

Terms of Reference

INDEPENDENT QUALITY APPRAISAL OF ILO PROJECT EVALUATIONS

Background

The ILO's new evaluation policy and strategy identify quality control as a continued important task for EVAL. At the decentralized level evaluations involve various colleagues. Through detailed evaluation guidelines, training with certified competencies and a layered approval process EVAL assures the quality of independent project evaluations and takes final accountability for their independence and quality standard.

This real time internal quality control system is complemented by an ex-post quality appraisal (QA) mechanisms conducted by external appraisers. A total of eight quality appraisals have been conducted of the independent evaluation reports submitted to EVAL. The results have been described in various Think Pieces (Robertson and Schroter, 2014¹; Friedman and Blight, 2014²; Watts, 2016³; Llabres⁴, 2017; Bustamente, 2017⁵).

The results of the last QA (2017) found that more than ninety per cent of the reports assessed met the minimum level of overall quality. Despite the positive results described above, analysis showed that, with regard to evaluation methodology and our efforts to mainstream gender into evaluations, there is ample scope for improvement. EVAL now seeks to evolve its QA process. It wishes to engage a firm to conduct QAs on a rolling basis.

The contractor will use the rating protocols reviewed during start-up to obtain a QA score for each report. The QA will, essentially, validate the EVAL's review of project evaluation reports. In addition, the consultants will send a short questionnaire to the concerned Evaluation Manager to determine his or her compliance with evaluation policy guidelines. Such an approach would enable EVAL to detect quality issues quickly and to take immediate action to address them.

Methodology

Start-up

In 2017, EVAL made some radical changes to its QA system. The first task to be performed by the contractor is to conduct a thorough review of the QA system using techniques such as Factor Analysis to ensure that the propositions that emerge from the system are valid and reliable. Once the QA system has been thoroughly reviewed, the next phase will be to use the system to review a sample of 50 (out of approximately 114) reports that have already been approved by EVAL during 2017-18.

¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_237914.pdf

² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_329163.pdf

³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_464253.pdf

⁴ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_613853.pdf

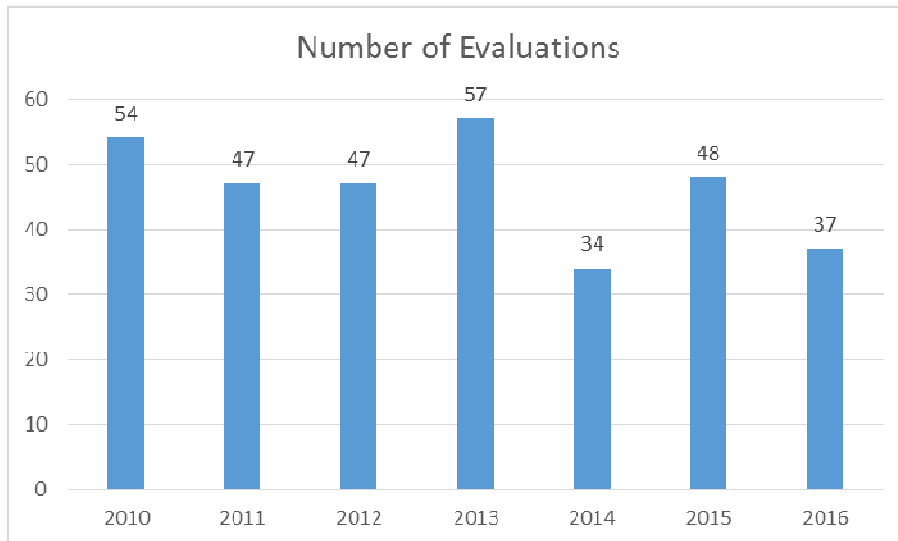
⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_633113.pdf

Rolling ex-Post appraisal system

After the start-up phase the selected contractor will receive evaluation reports for quality control on a rolling basis. The scope of the quality appraisals varies from year to year (see graph below). Over a seven-year period, from 2010 to 2016, the average number of evaluations was 46.

The contractor will use rating protocols, to be provided by EVAL, to obtain a QA score for each report. In addition, the contractors will send a short questionnaire (also to be provided by EVAL) to the concerned Evaluation Managers to determine their compliance with evaluation policy guidelines and feedback on problems and issues they face.

The contractors will compile the results of the appraisal and survey questionnaire on quarterly basis and send it to EVAL. The report should demonstrate the inter-rater reliability of the results.



Annual Quality Appraisal Summary

In advance of preparation for EVAL's Annual Evaluation Report, the QA contractors will do a cumulative analysis of the evaluations that have been submitted during the past fiscal year and write a report. The report should contain qualitative and quantitative information about trends as well as any additional analysis that is conducted. To the extent possible, the results should allow comparisons over time with previous quality appraisals.

Annual Analysis of the UN-SWAP

The ILO is one of 69 organizations that are mandated to report against United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women [UN-SWAP-GEEW]. Reports are submitted on an annual basis using the UNEG-endorsed Technical Note and related scorecard⁶ to report against the Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI).⁷ On an annual basis, the QA consultants will rate the EPI contained in the scorecard in compliance with the instructions found in the UN-SWAP-GEEW Technical Notes.

Deliverables

The deliverables associated with the activities described above are diverse in nature and have different schedules. Some deliverables are to be submitted one time only. Some are to be submitted on an annual-schedule and some are to be submitted on a rolling-schedule. This is why the contract will be issued on a retainer basis.

The review of the quality appraisal system and the appraisal of a sample of 2017-2018 reports are one-time-only deliverables that should be submitted within three months of signing the contract. The ex-post appraisals will be conducted on a rolling-schedule within a reasonable time and remunerated based on piece rate as described in the management arrangement section.

EVAL will report the results of the quality appraisal summary and the analysis of the UN-SWAP in its Annual Evaluation Report (AER). EVAL submits its AER for the ILO Governing Body's consideration each November. The production schedule requires the report to be submitted well in advance of the meeting. Therefore, the aggregated inputs would need to be received by EVAL each year, before the end of August.

Ownership of data from the evaluation rests exclusively with the ILO. The copyright of the evaluation reports will rest exclusively with the ILO. Use of the data for publication and other presentations can only be made with the written agreement of the ILO.

Management Arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

The QA consultants will work in accordance with the TORs and will report to the designated Senior Evaluation Officer in EVAL under the guidance of the Director of EVAL. Other Evaluation Officers and staff of EVAL will be part of the management depending on sector, department and region involved. EVAL will maintain an overall work plan for the QA system to provide documentation for work done and as the basis for review.

Qualifications of the Evaluators

- Adequate Contextual Knowledge of the UN and the ILO;
- Adequate Technical Specialization: Demonstrated knowledge and expertise of labour and industrial relations topics;
- At least 10 years' experience in evaluation of development cooperation projects;
- Expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and an understanding of issues related to validity and reliability;

⁶ <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2148>

⁷ <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2149>

- Fluency in spoken and written English and capacity to handle reports written in French and Spanish.

Levels of Effort and Payment

The unique nature of this work (i.e., on an as-needed basis) means remuneration for this contract will be output-based and spread over extended periods on a retainer basis. The suggested piece-rates are US\$500/report, US\$5,000/ Annual Quality Appraisal Summary inputs and US\$5,000 Annual Analysis of the UN-SWAP⁸. A typical year’s remuneration would be:

Cost Element	Number	Rate	Total
Report review	50	\$500	\$25,000
AER inputs	1	\$10,000	\$10,000
			\$35,000

The total amount of the initial contract will not exceed US\$ 35,000 and disbursements will be made based on outputs with a maximum of four payments in order to reduce the administrative burden. Addendums to the contract will be made as necessary to reflect fluctuations in workload.

⁸ The first year of the contract, the ILO will also pay \$5,000 for the review of the quality appraisal system. The total amount of the first year’s contract would be \$40,000