EPE 2015

Innovations and Challenges in Designing and Managing Thematic Evaluations
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