



Evaluation Manual

for OSCE staff and consultants managing and conducting
decentralized evaluations

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPC	Conflict Prevention Centre
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DHR	Department of Human Resources
DMF	Department of Management and Finance
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
EA	Evaluability Assessment
EFP	Evaluation Focal Point
EM	Evaluation Manager
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ExB	Extrabudgetary (projects)
GE	Gender Equality
GenAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence
HoM	Head of Mission
HR	Human Rights
ICTS	Information and Communication Technology Services
IR	Inception Report
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIO	Office of Internal Oversight
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PESU	Programming and Evaluation Support Unit
RMCIS	Risk Management, Compliance and Information Security
SEC	Secretariat
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely
SSA	Special Service Agreement
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UB	Unified Budget
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

Foreword

Evaluation plays a central role in supporting the OSCE in delivering on its mandate. In a complex and rapidly evolving security environment, the Organization must be able to demonstrate not only what it does, but how well it does it, for whom, and with what results. High-quality, credible and used evaluations are essential to inform decision-making, strengthen accountability, and promote organizational learning.

Since the launch of the [OSCE Evaluation Policy](#) (Administrative Instruction 3/2022), the OSCE has made important efforts to strengthen its decentralized evaluation function. At the same time, experience has shown that evaluation capacities and practices across the Organization remains uneven. Evaluations are not always planned early enough, sufficiently resourced, commissioned with clarity, or managed in ways that fully safeguard quality, independence and use. As a result, valuable opportunities for learning, improvement and evidence-based decision-making are sometimes missed.

This Evaluation Manual has been developed to respond to this challenge. Its purpose is to provide practical, clear and accessible guidance to those who plan, commission, manage, conduct and use decentralized evaluations across the OSCE. It translates the Evaluation Policy and international standards into concrete guidance, tools and good practices that can be applied in day-to-day work, while remaining flexible enough to reflect the diversity of OSCE contexts, mandates and operating environments.

The Manual is designed as a tool aligned with the evaluation policy to guide evaluation managers and users to ask the right questions at the right time, to clarify roles and responsibilities, and to make informed choices throughout the evaluation process. Particular emphasis is placed on strengthening evaluation quality, integrating human rights and gender equality considerations, and ensuring that decentralized evaluations are designed and managed with a clear intention to be used.

This Manual should be seen as a living document. It will evolve as evaluation practice matures, lessons are learned, and feedback from users is incorporated. Its effectiveness ultimately depends not on the document itself, but on the willingness of managers and staff to engage with evaluation thoughtfully, critically and constructively.

The development of the Manual has been a collaborative effort drawing on the expertise and experience of colleagues across the OSCE, as well as external expertise. The Manual has been prepared by an external evaluation consultant, Katia Sediakina-Rivière, under the overall supervision of Nynke de Witte, Head of Evaluation/Deputy Director, and support and inputs from Jeremy Creton, Evaluation Officer and Lucia Canziani, evaluation support consultant. The Manual greatly benefited from consultations with Evaluation Focal Points across the OSCE. Their contributions ensured that the manual reflects current practices, challenges and opportunities. In this context we extend special thanks to Kalina Lakinska and Matej Manevski from the Mission in Kosovo, Radmila Todosijevic from the Mission to Serbia, Andrey Butsman from the Secretariat / Programming and Evaluation Support Unit (PESU), and Jane Lawson and Emma Corneliusson from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for their valuable inputs and feedback. Finally, OIO is grateful to the Federal Republic of Germany for its extrabudgetary funding, which made it possible to develop this manual.

It is my hope that this manual will serve as a useful resource for Evaluation Focal Points, Project/Programme managers, and external evaluation consultants that are involved in decentralized evaluations. By providing clear guidance and promoting good practices, it aims to support the continuous improvement of evaluation processes and contribute to strengthening the credibility of evaluation outputs across the organisation.

I encourage all colleagues involved in planning, managing and using decentralized evaluations to make active use of this Manual, to share their experiences, and to contribute to strengthening evaluation practice across the Organization.

Signed,
Susanne Frueh
Director of the Office of Internal Oversight

Snapshot of the OSCE Evaluation Policy

The [OSCE Evaluation Policy](#) (Administrative Instruction 3/2022), published on 14 November 2022, sets out the framework for evaluation practice in the Organization. It highlights that evaluation in the OSCE is not a compliance exercise, but a practical tool to improve performance, strengthen accountability, and support learning. All staff involved in managing programmes and projects play a role in making it work.

What is evaluation in the OSCE?

The OSCE understands evaluation¹ as a systematic and objective assessment of a planned, on-going or completed intervention, project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and achievement of results. The aim is to determine its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. Evaluation also determines the coherence of OSCE interventions with other work conducted by the Organization, as well as their value added when compared to the activities of other actors.

The policy applies to all OSCE activities, regardless of funding source, and is relevant for:

- Fund managers and senior management
- Programme/project managers
- Evaluation focal points (EFPs)
- External evaluation consultants

Types of evaluation

- Independent evaluations – led and conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO). These evaluations often focus on strategic issues and thematic areas of relevance to the Organization as a whole.
- Decentralized evaluations – overseen by Fund Managers and commissioned and managed by programme or project managers with support of EFPs and conducted by external evaluation consultants. These evaluations typically focus on individual projects or on a sequence of projects within a programme, or on the work of one executive structure in a specific thematic area. This type of evaluation is the primary subject of this Manual.
- Joint evaluations – conducted with internal or external partners
- Self-evaluations – internal assessments conducted by implementing units and coordinated by CPC/PESU and/or corresponding units or appointed focal points in executive structures

Evaluations can be ex-ante, mid-term, final, ex-post, or real-time².

International standards and principles for evaluation

All OSCE evaluations must follow United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) standards, especially:

¹ Evaluation is different, but complementary, to audit, which emphasizes issues related to the effectiveness and efficiency of organizational processes and governance, their compliance with internal standards, and the adequacy of internal controls given the risks at stake.

² See definitions in Annex 1 – Glossary.

- Independence & impartiality – evaluators must not be involved in design or implementation of project / programme to be evaluated and should not be biased
- Credibility & quality – sound methods, reliable data, transparent analysis
- Utility – evaluations are meant to be used
- Ethics, human rights & gender equality – integrated throughout the evaluation process
- “Do no harm” – protect confidentiality and sensitive information

When is a decentralized evaluation required?

Decentralized evaluations should be conducted for all programmatic Unified Budget (UB) and Extra-Budgetary (ExB) funded interventions where one or more of the following criteria apply:

- The budget³ is EUR 400,000 or more
- Consecutive UB or ExB projects and their combination under a UB programme over a period of at least 4 years⁴ that meet the financial threshold mentioned above
- Carry exceptional risk (reputational, political, or operational risk)
- Are innovative or pilot initiatives
- Have a donor requirement for evaluation⁵

Resources for decentralized evaluations:

- The Organization sets a target of 3% of available operational costs of the project/programme to be used for evaluation activities
- The minimum cost of an evaluation is around EUR 10,000 – 12,000

Roles and responsibilities for evaluation at the OSCE in brief:

- Programme/ Project Managers and, in some Executive Structures, the EFPs take on the role of Evaluation Managers to plan, budget, commission, manage and follow up on evaluations under the authority of the Fund Manager
- Evaluation Managers ensure quality, independence, and timely delivery
- Evaluation Focal Points provide advice, co-ordination, and backstopping to Fund and Evaluation Managers
- OIO leads independent evaluations and reviews, provides guidance and capacity development for decentralized evaluations, and produces synthesis and learning products of relevance for the Organization at large

³ In case expenditure is lower than the budgeted amount, expenditure should be taken as a reference.

⁴ Projects are to be considered consecutive, e.g. if they are implemented in various phases, and / or demonstrate thematic continuity or complementarity.

⁵ Donor-led evaluations may be considered as satisfying requirement for decentralized evaluations.

To ensure quality decentralized evaluations, all evaluation managers are expected to:

- Use clear, well-designed Terms of Reference
- Select qualified and independent evaluators
- Review reports for accuracy, clarity, evidence, and usefulness of recommendations
- Use OIO guidance, tools and checklists available on the intranet

Evaluation is only useful if results are used. Evaluation managers are expected to:

- Prepare and implement a recommendation implementation action plan
- Feed lessons learned into planning, programming, and decision-making
- Discuss findings with relevant stakeholders
- Share evaluation reports and action plans internally and, where appropriate, externally

Overview of the decentralized evaluation process at the OSCE

A manager of a decentralized evaluation shall:	
Planning <i>well before the project / programme starts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for the evaluation of ExB projects during the design phase <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for the evaluation of UB projects / programmes during the annual planning cycle <input type="checkbox"/> Set aside adequate budget for each evaluation (3% target) and, where relevant, include a communications budget for the dissemination and communication of results
Preparation <i>at least 6 months before the end of the project / programme or its mid-term</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> (optional but encouraged) Conduct evaluability assessments to ensure that conditions are in place for an evaluation (project has advanced, stakeholders and data available, evaluation has a budget...) <input type="checkbox"/> Develop evaluation Terms of Reference (ToRs) in co-ordination with the EFPs <input type="checkbox"/> Set up an evaluation Reference Group (even small) with interested stakeholders (internal and external) <input type="checkbox"/> Hire an independent external evaluator or team <input type="checkbox"/> Share this Evaluation Manual with the external evaluator(s)
Implementation <i>during this phase the data collection and reporting is done by the external evaluators with oversight by the evaluation manager</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide the external evaluator(s) with documentation on the intervention and stakeholder contacts <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate logistics for evaluators' travel to project sites <input type="checkbox"/> Review the inception report in co-ordination or consultation with EFP to ensure credible data is collected and the evaluation workplan is realistic and feasible <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that evaluator(s) consider human rights, gender equality, and inclusion in their data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Support data collection by the evaluator(s) as required <input type="checkbox"/> Review, with the EFP, the draft evaluation report and provide written feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Organize an evaluation workshop in co-ordination or consultation with the EFP so that evaluators can present findings
Follow-up and use <i>is essential for evaluation findings and recommendations to feed into decision-making and learning for future programme planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare an Evaluation Recommendation Implementation Plan within 4 weeks of the finalization of the evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Share evaluation findings with key stakeholders through knowledge products <input type="checkbox"/> Share the evaluation report through the EFP to the OIO <input type="checkbox"/> Take stock of evaluation findings and recommendations during annual planning meetings and during project design phases

Quality control of evaluation process and deliverables

Overview of responsibilities for decentralized evaluation

Fund Managers and Main Programme Managers oversee planning and management of decentralized evaluations and designate who approves evaluation deliverables.

Project and Programme Managers become **Evaluation Managers** when they are responsible for planning and commissioning decentralized evaluations of their projects and programmes.

Evaluation Focal Points are knowledgeable and experienced in evaluation practices and advise and support evaluation managers in planning, commissioning, quality control, and best use of the evaluations. They are appointed by the Heads of Executive Structures.

The OIO manages and leads independent evaluations and reviews, follows-up on implementation of recommendations and facilitates use of evaluation findings, provides guidance, tools and templates for decentralized evaluations, provides advisory, capacity building and other support to promote and strengthen the OSCE's overall evaluation culture, produces periodic quality assessments and syntheses of evaluations, collects decentralized evaluation plans and decentralized evaluations, and monitors and reports on the implementation of the OSCE's evaluation policy.

Table 1: Overview of responsibilities for decentralized evaluation at the OSCE

Fund Managers & Programme Managers	Evaluation Managers	Evaluation Focal Points (EFP)
One for every fund / programme	One for every evaluation	At least one EFP per Executive Structure
Approves evaluation plans and	Liaise with the EFP of their respective entity	Liaise with OIO on evaluation related matters and participates in OIO's Evaluation Network
Oversee management of decentralized evaluations within their executive structure/main programme	Hold overall responsibility for managing a decentralized evaluation of their project/programme/thematic area	Primary points of contact on evaluation within their Executive Structure or Secretariat department. Keep abreast of organizational developments in evaluation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approves (or delegates approval of) biennial evaluation plans - Approves (or delegates approval of) evaluation ToR - Approve (or delegates approval of) all evaluation deliverables produced by external consultants 	<p>Responsible for planning and budgeting of evaluations and then for commissioning them, ensuring their quality, follow-up, and use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan and budget for an evaluation during the project / programme design phase - Prepare for an evaluation (at least) 6 months before end of project / mid-term - Set up an Evaluation Reference Group - Draft evaluation ToR 	<p>Advise staff in their Executive Structure (including senior management) on how and when to plan for, prepare, manage, and follow up on decentralized evaluations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise Executive Structures in preparing and updating biannual decentralized evaluation plans - Bringing past evaluation findings to strategic meetings to ensure that they inform

Fund Managers & Programme Managers

- Sign off on evaluation recommendation implementation plans
- Consider evaluation results when deciding on new and programmes/projects proposals and budgets

Evaluation Managers

- Hire external evaluation consultant(s)
- Provide documents and contacts to external evaluator
- Facilitate mission travel for evaluators
- Review the quality of evaluation deliverables (as applicable) implement recommendations addressed to them
- Consider evaluation results when designing future projects and programmes

Evaluation Focal Points (EFP)

- future programme and project design
- Point evaluation managers to evaluation guidance and tools
- Participate in Evaluation Reference Groups
- Review draft ToR
- Support the hiring of external evaluation consultants
- Review the quality of evaluation deliverables
- Follow-up on implementation of evaluation recommendations and report to Fund Manager / Main Programme Manager
- Share evaluation results with peers and leadership in their structures and with OIO

Phase 1: Planning a decentralized evaluation

Quality evaluations need to be planned and budgeted for in advance. At the OSCE, evaluation planning and budgeting for an evaluation takes place **during programme and project planning**.

Step 1. Define learning and information needs for each Executive Structure	
When:	Annual planning review (first half of year)
Actors:	Fund Manager, department heads, EFPs, with programme and project managers
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Map UB and ExB spending on programmatic projects/programmes during past 4 years and budgets for 2 years to come → highlight projects/programmes with combined budgets of 400,000 Euros or higher ⁶ that have not been evaluated <input type="checkbox"/> Consider Executive Structures' learning and information needs for the year(s) to come <input type="checkbox"/> Suggest evaluation priorities aligned with learning and decision-making needs
Step 2. Review the requirements for evaluations at the OSCE	
When:	Start planning of evaluations for both UB programmes/projects (June) and ExB projects/programmes (variable)
Actors:	Programme and project managers (who become Evaluation managers) with EFPs
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult Guidance on planning and budgeting for decentralized evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Understand selection criteria for evaluations at the OSCE <input type="checkbox"/> Take stock of decentralized evaluations already conducted in each programmatic area <input type="checkbox"/> Identify lessons learned of completed and ongoing evaluations
Step 3. Identify evaluations to be conducted for the coming period	
When:	Annual / biennial planning
Actors:	Programme teams, EFPs
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify UB programmes/projects/thematic area(s) for evaluation for the following year based on the learning needs and the requirements of the Evaluation Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Identify any ExB projects to be evaluated the following year based on the learning needs and the requirements of the Evaluation Policy and/or donor agreements
Step 4. Budget for evaluations	
When:	Budget preparation (UB - July) and project design (ExB, variable)
Actors:	Evaluation managers with support from EFPs
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult Phase 1: Template for budgeting for a decentralized evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Include evaluation budgets in UB proposals <input type="checkbox"/> Integrate evaluation (modality, costs) in ExB concept notes, proposals and budgets
Step 5. Prepare and share the final Biennial Evaluation Plan with OIO	
When:	Prepare and plan for evaluations in June (UB) and share the updated biennial evaluation plan with OIO in January the following year
Actors:	Evaluation Focal Points under the oversight of the Heads of Executive Structures
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare or update Biennial decentralized evaluation plans

⁶ In case the expenditure is lower than the budgeted amount, then the expenditure should be taken as a reference.

Share [Phase 1: Template for the development of a biennial decentralized evaluation plan for executive structures](#) with OIO by January

Guidance on planning and budgeting for decentralized evaluations

Purpose: To outline who should plan and budget for evaluations at the OSCE, under what circumstances and timeframes.

Intended users: Evaluation Focal Points, managers of decentralized evaluations, Fund Managers (UB), and Programme or Project Managers (ExB) under the overall authority of the Heads of Executive Structures.

What does the OSCE Evaluation Policy say about planning and budgeting for evaluations?

Decentralized evaluations should be conducted for *all* programmatic Unified Budget (UB) and Extra-Budgetary (ExB) funded interventions *where one or more criteria apply*.

Criteria for selecting projects* and programmes for evaluation:

***Apply to programmatic projects/programmes** which either directly benefit stakeholders in participating States and / or build OSCE staff capacities⁷

- ExB projects with budgets⁸ of EUR 400,000 or higher;
- Combinations of UB or ExB projects under a UB programme that run over a period of at least four consecutive⁹ years and have combined budget⁷ of EUR 400,000 or higher;
- projects that have or might have created a considerable reputational risk¹⁰;
- projects that have an innovative or pilot nature¹¹;
- ExB projects with a specific donor requirement for evaluation, irrespective of the volume of the overall project budget.



Executive Structures are encouraged to prioritize evaluation of a combination of projects, programmes, thematic or cross-sectoral areas, and/or evaluations of portfolios by outcome over individual evaluations of smaller projects. Such evaluations are considered more strategic and can help guide programme design and planning in the long run. These evaluations can be budgeted by pooling funds from multiple projects where possible.

An evaluation is strategic and useful if it expected to:

- inform the future design of the project/programme
- provide evidence on cross-cutting areas (youth, gender, etc.)
- inform talks with potential donors for future programming needs
- answer key questions of stakeholders to meet their learning needs and to inform upcoming decision-making

Whose responsibility is it to plan and set aside budget for evaluations?

Project and Programme Managers (UB and ExB) with the support of Evaluation Focal Points under the overall responsibility and oversight of the Heads of Executive Structures.

⁷ In contrast, non-programmatic projects should be subject to management review or audit as per the relevant regulations.

⁸ In case expenditures are lower than the budgeted amount, expenditures can be used as a reference.

⁹ Projects are to be considered consecutive, e.g. if they are implemented in various phases, and / or demonstrate thematic continuity or complementarity.

¹⁰ as per the consideration of the Head of the executive structure, the Secretary General or OIO

¹¹ as per the assessment of the Head of the executive structure, the Secretary General or OIO

When to start planning and budgeting for evaluations?

Evaluation Focal Points should consult with all project and programme staff in their entities in preparing their overall Biennial Evaluation Plan¹² with a list of projects / programmes / thematic or cross-sectoral areas / outcomes for their Executive Structure based on their information and learning needs. This plan should be updated annually and submitted to the OIO in January. (See [Phase 1: Template for the development of a biennial decentralized evaluation plan for executive structures](#))

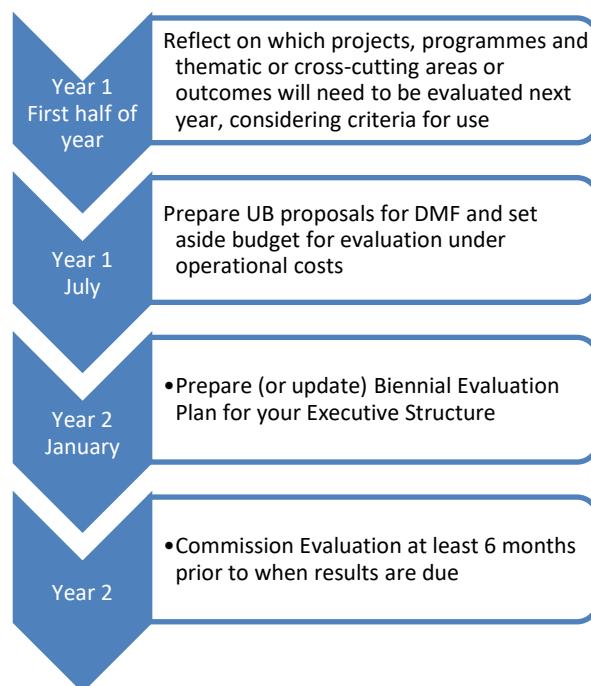
For **ExB projects**, during the project design phase, the project manager should decide on the evaluation modality (whether a mid-term and/or a final evaluation) and define the budget for evaluation(s) by including a dedicated budget line (a separate task) in the project proposal and budget. The project manager can consult the Evaluation Focal Point in his/her entity to explore the possibility of evaluating the project under a larger project portfolio or programme. If a larger evaluation is foreseen, it can be explored if the evaluation budget from the project can be pooled into a larger budget covering the thematic or programme evaluation. (See [Phase 1: Template for budgeting for a decentralized evaluation](#))

In the case of **UB projects and programmes**, budgeting for evaluations should be included as part of the Executive Structures' annual unified budget proposal that is presented by the SG to the participating States. This can also include plans and budgets for evaluation of groups of UB projects that fall under a UB programme or thematic area, or evaluations of the (multi-year strategies for a) Fund as a whole.

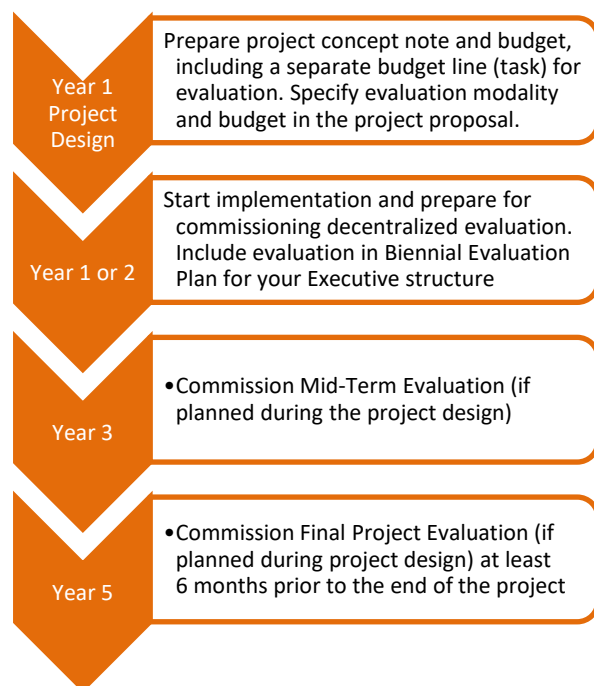
Indicative timeline for planning and budgeting:

Evaluation planning should take place *in parallel* with programme and project planning:

UB projects and programmes



ExB projects



How much budget to set aside for evaluation?

¹² As per their Terms of Reference, EFPs "support the management of the executive structure, department and/or unit in drafting and ensuring implementation of decentralized evaluation work plans."

The OSCE Evaluation Policy sets a target of **3% of available operational costs** as budget to be used for evaluation activities¹³. Such resources should come from existing (UB and ExB) funding envelopes. The minimum cost for a project evaluation is around EUR 10,000 -12,000. Projects with budgets¹⁴ above EUR 400,000 should set aside more than this, keeping in mind the 3% target of the project budget.

☛ **If a project or programme runs for several years, it is suggested to calculate the evaluation budget from the total projected expenditures over the implementation period.**

The evaluation budget for an ExB project is a direct cost that should be set aside on a separate task and budget line. For UB projects and programmes, evaluation budgets should be included in budgeted operational costs.

☛ **Funds may be pooled from several projects for an evaluation of thematic or cross-sectoral areas, and/or evaluations of portfolios by outcome. The overall evaluation budget is suggested to amount to around 3% of the combined operational project expenditures.**

What is the budget for evaluation used for?

- International and/or national evaluation consultant fees
- Travel fees for consultant(s), Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA)
- Support staff fees (enumerators for data collection, translators, interpreters)
- Communication fees (printing of by-products, design of infographics, dissemination of materials to stakeholders)

When not to plan for an evaluation?

If a donor commissions its own evaluation:

In this case, the OSCE can decide not to commission its own evaluation.¹⁵ It is recommended that relevant OSCE staff participate in the donor-led evaluation by providing input into the evaluation Terms of Reference, feeding into data collection, and reviewing draft evaluation deliverables (especially the evaluation report).

If an individual ExB funded project (or several projects) is covered in-depth by an Independent Evaluation conducted by OIO:

Such a case relieves the concerned executive structure of the need to commission an external decentralized evaluation. In this circumstance, any resources from the project, which were dedicated to a decentralized evaluation, should be made available to cost-share for the OIO-led evaluation.

Where to find the OSCE evaluation plans?

OSCE's Decentralized Evaluation Plan, compiled by OIO based on the inputs from all Executive Structures, is made available on the internal Evaluation Network Community of Practice page.

¹³ In line with international best practice and [UNEG Norms and Standards](#).

¹⁴ In case the expenditure is lower than the budgeted amount, expenditure can be taken as a reference.

¹⁵ As per the OSCE Evaluation Policy, donor-led evaluations may be considered as satisfying the requirement for decentralized evaluations.

Phase 2: Preparing a decentralized evaluation

Evaluations should be initiated with sufficient lead time to avoid being rushed and to ensure they meet quality standards, ideally **at least six months before the end of a project or programme, or before the expected evaluation delivery date.**

Step 1. Conduct evaluability assessment to ensure conditions are in place for an evaluation (optional but highly recommended)	
When:	At least 6 months before the evaluation results are due
Actors:	Evaluation manager
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult the Guidance on evaluability assessment in decentralized evaluation and associated Phase 2: Template for evaluability assessment report for a decentralized evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare an Evaluability Assessment for your project / programme / thematic area
Step 2. Set up an Evaluation Reference Group (optional but highly recommended)	
When:	When the evaluation is starting and the Terms of Reference are being prepared
Actors:	Evaluation manager
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult the Guidance for Evaluation Reference Groups in decentralized evaluations and Phase 2: Template for a decentralized evaluation terms of reference <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a brief ToR for the Evaluation Reference Group and invite members
Step 3. Prepare the evaluation Terms of Reference	
When:	As soon as it is decided an evaluation should start
Actors:	Evaluation manager
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult Phase 2: Template for a decentralized evaluation terms of reference <input type="checkbox"/> Consult Guidance on integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Terms of Reference, integrating the Evaluability Assessment, where relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Share the draft Terms of Reference with the Reference Group for inputs <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain approval from Fund Manager / Main Programme Manager on final ToR
Step 4. Hire an external evaluation consultant (or team)	
When:	When the Evaluation Terms of Reference are ready and approved
Actors:	Evaluation Manager, supported by EFP
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult the DHR Phase 2: Templates for Terms of Reference for OSCE consultants and for Consultancy Selection Report <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare DHR ToR based on the Evaluation ToR and attach the latter as an annex <input type="checkbox"/> Search the OIO evaluation consultant roster in TALEO / advertise for evaluator(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Review consultant profiles and applications, interview shortlisted candidates <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare selection report and share with HR for preparation of contract

Guidance on evaluability assessment in decentralized evaluation

The evaluability assessment (EA) informs the evaluation manager on whether a quality evaluation is feasible in light of the available data, time and evaluation budget. It also helps the evaluation manager determine to what degree the planned evaluation would provide credible and useful insights and thereby contribute to greater use.

An EA informs the preparation of the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the questions, indicators, data, and possible evaluation design, as well as the management of the evaluation. For this reason, the evaluability assessment and the subsequent evaluation are ideally to be managed by the same individual, but the EA could also be outsourced if appropriate.

The EA should examine the following five areas according to the [Phase 2: Template for evaluability assessment report for a decentralized evaluation](#) in this Manual:

1. Evaluation logframe or Theory of Change as stated in the project proposal, including objectives, results, and indicators – this is essential for determining the scope of the evaluation, which is to know what exactly is to be evaluated
2. Monitoring and data availability – help determine whether the intervention has advanced sufficiently in its implementation for there to be something to evaluate, and assess quality of baseline, output and outcome data;
3. Evaluation capacity – extent to which the evaluation can draw on previous evaluations or studies and documents;
4. Budget, timing, and timeframe of the evaluation – actual availability of evaluation budget and a realistic timeframe of the evaluation can help determine whether the evaluation can realistically take place and be ready on time to be used
5. Evaluation use – whether the evaluation has identified users and uses.

Each area contains a series of questions that can be answered with a yes or no. At the end of the assessment, if you have answered yes to all or nearly all the questions, you are well prepared for the evaluation. If you have answered yes to only part of the questions, it is recommended to explore ways to mitigate challenges and gaps in preparation for the evaluation.

While the EA represents an additional and optional step in the evaluation process, data collected during this stage can inform the development of the [Phase 2: Template for a decentralized evaluation terms of reference](#) and actually help save time later on during the evaluation. The EA is also a good precursor to consulting stakeholders and setting up an evaluation reference group (see [Guidance for Evaluation Reference Groups in decentralized evaluations](#)). It is therefore important in ensuring that the evaluation is used and is more likely to inform future decisions on programme design. Even if the evaluability assessment is not conducted by the evaluation manager, he or she should still prepare a package with relevant project documents and stakeholder contact information and share them with the external evaluation consultant.

Guidance for Evaluation Reference Groups in decentralized evaluations

What is an Evaluation Reference Group?

The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) consists of key internal and external evaluation stakeholders that provide inputs into the evaluation process and review evaluation deliverables. By establishing an ERG, you can engage internal and external stakeholders that can provide different perspectives and knowledge on the subject. ERG members' participation and engagement can enhance the quality, utility, and usability of the evaluation results. ERG participation can also enhance collaboration with government agencies, donors, and other agencies as well as strengthen the evaluation culture among national partners. An ERG advises, but does not make decisions on the evaluation.

The table below provides three levels of engagement of ERG depending on their availability:

Table 2: Scope and scale of ERG engagement

Evaluation stage	Minimum participation/ feedback by the ERG on:	Medium participation/ feedback by the ERG on:	High participation/ feedback by the ERG on:
Planning	Evaluation Questions only	Discussing and planning how the results should be used and disseminated.	Draft Evaluation ToR
Inception report	Consulted on data sources and stakeholder groups (not on the inception)	Draft inception report	Draft inception report Contribute to or comment on the theory of change.
Evaluation report	Draft Evaluation report (Focus on findings and recommendations)	Draft Evaluation report	Intermediate findings (if applicable) Draft Evaluation report Contribute to or comment on the comprehensiveness and validity/credibility of the data collected
Recommendations	Workshop on relevance and how actionable the draft recommendations are.		
Use of evaluation results	Share the final report	Support dissemination and use of results	Leading dissemination and use of results
Recommended Nr of Meetings	2	2-3	3+

In all cases, it is vital to establish clear and realistic expectations about involvement and participation of the ERG and to tailor the ToR of the ERG to the level of participation you envisage.

Members and Chair

An ERG chair (or facilitator) can either be evaluation managers or OSCE managers who are responsible for commissioning the evaluation. It is also possible, that someone from a project co-ordination unit (or an equivalent) or an Evaluation Focal Point/Evaluation and Monitoring Officer takes over the role of facilitating the Evaluation Reference Group meetings and commenting process.

Members of the ERG are selected by the ERG Chair. There are three types of stakeholders in the ERG (and ideally all three are included): those with a key role in the intervention under evaluation, those who are experts on the topic under evaluation, and those who are experts on evaluation methodology and design. External membership increases the credibility of the evaluation and helps minimize bias.

As the scope and complexity of the evaluation vary, so should the number of members of the ERG; it should be large enough to ensure a wide range of perspectives, but limited enough to be manageable and effective. For a decentralized evaluation in OSCE the ERG usually has 3-6 members (excluding the Chair). ERG membership is tied to individuals who commit to keep that role during the entire evaluation process. This role cannot be delegated to someone else during the process. The ERG should be gender balanced, and the chair should make sure all members have a voice.

Note on what voice the members represent: they may not represent their organization, unit etc., but bring in their personal expertise. Some members (for example from ministries) might not be able to not represent their official role.

Table 3: list of recommended ERG members (select between 3-6)

<p>A list of potential internal OSCE stakeholders is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project/Programme Manager / project team (if different from Evaluation Manager) • Evaluation Focal Point or Project Co-ordination Unit • A Gender Focal Point or a Gender Officer • A representative from one’s mission/office/ES • OSCE staff (from the same or other executive structures) working on related issues/projects 	<p>The following are potential external stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions closely involved in the project • Relevant ministries • Donors for ExB project • Civil society organizations relevant to the issue • Academia • Other relevant international organizations or project implementers of similar projects • Final beneficiaries (as far as possible)
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When to set it up?

The ERG should be set up during the Planning Phase (when the evaluation manager drafts the ToR) in time to participate in discussions on the **intended purpose and use of the evaluation**, and the **evaluation questions** that will be addressed. If the timeframe is too short for that, the ERG should be invited to comment and discuss this during the Inception phase.

Evaluation Managers are responsible for drafting a ToR for ERG members, indicating their expected contributions and the timelines within which they must complete each task (see [Phase 2: Template for evaluation reference group terms of reference](#)).

Managing the ERG and comments efficiently

Although most ERG responsibilities can be accomplished remotely, **face-to-face group meetings can be more effective at key points**, especially **when discussing comments on the draft evaluation report** (particularly when there are divergent views). Make sure to give ERG members plenty of notice when planning face-to-face meetings.

An ERG requires strong leadership to get appropriate participation from stakeholders who are either too busy or uncommitted. They may therefore be unable to contribute relevant or timely inputs, which will affect the evaluation process. It may also happen that some ERG members are extremely eager to participate and attempt to exert undue influence. It is important to manage both risks carefully. In this regard, the ERG Chair's leadership and engagement are vital in setting the tone and expectations for OSCE staff and other ERG members.

Table 4: Engage your ERG

- Early on, use the ERG to brainstorm possible evaluation questions. They are more likely to be interested in the results and more likely to feel ownership when their questions are included in the evaluation.
- Prepare and share a two-page summary of the Terms of Reference.
- Send a monthly bullet point update on the evaluation process to the ERG.
- Be aware of which issues - including context issues - interest members of the ERG and be prepared to bring them up for discussion.
- Ensure that ERG members are treated equitably and professionally, with advance notice of meetings and updates if the meeting time changes.
- ERG members should be involved in formulating/discussing evaluation recommendations, ideally in a workshop with the evaluation consultant. As a result, relevant and actionable recommendations will be generated, and the results will be owned more effectively.
- Generally, the more you engage the ERG members, the more helpful they will be.

Managing the commenting process is a key task of the ERG Chair with support from the Evaluation Manager. Inform ERG members of the timings and deadlines to provide comments, allow time for comments, and document them in a Comments Matrix. The Evaluation Manager should share the matrix with all members. Be ready to push back on comments that may compromise the evaluation, and ensure valid justifications are included in the matrix.

Provide the ERG members with clear parameters on what and how they can comment on.

Table 5: Managing comments

Managing comments efficiently:

- Inform ERG members when drafts will be available for review and inform them of any delays.
- Make sure they have time to comment. Inform them of the upcoming deadline with kind reminders.
- Comments should be documented in a comments matrix and kept within a reasonable limit. The evaluation team should fill out the matrix with their responses. It is critical that the Evaluation Manager shares the filled-out matrix with all members of the ERG so that they can see how the comments have been addressed.
- Prepare to push back on some of the requests/comments from the ERG. Their suggestions may, for instance, detract from the purpose of the evaluation. Some of their comments may not be relevant to the draft evaluation report.
- It is possible for evaluation consultant to not address some of the ERG comments provided an adequate justification is included in the Comments Matrix.
- The Evaluation Manager is responsible to make sure that the justification provided by the evaluation consultant for non-addressed comments is sound.

Guidance on integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality

This condensed guidance is based on the [UNEG Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#). The OSCE has a comprehensive Guidance note on this topic [available separately](#).

Why HR & GE Matter in Evaluation

UNEG requires all UN evaluations to be **human rights- and gender-responsive**. This means evaluations must:

- Examine **who benefits and who is left behind**
- Assess **equality, non-discrimination, participation, accountability, and empowerment**
- Be aligned with **international human rights standards and gender equality commitments**

Evaluation managers are key duty bearers in ensuring these principles are applied **throughout the evaluation process**, not treated as an add-on.

What Evaluation Managers Must Do at Each Step

STEP 1 – Preparation and Evaluation Design

Key responsibilities

- Ensure HR & GE are **explicitly included in the purpose, scope, and evaluation questions**
- Identify **rights holders and duty bearers**, with attention to marginalized groups
- Confirm evaluability of HR & GE dimensions (availability of data, indicators, baselines)

What to check in practice

- Does the ToR require analysis of **gender equality and human rights results**, not just activities?
- Are evaluation questions framed to assess:
 - Non-discrimination and equality?
 - Participation and inclusion?
 - Changes in power relations?
- Is the evaluation aligned with relevant **international normative frameworks** (e.g. [CEDAW](#), [UDHR](#))?

Evaluation manager tip

HR & GE should be visible in **evaluation questions and criteria**, not confined to a single “cross-cutting” paragraph.

STEP 2 – Stakeholder Analysis and Participation

Key responsibilities

- Ensure **meaningful participation** of diverse stakeholders
- Pay particular attention to:
 - Women and girls
 - Marginalized or discriminated groups
 - Both rights holders and duty bearers

What to check in practice

- Has a **stakeholder analysis** been conducted that disaggregates by gender and other relevant characteristics?

- Are participation barriers (language, safety, power asymmetries) identified and addressed?
- Are consultation methods appropriate and safe for all groups?

Evaluation manager tip

Participation is both a **means and an end** of HR & GE-responsive evaluation. Lack of participation is itself an evaluative finding.

STEP 3 – Methodology and Data Collection

Key responsibilities

- Ensure methods are **gender- and human rights-responsive**
- Require **disaggregated data** about project results and beneficiaries and qualitative analysis of lived experiences

What to check in practice

- Are data collection tools designed to capture:
 - Differences in access, benefits, and outcomes?
 - Perceptions of discrimination, empowerment, or exclusion?
- Are methods ethical and respectful of:
 - Confidentiality
 - Do-no-harm principles
 - Power dynamics between evaluators and participants?

Evaluation manager tip

If disaggregated data are missing, the evaluation should **explicitly explain why** and discuss implications for HR & GE analysis.

STEP 4 – Analysis, Findings and Conclusions

Key responsibilities

- Ensure HR & GE are **analysed systematically**, not descriptively
- Require analysis of **structural causes**, not just symptoms

What to check in practice

- Do findings assess:
 - Who benefited and who did not?
 - Whether inequalities were reduced, reinforced or unchanged?
 - Changes in gender relations or enjoyment of rights?
- Are unintended effects on HR & GE identified?

Evaluation manager tip

Strong HR & GE analysis goes beyond counting women participants and examines **power, norms, and institutional change**.

STEP 5 – Recommendations and management response

Key responsibilities

- Ensure recommendations are:
 - **Actionable, prioritized and responsibility-specific**
 - Explicit on HR & GE implications
- Guide management to respond to HR & GE issues even when not framed as recommendations

What to check in practice

- Are recommendations clearly linked to HR & GE findings?
- Do they address both:
 - Programmatic changes
 - Institutional or policy-level barriers?
- Does the management response reflect HR & GE principles of:
 - Accountability
 - Transparency
 - Participation?

Evaluation manager tip

Evaluation managers play a **quality assurance role**: vague HR & GE recommendations should be sent back for revision.

STEP 6 – Reporting, dissemination and use

Key responsibilities

- Ensure HR & GE are visible in reporting and dissemination
- Promote **accessible and inclusive use** of findings

What to check in practice

- Does the report:
 - Integrate HR & GE throughout, or include a clear dedicated section?
 - Present findings in accessible language?
- Is dissemination targeted to:
 - Decision-makers
 - Civil society, women's organizations, human rights actors (where appropriate)?

Evaluation manager tip

Strategic dissemination can link evaluation findings to **national HR and GE processes** (e.g. policy reforms, reporting to treaty bodies).

Phase 3: Managing a decentralized evaluation

Once the external evaluation consultant or team is hired, the evaluation manager is responsible for ensuring that they are informed of and comply with relevant OSCE requirements and guidance, including on access to OSCE information and ICT resources and the responsible use of AI in decentralized evaluations, before commencing evaluation activities. The external consultant or team then undertakes the collection and analysis of data and the preparation of evaluation deliverables under the overall guidance and oversight of the evaluation manager. Throughout this process the evaluation manager is responsible **for the quality of the evaluation process and deliverables**.

Step 1. Understand what a quality evaluation process and deliverables entail	
When:	At the onset and throughout the evaluation process
Actors:	Evaluation manager with support of Evaluation Reference Group and EFPs
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult Guidance on quality assurance in decentralized evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Review the three phases of evaluation management in this manual <input type="checkbox"/> Share this Evaluation Manual and templates with external evaluation consultant(s)
Step 2. Provide ongoing support to external evaluators (documents, contacts, logistics for travel)	
When:	Throughout the data collection process of the evaluation
Actors:	Evaluation manager with input from Evaluation Reference Group (if needed)
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide guidance to the evaluation consultant(s) how to safely access relevant project documents (consult Guidance on granting access to OSCE information and ICT resources to external evaluators and what are expectations in terms of responsible use of AI in Evaluation (consult Guidance on the responsible use of AI in decentralized evaluations) <input type="checkbox"/> Collect all relevant documents for evaluation and share with external evaluators in line with the above <input type="checkbox"/> Inform all concerned stakeholders that evaluation is starting and evaluators are onboard <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate logistics (travel and appointments) for any fieldwork for the external consultants <input type="checkbox"/> Be available for interviews and to provide input into the evaluation process
Step 3. Review draft evaluation inception report	
When:	When the external evaluation consultant submits it
Actors:	Evaluation manager with input from Evaluation Reference Group and EFP
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult the Phase 3: Template for inception reports for decentralized evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Review the draft evaluation inception report and provide comments <input type="checkbox"/> Collect comments from the Evaluation Reference Group and share with consultant
Step 4. Review draft evaluation report	
When:	When the external evaluation consultant submits it
Actors:	Evaluation manager with input from Evaluation Reference Group and EFP
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult the Phase 3: Template for decentralized evaluation reports <input type="checkbox"/> Review the draft evaluation report and provide comments <input type="checkbox"/> Collect comments from the Evaluation Reference Group and share with consultant

Review, alongside your EFP report as per the checklist [Phase 3: Key elements of a quality evaluation report](#) and share feedback with evaluator(s)

Guidance on quality assurance in decentralized evaluations

Purpose: To describe what quality assurance in evaluation means at the OSCE and how to go about quality assurance in evaluation processes and products.

Intended users: managers of decentralized evaluations and Evaluation Focal Points.

What is quality assurance and why is it important?

Quality assurance is a procedure by which the evaluation process and the resulting deliverables are reviewed in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Standard 5 on Quality¹⁶. Quality evaluation processes are more likely to lead to quality evaluation products. Quality evaluation products are more likely to be read, understood, and viewed as credible and useful for informing decision-making on programme design and delivery.

What does a quality evaluation process entail?

Evaluation managers are responsible for overseeing the following steps of a quality evaluation process during the planning and all three subsequent evaluation phases: preparation, implementation, reporting and use (see [Quality Checklist: steps of a decentralized evaluation process](#)).

What are quality evaluation deliverables?

Inception reports and evaluation reports are the most used deliverables produced by external evaluators. Inception reports outline the evaluation objectives, final questions, methodology, sampling strategies, and present draft data collection instruments. Evaluation reports present evidence-based findings, conclusions, and relevant and timely recommendations. These deliverables are considered of good quality when they follow the OSCE templates and the quality checklist for reports (see [Phase 3: Key elements of a quality evaluation report](#)).

Who is responsible for ensuring quality of evaluations at the OSCE?

Ensuring the quality of decentralized evaluations is the responsibility of the evaluation manager, i.e. the official who contracts the evaluation and oversees the evaluation process under the overall responsibility of the Fund Manager or Main Programme Manager. Evaluation Focal Points and members of Evaluation Reference Groups are responsible for providing guidance to evaluation managers on quality evaluation processes and for reviewing evaluation Terms of Reference and all deliverables of external consultants against the quality checklist. Evaluation Focal Points also provide comments on the ToR and final report to the Fund Manager or Main Programme Manager (in case of SEC). For detailed instructions see [Table 1: Overview of responsibilities for decentralized evaluation at the OSCE](#)

How is quality reported on and by whom?

Every two years, the OIO conducts a review of the quality of decentralized evaluations across the organization and presents the results in its Annual Report.

¹⁶ UNEG Standard 5 is about Quality: 5.1 indicates that an appropriate quality assurance system is in place. 5.2 focuses on quality control of the evaluation design. 5.3 emphasized that quality should be controlled during the final stage of evaluation.

Guidance on granting access to OSCE information and ICT resources to external evaluators

Purpose: This guidance defines the ICT tools relevant to supporting decentralized evaluations conducted by OSCE executive structures. It specifies the options and approach for granting access to OSCE information and ICT resources to external evaluators in a secure and controlled manner. It also identifies safeguards to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of evaluation-related information shared with external evaluators.

Scope: This guidance applies to all decentralized evaluations commissioned by OSCE Executive Structures to external evaluators.

Roles and responsibilities: OSCE evaluation managers are responsible for ensuring that external evaluators are informed of and comply with this guideline and relevant OSCE policies. The external evaluators are required to observe all provisions contained herein.

Background

Decentralized evaluations are commissioned and managed by the executive structures responsible for the interventions, and are carried out by independent external evaluation firms or consultants in order to ensure objectivity, independence, and credibility. External evaluators may be engaged under individual Special Service Agreements (SSAs) or as contracted firms.

External evaluators need to have access to internal OSCE information relevant to their assignments, such as project and programme documents (MS Office formats, PDFs, emails). They might also collect audio, photo, and video materials during interviews, focus groups, and participatory evaluation methods. Evaluators may also need to collaborate on evaluation reports with their OSCE counterparts.

The OSCE provides various ICT tools and platforms for sharing and collaborating on such OSCE information with external evaluators. This guideline describes different ICT tools, and their suitability for different evaluation use cases. It also identifies measures that safeguard the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of evaluation-related information that has been identified as sensitive and is shared with external evaluators.

Sharing sensitive information

OSCE information shared with external evaluators may include sensitive information that is classified (as official, confidential or highly confidential in line with the FAI13 OSCE classification policy). Sensitive (classified) information may only be shared with external evaluators with authorization from the Information Owner in line with FAI13. Any personal data must be handled in line with Administrative Instruction No. 2/2022 on Personal Data Protection.

According to the OSCE FAI 12 Policy on the use of Computing Resources, sensitive (classified) information may only be stored or processed on external cloud platforms that have been subject to an ICT security assessment and where the vendor has a commercial contract with the OSCE that protects the confidentiality, integrity and availability of OSCE information. This typically excludes the use of tools like MS 365, Google Drive, One Drive, DropBox and other filesharing and collaboration services. This restriction applies to other cloud-based services including Generative AI (GenAI) chatbots like ChatGPT, qualitative analysis tools like MAXQDA, or free translation tools. While unclassified or public

OSCE information may be stored and processed on such platforms, external evaluators who wish to use any cloud platform for storing or processing OSCE classified information must first seek permission from the evaluation manager. For sensitive information, it is recommended to use OSCE VPN-enabled laptops, OSCE email, file servers, and Jarvis (SharePoint) to reduce security risks and prevent unauthorized retention of OSCE materials (see below).

OSCE ICT Tools for sharing and collaborating with external evaluators

The following OSCE-managed ICT tools may be used for sharing and collaborating on OSCE information with external evaluators.

Table 6: OSCE-managed ICT tools available for external evaluators

ICT tools	Uses
<p>Email: most common way to share evaluation materials with external evaluators</p>	<p>3 approaches to using email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a non-OSCE (private or business) email address. It does not require the OSCE to provide the evaluator with access to any internal OSCE systems. The external evaluator is temporarily assigned a OSCE Windows account and @osce.org email address managed by the OSCE (requires to either assign an OSCE laptop or an OSCE-provided RSA authentication token).
<p>OSCE communities: an externally-accessible OSCE web service that supports information sharing and collaboration between OSCE staff and counterparts such as external evaluators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Confluence Spaces can be set up for specific evaluation assignments, with all user access and content managed by the OSCE evaluation manager. The use of Communities does not require the OSCE to provide the evaluator with access to any internal OSCE systems, or to provide any ICT hardware. External evaluators can access Communities using their own non-OSCE (private or business) PC, and they can register for and access the service with their own non-OSCE (private or business) email address.
<p>OSCE Jarvis (SharePoint): the OSCE intranet and document management platform based on Microsoft SharePoint Server. Jarvis provides a full document management system with project workspaces, search, and simultaneous collaboration on MS Word documents by multiple users. It is hosted internally within the OSCE network. The platform is accessible to all OSCE staff, and to external evaluators who have been provided with an OSCE Windows account.</p>	<p>Two ways for evaluators of accessing Jarvis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The external evaluator is issued with an OSCE laptop PC equipped with a VPN, and can access Jarvis directly. The external evaluator uses their own non-OSCE (private or business) PC to access Jarvis from outside the OSCE network, which requires an OSCE-provided RSA authentication token
<p>OSCE Network Drives (NetStorage): an OSCE web-based service that allows external</p>	<p>Two ways for evaluators of accessing OSCE network drives:</p>

partners access to these internal OSCE network drives. The service supports the storage of files exceeding 50 MB as well as audio and video files. However, it does not provide all the collaboration and search features of Jarvis.

OSCE FTP (CrushFTP): suitable for uploading and downloading large files that need to be shared between the OSCE and external evaluators. CrushFTP does not offer any collaboration functionality beyond password-protected file distribution.

Vimeo (Video and Audio Streaming): a YouTube-like commercial platform used by the OSCE that can be used for hosting video and audio files for a limited audience, such as external evaluators

- The external evaluator is issued with an OSCE laptop PC equipped with a VPN, and can access OSCE network drives directly.
- The external evaluator uses their own non-OSCE (private or business) PC to access NetStorage from outside the OSCE network, which also requires an OSCE-provided RSA authentication token.

The use of CrushFTP does not require the OSCE to provide the evaluator with access to any internal OSCE systems, or to provide any ICT hardware. External evaluators can access CrushFTP using their own non-OSCE (private or business) PC, and they access the service with an OSCE-provided username and password.

This platform supports media streaming and accepts video files directly. Audio files can be converted to MP4 format using the VLC application (available in the OSCE-approved software pool). Vimeo also permits controlled media sharing, limiting downloads to authorized devices.

Recommended approach to share information with external consultants

The following tools for sharing information is recommended:

1. Email for simple information sharing, using an @osce.org email mailbox accessed through the OSCE webmail service from the evaluator's own non-OSCE (private or business) PC. This requires the provision of an OSCE user account and an RSA token.
2. The OSCE Communities website for simple file sharing and collaboration.
3. Jarvis and/or NetStorage, accessed through OSCE accounts and RSA tokens from the evaluator's own non-OSCE (private or business) PC.
4. Where appropriate, a complementary use of Vimeo for media files may be authorised for specific types of evaluations where access to streaming video or audio is needed.

Access to any OSCE ICT services by external evaluators must be requested by the OSCE evaluation manager through the OSCE ICT Service Desk. The requesting evaluation manager shall specify the exact type of access and ICT resources required by the external evaluators. Access to OSCE information by external evaluators shall be on a need-to-know basis. All materials collected, analyzed, or produced by external evaluators during the assignments remain the exclusive property of the OSCE. These materials must be transferred to the OSCE at the end of the assignment, stored only on OSCE-administered systems, and not retained by evaluators beyond the contractual period.

Guidance on the responsible use of AI in decentralized evaluations

Purpose: To present potential responsible and safe uses of generative AI¹⁷ (GenAI) in evaluation within the framework of the organizational Policy on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence.

Intended users: managers of decentralized evaluations, external evaluation consultants, and Evaluation Focal Points.

Scope: this guidance focuses on two broad categories of GenAI use in Evaluation.

1. **Design support:** GenAI is used to brainstorm ideas, refine evaluation approaches, suggest methodologies, or draft data collection instruments.
2. **Analytical support:** GenAI is used to assist in the collection, processing, analysis and communication of data (e.g. transcription of interviews, synthesis of findings, and drafting of outputs).

These two categories entail different levels of risk, oversight and appropriate use. While design support generally poses lower risks as no information is uploaded, and is primarily advisory in nature, analytical support may involve uploading of sensitive data and require stricter safeguards, human oversight and compliance with OSCE policies.

What are possible uses of free GenAI tools in evaluation within the context of the OSCE?

The OSCE does currently not have internally-hosted AI tools, and the use of external AI tools therefore require users to **verify alignment with OSCE policies**. To date, the OSCE has not secured a commercial contract with an external AI tool supplier that protects the confidentiality, integrity and availability of OSCE information. While this situation might change in the near future, AI analytical support involving the uploading of classified information remains limited at this stage, as such applications have not yet been sufficiently tested and integrated within existing policy and compliance frameworks.

The first category of use is easier to implement in compliance with existing organizational policies and data protection requirements, as it does not necessarily require users to upload sensitive or confidential information into GenAI tools. By contrast, many applications under the second category often require the processing or uploading of evaluation data and documentation, which raises additional considerations related to confidentiality, information security, and data protection.

Examples of potential uses of GenAI tools for design support include:

- √ Provide suggestions on evaluation approaches, methods, and sampling strategies
Example: “Outline the pros and cons of using various evaluation approaches for evaluating a capacity-building programme for law enforcement officials.”
Example: “Suggest possible evaluation methods as well as their limitations for an evaluation of a capacity-building programme for law enforcement officials.”

¹⁷ GenAI refers to artificial intelligence technology that synthesizes new versions of text, audio, or visual imagery from large bodies of data in response to user prompts. GenAI models can be used in stand-alone applications, such as ChatGPT or Bard, or incorporated into other applications such as internet search engines or word processing applications. GenAI tools can support tasks such as identifying relevant information, recognizing patterns, generating text or content for reports, speeches, emails, presentations, images, videos and internal/external communications, and translating texts. ([FAI 13 annex 7 Implementation Policy on the use of Generative AI](#)).

- √ Develop basic Theories of Change or logic models that can be tested in evaluations
Example: “Construct a Theory of Change for a capacity-building programme for law enforcement officials involving the following interventions [xxx] in country [xxx].”
 - √ Conduct background literature review across publicly available databases
Example: “Provide a two-page overview of the context for law enforcement in country X and list all sources of information.”
 - √ Provide inputs for data collection instruments (interview questions, interview guides, surveys)
Example: “Make a list of interview questions for evaluating capacity-building programmes for law enforcement officials in country X to support evidence for evaluation question X.”
 - √ Example: “Design a short survey for participants of a capacity-building programme to understand what they learned, what they liked and what can be improved. Translate data collection instruments into other languages to reach more stakeholders
Example: “Translate this survey into Russian.”
 - √ Suggest structures for reports, briefs, or summaries
Example: “Produce an outline to help structure an evaluation report of 20 pages according to the main evaluation questions by criteria.”
- ☛ **Good prompts with specific instructions lead to better quality GenAI outputs. It is a good practice to be specific what standpoint the AI should adopt before prompting with a specific query. You may say for instance: “you are an evaluation expert within an international organisation, specialised in gender-sensitive approaches”.**

Examples of potential uses of GenAI for analytical support involving non-public information include:

- √ Translation of anonymized interview transcripts if prior consent has been asked from interviewee and the evaluation manager has received ICT approval for the use of the AI translation tool
Example: “Translate this interview transcript into English.”
 - √ Analyze qualitative data (from surveys or interviews) if it has been anonymized and the anonymization approach has been approved by the OSCE
Example: “Provide a summary of the trends in this data.”
- ☛ **Ensure human verification of all AI-generated outputs like translations, summaries, syntheses, etc. This means that evaluators need to know and understand the data that they collect to be able to verify the accuracy of any AI-generated outputs with that data.**

There is a growing body of guidance on the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence in evaluation that users are encouraged to consult, including the [UNEG guidance on AI and ethics in evaluation](#). This manual will be updated over time as organizational practices evolve and further practical experience with GenAI applications in evaluation becomes available.

What is the Implementation Policy on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence at the OSCE from June 2024?

This Policy “ensures the legal, ethical, and secure use of GenAI technology” at the OSCE and “defines acceptable and prohibited uses of GenAI [including] employee obligations related [thereto]”. The following provisions are of relevance to potential uses in evaluation:

- Free externally-hosted and cloud-based services must not be used for “storing, transferring or processing OSCE data, except for OSCE data that is classified as Public or if data is properly anonymized”¹⁸. Computing Resources Users are therefore permitted to use free, public GenAI services for work purposes only if the OSCE information input into the tool is classified as Public or if data is properly anonymized. ([FAI 13 annex 7 Implementation Policy on the use of Generative AI](#)).
- Users are permitted to use OSCE approved GenAI tools in line with relevant OSCE policies ([FAI 12, Policy on Use of OSCE Computing Resources](#)). DMF/ICTS review and approval is required **prior** to the procurement of any GenAI system, both externally hosted systems and those to be installed on the OSCE network. Independent subscriptions to ICT services such as GenAI tools that are then used for processing and storing sensitive OSCE data are not permitted.
- It may be needed to anonymize or otherwise obscure sensitive data. **Effective anonymization must ensure that no sensitive information is included in the data shared with the GenAI tool.** In such cases the anonymization approach must be verified as effective by DMF/ICTS and DMF/RMCIS (FAI 13 Annex 7, [AI 2 on Personal Data Protection](#)).

What ethical and security aspects should be kept in mind for using GenAI in evaluation?

Any information input into an GenAI tool is processed by an external provider. While free tools are more likely to use such data to train their models, some paid tools offer options to limit or prevent this. However, in all cases, the data is handled by systems located outside the Organization and remains subject to a degree of disclosure risk. Without proper anonymization of sensitive information, there is therefore a risk of confidential data being released for the GenAI model to use, thereby breaching data privacy and IT security policies of the OSCE.

AI-generated content may also contain bias and hallucinations, which means that its substance can either be distorted or simply invented, while appearing credible. Without human verification, there is a risk of incorrect information being used for work purposes. When using AI, it is therefore of utmost importance to apply appropriate quality assurance measures. Outputs should be evidence-based, traceable to their sources where possible, and systematically reviewed. Responsibility for the accuracy, reliability, and appropriate use of AI-generated outputs remains with the user and/or designated information owner. Transparency should also be ensured by clearly indicating when AI has been used.

“Used effectively, GenAI can currently only support human processes, not replace them.”
Implementation Policy on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence at the OSCE

What provisions for the use of AI are relevant for external consultants?

All TORs for decentralized evaluations should include provisions for the use of GenAI as per the OSCE AI Policy to ensure compliance with it in the conduct of evaluations. A provision has been included in the [Phase 2: Template for a decentralized evaluation terms of reference](#) to make sure external parties collaborating with the OSCE are aware and compliant with the OSCE AI regulations.

Evaluation managers should proactively set clear expectations regarding the use of GenAI when engaging with external consultants. This includes sharing relevant OSCE policies and guidance on

¹⁸ Anonymization does not only refer to personal data, but also any sensitive information that could negatively affect the OSCE or its personnel.

GenAI, clarifying permitted and restricted uses, and ensuring that data protection, confidentiality and ethical standards are fully understood.

Evaluation managers and external evaluators should ensure full disclosure on the use of GenAI in the evaluation with all stakeholders, for example during interviews if GenAI note-taking assistants are being used, for translation, synthesizing data, etc.

During the inception phase of an evaluation, evaluators must describe any planned uses of GenAI during the evaluation in the methodology section of the inception report.

If evaluators use GenAI during data collection or analysis, they need to provide information in the methodology section of the evaluation reports (or in an annex) about which tools were used, how, and how AI-generated outputs have been verified to ensure credible results.

What data need to be anonymized and can be subsequently used in GenAI tools?

In the absence of a formally purchased and approved AI tools, any non-public document (Classified) must be stripped of any specific information such as the project name, dates, locations, stakeholder names, specific numbers. This proposed anonymization approach must be verified as effective by DMF/ICTS and DMF/RMCIS before the document is uploaded into any GenAI tool for processing and analysis. Project-specific content then needs to be added back manually to any AI-generated output(s) as relevant.

When using a formally purchased and approved AI tool, anonymization requirements depend on the classification of the document, as defined in the Implementation Policy on Information Classification (FAI13).

Outlined below is the list of different classifications and how AI can be used according to its level of classification:

Type of document	What you can do
<p>Unclassified/public documents: unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause no harm to the OSCE or its personnel.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine business records including most memos, emails, minutes, reports, etc.; • Public CRMS documents, policies and procedures including the Financial Regulations and Rules, Staff Regulations and Rules, Staff Instructions, and Administrative Instruction 3; • Press releases, public website and social media content, vacancy notices, tender documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free AI: Only public or redacted/anonymized information may be input on GenAI tool (not all unclassified information is available to the general public). • Purchased and approved tool: You may input such information into AI
<p>Official documents:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free AI: May be processed through AI tools with redaction of sensitive information.

<p>unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the OSCE or its personnel, causing minor reputational or operational impact.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSCE Internal Address List; Internal CRMS documents including all Financial and Administrative Instructions (FAIs), and some Administrative Instructions (AIs); • Standard personal data, as defined in Administrative Instruction 2 section 4.1b. • Proposals and reports on most ExB and UB projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased and approved AI: You may input such information into AI
<p>Confidential documents:</p> <p>unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause harm to the OSCE or its personnel, with a significant short-term impact on operations or objectives.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on crisis management or security incidents that could pose a significant risk to people or property; • Special categories of personal data, as defined in Administrative Instruction 2 section 4.1c; • Passwords, PINs, system credentials and private encryption keys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free AI: May be processed through AI tools with redaction of sensitive information • Purchased and approved AI: Requires prior written/email approval from the Information Owner before being uploaded on any tool
<p>Strictly confidential documents:</p> <p>unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause serious harm to the OSCE or its personnel, impacting long-term objectives, compliance with governing body decisions, or even putting the survival of the organization at risk.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal information about at-risk individuals such as victims of hate crime or human trafficking; • Information about crisis management or security incidents that could pose a high or existential risk to the viability or reputation of the OSCE or the 	<p>Must never be entered into AI tools, regardless it being a free or purchased AI tool</p>

personal safety and security of personnel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive military information (CSBM), including data on the CPC Communications Network. 	
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Official, confidential and strictly confidential information is collectively defined as **Classified information** and its access should be limited to those with a **need to know**. All other information is designated as “Unclassified”, but it does not necessarily mean that this information is for public distribution. In the absence of a classification level in the form of a marking or other applicable instructions, information shall automatically fall under the Official category until classified differently. If the classification level is not clear from the document markings, clarification shall be sought from the information owner.

What other aspects of GenAI use should be considered for evaluations at the OSCE?

Unless the information you plan to input into a GenAI tool is publicly available, the use of such tool requires prior authorization. External consultants wishing to use a personally purchased GenAI tool to input non-public information must consult with their supervisor first (evaluation manager) – having a personal license for a service does not automatically allow you to use it as it must be approved by ICT and in contractual relationship with the OSCE. In general, GenAI tools may be cleared for use after a formal request is submitted, including completion of the FAI12 Cloud Provision Checklist and the required assessment. Use of the tool (with classified information) is permitted only after the FAI12 assessment and the corresponding exception request have been reviewed and approved by DMF/ICTS. For guidance on these aspects, project managers may consult DMF/ICTS.

In line with emerging international good practices on the ethical use of AI in evaluation, the use of GenAI should aim to enhance the quality, timeliness, and robustness of evidence, while remaining consistent with core evaluation principles such as independence, transparency, and accountability. Responsible use of GenAI also requires continuous learning and knowledge exchange, including sharing experiences, good practices, and lessons learned across evaluation functions. Pilot applications of GenAI can support this process by testing its added value in real-world evaluation contexts and identifying potential risks and limitations. In addition, evaluators should ensure they have the necessary skills and understanding to use these tools appropriately, and, where relevant, seek collaboration with technical experts to support safe and effective application (UNEG Ethical Principles for Harnessing AI in UN Evaluations).

Guidance on inception reports for decentralized evaluations

For all Decentralized Evaluations, external evaluation consultant(s) submit an inception report during the early phase of an evaluation.

Purpose. The purpose of the inception report is to make sure that the evaluation consultant(s) and the OSCE and potentially engaged partner agencies and/or donors have a shared understanding of the way the evaluation will be conducted. As such, the inception report provides the OSCE evaluation manager and Reference Group members with a clear indication of how the evaluation consultants intend to conduct the evaluation, with a detailed workplan to achieve the evaluation objectives. The other purpose is to highlight the elements (questions, methodology, data, indicators, timeline, etc.) that **were revised** (as agreed with the evaluation manager) **or need to be revised** in the original ToR before an evaluation can be launched.

Relation to ToR. The inception report is based on the Terms of Reference but goes further to provide details on the specific issues to be evaluated. Even as some sections of the inception report mirror the ToR, they still show that the evaluation consultant(s) take full ownership of the process, and that they have a good understanding of the ToR.

Format and structure. The inception report should be a stand-alone document and is recommended to not exceed ten pages. It can be shorter, depending on the evaluation and needs of the evaluation manager. A template for the inception report is provided later in this Manual and should be shared with evaluation consultants.

Gender and human rights mainstreaming: The inception report should use gender sensitive and human rights-based language throughout. See [Guidance on integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality](#).

Phase 4: Following up on a decentralized evaluation and ensuring its use

An evaluation process does not end with the submission of the final evaluation report. Evaluation use can and should continue with proper **follow up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations and the dissemination and communication of evaluation findings** to relevant stakeholders which are the responsibility of evaluation managers.

Step 1. Prepare an evaluation recommendations implementation plan	
When:	Within 4 weeks of the submission of the final evaluation report
Actors:	Evaluation manager, in co-ordination with all other recommendation owners and EFPs
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult the Guidance on follow-up on evaluation recommendations in decentralized evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Identify recommendation owners and request formal response to the recommendations addressed to them, consolidate in the evaluation recommendations implementation plan <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare the Phase 4: Template for developing a decentralized evaluation recommendations implementation plan <input type="checkbox"/> Get the evaluation recommendations implementation plan signed off by the Fund Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute the plan to OIO after it is signed
Step 2. Follow-up on progress in implementation every 6 months	
When:	Every 6 months or when recommendations are due for implementation
Actors:	Evaluation managers with the support of EFPs
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Update the evaluation recommendations implementation plan with progress on implementation of each recommendation until it can be considered closed
Step 3. Maintain an overview of the status of evaluation recommendations within each Executive Structure	
When:	Ongoing with regular updates
Actors:	EFPs
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain an overview of the status of recommendations from evaluations in your Executive Structure (including acceptance and implementation). Consult Phase 4: Template for a database of decentralized evaluation recommendations <input type="checkbox"/> Review progress and present any status updates at planning and strategy meetings of your Executive Structure to ensure that evaluations inform future programme design
Step 4. Disseminate and communicate evaluation findings and recommendations widely in various formats	
When:	As soon as the evaluation findings are ready
Actors:	Evaluation managers and EFPs
Actions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult the Guidance on use of decentralized evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for Phase 4: Template for developing a decentralized evaluation recommendations implementation

- Disseminate the evaluation findings to various audiences through user-friendly formats (workshop, summary, brief, newsletter entry, etc.)
- Publish evaluation reports of sufficient quality and/or related knowledge products where relevant

Guidance on follow-up on evaluation recommendations in decentralized evaluations

Purpose: To describe how and why to follow up on evaluation recommendations at the OSCE.

Intended users: Evaluation Focal Points, with information from managers of decentralized evaluations.

Why follow up on evaluation recommendations?

To put it simply, following up with key stakeholders is more likely to lead to evaluation uptake and use! With regular follow-up, an evaluation manager can ensure that the evaluation report is not just shelved but can lead to real change. According to the OSCE Evaluation Policy, following up on evaluations is a key part of ensuring that evaluations inform decision-making and planning processes, which is in alignment of international standards like [UNEG Norms and Standards](#).

“Learning happens while an evaluation is conducted, as well as after an evaluation was conducted and the results have been disseminated and are being discussed.”

OSCE Evaluation Policy

How to follow up on evaluation recommendations?

Follow-up can happen in various ways and does not always have to be formal.

- Presenting the evaluation recommendations to relevant Executive Structure staff and external stakeholders and discussing the pathways towards their implementation
- Issuance of detailed [Phase 4: Template for developing a decentralized evaluation recommendations implementation](#) plan with a formal response from management and recommendation owners
- Keeping a database of all evaluation recommendations and their status in each Executive Structure under the oversight of Evaluation Focal Points
- Reviewing the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations prior to annual planning meetings, discussions with donors and partners, preparation of concept notes for ExB projects
- Providing informal briefings on the status of evaluation recommendations to the deputy and heads of Executive Structures to inform their discussions and decision-making.



Uptake of evaluation recommendations can be facilitated during any strategic discussion of the Executive Structure if the findings and recommendations are presented in user-friendly and digestible formats such as briefs, summaries, and presentations (see related [Guidance on use of decentralized evaluations](#)). Evaluation managers are encouraged to bring such materials to all strategic planning meetings of their Executive Structures.

Whose responsibility it is to follow up on decentralized evaluation recommendations?

Evaluation managers are responsible for following up on recommendations, including with other owners of recommendations. Upon the finalization of an evaluation report, the evaluation manager should prepare an Evaluation Recommendation Implementation Plan which constitutes a response to the evaluation recommendations. These should be shared with the Executive Structure’s Evaluation Focal Point who brings up implementation plans to the Deputy and/or Head of the Executive Structure. The EFP should then follow up on the implementation of recommendations on a 6-monthly basis

and/or as needs arise to ensure that any progress or delays in implementation inform programme planning and decision making.

What is an evaluation recommendation implementation plan?

This plan outlines in detail the exact actions that will be taken to address the recommendations, by whom and by when. The evaluation recommendation implementation action plan should be prepared within 4 weeks of the completion of the evaluation, signed and its implementation overseen by Evaluation Focal Point under the overall authority of the Fund Manager / Main Programme Manager.

Example of an evaluation implementation plan (see full [template](#)):

Step 1: The Evaluation Manager (EM) fills out table based on final evaluation report and identifies a person in the unit/department responsible for implementing the recommendation.		Step 2: The EM identifies a person responsible for each recommendation	Step 3: The person responsible for each recommendation accepts the recommendation	Step 4: The person responsible for this recommendation summarizes the actions	
Issue / Priority (low-high)	Recommendation	Responsibility Include the name, position and unit/department	Accept Yes/No/Partially	Recommendation Implementation Plan (actions, who)	Implementation date (estimate)

When and how often should evaluation managers follow-up on recommendations?

Evaluation managers should follow up on recommendations at regular 6-month intervals. However, if a recommendation is due for implementation within 3 months, a stock take of progress should be made at that time.

Following-up on recommendations should also take place prior to UB programme planning to inform discussions and the preparation of new programmes and projects for the upcoming year.

For evaluations of ExB projects, follow up should take place prior to the preparation of new project concept notes to inform the design of the next project cycle.

What role for Evaluation Focal Points in the follow up?

Evaluation Focal Points should take stock of progress implementation of evaluation recommendations in their respective entities by soliciting information from evaluation managers. They are encouraged to keep a centralized overview of all evaluation recommendations and their status for their Executive Structures and use them to provide regular updates on implementation for the Deputy and/or Heads of Executive Structures.

Guidance on use of decentralized evaluations

Purpose. Evaluation follow-up can support the use of evaluation findings and recommendations. By **building ownership**, it aims at motivating stakeholders to use and implement evaluation recommendations in **decision-making**, both for current interventions and when planning new interventions. The follow-up also increases the potential for the evaluation to positively affect **organizational learning** and learning among external partners. This in turn supports building a strong overall **evaluation culture**.

Relation to the OSCE Evaluation Policy. The OSCE Evaluation Policy stresses the use of evaluation results for decision making, for learning, to improve the organization’s work, and for accountability purposes. It also refers to Norm 14 of the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation.

Good practices to encourage use of evaluations

The following practices enhance evaluation use. They derive from good practices of international institutions and are in line with the OSCE Evaluation Policy.

Involve internal and relevant external stakeholders: Thinking about how the evaluation will be used should start during the evaluation planning phase. It is good practice to establish an Evaluation Reference Group to accompany the evaluation process. Meetings, webinars, and workshops may be suited for interactive exchange and action-oriented dissemination. An “inclusive approach to evaluation that engages evaluation stakeholders throughout the evaluation process” is a key principle to foster evaluation use (see [OSCE Evaluation Policy](#)).

Draft and implement a communication and dissemination plan during the evaluation inception phase, based on the initial dissemination plan in the ToR: An effective dissemination strategy includes how to target intended users, how to facilitate access to evaluation findings including online venues, and how to time dissemination efforts. The aim is to influence decision-making.

Create user-friendly evaluation products: Evaluation products should be easy to understand and succinctly summarise the key findings and recommendations, tailored to the specific audience. They also support public accountability through the publication of evaluation reports and related knowledge products of sufficient quality.

Assess evaluation use. Formally track and assess how stakeholders have used evaluations to inform decision-making and planning processes. Make this assessment part of the dissemination plan. Consider examining the issue of evaluation use in any meta-evaluations to be conducted.

Creating an effective communication and dissemination plan

What is a communication and dissemination plan? It is a formal, systematic plan for effectively communicating and disseminating evaluation findings and recommendations to intended users who will put the information in practice.

Timing. A communication and dissemination plan is part of the evaluation ToR template and needs to be developed at the beginning of the evaluation process and updated during as evaluation progresses. The dissemination plan should be finalised when the evaluation report is approved.

Budget. When determining the evaluation budget, you will also need to factor in the costs of the evaluation products including copy-editing and translation. Also use existing resources to produce visually appealing information. For example, use a graphic designer on a framework contract during

the drafting stage and discuss with your communication team on how they can support the dissemination.

Articulate a purpose for disseminating each type of product. Determine whether the purpose is to implement evaluation recommendations, change policies, influence project activities, attract new partnerships, avoid mistakes, take up lessons learnt and good practices etc.

Identify intended users (based on stakeholder table in ToR). The clearer the communication and dissemination plan identifies the targeted users, the more effective will the evaluation message be. This may require a more formal stakeholder analysis. Determine how each user group may best receive the evaluation information. This includes identifying literacy level, native language (consider translations) etc. Ensure gender-responsiveness of the communication and dissemination plan and presentation of findings. Determine whether the products need to be barrier-free for a specified audience.

Consider publishing decentralized evaluation results. Decide which types of evaluation products can be published. Evaluation reports that passed the quality assessment requirements are encouraged to be published on the OSCE website to strengthen public accountability. Alternatively, consider publishing executive summaries or evaluation knowledge products. For evaluation reports and knowledge products that are published determine which confidential information needs to be desensitised to address confidentiality issues and other risks.

Specify and work with disseminating partners. Identify the persons, organizations, and networks that will support spreading the message.

Identify appropriate dissemination and communication tools. Make the final evaluation report available in an electronic format with interlinked sections for easy use. The executive summary should be a stand-alone product. Other tools and knowledge products and communication channels may include:

- evaluation briefs and brochures (1-2 pages, graphically appealing),
- press releases and announcements,
- non-technical summaries for large audiences (e.g., for beneficiaries, with catchy design),
- newsletter entries (OSCEval News),
- infographics (visual representation of information),
- video messages (e.g., YouTube),
- social media posts (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc., <https://www.osce.org/osce-social-media>)
- e-mails to listservs, and other products.

Think about already existing channels and forums through which the information can be disseminated.

Internal channels could include webinars, Coffee Briefings, the Evaluation Network community of practice page, and the OSCE website to disseminate evaluation results across OSCE executive structures/ to external audiences.

Update communication and dissemination plan. The dissemination plan may be updated as needed and adapted to reflect changes in the evaluation context.

Time communication and dissemination efforts. External factors such as the policy and budget cycles may determine the appropriate point in time to disseminate evaluation products. Build in time for formatting, copyediting, and translating the final products.

Determine dissemination reach. Collect information on whether you reached the intended users by using web analytics (number of downloads, date of downloads). You can talk to the disseminating partners about their assessment. Consider also launching an electronic follow-up survey to document evaluation use.

Additional support

OIO and the OSCE Evaluation Focal Points stand ready to support evaluation managers with supporting evaluation use.