International Trade Centre

TRADE IMPACT FOR GOOD

ITC Evaluation Guidelines

SECOND EDITION

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Acronyms

Note: Unless otherwise specified, all reference to dollars ($) are to United States dollars.

AESR	Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report
AEWP	Annual Evaluation Work Programme
AfT	Aid for Trade
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child/Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GE	Gender Equality
HR	Human Rights
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
ITC	International Trade Centre
JAG	Joint Advisory Group
LDC	Least Developed Country
LLDC	Landlocked Developing Country
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCR	Project Completion Report
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMC	Senior Management Committee
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SPPG	Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRTA	Trade-Related Technical Assistance
TISI	Trade and Investment Support Institution
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Introduction

Overview

1. These Evaluation Guidelines aim to build a common organizational understanding of the methodology, process and quality standards of evaluations, to ensure a level of coherence across the different types of evaluation at the International Trade Centre (ITC). They codify and harmonize the methods, tools, processes, criteria and rating system used for evaluation in ITC. The Guidelines also address the need to ensure thematic harmony and coordination among evaluations managed by the ITC Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU), and Funder-led Evaluations. In brief, the Guidelines:

    - Serve as a reference document when undertaking evaluations, including Independent Evaluations, Self-Evaluations, and Project Completion Reports (PRC);
    - Address the tasks related to monitoring and reporting for evaluation
    - Are for the use of evaluation practitioners, Project Managers, Aid for Trade (AfT) development practitioners, ITC funders, partners, and clients; and
    - Complement the ITC Evaluation Policy[1]

2. The IEU will periodically review and enrich this technical and operational document when required. The Guidelines build on and supersede the *ITC Evaluation Guidelines for Evaluation Terms of Reference*; *Guidelines for Evaluation Reports*; and *Guidelines for Follow-up to Evaluation Report Recommendations*, published in 2008.

3. The ITC Evaluation Policy contains the general principles, standards and processes governing the evaluation function of ITC. The Policy provides guidance on the scope, practice and use of valuation to serve management decisions and policymaking, and the need for coordination with funders on Funder-led Evaluations related to ITC operations. Building on the Policy, the Guidelines contribute towards embedding evaluation within ITC. One of the expected effects of a harmonized quality approach to evaluation is to promote an evaluative culture in the organization; the role of evaluation is to facilitate the development of evidence-seeking behaviour to support evidence-based decision-making. Characteristics of an organization with a strong evaluative culture include:

    Self-reflection and self-examination

    - Deliberately seeks evidence on what it is achieving
    - Uses results information to challenge and support what it is doing
    - Values candour, challenge and genuine dialogue

    Evidence-based learning

    - Makes time to learn
    - Learns from mistakes and weak performance
    - Encourages knowledge transfer

    Encourages experimentation, change and innovation

    - Supports risk-taking
    - Seeks new ways of doing business[2]

[1] International Trade Centre (2015). *ITC Evaluation Policy*, Second Edition, Geneva. Available from: http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/About_ITC/How_ITC_Works/Evaluation/ITC-Evaluation-Policy-2015-Final.pdf

[2] Adapted from: Mayne, John (2010). Building an Evaluative Culture: The Key to Effective Evaluation and Results Management. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 1-30. Available from: http://evaluationcanada.ca/secure/24-2-001.pdf

4. In line with good practice promoted by the United Nations (UN) Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG), ITC has developed an evaluation function. The evaluation function serves ITC management decision-making on selected policy and strategic areas, with the purpose of improving the performance and results towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and enhancing ITC's position in the trade and development arena. The evaluation function is distinct from, but strategically complements, ITC's Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance (SPPG) function which oversees planning, monitoring and reporting. The IEU is the custodian of the evaluation function; its role is to support corporate learning and accountability.

5. The scope of the Guidelines covers all types of evaluations: Independent Evaluations, Self-Evaluations, PCR, evaluations undertaken by funders, and reviews. The ITC results framework[3], which determines ITC's impact objectives, operational model of the organization, and its intervention to achieve impact, is central to the approach of these Guidelines. They will be implemented incrementally in line with ITC's Annual Evaluation Work Programme (AEWP). In specific cases, use of the Guidelines should be adaptable and flexible; insistence on methodological rigor should not be made at the cost of pertinence or utility of an evaluation exercise.

How evaluation is approached at ITC

Building Staff Capacity

6. In association with the Guidelines, IEU has designed an online course on evaluation, which will be made available on ITC's SME Trade Academy[4]. The course has been designed to strengthen evaluation capacity to equip project staff with evaluation skills and is intended to complement the Guidelines. It will demonstrate how a Project Manager can use the Guidelines in evaluation activities and apply evaluation concepts and methods in project management practice.

Annual Evaluation Work Programme

7. The ITC Programme Budget[5] is the high-level planning instrument of the organization, approved by the UN General Assembly and the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council, and is operationalized through the ITC's annual Operational Plan.[6] The ITC Programme Budget includes an outline of ITC's AEWP and proposed budget, which is partly financed by regular budget sources (RB) and extrabudgetary resources (XB). The IEU prepares the AEWP along with a prospective plan for the following year. It is presented to the Senior Management Committee (SMC). When an evaluation is included in the AEWP, the project evaluation budget is incorporated into the proposed budget.

8. The AEWP is prepared through a priority-setting process and includes all the types of evaluations. The decision whether projects that are subject to mandatory evaluation undertake an Independent Evaluation or Self-Evaluation is based on a risk and opportunities assessment. In principle, Independent Evaluations should concentrate on items obtaining high scores against risk factors such as project complexity, funding source, innovation and replication and strategic partnerships (see Annex I).

Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report

9. IEU prepares an Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report (AESR) to convey the critical learning points generated through Funder-led Evaluations and ITC's evaluations and reviews. It distils the potential implications of the emerging findings, possible implications and includes

[3] The ITC results framework is discussed further in Chapter 3.
[4] See ITC E-Learning: http://www.intracen.org/itc/market-info-tools/e-learning/
[5] For example, the 2018-2019 ITC Proposed programme budget for the biennium can be found at: http://www.intracen.org/itc/about/working-with-itc/corporate-documents/financial-reports/
[6] International Trade Centre (2017). *Operational Plan 2017*, Geneva. Available from: http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracen.org/Content/About_ITC/Corporate_Documents/_Operational%20Plan%202017_combined_web.pdf

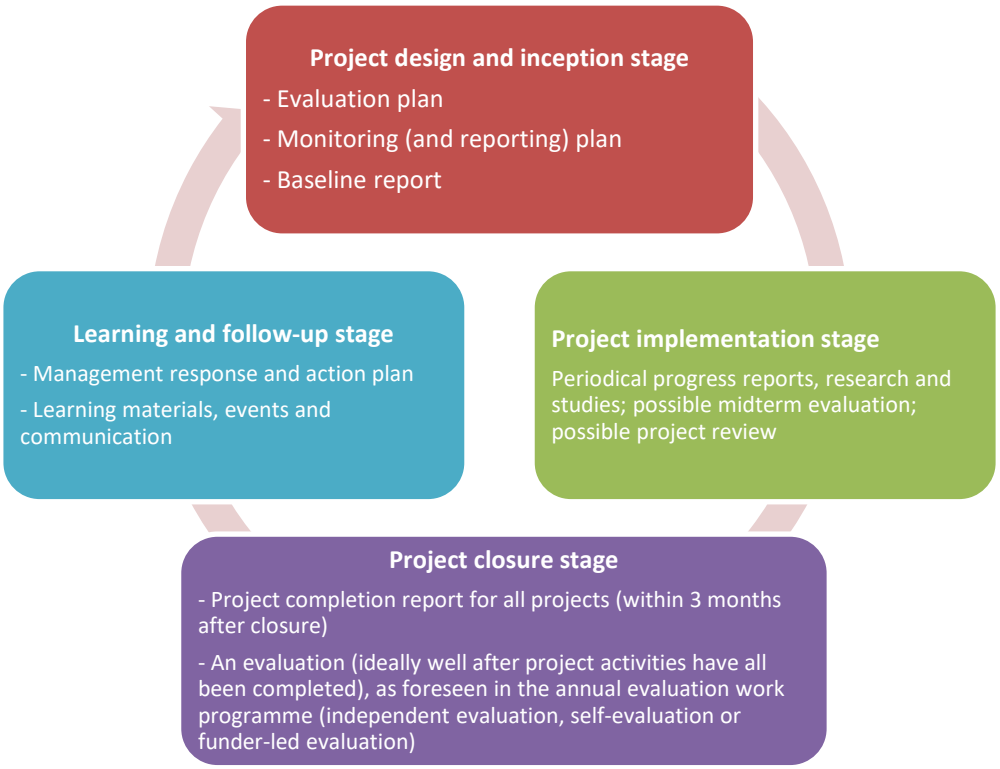
recommendations to senior management.[7] The AESR also includes a report on the status of the implementation of past evaluation recommendations that are still ongoing. The AESR is presented to ITC management, staff, and the Joint Advisory Group (JAG).[8]

2. Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation

Project cycle management and evaluation

10. In line with the evaluation process promoted by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG)[9], this chapter presents the connections between evaluation and ITC's project cycle management. During project design, developing a Monitoring Plan and Evaluation Plan is critical. During the project implementation stage, progress reports, and a possible midterm evaluation may take place. At the project closure stage, it is mandatory for all trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) projects to complete a PCR no later than three months after the project has been operationally closed. An evaluation is required if foreseen in the AEWP, in which case a Management Response and Action Plan will be produced, during the learning and follow-up stage.

Figure 1: Evaluation elements in project cycle management



Monitoring Plan

11. At the project level, the intelligence acquired through monitoring enables managers to update and adjust their understanding of the required preconditions for success and the intervention strategy. During implementation, as monitoring data becomes available, project management should periodically refine the project's Theory of Change (ToC) based on evidence.

12. Within ITC, the Monitoring Plan is referred to as the Results Monitoring Plan[10]. The purpose of the Monitoring Plan is to address the need for effective management and accountability, and to

[7] See past Annual Evaluation Synthesis Reports at: http://www.intracen.org/itc/about/how-itc-works/evaluation-publications-and-synthesis/
[8] See documentation presented at previous JAG meetings at: http://www.intracen.org/itc/events/JAG
[9] For further information see www.uneval.org
[10] See the Results tab in projects found in ITC's New Projects Portal.

facilitate effective reporting and evaluation. Monitoring results inform and provide a basis for reporting and evaluation; an analysis of the effectiveness of a Monitoring Plan is an integral part of an evaluation. It is critical for a Project Manager to track and gauge project implementation progress, modify activities according to emerging situations, and keep implementation on track towards achieving stated objectives.

13. A Monitoring Plan is a fundamental responsibility in project management and can include monitoring, reporting, and certain Self-Evaluation activities. The Monitoring Plan should use progress and results indicators aligned to the project's ToC, and indicate the timeline for monitoring and reporting deliverables, such as a baseline report, periodical progress reports, midterm evaluation, PCR, and any other research. Monitoring tools include: project indicators, programme indicators, corporate indicators, means of verification, data collection frequency, baseline figures and total target figures (including annual and overall figures). Including research data is also encouraged in a monitoring plan. In-house resources for research information can be derived from sources such as ITC's benchmarking tool for trade and investment support institutions (TISI)[11] or impact data from ITC's annual SME Competitiveness Outlook[12].

14. External and internal factors are also considered at the project design stage and are monitored throughout project implementation. In terms of external factors (those outside of the control of the Project Manager, such as political, climatic and security), risks and assumptions are identified in the project logical framework, and a risk management plan is also established. The Plan includes the probability of the risk occurring (low, medium, or high), impact on project results (low, medium, or high), risk reduction measures; additional resources/activities needed, and the person(s) responsible. These elements are applied to each level of the project logical framework. A good Monitoring Plan takes into account internal factors (those within the direct and indirect control of the Project Manager, such as verifying the state of readiness of beneficiaries and partners, ensuring the use of outputs, following-up on procurement, and supporting partners and beneficiaries to achieve outcomes).

Baseline data

15. Baseline data is information that measures conditions (appropriate indicators) prior to the start of a project to be used for later comparison. Baseline data provides an historical point of reference to inform project planning such as target setting, to monitor change during project implementation, and to evaluate change for impact. Baseline data can be obtained through sources such as a baseline study, target figures reached in previous projects, data determined in a needs assessment, and national statistics.

Complementary indicators

16. In addition to ITC corporate indicators[13], monitoring could comprise complementary indicators to measure issues and progress related to project relevance, efficiency, impact, and sustainability[14]; or to assess the performance of specific key components in the results chain[15]. Complementary indicators could also include indicators developed by stakeholders.[16]

[11] ITC's benchmarking tool is available at: http://www.tisibenchmarking.org/benchmarkredesign/
[12] ITC's annual SME Competitiveness Outlook is available at: http://www.intracen.org/SMEOutlook/
[13] See full presentation of corporate indicators in the Project Management Guidelines: https://our-intranet.itc-cci.net/oed/sppg/ProjectManagement/SitePages/Corporate%20results%20indicators%20and%20results%20toolkit.aspx
[14] Some examples: Relevance — Percentage of partners and beneficiaries buy-in (their opinion whether the intervention meets their needs and priorities); Efficiency — Cost against budget and areas where overruns or underspending occur; Impact — Percentage of SMEs in the target population having transacted international business; Sustainability — Progress against the plan in negotiating an exit strategy with key partners.
[15] According to the ITC Theory of Change approach, monitoring could be interested in measuring progress in the target population in terms of increased knowledge, skills and exchange, and improved consensus and feasible plans for action; and, in assessing progress / achievement in the fourth intermediate outcome related to external parties (see Figure 2).
[16] Such as the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) Standard for Results Measurement, http://www.enterprise-development.org/measuring-results-the-dced-standard/

Monitoring methods

17. The Monitoring Plan includes monitoring methods that are used to address how and why the pre-conditions for success are met to achieve project intermediary outcomes, outcomes and impact. Table 1 below contains details related to monitoring methods, examples, and timing.

Table 1: Examples of monitoring methods used in a Monitoring Plan

Monitoring methods	Monitoring examples	Suggested frequency
Baselines to assess change relative to the situation before the intervention started	Progress can be assessed by comparing the observed starting situation with future observations using a set of indicators based on expected change. Baselines can be developed using primary or secondary data.	At the very onset of the intervention, ideally at the inception stage
Observing and tracking progress in the causality and contribution of the intervention to change	This is usually achieved through workshops engaging with partners and beneficiaries to develop and/or assess progress in the implementation of the intervention strategy and adjustments in the ToC related to an evolving context	At the onset and at midterm stages of the different interventions
Observing, tracking and illustrating intervention implementation and its effects (outputs)	Periodic assessment on a limited number of observations; for example, about participants' valuation of group training and their use of acquired capacity.	For example, three months after training
Observing and tracking the progress of the role that partners and beneficiaries play in the achievement of intermediate outcomes, outcome, and impact	This will support the plausible assessment of the intervention contribution to the achievement of intermediate outcomes, outcome, and impact. It will use methods such as focus groups involving a limited number of key partners and stakeholders to monitor the progress of partners and beneficiaries in achieving, intermediary outcomes, outcome, and impact	On a yearly basis
Identifying specific stories of change to illustrate the intervention effects in areas that are otherwise difficult to measure by quantitative means	Stories are selected based on their significance. This will be achieved through conducting periodic direct interviews focusing on a few selected topics	On a yearly basis

Evaluation Plan

18. At ITC, all TRTA projects are expected to undergo some form of evaluation and public disclosure. Projects with a total budget over $2 million are subject to mandatory evaluation, which may take the form of a Self-Evaluation or an Independent Evaluation or a Funder-led Evaluation. At the Evaluation Plan stage, the form the evaluation will take is undefined; the decision is taken when IEU is establishing its AEWP for the coming year. Projects subject to mandatory evaluation, which do not undertake an Independent Evaluation or a Funder-led Evaluation, conduct a Self-Evaluation. Projects with a total budget less than $2 million can be subject to a Funder-led Evaluation. If this is not the case, they can choose to do an optional evaluation, which normally takes the form of a Self-Evaluation. All projects are subject to a PCR (see the template in Annex VI), which is a form of Self-Evaluation and is conducted by the responsible operational unit at the close of the project. When a rapid and independent analysis of a specific project or another type of undertaking is required, ITC senior management can directly commission a review. A review is an ad hoc, often rapid assessment of the performance of an undertaking.[17]

[17] A review is directly managed by IEU. It is a flexible tool that uses evaluation methods although it is not bound to applying the due process of an evaluation, in particular diffusion and follow-up.

19. An Evaluation Plan is a management tool used to address the evaluation expectations of key stakeholders (ITC management, funders, clients, partners), and to arrange resources, including a commensurate budget for conducting the planned evaluation(s). The Evaluation Plan is prepared prior to project approval. Project designers/managers take advantage of discussing the Evaluation Plan with the IEU. Under normal circumstances, a final evaluation should start after the completion of project intervention to allow for an assessment of results. Concerning midterm evaluation, they are undertaken half-way through the intervention life-cycle.

20. The responsibility for conducting quality evaluations is shared by the evaluation practitioners and Project Managers who monitor project results from the design stage throughout the implementation process until completion of the project.[18] The suggested outline for a project Evaluation Plan is offered in Box 1 below. [19]

Box 1: Evaluation Plan outline

1. Type of evaluation: mandatory / optional; midterm / final
2. Preferences in terms of who will manage the evaluation: Self-Evaluation, Independent Evaluation; Funder-led Evaluation
3. A proportionally costed budget
4. Prospective date for the start of the evaluation (for final evaluations, ideally well after all project activities have been completed)

Prospective purpose and use of the evaluation

21. The purpose of the evaluation answers why the evaluation(s) will be carried out at a point in time. This section also identifies the key users of the evaluation(s), which could include Project Managers, beneficiaries, implementing partners, ITC management, and funders. The intended users of the evaluation(s) are people in a specific position within an entity or represent a group, who will use the evaluation findings and have the capacity to effect change.

Types of evaluation at ITC

22. Within ITC there are four types of evaluation:

Independent Evaluation. An Independent Evaluation is carried out by entities and persons who have not been responsible for the design and implementation of the intervention, it is managed or conducted by the IEU.

Self-Evaluation. A Self-Evaluation is an evaluation carried out by those who are responsible for the design and implementation of the project.[20] At ITC a Self-Evaluation can be as in-depth and thorough as an Independent Evaluation, or it can be a study of a particular issue of interest to the Project Manager. The former is usually anticipated when the project is subject to mandatory evaluation and/or funders have authorized or requested Project Managers to carry out a Self-Evaluation. The latter is when the Project Manager has chosen to do a Self-Evaluation as an optional exercise.

Project Completion Report (PCR). A PCR is a standardized report to assess and learn from the performance of an intervention by those responsible for the design and delivery of the project. A PCR is a form of Self-Evaluation.

Funder-led Evaluation. A Funder-led Evaluation is an evaluation commissioned, managed and/or conducted by the project funder. In cases of Funder-led Evaluations, Project Managers

[18] In some cases, it is even necessary to monitor results beyond the end of project implementation to allow for a maturity period to reveal impact.
[19] As of May 2018, Project Managers can complete the Evaluation Plan in the projects portal.
[20] Definitions for Independent Evaluation and Self-Evaluation have been adapted from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010). *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*, Paris. Available from: http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/publicationsanddocuments.htm

should ensure the IEU is in contact with the funder to ensure harmonization of evaluation approach and methods. In addition, these Guidelines should be shared with the funder.

Table 2: Types of Evaluation

Characteristics	Independent Evaluation	Self-Evaluation	PCR	Funder-led Evaluation
< $2 million	No (except in extraordinary cases)	Optional	Mandatory	On request of funder
> $2 million	Mandatory evaluation (either an Independent Evaluation, when project incorporated as such in IEU AEWP or a Self-Evaluation in other cases)		Mandatory	Not subject to additional mandatory evaluation (except in extraordinary cases)
Evaluation Plan, including budget, prepared in the project design phase	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Incorporated in the IEU AEWP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
IEU follow-up on recommendations implementation	Yes	No	No	No (except in extraordinary cases)
Integration of learnings into the AESR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Preferences in terms of who will manage the evaluation

23. The Evaluation Plan should clearly identify who is the preferred manager of the evaluation. In the cases of Independent Evaluations conducted by the IEU, and Self-Evaluations conducted by Project Managers, the preferred manager will be confirmed a year before the end date of the project. In the case of midterm evaluations, confirmation of the preferred manager will be done the year prior to the midterm stage of the project. Funder-led Evaluations will be managed by the funder unless otherwise stated and agreed in the project document.

A proportionally costed budget

24. A detailed budget for evaluation activities should be developed. Elements may include the frequency of evaluation (i.e., midterm and final); the extent of travel required; hiring consultants, translators or interpreters; transportation; meeting facilities during field visits; the complexity of the project, geographical coverage, etc. The budget may indicate staff time required, but the costing is not required. To gauge the approximate amount for the evaluation budget, one may set aside 3% to 5% of the overall budget. Generally, for a large project with a budget above $2 million, if a midterm and a final evaluation are planned it is advisable to calculate on the higher side. It is important to note that if funders request a final evaluation to be carried out after operational completion, the Project Manager will need to have formal authorization to use the budget line (this should be included in the project document).

Prospective date for the start of the evaluation

25. Dates for midterm and final evaluations should be clearly identified in the Evaluation Plan, even if they are approximations.

3. ITC Results Framework and Evaluation Approach

ITC results framework

26. ITC contributes to the UN SDGs through enhancing inclusive and sustainable growth and development in developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and countries with economies in transition through trade and international business development. The corporate outcome of ITC is to enable microenterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), including those owned, operated and controlled by women from developing countries — especially LDCs, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), sub-Saharan Africa, small and vulnerable economies, post-conflict states and economies in transition — to build their international competitiveness and access new markets.[21]

27. Within the UN system of assistance to developing countries, ITC is the focal point for technical assistance and cooperation activities in trade promotion and export development. It focuses on the implementation of international development goals — particularly those set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[22] [23]

28. Building on the ITC corporate logical model,[24] Figure 2 below is a graphic illustration of ITC's results framework, which organizes the different components of the results chain; and where the role of ITC is understood as a change facilitator that supports its partners and stakeholders to realize their development objectives and contribute towards the SDGs. It is important to note that ITC has two guidance documents which should be made use of at the project design stage, these are Environmental Mainstreaming: A Guide for Project Managers[25]; and ITC Gender Mainstreaming Policy[26]. The use of these two mainstreaming documents will guide projects in these two SDG dimensions.

29. With the use of the results framework, ITC interventions provide partners and beneficiaries with capacity-building services to increase their ability and likelihood to act, largely through four types of TRTA *outputs*: group training, advisory services, technical material, and publications. These outputs lead towards *strengthened capacities*, including increased awareness and interest; increased knowledge, skills and exchange; and improved consensus and feasible plans to act (A1).

30. ITC's contribution is realized though achieving four *intermediate outcomes* related to policymakers and regulators, Trade Investment and Support Institutions (TISIs), and SMEs (A2, B1, C1 and C2); these, in turn, contribute to the *corporate outcome* of improved international competitiveness of SMEs in developing countries and transition economies for inclusive and sustainable development (C3 and C4). Finally, it is anticipated that ITC's corporate outcome of enhanced inclusive and sustainable growth and development in developing countries, especially LDCs, and countries with economies in transition through trade and international business development, will contribute towards the SDGs.

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[21] United Nations (2016). *Proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019, Part two: biennial programme plan, Programme 10, Trade and Development*, New York, A/71/6 (Prog. 10). Available from: http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a71d6prog10_en.pdf

[22] Details of the SDG targets ITC contributes towards can be found on the ITC website at: http://www.intracen.org/itc/goals/Global-Goals-for-Sustainable-Development/

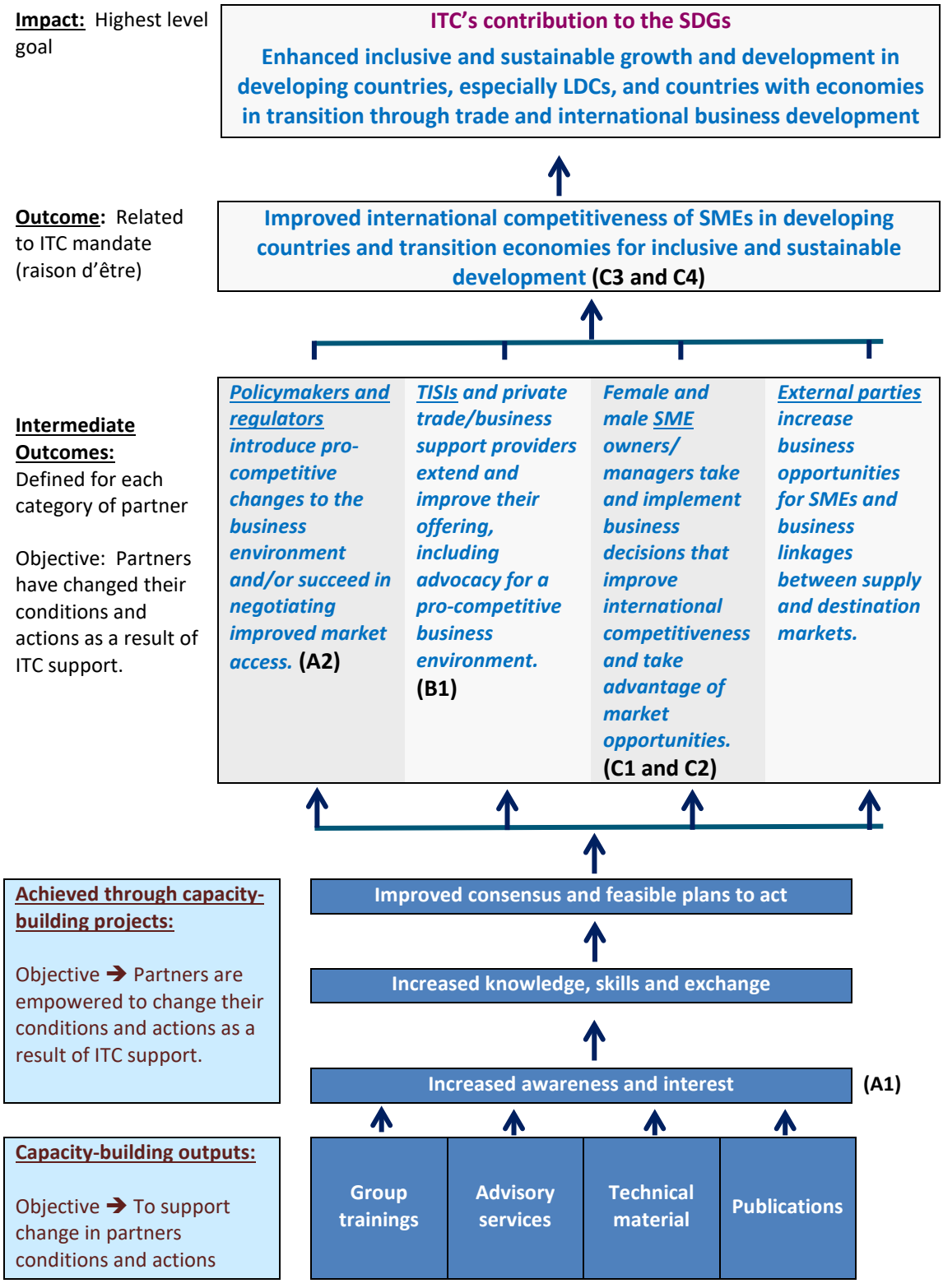
[23] It is worth noting that ITC is also shaped by the objectives of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020; the resolutions of the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness; the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action on Financing for Development; and the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As well, ITC plays an important role in furthering the implementation of WTO ministerial declarations, United Nations (2016), *op. cit.*

[24] *Ibid.*: 18-19; and, United Nations (2015). *Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, Part IV, International cooperation for development, Section 13, International Trade Centre*, New York, A/70/6 (Sect. 13)/Add.1., pp. 12-14. Available from: http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/About_ITC/Corporate_Documents/Financial_reports/A_70_6%20(Sect.%2013)Add.1.English.pdf

[25] Found on the ITC website at http://www.intracen.org/publication/Environmental-Mainstreaming-A-Guide-for-Project-Managers/

[26] Found on the ITC website at http://www.intracen.org/itc/women-and-trade/programme/

Figure 2: ITC Results framework[27]



[27] A1, A2, B1, C1 through C4 are all ITC corporate indicators, found in the corporate logic model. Based on the ITC 2018-2019 Strategic Framework.

31. Information related to the baseline data of corporate indicators (A1, A2, B1, C1, C2, C3 and C4) are found in the corporate logic model based on the performance of previous bienniums. This information is used to establish the target figures for the upcoming biennium. Monitoring and reporting of progress made on the corporate indicators are set out in operational plans and annual reports.

32. External factors, which may have an influence on the successful accomplishment of ITC objectives, include the following assumptions:

    a) The international community and other stakeholders remain fully engaged and committed to working with ITC;

    b) There are no significant shortfalls in actual receipt of XB funding;

    c) The political capacity and geographical conditions in recipient countries remain stable for the implementation of programme activities;

    d) The mandates of the UN and other international organizations that impact ITC remain the same; and,

    e) The enabling environment in the form of fiscal and monetary policies and other measures, including physical infrastructure in recipient countries, does not deteriorate.

33. In principle, the ITC project results chain and ToC is aligned with the ITC results framework, particularly since ITC has created a ToC for each of its corporate programmes.[28]

ITC evaluation approach

34. Building on ITC results framework, which highest level goal is sustainable development, the examination of the ToC, which allows an in-depth understanding of the intervention under evaluation. The starting point is the broader strategic intent, objectives, and design of the intervention.[29]

35. Results chains provide the building blocks for developing theories of change. With the use of assumptions, risks, external and internal factors, theories of change expand on results chains to explain why and how a set of results is expected to occur. While logical frameworks tend to focus on results intended (the long-cycle logic of the logical framework), theories of change focus on the connections between the boxes (which can be thought of as the short-cycle logic), as seen in Figure 3 below. In other words, theories of change explain how a project is expected to bring about the desired results, rather than just describe the successive results.[30]

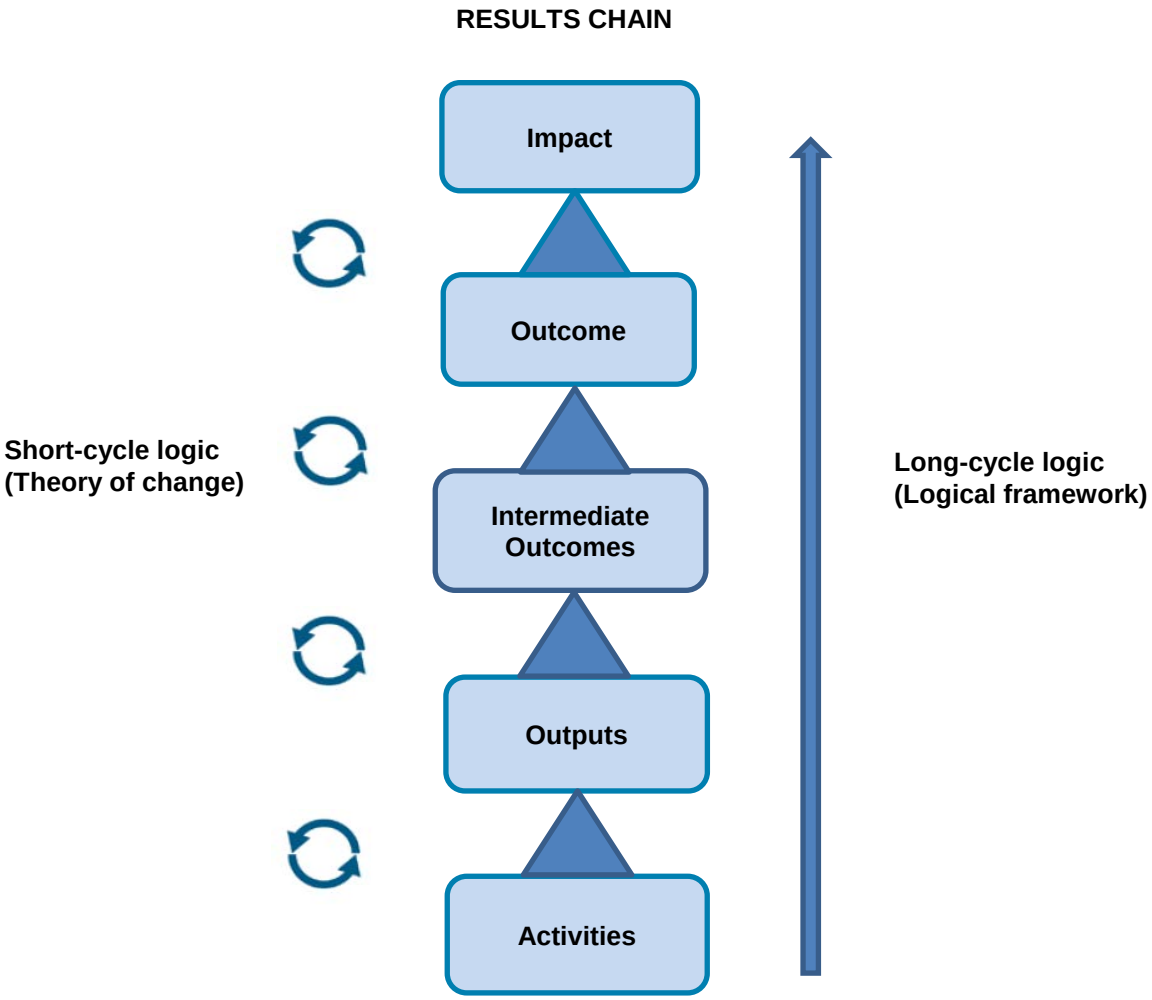
36. It is anticipated that the causal change between each of the components, which rests outside of the results chain, is where the ToC takes place. In other words, to successfully deliver to our beneficiaries and partners, the change that occurs between the levels of activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes, corporate outcomes, and impact, represents the value-added by ITC to its partners and beneficiaries. Notwithstanding, this desired change is subject to external and internal factors that all have an influence on the successful accomplishment of the results framework, as identified at the Monitoring Plan stage.

[28] See: International Trade Centre (2016). *Report of the 50th Session of the ITC Joint Advisory Group Meeting*, Geneva. Available at: http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/About_ITC/Working_with_ITC/JAG/Redesign/_en_2016%20JAG%20Report_EN.pdf

[29] Adapted from IFAD (2016). *Evaluation Manual, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD*, Rome.

[30] Adapted from: Treasury Board of Canada (2012). *Theory-Based Approaches to Evaluation: Concepts and Practices*, Ottawa, page 5. Available from: https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/centre-excellence-evaluation/theory-based-approaches-evaluation-concepts-practices.html

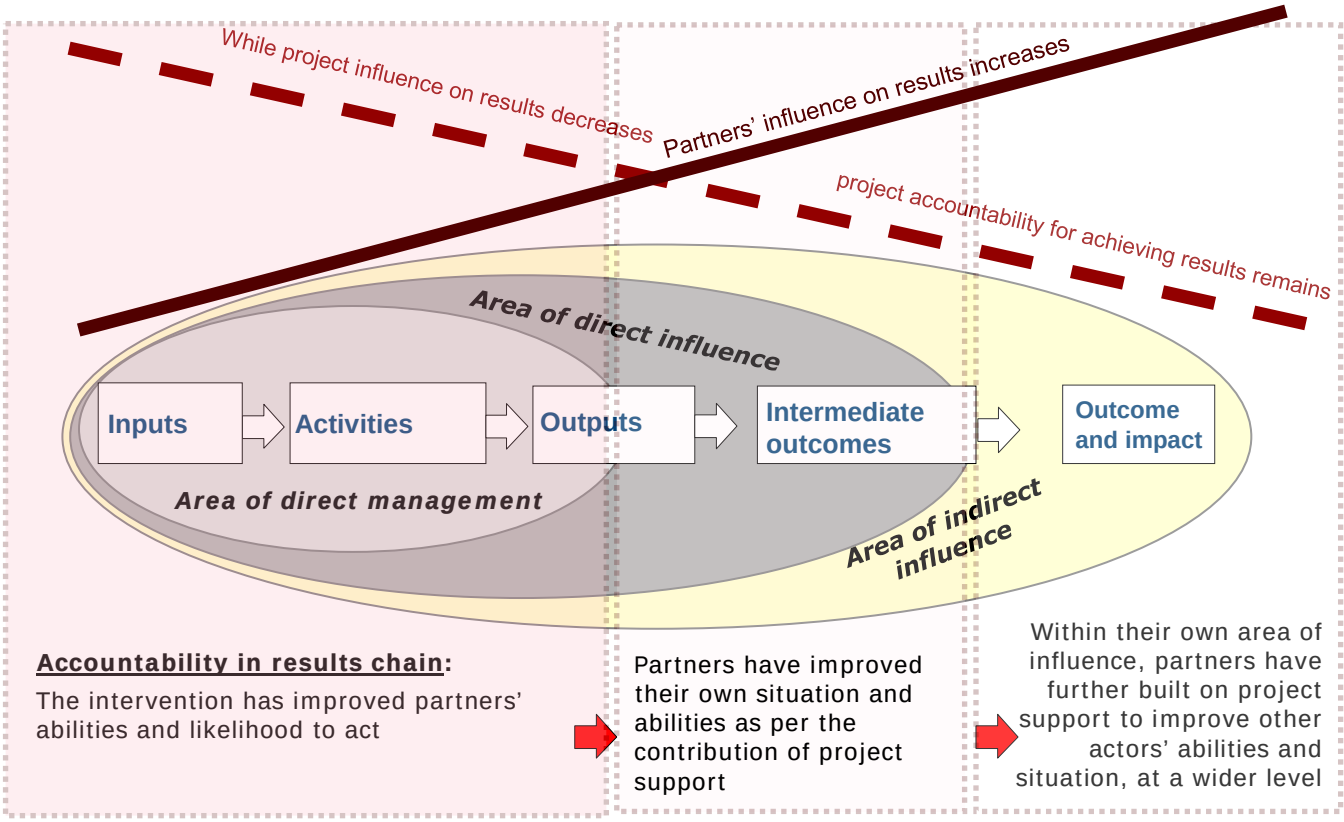
Figure 3: Theory of change and logical framework



37. Like the operations of many other development agencies, ITC interventions tend to have a stronger influence on project outputs and decreasing influence on intermediate outcomes and long-term impact. Figure 4 below illustrates how change can be influenced, but not directly determined; there are often many other contributors to, and hindrances against, the same desired impact, as changes are taking place within an interconnected web of relationships and systems. Moreover, partners and beneficiaries may develop a wide range of activities when achieving the intermediate outcomes, because of a similar capacity-building intervention implemented by ITC. Therefore, when examining performance in delivering change to partners, evaluation recognizes that changes are complex, non-linear and multidirectional and that performance for each intervention, requires flexibility/ability to innovate.[31]

[31] Adapted from: Chipimbi, Robert and Simon Hearn (2009). *Outcome Mapping, Bringing learning into development programmes*, Presentation, 15-18 September, Cape Town South Africa.

Figure 4: Project accountability along a diminishing influence results chain[32]



38. With this caution in mind, since ITC is accountable to achieve the ITC results framework, evaluation examines whether and how partners and beneficiaries have improved their conditions and actions because of the intervention carried out by ITC. Accountability rests with management, although the ultimate ability for achieving intermediate outcomes and impact depends upon the partners and beneficiaries working in countries. This why when studying the ToC, evaluation is interested in the strategy that the intervention has followed to support partners and beneficiaries to achieve impact, while acknowledging higher value results in the results framework, such as outcomes and impact, might take place outside of the project area of direct management.

39. As a result, while evaluation examines project accountability towards achieving intermediate outcomes and outcomes planned to contribute to realizing SDGs, it is not limited to the analysis of the causal attribution of the changes uniquely tied to the intervention within the area of direct management.[33] This examination includes the assessment of the effectiveness of an intervention in relation to its support to partners and beneficiaries, and to the observed impact in terms of improvements (conditions and actions) for partners and beneficiaries.

[32] *Ibid*
[33] Contribution is defined as describing the intervention as one of many contributory causes to the outcome, based on a results chain or theory of change. Source: OECD-DAC 2002.

4. Evaluation Process

40. Building on the Evaluation Plan, generally, all evaluations at ITC follow the same process as outlined in Box 2 below.

Box 2: Evaluation process

1. Pre-evaluation discussion
2. Terms of reference
3. Inception Report
4. Draft Evaluation Report
5. Final Evaluation Report
6. Communications and learning
7. Management Response
8. Follow-up on recommendations

Pre-evaluation discussion and informal interaction

Independent Evaluations

41. To pave the way for a useful evaluation, the first step in preparing for an evaluation is an informal exchange with management to discuss the following points:

    - What is to be evaluated?
    - What is the stage of the project ToC at the time of the evaluation?
    - How should the object under evaluation be evaluated?
    - What is expected from the evaluation?

    As a result of this dialogue, the evaluation manager writes in full independence, a two-page brief summarising IEU understanding of the key evaluation elements, which is circulated to management and other in-house stakeholders.

Self-Evaluations

42. This stage may be applied when the project is being jointly implemented either by more than one ITC Section or Division, or more than one entity. Consultation is critical to ensure the relevance of the Self-Evaluation to the expectations of stakeholders. Consultations should support the Self-Evaluation Manager to identify the evaluation issue(s) of particular interest and key learning aspects to be outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR). Canvassing stakeholders' expectations helps to ensure the Self-Evaluation is viewed as relevant and useful. Proper coordination with stakeholders helps to encourage their participation and support during the Self-Evaluation process and follow-up actions. The following questions may be useful to kick-start a consultation meeting:

    - What issues do you think should be addressed in this Self-Evaluation?
    - What would you like to learn in this Self-Evaluation?
    - Which questions should be answered by the Self-Evaluation?

Terms of reference

43. The next step in the preparation of an evaluation is the drafting of the ToR, which should be built into the Monitoring Plan and the Evaluation Plan, prepared at the project design stage. This document provides details of the requirements and expectations related to an evaluation and serves as the basis for a contractual arrangement between the IEU and the evaluator or evaluation team, in the case of an Independent Evaluation, and between the Project Manager and the evaluator or evaluation team, in the case of a self-evaluation.[34] Box 3 below provides an indicative outline of an evaluation ToR. Most of the items developed at the ToR stage are refined and further developed at the inception and reporting stages of the evaluation process.

Independent Evaluations

44. The IEU drafts the ToR in consultation with management and key stakeholders for comments before finalization.

Self-Evaluations

45. The Project Manager drafts the Self-Evaluation ToR, which is subsequently checked for quality by the responsible Division, and commented on by the IEU, and stakeholders. The commenting process is an opportunity to promote a common understanding and build consensus. IEU provides support throughout this process and provides guidance to the Project Manager to ensure the quality of the ToR meets the expected standards.

Box 3: Terms of reference indicative outline

1. Background
   - Evaluation background and rationale
   - Project background and country context
   - Results chain, ToC and intervention strategy
2. Anticipated utility and scope
   - Evaluation objectives, scope, and intended users
3. Evaluation approach
4. Evaluation criteria and questions
5. Evaluation management
   - Management arrangements and evaluation team
   - Timeline of the evaluation process
   - Evaluation deliverables
6. Evaluation use
   - Communication and learning plans
   - Dissemination, learning events and follow-up
7. Annex: Project logical framework

[34] Adapted from: Independent Evaluation Group (2011). *Writing Terms of Reference for an Evaluation: A How-to Guide*, Washington, World Bank Group. Available from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEVACAPDEV/Resources/ecd_writing_TORs.pdf

Background

46. The background and context are a summary of the overall concept and design of the evaluation, including an assessment of its strategic objectives; planned time and resource availability for its implementation; institutional and management arrangements; and the clarity, logic, and coherence of the intervention document or concept paper. If project or programme objectives are revised during project implementation, the project should be assessed against the revised objectives, which are approved by the respective governing body.[35] The evaluation should examine the results chain to clarify the ToC to determine whether the pre-conditions for success have been considered and successfully adapted to the changing context and intervention strategy. If the project ToC is not well-defined, it will need to be reconstructed and included in the Inception Report; this possibility should be noted in the ToR.

Anticipated utility and scope

47. The purpose of the evaluation must be clearly covered in this section. It should answer why the evaluation is being carried out at this point in time. The scope of the evaluation is a summary of what the evaluation will be covering. This section must also state the objective of the evaluation, which is to examine the mandate, strategies, objectives, relevance, effectiveness, results, impact, sustainability and added value of ITC's interventions.

Evaluation approach

48. The evaluation approach is the conceptual way of designing and conducting the evaluation, depending on factors which can include the design of the project, when the evaluation is taking place, the objective of the evaluation, etc. The evaluation approach examines the ToC to verify the extent to which the theory meets what actually happened. Using the ToC offers several positive features including:

    - It not only questions what did work but also why and how it worked.
    - It identifies the project mechanisms that made things happen.
    - It helps to understand the transformational relations, or causality, between project components (activities, outputs, and outcomes) leading to impact, and allows conclusions to be drawn on the cause−effect elements of a project.
    - It is comprised of two key parts: conceptual (developing the causal model to guide the evaluation); and empirical (testing the model to investigate how the project contributed to intermediate outcomes, outcome, and impact).
    - It often proposes the use of mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) in data collection.[36]

49. While the evaluation approach is delineated at the ToR stage, it is usually finalized at the Inception Report phase.

Evaluation criteria and questions

50. Evaluation questions are formulated at the ToR stage and further refined at the Inception Report phase within the evaluation matrix. They are used to orient the evaluation around the issues considered as the most important to assess performance against planned activities, results, and objectives, as in the logical framework of the intervention, and against the strategy undertaken to implement the ToC. Evaluation questions are organized according to evaluation criteria[37] and

[35] This step is crucial, since without official approval the evaluation is sometimes obliged to use the initially approved objectives, which could affect analysis and findings.

[36] Adapted from: Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (2012). *Helpdesk Research Report: Theory-based evaluation approach*, Birmingham. Available from: http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/hdq872.pdf, and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2012*)*, *op. cit.*

[37] The criteria used in ITC evaluations are consistent with the five evaluation criteria laid out and defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2015). *DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance*, Paris. Available from:

cross-cutting dimensions.[38] Evaluation criteria comprise relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability while cross-cutting dimensions include: human rights and gender equality, environment and climate change, and innovation. Cross-cutting dimensions are systematically examined within each of the evaluation criteria, when applicable.[39] Depending on the purpose of the evaluation and characteristics of the project, not all criteria and cross-cutting dimensions are always used to formulate evaluation questions. A list of evaluation criteria, cross-cutting dimensions, and their respective definitions are found in Box 4.

Box 4: Definitions of evaluation criteria and cross-cutting dimensions

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Relevance. It is to assess the consistency of the objectives of an intervention with ITC's corporate goals and comparative advantages, the client country's development strategy or policy priorities, and the needs of beneficiaries. The adequacy and coherence of the components of the intervention and the related strategy to achieve those objectives should be assessed as well.

Effectiveness. It is to assess to what extent the intervention's objectives have been achieved or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Efficiency. It is to assess to what extent the intervention has converted its resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) economically into results (i.e., the results chain, ToC and intervention strategy).

Impact. It is to measure changes that have occurred or are expected to occur for the partners and beneficiaries, and to indicate the positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended, medium- to long-term results caused by the interventions.[40] The impact domains aligned to the UN 2030 SDGs are considered in assessing impact.

Sustainability. It is to assess the likelihood of continued long-term benefits of the interventions and the resilience to risk of net benefit flows over time.

CROSS-CUTTING DIMENSIONS

Human Rights and Gender Equality. This is to assess whether human rights and gender equality are sufficiently embedded in the intervention, and the extent to which the intervention has contributed to their enhancement.[41]

Environment and climate change. This is to assess, in the trade development context, to what extent the interventions have contributed to protection and rehabilitation of natural resources and the environment, and to climate adaptation and resilience.

Innovation. This is to assess to what extent the intervention has introduced innovative approaches to achieve ITC's goals or better adapt to emerging contexts, and the innovations have been replicated or scaled up by development partners.

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http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm See also Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *op. cit.*
They are also embodied in the UNEG Norms and Standards United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*, New York. Available from: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914

[38] Evaluation criteria and cross-cutting dimensions can also be used to formulate evaluation questions to assess performance of evaluation objects that are not projects/programmes and are not necessarily structured through a logical framework.

[39] Since evaluation criteria are neutral in terms of the cross-cutting dimensions, evaluations do not automatically assess these dimensions. Since 2014, UNEG has provided guidance in integrating the HR and GE dimension into evaluations questions, paving the way for the systematic examination of this specific cross-cutting dimension within ITC evaluations. Cf. United Nations Evaluation Group (2014). *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*, New York. Available from: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

[40] International Fund for Agricultural Development (2015). *Evaluation Manual, Second Edition*, Rome. Available from: https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/bfec198c-62fd-46ff-abae-285d0e0709d6

[41] Since 2011, UNEG has placed an increased emphasis on the integration of human rights and gender equality into evaluations, cf. United Nations Evaluation Group (2011). *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations – Towards UNEG Guidance*, New York. Available from: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980

Evaluation management

Independent Evaluations

51. The IEU is responsible for managing Independent Evaluations at ITC. All evaluations undertaken by the IEU are collaborative and include project management and stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. To ensure participation and ownership among key stakeholders, regular consultations will be conducted during the evaluation process. The main clients shall be involved in commenting on the draft deliverables including ToR, Inception Report and draft Evaluation Report.

52. ITC management ensures that the IEU has timely and sufficient access to information needed for conducting Independent Evaluations and that the operational managers of the Divisions, programmes, and projects actively cooperate with the IEU and participate in the evaluation processes.

53. As part of the management of the evaluation, the ToR focus on the composition of the evaluation team. The team includes a lead evaluator, designated by the Head of the IEU, who can be either a staff member or an external expert recruited as an evaluation consultant. Depending on the complexity and needs of the evaluation, the team may also include other team members, such as a research analyst and/or an associate evaluator, or other ITC staff members working as thematic specialists for the evaluation.

    In general, the recruitment of evaluation consultants is completed in the ToC preparation and consultation phase. In certain cases, consultants may be hired during successive evaluation phases, depending on the situation and needs. The Head of IEU is responsible for choosing the team, including recruitment of evaluation consultants who must sign non-disclosure agreements to avoid possible conflicts of interest.[42]

54. Sometimes, a preliminary mission may be undertaken to prepare the stakeholders in the field, explain the ToR to national partners, establish initial connections with stakeholders on site, clarify their concerns on the upcoming evaluation, and make necessary agreements for the main mission to follow.

Self-Evaluations

55. A Self-Evaluation is an evaluation carried out by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of a development intervention'.[43] Self-Evaluations are conducted according to the procedures set out below and in compliance with ITC Evaluation Policy. The Divisional Director holds oversight responsibility for Self-Evaluation exercises; he/she designates a manager responsible for conducting the exercise. In principle, the Self-Evaluation Manager should be the Project Manager of the project being evaluated. However, due to workload constraints or other reasons, management of the Self-Evaluation may be delegated to another staff member within the same project/programme from a different Section or Division. Key features of a Self-Evaluation include:

    #### *Autonomy*

    - Autonomous management supported by IEU
    - Use in the decision-making of lessons learned and good practices, and possible recommendations, at the discretion of management

[42] International Trade Centre (2015). *ITC Evaluation Policy, Second Edition*, Geneva, pp. 8-9. Available from: http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/About_ITC/How_ITC_Works/Evaluation/ITC-Evaluation-Policy-2015-Final.pdf

[43] Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *op. cit.*: 35.

Light process

- ToR and final report are the only formal deliverables; the Inception Report and draft Evaluation Report can be informal documents
- Evaluation recommendations and a Management Response to the recommendations are strongly encouraged, but not mandatory, unless otherwise set out in the project document
- No follow-up of the implementation of possible recommendations by IEU

Quality enhancement and learning:

- Self-Evaluations formally included in the AEWP
- TOR and final report subject to quality review by IEU
- No diffusion and use of Self-Evaluation Reports without quality review
- IEU maintains a repository of the Self-Evaluations
- Key learning messages extracted from Self-Evaluations consolidated and presented in the AESR

56. The IEU and respective Division should acknowledge the workload of the Self-Evaluation Manager and quality of the deliverables. The Self-Evaluation Manager is responsible for managing the budget for the evaluation exercise. He/she also determines the evaluation users, objectives to address, evaluation issue(s) of particular interest, scope, methodology, and timing. In addition, the Self-Evaluation Manager should choose the relevant learning and accountability aspects of the evaluation. The use of Self-Evaluation findings in decision-making is determined by management. Accordingly, IEU does not follow-up on the implementation of Self-Evaluation recommendations.

57. IEU provides customized advice to the Self-Evaluation Manager on evaluation planning, methods, and the drafting of the terms of TOR, Inception Report and final Evaluation Report. For quality enhancement purposes, IEU provides technical comments on an advisory basis concerning the main Self-Evaluation deliverables, including draft TOR, Inception Report and final report.

Figure 5: Self-Evaluation quality assurance process:

58. In addition to these advisory services, IEU conducts a quality review of Self-Evaluation ToR and final reports to assess whether these documents meet the required standards. In terms of the Self-Evaluation ToR, the review is conducted in line with the criteria described in the quality checklist in Table 7 below. The IEU also plays a role in promoting lessons learned and good practices generated from Self-Evaluations. The findings and results of Self-Evaluation Reports will be taken into account in the ITC AESR.

59. Should it be decided to hire an evaluation consultant or evaluation team, supplementary ToR will be required. These can be based on the Self-Evaluation ToR (discussed further below) but will include the specific requirements for individual consultants that will be used during the hiring process. The hiring of evaluation consultants should take place as soon as the agreement is reached on the draft ToR. The Self-Evaluation Manager is responsible for the hiring of

consultant(s) and/or building an evaluation team, should it be required. IEU is available to assist in identifying experienced evaluation consultants. All hiring procedures should be completed prior to the desk review.

60. In accordance with the Evaluation Policy, below are the rules to use in order to avoid conflict of interest in Self-Evaluation when hiring consultants:

    - Self-Evaluation consultants should not have been involved substantively in the management, design, and implementation or performance review of the project/programme. In the case of a conflict of interest, the consultant shall recuse him/herself from the particular evaluation.

    - ITC management should ensure that the Self-Evaluation Manager and Self-Evaluation consultants will not be subject to any form of undue influence at ITC, such as partial information, bias against or in favour of certain stakeholders, retaliation, and actual or perceived threats in relation to the professional judgments made by the Self-Evaluation team.

    - Self-Evaluation consultants who provide evaluation services shall commit to confidentiality rules. Within one year after the completion of a Self-Evaluation, a participating consultant should not seek any employment in units where he/she evaluated their operations.

61. Should an evaluation team be established, the Self-Evaluation Manager should arrange regular briefing sessions with the team to discuss progress, achievements, problems, further steps, timing, etc. Team coordination helps to cross-check sources of information, assess the strength of the factual base, and identify the most significant findings.

Evaluation use

62. Communication and Learning Plan is an integral component of the evaluation ToR. A dissemination plan should be included, where learning events are identified, and follow-up activities set out. The Communication and Learning Plan is built on throughout the evaluation process. It should be noted that communication products for a Self-Evaluation, such as regular updates or evaluation communication notes, may be prepared for dissemination according to the information needs of stakeholders.

Preparation for Inception Report

Desk review

63. During the inception phase, the evaluator or evaluation team reviews the available documents related to the project. The initial findings of the desk review should be summarized around various themes and operational issues. As findings establish facts derived from evidence through an analysis, the desk review is complemented by the information and feedback received during the consultations with project stakeholders.

64. Based on the desk review and evaluability assessment (discussed below), the Inception Report should tentatively clarify the intervention results chain, ToC, and strategy, and provide early findings to be further analysed and substantiated during the data collection phase. Special attention should also be put on an analysis of the changing environment and its consequences.

Using the theory of change

65. At the desk review stage, the evaluation examines the accuracy and relevance of the identified ToC, keeping in mind the ToC should focus on connections between the levels in the logical framework that take place outside of the project itself. Using the ToC serves to explain how the project was expected to produce rather than just describe results.

66. If the project ToC was not created at the early stages of the project, it should be reconstructed. This is particularly important for evaluating a policy or corporate process without a specific policy or strategy document available as a main reference. If the initial ToC was not followed or was partially followed, the evaluation reconstructs the ToC the project was implemented around. In doing so, it is important to bear in mind that the pathway to policy, process or project results is the core of the theory.[44]

67. When validating or reconstructing the ToC, the following documents and information are required:

    - Logical framework;
    - Results chain;
    - Assumptions[45], risks[46] and, in some cases, mechanisms[47] associated with each link in the logical framework and/or the results chain;
    - External factors[48] that may influence the expected results; and
    - Any empirical evidence supporting these assumptions, risks and external factors.

68. The evaluator validates or reconstructs the ToC with empirical evidence and an account of major external influencing factors. Since the ToC provides the basis for arguing that the intervention is making a difference and the weaknesses in the project logic have been identified, this helps to identify where evidence for strengthening the claim of 'making a difference' is most needed. To summarize, the contribution claim is equal to the verified ToC in addition to the other key influencing factors.[49]

Box 5: Logical models and theories of change

Logic models and ToCs are often illustrated through a diagram or flow chart and using arrows to indicate the logical sequencing between the project components (see Figure 3). However, a major difference between a ToC and a logic model is that the ToC is required to explain what is happening behind the arrows linking the components. In other words, the ToC describes the details that link programme components together. Elements contained in the assumptions, risks, mechanisms, external factors, internal factors and empirical evidence are all used in describing the details behind the arrows.

Inception Report

69. An Inception Report of an evaluation is prepared by the evaluator or evaluation team after an initial desk review of the relevant project documentation has been carried out. The Inception Report sets out the conceptual framework to be used in the evaluation, the evaluation questions and methodology, including information on data sources and collection, sampling and key indicators. The Inception Report also includes a timeline for the evaluation and drafts of data collection instruments.[50] The Inception Report is one of the key deliverables in the evaluation process; it is

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[44] Adapted from: Department for International Development (2013). *Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security, and Justice Programmes*, London. Available from: https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/PartII-Theories-of-Change-for-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-With-Annexes-SFCG.pdf

[45] Assumptions are defined as 'key events or conditions that must occur for the causal link to happen'. Source: Treasury Board of Canada (2012), *op. cit*.: 6

[46] Risks are defined as the 'influences or events outside the intervention that may inhibit the causal link from happening'. Source: *Ibid*.

[47] Mechanisms are defined as 'the causal processes that enable the program to produce results'. Source: *Ibid*.

[48] External factors are defined as 'circumstances beyond the control of the program, such as social, political or economic context, which may affect the program's ability to achieve an intended result'. Source: *Ibid*.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] Adapted from: Better Evaluation (2017). *Inception report.* Available from: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-option/inception_report

shared with project stakeholders for comments and feedback at the draft stage and circulated to all at the final stage.[51] An indicative outline of an Inception Report[52] is presented below in Box 6.

Box 6: Inception Report indicative outline

1. Introduction
   - Describe the project or programme being evaluated
   - State the purpose and scope of the evaluation
2. Evaluation Framework
   - Discuss the overall approach of the evaluation
   - Discuss the risks and limitations of the evaluation
3. Evaluation Methodology
   - Discuss the data collection and data analysis methods
   - Present the key data sources
   - Discuss the sampling methods and details
   - Summarize the evaluation methodology in an evaluation matrix
4. Workplan
   - Develop a timeline
   - Specify responsibility for each evaluation phase
5. Logistics
   - Discuss the logistics of carrying out the evaluation
6. Appendices
   - Draft data collections instruments
   - Terms of Reference

Introduction

Description of the evaluation subject

70. With the use of the relevant documentation used during the desk study, the introduction of the Inception Report should provide a description of the project or programme being evaluated.

Evaluability Assessment

71. An evaluability assessment helps to determine if the project or programme designed well-enough, so it can be successfully implemented to achieve results. Evaluability is defined as the extent to which an activity or project can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.[53] The evaluability

[51] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2014). *Guidelines for Inceptions Reports*, Vienna. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Guidelines/UNODC-IEU_Inception_Report_Guidelines.pdf
[52] Adapted from: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2008). Guidelines for Inception Reports, Paris. Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001583/158397e.pdf
[53] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *op. cit.*: p. 21.

assessment is used to advise on the use of the evaluation resources, evaluation criteria, data collection, analysis methods and field visits.[54]

Independent Evaluations

72. It is performed during the Inception Report stage and examines the design (focusing on the ToC), inception (focusing on the ToC and data availability), and implementation stages (focusing on the ToC, data availability, and stakeholders) of a project and is based on the following three groups of indicative questions:[55]

    1. Does the quality of the project design allow for the evaluation?
        - Are the objectives of the project clear and realistic?
        - Is the logical framework flexible and responsive to external factors?
        - Were there modifications to the intervention logic and why?
        - Have the characteristics of beneficiaries been clarified?
    2. Are the results of the project verifiable?
        - Is baseline data available to assess change?
        - Was monitoring data planned and collected on a regular basis against the performance indicators?
    3. Would the evaluation be feasible, credible and useful?
        - Does the timing of the evaluation fit into the programme cycle (usefulness of evaluation at that point in time)?
        - Has the project been previously evaluated (i.e. midterm evaluation)?
        - Can external factors (political, climatic, security, etc.) hamper the evaluation?
        - Is the budget sufficient for the evaluation exercise envisaged?
        - Are key stakeholders available for interviews in the field and in headquarters during the planned evaluation time period?

73. In the case of most of negative answers in any of the above groups of questions, it should be noted in the Inception Report as this will help to describe the limitations that may be encountered during the evaluation. The methodological limitations of an evaluation should be acknowledged in the Inception Report to avoid any misleading interpretations. These limitations often relate to data availability, sampling size and methods, access to informants, potential survey response rates and maturity of changes to show clear impact. Having this information in the report is a means to inform stakeholders.

Self-Evaluations

74. Project Managers are encouraged to carry out evaluability assessments for Self-Evaluations which can help to organize project documentation as well as determine the extent to which the project can be evaluated. It should be noted that this is not mandatory for Self-Evaluations, but it is strongly encouraged as it offers an opportunity to discuss any risks or limitations that may undermine the reliability and validity of the evaluation results at an early stage.

[54] In some cases, the evaluability assessment might require field missions to evaluate the readiness of key stakeholders for conducting the evaluation and the availability of data, and to identify information gaps and gather early findings.
[55] Adapted from: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2012). *Evaluability Assessment Template*. Available from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Guidelines/Evaluability_Assessment_Template.pdf

Purpose and Scope

75. The purpose and scope of the evaluation is usually set out in the ToR. In this section, also include the complete set of evaluation questions and elaborate on them if required. If there were preliminary discussions with project teams, and any additional questions were identified, they should be included here. In addition, if any questions set out in the ToR are deleted, this must be mentioned with a reason as to why they have been excluded.

Evaluation use

76. The evaluation users may have been initially identified at the ToR stage. However, it is important to further define the primary intended users in the Inception Report as this will increase the likelihood of the evaluation being completed and used in an appropriate way. Another element to be included in the Inception Report is evaluation follow-up, which should identify who will be responsible for following the evaluation process to ensure its use. Further discussion regarding evaluation follow-up is found below.

Evaluation framework

Evaluation approach

77. Discuss the overall approach of the evaluation; this should incorporate an analysis of the ToC of the project or programme. The ToC of the project or programme should be included here. If it has already been created it can be taken from the project documentation. If it does not exist, it should be reconstructed as described above. This can be an initial reconstruction, which can be built on during the course of the evaluation. The project management should also be described.

Assumptions, Risks, and Limitations

78. All components of the project or programme being evaluation should be discussed, as well as all assumptions, risks, and limitations. Including a discussion on the risks and limitations helps to identify elements which may undermine the reliability and validity of the evaluation results.

Evaluation methodology

Data collection and data analysis methods

79. Discuss the data collection and data analysis methods that will be used for the evaluation. State the limitations of each method and include the level of precision required for quantitative methods and value scales or coding used for qualitative methods. ITC evaluations adopt a mixed-methods approach and include questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, surveys, document review, and observation. The evaluation questions should be addressed with the appropriate information-gathering techniques, whether they be qualitative or quantitative. Data collection methods should be adequately tailored – as needed – to reflect the specific circumstances and applied in relation to the evaluation approach (see Table 3 below).

80. To enhance the validity and credibility of evaluation findings, the Inception Report plans for triangulation of the information obtained from different methods of data collection. Triangulation is a data analysis technique to cross-check and verify data and evidence collected from different sources. Triangulation is used to indicate that more than three independent methods have been used to check the results of the same project. When using either qualitative and/or quantitative data collection, triangulation provides a confirmatory measurement.[56] The use of triangulation requires multiple data collection techniques, which help contribute to the reduction of bias. Annexes II and III provide further details on how to deal with frequent difficulties related to data collection, and how to cope with some common data collection biases.

[56] Adapted from: Scriven, Michael (1991). *Evaluation Thesaurus, Fourth Edition.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications, pp. 364-365.

81. In planning for data analysis, key deliverables can include thematic working papers, learning notes and presentations, which should be identified in the Inception Report. These additional deliverables help to illustrate the detailed data and analysis, and can be used as internal documents, which should be filed for accountability purposes to enable future tracking as needed.

Data Sources

82. The key data sources that will be selected to answer each of the evaluation questions should be presented. Common sources include project or programme beneficiaries, implementing partners, project stakeholders, key informants, and project or programme documents, records, databases, etc.

Sampling methods

83. The sampling methods to be used during the evaluation should be described in detail. This should also include the area and population to be represented, rationale for selection, mechanics of selection, sample size, sample precision and confidence and limitations.

84. Should field visits be required during the data collection phase of the evaluation process, prior to the end of the field mission, a debriefing session should be held with key national stakeholders to present the preliminary findings and solicit early feedback. This discussion helps to facilitate evidence-based consensus building with and among country stakeholders. It is important that country stakeholders know that preliminary findings are not conclusive, as they are subject to modification when additional information and feedback becomes available. A mission reporting note, or a Note for the File (NFF), depending on the depth of analysis, could be prepared to summarize the key findings and the plan for next steps. This is also important to align the evidence collected during field missions, to the objectives of the evaluation and the structure of the Evaluation Report. Some form of mission reporting note is requested for each mission.

Summary of the Evaluation Methodology

85. Building on the proposed evaluation questions set out in the TOR, the evaluation methodology should be summarized in an evaluation planning matrix containing the following column headings: evaluation criteria, evaluation issues, possible evaluation questions, data collection sources, and data collection methods. An evaluation matrix is a tool that presents the evaluation questions against evaluation methods that evaluators or evaluation teams have selected to collect factual data paving the way to the analysis of the findings using triangulation. Against each evaluation criterion, key questions are tailored to the objectives of the evaluation and the operational context. Tables 3 and 4 below provide sample evaluation matrixes, as well as sample questions, data sources, and data collection methods related to the evaluation criteria and cross-cutting dimensions described above.

Table 3: Frequently used data collection methods[57]

Method	Description	Remarks
	QUALITATIVE METHODS	
Direct observations	Observations of policy regulations, TISI offerings, and business transactions, as well as sites, practices and living conditions, according to a pre-agreed checklist (can be combined with rating).	Necessary in most evaluations; can be a source of unexpected findings. Generalization of findings can be an issue.
Key informant interviews	Individual interviews on a number of selected topics according to a pre-agreed checklist or interview schedule. In most cases, the questions are open-ended and meant to stimulate discussion rather than elicit one-word or one-sentence responses.	Useful for sensitive issues that would not normally be discussed in public. Generalization of findings can be an issue. Requires careful preparation of data collection instruments.
Focus group discussions	Interaction of a relatively small group of people (normally 6−12) on a limited set of topics; facilitated by a moderator or carried out by the evaluator. Participants of the discussion agree to or come to a consensus on a number of preferences, conclusions, beliefs, attitudes, results, etc.	Valuable for understanding interactions and areas of dis/agreement. Generalization of findings can be an issue.
Memory recall	Entails interviews with beneficiaries and other stakeholders, individually or in groups, who reconstruct their situation before the project and may compare this to their situation after the project.	Necessary generally in all evaluations, especially when baseline surveys are not available, but has limitations especially with long recall periods.
Participatory techniques	Participatory techniques can include wealth ranking, problem ranking, community mapping, historical transects, etc. Participants are requested to come up with their own criteria and indicators to assess a situation, process or distribution of resources in order to discuss how it has changed over time.	Indicators and parameters are elicited from people rather than pre-selected by evaluators. Generalization of findings can be an issue.
	QUANTITATIVE METHODS	
Mini-surveys	These are typically samples of 100−200 respondents, including project and control observations, representing a sample of the project population (and possibly a control group depending on the evaluation approach). Interviews are conducted by the evaluator(s) on the basis of a pre-written and pre-coded questionnaire. Entries are recorded and analysed using computer software on the basis of a standard description.	The sampling procedure should try to capture the true averages in the population.
Large surveys	This includes the collection of primary data from large numbers of beneficiaries and control and comparison groups (if applicable to the evaluation approach). Among other issues, such data provide the basis for rigorous assessment – using statistical methods – of the changes in the lives of the beneficiaries.	Often done in evaluations using experimental or quasi-experimental methods.

[57] This is not an exhaustive list of data collection methods, adapted from: International Fund for Agricultural Development (2015), *op. cit.*

Table 4: Evaluation matrix: Criteria, issues, questions and methods

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation issues	Possible evaluation questions	Data sources and methods
Relevance	Conformity to ITC's mandate; relevance to strategic objectives; alignment to ITC's comparative advantages	– Were the objectives and design of the intervention in line with ITC's corporate objectives, strategies, strengths and comparative advantages? – Was the positioning of the intervention against competitors aligned to ITC objectives, strategies, strengths and comparative advantages?	Desk review of documentation, interviews at headquarters, etc.
	Relevance to the needs of clients; participation of partners and beneficiaries in the intervention	– To what extent does the intervention fit in with the policies and plans of the government and other development partners in the country? – Were the objectives and design relevant to targeted partners' and beneficiaries' needs and priorities? – Have partners and beneficiaries bought and participated in the intervention?	Desk review, interviews in the field and with key national partners, survey, national statistics, national trade and export development strategies, etc.
	Rationale, coherence, and adaptability of the intervention design and implementation	– Did the intervention design benefit from available knowledge (e.g. recent evaluations, lessons from similar interventions)? – Was there coherence in the intervention strategy to link causal effects between activities, outputs, and intermediate outcomes? – Was the role of partners and beneficiaries to achieve intermediate outcomes and impact well defined? – Were all the relevant pre-conditions necessary to achieve intermediate outcomes and impact identified and taken into account in design and inception? – Was the design appropriately adapted to changing context? – Is the project grounded in an appropriate, well-articulated and valid project ToC?[58] Does the theory reflect recent research? – Are the project-targeted stakeholders, design, operation and intended outcomes consistent with the project ToC?	Review of M&E reports and past evaluations, interviews, survey, national statistics, national development strategies, etc.
	Strength and effects of internal and external partnerships	– What kind of internal and external partnerships existed? – What kind of coordination and support mechanisms were in place to support partnership and the achievement of common goals? – How well did they work to support the achievement of intermediate outcomes and impact?	Review of documentation, interviews with cooperation partners, survey, etc.
Effectiveness	Effectiveness of intervention strategy to realize intermediate outcomes	– Was the intervention effective in transforming outputs into support to partners and beneficiaries in terms of increased awareness and interest; increased knowledge, skills, and exchange; and improved consensus and feasible plans to act? – Was the intervention effective in supporting partners and beneficiaries to achieve intermediate outcomes?	Review of M&E reports, interviews at headquarters and in the field, survey, national and local statistics, national and local social and

[58] Note that all theory of change based evaluation questions are adapted from: Stufflebeam, D. L. (2001). Evaluation Models. *New Directions for Evaluation*, No. 89 Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation issues	Possible evaluation questions	Data sources and methods
		– If the activities are not yet completed, is it likely that so far unattained objectives may be accomplished in full or in part over time? – What major changes in the overall context (e.g. policy framework, political situation, institutional set-up, economic shocks, civil unrest) have affected or are likely to affect project implementation and overall results? – Are the project inputs and operations producing outcomes in the way the project ToC predicted? – What changes in the project's design or implementation might produce better outcomes?	economic development reports, etc.
Efficiency	Adequacy of staff and resources to achieve deliverables and objectives	– What are the resources and costs to develop specific outputs? – Do management team members have the necessary skills and expertise? Is the required capacity-building in place to mitigate gaps? – Are financial resources available at the time they are needed? Are they sufficient to achieve the objectives? – Were outputs and services delivered on time? Was the implementation period extended? – Has the team obtained adequate cooperation from internal ITC partners? – Has the team worked with competent subcontractors?	Review of financial and performance records, time records and outsourcing selection records.
	Quality and adequacy in output production, particularly against qualitative and quantitative targets.	– Were outputs produced at a reasonable cost and with acceptable quality? – Was the administrative cost comparable to that of other development partners? – What does the analysis of the M&E data tell us in terms of performance? – What other factors help account for project efficiency performance?	Review of documents, field interviews, interviews with cooperation partners, survey, national statistics, national development strategies, etc.
	Quality and adequacy of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system	– Did the M&E system provide for efficient project management and accountability? – Did it successfully enhance the evaluability of the intervention?	
Impact	Partners' and beneficiaries' attainments of outcome and impact as a result or through the support of ITC intervention.	– To what extent have partners and beneficiaries changed their own situation and improved their actions as a result of intervention? – To what extent have partners and beneficiaries influenced other actors resulting in an improved overall situation with the support of the intervention? – Can any other positive or negative effects be observed as a consequence of the project interventions? What? Why?	Review of M&E reports, interviews, survey, national statistics, national social and economic development results, etc.
Sustainability	The extent to which partners and beneficiaries are enabled, committed and likely to contribute to ongoing benefits beyond the intervention	– Do partners and beneficiaries have sufficient abilities and influence necessary to generate impact? – Was a specific exit strategy prepared and agreed upon by key partners to ensure post-intervention sustainability? – What is the likelihood that partners and beneficiaries will be in a position to continue generating results and benefits after intervention completion? What factors are in favour of or against maintaining benefits?	Review of documents, M&E reports, interviews in the field and with key national and local partners, survey, national development strategies, etc.

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation issues	Possible evaluation questions	Data sources and methods
		– Is there a clear indication that the government and/or other key partners have committed financial and human resources to maintain benefits and results? Are the target groups and their organizations prepared to continue the activities and benefits? – What other factors account for the assessment of sustainability?	

Table 5: Evaluation matrix: Integrating cross-cutting dimensions into evaluation criteria

Cross-cutting dimensions	Integration into evaluation criteria	Possible evaluation questions	Data sources and methods
Human Rights and Gender Equality[59]	Assessing the HR and GE **relevance** of an intervention entails examining how the intervention is designed to align and contribute to HR and GE, as defined by international and regional conventions; national legislation, policies and strategies; and rights holders and duty bearers – women and men – targeted by an intervention.	– Was the intervention designed to contribute to results in critical human rights and gender areas, as identified through human rights and gender analysis — based, inter alia, on international conventions (e.g. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW], Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPD], Committee on the Rights of the Child/Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC]) and related documents (e.g. concluding observations), declarations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and other relevant international agreements on HR and GE)? If so, how was the project designed to do this? – What is the extent to which the intervention is aligned with and contributes to national policies and strategies on HR and GE? – What is the extent to which integrating an HR and GE perspective was relevant to achieving the goals and results stated by the intervention?	Review of documents, M&E reports, field interviews, survey, national statistics, national employment protection strategies, etc.
	Analysis of an intervention's **effectiveness** involves assessing the way in which defined results were achieved (or not) on HR and GE, and whether the processes that led to these results were aligned with HR and GE principles (e.g.	– Are there any key results on HR and GE? – What is the extent to which the ToC and results framework of the intervention integrated HR and GE? – What is the extent to which a human rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated into the design and implementation of the intervention?	Review of documents, M&E reports, field interviews, survey, national statistics, national employment protection strategies, etc.

[59] Note that all of the evaluation issues and possible evaluation questions provided for human rights and gender equality are extracted from United Nations Development Group (2014), *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*, pp. 77-79. Additional information for evaluation questions to assess design and planning, implementation and results can also be found on pages 81 to 85.

	inclusion, non-discrimination, accountability).		
	The HR and GE dimensions of **efficiency** require a broader analysis of the benefits and related costs of integrating HR and GE in interventions.	– Was there a provision of adequate resources for integrating HR and GE in the intervention as an investment in short-, medium- and long-term benefits? – What are the costs of not providing resources for integrating HR and GE (e.g. enhanced benefits that could have been achieved through modest investment)? – What is the extent to which the allocation and use of resources to targeted groups take into account the need to prioritize women and individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against?	Review of documents, M&E reports, field interviews, survey, national statistics, national employment protection strategies, etc.
	To assess the **sustainability** of results and impacts on HR and GE, the extent to which an intervention has advanced key factors that need to be in place for the long-term realization of HR and GE should be studied.	– Has the project contributed towards developing an enabling or adaptable environment for real change on HR and GE? – Is the institutional change conducive to systematically addressing HR and GE concerns? – Has the capacity of targeted rights holders and duty bearers to respectively demand and fulfil rights been developed?	Review of documents, M&E reports, field interviews, survey, national statistics, national employment protection strategies, etc.
	HR and GE results can be defined as the **actual realization and enjoyment of HR and GE by rights holders**. It is the real change (positive or negative, intended or unintended, primary or secondary) in HR & GE that is attributable to an intervention.	– Have rights holders been able to enjoy their rights? – Is there a real change in gender relations (e.g. access to and use of resources, decision-making power, division of labour)? – Is there permanent and real attitudinal and behavioural change conducive to HR and GE? – Is there a redistribution of resources, power, and workload between women and men? – Are there effective accountability mechanisms operating for HR & GE?	Review of documents, M&E reports, field interviews, survey, national statistics, national employment protection strategies, etc.
Innovation	The success of the intervention strategy and results to promote innovation, replication and scaling up, especially for small-scale projects.	– What are the characteristics of innovation(s) promoted by the project that may benefit other AfT interventions? Are the actions in question truly innovative or are they well established elsewhere but new to the country or project area? – Were successfully promoted innovations documented and shared? – Have the intervention approaches and innovations been replicated or scaled up by other partners in the same or other countries? – What elements of the project ToC are essential for successful replication?	Review of documents, M&E reports, interviews in the field and with key national and local partners, survey, national development strategies, etc.

Environment and climate change	The contribution to changes in the protection and rehabilitation of natural resources and the environment, and to climate adaptation and resilience	– Has the intervention led to changes in the environment and natural resources protection and rehabilitation through trade support interventions? – What activities have been taken into consideration of climate adaptation and resilience, and what are the results?	Review of documents, M&E reports, field interviews, survey, national statistics, national environmental development strategies, etc.

Workplan

86. The Inception Report should provide a timeline outlining the evaluation phases (data collection, data analysis, and reporting). In addition, the key deliverables and milestones should also be identified. In addition to the timeline, specific responsibilities for each phase of the evaluation process should be identified. This should include all stages and who is responsible for what. For example, when the draft report is to be quality reviewed it would be with the IEU.

Logistics

87. This section should provide a summary of the logistics required to carry out the evaluation. It should include all elements required for the data collection phase, such as field visits, transportation, communication requirements, etc.

Appendices

88. Appendices that should be included with the Inception Report include all relevant draft data collection instruments (surveys, questionnaires, and interview guides), and the ToR. Any other documents deemed relevant should also be included at this time.

5. Data Collection Phase

Ethical behaviour

89. In line with the ITC Evaluation Policy, and UNEG guidelines[60] and code of conduct for evaluation[61], evaluators and evaluation teams should adhere to the principles of ethical behaviour throughout the evaluation process and particularly during data collection. Evaluation team members should ensure that they are familiar with and respectful of local beliefs, manners, and customs. Interviewers must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Attempts should be made to minimize demands on interviewee time. Evaluators and evaluation team members also have a responsibility to bring to light issues and findings that do not relate directly to the evaluation ToR. At times, evaluators or evaluation teams can uncover suspicious practices or evidence of wrongdoing; if this happens, what, how and to whom these issues are reported should be discussed with the Evaluation Manager, who must also inform ITC management.

Bias and difficulties in data collection

90. Even if the field mission has been carefully planned and prepared, the evaluation team often encounters unexpected situations and difficulties that must be addressed with deliberations, decisions, and diplomacy. One main challenge is the implicit and explicit bias generated during data collection, which may influence evaluation findings. The various biases should be considered as risk factors and treated with preparation, critical thinking, and professional integrity. Data collection should be as objective as possible to avoid bias. Annex II offers strategies to deal with difficulties related to data collection and Annex III contains strategies for dealing with common biases.

Data sources and analysis

91. In evaluation practice, an analysis is required to convert data and evidence into findings, which are then assessed before being converted into conclusions. In the process of data analysis, triangulation of data and views drawn from various sources is critical to minimizing bias and enhancing the credibility of the evaluation findings and conclusions.

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[60] United Nations Evaluation Group (2008). *UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation*, New York. Available from: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

[61] United Nations Evaluation Group (2008). *UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System*, New York. Available from: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

Box 7: Definitions for data, evidence, findings, conclusions, and lessons learned[62]

***Data**:* Any piece of qualitative or quantitative information that has been collected by the evaluation team is called data. **For example**, Document X indicates that the vast majority (90%) of surveyed clients are satisfied with the project services.

***Evidence**:* A piece of information, or data, is qualified as evidence as soon as the evaluation team assesses it as reliable enough. **For example**, Document X, quoting Ministry Y data that is considered reliable, indicates that 85% of project beneficiaries or users of an output are satisfied with the service.

Findings: Findings establish a fact derived from analysis of the evidence. Findings do not include value judgments**. For example**, the quality of service delivery has improved.

***Conclusions**:* Conclusions point out the factors of success and failure of the evaluated intervention, with special attention paid to the findings (i.e. intended and unintended results and impacts; any other strength or weakness). A conclusion draws on data collection and analyses (undertaken, through a transparent chain of arguments), evidence and findings from the evaluation process. **For example**, the project has contributed to enhancing the exports of women entrepreneurs in the coffee sector.

Lessons Learned: Lessons learned are generalizations based on the evaluation process; they relate logically to the evaluation findings and interpret the findings and conclusions of the evaluation in relation to wider concerns. They are conclusions that can be transferred to the next cycle(s) of the same intervention or to other similar interventions. **For example**, sustainability is rooted in the successful transfer of capacity, skills and competencies to beneficiaries and partners in a way that fosters local ownership and long-term commitment.

93. Findings should resist criticism based on weak evidence or subjective views, and therefore need to be supported with convincing facts and reliable evidence (i.e. converging facts, records and/or statements). Particularly, data and views collected during interviews and observations should be corroborated with reliable data from other sources before the data are applied in the Evaluation Report. If data gaps are identified, the evaluation team may need to collect additional information to establish a robust analysis. In evaluation analysis, four levels of data strength can be considered, as presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Strength of different data sources[63]

Type of evidence	Description
Observed fact	Factual evidence is the strongest. Observed facts can be in the form of visit reports, photographs, management records or any kind of traceable material.
Witness statement	Still considered very strong evidence; for example, beneficiaries in a training programme state that they have changed their attitudes after participating in the program
Proxy	This type of evidence is also called circumstantial evidence; for example, during the past few months, several competitors of a subsidized firm collapsed, which indicate that the level of support was excessive and distorted competition. The strength of this type of evidence depends upon the strength of the logical reasoning supporting the inference.
Reported statement	An indirect statement is the weakest type of evidence; for example, programme managers state that beneficiary enterprises have strongly improved their competitiveness. The strength of this type of evidence depends upon the authoritativeness of the expert whose statement is used.

[62] Adapted from: World Intellectual Property Organization (2009). *Self-Evaluation Guidelines*, Geneva. Available from: http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/about-wipo/en/oversight/iaod/evaluation/pdf/self_evaluation_guidelines.pdf; and the Organisation of Economic Co-operation for Development (2010), *op. cit*.
[63] World Intellectual Property Organization (2009), *op. cit*.: 29.

Quality assurance for Terms of Reference and Inception Reports

94. The IEU reviews the design of Inception Reports to ensure all elements have been considered for the quality assurance purposes. The quality checklist provided in Table 7 below is based on the UNEG checklist and includes critical indicators for high-quality deliverables.

Table 7: Quality checklist for evaluation terms of reference and Inception Reports[64]

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION
- Why the evaluation is requested - Objectives and scope of the evaluation - Primary and secondary audiences for the evaluation - How the evaluation will be useful - (After the ToR approved) Based on a comprehensive desk review, the Inception Report may verify or re-define the above contents included in the ToR.
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
- Relevant aspects of the economic, trade, social and political context of the intervention - Objectives of the project, ToC (intervention logic) and activities - Management arrangements, challenges, and changes - Progress and outputs - Based on a comprehensive desk review, the Inception Report may need to further develop the above contents included in the ToR.
KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED
- Key learning aspects and issues to be addressed by the evaluation - Based on a comprehensive desk review, the Inception Report presents the initial analysis and data gaps. - The Inception Report further develops the key learning aspects and issues to be evaluated. The detailed evaluation methodology should be developed based on key issues identified in the Inception Report.
EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY
- General methodological approach and design for data collection and analysis should be included in the ToR. - TOR includes evaluation criteria to be used by the evaluation (e.g. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, innovation and scaling up, women's empowerment and gender equality, human rights). - Main evaluation questions related to each evaluation criterion should be included in the ToR. - Based on a comprehensive desk review, the Inception Report finalizes the evaluation criteria and further develops specific questions. - The detailed data collection and analysis methods should be presented in the Inception Report.
EVALUATION PROCESS AND DELIVERABLES
- Main stages of the evaluation process, including learning and follow-up - Deliverables at each stage of the evaluation - The process of commenting and addressing comments

[64] Adapted from: United Nations Evaluation Group (2010). *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports*, New York. Available from: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/608

- Process for quality assurance of the final report
- If major revisions needed, the Inception Report will revise the evaluation process and deliverables described in the ToR.

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

- Roles and responsibilities for the Project Manager and other evaluation team members
- Roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and IEU in the evaluation process
- The ToR should also include general profiles of evaluation consultant(s) for recruitment or service procurement.
- If major revisions needed, the Inception Report will revise the above contents included in the ToR.

TENTATIVE ROADMAP

- Roadmap of the evaluation, including the anticipated date for each key deliverable
- If major revisions needed, the Inception Report will provide a revised roadmap.

BUDGET ESTIMATE

- The ToR should include an estimated budget for consultancy and other evaluation-related services.
- If needed, the Inception Report will finalize the budget estimate in the ToR.

6. Evaluation report

95. Based on the approved Inception Report, the evaluator or evaluation team conducts the evaluation and prepare a draft report.[65] It is the responsibility of the Evaluation Manager to ensure that the draft Evaluation Report is prepared. Once all data have been analysed and evaluation results compiled, the worth of an intervention can be assessed. Judging the achievements of a project involves drawing out conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. To formulate conclusions, the evaluator or evaluation team applies the rating system to the evaluation criteria agreed upon in the ToR and Inception Report. Data collection and analysis are structured according to these criteria and key learning aspects. An indicative outline for an Evaluation Report is found in Box 8 below.

Box 8: Evaluation Report indicative outline

Executive summary

1. Introduction

   Background and context
   Purpose and objective of the evaluation
   Scope of the evaluation
   Methodologies used in the evaluation

2. Description of the intervention

   Description of the project design, ToC, management arrangement, M&E system, and major changes in design

3. Analysis and findings

   Implementation progress and results against the objectives of the intervention as determined through each evaluation criteria
   Assessment of the performance of the intervention strategy against the ToC
   Lessons learned
   Good practices
   Constraints

4. Recommendations

   Issues resolved during evaluation
   Actions/decisions recommended
   Follow-up

5. Conclusions

6. Communication and Dissemination

7. Annexes:

   Audit Trail; ToR; organizations and places visited, and persons met; data collection instruments; any other relevant materials

Executive summary

96. The Evaluation Report starts with the executive summary which presents, a brief overview of the purpose, objective, scope, methods of the evaluation, the major findings, lessons learned, and recommendations, and a summary of the conclusion stemming from the ToC analysis, in a concise manner. The credibility of evaluation findings is largely based on the rigour of its data collection

[65] In principle, the final report will not include acknowledgements at the beginning and no specific names are mentioned.

methods and the robustness of its analysis, a clear evidence trail is considered obligatory to present the required linkages.

97. An evidence trail is provided in a matrix and links findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Each recommendation should be clearly anchored in the specific conclusions presented in the report, and in turn, each conclusion is coherently generated from the specific analysis and evidence presented in the same report (see Table 8 below). A clear evidence trail is considered obligatory in presenting evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The conclusions should provide clear answers to the questions asked in the Inception Report. As a good practice, the conclusions should be organized in clusters to formulate coherent and inclusive recommendations. The lessons are conclusions that can be transferred to the next cycle of the same intervention or to other similar interventions in the near future. The report should also include a self-assessment of the methodological limitations that may restrict the range or use of certain conclusions. The evidence trail should appear at the end of the executive summary.

Table 8: Linking findings, conclusions, and recommendations

Findings: Identified problems/issues, with supporting evidence/ examples	Analysis and conclusions	Recommendations, including addressee(s)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Evaluation Report introduction

98. The background and context of the evaluation provide a summary of the fundamental information on the project being evaluated. Elements to be included are the project context (national, political, economic, social, cultural background); duration of implementation (start date and end date), name of project partner(s); location(s); total project budget and its funders; objectives; expected results and planned changes with regard to the target group or beneficiaries (outcome) and the project's ToC; intervention logic or logical framework (which should be added as an annex); details on the target groups or beneficiaries (number according to sex, age, ethnicity, etc.). Much of information in this section may already be found in the ToR and Inception Report.

99. The purpose, objective and scope of the evaluation, which may have already been set out in the ToR should be included here. Any new details that may have come to light during the evaluation process regarding the project's background and context should also be included at this time.

100. A discussion of the methodologies used in the evaluation and how they were applied should also be included in this section. This should include an overview of the quantitative and qualitative methods applied (including an explanation of the number of the persons included per method, as well as criteria for selecting the project locations etc.). Techniques used during data collection and processing of data and information (e.g. data triangulation) should be mentioned as well. The methodologies used in the evaluation include any information as to how the data was collected, the data sources (e.g. primary data from interviews, surveys, and questionnaires, and secondary data), and the approach used to analyse the data. The Evaluation Report also mentions possible restrictions (e.g. the non-availability of key informants) by using the methods as well as possible resulting effects on the evaluation, particularly its independence. This section is important as it provides the basis for the credibility of the evaluation results.

Description of the intervention

101. This section of the report should cover the overall project design, details of the target group or beneficiaries, the project's ToC, management arrangements including implementing partners if applicable, the project's M&E system, and any major change to the project design during its implementation.

Role of the theory of change

102. At the project report stage, the use of the ToC emerges throughout the entire Evaluation Report. Keeping the ToC in mind is vital for conducting the analysis leading to findings, the distillation of conclusions and the issuance of useful recommendations. The causality required for assessing that the intervention has successfully attained its goal is inferred from the following evidence:

- The intervention was based on a reasoned ToC; the results chain and the underlying assumptions of why the intervention was expected to work were sound, plausible and agreed to by key players.
- The activities of the intervention were implemented.
- The ToC has been verified by evidence; the chain of expected results occurred, the assumptions held, and the (final) outcomes were observed in terms of the value added by ITC to its partners and beneficiaries.
- External factors (context) influencing the intervention were assessed. They show not to have made a significant contribution, or if they did, their relative contribution was recognized and, addressed to the extent it was feasible.
- In the end, a conclusion (a contribution claim) is made about whether the intervention has made a difference in terms of the improvement facilitated by ITC of the situation and abilities of its partners and beneficiaries.

Analysis and findings

103. This section of the report is the longest and most detailed and is based on facts (other sections of the Evaluation Report draw from it and cross-reference to it). Findings, based on the analysis, use evidence derived from the evaluation process to make factual statements. These are used to provide an overall performance assessment that should at the very minimum clearly address the main evaluation criteria, namely the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project. As a result, each of the evaluation criteria will become a sub-title, and the discussion of the criteria, based on the findings from the evaluation questions and other data collection techniques, should form the basis of the discussion.

104. However, although the use of evaluation criteria is necessary for a systematic and unified analysis of data collected during the evaluation process, they can present a series of challenges when evaluating complex interventions such as large programmes, a strategy, a policy or a corporate approach. In these cases, an interpretation of the criteria may not always be in a linear logic; there may be a limited ability to reflect the complexity and synergetic effects, and gaps may become evident in some key themes raised under Agenda 2030.[66]

105. Evaluation adopts an integrated approach across the evaluation criteria with a focus on the efficacy of the strategy that was deployed to address the intervention ToC. It includes the examination of the appropriateness of overall management arrangements and how these have impacted the intervention in terms of the value added by ITC to its partners and beneficiaries and concerning the positive change made by the intervention as per the improvement facilitated by ITC of the situation and abilities of its partners and beneficiaries. Since expected changes are related to sustainable development, the analysis expresses change in terms of ITC's contribution to the SDGs. Also examined with the same lengths are the coordination, collaboration and support arrangements with partners and beneficiaries and with other stakeholders.

106. In conducting the assessment of the achievements throughout the intervention results chain, the discussion initiates with the examination at the output level. Regarding the implementation of activities,[67] it addresses how this was undertaken, noting any constraints, and examining if and

[66] DAC Network on Development Evaluation; Summary of the workshop on OEC DAS Evaluation Criteria: Progressing the dialogue, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018)

[67] Activity is defined as 'Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs'. Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *op. cit.*: 15.

how the monitoring and backstopping was done during implementation. This is done with a view to drawing lessons from the experience.

107. The achievement of planned intermediary outcomes indicates the extent to which the planned outputs[68] were delivered and how the intervention used the short-life cycle of outputs to attain the corresponding results[69] within the long-life cycle of the results chain (see Figure 3 above). It also includes how intermediary outcomes were achieved, or not, within the planned time-frame and the resources available.

108. The examination further shows if and how the intermediate outcomes have either been achieved, or not, with a view of demonstrating whether the intervention strategy has been successful, or not, in supporting partners and beneficiaries having improved their own situation and abilities as per the contribution of the intervention.

109. Following the results chain, where intermediary outcomes have been fully met the analysis focuses at demonstrating how these have been contributing to the attainment of the intervention outcome[70] measured by some form of proven improvement in the international competitiveness of SMEs, directly or indirectly targeted by the intervention, as well as in terms of impact[71], evidenced by partners and beneficiaries having further built on the intervention support to improve other actors' abilities and situation, at a wider level within their own area of influence. As mentioned earlier, the evaluation focuses on the measurement of impact expressed in terms of ITC's contribution to the SDGs. For intermediary outcomes that have not been attained, the report still shows what progress has been made towards achieving them and how they have contributed to the attainment of the overall goal of the intervention.

110. The aim of any intervention is to deliver lasting benefits, so the sustainability[72] of the intervention is covered in the Evaluation Report. The discussion focuses on whether there is evidence that intervention direct and indirect benefits will continue beyond the period of intervention assistance. A key emphasis in the analysis is whether the intervention has strengthened institutional and human capacity to continue the observed benefits.

Rating system

111. The harmonization of evaluation criteria and rating system allows ITC to expand evaluation coverage of its operations, and to consolidate evaluation-based performance and results at the corporate level. A six-point rating system has been designed to apply to ITC evaluations, as described in Table 9 below. In evaluation reports, evaluators provide a qualitative justification for the rating of each evaluation criterion, a quantitative measure based on the achievement of planned targets set out in the logical framework, and a composite rating for overall project performance based on consideration of the individual ratings. All ratings should be a round number, with no decimal points. Should the object of evaluation not have a logical framework (i.e., a policy), only a qualitative assessment on each of the evaluation criteria, and an overall rating of the project, is expected.

[68] Output is defined as 'The products and services which result from the completion of activities within a development intervention'. Source: United Nations Development Programme (2002). *OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation Results-Based Management and Proposed Harmonized Terminology,* New York. Available from: http://web.undp.org/execbrd/word/Final%20RBM%20terminology%2030%20May.doc

[69] Results are defined as 'The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention'. Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *op. cit.*: 33.

[70] Outcomes are defined as 'The intended or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs… Outcomes represent changes in development conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of impact'. Source: United Nations Development Programme (2002), *op. cit.*

[71] Impact is defined as '…long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended'. Source: Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *op. cit.*:24.

[72] Sustainability is defined as 'The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed'. Source: *Ibid*: 36.

Table 9: A Six-point rating system for evaluation[73]

SIX-POINT RATING SYSTEM		
Rate	**Qualitative assessment based on each evaluation criteria**	**Quantitative measurement based on the logical framework**
6. Highly satisfactory	A project with overwhelmingly positive results and no shortcomings.	Level of achievement presents no shortcomings (90% - 100% achievement rate of planned targets for project outcome, intermediary outcomes, and outputs).
5. Satisfactory	A project with some strong results and without material shortcomings.	Level of achievement presents minor shortcomings (70% - 89% achievement rate of planned targets for project outcome, intermediary outcomes, and outputs).
4. Moderately Satisfactory	A project with a clear preponderance of positive results (i.e. it may exhibit some minor shortcomings though these should be clearly outweighed by positive aspects).	Level of achievement presents moderate shortcomings (50% - 69% achievement rate of planned targets for project outcome, intermediary outcomes, and outputs).
3. Moderately Unsatisfactory	A project with either minor shortcomings across the board, or an egregious shortcoming in one criterion that outweighs other generally positive results.	Level of achievement presents some significant shortcomings (30% - 49% achievement rate of planned targets for project outcome, intermediary outcomes, and outputs).
2. Unsatisfactory	A project with major shortcomings clearly outweighing positive results.	Level of achievement presents major shortcomings (10% - 29% achievement rate of planned targets for project outcome, intermediary outcomes, and outputs).
1. Highly Unsatisfactory	A project with severe shortcomings and no material redeeming positive results.	Level of achievement presents severe shortcomings (0% - 9% achievement rate of planned targets for project outcome, intermediary outcomes, and outputs).

112. When using the six-point rating system for an evaluation of an intervention with a logical framework, a qualitative rating is given for each of the evaluation criteria, and a quantitative rating is given based on the achievement rate of planned targets set out in the logical framework. Both qualitative and quantitative scores are intended to be used to justify the rate.

113. **The qualitative rating** for each given evaluation criterion is based on considerations of different elements of the criterion, as elaborated in the evaluation matrix. For example, the rating for relevance should be based on a balanced consideration of the intervention relevance to ITC's strategic objectives, to the needs of clients (e.g. policymakers, TISIs, SMEs, other beneficiaries), and to coherence and clarity of the design. **Shortcomings in relevance** may have to do with the extent to which the project's objectives, design, rationale, coherence, adaptability, or implementation is inconsistent with partners' and beneficiaries' development needs and priorities, and/or with ITC's results framework.[74]

114. The effectiveness rating may be based on an overall assessment of the achievement of each of the project intermediate outcomes and impact. It is useful when discussing the effectiveness of the project to provide a table based on the objectives found in the logical framework (i.e. impact, outcome(s), outputs), and the associated indicators and targets, as well as a column discussing the progress made on each component. This step is vital in conducting the quantitative assessment to determine the quantitative rate (discussed below). **Shortcomings in effectiveness** relate to the lack of achieving the project outcome, intermediary outcomes, and/or

[73] Adapted from: Independent Evaluation Group, International Finance Corporation (2008). *A Review if IEG's Methodology for Assigning Development Outcome Ratings*. Technical Note Number 3. Washington, page 2. Available from: https://wpqr4.adb.org/LotusQuickr/ecg/PageLibrary48257B910010370B.nsf/0/9213AC34699B70F148257B9D003D7AEB/$file/Assigning%20DO%20Ratings%20-%20Nov08.pdf, and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (2018). *Evaluation Manual*. Vienna, page 24. Available from: https://www.unido.org/resources/evaluation/evaluation-resources

[74] Adapted from: Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank (2005). *Harmonized Evaluation Criteria for ICR and OED Evaluations*, Washington. Available from: http://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/HarmonizeEvalCriteria.pdf

outputs, and may have to do with the inability of the intervention strategy to support partners and beneficiaries to improve their own conditions and actions as expected as expected.[75]

115. The efficiency rating may be based on an assessment of overall financial performance, output quality, cost-effectiveness, and timeliness of outputs and outcomes. **Shortcomings in efficiency** may have to do with the extent to which the intervention failed to achieve (or is not expected to achieve) the project outcome, intermediary outcomes, and outputs with the available resources, or is unable to account for results.[76]

116. The impact rating may be based on the assessment of the extent to which the project has made, or is likely to make, a difference to the beneficiaries, the extent of attributable change, and/or any intended or unintended effects (whether positive or negative). **Shortcomings in achieving impact** may have to do with the inability of the intervention strategy to contribute to long-term transformation of partners and beneficiaries in improving the conditions and actions of others, at a wider level.[77]

117. The sustainability rating may be based on whether the project results and benefits will be sustained after the end of project funding, and/or the extent to which the outputs and results have been institutionalized. **Shortcomings in achieving sustainability** may have to do with the inability of the intervention strategy to enable partners and beneficiaries to take ownership of the results achieved beyond the period of intervention.[78]

118. **The quantitative rating** is a percentage calculated with the use of the number of completed targets out of the total number identified in the logical framework. Table 9 provides the formula applied to transform the results to the rating. In all cases, the ratings that have been determined for the qualitative and quantitative criteria, and the overall project, must conform to the description provided in Table 9, and evidence should be provided.

119. It should be noted that the **rating for overall performance and results** (including qualitative and quantitative) should not be an arithmetic average of the individual ratings. Appropriate weight for the project. In rating practice, it is necessary to check the consistency among ratings on different criteria. For example, if a project was to be found ineffective, it would be unusual for it to have a high rating for sustainability. [79]

Lessons learned and good practices

120. With the use of the learning plan included in the evaluation ToR or the Inception Report, lessons learned aim to promote knowledge sharing and evidence-based consensus building in ITC and among stakeholders. This helps to integrate evaluation-based knowledge in strategic decision-making. At ITC, the utility of evaluations is largely embodied in applying the findings and recommendation when designing new strategies and operations; a learning plan plays a critical role in enhancing evaluation utility. The evaluation process itself should be treated as a knowledge exchange process among stakeholders. The consultations and evidence-based consensus building conducted during the evaluation supports the learning process, as increased common understanding among key stakeholders facilitates knowledge buy-in.

121. A high priority should be given to lessons learned.[80] This part of the report must deal with those evaluation experiences and lessons that have broader applicability to other projects, programmes or policies. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths and weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcomes and impact. Lessons should specifically refer to the findings or the part of the report they are based on, and should not be stated as recommendations, observations or a description.

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[75] *Ibid*
[76] *Ibid*
[77] *Ibid*
[78] *Ibid*
[79] Asian Development Bank (2006). *Guidelines for Preparing Performance Evaluation Reports for Public Sector Operations*, Manilla, p 7. Available from: https://www.oecd.org/derec/adb/37965974.pdf
[80] Lessons learned are defined as: 'Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programmes or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations'. Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *op. cit*.: 26.

122. The report should cover specific experiences that are considered good practices, which are drawn from the evaluation and have a broader applicability to other activities of ITC. The Evaluation Report should identify what worked well and how it can be replicated. Very often approaches to project implementation that work in one situation are not made known to the rest of the organization. This part of the report should identify these good practices so that they can be widely shared within ITC.

123. The report should highlight major constraints and problems that have impacted the implementation and delivery of the intervention. The aim here is to learn from these constraints and problems and avoid them or find solutions to improve performance.

Conclusions

124. The report must draw conclusions based on all the above (findings, outcomes, lessons learned, recommendations, etc.). Evaluation conclusions point out the factors of success or failure in a project, with special attention paid to the intended and unintended results and impact, as well as other strengths or weaknesses. A conclusion draws on data collection and analyses undertaken through a transparent chain of arguments.[81] There must be a clear link between conclusions, findings, and recommendations.

Recommendations

125. This part of the report should provide clear and pragmatic recommendations aimed at enhancing the quality of interventions. Recommendations are proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality or efficiency of a development intervention; and at redesigning the objectives and/or the allocation of resources.[82] They must derive directly from one or more specific conclusions; they should aim at improving or reforming the project or preparing the design of a new intervention. Recommendations should be clustered with strategic considerations and should be operational and feasible. The conditions of implementation should be specified as well

126. Recommendations should:

- Be written clearly in a comprehensive and precise way.
- Be sensitive in the choice of words (e.g. use words like should or must to express advisability or necessity).
- Be firmly based on evidence and analysis (not be opinion-based), and logically follow from the evaluation findings and conclusions.
- Be formulated with clear priority actions and their use in mind, reflecting an understanding of ITC's organizational context and potential constraints to follow-up.
- Be clear on who needs to implement them (both for priority actions and oversight responsibility), and clearly identify the target group for each recommendation.
- Be action oriented (human, financial and technical resource implications outlined), without being overly prescriptive.
- Leave room for fine-tuning the implementation approach, while remaining balanced and impartial.
- Be relevant to the purposes of the evaluation and, once drafted, be presented to relevant stakeholders for further refinements, as appropriate.
- Be sensitive to cross-cutting dimensions, in particular gender and human rights issues.[83]

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[81] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), *op. cit*.: 18-19
[82] *Ibid*.: 32.
[83] Adapted from: United Nations Evaluation Group (2017). *Improved Quality of Evaluation Recommendations Checklist*, New York. Available from: www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2680

127. Many issues come up during an evaluation, and generally some of these issues are resolved by Management during the evaluation. This part of the report should provide a short resume of all such issues, as it demonstrates how evaluation results are already being taken on board. These issues should not be included in the section regarding actions and decisions recommended.

128. The Evaluation Report should clearly show the major proposals and suggestions that are made, which aim to improve programme and project delivery, management or policy change. Some of the recommendations may urge management to make certain decisions or take certain actions. For each recommendation, a person or entity is identified as responsible for its implementation.

129. During the process of formulating recommendations, project management (and other likely implementers) should be given the opportunity to review draft recommendations and provide comments or suggestions for refinement — provided this step does not compromise the required accountability.

Quality assurance for evaluation reports and the commenting process

130. The draft Evaluation Report will be quality assured and validated by the IEU with the use of the quality checklist (seen Table 10 below). Criteria taken into consideration during the quality review include:

- the credibility of the data and analysis used in the Evaluation Report, and justification with a minimal level of bias;
- logical conclusions grounded in the analysis provided in the report;
- recommendations being based on the specific conclusions; and
- explicit Audit Trails of stakeholder comments and feedback in the report.

Table 10: Quality checklist for evaluation reports[84]

REPORT STRUCTURE
The report follows the ITC Evaluation Guidelines, is well structured, logical, clear and complete, and an executive summary is prepared summarizing the key findings and recommendations.
EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY
Evaluation objectives and scope are fully explained, and a summary of the methodology provided: - An explanation of the chosen evaluation criteria, performance standards or other criteria used by the evaluators - The methods followed by the evaluation are in line with ITC's Evaluation Policy and Guidelines; the data used in the report are reliable, balanced and comprehensive, and the analyses to form judgments are credible and objective. - A precise description of the methodology applied that clearly explains how the evaluation was specifically designed to address the evaluation criteria, yield answers to the evaluation questions and achieve the evaluation purposes - The report presents evidence that adequate measures were taken to ensure data quality, including evidence supporting the reliability and validity of data collection tools (e.g. interview protocols, observation tools) - Gaps and limitations in the data and/or unanticipated findings are reported and discussed
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT, PROGRAMME AND OTHER EVALUATION SUBJECTS
The report presents a clear and full description of the 'subject' of the evaluation, including: - The context of key economic, social, political, demographic and institutional factors - ToC / the expected results chain (inputs, outputs, and outcomes), and scale and complexity of the project or programme - Key stakeholders involved - Implementation status of the project or programme, including significant changes (e.g. plans, strategies, logical framework) that have occurred over time and explains the implications those changes for the evaluation
FINDINGS: PERFORMANCE AGAINST EVALUATION CRITERIA
Findings are presented with clarity, logic, and coherence, as follows: - Findings respond directly to the evaluation criteria and questions detailed in the Inception Report - Findings are based on evidence derived from analysis - Reasons for accomplishments and failures, especially continuing constraints, are identified as much as possible
PERFORMANCE OF ITC AND MAIN PARTNERS (OPTIONAL)
Based on analysis of management performance and changes, if applicable, the performance of ITC and main partners should be summarized.
CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES
- Conclusions present reasonable judgments based on findings and substantiated by evidence and provide pertinent insights - Each conclusion is referring to the specific analysis presented in the Evaluation Report

[84] Note: The checklist can be used for both draft and final Evaluation Reports. Adapted from: United Nations Evaluation Group (2010). *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports*, New York. Available from: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/607

- Conclusions lay the firm ground for making evaluation recommendations pertinent to the prospective decisions and actions of evaluation users
- Lessons and good practices are presented based on analysis

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations are forward-looking, relevant to the subject, actionable and reflect an understanding of strengths and constraints of ITC
- Recommendations are supported by evidence and conclusions, and each recommendation is referring to specific conclusion points in the report
- Recommendations clearly identify the target group for each recommendation

131. Once the draft report is quality assured by the IEU, it should be sent to respective Divisions and the delivery managers for comments, and the comments should be returned to the IEU within two working weeks. The draft will then be shared with ITC management for review and comments

132. When ITC internal comments are addressed, the draft report may be shared with external stakeholders — including representatives of funders and client countries, and implementation partners in project countries — for review and comments. During the commenting period, dedicated meetings may be organized with key stakeholders to clarify remaining concerns and promote common understanding and evidence-based consensus building among partners. This process can be an opportunity to prepare key partners to agree and follow-up on evaluation findings and recommendations.

Independent Evaluations

133. The draft Evaluation Report should be circulated among all stakeholders for comments. At times, it may be prudent to share the draft Evaluation Report with the Project Manager to offer a preliminary opportunity to determine if there are any factual errors, omissions, or inconsistencies. If possible, it could also be shared with other ITC managers and staff for peer review. The commenting period ranges from two to four weeks depending on the scale of the evaluation. During the commenting process, dedicated meetings may be organized with stakeholders to clarify the findings and recommendations, discuss remaining concerns, and promote common understanding and consensus among partners. Together these meetings represent an opportunity to further engage partners' agreement on evaluation findings and follow-up on lessons, good practices and/or recommendations.

134. Audit Trails will be prepared by the IEU to indicate how the evaluation team has addressed the comments of key stakeholders in the final Evaluation Report. An Audit Trail is based on a simple matrix where stakeholders can identify the area in the draft report requiring clarification or factual changes, and a note containing the specific issue being addressed (a sample Audit Trail template can be found in Annex IV). When all comments have been collated, the evaluator(s) address each issue and provide a comment to each. The Audit Trail should be filed for considerations of accountability and reliability and be published as an annex to the final report for transparency purposes. An Audit Trail serves several purposes:

    - It demonstrates how the Evaluation Report has treated (i.e. either accepted or declined) the comments obtained from various stakeholders in the draft report stage.
    - Good quality Audit Trails support evidence-based consensus building among partners and prepare key partners for implementing evaluation recommendations.
    - In addition, consensus-building during the commenting process helps to prepare the responsible managers and stakeholders for accepting the final version of the recommendations and translating them into concrete actions.

Self-Evaluations

135. Review of the Self-Evaluation is conducted by IEU; it is a formal recognition of the quality of the evaluation and makes it eligible for disclosure and communication. The review is conducted in line with criteria described in the Quality checklist for evaluation ToR and Inception Reports (Table 7), and the Quality checklist for evaluation reports (Table 10).

136. To uphold the quality standard, the evaluation deliverables should be reviewed and commented on by the stakeholders and IEU. Concerning Self-Evaluation, the evaluation manager is responsible for quality checks and soliciting comments and reviews on the draft deliverables. To facilitate the former, it is recommended to use the two quality checklists (found in Tables 7 and 10, as mentioned above). The quality checklist in Table 10 should be used to review the draft Evaluation Report before sharing the Self-Evaluation with stakeholders for their feedback and comments. Quality assurance aims to enhance professional standards, credibility, and utility. The quality review should be relatively simple, brief and quick.

137. The IEU quality assurance process is an independent and critical review of the evidence, results, and assessments of a Self-Evaluation, and in line with the quality requirements criteria (see Table 10 above). After review, the Self-Evaluations qualify for circulation among stakeholders and for publication (including on the ITC evaluation website). IEU is not able to support the disclosure and publication of Self-Evaluations that do not meet quality requirements.

138. The process is largely based on a review of the Self-Evaluation Report and, if necessary, cross-checking among stakeholders. IEU conducts a quality review of the ToR and final report. The review generally focuses on assessing (i) internal validity of the Self-Evaluation Report (the quality of data, analysis, findings, and recommendations); and (ii) consistency among ITC's evaluations (appropriateness of evaluation methodology, ratings, and conclusions in comparison to other ITC evaluations).

139. Once a Self-Evaluation is satisfactorily reviewed, the report is endorsed for use and disclosure among stakeholders. The learning potential is amplified when Self-Evaluations are included in the organizational evaluation learning loop. In other words, the lessons learned, and good practices reported by the Self-Evaluation should be shared across Divisions.

140. After review, endorsed Self-Evaluations qualify for disclosure among stakeholders and for publishing (such as on the ITC evaluation website). For presenting corporate-level performance and results in the AESR, the results generated from Self-Evaluations are included (along with those generated by Independent Evaluations and Funder-led Evaluations). IEU takes responsibility for cross-checking the analysis and findings generated by Self-Evaluations and presenting more inclusive cooperate-level results and impact.

141. Once the comments from stakeholders and peers are addressed, an Audit Trail should be prepared by the Self-Evaluation Manager to indicate how the comments have been treated in the final report. The Audit Trail note should be filed for accountability and reliability, and it is good practice to include it as an annex to the Self-Evaluation Report. Further information on Audit Trails is provided in above and a template is provided in Annex IV.

Evaluation Use

Communication and Learning

Independent Evaluations

142. As mentioned above, a communication plan is an integral part of the evaluation ToR and Inception Report. The plan may be updated or modified during the later stage of the evaluation. Evaluation communication activities should be conducted on a timely basis throughout the evaluation process, and key stakeholders should be regularly involved and updated; this will help familiarize stakeholders with evaluation concerns and prepare them to use the evaluation findings in later stages. Communication may take various forms: for example, formal or informal, written or oral, face-to-face discussion, telephone conference, or videoconference.

143. Upon the completion of the Evaluation Report, dissemination should be done in a timely manner. The IEU prepares various communication products, such as an evaluation communication note; the dissemination of evaluation products is tailored to the client's preferences. Evaluation reports are published online on the ITC website.

Self-Evaluations

144. The Self-Evaluation Manager identifies the potential users at the outset of the evaluation and prepares a learning plan to share the findings with staff and stakeholders. The learning plan should prioritize consensus building and use of the evaluation results in new interventions and for other projects. If the objective and issue(s) of interest in the Self-Evaluation are mainly for performance improvement, the range of potential users could be narrow.

145. Communication activities should be arranged and conducted on a timely basis throughout the course of the Self-Evaluation process, and key stakeholders should be regularly involved and updated. Involvement of stakeholders helps the evaluation capture their expectations and perspectives and prepares them for using the evaluation findings and recommendations in next steps.

146. For presenting corporate-level performance and results in the AESR, incorporates the findings and learning lessons generated through Self-Evaluations. IEU also maintains a repository of the Self-Evaluations conducted.

Management response

147. Management Responses are usually only required for Independent Evaluations. In some circumstances, however, a Management Response may be requested for a Self-Evaluation. The below instructions pertain to Independent Evaluations.

148. Preparing a Management Response is a critical step for integrating evaluation-based learning into new interventions and actions. Once the Evaluation Report is finalized, it is the responsibility of the people and functions to which the recommendations are addressed: to prepare a Management Response in consultation with IEU; and to submit a draft response to IEU for follow-up purposes. In cases where evaluation recommendations are addressed to several people or entities, a focal point should be nominated by management to coordinate the process. To facilitate the responsible managers in preparing their response, IEU should discuss with them in advance, and address the relevant comments, concerns, and perspectives of the delivery managers and stakeholders, before finalizing the evaluation recommendations in the report.

149. The Management Response is comprised of a list of the recommendations and indicates if the recommendations have been accepted, partially accepted or rejected (template is provided in Annex V). If a recommendation has been accepted or partially accepted, a list of actions designed to support the implementation of the recommendation is required. Also required is a timeline for completion and the person(s) and/or entity(ies) responsible to carry out actions established. When creating the actions, it is important to bear in mind that they should lead to the successful completion of the recommendation. When recommendations are partially accepted or rejected, it is expected that a justification is provided to support the decision. The Management Response is quality checked by IEU and approved by senior management; the final version should be signed off by the responsible officers. The final Evaluation Report, mainly the findings and recommendations, together with the Management Response, may be presented to the SMC.

150. IEU collects the implementation status of all evaluation recommendations every six months (March and September of each year), consolidates this information, and reports significant issues to the SMC. The implementation status of evaluation recommendations should be updated periodically by the responsible operational teams. IEU maintains a tracking system on the implementation status of the evaluation recommendations that were endorsed by SMC; it follows up on the status of accepted evaluation recommendations and reports the consolidated progress to the SMC periodically. The consolidated implementation status is included in the AESR.

Evaluation follow-up

Independent Evaluations

151. Independent Evaluations are used and followed-up, using an interactive process involving all stakeholders. Based on the evaluation Management Response, management should integrate evaluation results and recommendations into its policies and programmes. As mentioned in the previous section, IEU systematically follows up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations and presents periodic reports on their status. When analysing Monitoring Plans and Evaluation Plans at the project design phase, IEU should check if similar projects have been evaluated and the findings considered in project design.

152. Once the Management Response and Action Plan for all accepted recommendations have been completed, this plan constitutes the baseline against which future progress is measured. The logic of the Action Plan is that actions taken in response to recommendations should contribute to expected results and the complete implementation of the recommendation within a given date. The purpose of follow-up reporting is to promote organizational learning and accountability for results. The manager responsible for the Action Plan must submit periodic status reports to IEU.

153. Management periodically undertakes an assessment of the extent to which the accepted or partially accepted recommendations have been implemented, which status is revised by the IEU. The review examines how evaluation follow-up has improved programme design, delivery, and strategic policy development. The key findings and lessons learned are inserted into the AESR, which is presented to the JAG.

Self-Evaluations

154. The Self-Evaluation Manager prepares a follow-up plan on the use of the findings and/or on the implementation of the recommendations, and progress should be updated periodically. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to follow-up on the implementation of the Self-Evaluation Action Plan and recommendations.

7. Process for a project completion report

155. In ITC's operations, a PCR is requested for all trade-related technical assistance support, including ITC Trust Fund (W1) and Funder (W2) projects. A detailed PCR template is provided in Annex VII. To prepare this report, delivery managers rely mainly on monitoring data generated by their project.

156. For the formal closure of project operations, a PCR is prepared by the responsible project team at the end of implementation. The PCR is intended to encourage the project team to reflect on and learn from project performance from an evaluative perspective. The PCR is a means to ensure that project results are reported in line with the approved plans and that projects are closed in compliance with ITC rules and procedures.[85]

157. A PCR is often considered a form of Self-Evaluation, as it also addresses learning. ITC evaluation criteria (as discussed above), and data collection methods (discussed above and listed in Table 3) may be applied accordingly. For accountability, a PCR should describe the project design, intervention logic, changes during the implementation period, planned and actual costs, planned and actual outputs, planned and actual results (as objectively as possible), lessons learned and any other relevant issues.

PCR formats and approval process

158. In the case of W2 projects, as the funder's closure report format may not be identical to ITC requirements, Project Managers may decide to employ either of the two formats listed below:

[85] Note: As of May 2018, the PCR process is now integrated into the project cycle process in the projects portal.

i. The ITC format, when the funders acknowledge the quality of ITC's M&E system and accept the PCR as equivalent to their own closure report; or,

ii. The funder's format, as agreed by ITC; Project Managers may need to provide additional information requested for ITC reporting purposes using the PCR template.

159. A draft PCR should be reviewed within the Division for quality enhancement; once it is cleared by its respective Director, the responsible manager should transmit the approved version to IEU. IEU does not formally validate the quality of PCRs, though it can provide advisory support to managers to enhance quality.

160. Project Managers may opt to convey additional comments beyond those that are required for completing the PCR. Should this be the case, these comments are strictly confidential, outside of evaluation scope and for the use of the SPPG Chief only.

Annex I: Possible risk factors used to determine type of mandatory evaluation

The below table lists the possible risk factors used to determine the type of mandatory evaluation that applies to projects. The inclusion of evaluations in the AEWP is based on a risk and opportunities assessment. In principle, Independent Evaluations are concentrated in projects obtaining high scores with the use of the criteria below. It should be noted that factors and points may vary each year in the AEWP.

CRITERIA	LEVEL OF RISK High (3 points)	Medium (2 points)	Low (1 point)
Funder sensitiveness	>10% of total ITC funder support and W1 projects	Between 6% and 10%	< 6%
Materiality	Budget > $4 million	Between $3 million and $4 million	Between $2 million and $3 million
Delivery complexity	Project delivered by more than two ITC Sections	Project delivered by two ITC Sections	Project delivered by one ITC Section
ITC Trust Fund (W1)	Bonus +3 points	No bonus points	No bonus points
Innovation and replication	Intervention highly innovative and replicable	Intervention innovative and replicable	No innovation or replication aspects
Strategic partnerships	Intervention developed important strategic partnerships	Intervention developed strategic partnerships	No strategic partnerships
Visibility	Intervention highly visible	Intervention visible	No visibility
Quality of Evaluation Plan	Add 3 bonus points	No bonus points	No bonus points
Evaluation undertaken by funder	Not applicable	n/a	n/a

Annex II: How to deal with some frequent difficulties related to data collection[86]

ISSUE	PROBLEM	HOW TO COPE
Access to informants	The sampling process proves to be difficult.	Decide whether a reduced sample size is likely to provide statistically valid findings. If not, apply another technique such as a focused group discussion.
	An informant does not express him/herself freely.	Focus interviews on facts rather than opinions. Propose to keep the collected information anonymous and explain how this will be secured.
	An informant expresses him/herself in a way that seems purposely biased.	Focus on facts, not on opinions. Cross-check with other information sources.
Lack or weakness of data	An information source proves to be incomplete.	If possible, extrapolate missing data and cross-check with other sources.
	An information source proves to be unreliable.	If possible, understand the biases; adjust data and cross-check with other sources.

Annex III: How to cope with some common data collection biases[87]

ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	HOW TO COPE
Confirmation bias	This risk is a threat to all data collection approaches. It results from a tendency to seek out evidence that is consistent with the intervention logic, rather than evidence that could disprove it	When subject to this bias, the evaluation team and informants tend to focus on intended effects and systematically overlook external factors unintended effects, negative effects, interactions with other policies, outside stakeholders, alternative implementation options, etc. *In an Independent Evaluation process, this bias is avoided by relying on independent and professional evaluators.*
Self-censorship	In some instances, informants may be reluctant to freely answer questions, simply because they feel at risk. They tend to rigidly express the views of their institution or their hierarchy.	This bias is combated by guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity in the treatment of answers. The interviewer should also insist on factual questions and avoid collecting opinions. *Be highly credible when promising confidentiality and anonymity to limit respondents' self-censorship — and keep such promises strictly.*
Informants strategy	Those who have a stake in the intervention may distort the information they provide, with the	This bias will be reduced if a whole range of stakeholders is included in the data collection workplan and if various sources of information are cross-checked.

[86] Source: World Intellectual Property Organization (2009), *op. cit.*: 25.
[87] *Ibid.*: 26.

	aim of obtaining evaluation conclusions closer to their views.	*Never rely on a single category of stakeholder (e.g. project or programme managers, beneficiaries) to reduce strategic bias.*
Unrepresentative sample	This bias may be a matter of concern if the evaluation team generates quantitative data through a questionnaire survey. It should also be considered when using secondary data obtained from a questionnaire survey.	In this instance, the evaluation team should verify that the sample of surveyed informants is large enough and representative of the population.
Question induced answers	This bias is frequent in interviews and questionnaires. The way in which questions are asked by interviewers or the interviewer's reaction to answers can generate a bias which is either positive or negative. Even the order of the questions in a questionnaire may change the substance of the answers.	This bias will be limited by having questionnaires designed and tested by experienced professionals. *Systematically mix positive and negative questions to reduce empathy bias and question bias.*
Empathy bias	Interviewees may not have a pre-determined opinion about the questions put to them. They try to make up their minds in a few seconds when responding to the interviewer or to the questionnaire. While doing so, they may be strongly influenced by the context. Especially in the case of interviews, the evaluation team must create a friendly (empathetic) atmosphere, at least for the sake of achieving a high rate of answers and fast completion of the survey. The combination of the two introduces a systematic positive bias in the answers, which tends to overestimate the benefits of the intervention and to underestimate the role of external factors.	This bias is prevented by relying on properly trained interviewers and evaluators. *Systematically mix positive and negative questions to reduce empathy bias and question bias.*
Sample selection bias	People who agree to be interviewed may not be representative of the overall target audience.	This bias can be controlled by undertaking a special qualitative survey on a few "non-respondents", although this exercise brings additional costs.

Annex IV: Feedback Form and Audit Trail templates

FEEDBACK FORM − DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation title:

Name:[88]	
Title:	
Email address:	

This feedback form has been designed to capture your questions or comments in a structured, focused and readily usable way. It will enable you to direct your questions or comments to specific paragraphs of the draft Inception Report.

Identifier *(Please insert relevant paragraph number, page number, annex number, or other reference identifier)*	**Question / Comment**

Audit Trail[89]

Identifier	**Question / Comment**	**How the question or comment was addressed in the draft Evaluation Report**

[88] When comments and feedback are collated and incorporated as an annex to the Evaluation Report, all identification data and contact information is removed.

[89] It is important that each of the comments listed in the feedback form are addressed in the audit trail.

Annex V: Management response template

Management Response, Action Plan, results and means of verification

Evaluation Title:	
Date of submission of the final Evaluation Report:	
Date: Responsible manager:	Signature:
Date: Responsible Chief/Director:	Signature:
Date: Partner:	Signature:
Recommendation 1: Assigned to:	

Management Response and justification:	
The recommendation is: Accepted: ☐ Partially accepted: ☐ Rejected: ☐	*Please explain why the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted or rejected.*

Action Plan and responsibilities:

Actions:	Expected result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
1.1 *Insert description of the action*	*Insert expected results and explain how this action supports the implementation of the recommendation*	*Insert text*	*Insert text*	*Insert (mm/yy)*	*Insert risks and assumptions*
1.2 *Insert description of the action*	*Insert expected results and explain how this action supports the implementation of the recommendation*	*Insert text*	*Insert text*	*Insert (mm/yy)*	*Insert risks & assumptions*
1.3 *Insert description of the action*	*Insert expected results and explain how this action supports the implementation of the recommendation*	*Insert text*	*Insert text*	*Insert (mm/yy)*	*Insert risks & assumptions*
1.4 *Insert description of the action*	*Insert expected results and explain how this action supports the implementation of the recommendation*	*Insert text*	*Insert text*	*Insert (mm/yy)*	*Insert risks & assumptions*

Annex VI: Project completion report template[90]

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Project Number: Project Title

Keywords identifying the topics the project has been working on:	
Project start date:	
Project end date:	
Funders:	
Total project budget (financial contributions):	
Total value of in-kind contributions from project partners:	

Report prepared by: (name, title)

Signature / Date:

Report approved by Chief: (name, title)

Signature / Date:

Report approved by Divisional Director: (name, title)

Signature / Date:

[90] The PCR template is available on the ITC intranet under Project Management Guidelines, available from: https://our-intranet.itc-cci.net/oed/sppg/ProjectManagement/SitePages/Project%20completion%20report.aspx

PCR Template Instructions

1. In accordance with the ITC Evaluation Policy 2015, a Project Completion Report (PCR) is an assessment conducted at the end of the project, reporting on the fulfilment of the expected accomplishments. A PCR is a mandatory step in the project cycle to close officially a project. In ITC's operations, a PCR is requested to all trade-related technical assistance projects, including W1 and W2 projects.
2. PCR is often considered as a form of self-evaluation using the evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) to describe, as objectively as possible, the design, intervention logic, changes during the implementation period, planned and actual costs, planned and actual outputs and results, lessons learned, and other issues. A PCR should be prepared by the responsible manager based on monitoring data collected by the project. There is no need for additional data collection, unless it is necessary and justified.
3. The PCR is intended to encourage the project team to reflect and learn on project performance from an evaluative perspective. It is also a means to ensure that project results are reported in line with the plans approved, and that projects are closed in compliance with ITC's rules and procedures. Responsible managers are encouraged to share the report with project team members before finalization and use it as a tool for discussion within the team.
4. A PCR should be reviewed within the division for quality enhancement. Once it is cleared by its respective division, the responsible manager should transmit the approved version to the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU)/SPPG. In line with ITC's disclosure policy, the IEU discloses the evaluation products including validations of PCRs. Some measure of confidentiality is warranted in exceptional cases only.
5. In the case of W2 projects, a project may have to submit a PCR following a funder's request. Once a funder PCR has been completed, the project manager could indicate in the ITC PCR template, to avoid repetition of same contents in two PCRs, the specific references to the whereabouts (which section, page) in the funder PCR, and add in the ITC PCR the information not requested in the funder PCR.
6. In certain cases, when a funder acknowledges the quality of ITC's monitoring and evaluation system and accepts ITC's PCR as an equivalent to its own PCR, the project manager could submit the ITC PCR to the funder for the same purpose.
7. The signed PCR should be updated in the New Project Portal, and the funder PCR should be attached as an annex.

Important Note:

- Please liaise directly with the relevant DPS service(s) for financial and administrative reporting requirements for project closure.

- Before submitting the final report, please:
  - ✓ remove all of the instructions appearing in green in the template;
  - ✓ reformat the document, where necessary;
  - ✓ save the signed report in the New Project Portal in the Documents tab; and
  - ✓ send an e-mail to the IEU indicating that the completion report has been finalized and uploaded.

1. PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

Project logframe: *Attach the project logframe from the project portal, as an annex to the PCR, including the final narrative report in the portal (NPP-Results Tab – Results Monitoring Section).*

Other achievements: *Provide additional comments in case the project had results (positive changes for beneficiaries, contributions to the SDGs) that were not planned in the logframe and therefore not reported in the portal.*

Confirm all reporting has been completed in the projects portal.

Yes	No

1.1. SELF-ASSESSMENT

In case a PCR has been submitted to the funder and uploaded into the project portal, did this report include a self-assessment section in which you **explicitly** commented on the following evaluation criteria:[91] relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations?

Yes	No	Not applicable

If yes, simply do the rating for the categories below and specify in the text box on which pages you have addressed the evaluation criterion in the PCR to the funder.

If answered no or not applicable, please complete all the sections below with your project performance assessment. This assessment requires a narrative and a self-rating for each OECD/DAC evaluation criterion.

Relevance: *The extent to which the project was aligned with ITC's results framework and suited to the priorities and policies of beneficiaries and partners.*

Narrative (insert text): Assess the consistency of the objectives of the project with ITC corporate goals, the beneficiaries' and partners' needs, and the country's development strategy and/or policy priorities. *Also consider the following:* *To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?* *With the benefit of hindsight, were the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with overall project objectives?*

Provide your rating of the relevance of the project: level of satisfaction on the extent to which the activities and outputs of the project were consistent with achieving the intermediate outcomes and contributing to impact (only choose one in the scale below).

Highly Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory

[91] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2015), *op. cit*.

Effectiveness: *A measure of the extent to which the project has attained its objectives*

Narrative (insert text): Assess the extent to which objectives (outcomes and intermediate outcomes) were achieved or are expected to be achieved. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of these objectives?

Rate your level of satisfaction on the extent to which the objectives were achieved (only choose one in the scale below).

Highly Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory

Efficiency: *A measure of the outputs (qualitative and quantitative) in relation to the inputs.*

Narrative (insert text): Ascertain to what extent the project has converted its resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) economically into results.

Consider the following questions:
Were activities cost-efficient?
Were objectives achieved on time?
Could the project have been delivered in a more efficient way, comparing with alternative ways of achieving the objectives?

Rate your level of satisfaction on the cost-efficiency of the activities (only choose one in the scale below).

Highly Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory

Impact: *A measure of the positive and negative changes produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.*

Narrative (insert text): Describe long-term economic, social and environmental impacts and contribution to the selected SDG targets produced by the project, particularly in terms of the partners' and beneficiaries' situation and actions.

Consider the following questions:
What real difference has the project made to partners and beneficiaries (policymakers, TISIs, enterprises, others) and how has it contributed to specific SDG targets?
How many people have been affected?
Were there any unintended positive or negative changes introduced by the project?

Rate your level of satisfaction as to the real positive change that the project has made (only choose one in the scale below).

Highly Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory

Sustainability: *An assessment of whether the benefits of the project are likely to continue after the end of the project.*

Narrative (insert text): Indicate the likelihood of continued long-term benefits of the project. What were the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of project sustainability?

Rate your level of satisfaction on the extent to which the benefits of the project will likely continue after funding has ceased (only choose one in the scale below).

Highly Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory

1.2 LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall assessment should provide lessons derived from the above analysis and recommendations for the future.

Lessons Learned: *(those that can be applied to the next phase of the same intervention or to other similar ongoing and future interventions)*

Insert text: Lessons learned include what worked well and what did not. Please bear in mind that lessons learned may have a broader application to other projects, programmes or policies.

Recommendations: *(those that are specifically assigned to a responsible manager and team who should implement them to enhance future performance)*

Insert text: Recommendations should be based on lessons learned. They should be clear and pragmatic, aimed at enhancing the quality of project design, the effectiveness and efficiency of projects, and sustainability of results.

2. PROJECT FOLLOW-UP

Outstanding Issues and post-project responsibilities

List outstanding issues related to project closure, post-project handover and/or required follow-up. Indicate the focal point at ITC and in the project country for future inquiries about the project.

Risk Management

Identify any risks that could affect future ITC projects or operations (e.g. conflict with a local partner/individual, negative reaction to ITC due to a project incident or unmet expectations), and persons and teams who will take on responsibility for monitoring them.

Records Management

Identify what arrangements have been put in place for the storage, security, and backup of project documents (including consultant reports, minutes of meetings, monitoring records, and important correspondence with funders, partners, and beneficiaries).

Administrative closure

Please review your grant Memorandum of Understanding and contact the Division of Programme Support (DPS) for requirements related to the financial closure of the project (e.g. closure of petty cash accounts, transfer of assets, closure of field office).

3. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

This section provides an opportunity to include additional comments on the project.

Should there be any information that a Project Manager considers important but does not want to share in the public PCR, please send these comments directly to the Chief, SPPG by e-mail. The information will be used for learning purposes, but any messaging about these matters will keep the source anonymous, unless agreed otherwise.

4. ANNEXES

List any annexes attached, which can include:
- Project report to the funder or project partners
- Change control forms
- Financial report (actual expenditure by output compared with the planned budget)
- List of enterprises that were direct project beneficiaries and received customized support (e.g. in a Value Added to Trade [VA2T] project)
- Other relevant documents

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International Trade Centre

Street address
International Trade Centre
54-56 Rue de Montbrillant
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

P: +41 22 730 0111
F: +41 22 733 4439
E: itcreg@intracen.org
www.intracen.org

Postal address
International Trade Centre
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.