council via the Director General. While a high degree of independence is desirable, it does not mean all M&E should be external but rather that the principle of independence must be respected.

Credibility: Evaluations should adhere to standards or best practices, as developed by IUCN, and managers should strive to improve the quality of evaluations over time.

Utility: Evaluations must serve the information needs of intended users.

Gender-responsive evaluation

IUCN is committed to promoting gender equality and thus IUCN's evaluations aim to be gender responsive, including by:

1. Ensuring that the Guiding Principles of the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Policy are applied in a gender sensitive manner with regards to working in partnership, transparency, ethics, and impartiality described above;
2. Ensuring that men and women are adequately consulted and included in the design of

the evaluation, data collection and use of its results;

3. Ensuring that the evaluation team has the expertise to review monitoring data, including gender responsive and sex-disaggregated monitoring data, and the expertise to design evaluation questions and data collection that will test the gender responsive aspects of the project;
4. Ensure that evaluation findings and outcomes influence future project planning to be more responsive to/inclusive of gender considerations.

To improve your understanding of gender responsive evaluation, see the UN Women handbook on managing gender responsive evaluation or the free e-learning course on Equity Focused and Gender Sensitive Evaluation by My M&E.[4]

5.3 Roles and responsibilities for project evaluation

5.3.1 Roles and responsibilities

Table 5.3.1 Summary of roles and responsibilities for evaluation

Person / Units	Roles and responsibilities
Council and senior management	Oversight of the IUCN evaluation function Use of evaluation results
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PM&E)	Management of global evaluations and evaluations of regional GEF projects. Including oversight of the process and quality control Evaluation upon request and within available resources
Regional Programme Coordinators (RPCs)	Management of regional project evaluations (except GEF projects) Evaluation of regional projects when appropriate (except GEF projects)
Individual project and programme managers	Plan for evaluation, including assisting with TOR development Support evaluations Use evaluation results
External evaluators	Evaluation

IUCN Council, **through the Programme and Policy Committee**, is responsible for overseeing the evaluation function. The Committee's role is exercised through the Director General, who has responsibility for the monitoring function and for facilitating the evaluation function. The Council and the Programme and Policy Committee can request specific evaluations and updates on the implementation of the recommendations of completed evaluations.

[4] - How To Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation Handbook: http://www2.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/unwomen-evaluationhandbook-web-final.pdf?v=1&d=20150423T183815
- E-learning course: http://www.mymande.org/elearning/course-details/1

IUCN senior management, which includes the Director General, the Deputy Director General, Regional Directors and Global Directors, are the primary users of evaluation results and should actively participate in evaluations in terms of collaboratively setting a work plan, participating in design, considering draft reports and using results in decision making. Senior management also monitors the implementation of changes as recommended by an evaluation. Individual project and programme managers also use the results of project evaluations for improving their projects and to inform planning of future projects.

The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (based at Headquarters) is responsible for:

- Assisting individual project and programme managers with facilitating evaluations. Note: regional evaluations are delegated to Regional Programme Coordinators (RPCs), except for GEF project evaluations which always require external evaluators and management/oversight by PM&E.
- M&E standard setting, coordination and implementation of the IUCN M&E Policy
- Working with senior management and Council to prepare M&E work plans and reporting
- Developing the annual evaluation plan and tracking evaluations
- Liaising with IUCN's donors with regard to evaluation
- Supporting the development of appropriate Terms of Reference for evaluations, including helping evaluators to identify appropriate evaluation questions, data collection tools and methods
- Training and coaching staff and managers on application of the Project Guidelines and Standards, including guidance on evaluation
- Managing externally conducted evaluations and ensuring they meet IUCN's minimum standards
- Upon request, and within available resources, conducting independent evaluations of IUCN projects, and strategic reviews of organizational units/programmes
- Ensuring that evaluation reports and management responses are made publicly available on the IUCN website
- Ensuring that all evaluations are followed up with a complete management response
- Creating processes to help IUCN staff learn lessons from evaluations

Individual project and programme managers are responsible for using the results of project evaluations. Project and programme managers also support evaluation by:

- Implementing donor contractual requirements for evaluation
- Ensuring that resources for evaluation are built in to project budgets at the target level of 3-5% of the total budget
- Liaising with PM&E or relevant regional M&E staff to provide the necessary support to design, manage and deliver high quality evaluations
- Preparing and implementing a management response to ensure that the results of evaluations are used for programme and project planning improvements

5.3.2 Ensuring the appropriate levels of independence and oversight

From the preparation through to tracking implementation of a management response, an evaluation manager is assigned for coordination and oversight. This can be a member of PM&E, an individual programme manager who does not have direct project management responsibility for the evaluated project, or the RPC in the case of regional project evaluations. For GEF

projects it will always be PM&E. For advice, the PME unit can be reached on evaluation@iucn.org

Table 5.3.2 Assigning evaluation manager responsibility

Type of project being evaluated	Evaluation manager	Evaluator*
Small HQ-based or global project (under CHF 500,000)	Project manager	External consultant
Small regional project (under CHF 500,000)	RPC	External consultant
Medium HQ-based or global project (over CHF 500,000)	PM&E or appropriate programme manager	External consultant
Medium regional project (over CHF 500,000)	RPC	External consultant
Large HQ-based or global project (over CHF 2,000,000)	PM&E or appropriate programme manager	External team of consultants
Large regional project (over CHF 2,000,000)	RPC	External team of consultants
All GEF projects, regardless of size	PM&E	External team of consultants

*PM&E, and in some cases RPCs, evaluate projects upon request and within available resources.

5.4 Scope and Terms of Reference for evaluations

The Evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR) is a statement of expectations for the evaluation that includes the principle issues to be addressed in the study and details about the required methodology, scheduling, cost, and necessary evaluator qualifications. The TOR, particularly the objectives and evaluation questions, sets the basic parameters for the design and implementation and the final report will be checked against the TOR by PM&E.

In IUCN, the evaluation manager is responsible for ensuring that clear and focused Terms of Reference (TOR) are written for evaluations.

- All TORs for evaluations should be approved by PM&E or the Regional Programme Coordinator before the evaluation process proceeds.
- All GEF evaluation TORs must be approved by PM&E and GEF Coordination Unit.

An Evaluation Terms of Reference Template is provided with the PGS tools, or past examples can be requested from the PM&E Unit.

5.4.1 Defining focus and scope for evaluation

Before writing the TOR, PM&E and the relevant managers who will use the evaluation results should consider:

- Principle issues and concerns that are driving the need for the evaluation.
- Potential users of the results and the information they need. Potential users: project manager, senior management, partners, donors, other stakeholders.
- Overall purpose, bearing in mind the three general purposes of evaluation at IUCN: learning, accountability and evidence-based management.

GEF projects almost always require midterm reviews and terminal evaluations, and the GEF Coordination Unit should be consulted about this on a case by case basis. This differs from supervision missions which are part of normal procedures for monitoring GEF projects, although both evaluations and supervision missions use similar techniques.

5.4.2 Choosing evaluation criteria

IUCN evaluations address some or all of the criteria of **effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability,** and **impact**, which together provide an integrated analysis of the performance of a project. In all cases, evaluation must first consider all five criteria and decide which ones are the most important given the context. The scope of an evaluation may be limited to only a few criteria because of stakeholder interests, resource constraints or feasibility. Mid-term reviews or evaluations are more likely to focus on relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, whereas impact and sustainability are more appropriate for end of project evaluations.

For GEF funded projects, an assessment of the effective application of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (if relevant) will fall within the scope of the evaluation, to determine the extent to which expected environmental or social impacts were indeed avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Also for GEF portfolio projects, the GEF provides clear guidance for evaluation criteria that must be included in any evaluation. These can be found on page 31 of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy 2010, which can be downloaded from www.gefeo.org or requested from the PM&E Unit.

5.4.3 Formulating evaluation questions

Evaluation criteria guide the choice of evaluation questions, and the questions ensure the evaluation responds to stakeholder needs. There should be a clear link between the evaluation questions and the purpose and evaluation criteria for the study. The following should be considered when formulating evaluation questions:

- Objectives and results of the project or programme, including measures to be gender responsive
- Donor requirements
- Key stakeholders' input
- Stage of the project or programme in terms of its life cycle
- Likely users of the evaluation study (donors, regional staff, IUCN members, etc.) and what they are most interested in
- Relative importance of each of the possible questions
- Relative ease, data availability and resource requirements for answering the possible questions

Once the evaluation questions have been defined, they are used in the evaluation matrix that is illustrated in the Section 5.4.6 below.

5.4.4 Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholders are all those people (men and women) or organizations that have a "stake" in the project, either during its lifetime or in subsequent years. Stakeholders can include: participants, beneficiaries, indirect beneficiaries, donors and contractual partners, programme or project managers, other staff, volunteers, Members of IUCN with specific interest or competency in the project or programme area, community and interest groups, government officials, elected officials, government employees with a relevant interest.

Stakeholders bring different perspectives on the programme or project intervention and will be more likely to act upon the evaluation's recommendations if involved from the project planning stage. Stakeholder participation should be equitable across different groups (i.e. age, sex, ethnic groups), feasible in the context of the evaluation, and useful to the evaluation process. It is important to consider those stakeholders who typically would not be asked to participate in such activities, such as women.

Stakeholders should at a minimum be involved in: defining evaluation questions, defining the schedule of activities for the evaluation study, data collection, disseminating results and gathering feedback, and implementing the management response.

The evaluation manager and project manager should work together to brief stakeholders on the purpose of the evaluation. For anyone who will be a data source (respondents to surveys, interviewees or other) the evaluation should be communicated through audience-appropriate channels/means well in advance announcing the evaluation, its purpose, the expectations of the stakeholders in contributing, and what the stakeholders can expect to see after the evaluation. In IUCN's case this is the final evaluation report and management response (both are publically disclosed on IUCN's website – and should be shared with key stakeholders).

5.4.5 Appropriate content and organization of evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR)

The following outline presents the standard contents of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for an evaluation.

A. Rationale or Purpose for the Evaluation

This identifies why the evaluation is being commissioned at this time. Is it a mid-term review (more likely to be formative[5]) or terminal evaluation (more likely to be summative)? Who is requesting it? (One or two paragraphs)

[5] **Formative evaluation** intends to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programmes. **Summative evaluation** is conducted at the end of an initiative (or a phase of that initiative) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. It is intended to provide information about the worth of the programme. (Taken from UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results (UNDP, 2009).

B. Audience for the Evaluation

This identifies who is commissioning the evaluation – usually the donor or the manager or group expected to act on the results.

C. Context for the Evaluation

This includes the critical aspects of the social, economic, cultural, political and environmental context for the programme or project. What is the programme or project all about? How and when did it begin? What does it aim to achieve? Who does it serve? Detailed background information on the programme/project can be included as an Appendix. (Several paragraphs)

D. Evaluation Stakeholders

This identifies the major stakeholders in the evaluation, including their interests and concerns about the project/programme. (One or two paragraphs)

E. Objectives (Evaluation Issues and Questions)

This identifies the evaluation criteria that should be used in the study. What are the principle issues and questions that will be explored in the evaluation? Evaluation questions should be gender sensitive, seeking to assess whether the project benefitted men and women equally. (Several paragraphs)

These issues and questions should be presented in an Evaluation Matrix that can be included in the main TOR or as an Appendix. A sample format for the matrix is presented below. (One to five pages for the matrix depending on the scope of the evaluation.)

F. Methodology

This makes specific suggestions for the data collection strategy and methods to be used such as key informant interviews, questionnaires, focus groups. Are there geographic or cultural conditions or other aspects that evaluators will have to consider in order to design and implement an effective evaluation (including ability of both men and women to participate)? (Several paragraphs)

G. Qualifications of the Evaluators

This identifies the specific skills or characteristics needed in the evaluator or evaluation team. (One or two paragraphs or often a bulleted list)

H. Schedule

This identifies the start and completion of the evaluation, and important milestones such as reporting on interim findings, submission of a draft report and the final report.

I. Outputs and Deliverables

This identifies the outputs and deliverables that are required from the evaluator or evaluation team. These often include a work plan (see Annex 1), briefings, interim report, draft findings, presentations and the final report. Deadlines for these products should be specified in the schedule. (About a half-page, usually a list of the key deliverables and deadlines)

J. Cost

This identifies the resources available for the evaluation, including consultant fees, data collection and analysis, travel, reporting. This is not a detailed budget, but general allocations for broad budget categories.

K. Appendices – Evaluation Matrix and Other Attachments

In addition to the detailed evaluation matrix, an evaluation may also include a Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) or the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

Table 5.4.5 Checklist for approving an evaluation TOR

	Consideration	**Y**	**N or only partially – follow up needed**
1	Have the relevant stakeholders been consulted in the process of writing the TOR?		
2	Do the TORs have all the suggested content and an adequate format?		
3	Have the priority issues and questions been included in the evaluation matrix?		
4	Are the objectives and deliverables feasible under the proposed budget?		
5	If the project has an ESMP, does the evaluation address this?		

5.4.6 Evaluation matrix

The evaluation matrix is a working document that helps to clarify the evaluation criteria (performance areas), key evaluation questions, sub-questions, indicators and anticipated sources of data for the study.

An Evaluation Matrix template is included in the Evaluation Terms of Reference Template.

Table 5.4.6 Suggested format and examples of content for an Evaluation Matrix*

EVALUATION CRITERIA	KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SUBQUESTIONS[6]	INDICATORS[7]	DATA SOURCES / METHODS
Relevance	To what extent does the intervention respond to priority problems and issues in the situational analysis?	1. To what extent does development of non-timber forest products meet the needs of the women and men from the communities involved? 2. 3.	1. Degree of satisfaction of key community members (disaggregated by sex) 2. 3.	Interviews with community members Situation analysis, trends data
Effectiveness	To what extent is the intervention achieving its planned results (outcomes and outputs)?	1. Was the forestry assessment methodology implemented through a participatory process? 2. 3.	1. Frequency of participation by stakeholder groups 2. Percentage of women and men involved 3.	Interviews with community members, partners, donors Observation
Efficiency	To what extent is the relationship between costs and results reasonable?	1. Do actual expenditures correspond to planned expenditures? 2. 3.	1. Ratio of planned to actual expenditures 2. 3.	Review of financial documents Data from other projects of similar scope
Sustainability	To what extent are the results and the processes initiated by the project sustainable beyond the period of implementation?	1. Have communities found alternative sources of financing? 2. 3.	1. Number of alternative sources of funding available to the women and the men in the community 2. 3.	Interviews with community leaders Review of local government budgets Interviews with donors
Impact	To what extent is the intervention contributing to a long-term positive effect on the ecosystem and the communities? To what extent have environmental and social risks identified through ESMS process been avoided or mitigated?	1. Are the threats to people's livelihoods and to the ecosystem being reduced? 2. 3.	1. Frequency of threatening activities 2. 3.	Data analysis from situation analysis, baseline studies, interviews with community leaders

[6] Multiple sub-questions (typically 5 to 10) for each key evaluation question identified.
[7] Multiple indicators for the sub-questions.

***** The first two columns (Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions) reflect generic evaluation criteria.

5.4.7 Guidance for developing the Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix provides a clear opportunity for putting gender considerations into practice by focusing what the evaluation will examine and how it will be undertaken.

"Gender-responsive evaluation has two essential elements: what the evaluation examines and how it is undertaken. It assesses the degree to which gender and power relationships—including structural and other causes that give rise to inequities, discrimination and unfair power relations, change as a result of an intervention using a process that is inclusive, participatory and respectful of all stakeholders (rights holders and duty bearers)."

- UN Women, Independent Evaluation Group

Evaluation Criteria (aka: performance areas): principle areas to explore in the evaluation. In some cases specific performance issues such as gender dimensions or financial viability[8] will be included.

Evaluation questions: overall general questions that facilitate analysis of the evaluation issues. These are <u>not</u> the questions that are asked directly of stakeholders, but rather the overall questions that the evaluation should try to answer. The section above "Formulating evaluation questions" provides guidance.

What evaluation questions should focus on for each criterion:

> **Relevance –** whether or not the intervention or programme is addressing important issues and concerns to IUCN, to partners, members, or other stakeholders, and/or whether it is on target in terms of solving the key problem(s). Do stakeholders care about the intervention and believe it makes sense given the problem and situation?
>
> **Effectiveness –** achievement of the results or outcomes of the project, programme or organizational unit. Is the intervention achieving its intended results?
>
> **Efficiency** – costs and services of the intervention: Is the intervention achieving results at a reasonable cost? Are there less costly ways of achieving the same thing?
>
> **Impact (and results) –** effects of the intervention on the broader context (organization, region, community). Have there been changes in the ecosystem functioning, and/or the community's quality of life as a result of the project?
>
> **Sustainability** – to what extent is there an environment that favours the continuity of the intervention. Will participants and beneficiaries continue with the project activities beyond the project timeframe?

Sub-questions: the specific questions needed to answer the key questions (used to develop surveys or interviews). They will provide more specific and concrete focus for the indicators and the types and sources of data needed.

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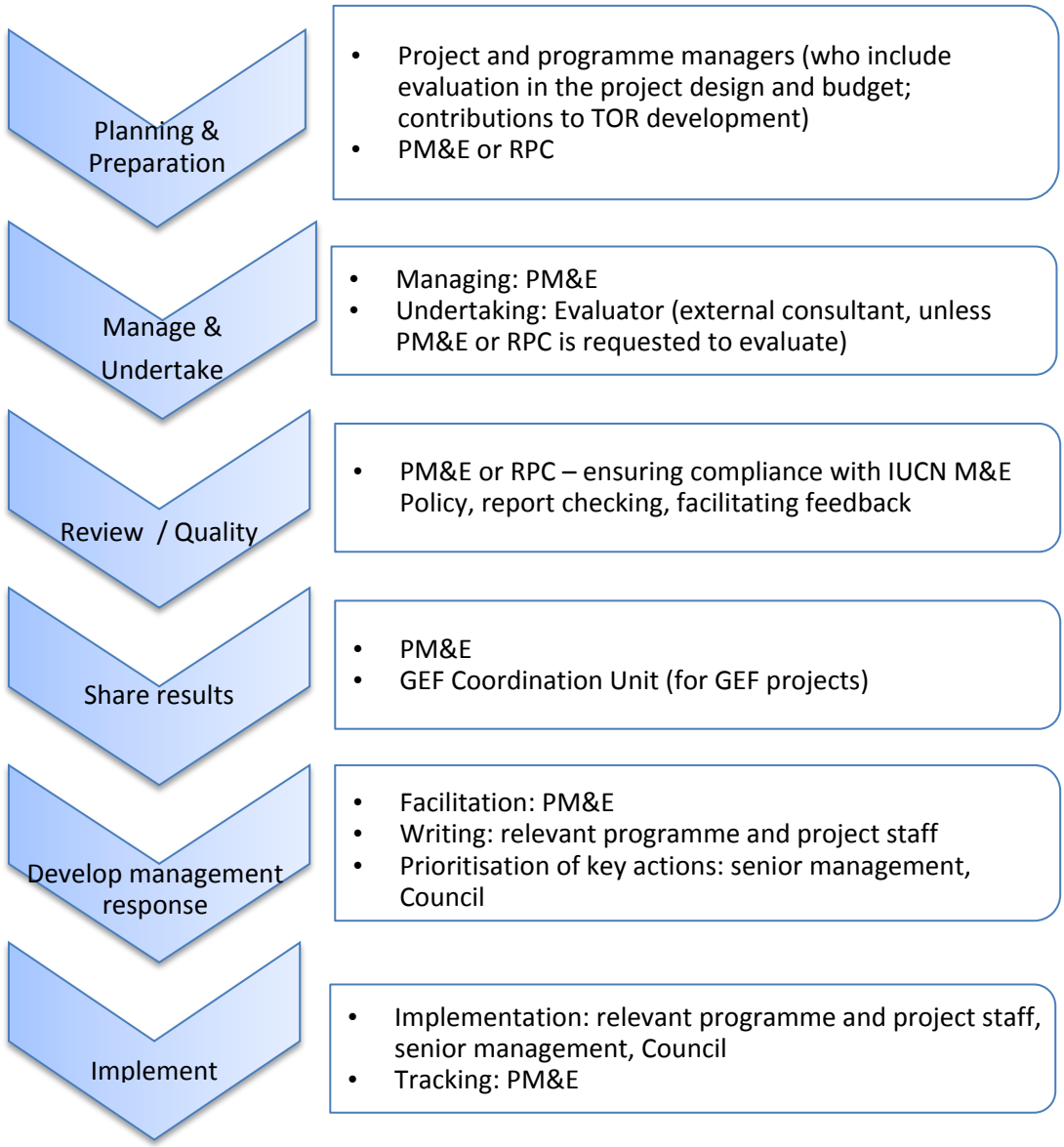
[8] Financial viability is more likely to be relevant for IUCN Strategic Reviews commissioned by senior management than project evaluations.

Indicators: how the evaluation will clarify and assess the sub-questions. They may be qualitative or quantitative.

Data sources / Methods: Different sources and methods can be used to answer the sub-questions. These may include specific people, different kinds of documents such as situation analyses, trends analyses, gender analysis of benefits, specific research methods such as semi-structured interviews or surveys, observation – including field visits, desk review or other types of information.

5.5 The Evaluation Process

Most evaluations in IUCN will follow a standard process that begins with a planning stage and ends with the actions taken to follow up on the evaluation's recommendations.



The following sections provide an overview of what is expected in each stage of the evaluation process.

5.5.1 Planning and preparation

Planning for evaluation starts during the project concept and design stage. All projects over CHF500,000 and all GEF-financed projects must be evaluated. In addition, every IUCN project over CHF2,000,000 also requires a mid-term evaluation. Based on international best practice, IUCN recommends incorporating a 3-5% budget line for evaluation in projects and programme budgets.

Project and program managers plan for evaluation by including it in their project designs and budgets. In preparation for the evaluation, the evaluation manager will decide what stakeholders will be involved and the focus and scope of the evaluation through the TOR.

5.5.2 Selecting and contracting the evaluators

Evaluators and evaluation teams must be able to deliver a structured evaluation that asks key questions, provides data from key stakeholders or makes judgments on key evaluation criteria, and not only a technical opinion on a project. A good evaluator will demonstrate the following characteristics[9]:

- **Technical evaluation expertise:** Understanding of, and experience in, the required evaluation methodologies
- **Sectoral or thematic expertise:** Expertise in the sectoral area of the project being evaluated (conservation and development, or specific themes such as wetlands, species, protected areas, etc.), and having the expertise to evaluate the project for gender responsiveness.
- **Credibility:** Recognized as expert evaluator and judge by the main stakeholders of the project and its evaluation
- **Impartiality:** No conflict of interest with any of the parties involved in evaluation
- **Communication skills:** Able to communicate the evaluation results in a manner that is easily understood by all parties
- **Interpersonal skills:** Able to interact with all parties in a sensitive and effective way,
- **Availability:** Available to conduct the evaluation at the required level of depth in the specified time frame
- **Ethics:** Able to apply the guiding principles of IUCN's M&E policy and to apply gender sensitivity in application of these.

Programme and project managers should be involved in the choice of the evaluation team. Hiring an evaluation consultant or team should follow IUCN Procurement Policy and Contracts Review and Sign Off. The evaluation team should be gender balanced if possible. PM&E can provide a roster of qualified and trusted evaluators. Note that while the PM&E unit does on some occasions *undertake* evaluations, the majority of project evaluations are only *managed* by PM&E, RPCs or project managers (for small projects) and undertaken by external consultants.

5.5.3 Large, complex or joint evaluations

When managing a large, complex or joint evaluation a Steering Committee is recommended. This could be comprised of the lead managers from each agency, and the Global Head, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit or Regional M&E staff person and should have a description of responsibilities that clarifies who signs off on the TORs for each agency, how the quality of the evaluation will be ensured, and who is in charge of managing the evaluation consultants. For major joint reviews the Steering Committee then signs off on the TORs,

[9] Adapted from Inter-American Development Bank, Evaluation Office, Evaluation: A Management Tool for Improving Project Performance, Washington, D.C., 1997, p.46

methodology and work plan (see Annex 1), and provides direction to the consultants, even if IUCN or another agency takes care of the administrative aspects (consultant's contracts, etc.).

5.5.4 Undertaking the evaluation

During the evaluation, several roles are key to supporting the process.

The evaluation manager oversees the process, including but not limited to:

- Requesting a work plan (guidance for this is provided in Annex 1) with activity schedule and planned report outline from the evaluator
- Informing stakeholders of the evaluation, schedule and progress
- Requesting regular updates from the evaluation team and ensuring the project and programme managers are able to provide feedback
- As needed, reviewing data collection instruments.
- Ensure the evaluation adheres to IUCN's M&E Policy
- Convening a meeting to review draft findings
- Communicating the findings to the different stakeholder groups
- Quality control (see below)

Individual project and programme managers:

- Provide all the documents that are necessary for the evaluation
- Provide contact information for any stakeholders to be contacted during the evaluation

Quality control

PM&E or the RPC managing the evaluation is responsible for ensuring that the evaluation study and evaluation report adhere to IUCN's M&E Policy. This includes the evaluators following appropriate practice during the study, as well as the content and organization of the report adhering to the TOR.

5.5.4 Appropriate content and organization of the report

Evaluation reports should present findings clearly and concisely, and to this end evaluators should be encouraged to keep reports short. The appropriate length depends on the scope of the project being evaluated but 15-30 pages should suffice. A succinct executive summary is always required at the start of an evaluation report.

A. Executive Summary: including key issues, findings, conclusions and recommendations

B. Table of Contents

C. List of Acronyms and abbreviations

D. Introduction: background for conducting evaluation, type of evaluation, timing (start-up, mid-term, terminal, etc.), who has commissioned it, and the intended audiences for the evaluation.

E. Purpose of the Evaluation: purpose, scope and focus, and evaluation criteria.

F. Project/Programme Context: country, regional or institutional context highlighting relevant development and environmental indicators and priorities, or programme/project needs.

G. Project/Programme Description: describes project/programme as it was originally planned and notes major changes during its evolution.

H. Evaluation Issues and Questions: as found in the evaluation matrix within the evaluation TOR.

I. Methodology: detailed description of methodology with rationale. Cites data sources consulted stakeholders. Explains the approach to data analysis.

J. Findings and conclusions: findings of the evaluation and how they are based on the data collected. Various different formats possible (graphs, tables, etc.). Conclusions based on a number of findings, covering a major aspect of the evaluation.

K. Recommendations: directed towards the evaluation's key audience and users. They state clearly the steps that can be taken in response to the evaluation's findings and conclusions.

L. Action Plan: (optional) sets out a proposed timeframe and responsibilities for acting on the Recommendations as a starting point for managers to consider how to implement the recommendations.

M. Appendices: including TORs, data collection instruments (e.g. interview protocol or survey questions), records of field visits and the management response (or a placeholder for it (see section 5.5.6 below).

5.5.5 Assessing the quality of the evaluation report

Quality control at a minimum should ensure the report meets the evaluation standards set out in the M&E Policy, meets the expected deliverables outlined in the evaluation ToR, and presents factually accurate information. It can also focus on improving the report in terms of organisation and language, clarity of data-based findings and conclusions, or other changes to improve its usefulness to the evaluation audience (including additional analysis of data by stakeholder group).

However, the findings (judgments on data) are the responsibility of the evaluator. Evaluators and evaluation managers are expected to respect the principle of independence. Any disagreement with the findings can be included as a critique of findings and included as an addendum. Any disagreement on the recommendations can be noted in the management response.

Table 5.5.5 Checklist for evaluation report quality control

	Quality issue	Y	N or only partially – follow up needed
1	Does the report respond to each of the key questions and issues defined in the evaluation TOR?		
2	Does it have the appropriate content and format?		
3	Is it clearly written and well organized?		
4	Does each component of the report meet the evaluation standards in the M&E Policy?		
5	Is the factual data in the report accurate?		
6	Is it clear how the evaluators reached their conclusions from the findings and data analysis presented?		

5.5.6 Facilitating the management response

Every evaluation must be followed up by a management response that explains what follow up actions will be taken.

A management response is IUCN's way of responding to the key issues and recommendations raised in evaluations. It is a document that structures the organisation's response to the results of the evaluation. Management responses are a critical part of IUCN's accountability and enable IUCN and other stakeholders to use the lessons learned in future project development or for scaling up to the programme level.

The management response is normally prepared by the Head of the programme under which the project falls, but can be facilitated by PM&E or the RPC. All of the key stakeholders for the evaluation should also be involved in developing or at least approving the management response.

Management responses are not only for mid-term reviews, they are also valuable and required for terminal evaluations even though they are likely to have a different emphasis. The management response should become an annex to the report.

Use the Management Response Template, filling in the first 4 columns. The last two columns can be filled in as the Management Response gets updated at regular intervals (twice yearly or yearly).

Recommendation	Response	Intended Result	Planned/pending Actions (responsibility, timeframe)	Completed Actions	Notes

5.6 Project Closure

Key tools: Project Closure Report template

Every project eventually ends or transitions into a new phase, and there are specific steps to be taken at the end of a project or phase:

- Closure of implementation and financial aspects (including contracts, fixed assets, etc)
- Reflect and gather lessons
- Prepare a Project Closure Report

5.6.1 Ending activities, budget expenditure and contracts

At the end of a project, all activities are ended and with that come a number of administrative tasks which include ending contracts with project staff, consultants and partners, disposal of fixed assets and closing the financial books.

All of these topics are covered in the IUCN Project Budgeting Guidelines.

5.6.2 Reflect and gather lessons

At the end of the project, the project team and key partners should meet to reflect on the achievements (intended and unintended) of the projects and any lessons which have been learned that might help the design and implementation of future projects. The project's achievements should then be documented in a Project Completion Report.

An exercise to reflect and gather lessons is best accomplished in a workshop setting, facilitated by someone with experience in harvesting lessons. The workshop can follow a "brainstorm and norm" process whereby the participants brainstorm on areas of success (intended and unintended), areas for improvement and then agree on the most important, forming lessons for future project teams.

Lessons can often be found in annual technical reporting and evaluations which were completed during the life of the project. A summary of these reflections and lessons should be presented to the working group.

5.6.3 Prepare a Project Completion Report

The final step in closing a project is producing a Project Completion Report and deciding which documentation from the project to maintain in permanent archives.

A key part of this process will be to determine which documents to archive permanently. This list should include:

- The project concept and project proposal documents, along with any documentation related to appraisal and approvals;
- All technical and financial reports produced during the life of the project;
- Workshop reports and minutes of important meetings

- Any publications (books, scientific articles) and other communications materials (websites, films, brochures, etc.) that were produced;

Annex 1: Evaluation work plan

A work plan is the document prepared by the evaluator or the evaluation team in response to the TOR that governs the implementation of the evaluation. It clarifies what will be done, how, by whom, and at what cost. It is an important communication and operational tool, but it should not be unduly rigid. It sets out the requirements for updating the preliminary evaluation matrix provided with the TOR, and specifies the specific evaluation issues, questions, methods of data collection and analysis that will be undertaken during a specified time and within a specified budget. It establishes commitments in terms of roles, deliverables, schedules, and budget.

The evaluation manager is responsible for approving the work plan.

Sample content and organization of a work plan:

A. Project/Programme Overview
The first section of the work plan provides an overview of the programme/project and its logic. It gives relevant information concerning background context, inputs and expected results.

B. Evaluation Mandate
This section should indicate the rationale and purpose for the evaluation, which usually are drawn directly from the TORs.

C. Evaluation Matrix
The evaluation presents the evaluator's approach to the conceptual issues and questions to be addressed in the evaluation. It should be based on the matrix that is included in the TOR, but the evaluators should enhance the matrix, by refining the questions and adding elements such as "indicators", or the basis for judgments.

D. Evaluation Methodology
This section usually begins with a summary of the general approach to be taken by the evaluation, including the reasons for choosing the proposed methodology. The section should indicate the general design or type of evaluation and the major methods of data collection and analysis. It should be clear who will participate in the evaluation (stakeholders) and how their perspectives will be taken into account.

E. Evaluation Team
Where more than one evaluator is involved, the work plan should indicate the name and role of each member of the team. It should also summarize their prior experience and qualifications for playing that role in the evaluation.

F. Activity and Effort Analysis
The plan should list the evaluation's activities and estimate the effort required by each team member in order to accomplish them. The level of effort is recorded in terms of the number of person days it will take to complete the activity.

G. Schedule of Activities

The timeline and schedule for the evaluation is another important component. This schedule should clearly indicate the dates of particular milestones in the process (the presentation of draft findings, for example). It should note the meetings, briefings or expected delivery time of reports to facilitate the manager's role in monitoring the implementation of the evaluation.

H. Budget

The work plan's budget should present the costs of conducting the evaluation. It should include categories such as consulting fees/honoraria, travel and per diems, and other budget items associated with the evaluation (for example, translation of questionnaires and the final report).

I. Outline of the Evaluation Report

Although the report outline may change over the course of the study, it is important for the work plan to provide an overview of the expected components and organization of the final report.

Checklist for assessing the work plan

	Concern	**Y**	**N or only partially – follow up needed**
1	**Does it have the appropriate content and format?** The work plan includes all the necessary elements of a good evaluation and is presented in an acceptable format (see suggested outline on p. 26).		
2	**Does the evaluation seem feasible?** The work plan clearly illustrates: – how stakeholders (women and men) will be engaged – a reasonable time frame – feasible methods of data collection and analysis – the right mix of people involved as evaluators – sufficient allocation of resources		
3	**Does the evaluation seem like a useful and worthwhile investment?** The work plan clearly specifies the issues and questions to be explored and illustrates how the data collection and analysis will help to answer those questions. The cost of conducting the evaluation seems reasonable and does not exceed the benefits of the evaluation for IUCN.		
4	**Does the schedule include reporting and feedback for monitoring the implementation?** The work plan's schedule of activities includes briefings, reports, and draft findings to facilitate your role in monitoring the implementation of the evaluation and supporting the use of its findings.		

Annex 2: Further sources of information on evaluation

For further information on undertaking and managing evaluations, IUCN recommends the following material, which has also been used as a basis for this chapter (all available online or on request from PM&E):

- How to Manage Gender Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation Handbook, UN Women Independent Evaluation Office, 2015 http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/unwomen-evaluationhandbook-web-final.pdf
- The "Step-by-Step Guide to Managing Evaluations" developed by the Evaluation and Policy Unit of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)
- The International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET)**:** Building Skills to Evaluate Development Interventions, "IPDET 2001," a course developed by the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department (OED) and the Faculty of Public Affairs and Management at Carleton University.
- "Program Evaluation: A Train the Trainer Workshop", a course designed by Universalia Management Group.
- OECD Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance (DAC). This set of principles gives the views of the members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on the most important requirements of the evaluation process based on current policies and practices as well as donor agency experiences with evaluation and feedback of results.
- GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (2010). Available from: www.gefeo.org
- UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009)
- UNEG Good Practice Guidelines for Follow Up to Evaluations UNEG/G (2010).
- Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation --Towards UNEG Guidance, UN Evaluation Group (UNEG), 2011
- Addressing Gender in Evaluations – Guidance Note for Approach Papers, GEF Independent Evaluation Office: https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/Gender-Guidance-Evaluation.pdf (draft, December 2015)