Quality checklist for decentralized evaluation

Inception report

Version April 2024

[Title of the decentralized evaluation]

**The evaluation team/firm should not submit the draft IR to WFP if it does not meet the quality criteria. If the EM receives a draft that does not meet the quality criteria, they should not submit to DE Quality Support (DEQS). REU DE Focal point (or CapQual incase of HQ DEs) as Quality Assurance Level 2 (QA2) should confirm that the IR meets the criteria and is ready for submission to DEQS. If it does not meet the criteria, it should be returned to the team/firm. If the IR is submitted to DEQS without meeting the quality criteria it will be returned which could result in Delays. If in doubt whether the IR is ready for submission OR you have reasons to want to submit incomplete IR, write to DE helpdesk** **wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org**

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| **Overall** |
| **General** | **Criteria met**  | **Comments** |
| **Length**: * Is the report 15,000 words or less (excluding Annexes and Table of Contents)? An additional 15 percent length is allowed for deliverables written in French or Spanish.

**Accessibility:*** Is the report written in a clear and accessible manner?
* Does the report clarify and build on the terms of reference, extending analysis of context and subject of evaluation?
* Does the report provide a clear operational plan for how the team will carry out the decentralized evaluation?
* Does the report reflect a common understanding between the evaluation team and evaluation manager on expectations and standards?
* Does the report demonstrate ownership of the process by the evaluation team?
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| **Editing** | **Criteria met** | **Comments/status** |
| * Is the report written in line with WFP editing style?
* Has the IR Template been followed, and all elements included including the core annexes?
* Is a table of contents included and lists tables, graphs, figures and annexes?
* Are maps, visuals, tables and diagrams used as relevant and labelled appropriately?
* Are acronyms spelled out the first time they used, and a list proceed at the end of the report?
* Are sections, sub-sections, paragraphs and pages numbered electronically?
* Is the report free from grammar, spelling or punctuation errors?
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| **Cover page and Key Evaluation Personnel** | **Criteria met** | **Comments** |
| * Has the DEQAS template for IR cover page been followed (or appropriately adjusted for joint evaluations to represent the logos of commissioning partners as per TOR branding)?
* Is the title of the decentralized evaluation identical to that in the ToR (unless agreed otherwise with WFP)?
* Is the date and status of the report (draft/final) indicated on the cover page?
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| * Is the name and title of chair of evaluation committee included?
* Is the name and title of Evaluation manager (and any co-manager or replacement if EM changed] is included?
* Is the name and title of WFP Evaluation Officer (REU/OEV) responsible for second level quality assurance if included?
* Are names and titles of the evaluation team members included?
* Is the name of the person responsible for quality assurance from the firm (if contracted via firm) included?
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| 1. **Introduction**
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| * 1. **Evaluation features**
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| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria met** | **Comments** |
| * Present briefly the subject, rationale for the evaluation (why needed at this time), objectives (accountability and/or learning, with an indication if more weight is given on one of the two) and expected users
* Briefly describe the purpose of the IR (operational plan) and its place within the evaluation process
* Indicate on what basis the IR was prepared and by whom
* Discuss the appropriateness of analysing gender, equity and wider inclusion issues in the evaluation scope
 | * Does the introduction clearly set the scene for the evaluation, including its subject, rationale, objectives, timing and users?
* Is the purpose of the IR clear and activities supporting its formulation are relevant, demonstrating that adequate research and consultations have taken place?
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| * 1. **Context**
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| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria met** | **Comments** |
| Overview of the geographical context directly relevant to the evaluation, including:* General overview (e.g. geography, demography/population, basic macro-economic indicators)
* Key indicators on poverty levels, food security (disaggregated by sex, population groups, highlighting regional disparities), vulnerability to climate change-related shocks
* As needed, national indicators related to education, health, nutrition, agriculture, relevant to the evaluation subject (e.g. data on literacy rates, primary and secondary school enrolment by sex and percentage of population with at least secondary education)
* Elaborate on gender inequality index and wider equity and social inclusion issues in relation to food security, nutrition and other areas relevant to the evaluation subject. This should also include a description of the architecture in the country (policies, strategies) and indicators
* National policies, institutional capacities and priorities, including policy gaps relevant to the evaluation subject
* Key data and trends related to the SDGs relevant to the subject of evaluation in the context (region, country subnational/local level)
* Humanitarian issues, including migration patterns, humanitarian protection, refugees and IDPs and host community/social tensions
* Key external events that led to significant changes in WFP work
* Features of international assistance in the area and related work of other humanitarian/ development actors, including long-standing donors/agencies in the country, and levels of resources
* Other WFP work in the area
 | * Is the contextual information focused, concise and relevant to understand the context for the subject of the evaluation including the specific sectors and national policies relevant to the subject?
* Is the information explicitly geared to the evaluation subject, rather than being generically presented/stated?
* Are relevant indicators identified and trend data used and is it up to date (if applicable to the subject)?
* Is data commented on and contextualised, rather than simply stated?
* Is there a good balance between amount of details and synthesis?
* Is gender landscape/context briefly described as relevant to the subject of evaluation?
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| 1. **Subject of the evaluation**
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| * 1. **[Subject evaluated]**
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| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria met** | **Comments** |
| * The nature of the evaluation subject (intervention/activity, thematic area, transfer modality, pilot project)
* An illustration of the logic of the intervention and its key assumptions (based on an assessment of the logical framework and/or theory of change). If such tool is not available, they should be reconstructed at inception phase
* Building on the relevant section of the ToR expands on the analysis of:
* The geographic scope of the evaluation subject
* Relevant dates specific to the subject of evaluation: approval date; start date; end date; budget revisions if any; duration of the intervention
* More recent data on the activities that fall within the scope of the evaluation (disaggregated by sex/ age/ year where/as appropriate)
* A quantitative overview of performance including outcome and output targets achievement rate, if applicable with available data
* Brief comments on the performance data. For example, any discrepancy between target achievement rate and budget implementation for the same outcome
* Main partners (government; NGOs; UN agencies; private sector; other)
* Resources (planned, revised and actual, by year and cumulative, percentage funded of total requirements) and key donors
* Other relevant preceding/ concurrent activities/ interventions
* Any amendments to initial design
* Gender equality and women’s empowerment, equity and wider inclusion dimensions that the intervention sought to address, through which strategies and for which targets/results
* Assessment of whether quality gender, equity and wider inclusion analyses were undertaken and whether this analysis was properly integrated in programme design. If there was no analysis to inform the programme, this fact should be mentioned
* References past evaluations/reviews related to the subject. If none, say so
* Maps/graphs for illustration
 | * Is all the expected content included, and is information presented relevant, complete and important to understand the subject of the evaluation?
* Are tables/graphs used to illustrate the subject of evaluation including comparison of planned and achieved results as appropriate?
* Is the soundness of logical framework or theory of change, where they exist, assessed?
* If ToC was reconstructed, has it been discussed and agreed with the evaluation commissioner and other relevant stakeholders?
* Does the IR highlight relevant issues from past evaluations, reviews and other analytical work that are relevant to the evaluation? If no relevant evaluations, does the IR mention that the subject has not been evaluated before?
* Are GEWE, equity, and wider inclusion dimensions explained and is there information on whether the design of the subject of evaluation was informed by a gender analysis?
* Are any differences between original design and implementation explained if /where appropriate?
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| * 1. **Scope of the evaluation**
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| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria met** | **Comments** |
| * Describe the programmatic scope in detail, highlighting any changes or refinements as compared to the scope stated in the ToR
* Present the key issues to focus on as identified in the inception phase. These issues should be clearly reflected in the evaluation matrix as operational components or lines of inquiry under the relevant evaluation subquestions
* Explain how any evaluability challenge will affect the scope of the evaluation in relation to specific evaluation criteria, questions or subquestions
* Geographical coverage of the evaluation is clearly defined
 | * Is the programmatic scope (activities) the temporal scope (period covered), and the geographical scope (coverage) of the evaluation clearly explained?
* Are issues of depth versus breath of analysis where appropriate/applicable explained?
* Are any differences between the scope in ToR and IR identified, explained and justified?
* Does the scope articulated allow for coverage of relevant GEWE issues?
* Are any key strategic issues relevant to the subject that deserve particular attention identified and explained?
* Are any exclusions from the scope (activities, period or locations) described and justified?
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| * 1. **Stakeholder analysis**
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| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria met** | **Comments** |
| * Building on the related ToR section, add depth by providing necessary and relevant information
* For each group of stakeholders, specify concrete agencies or functions, describe their role in the subject of evaluation/ the evaluation itself and analyse the nature of their stake/interest, including what they stand to gain or lose from the results of the evaluation
* Ensure that the stakeholder analysis is responsive to gender, equity and inclusion issues
* Integrate beneficiaries’ perspectives, disaggregated in a way that reflects diversity
* Identify the principal types of stakeholders e.g. duty-bearers, rights-holders
* Define how stakeholders will be involved, with consideration of the most appropriate method for each group
* Summary of stakeholders and their interest, stake and involvement in the evaluation presented in the Annex
 | * Does the stakeholder analysis build on that presented in the ToR?
* Have all relevant stakeholders been identified (by category or function) and explicitly named (e.g. name of ministries, donors, NGOs, etc)?
* Have the key actors that have a stake in the evaluation been identified and their specific interests, role and relative power to influence the evaluation process or the use of the evaluation explained?
* Have relevant stakeholder analysis tools applied and summary presented in the Annex?
* Does the IR include considerations regarding beneficiaries’ perspectives and are they disaggregated in a way that reflects diversity and gender-responsiveness, with a focus to accountability to affected populations?
* Is the stakeholders’ analysis coherent with the proposed methodology and evaluation matrix?
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| **3. Evaluation approach, methodology and ethical considerations** |
| **3.1. Evaluability assessment** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria Met** | **Comments** |
| * Overview of the evaluability assessment, highlighting challenges and opportunities and describing how the assessment has informed the choice of methods for data collection and analysis. The detailed evaluability assessment, including detailed analysis of data availability, should be presented in annex
* Discussion of availability and quality of data
* Discussion of the design of the subject of evaluation – whether there is a logical framework, theory of change or some other representation of the design;
* A note on evaluation team’s assessment of demand and interest from stakeholders for the evaluation
* A reflection on the feasibility
 | * Does the IR discuss evaluability of the design of the subject, identifying challenges and opportunities?
* Does it mention whether there is or there isn’t a theory of change/logical framework?
* Does the IR include assessment of availability and validity of data and systems for accessing that data?
* Does the IR discuss demand dimension and ET’s understanding of the extent to which key stakeholders (especially commissioning office) are committed to the evaluation including to use the results?
* Does the IR consider the evaluation questions, available resources (including time and budget), and logistical/access issues?
* Does the above assessment inform the delimitation of the evaluation scope and the choice of methods for data collection and analysis?
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| **3.2. Methodological approach** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria Met** | **Comments** |
| * Overall methodological approach, data collection methods, and data analysis
* Evaluation questions to be addressed. Justification provided if they vary from ToR.
* Overall approach to data collection, synthesis, analysis and validation of findings
* A discussion on how data will be collected and analysed, including a clear description of the evaluation matrix, and how it will be used
* Discussion of any implications of evaluability challenges in relation to specific evaluation criteria, questions or subquestions; data gaps highlighted; mitigation measures identified.
* A clear statement of how gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be addressed in the methodology
* If not already clearly indicated in the ToR, a specification about whether or not a set of lessons will be required in the ER
* If relevant, specification about how the analysis will be conducted against international humanitarian principles
 | * + - Is the overall methodological approach (design of the evaluation) coherent, logical and comprehensive and does it explain how it will mitigate limitations identified in section 3.1 to ensure validity and reliability of the findings and overall credibility of the evaluation?
		- Are the evaluation questions articulated clearly and the criteria to which they contribute assessment of indicated?
		- Does the IR distinguish between data collection methods and data analysis methods and are these clearly stated and sufficient to answer the questions?
		- Are the proposed methods and evaluation criteria gender and equity sensitive?
		- Are the methods and a sampling frame described appropriate to consult with different groups/types of stakeholders including within the affected population?
		- If there are deviations/modifications from the evaluation questions, criteria and overall approach in ToR, are they presented and justified?
		- Does the report specify how gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be addressed?
		- If the ToR indicates that learning is a key objective, does the IR specify that lessons will be included in the ER?
		- Are the evaluation questions summarised in the Evaluation Matrix with sub-questions?
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| **3.3. Data collection methods** |  |  |  |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | Crieria met | **Comments** |
| * Provide detailed overview of the data collection methods building on the preliminary methodology in the ToR. Explain and justify if and how the methodology is modified from that presented in the ToR
* Explicitly link chosen methods to the evaluation matrix and ensure they are informed by stakeholder analysis as well as by an analysis of the reliability and completeness of the data collected during the design and inception phases (secondary data, M&E information, previous evaluations, etc.)
* Explain how data gaps will be filled and how information will be collected, analysed and used to answer all the subquestions
* Define the nature of data information collection methods and field instruments (to be included in annex). Highlight their comparative advantage, inherent constraints and solutions
* Description of how methods and sampling address diversity of stakeholders
* Describe comprehensively the sampling strategy and selection, and related limitations/risks
* Provide information on selection of intervention sites to be visited during fieldwork and geographic coverage and explain the sampling. Provide information about the number of beneficiaries and key partners or stakeholders in each site.
* Ensure methods proposed are in response to gender, equity and wider inclusion issues. Ensure data collected is disaggregated by gender; provide an explanation if this is not possible
* Clearly articulate that gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be considered in findings, conclusions and recommendations (as appropriate) including unanticipated effects
 | * Are data collection methods described in detail in line with the overall approach described in section 3.2)?
* Are proposed data collection methods adequate given data needs, budget and time constraints?
* Is the choice of methods justified, and limitations explained?
* Are the methods explicitly linked to the evaluation matrix and informed by the stakeholder analysis in section 2.3 and the evaluability assessment in section 3.1?
* Does the data collection plan (type and amount of data to be collected) demonstrates that the team has adequately gathered and consulted existing/ shared data during the inception phase?
* Are methods described appropriate to consult with different types of stakeholders?
* Are data collection tools included in annex?
* Is sampling strategy and sampling selection robust and impartial and limitations to impartiality and risks, if any addressed?
* Does the description of the methods clarify the selection of areas to be visited during the mission with a sound rationale?
* For every data collection method and stakeholder selected (including direct observations), is there a data collection instrument/tool and by stakeholder in Annex 5?
* Are there considerations of how the data collection methods will address gender, equity and wider inclusion issues and be undertaken in a gender-sensitive manner?
* Are limitations of the approach and methods explained and mitigation measures identified?
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| **3.4. Data analysis** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | Crieria met | **Comments** |
| * Describe methods for quantitative and qualitative data analysis, cleaning and triangulation to ensure validity and reliability
* Clarify data validity and reliability
 | * Are the processes for data cleaning, processing and analysis for all the types of data from all the method described in section 3.3 explained?
* Is the IR clear on how data will be triangulated between methods and sources to check/ ensure validity and reliability?
* Are choices of data analysis methods adequate and justified and limitations explained and addressed?
* Are the chosen data analysis methods coherent with overall methodological approach i.e. the nature of data to be collected and the questions to be answered?
* Is analytical framework for data analysis included either separately or data analysis and triangulation described for each question in the evaluation matrix?
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| **3.5. Ethical considerations** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | Crieria met | **Comments** |
| * Include standard text as per the IR template
* Describe ethical issues and which safeguards and measures will be put in place by evaluation phase
* If the ToR had identified or anticipated any ethical issues, discuss them explicitly and offer clear mitigation measures;
* Summarise ethical considerations, risks and safeguards for each of the phases of the evaluation in the table provided
 | * Is standard text used that states core ethical considerations?
* Are specific ethical issues, safeguards and measures discussed in a way that demonstrates clear understanding of specific risks arising in the context of the evaluation?
* Does the IR describe mechanisms to ensure inclusive representation and treatment of different stakeholder groups including people living with disabilities, children (if applicable), elderly etc?
* Does the IR include a description of mechanisms to ensure confidentiality/ anonymity and data protection?
* Is there a table with summary of ethical issues, risks and safeguards?
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| **3.6. Risks and assumptions** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | Crieria met | **Comments** |
| * Highlight any potential risk to efficient and safe conduct of the evaluation process as designed in the previous sections. Include potential conflict of interest, logistic challenges, safety issues, availability of data, data protection, timing of field visits, etc
* Indicate how the evaluation team will mitigate/prevent these risks
* Specify the support that the team assumes it will receive from the commissioning office and other stakeholders to ensure the evaluation is conducted as designed/ planned
 | * Does the IR demonstrate clear understanding of any potential risks and their implications/impact for the evaluation process and product?
* Is there a summary table with risks and mitigation strategies/measures?
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| **3.7. Quality assurance** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | Crieria met | **Comments** |
| * Standard text on application of WFP DEQAS
* Clear description on how the firm (or team) will assure quality of the process and product, including internal processes, names of persons responsible and procedures that will be followed.
* Clear and explicit mechanisms for ensuring the utility, credibility, impartiality and independence of the evaluation
* Description of how the evaluation team will ensure validity and accuracy of data
 | * Is the standard text on use of DEQAS throughout the process provided as per the IR template?
* Does the IR spelt out how the firm (or team in case of individuals) assure quality of the process and products?
* Is it clear who will be responsible for quality control/checks before the drafts are submitted to WFP?
* Are mechanisms for ensuring the utility (e.g. communication and knowledge management plan in place), credibility (robust methodology, clear mechanisms for minimizing bias (i.e. impartiality), validity (internal QA within the team) and independence (use of external evaluation team) are clear and explicit?
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| **4. Organization of the evaluation** |
| **4.1. Roles and responsibilities** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria Met?** | **Comments** |
| * Composition of the evaluation team, primary role and responsibilities of each team member in line with expertise and ToR requirements (including gender expertise), and the areas to be covered based on the evaluation matrix
* A detailed workplan for the team showing the tasks of each team member in line with deliverables agreed and according to roles and responsibilities.
* Clear description of how individual inputs will be incorporated into expected evaluation draft products
* Clear description of mechanisms for ensuring coordination within the team and with WFP stakeholders including EM for day to day and the evaluation committee for overall steering
* Statement of how the team will escalate things within the firm and to WFP if there are concerns.
 | * Does the team expertise match all competencies required in ToR (and as expressed in the technical proposal (if hired through a firm)?
* Are roles and responsibilities of each team evaluation team member clear?
* Is there is clear complementarity among team members’ skill sets?
* Are the tasks to be undertaken and outputs delivered by each team member clear and in line with consultants’ profiles?
* Are deliverables for each team member clearly stated with deadlines and do they match the duration of contract?
* Is there a clear plan to ensure efficient coordination within the team, within the firm and with WFP stakeholders?
* Are there mechanisms for escalation of issues?
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| * 1. **Timeline**
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| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria Met?** |  |
| * A Clear present the timeline, revised if applicable, with associated deliverables
* Explanation of any variations from the ToR
* A detailed fieldwork schedule (by days, team member, locations, stakeholders, etc) in the annex that enables the commissioning office to organize appointments and arrange logistics
* Explicit reference to the provision for review and feedback on draft products
 | * ­Does the timeline provide a clear picture of how the evaluation process will unfold including dates for key deliverables?
* Is the timeline realistic given the scope and methodology, and provides sufficient time required for each evaluation phase?
* Does the timeline have provision for quality review and feedback by DEQS and stakeholders?
* Has the timeline has been agreed with the evaluation manager?
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| **5. Issues to be agreed and information required [optional]** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria Met?** |  |
| * List of any issues that have arisen during the inception phase and still require discussion with and/or clarification from the evaluation manager or other WFP stakeholders or the firm
* Constructive suggestions for addressing these issues, so that they can be resolved easily
* Do not re-state constraints to the evaluation that are already covered (or should be covered and managed) under the evaluation methodology
 | * Do the Issues highlighted follow logically from the points raised in the report?
* Are the support needs of the team clearly spelled out and realistic in view of the time and budget available for the evaluation?
* Is the list of support clear and has been discussed with WFP evaluation manager before submission of the IR?
* Does the final version of IR adequately reflects the agreement reached with evaluation manager on these issues?
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| **Annexes** |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria Met** | **Comments** |
| Annexes support and expand on text in the main report. Including: * Summary ToR
* Detailed timeline
* Methodology guidance
* Evaluation matrix
* Data collection tools
* In-site observation tools
* Field mission schedule
* Evaluability assessment
* Reconstructed theory of change
* Results framework/line of sight
* Detailed stakeholder analysis
* Updated ERG membership
* Communication and knowledge management plan
* List of people interviewed
* Bibliography
* Acronyms
 | * Are all annexes as per IR template included and numbered?
* Are Annexes referenced, where appropriate in the main report?
* Are the data collection tools complete, realistic and implementable?
* If observation is included as a method for collecting data, is there in-site observation tool in the annex?
* Does the methodology annex build on the methodology section including explaining the rationale and steps for using the ToC if applicable?
* Are the data collection tools provided appropriate and feasible for the methodology proposed?
* Is there provision for pilot testing the tools and training data collection people if any will be involved beyond the evaluation team members?
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| **Evaluation matrix**  |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | **Criteria Met** | **Comments** |
| The evaluation matrix should provide an overview of how each of the key evaluation questions (taken explicitly or implicitly from the terms of reference and adjusted as per discussions with stakeholders), will be addressed. It should include: * Breakdown of the main questions into an adequate number of subquestions which together are sufficient to answer the main question
* A set of indicators/measure required to answer each sub-question
* List of clear methods that will be used to collect the specific data required for each sub-question.
* Sources of information (specifying whether secondary data will be used and where primary data is needed)
* A list of clear data analysis methods (distintict from data collection methods) that will be used to analyse the data collected (descriptive statistics)
* Clear explanation of how the data will be triangulated
* References to the availability and reliability of the data
 | * The matrix summarizes the evaluation methodology and addresses the evaluation questions taken explicitly or implicitly from the ToR (and further refined as needed)
* The subquestions are developed to guide the evaluation team, but are not as detailed as a survey instrument or interview guides. Their number is adequate to keep the evaluation team focused on answering all the main questions and attain depth of analysis (i.e. not too many and not too few)
* For each evaluation question, the subquestions, performance or progress indicators and the main sources of information are specified
* The matrix clearly demonstrates that triangulation will take place
* The evaluation matrix is informed by the stakeholder analysis
* The matrix refers to the relevant evaluation criteria
* Gender, equity and wider inclusion issues are integrated into the questions and subquestions where relevant
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