UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

Introduction to the UNEG Guidelines on Integrating Environmental Considerations into Evaluations

UNEG AGM 2023: 24-26 January 2023

This introduction outlines in broad terms the areas which will be included in the online Guidelines document to be produced shortly by the UNEG Working Group on Integrating Environmental and Social Impact into Evaluations.

It provides the UNEG AGM with an overview of the intended format and coverage of these guidelines to strengthen agency coverage of environmental issues. Suggestions, revisions and additions offered by the broader UNEG membership at or after the AGM will then be carefully reviewed by the Working Group and tailored to inform production of the online document. This document will be regularly updated by UNEG to ensure its conformity with evolving UN approaches to helping to deliver the SDGs.

Executive Summary

Areas to be covered in detail by the Guidelines

1:      Evaluation Offices should build on evidence previously gathered and presented by the ESI Working Group, which shows that for most UN Agencies that are not primarily targeting the environment, evaluation of intervention effects in this area is currently weak.

2:      In July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly declared that everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment. In keeping with this, evaluation offices should always evaluate environmental considerations as part of their agency's commitment to human rights.

3:      Evaluation offices should support and draw on convergence in UN approaches to social and environmental effects of interventions, as advocated by the UN Environment Management Group for more than a decade.

4:      Evaluation offices should strive to address all dimensions of agency interventions, including direct and indirect effects and taking account of situations with multiple implementers and/or stakeholders.

5:      Evaluators should use the SDGs as a framework to help assess environmental considerations. This is particularly appropriate since almost all UN agencies now design their new projects and programmes to address specific SDGs, so that data will (in principle) be collected and available on contributions towards identified goals.

6:      Evaluators should prepare a systematic map of the environmental effects of agency interventions. showing connections between major types of activity and environmental factors, which have been reported by evaluations.

7:      Although UN agencies show weaknesses with regard to implementation of environmental safeguards, many do have risk assessment systems. The use and effectiveness of these should be evaluated to help develop an improved understanding of environmental effects, which occur regularly and should not therefore be reported as "unanticipated".

8:      Ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated into Theories of Change for all interventions. Where an intervention has not been built upon an explicit and documented Theory of Change, it can be challenging for evaluators to make explicit the range of targeted causes and effects and their interaction with other factors, including the environment. In such evaluations, one of the first tasks of the evaluators should be to hold detailed discussions with project stakeholders to devise a retrospective Theory of Change.

9:      Incorporate environmental considerations into the DAC criteria for all intervention evaluations. These criteria are the most commonly used framework for evaluation Terms of Reference but are not explicitly linked to environmental effects. However, drawing on its

database of evaluations, each agency Evaluation Office should outline how environmental considerations can best be dovetailed into the DAC criteria for the purposes of evaluating the types of intervention it implements.

10:    Take early steps to strengthen incorporation of environmental considerations into all Agency evaluations. Four early measures are proposed in the accompanying main document.

11:    Bring evaluation findings on environment to the centre of agency planning and programming. One means of ensuring this will be for evaluation offices to consistently ensure that evaluation recommendations regarding the importance of environmental considerations in intervention design and implementation are entered into the *Management Action Record system and from there over time into standard project design procedures*.

12:    Ensure that evaluation is an integral part of UN-wide efforts to ensure that environmental considerations are central to progressing towards the SDGs. The current UN Environment Management Group model for strengthening the UN's environmental contribution has no focus on the important role evaluation can play in this process.

13:    Maximise linkages and approach sharing between UNEG and other evaluation entities focussed on improving evaluation of environmental considerations. In particular, liaise closely with the efforts of Footprint Evaluation and the Canadian Evaluation Society, which are highly relevant.

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND, NATURE AND SCOPE

1.1   Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the attendant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) all recognize the close interlinkages of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability. In 2019, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) established a Working Group on Integrating Environmental and Social Impact into Evaluations, with the objective of helping to establish a common UN-wide approach, norms and standards for appropriately incorporating environmental and social considerations into all evaluations, in line with the UN system-wide effort to move towards a common approach to environmental and social standards for UN programming. This document is the second product of the third phase of an exercise conducted by this Working Group. Earlier products, which detail the approach adopted and its empirical findings, are available online at the addresses listed in Annex One. An important outcome of the work to date has been the decision to focus at this stage on environmental considerations. This recognises that this area of work is currently considerably weaker than social aspects and that the latter can be addressed at a later stage in the Working Group's activities.

1.2   Nature of UNEG Guidance on Integrating Environmental Considerations into Evaluations,

The Working Group's initial approach towards helping to develop a UN-wide approach towards integrating environmental considerations into evaluations will be through the online publication of a UNEG Guidelines Document. The current paper, *Introduction to the future UNEG Guidelines,* outlines the areas, which will initially be addressed in this Document. The intention is that the Guidelines will be a "living document," which can be easily updated or expanded as UN sustainable development and evaluation approaches evolve.

The Working Group has emphasised that this guidance is particularly targeted at evaluations where the evaluand is not primarily an environmental program. However, the Group also recognizes that even environmental programs, targeting mitigation of one environmental area, might cause adverse environmental effects in another. The purpose is thus to achieve mainstreaming of environmental dimensions into *all evaluations* as an important input into the United Nations contribution towards sustainable development.

1.3   Scope of this Introduction to the future UNEG Guidelines

The Working Group has made major progress in understanding hindrances to the appropriate inclusion of environmental considerations in UN Agency evaluations. The foundation has been laid in identifying specific areas in which actions can be taken by evaluation offices, supported by UNEG to ensure that environmental considerations are appropriately addressed and that findings from evaluations gradually strengthen agency policies and interventions towards meeting the intentions of the Sustainable Development Goals. Section Two below identifies

key areas, which will be addressed in more detail in the Guidelines, taking into account suggestions from the UNEG membership at large and from the Working Group in particular.

SECTION TWO: AREAS TO BE DETAILED IN THE UNEG GUIDELINES DOCUMENT

This introduction outlines in broad terms the areas, which will be included in the online Guidelines document to be produced by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Working Group on Integrating Environmental and Social Impact into Evaluations. It provides the UNEG AGM with an overview of the intended format and coverage of environmental issues. Suggestions, revisions and additions offered by the broader UNEG membership will then be carefully reviewed by the Working Group and further tailored to inform the online document. This in turn will be regularly updated by UNEG to ensure its conformity with evolving approaches to delivering the SDGs.

2.1   Evaluation offices should build on evidence gathered and presented, which shows that for most UN Agencies that are not specifically targeting the environment, evaluation of intervention effects in this area is currently weak.

This deficiency is recognised by UN evaluation offices themselves and there is high demand for guidance in this area. This finding comes from earlier phases of this ESI work, during which an independent review was undertaken of (112) agency documents and (29) agency evaluation offices completed a self-assessment survey. The Guidelines document will build on identification and analysis of areas of weakness and propose how they can be addressed by the UN evaluation community.

2.2   Evaluation offices should evaluate environmental considerations as part of agency commitment to human rights.

On 28 July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly declared that everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment. UN Agencies, their Evaluation Offices and UNEG have all had a strong focus on human rights (and gender) for many years. Environment has largely been a subsidiary consideration. The GA declaration puts environment on the same footing as other human rights. Evaluation offices and activities must therefore now take measures to adequately address environment throughout the evaluation function. Areas of focus should include:

- Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management
- Climate Change and Disaster Risk
- Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency
- Just transition.

2.3   Evaluation offices should support and draw on convergence in UN approaches to social and environmental effects of interventions.

For more than a decade, the UN has been trying to encourage consistency among its member bodies in terms of Social and Environmental Management, under the auspices of the Environment Management Group (EMG). The EMG's understanding of the inter-relationships among social, economic and environmental aspects of development under the SDG's is illustrated in Figure 1 below. This recognises that all aspects of development, health and poverty reduction ultimately depend on the biosphere. To the extent that evaluation TOR's and reports fail to address this dependency, they are therefore likely to be ignoring a fundamental factor with the capacity to "make or break" the long-term impacts of the UN system.
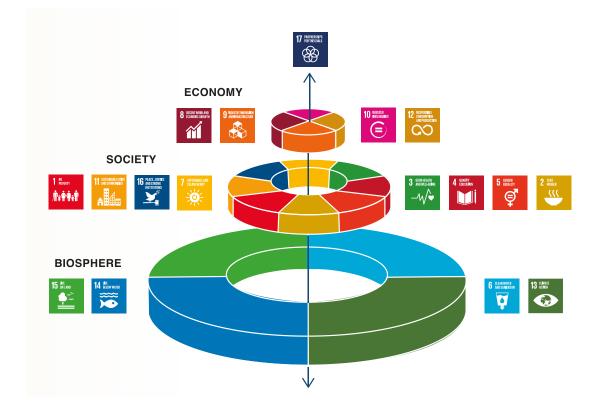

Figure 1: The relationship between the environmental, social and economic dimensions of the SDGs (Source: Azote Images for Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University).

2.4   Evaluation offices should strive to address all dimensions of agency interventions

It should be emphasised that the Guidelines will be particularly targeted at evaluations where the evaluand is not an environmental program. It is, however, recognized that even environmental programs, targeting mitigation of one environmental area, might cause adverse environmental effects in another. The purpose is thus to achieve mainstreaming of environmental dimensions into all evaluations as an important input into the United Nations contribution towards sustainable development.

UNEG members present an extremely varied and complex range of interventions for coverage by agency evaluation offices. For example:

- 50+ agencies. Huge range of issues covered
- Levels of intervention from community projects to global agreements
- May be multiple implementers and stakeholders in any intervention.

All evaluations need to adequately assess both the direct and indirect effects of interventions, to ensure that such aspects as institutional development, capacity building and generation of guidelines and policies are not assessed as an "end in themselves", but as potential contributions towards environmental benefits.

2.5   Evaluators should use the SDGs as a framework to help assess environmental considerations

It is clear why guidance is needed; but it is less obvious what should be its structure and foundations. An initial intention to filter environmental considerations for evaluation on the basis of the main activity area (s) covered by each agency was rejected. This was because development thinking and approaches are dynamic, leading to progressive changes in the understanding of institutional mandates. For example, a humanitarian mandate, which originally focussed narrowly on disaster response is now likely to consider a more holistic approach, drawing on Comprehensive Disaster Management principles, and may address disaster preparedness, mitigation and recovery as part of the overall process to be supported. This may lead towards intended results in related areas such as climate change adaptation and "building back better." In such a case, the formal mandate of the organisation may take some time to catch up with the new developmental approaches around its original core activities. This would lead to a miscategorisation of the agency concerned in terms of the likelihood of environmental effects from its activities.

An additional (or sometimes alternative) perspective on this issue refers to the financial pressures under which most UN Agencies consider themselves to operate. These are seen to have promoted widespread "mission creep" among UN agencies, leading to substantial overlap between the types of activity of various entities. This makes a narrow interpretation of agency activity fields according to their formal mandates inaccurate and ineffective; again, *giving a strong possibility of under-estimating the extent of environmental considerations.*

Since it was not felt appropriate to attempt to base the need and approach for environmental evaluation on a categorisation of agencies as a whole, the next possibility was considered to be classification of the activities they have supported. This was felt more able to take account of an evolving understanding of mandates, since institutions will then be able to incorporate new activity areas as these are entered, taking account of their potential for environmental effects.

The earlier ESI stocktaking review[1] found that the areas directly identified by agencies as requiring guidance under-estimate the scope of evaluation gaps, which were revealed from the assessment of existing documents and evaluations. However, a broad range of agencies also noted that their activities may have unanticipated environmental effects, for which evaluation guidance would be highly useful. Many suggested a heightened awareness of the

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[1] Links to this document and other earlier products of the ESI Working Group are provided in Annex 1.

interactions between social and environmental factors, driven by the SDGs' explicit emphasis on these interlinkages. This raised the potential of using the SDGs themselves as a key organizing principle for evaluation guidance. This gained strength from the fact that almost all UN agencies now design their new projects and programmes to address specific SDGs, so that data will (in principle) be collected and available on contributions towards identified goals.

Drawing on the review material in the light of the objectives of the SDGs, an initial overview of SDG areas, which may warrant environmental evaluation is presented in Annex 1 below. This shows that most of the SDGs potentially have aspects, which would need evaluating on this dimension, at different levels of intervention. Individual agencies, and particularly their evaluation offices, will need to examine each supported intervention to assess where environmental considerations might be relevant.

2.6   Evaluators should prepare a map of environmental effects of agency interventions

Each agency needs to define and implement a continuing process, through which it maps out connections between its major types of intervention and environmental factors, which have emerged during implementation.

For evaluation offices, there is a need to move from the current situation, where each intervention is often evaluated as if it is unique and has completely unpredictable "side-effects" to one where the overall repertoire from which actual "unintended consequences" may occur is identified in advance, building on systematic evidence base derived from previous project and programme evaluations. This would then be used to produce a "map" of common patterns of unintended consequences, which may occur from its different types of activity. These would be expected over time to be addressed in intervention design and assessed during evaluation.

An additional consideration for evaluators should be the "footprint" of any intervention. To what extent did implementation of the intervention have an "environmental footprint" of its own, independent of project/programme effects? If any, what were these?

2.7   Need to relate environmental considerations to agency safeguard systems

Guidelines will support the need for consideration of environment in design. An early step will be to assess whether the intervention under evaluation (the evaluand) was subject to environmental screening during preparation phase.

- If no screening, were there any environmental considerations that should have been subjected to screening? If so, what were these and how can they be evaluated?
- If screening was conducted, what environmental considerations have been raised and how have they been addressed during implementation?

This approach draws on the finding from the ESI review work that the use of environmental and social safeguard systems among UN Agencies has so far been seen as weak, particularly in comparison with international development banks. This has been most pronounced in the

environmental area. Despite this poor performance, there are screening processes for environmental effects in a range of UN organizations. Although risk categories and terminology vary, there is broad adoption of a three-tier system of risk assessment categories:

- **High**: Possibility of environmental impacts that are significant in scale and/or severity and may have irreversible effects
- **Medium:** Possibility of environmental impacts that are limited in scale and severity, for which remedial actions may be effective
- **Low:** Minor impacts that can be remedied or no impacts.

Each risk category is associated with procedures, ranging from a Full Environmental Impact Assessment for high-risk interventions, through smaller scale, less formal and often more localised reviews, to "no further action required". Use of the screening system should be carefully assessed by evaluators for all projects, to ensure that it is actually offering the intended level of safeguarding; since there is a possibility that risks will be under-estimated during project preparation to avoid incurring expenses and time delays. Further, evaluators should not accept the common principle of "do no harm" to the environment as the highest level of potential achievement. Rather, in order to assess effectiveness and sustainability, evaluators need to assess the extent to which risks (threats) have been turned into opportunities and positively addressed by interventions.

By ensuring that the initial risk assessment during project development was at the right level and standard, the evaluation office can build a database of the use and effectiveness of the agency safeguard system, to which all of its evaluations will contribute. Careful analysis of this database will also enable a systematic reduction in the number of "unintended consequences" of interventions, since most environmental effects, however slight, should be raised and addressed during the project risk assessment. Any which "slip through" this process can be added to the database and will be routinely assessed during the design of future interventions.

2.8 Ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated into Theories of Change for all interventions

The great majority of activities by all UN Agencies are now expected to be based on a Theory of Change (ToC), which sets out the long-term objectives and how the intervention will contribute towards their attainment. However, extensive project development, approval and pipeline processes, as well as long or phased implementation, mean that there are still projects coming up for final evaluation without such a ToC. Where an intervention has not been built upon an explicit and documented Theory of Change, it can be challenging for evaluators to make explicit the range of targeted causes and effects and their interaction with other factors, including the environment. In such evaluations, one of the first tasks of the evaluators is to hold detailed discussions with project stakeholders to devise a retrospective Theory of Change.

There are many documents outlining how to create a Theory of Change. Whilst most of these are intended to assist during project design, they can also be used retrospectively with project stakeholders as part of the process for evaluating projects nearing completion. An early

example, devised by the GEF specifically to target environmental considerations, is the RoTI Handbook[2], which has been extensively used during project design, as well as for retrospective evaluations. Other useful documents on creating Theories of Change are available from ILO, UNDG, UNDP and UNICEF (among others).

In creating Theories of Change for evaluation of development interventions, three important considerations are:

- The theory should not be so focussed on intended benefits that it "crowds out" potential negative effects (the search for "win-win" interventions should not overlook the more likely "trade-off" scenarios)
- The theory should not be so comprehensive and complicated that contributions towards impacts cannot be assessed
- The theory needs to take account of different "trajectories of change" for the main cause and effect chains; since there may be short-term development benefits, which contribute towards long-term environmental effects (Positive or negative).

2.9 Incorporate environmental considerations into the DAC criteria for all intervention evaluations

The DAC criteria are at the heart of most evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR). Given prevalent restricted resource allocations, particularly for evaluations built around fieldwork, evaluators tend to address the compulsory elements of ToR first and then move on to other aspects. In most cases, this reduces attention to environmental considerations, unless these are centrally placed in the ToR.

Drawing on its database of evaluations, each agency Evaluation Office needs to outline how environmental considerations can best be dovetailed into the DAC criteria for the purposes of evaluating the types of intervention it implements. This process could lead to advances both in the concept and use of the DAC criteria and in the status and consistency of incorporating environmental considerations into all evaluations. As an indication of how this process might work, some initial hypothetical environmental considerations to be considered by evaluators are shown in Table 1 below.

DAC evaluation criterion	Hypothetical examples of environmental considerations
Relevance	Does intervention conform with national policies and commitments on environmental management? Is the intervention "climate proof"?
Coherence	Does the intervention relate to agency and broader UN policies on environmental management? Is the intervention's environmental footprint sufficiently managed to ensure it does not counteract benefits achieved?
Efficiency	Does the project use natural resources in the most economical manner?

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[2] The ROtI Handbook. GEF Evaluation Office and Conservation Development Centre, Kenya. August 2009

Effectiveness	Does the project enable improved and more equitable management of natural resources as well as its primary objectives?
Sustainability	Will the project be adaptable to take account of changing environmental circumstances, such as climate change and pressure on biodiversity and, if possible, to advance responses to these?
Impact	Will the project contribute towards long term improvements in environmental management, which will help generate positive adaptation effects?

Table 1: Hypothetical matching of environmental considerations to DAC criteria

2.10 Early steps to strengthen incorporation of environmental considerations into all Agency evaluations

Pending a more thorough reform of agency evaluation systems and procedures, it is suggested that the following basic measures are immediately taken to accelerate the processes of strengthening environmental considerations in all agency evaluations:

- Ensure that all evaluation TORs incorporate potential or actual environmental considerations, particularly by relating them to DAC criteria, to project risk assessments and to effects reported by previous evaluations
- Ensure that evaluation teams have sufficient capacity in environmental areas to appropriately assess such effects. Avoid the practice of appointing candidates with other specialisations and marginal environmental credentials to "double up" on these aspects
- Take steps to ensure that all evaluation quality ratings assess coverage of environmental considerations, even if only to demonstrate on the basis of evidence that these were slight or non-existent
- Begin to collate a specific database on environmental considerations reported in all agency evaluations, including those where no such effects are reported.

2.11 Bring evaluation findings on environment to the centre of agency planning and programming

It is extremely challenging for an evaluation to make a coherent and evidence-based assessment of the environmental effects of an intervention if these were not considered in the original project design. This is because in such situations it is highly unlikely that the institutions involved in implementation will have gathered any coherent evidence, particularly monitoring data, which can be reviewed or used by the evaluators as the basis for findings or conclusions, still less for recommendations.

As proposed in item 2.10 above, evaluation offices should take a long-term approach by ensuring that environmental considerations are included clearly in their Terms of Reference and that evaluators address these adequately. One means of ensuring quality will be to include this coverage in their *evaluation quality rating system*. Furthermore, evaluation offices should consistently ensure that evaluation recommendations regarding the importance of environmental considerations in intervention design and implementation are entered into the *Management Action Record system and from there over time into standard project design procedures*.

Furthermore, the evaluation office should consider how each evaluation can contribute to institutional strengthening of the agency with regard its environmental effects, for example by exploring:

Linking evaluation to improved planning. Are there any lessons from this intervention, which suggest changes necessary to improve the Agency's environment management system and processes?
How can *recommendations from this evaluation for system changes* with regard to environmental considerations be promoted and institutionalised in the Agency and more broadly?

2.12 Ensure that evaluation is an integral part of UN-wide efforts to ensure that environmental considerations are central to progressing towards the SDGs

The Guidelines will advise on aligning evaluation with the overall UN environment management standards and systems. Looking at the efforts of the UN system to bring social and environmental considerations to the core of progress towards the SDGs, a most striking aspect is the failure of agency evaluation functions to ensure that the critical role they can play in contributing to evidence-based policy and practice is incorporated into emerging approaches. This is clear, for example, in the EMG's suggested Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards,[3] which is shown in Figure 2 below.
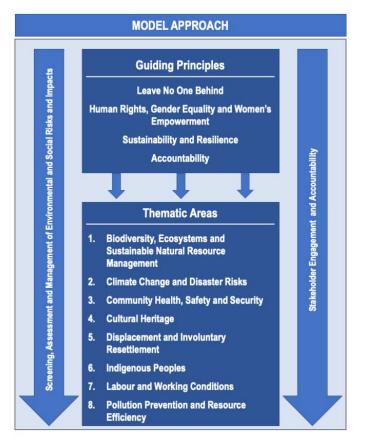

Figure 2: UN EMG proposed Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards

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[3] Supporting the Global Biodiversity Agenda: A United Nations System Commitment for Action to assist Member States delivering on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. EMG. 2020. P6.

Environmental management is seen as incorporated at project/programme preparation stage through screening and, where appropriate, ex-ante impact assessment and thereafter through monitoring. However, the importance of evaluation to assess the extent to which planned environmental management is actually implemented and, if so, whether it delivers the expected results is largely absent in the model. A rapid review of individual agency (and Development Bank) guidelines for environmental risk assessment and management shows that, however detailed these are, they almost never include evaluation as a distinctive and important element of the overall process[4].

2.13 Maximise linkages and approach sharing between UNEG and other evaluation entities focussed on improving evaluation of environmental considerations.

The issue of how best to mainstream environment into international development evaluation approaches is currently under review by a range of stakeholders. Of particular interest to the UNEG guidance exercise is the work of Footprint Evaluation, presented and updated on the Better Evaluation website[5]. "Footprint evaluation is grounded in the premise that all evaluations should include consideration of environmental sustainability, even when this is not a stated goal of the intervention. This is so that decision-making can take into account the potential and actual impacts of planned interventions (projects, programs, policies) on the environment". Footprint's work has covered similar ground to that of the current UNEG ESI research and has come to some similar conclusions and potential solutions, although within a broader institutional framework than UNEG. In particular, Footprint draws attention to the importance of the DAC criteria, which also strongly emerged from the first two stages of the ESI work. With regard to the need to promote a strong rationale for including environmental considerations in all evaluations, Footprint promotes reference to international environmental agreements, which partner countries have ratified, to leverage inclusion.

Whilst this aspect could indeed be highlighted in activities at country level, the Guidelines will propose another channel specifically for UN Agencies. It will support efforts to ensure that UNEG approaches to environmental evaluation should be related to the overall UN EMG proposed Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards, as part of a longer-term intention to fully incorporate evaluation into this approach, from which it is currently largely omitted. This would both raise the status of evaluation within the UN Environmental Management system and strengthen that system by informing its successive iterations on the basis of the difference made (or not made) by earlier stages such as Environmental Screening.

Footprint has also proposed a brief set of generic Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs), which might be incorporated into all evaluation TORs as a way of screening, at this stage, for environmental issues which have been or should have been addressed during the course of the intervention (evaluand). The appropriateness of the KEQs suggested by Footprint for the UN system (and the broader applicability of a KEQ approach) will be explored further in developing the ESI Guidelines document.

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[4] At best, it occasionally appears as part of generic references to "monitoring and evaluation," with no specification of its role or importance.

[5] Source: website: betterevaluation.org, headings – cross-cutting themes – footprint evaluation.

The Canadian Evaluation Society has also conducted a study[6] covering some of the same ground as the ESI and Footprint Work. This concludes that: "sustainability is not being systematically addressed by evaluators in either Canada or the United States. The focus of publications, grey literature, and the vast majority of evaluation projects continues to be on human systems, and even evaluations dealing with environmental or natural systems issues tend largely to focus upon operational and program processes (i.e., the human dimension) of those programs".

These external investigations of similar issues as those addressed by the ESI Working Group emphasise that, even if the Guidance leads to improvements in the coverage and technical quality of environmental considerations in evaluations, this will lack significance as long as Evaluation Offices are "on the outside looking in" to overall UN environmental management systems. This issue has already been raised in 2.12 above.

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[6] CANADIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP. REPORT ON STOCKTAKING FOR SUSTAINABILITY-READY EVALUATION. Submitted to: CES National Council December 2020

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Initial outline of environmental evaluation considerations relating to the SDGs

SDG	Environmental Considerations	Key Environmental Evaluation Factors
Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	Requires environmental management: e.g., to ensure that increased production does not deplete environment.	Poverty reduction often implies increased production. Evaluation needs to assess unexpected (or extent of expected) negative effects on environment.
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Goals depend on environmental management of sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and agro industry.	Sustainable agriculture and aquaculture imply close attention to environmental factors, including land and water management. Climate Change adaptation needs to be intrinsic to interventions and carefully evaluated.
Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	There are many environmental requirements if human health and well-being are to be ensured.	Climate change adaptation is essential in many locations to ensure that new pests and diseases, damaging to health, are not promoted by environmental change. Interventions intended to promote health and well-being may cause unintended environmental stress, which needs to be carefully evaluated.
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	Could be important: e.g., incorporation of environmental elements into academic curricula.	Inter-relationship between social and environmental considerations could be important in academic curricula. There could also be CC adaptation needs, e.g., affecting functioning of schools in heat waves. Disruption of schooling by CC-related extreme weather events (e.g., hurricanes) is already common and the contribution of social-focussed interventions to minimising this should be considered in relevant evaluations.

SDG	Environmental Considerations	Key Environmental Evaluation Factors
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	In some situations, interventions in this area may have environmental implications.	In many locations, particularly rural, woman and girls play a major role in natural resource management, for example, in such areas as water and fuel wood management. Agricultural roles may also be gender-determined. Evaluation should therefore consider intended and unintended changes in relationship between women/girls and the environment from gender-focussed interventions and how these my affect NRM and environmental quality.
Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	The relationship between sanitation and water management is challenging, particularly for large urban populations.	In major urban areas, water-borne sanitation may severely challenge water availability, posing a threat to environmental sustainability. Evaluation needs to carefully consider any intended or unintended challenges to water availability, particularly in the context of Climate Change Adaptation needs.
Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	Complex environmental considerations, including CC mitigation obligations and sustainability of water supplies in case of increased hydropower.	Need to evaluate relative costs of traditional and sustainable energy sources to assess viability of expanded sustainable sources in short, medium and long term. Environmental impacts of hydropower expansion interventions need careful assessment, for example with regard to effects on availability of water for agriculture and drinking in rural areas. Consider Water-Land-Energy nexus in evaluations.
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Economic growth may be achieved at expense of the environment, e.g., through increased industry and/or agriculture.	Evaluation needs to carefully consider intended and unintended effects of different types of increased production on the environment.

SDG	Environmental Considerations	Key Environmental Evaluation Factors
Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	Development of infrastructure and industry characteristically pose environmental challenges, which may be major.	Evaluation needs to consider in detail the extent to which industrialization and infrastructure have proved to be resilient (in particular to CC and weather-related events) and environmentally sustainable. E.g., what environmental resources are necessary for industrialization; to what extent has infrastructure displaced or damaged environmental resources; do infrastructure return periods take account of CC Adaptation needs?
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	Reducing inequality may involve increasing productive activity in poor and environmentally fragile areas and countries, with potential environmental consequences.	Evaluation should consider the extent to which inequality has been reduced through increased use of environmental resources, particularly in fragile locations, with potential or actual negative effects.
Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	The goals of resilience and sustainability have substantial environmental considerations.	Evaluation should consider to what extent and with what priority, the concepts of environmental resilience and sustainability have been realised; taking into account CC mitigation and adaptation needs.
Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	Extent to which consumption and production make sustainable demands on the environment.	Evaluate extent to which sustainability of consumption and production have been assessed or measured and steps taken to maximise them. Determine whether sustainability gains are sufficient to prevent major environmental consequences (e.g. energy efficiency).
Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*	Covers both Mitigation and Adaptation, as well as resilience.	Evaluation of mitigation and adaptation approaches and their effects. Resilience approaches should align with overarching frameworks such as Sendai and UNFCCC

SDG	Environmental Considerations	Key Environmental Evaluation Factors
Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Sustainable use of marine resources, including through protection and conservation.	Evaluation of conservation and protection measures and their effects on use patterns, including on poverty.
Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	Sustainable use of terrestrial resources, including through protection and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems. Sustain traditional access and use, e.g., of non-timber forest products. Also includes marine fisheries within ecosystem approach.	Evaluation of conservation and protection measures and their effects on natural resource and ecosystems use patterns, including on biodiversity and livelihoods. Assess whether protected areas have placed stress on adjacent areas. Assess trade-offs between agriculture and marine fisheries, e.g., through use of agricultural inputs in coastal areas.
Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	Peace and social inclusion may increase opportunities for effective environmental management. But peace keeping forces may cause environmental damage or stress.	Assess extent to which peace and social inclusion have enabled and empowered environmental management. Evaluate environmental effects of increasingly functional institutions. Assess unanticipated effects of peace keeping forces.
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	Improved implementation institutions, coordination and data systems for global environmental management.	Evaluation at level of global environment architecture, including inter-relations between relevant bodies.

ANNEX 2: Links to previous outputs of the ESI Working Group

1:      Stock-Taking Exercise on Policies and Guidance of UN Agencies in Support of Evaluation of Social and Environmental Considerations. UNEG. July 2020.

(http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2951)

2:      UNEG Working Group on Incorporating Environmental and Social Considerations into Evaluation. Mainstreaming the Environment into Evaluations: Shaping the ESI Guidance. A "Think Piece". David Todd. 16th August 2022.