

META-EVALUATION OF IOM EVALUATIONS

2020-2024

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE & EVALUATION METHODOLOGY



To assess the quality of internal and external evaluations conducted between 2020 and 2024, examine the relevance and use of newly introduced quality assessment tools, and compare the quality of the evaluations against those conducted between 2017 and 2019.



The meta-evaluation reviewed 90 internal and external evaluation reports covering all IOM regions and various thematic areas.



The evaluation adopted a mixed-method and a utilization-focused approach.

The evaluation applied statistical methods, including correlation coefficients, to identify patterns and visualize trends.



14 Key Informant Interviews



3 Online Surveys Conducted



90 Evaluation reports, 58 Terms of Reference, 3 Inception Reports.

KEY FINDINGS



Terms of Reference (ToRs) Influence Quality:

- High-quality ToRs are associated with better evaluation reports.
- However, many ToRs lack clarity, contextual adaptation, and comprehensive cross-cutting analysis.



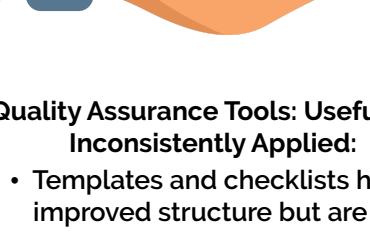
Inconsistencies in Decentralized Evaluations:

- Decentralized evaluation design contributes to inconsistent scope, oversight, and rigor. Structural weaknesses persist, with fragmented responsibilities and the absence of standardized procedures or reviews.
- Evaluations are often treated as contractual obligations rather than learning tools.



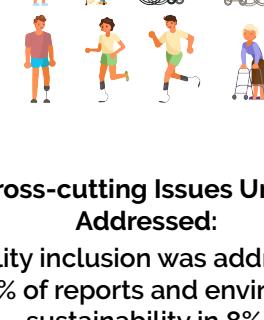
Moderate Improvement in Quality:

- 39% of evaluation reports met or exceeded requirements, 44% approached requirements, and 17% fell below standards.
- The global average score increased from 2.6 (2017–2019) to 2.8 (2020–2024) out of 5.



Quality Assurance Tools: Useful but Inconsistently Applied:

- Templates and checklists have improved structure but are not used consistently across offices.
- Their effectiveness is hindered by competing priorities and limited awareness.



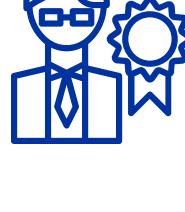
Cross-cutting Issues Under Addressed:

Disability inclusion was addressed in only 10% of reports and environmental sustainability in 8%.

Regional Offices Make a Difference:

Active involvement of regional offices and Regional planning, monitoring and evaluation officers (RPMEOs), improves evaluation quality, especially when they review ToRs and key deliverables.

Good Practices



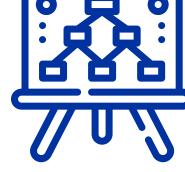
Active Involvement of RPMEOs:

Regional M&E Officers (RPMEOs) significantly enhance evaluation quality when actively engaged. Their input in reviewing ToRs, methodologies, and reports leads to more coherent and methodologically sound evaluations.



Internal Evaluation Databases and Knowledge Management (KM) Platforms:

Platforms that store past evaluations help staff access relevant data for new projects. These tools support learning and continuity, though awareness and usability remain areas for improvement.



Standardized Evaluation Formats:

Using structured templates and checklists (e.g., from the IOM Development Fund) has improved consistency and comparability across evaluation reports, even if it doesn't guarantee quality.

LESSONS LEARNED

Weak Integration Between Monitoring and Evaluation:



Weak or incomplete monitoring data, often due to poorly designed results matrices and inadequate indicators, limits the ability to use monitoring data in evaluations



Limited Technical Expertise:

Some evaluation managers and programme staff lack formal training in evaluation methods, resulting in weak data collection, poor sampling, and shallow analysis—especially in offices without dedicated M&E personnel.



Inconsistency in institutional and donor requirements:

Unlike audits, evaluations are not always required by donors. This inconsistency leads to evaluations being deprioritized or treated as optional, weakening their role in accountability and learning.



Uneven RPMEO Engagement Across Regions:

While RPMEOs add value, their involvement is inconsistent across regions. Some country offices do not systematically include them, leading to variability in evaluation quality.



Overly Broad Monitoring Indicators:

Many projects use vague or non-specific indicators, making it difficult to measure outcomes effectively. This undermines the ability of evaluations to draw meaningful conclusions.

GAPS AND CHALLENGES



Inconsistent Use of Key Guidance:

While core resources are widely used, critical documents (guidance for addressing gender in evaluations) are inconsistently consulted, leading to gaps in addressing cross-cutting issues.



Post-Pandemic Quality Fluctuations:

Evaluation quality peaked in 2020, dropped in 2022, and moderately recovered in 2023, reflecting resilience but also ongoing methodological and coordination challenges.



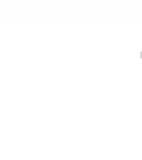
Critical Gaps in Cross-Cutting Integration:

Many evaluations lack integration of cross-cutting perspectives (e.g., gender, disability, environment), and have weak lessons learned and good practices sections.



Inconsistent ToR Quality:

Well-crafted ToRs lead to better evaluations, but many ToRs still lack clarity, contextual adaptation, and focus, often due to blanket use of OECD-DAC criteria.



Technical Capacity Gaps:

Persistent gaps in technical skills, worsened by high turnover and sporadic training, undermine the institutionalization of best practices.



High Staff Turnover:

Frequent staff changes and lack of sustained capacity-building mean evaluation quality often depends on individual expertise rather than institutional knowledge.



Rushed and Limited Analytical Depth of Evaluations:

Short time-frames and delays in commissioning evaluations lead to rushed processes, limited data collection, and superficial analysis.



Inconsistent Oversight:

Engagement of RPMEOs in evaluation oversight varies widely resulting in inconsistent quality control across regions.



Weak Monitoring-Evaluation Link:

Despite some improvements, there is still little integration between monitoring data and evaluation design, limiting the ability to generate actionable insights.



Limited Stakeholder Engagement:

Recommendations and ToRs are often developed without sufficient input from donors, beneficiaries, or implementing partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Keep promoting the use of the evaluation report templates and ensure their mandatory application, so that all required sections are consistently included in the reports



Advocate for the integration of gender equality, human rights-based approach (RBA), environmental sustainability, and disability inclusion throughout the evaluation process, from needs assessments to findings and recommendations.



Continue promoting a fixed percentage of project budgets for evaluation, as recommended in the IOM M&E Guidelines, to ensure evaluations are well-resourced and of high quality.



Promote a culture of adaptation within the IOM evaluation framework, allowing methodological adjustments tailored to specific evaluation contexts.



Enhance the quality of ToRs by strengthening the clarity, focus and methodological rigour, and by establishing review procedures, ultimately leading to more impactful and actionable insights.



Build long-term capacity in evaluation through structured and continuous training efforts. Relying on one-off webinars or ad hoc learning opportunities has proven insufficient, particularly considering high staff turnover.



Make the quality assurance tools more accessible and practical to promote their consistent use across different teams.



Want to learn more?

Visit the [IOM Evaluation repository](#)