ITC

EVALUATION
POLICY

International
Trade
Centre

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A.   Introduction

ITC is committed to continuous improvement, increased productivity and delivering value for money in driving towards its goal of 'Export impact for good'. A critical element in achieving this is the establishment of the strengthening and reinforcement of the evaluation function including the establishment of an Evaluation Policy and Annual Evaluation Programme. The promulgation and implementation of the Evaluation Policy will also ensure that ITC conforms to required UN standards and will meet the commitment made to ITC's Joint Advisory group (JAG) in 2007.

The Evaluation Policy determines due process and sets general standards for evaluation in the ITC. ITC's Senior Management Committee (SMC) adopted this Policy on 7 May 2008. It will be periodically reviewed and updated as part of an annual reporting process

The development and adoption of the Evaluation Policy responds to the recommendations of the ITC External Evaluation led by Denmark, which emphasised the need for "ITC's evaluation function to be strengthened and made independent from operational functions"[1] and to the same concern expressed by Delegations during the December 2007 Joint Advisory Group (JAG) meeting "that the monitoring and evaluation function could be further strengthened."[2]

From a broader perspective, it builds on the work that has been developed in the UN system for promoting system-wide coherence through the use of evaluation. In its Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (TCPR), the UN General Assembly "*encourages* all United Nations organizations involved in operational activities for development that have not already done so to adopt, as appropriate, monitoring and evaluation policies that are in line with system-wide norms and standards and to make the necessary financial and institutional arrangements for the creation and/or strengthening of independent, credible and useful evaluation functions within each organization."[3]

The Policy also corresponds to ITC commitments in fulfilling OIOS recommendations related to the development of the evaluation function, and in particular recommendation 4 of a recent report which urges   "all heads of Departments/Offices that do not yet have established evaluation policies should develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation for their department. The policy should provide a clear explanation of the concept, role and use of evaluation within the department/office, including the institutional framework and definition of roles and responsibilities, scope and periodicity of evaluations; an explanation of how the evaluation function and evaluations are planned, managed and budgeted; a clear statement on disclosure and dissemination of evaluation reports." [4]

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[1] See "Evaluation of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, Synthesis Report", DMI ASSOCIATES, April 2006: http://www.EMUuation.org/filedir/Reports/Synthesis%20Report%20A/Synthesis%20Report.pdf

[2] See "Report of the 41st session of the ITC Joint Advisory Group meeting" ITC/AG(XLI)/216, 4-5 December 2007, available at: http://www.intracen.org/docman/JAG_11692.pdf

[3] UNGA Resolution A/RES/62/208 of 19 December 2007

[4] "Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the assessment of evaluation capacities and needs in the United Nations Secretariat", INS-07-002, May 2007

The Evaluation Policy has been prepared in accordance with the norms and standards that have been developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and builds on the Evaluation Policies developed by UNEG member organizations[5].

B.   Evaluation Concept

1.   Definition

Evaluation is an **assessment**, as systematic as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements, learn lessons and then share good practice across the organisation. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of ITC's programme of work, to help achieve greater value for ITC clients[6] and fulfil ITC's mission[7].

Evaluation acts as an important **agent of change** and feeds into management and decision-making processes through:

- Providing evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the design and implementation of current and future activities, projects and programmes;

- Informing the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting cycle;

- Generating value-addition for decision-oriented processes to assist in the improvement of strategies and policies, contributing to institutional policy-making, development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness; and,

- The production and implementation of action plans following the assessment of recommendations form evaluation reports.

All **types of evaluation** in the ITC are conducted in accordance with due process of evaluation as determined in the Evaluation Policy. Three main types of evaluations are foreseen:

- **Self-evaluations -** undertaken by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of the project or programme in question. (Following the adoption of the overall evaluation policy, a further report will be submitted to set out guidelines for self evaluations, whose results will then feed into the overall evaluation programme)

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[5] The support of the UNEG Secretariat, and also at a personal level, of the Heads and colleagues in the Evaluation Departments, has been particularly appreciated and played an important role in the elaboration of this Evaluation Policy, which has also been developed on the basis of and in concordance with the Monitoring and Evaluation System for WTO Technical Assistance Activities. See UNEG website: http://www.uneval.org/

[6] Following a holistic approach to trade development, ITC's clients were principally identified at three levels: (1) the enterprise (SME) level; (2) the TSI level; and (3) the level of the policy- or strategy-maker, *"Draft framework for Consolidated Programme Document" Informal Joint Advisory Group,* 4 December 2006

[7] Mission of ITC: "ITC enables small business export success in developing and transition countries by providing, with partners, inclusive and sustainable trade development solutions to the private sector, trade support institutions and policy-makers."

- Independent evaluations - conducted by independent consultants external to the donor and ITC. Such evaluations are centrally managed and funded resources available to the ITC Evaluation and Monitoring Unit – EMU.

- The annual ITC **Clients' Survey** - managed by EMU and is used to gather data from a large number of ITC clients in a structured way to allow for statistical analysis and for taking a strategic view of demand and needs of ITC's client base.

Methodology is the approach used to identify information sources and collect information during an evaluation, and to analyze those data. The quality of evaluation very much depends on the methods used. Evaluation methods may include: Document review; Interviews with all key informants and key players; Questionnaires; Observation and other participatory techniques such as focus groups etc.; Participation of partners and stakeholders; Benchmarking; etc. For each evaluation, the combination and sequence of evaluation methods that are the most appropriate to the purpose of the evaluation are determined.

There are **other forms of assessment** that may overlap to some extent with evaluation but need to be differentiated:

- Evaluation has a **research** component, as it is also a sum of work that leads to the discovery of new knowledge or to developing existing knowledge. The methodologies and technical tools used for research are often similar to the ones used in evaluation. Research is a learning process but without the control and accountability components that are specific to evaluation.

- **Audit** may be defined as an activity of supervision verifying whether the existing policies, norms and instruments are being applied and used adequately. It also examines the adequacy of organizational structures and systems and performs risk assessments. It focuses on the accountability and control of the efficient use of resources, with less emphasis on issues related to relevance, sustainability and impact of the activities as can be found in evaluation.

- **Needs assessments** and **appraisals** are tools enabling decision makers to choose and decide between optional activities, and to refine the final design of a project or programme.

- **Review** is a periodic or ad hoc often rapid assessment of performance of an undertaking, that do not apply the due process of evaluation. Reviews tend to emphasize operational issues.

- **Monitoring** is management's continuous examination of progress achieved during the implementation of an undertaking to track compliance with the plan and expected outputs, leading to taking necessary decisions to improve performance.

- **Inspection** can be defined as a general examination seeking to resolve a particular problem, or to identify vulnerable areas and malfunctions and to propose corrective actions. An **investigation** is a specific inquiry or examination of a claim of wrongdoing and provision of evidence for eventual prosecution or disciplinary measures.

All of the above will contribute significantly to ITC's commitment to a learning culture within the organisation. This will be an increasingly critical factor in offering assurance to ITC's stakeholders that resources are being used efficiently and effectively.

2. Purposes

Evaluation purposes can be summarized as follows: (a) play a critical and credible role in supporting accountability, (b) contribute to building knowledge and to organizational learning and, (c) promote the work carried out by the ITC.

Evaluation purposes can't be fulfilled if at the end of the evaluation process, the results of the evaluation aren't actually utilised. Therefore, it is necessary to keep in mind that evaluation should have a particular aim and should serve the needs and requirements of the parties for whom evaluation is relevant and useful – the users of evaluation. To ensure utilization of evaluation, the evaluation function must align the evaluation purposes with how the information generated by evaluation will be used.

a. Accountability

The reinforcement of the evaluation function within ITC stems from an increased demand for accountability. The notion of accountability is particularly important for the contributors to ITC's budget including donors who provide financial assistance to ITC to enable it deliver trade-related technical assistance to beneficiary countries. Projects and programmes have to increasingly justify their existence, the use of funds, their relevance, their effectiveness in achieving key objectives and the sustainability of results once completed. Accountability is "an obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in compliance with the agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans."[8] It also includes the proper use of resources, given the finite quantum of resources available for trade development as compared to the very large and wide-ranging needs of ITC clients.

b. Learning

Learning is the second purpose of evaluation. A common definition of learning is the process by which individuals and organizations create, transfer and use knowledge in order to achieve positive change and realize their goals. The role of evaluation is to recommend changes in the organization's activities after having analyzed and assessed its institutional performance. Similarly, evaluation can generate knowledge when it enables the acquisition of deeper understanding of the underlying factors of a problem.

Moreover there is a learning dimension of the evaluation itself by which, people involved in the evaluation process "develop and increased capacity to interpret evidence, draw conclusions, and make judgments".[9] A prerequisite for this "evaluative thinking" is to train people in using evaluation as a learning tool.

To facilitate learning, evaluation reports generated through the evaluation process are transmitted to the users of evaluation. To be usable for learning purposes, evaluation reports

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[8] "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management", OECD/DAC, 2002
[9] This is described in the evaluation literature as the "Evaluative Thinking and Process Use" dimension.

need to be interesting, practical, relevant, when possible innovative and more importantly short. They should also enable action plans to be constructed as part of the transition from learning to action and tangible improvements.

c. Communication

The third purpose of evaluation is related to the promotion of the work carried out by the ITC. An evaluation provides an independent and objective view of the performance and achievements of a project, programme or policy. It offers an all-embracing and comprehensive view of the object evaluated, and helps remove ambiguities that were, for instance, previously questioned by donors or partners.

Communicating about the enhancement or refinement of an activity, strategy or policy through evaluation will gain in credibility and will not be perceived as a pure marketing operation. An evaluation does not necessarily need to be positive to be used as a promotional tool. An evaluation identifying weaknesses, proposing adjustments also shows the capacity of the organization to be open to criticism, transparent in its management, ready to learn from experiences and to adapt to changing needs.

C. Evaluation Key Principles and Criteria

1. Key Principles

In the evaluation context, there is no clear distinction and delimitation of what precisely encompasses the terms "principles", "norms" and "standards". We use the term "Key Principles" as basic references that will help to better manage and conduct evaluation. They are not mutually exclusive and present some overlap between them. It is their fulfilment, combination and balance, which ensure that evaluation is effective and valid.

a. Utilisation of Results

In terms of evaluation planning, the proper use of the evaluation function implies that there is clear intent to use evaluation findings for the purposes outlined above. In the context of limited resources, the planning and selection of evaluation work should be timely and carefully done, taking into account strategic needs and priorities defined in the ITC Strategic Plan.

Utility criteria are followed in order to ensure that evaluation serves the information needs of intended users. They include *inter alia* the proper identification of the stakeholder, the evaluator's credibility through an appropriate selection, a relevant selection of information to be collected, clarity in the report with clear description of the perspectives, a selection of procedures and rationale to interpret findings and their timely dissemination. In addition, evaluation should be conducted and presented in a manner that is easily understood by evaluation users.

The need to ensure actual use of evaluation implies the systematic follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted. In fact, the final report itself represents the completion of only the first part of a process whose main benefits are derived from the follow-up process.

**b.	Transparency**

Meaningful, timely and regular consultation with the major stakeholders is a key feature in all stages of the evaluation process since it is essential for the credibility and utility of evaluation and it can facilitate ownership of evaluation. Full information on evaluation design and methodology should be shared throughout the process to build confidence in the findings and facilitate understanding of their limitations and context.

**c.	Impartiality**

The requirement for impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process. It implies the absence of bias in due process and the use of methodological rigour. It also implies that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account and eventual differences in perspective are reflected in a balanced evaluation analysis and reporting.

The precondition for ensuring impartiality is that, in all stages of the evaluation process, the evaluation function has the ability to exercise independent judgment, is not unduly influenced by the views or pressures of any party and has the required authority to submit reports directly to appropriate levels of decision-making.

Conflicts of interest should be avoided as far as possible so that the credibility of the evaluation process and product is not undermined. Conflicts of interest should be disclosed and dealt with openly and honestly. EMU staff and external evaluators engaged by the ITC shall not have had any responsibility for the design, implementation or supervision of any of the projects, programmes or policies that they evaluate.

**d.	Feasibility**

The implementation of the principle of "feasibility" is to ensure that "an evaluation is realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal". Feasibility criteria include among others the need to select practical methodologies and procedures, with minimum disruption, a political viability with proper plans to obtain the cooperation of various interest groups, and cost effectiveness where the benefit of evaluation should outweigh the costs.

It is important that evaluation is constructive and, diplomatic when required, so that confidence can be built and the users of the evaluation have an increased readiness to learn from the evaluation. This constructive approach cannot however be at the expenses of diluting the purpose of the evaluation exercise and distorting the findings.

**e.	Ethics**

Evaluation must be conducted with personal and professional integrity and should not reflect personal or sectoral interests. Evaluation must be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of social and cultural environments and must be conducted legally with due regard to the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its findings. In line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluation must be sensitive to and addresses issues of discrimination and gender inequality.

Evaluation respects people's right to provide information in confidence and makes participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality. When dealing with sensitive information, it protects the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants.

Evaluations do not evaluate individuals. At the same time, they can provide an assessment of management functions. When it finds evidence of wrongdoing or unethical conduct, such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body.

f.   Quality

Information generated by evaluation is accurate and reliable to ensure that it reveals and conveys technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the object being evaluated. Evaluation design, data collection and analysis should reflect professional standards, with due regards for any circumstances or limitations reflecting the context of the evaluation. Evaluation findings should be presented in a manner that is readily understood by the target audiences. To ensure this, it is critical that ITC evaluators possess the necessary evaluation competences and professionalism and that they exert intellectual integrity in applying standard evaluation methods.

g.   Creativity

Evaluation is an assessment focusing not only on accountability but also on learning. Evaluation generates knowledge. Building on methodological rigour and the respect of ethical standards, evaluations should be stimulating and creative leading to interesting new perspectives. When creative, evaluation opens new fields of interest, new parameters of action and new strategies.

2.   <u>Criteria</u>

Evaluation uses a certain number of specific criteria to assess the relevance, performance and achievements of a project or programme. Evaluation criteria[10] are used to conduct the analysis and the assessment of a project, programme or policy and to determine findings (factual statements based on evidence), conclusions ('synthesis' of a series of findings responding to a 'specific circumstance') and recommendations ('prescription' on what should be done in a 'specific circumstance')

a.   Relevance

'Relevance' can be understood as "are we doing the right thing?" It is the extent to which the objectives and/or project purposes of a project/programme are / remain valid and pertinent either as originally planned or as subsequently modified. Relevance has to be assessed in relation to the design and the implementation of a project, programme or policy. It can be analyzed at different levels, for instance the relevance to the country's trade development strategy, to the target groups or beneficiaries' needs, to the ITC's global mandate and strategic objectives or to partners and donors policies.

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[10] These criteria have been harmonized in "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management", OECD/DAC, 2002

b.   Performance

'Performance' can be understood as "are we doing it right?" The analysis of the performance looks at the progress being made by the project, programme according to criteria, standards or performance indicators, and in relation to its overall objectives and/or project purposes. Two criteria are commonly used to assess the performance of a project/programme:

- '*Effectiveness*' assesses if the programme/project is achieving satisfactory progress toward its stated objectives / desired results, taking into account their relative importance. In this context, it is equally important to examine if changes would have occurred, regardless of the implementation of the project or programme.

- '*Efficiency*' examines the extent to which the approved goals, targets and outputs have been achieved within agreed or cost levels.

c.   Effects

The criteria related to the measurement of impact and sustainability focus on the effects of a project, programme or a policy rather than on the intervention itself:

- '*Impact'* is considered as the follow on stage after the ITC intervention or support. Often ITC is creating capacity or capability. It is therefore critical that once capacity is created in an enterprise, an institution or an individual, that this is converted into action and improvements. The achievement of 'impact' is the critical test for ITC's work. This approach will require ITC to develop a process that is able to monitor impact, i.e. the progress made, within a defined period, by an enterprise, an institution or an individual after receiving ITC's support.

- '*Sustainability'* is the extent to which the organisational changes generated by ITC's intervention are maintained over a longer period. This requires the recommended actions to be established within the resource capacity of the organisations being supported. There are different aspects of sustainability, including financial sustainability, institutional sustainability, and technological sustainability. These different aspects have to be assessed when looking at the sustainability of an intervention.

D.   Evaluation Roles and Responsibilities

1.   Joint Advisory Group

The membership off the JAG is open to Member States of UNCTAD and Members of WTO. While the JAG has neither legislative nor budgetary authority, it has come to be the main intergovernmental policy forum of the ITC. On an annual basis, the JAG will receive the Annual Evaluation Report that will set out the current year's programme, the results of the evaluations and the actions implemented.

2.   Senior Management Committee

The Senior Management Committee (SMC) identifies priority areas for evaluation during the preparation of the Annual Evaluation Programme and approves it. SMC ensures adequate

resources for evaluation and safeguards the independence of the evaluation process and product. It also receives the Annual Evaluation Report and determines actions to be taken following consideration of its recommendations.

SMC ensures that the relevant part of ITC management prepares responses to all evaluations and ensures the appropriate and timely implementation of agreed evaluation recommendations. It draws on evaluation findings to improve the quality of projects and programmes and guide strategic decision-making on future programming and positioning. To execute these responsibilities SMC will depend upon reports from the ITC Evaluation and Monitoring Unit within OED.

The SMC examines and approves the revisions to the Evaluation Policy and evaluation Guidelines.

### 3.	Executive Director

The Executive Director (ED) is accountable for ITC results and uses the evaluation function to fulfil the purposes of evaluation (see Section B.2.). ED is responsible for fostering an enabling environment for evaluation and ensures compliance with the evaluation policy as integral to effective accountability across ITC.

ED maintains overall supervisory responsibility of the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit and appoints its staff, and verifies that it continuously strives to enforce the key principles of evaluation (see Section C.1.). ED safeguards the integrity of the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit, ensuring its independence from operational management, endorsing its authority in matters related to evaluation content and process, and providing it with sufficient resources and capacity.

ED ensures that the ITC prepares a management response to evaluations produced by the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit. ED also ensures that Divisional Directors respond to and utilise evaluation in their operational and strategic functions and that the relevant units appropriately follow up on the findings and recommendations of evaluations.

### 4.	Evaluation and Monitoring Unit - EMU

ITC Evaluation and Monitoring Unit – EMU – is the **custodian of the evaluation function**. It has the lead role in ensuring that evaluation work is conducted according to the required professional standards.

In terms of **governance and accountability**, EMU prepares and periodically reviews and updates the Evaluation Policy and evaluation guidelines. It submits the Evaluation Programme to SMC for approval. It alerts SMC to emerging evaluation-related issues of corporate significance. EMU maintains a system to record management responses to all evaluations and to follow‑up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management. It produces the Annual Evaluation Report on the function, findings and recommendations of evaluation, on compliance, quality assurance, and the follow‑up to evaluations conducted by the ITC.

EMU is responsible for **managing the evaluation process**. It develops an Evaluation Programme including an agenda for independent evaluations and a provisional budget forecast,

based on consultations with the Divisional Directors and other stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluations provide strategic and representative coverage of ITC activities, and also in response to emerging issues that EMU may identify. It manages the Clients' Survey, strategic and thematic evaluations, projects and programme evaluations at the country / regional / global levels, and other evaluations as required. It supports project and programme managers in carrying out self-evaluations.

EMU ensures **quality assurance** for evaluation through developing, implementing and updating a common set of Evaluation Guidelines that operationalize the Evaluation Policy. These are separate documents containing a more detailed explanation of the process and methodologies to be used for conducting evaluations. Evaluation Guidelines[11] set evaluation standards for planning, conducting and using evaluations, developing and disseminating methodology and establishing the institutional mechanism for their implementation.

With regards to **capacity building**, EMU builds knowledge of good practices standards and approaches for evaluation management in ITC with a view to increase staff capacity to think in "evaluative" terms for the promotion of an evaluation culture in ITC. EMU also plays a capacity-building role in the field of the evaluation of trade-related technical assistance. It strengthens countries' evaluation capacity and their involvement in evaluations through country-led evaluations using in-country professional resources.

In terms of **knowledge building and organizational improvement,** EMU maintains a publicly accessible repository of evaluations. It distils evaluation findings and lessons for dissemination to improve organizational learning and facilitate systemic improvements. EMU manages a follow-up system to monitor the implementation of accepted recommendations.

5.   Divisional Directors

Divisional Directors have important roles to play within the evaluation process and programme, namely:

- Providing inputs to the options for inclusion within the Annual Evaluation Programme;
- Ensuring managers and staff are briefed and supported during evaluations covering their areas of responsibility;
- Ensuring full cooperation with the evaluators in terms of access to information and meetings;
- Organising the management responses to the draft evaluation reports;
- Securing the implementation of the agreed action plans as they affect their divisions; and,
- In general, providing strong support for the evaluation process to increase its impact and profile.

The above requires a good communication process with EMU to ensure findings and issues highlighted are well shared.

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[11] They *inter alia* include: Guidelines for Evaluators, Selecting Priorities for the Annual Evaluation Programme; Self-Evaluation Evaluation Terms of Reference; Evaluation Reports.

6.   Evaluation Focal Points

Evaluation Focal Points are nominated for each ITC Division. They facilitate the dissemination of an 'evaluative thinking' throughout ITC and also contribute to the evaluation follow up process. They cooperate with Divisional Directors in preparing management responses and tracking implementation of agreed evaluation recommendations and update the follow-up system accordingly. They are also responsible for disseminating in their respective Divisions knowledge related to evaluation findings and lessons.

In further developments, these Evaluation Focal Points could become more general and be 'learning focal points' for dissemination and promoting not only evaluation good practice but also wider generic good practice emerging from other aspects of the assessment processes used by ITC.

7.   Managers of Projects and Programmes

Managers of Projects and Programmes in the relevant units contribute to the evaluation process. They are responsible for the actual implementation of the accepted recommendations.

Managers are encouraged to undertake self-evaluations of the projects and programmes under their responsibility. In conducting self-evaluations, being internal or external, Managers are bound to respect due process for evaluation as determined in the Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Guidelines, when applicable. When planning for a self-evaluation, and in particular in the case of an external self-evaluation, managers are requested to inform EMU in due time so as to permit the mobilization of EMU resources required for ensuring support and quality control of the evaluation process and product, if available.

E.   Evaluation Management

1.   Conducting Independent Evaluations

a.   Programming

The conduct of evaluation follows the ITC cyclical Strategic Plan at various levels, which is comprised of different stages: planning, design, implementation and follow-up. Proper and efficient evaluations implies that evaluation is designed to ensure timely, valid and reliable information that will be relevant for the subject being assessed and that there is clear intent to use the evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned. Accordingly, the Evaluation Annual Programme supports the Strategic Plan and makes sure that evaluations are selected and undertaken in a transparent and timely manner. An Annual Evaluation Cycle will be established. The Cycle will probably be as follows (to assist with dates the 2009 cycle is described here):

Initial compilation of options for the 2009 Evaluation Programme	Oct 2008
Annual Evaluation Report for 2008 submitted to SMC	Oct 2008
Annual Evaluation Report for 2008 considered by JAG	Dec 2008
Annual Evaluation Programme for 2009 submitted for SMC approval	Jan 2009
Implement Annual Evaluation Programme for 2009	Feb – Sep 2009
Initial compilation of options for the 2010 Evaluation Programme	Oct 2009

Within this framework, the general principles for selecting the undertakings being subject to an evaluation are based on their strategic importance in terms of: (a) Enabling an evidence-based and independent learning from experience with a view to identify and address factors inherent to weaknesses and enhance those related to success. (b) Assessing the value for money for ITC clients and the positioning of ITC undertakings, compared with similar undertakings being performed or provided in the TRTA context / market. (c) Promoting the role of ITC in its fulfilment of its mission and corporate objectives. More specifically, selected evaluations will contribute to assess progress in the change management process, in particular related to "ITC's key challenges": Focus, integration, scale and contribution to the MDGs. [12]

In preparing the Annual Evaluation Programme for consideration by SMC, EMU takes into account a wide range of options submitted by Divisional Directors, key issues arising from the Operational and Strategic Plans, any advice or guidelines from UN or UNEG and comments or recommendations emerging from JAG. Subject areas for evaluation can range widely in subject matter and could include:

- ITC programmes
- ITC work in specific countries or regions
- ITC tools and methodologies
- ITC policies and strategies
- ITC critical internal processes

b.   Budgeting

The ITC evaluation budget is managed by EMU and is mainly derived from three sources:

- Resources allocated through RB Budget for EMU;
- Resources allocated through XB Budget to fund specific evaluations; and,
- Resources from donors with ITC working collaboratively on specific evaluations.

The evaluations budget covering all of the above forms part of the Annual Evaluation Report.

c.   Design

EMU prepares the Terms of Reference (ToR) for evaluations in keeping with the Evaluation Action Plan, in line with the 'ITC Guidelines for Evaluation Terms of Reference' and in cooperation with the project/programme manager(s), Divisional Directors and other stakeholders. The ToR determine the purposes of the evaluation. These need to be focused and realistic, they clearly describe what the evaluation seeks to accomplish so that the purposes of the evaluation are achieved in the most cost-effective manner. The evaluation scope clearly states what should be evaluated spelling out the evaluation criteria against which the subject to be evaluated will be assessed. The ToR also suggest evaluation methods, describe the Evaluation Team (ET) composition and define planning and implementation arrangements, including expected deliverables.

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[12] Detailed description of "ITC's key challenges" is provided in "Change Management Progress Report", page 5, ITC, November 2007 http://www.intracen.org/docman/JAG_11206.pdf

d.   Implementation

EMU prepares and manages the evaluation budget, drafts job description for external evaluator(s), and selects, recruits and briefs the ET. The selection of external evaluator(s) takes place on the basis of competence, and by means of transparent criteria and through competitive process. The composition of the ET should be geographically diverse, include as a priority, professionals from developing and transition economies and gender balanced. In implementing the evaluation the relationship between EMU and the external consultants of the ET is, from the outset, characterised by mutual respect and trust.

ET conducts the evaluation process in accordance with the Evaluation Key Principles and Criteria as defined in the ITC Evaluation Policy. The external evaluators of the ET are personally subject to the "Obligations of Evaluators" as described in Section 3.2 of the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation[13]. ET decides about the evaluation methods that are the most appropriate to the purpose of the evaluation. It is responsible for the provision of the expected deliverables of the evaluation. These normally include a Final Evaluation Report and a presentation to main stakeholders of the main evaluation findings and recommendations.

e.   Evaluation Reports

The format for Evaluation Reports is determined in the "ITC Guidelines for Evaluation Reports". The Evaluation Report is logically structured; it contains evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations. It doesn't exceed 30 pages (including executive summary) and is free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. It includes a detailed statement of the evaluation methods that have been used for conducting the evaluation and is presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible.

Usually before starting the production of the Draft Evaluation Report, ET presents its preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations through in a series of debriefings with all those concerned. The purpose of these preliminary and informal submissions is to collect feedback and validate the initial findings, conclusions and recommendations. When ready, ET formally presents the Draft Evaluation Report to EMU, which transfers it to project/programme management for identification of the eventual factual errors and omissions to be considered for the finalization of the Evaluation Report.

ET prepares the Final Evaluation Report. In the event of differing views being expressed, these are reflected in the analysis and in the report. ET is responsible for the views being expressed in the Final Evaluation Report. EMU is responsible for the approval of the Final Evaluation Report. It does it on the basis of the conformity with due process for evaluation as determined in the Evaluation Policy, the corresponding ToR and quality standards established in the Evaluation Guidelines, when applicable.

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[13] The UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation can be consulted at:
http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=2058

2. Follow-up of Evaluations

a. Follow-up to Self-Evaluations

The follow-up to self-evaluations comes under the responsibility of project and programme managers and their line managers.

b. Follow-up of Independent Evaluations

EMU transmits to the Managers in the relevant units and the corresponding Evaluation Focal Point, the Final Evaluation Report together with a Management Response Sheet. This sheet allows tracking, for each recommendation, the comments of acceptance or non-acceptance of evaluation findings and recommendations, an action plan including deadlines and the officers who are responsible for implementation. Senior Management ensures that those responsible for follow-up keep information in the Management Response Sheet up-to-date.

EMU monitors the information in the Management Response Sheet. It is assisted in this undertaking by the Evaluation Focal Points. EMU compiles periodical reports on the status of the implementation of the follow-up activities for the attention of the ED. EMU also uses, on an annual basis, this information for the production of the Annual Evaluation Report.

c. Organisational Learning

EMU contributes to knowledge building and organizational improvement by disseminating relevant information to the network of Evaluation Focal Points from each of the ITC Divisions, who facilitate access to, and interact with, their respective Divisional colleagues for follow-up purposes. As a prerequisite for the utilisation of evaluation results, the recommendations and lessons learned are analysed with the network of Evaluation Focal Points so that they are conveyed in a concise manner that corresponds to the needs of the different target audiences in the ITC. Evaluation Focal Points make the lessons learned from evaluations known within their Division. In a proactive manner, they facilitate the adoption of lessons learned, in particular in the context of project and programme formulation and approval within their respective Divisions.

d. Dissemination and Disclosure Policy

The Annual Evaluation Programme, the ToR of independent evaluations, the corresponding evaluation reports and the Annual Evaluation Report are posted on the relevant pages of the ITC public website.

7 May 2008

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