



Q U A L I T Y
COMPAS
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PROJECT EVALUATION COMPANION BOOK



Groupe URD

La Fontaine des Marins,
26 170 Plaisians, France
Tel: +33 (0)4 75 28 29 35
www.qualitycompas.org
www.urd.org

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Introduction





The Project Evaluation Companion Book presents an overview of the project evaluation section of the Quality COMPAS CD-ROM. Its format and content have been designed for practical use in the field and for facilitating group work.

The Quality COMPAS is built around a quality reference framework, the compass rose, and the **evaluation compass rose** is presented on pages 4-5. The evaluation compass rose, composed of twelve criteria that define the quality of an evaluation, is centred on crisis-affected populations and their context.

The Quality COMPAS method has two main sections: project management and project evaluation. The **project evaluation** function presented in this companion book is aimed at workers who are in charge of one or more phase of the evaluation process. **Quality assurance** principles have been applied to both the project management and the project evaluation functions of the Quality COMPAS.

The twelve quality criteria that form the compass rose are broken down into key questions.

Key questions prompt the evaluator, or agency, to think about and analyse the critical points, i.e. any activity or factor which can, and must, be controlled in order to reduce or eliminate the risk of one or several hazards occurring. A checklist of key questions is provided for each phase in the evaluation process:

	Preliminary phase	pg 6-7
	Planning the evaluation	pg 8-10
	Implementation of the evaluation	pg 11-14
	Dissemination and use of results	pg 15-16

User notes:

This companion book uses the following coding system:

Each criterion is denominated by a letter: Ae, Be, Ce, etc.

Each criterion is broken down into various key processes. Each key process is identified by the letter of the criterion to which it belongs, followed by its own number: Ae1, Ae2, etc., Be1, Be2, etc.

This coding system should enable the user to identify which criterion and key process each key evaluation question corresponds to.

The complete version of the Quality COMPAS, i.e. the CD-ROM, provides numerous examples, indicators and tips for each of the key questions. The Project Evaluation Companion Book represents an abridged version of the Quality COMPAS and users are advised to consult the CD-ROM for further information.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY PROCESSES

-Ae- The evaluation responds to a demonstrated need

- Ae1.** The need to carry out evaluation is carefully analysed and clearly defined
- Ae2.** The evaluation design is adapted to identified needs
- Ae3.** The decision not to address other serious problems via an evaluation can be justified

-Be- The evaluation achieves its objectives

- Be1.** The quality criteria used to evaluate the project are defined and used
- Be2.** The constraints that weigh on the evaluation are analysed and taken into account
- Be3.** The evaluation measures its progress towards achieving its objectives

-Ce- The risk of the evaluation having negative impacts is removed or reduced

- Ce1.** The evaluation avoids causing security problems for the population
- Ce2.** The risk of negative impacts on the project, population, and agencies involved in the project is reduced or alleviated

-De- The evaluation aims for positive impacts beyond its completion

- De1.** The purpose of the evaluation is identified
- De2.** The agencies involved in the evaluation anticipate and plan what will be done after the evaluation
- De3.** Ownership of evaluation results by key stakeholders is sought after

-Ee- The evaluation respects the aid agencies' mandates and principles and the ethics of evaluation

- Ee1.** The evaluation respects the principles and mandates of the agencies involved in the project
- Ee2.** The evaluation respects evaluation ethics and principles
- Ee3.** The political context of the evaluation is analysed to avoid manipulation

-Fe- The evaluation respects the population

- Fe1.** The populations are involved in the evaluation process
- Fe2.** The evaluation takes into account and respects people's cultural, social and religious identities

-Ge- The evaluation process is flexible

- Ge1.** The evaluation adapts according to changes in the context and to unforeseen situations

-He- The evaluation is integrated in its institutional context in an optimal manner

- He1.** Interactions between the evaluation and other actors are identified and analysed
- He2.** The evaluation team interacts with the project team and/or agencies involved in the project in an optimal manner

-Ie- The project and the evaluation team have the necessary resources and expertise

- Ie1.** The resources required to carry out the evaluation are correctly estimated and mobilised
- Ie2.** The evaluation team has the appropriate expertise and skills
- Ie3.** An appropriate amount of time is allocated to each phase of the evaluation process

-Je- The implementing agency(ies) and the evaluation team have the appropriate management capacity

- Je1.** Responsibilities (for decision-making, reporting, etc.) are clearly defined
- Je2.** Good team management enables the evaluation to run smoothly
- Je3.** Methods for collecting and processing information are appropriate
- Je4.** The security risks affecting the project and evaluation teams are identified, monitored and taken into account

-Ke- The project and the evaluation team make optimal use of resources

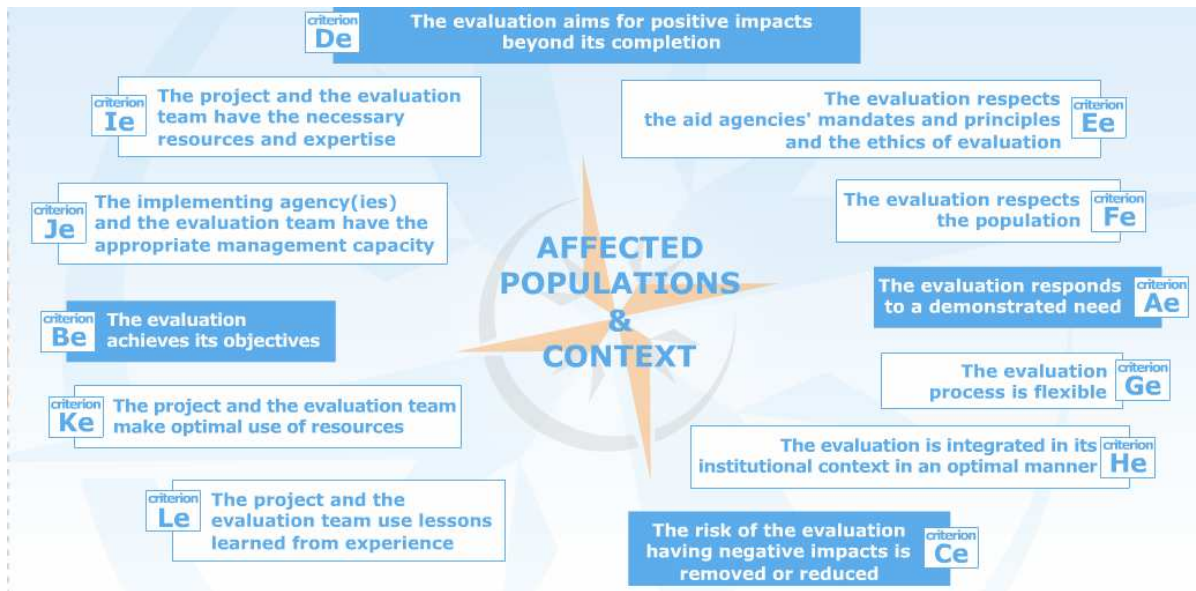
- K1.** The project and the evaluation team use the evaluation's resources in an optimal manner

-Le- The project and the evaluation team use lessons learned from experience

- L1.** The evaluation process uses lessons drawn from other evaluations
- L2.** Records of the evaluation process are kept
- L3.** The evaluator(s) and agencies involved learn lessons from the evaluation process



EVALUATION COMPASS ROSE



PRELIMINARY PHASE

During the preliminary phase, actors decide whether to conduct an evaluation or not. This involves carrying out a rapid needs assessment, and assessing the potential risks and opportunities of conducting an evaluation on which to base this decision.

Steps and corresponding key questions (Preliminary phase)
<i>Preparing the preliminary phase</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (01-Je1) Who decides whether an evaluation will be carried out? (field teams, desk officers, etc.) How is this decision taken? ▪ (02-He2) How are project teams and/or the agencies involved in the project involved in the decision to carry out an evaluation?
<i>Defining the evaluation objectives</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (03-Ae1) How has the need for an evaluation arisen? Is an evaluation the most adequate response to this need? Why? What would the objectives of this evaluation be? ▪ (04-De1) In addition to responding to identified needs (cf. the evaluation objectives), can the evaluation aim for 'other objectives' related to its wider purpose? (e.g. building trust with donors and populations, increasing expertise within the humanitarian sector, etc.) ▪ (05-Ae3) If you have identified serious problems which you decide not to address via an evaluation, what other measures do you take to address them? ▪ (06-De2) Should an evaluation be carried out, would the agency be ready to go all the way in the evaluation process, that is to implement recommendations and monitor their implementation?
<i>Analysing the constraints and risks involved in doing an evaluation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (07-Je4) Does the security situation make it possible to envisage carrying out an evaluation? ▪ (08-Be2) Do current constraints make it possible to carry out an evaluation? What would be the most appropriate time to do so? ▪ (09-Ce1) Would carrying out an evaluation create certain risks for the population and does this affect your decision to launch an evaluation? ▪ (10-Ee3) Should an evaluation be carried out, would certain stakeholders be likely to exert pressure or to manipulate the evaluation process and results? Which stakeholders, and to what purpose? ▪ (11-Ce2) Could carrying out an evaluation have negative impacts on the project (implementation schedule, teams), the populations (creating false expectations, frustrations), or agencies involved in the project? How do factor this risk in your decision to carry out an evaluation?



Steps and corresponding key questions
(Preliminary phase)
<i>Rapid feasibility analysis</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (12-Ae2) Should an evaluation be carried out, would relevant and necessary information be available?▪ (13-He1) Are similar initiatives (e.g. evaluation, research) underway or planned? Are there opportunities for collaboration▪ (14-Ie1) Does your agency currently have the capacity to mobilise the financial and human resources required to commission or carry out an evaluation? Will sufficient time to carry out a 'quality' evaluation be available?▪ (15-Le1) Can lessons learned through previous evaluations provide you with information about the opportunities and risks of carrying out an evaluation?
<i>Recording decisions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (16-Le2) How is the decision to carry out an evaluation recorded, in order to build institutional memory about decisions that are made and the rationale behind them?

PLANNING THE EVALUATION

During this phase, actors write the terms of reference and select the team that will carry out the evaluation. The details of evaluation implementation (who, what, why, when and how) are established.

Steps and corresponding key questions

(Planning the evaluation)

Preparing the planning phase

- (01-Je1) Who is responsible for preparing the evaluation (writing the terms of reference, selecting evaluators, etc.)? How are decisions validated and by whom? Will the evaluation team have the possibility to negotiate the terms of the evaluation?
- (02-He1) Which other actors (local authorities, other aid agencies, donors, etc.) should be taken into consideration in the evaluation process? Are there opportunities for collaboration? Does tension or conflict exist between stakeholders that should be taken into consideration?
- (03-Ie3) How much time do you allow to plan and prepare the evaluation? (elaboration of the terms of reference, selection of evaluators, resource mobilisation, etc.)
- (04-He2) How do the project team and/or agencies involved in the project contribute to the elaboration of the terms of reference? (discussion on the evaluation objectives, consideration for the team's expectations, agreement on the evaluation criteria, methods, etc.)
- (05-Fe1) Are people involved in the evaluation preparation?
- (06-Le1) How do you integrate lessons learned from previous evaluations (e.g. in terms of methodology, planning, etc.) in the preparation of this evaluation?
- (07-Le3) What mechanism do you put in place before starting the evaluation to ensure that lessons can be learned throughout the evaluation process?

Defining evaluation objectives

- (08-Ae1) According to the identified needs, what are the objectives and limits of the evaluation? Are they clearly stated in the terms of reference for the evaluation?
- (09-Ae3) How do you address serious problems that have been identified but are not included in the terms of reference for the evaluation?
- (10-Be3) Are evaluation objectives specific, realistic, and time-bound?
- (11-De1) Are the 'other objectives' understood in the evaluation purpose integrated in the terms of reference? Should additional means be planned or the evaluation design adapted to support their achievement?
- (12-Ae2) Given the evaluation objectives, what is the most appropriate evaluation design? (internal or external evaluation, combination of both, etc.)

Steps and corresponding key questions (Planning the evaluation)
<p><i>Analysing risks, handling constraints</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (13-Ee2) What are the ethical principles of evaluation? Are certain principles particular difficult to apply or threatened in this evaluation (e.g. impartiality, transparency, objectivity)? Why? What steps do you take to ensure that the evaluation respects all the ethical principles of evaluation? ▪ (14-Ee1) How do you ensure that the evaluation process respects the principles and mandates of the agencies involved in the evaluation? ▪ (15-Ce2) What potential negative impacts could the evaluation have on the project, people, and/or agencies involved in the project? How are these taken into account in the terms of reference for the evaluation? ▪ (16-Je4) What security risks may the implementing agency and evaluation team face? How are they taken into account when planning the evaluation process? ▪ (17-Ee3) Which stakeholders are liable to manipulate or exploit the evaluation? What measures do you take when elaborating the terms of reference to protect the evaluation process and results? ▪ (18-Be2) How are constraints related to the context taken into account when defining how the evaluation will be carried out? ▪ (19-Ce1) How are risks that could affect people's security taken into account in the design of the evaluation process? ▪ (20-Fe2) How are people's cultural, social and religious identities taken into account in the evaluation process? (cf. period chosen to do the field work, team composition, etc.) ▪ (21-Ge1) How do you take into account possible changes in the context when designing the evaluation? (anticipation and capacity to adapt to a changing environment) How much room for manoeuvre is planned in the terms of reference to enable the evaluation to adapt to potential changes? ▪ (22-Je1) How do you ensure that decision-making responsibilities regarding critical issues (e.g. security, changes in the schedule, etc.) are clearly identified and optimally distributed between the commissioning body, the implementing agency, the project teams and evaluator(s)?
<p><i>Designing the evaluation methodology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (23-Be1) Which quality criteria will be used to evaluate the project? If you choose to exclude certain criteria, how do you justify this decision in the terms of reference? ▪ (24-Je3) How do you ensure that existing information will be made available to the evaluation team? What methods will be used to collect and analyse information? Are these determined by the commissioning body or jointly established with the evaluator(s)? ▪ (25-Le1) How do you factor recent developments in the evaluation sector (e.g. methods, tools, criteria, etc.) into the terms of reference? ▪ (26-Fe1) How do you ensure that people's concerns, opinions and suggestions will be taken into account during the evaluation process? What role will people play in information collection and analysis? ▪ (27-De3) Which mechanisms will you put in place with key stakeholders to ensure that there is optimal buy-in and ownership of evaluation results?



Steps and corresponding key questions (Planning the evaluation)
<i>Identifying necessary resources</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (28-Ie1) In light of evaluation objectives, what resources (human, financial, administrative, logistical, information) need to be mobilised for the different phases of the evaluation? Who is responsible for providing them? How do you ensure that they will be available in a timely manner?▪ (29-Ie3) What is the planned activity schedule? How do you ensure that the time allocated to each phase of the evaluation is not underestimated?▪ (30-Ke1) How do you ensure that the evaluation process you are elaborating will be as efficient as possible? (type and quantity of human resources, time allocated, etc.)▪ (31-De2) What measures are taken or planned in advance to ensure that the evaluation results will be taken into consideration and have an impact on the project and/or agency?▪ (32-Ie2) What skills and expertise should the evaluation team have in order to provide a comprehensive picture and analysis of the situation?▪ (33-Je2) What importance do you place on are personal and communication skills (capacity to work in a team, to listen, to explain) when putting the evaluation team together?
<i>Record keeping</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (34-Le2) What record do you keep of the evaluation planning exercise?



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION

During this phase, the evaluation team will conduct the evaluation mission and write the evaluation report. Their duties consist of two main activities which are connected: firstly collecting and processing data, and secondly, summarising data and providing feedback.

Steps and corresponding key questions (Implementation of the evaluation)

Organising the team

- (01-le2) In light of individuals' skills and expertise and of the evaluation objectives, what is the most optimal distribution of roles and responsibilities within the evaluation team?
- (02-Ee1) How do you ensure that the people responsible for conducting the evaluation are aware of and respect the principles and mandates of the agencies involved in the evaluation?
- (03-Je1) Is the distribution of responsibilities between the commissioning body, the implementing agency, the project teams and evaluator(s) clear and communicated so that appropriate decisions can be made in a timely manner?
- (04-Je2) What mechanisms do you put in place to ensure that all evaluation team members participate in the evaluation process until the end, and agree with the evaluation results and recommendations?

Information collection and analysing

Methods for collecting and analysing information

- (05-Be1) Which indicators are necessary to analyse the quality criteria defined in the terms of reference for the evaluation? What information must you collect and analyse for these indicators?
- (06-Je3) What system do you establish to collect, analyse, record and process information in order to provide objective observations, conclusions and recommendations?
- (07-Fe2) How do you ensure that the evaluation respects people? (e.g. information collection techniques, behaviour, etc.)
- (08-Le1) How do you apply lessons learned on evaluation methods when conducting the evaluation?

Steps and corresponding key questions (Implementation of the evaluation)

<i>Information collection and analysing (cont.)</i>
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Interaction with different stakeholders

- (09-Fe1) How do you ensure that people's opinions, concerns and suggestions are taken into account during the evaluation? How are they informed on the various stages of the evaluation process?
- (10-He1) What type of interactions (information exchange, partnership, etc.) do you put in place with other actors (local authorities, other aid agencies, donors, etc.)? How do you deal with possible tension or conflict?
- (11-Ee3) Which stakeholders are liable to exert pressure on the evaluation process? How do you monitor these risks so as to avoid them? How do you protect the data collection and analysis process from possible manipulation and exploitation?
- (12-He2) How are people and /or agencies who participate in the project involved in the evaluation process? (information collection, validation of results and recommendations)?
- (13-De3) Which mechanisms are put in place with key stakeholders to ensure ownership of the evaluation's observations and analyses?

Time and resource management

- (14-Be3) What is the plan of action and how do you monitor whether the activities are carried out according to plan?
- (15-Ae1) How do you ensure that you are respecting the terms of reference and not diverting from the planned objectives?
- (16-He2) How does the evaluation process take into account the constraints that weigh on project teams and/or on the agencies involved? How does the evaluation team deal with possible tension within the project team and/or between partners?
- (17-Ie1) How do you adapt the evaluation process to the resources that are actually mobilised? (human, financial, administrative, logistical and information resources)
- (18-Ie3) How do you organise the activities planned in the terms of reference within the time that is actually available?
- (19-Ke1) How do you ensure that the evaluation is making optimal use of available resources?

Handling risks and problems encountered

- (20-Be2) How do you manage the constraints related to the context when carrying out the evaluation?
- (21-Ce1) When collecting and analysing information, how do you ensure that you do not put people at risk?
- (22-Je4) How are security constraints faced by the agency and evaluation team factored into the evaluation design (objectives, activities and implementation strategy)? Have you set clear limits for the evaluation should the security situation deteriorate?

Steps and corresponding key questions (Implementation of the evaluation)
<p><i>Information collection and analysing (continued)</i></p> <p>Handling risks and problems encountered (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (23-Ce2) How do you reduce the risk of negative impacts on the project, people, and/or agencies involved in the project? How do you dispel fears and/or false expectations that the project teams, partners and people may have concerning the evaluation? ▪ (24-Ge1) How does the evaluation adapt to changes in the context and/or to unforeseen events, while remaining consistent with the terms of reference? ▪ (25-Ee2) How do you deal with the risk that evaluation ethics will not be respected? How do you deal with possible pressures? ▪ (26-Ae3) How do you manage serious problems that are identified during the evaluation but do not fall under the planned evaluation objectives? ▪ (27-Je2) How do you manage the evaluation team's motivation and the working environment to ensure that the evaluation runs smoothly? How do you deal with possible 'crises' within the team and limit their impact on team motivation?
<p><i>Synthesis and feedback</i></p> <p>Risk management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (28-Ce2) What negative impacts may the evaluation results have on the project, the teams, the population, and/or the agencies involved in the project? How do you ensure that the recommendations made do not create false expectations or frustrations in the future concerning the project amongst the population and project teams? ▪ (29-Ce1) How do you ensure that sensitive information that could put people at risk remains confidential? ▪ (30-Ee3) Given the evaluation results, which stakeholders are liable to exert pressure, manipulate or exploit the evaluation? What measures do you take when compiling the report to avoid the evaluation being manipulated and diverted from its purpose and objectives? <p>Presentation of the evaluation methodology and limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (31-Je3) How does the evaluation report describe the methodological choices made for collecting and analysing information, in order to ensure that observations, conclusions and recommendations are well founded? ▪ (32-Ge1) If the terms of reference had to be adapted during the course of the evaluation, how are the changes described in the evaluation report? ▪ (33-Be3) What explanations do you give if certain parts of the terms of reference are not covered by the evaluation? ▪ (34-Be2) What are the scope and limitations of evaluation conclusions and recommendations (their 'domain of validity'), in light of constraints that have affected the process? How is this made explicit in the feedback and reporting? ▪ (35-Ae3) How, and to whom, do you report serious problems that are identified during the evaluation but which do not fall under the terms of reference for the evaluation?

Steps and corresponding key questions (Implementation of the evaluation)
<p><i>Synthesis and feedback (continued)</i></p> <p>Deciding upon the evaluation conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (36-Be1) How do you analyse the quality of the project as a whole, on the basis of your analysis and recommendations for each criterion? Which recommendations do you prioritise in order to improve the quality of the service provided to people? ▪ (37-Be1) How do you relate the observations, conclusions and recommendations made for each criterion to specific questions that were raised in the terms of reference for the evaluation? ▪ (38-De2) Are the recommendations realistic and feasible? Are recommendations consistent with the initial commitments that were made by the agency to act upon evaluation results? ▪ (39-Ee1) How do the evaluation conclusions and recommendations take into account the mandate and principles of the agencies involved in the project evaluation? ▪ (40-Ae1) How do you ensure that the evaluation effectively achieves the planned objectives and thus responds to initially identified needs? ▪ (41-Ae2) Has the evaluation responded to initially identified needs? Should other activities be undertaken to complement the evaluation? Which arguments do you put forward to justify this? <p>Feedback methods (presentations and reports)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (42-Le1) How do you apply lessons learned from previous evaluation experience when presenting and reporting evaluation results (presentation of results, formulation of recommendations, etc.)? ▪ (43-Fe2) How do you ensure that the mechanism used to provide feedback to people on evaluation results will be appropriate and sensitive to cultural, social and political identities? (techniques used, behaviour, etc.) ▪ (44-Le2) What documents provide records about the evaluation (reports, workshops reports, presentations, etc.)? How is this information used to draw lessons from the evaluation process? What do you do with the collected information (destroy, store, archive, etc.)? ▪ (45-Ie2) How do you ensure that the person(s) responsible for presenting evaluation results has/have the necessary skills to do so (e.g. communication skills, legitimacy)? Do you need to call upon someone with the appropriate skills? ▪ (46-He2) How do you circulate the draft so as to ensure that all key stakeholders may react and to build ownership of evaluation results? ▪ (47-Ie3) When presenting the results, how do you ensure that the evaluated teams have sufficient time to become familiar with and react to the terms of the debate?
<p><i>Record keeping</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (48-Le2) What records do you keep of the evaluation process, so as to inform future evaluations?



DISSEMINATION AND USE OF RESULTS

During this final phase, the evaluation team ensures that evaluation objectives are achieved. The final results are presented to stakeholders and disseminated internally and/or externally. Where applicable, evaluators will arrange to publish these results. Actors will plan how to implement recommendations and possibly even monitor their implementation.

**Steps and corresponding key questions
(Dissemination and use of results)**

Preparing the dissemination phase

- (01-De1) How are evaluation results processed to respond to the evaluation's various objectives and purpose?
- (02-Le1) How do you apply lessons learned through previous learning processes when disseminating evaluation results and implementing recommendations?
- (03-Je1) Who is responsible for disseminating the report and implementing recommendations?
- (04-Ie3) What resources (time, human resources, etc.) are specifically allocated to the dissemination of results, in spite of other workloads?
- (05-Ke1) Do the feedback, reporting and dissemination mechanisms make optimal use of available resources? (meetings, reports, etc.)

Risk management

- (06-Ce2) How do you ensure that the dissemination of evaluation results will not have a negative impact on the agency and/or project (e.g. loss of motivation and/or credibility)?
- (07-Ce1) How do you ensure that results are disseminated in a way that does not put people at risk? (level of detail provided in reports depending on the potential reader, risk of information being manipulated, etc.)
- (08-Ee2) When disseminating evaluation results, how do you stay consistent with evaluation ethics, in particular the respect of certain people's anonymity and transparency on the methods used?
- (09-Ee3) What measures do you take when disseminating the results to avoid the evaluation being manipulated or diverted from its purpose and objectives?



Steps and corresponding key questions (Dissemination and use of results)
<i>Taking into account lessons learnt and recommendations</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (10-De2) How does the agency take into account the evaluation recommendations and lessons learnt?▪ (11-Ie1) What specific resources need to be mobilised to ensure that evaluation results will be used (human, financial, administrative, and logistical resources)? What are priority areas for action in light of available resources?▪ (12-De3) Which mechanisms are put in place with different stakeholders to ensure ownership of the evaluation results and recommendations?
<i>Dissemination evaluation results</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (13-Fe1) To what extent and how do you share evaluation results with people?▪ (14-He1) To what extent and how do you share your analysis, conclusions and recommendations with other actors (local authorities, other aid agencies, donors, etc.)?
<i>Record keeping and evaluating the evaluation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ (15-Le2) How are choices made regarding the dissemination and use of evaluation results recorded, so as to inform future evaluation and learning processes?▪ (16-Le3) What lessons do you learn from the evaluation process as a whole? How are they integrated in the institutional memory of the implementing agency and/or other actors?