

EPE 2015

Innovations and Challenges in Designing and Managing Thematic Evaluations

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Session Overview

1. Examples of thematic evaluations from UN WOMEN and UNCDF: innovation and challenges

2. Experiences of others through parallel group work

- **Managing Thematic Evaluations/ Governance models**
- **Designing thematic evaluations**
- **Data gathering and synthesis for thematic evaluations**
- **Evaluation dissemination and utilisation**

3. Plenary session summarizing results

1. Innovations and challenges in **Managing Thematic Evaluations/ Governance models**

Who should evaluate?: external teams - Firms/Consortium vs. Individual Consultants vs. mix of internal plus external teams, i.e. evaluation entities participating in evaluation teams; evaluators vs. sector experts vs multidisciplinary teams; team members from the north vs team members from the south; international vs. local consultants.

Selecting the evaluators vs. selecting evaluation teams: request for proposals versus request for qualifications vs. others

1. Innovations and challenges in **Managing Thematic Evaluations/ Governance models (cont.)**

Oversight and governance for evaluation:

e.g. Advisory Panel, Evaluation Reference Groups, National Evaluation Reference Groups (composed by UN agencies, Partner Government and Civil Society Organizations)

... more participatory governance mechanisms

2. Innovations and challenges in **Designing Thematic Evaluations**

Agreeing the **evaluation approach** and **methods**

- Theory of change and OECD/DAC vs. other criteria
- Mixed-methods designs; contribution vs. attribution; experimental/quasi-experimental vs. more process-focused designs; use of control groups/counter-factuals
- Designing evaluations under constraints (time, budget, data)

Scoping thematic evaluations and **agreeing data collection strategies**

- Ensuring rigorous sampling
- Good practice in portfolio analysis of programmes and interventions
- Ensuring integration of gender equality and human rights

3. Innovations and challenges in ensuring **credible, evidence-rich thematic evaluations**

Strategies for **data collection** and **analysis**:

- i) organising and analysing secondary data;
- ii) generating and analysing primary data
- iii) ensuring minimum 'lines of evidence' and triangulation

Aggregating data into evaluation findings: balancing transparency and accuracy with efficiency

4. Innovations and challenges in ensuring the results from thematic evaluations are disseminated and utilised

- Internal utilization mechanisms
- Outreach to partners and external audiences
- Ensuring integration of gender equality and human rights
- Examples of utilisation that resulted in wider policy impact and change in UN entities and beyond

GROUP WORK

Decide which group you want to work in

Each group needs one *rapporteur*

You have 35 mins for group work; focus on **concrete examples of good practice**

Start by reviewing questions, adding if necessary

Rapporteurs and facilitators to briefly present main findings in Plenary

Four groups

- 1) Managing Thematic Evaluations/
Governance models
- 2) Designing thematic evaluations
- 3) Data gathering and synthesis
- 4) Evaluation dissemination and utilization

Outcome: Better understanding of the range of approaches within the UN system to designing and managing thematic evaluations