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intended users

This manual has been tailored for managers of decentralized evaluations. Its guidance and tools may also be useful to UNRWA project and programme managers who work closely with donors in the formulation of projects and multi-year agreements.

This guide will also be useful to external evaluation consultants commissioned to conduct evaluations of UNRWA activities.

the manual's structure

Evaluations are designed and delivered in four broad phases including i) planning, ii) preparation or inception, iii) data collection or implementation, and iv) reporting and use including the management response and dissemination of results. Each section of the manual focuses on one of these phases.

Section 1 provides an overall introduction to evaluation. **Section 2** places evaluation in the context at UNRWA and within the UN system. It details important concepts about evaluation including types and purposes, introducing the norms and standards for evaluation in the UN system.

Section 3 provides guidance for the **planning phase** of an evaluation. This involves ensuring that needs for an evaluation of an intervention are considered in the initial project/programme design, and that evaluation plans and resource requirements are detailed in project documents and relevant Agency results monitoring and management plans.

Section 4 provides details on the **preparation phase** of the evaluation which covers the period from the appointment of an evaluation manager, drafting and finalizing the evaluation ToRs, and the selection and recruitment of the evaluation team.

In **Section 5**, evaluation managers and practitioners can find information on the **implementation phase** which starts once the evaluation team or evaluator is recruited up until data analysis is concluded.

Section 6 covers the **reporting phase**, including the drafting and review processes of the evaluation report, the preparation of the management response, and the dissemination of evaluation results.

Throughout, the manual provides users with access to additional guidance and templates. These are signposted by icons:



Click this icon to become an expert



Documents, templates, tools, or checklists that can help with the task



Tips to mainstream cross-cutting issues

foreword and acknowledgements

In 2022, UNRWA developed and issued a revised Evaluation Policy to help strengthen the guiding framework for the Agency's evaluation function. This Evaluation Manual is designed to stimulate and support Agency staff in applying the Policy, and in using evaluation to improve our understanding of the needs facing Palestine refugees and the extent to which UNRWA services are meeting those needs.

Given the criticality of project funding to UNRWA Fields and Programmes, individual project officers and programme support staff play an important role in evaluation activities. This manual is tailored to provide them with practical, step by step support in planning for and managing decentralized evaluations. It condenses information on UNRWA evaluation processes, makes use of lessons learned and provides valuable reference materials to staff involved in evaluation – including evaluation managers, UNRWA project officers and external relations staff.

The manual was developed by external consultants Eva Otero Candelera, Joy McCarron and Sadie Watson from IOD PARC, and UNRWA Evaluation Officer Anshuman Bhargava, under the supervision and guidance of the Chief of the Evaluation Division, Leslie Thomas. Significant contributions were made by UNRWA staff Siham Houweidi, Vickram Chhetri, and Samar Al-Moghany, as well as members of the UNRWA Evaluation Network. Special appreciation is expressed to Scott Cameron of IOD PARC for his design assistance.

In May 2023, an evaluation management workshop was organized to introduce this Manual. The workshop was attended by UNRWA staff from headquarters as well as all fields of operation. Feedback from participants helped in finalizing the manual.

We would also like to thank the government of Switzerland for their contribution that enabled this work.

1.1 the purpose of an evaluation

Evaluations can be incredibly useful exercises for the managers of the Agency’s programmes, operational and functional units, and projects, as well as for partners and project/programme participants. The primary purpose and uses of an evaluation are to ensure accountability and learning.

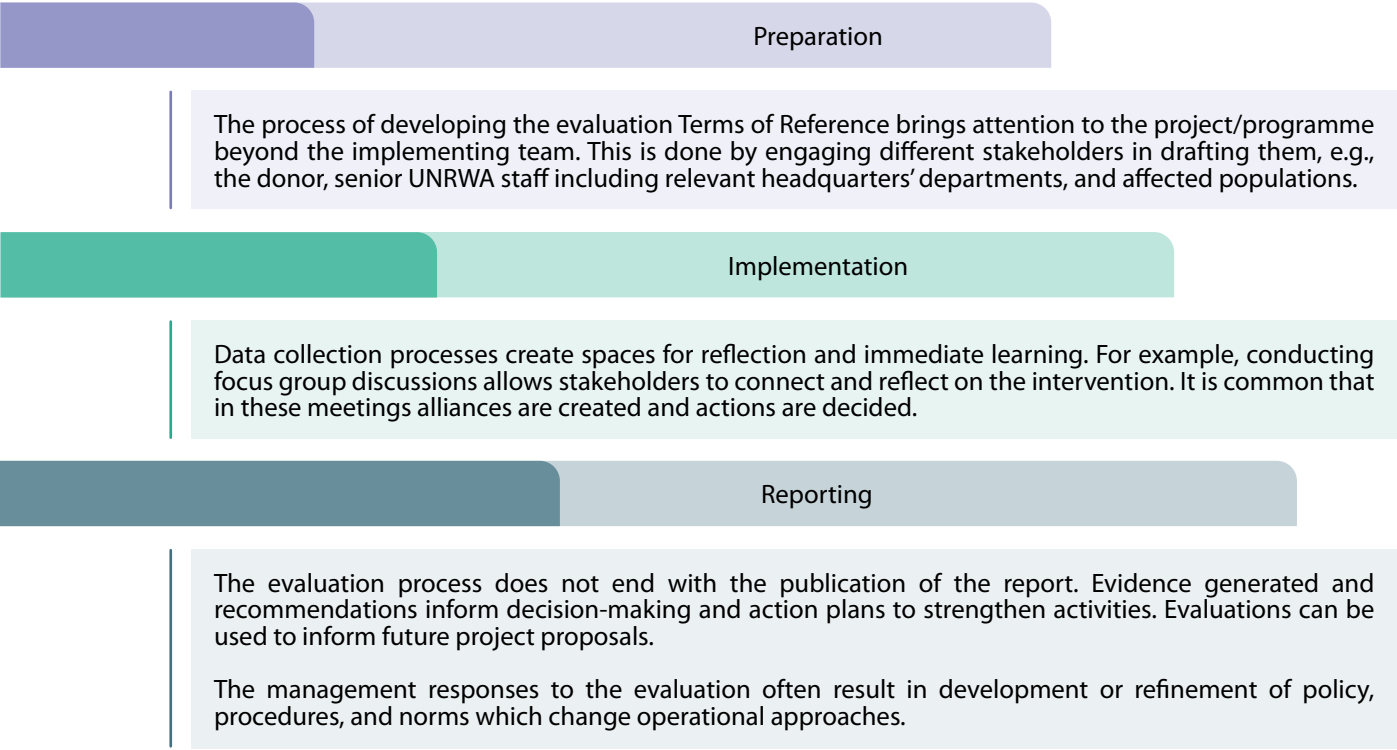
In the case of UNRWA, the clearest lines of accountability are with the Palestine refugees and the donors who require information on the effectiveness of interventions. Evaluations can generate evidence on outcomes and aid in this process. The clearest line of learning is for Agency staff, as the evaluation can reflect on factors influencing achievements and potential areas for improvement. However, there are additional types of accountabilities and learning that are equally important and are listed in the table below.

Learning and accountability for different stakeholders

Accountability	Stakeholder	Learning
Each donor has internal reporting requirements. To inform these, it is essential to conduct independent evaluations.	Donor	Learning from evaluations is an essential element for donors to make future programmatic decisions and funding allocations.
Evaluation findings are used by UNRWA managers to present evidence-based information to the Agency’s advisory bodies.	UNRWA Management	Evaluations help UNRWA decision-makers to learn from independent sources what results the various interventions are achieving and what challenges need to be addressed. Evaluation analyses are also used to inform programming and strategic decisions.
The most important line of accountability. Evaluation findings can help the communities UNRWA serves have a more holistic view of what UNRWA has done and hold the Agency to account. Depending on the scope of the evaluation, evaluation managers should share evaluation results with communities through in-person briefings and high-level, user-friendly summaries on results in Arabic.	Palestine Refugees	Evaluations are very useful processes to capture the voices of affected populations and bring them to decision-makers in the organization.
Other Accountability Lines		
The complexity of the 2030 Agenda, including the interlinkages with the Sustainable Development Goals, can only be assessed through evaluation efforts across projects/programmes/themes by all UN entities. UNRWA has made certain commitments in this regard which must be fulfilled by conducting evaluations in accordance with UN standards. These include commitments to the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UNSWAP), the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), and the Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability.		

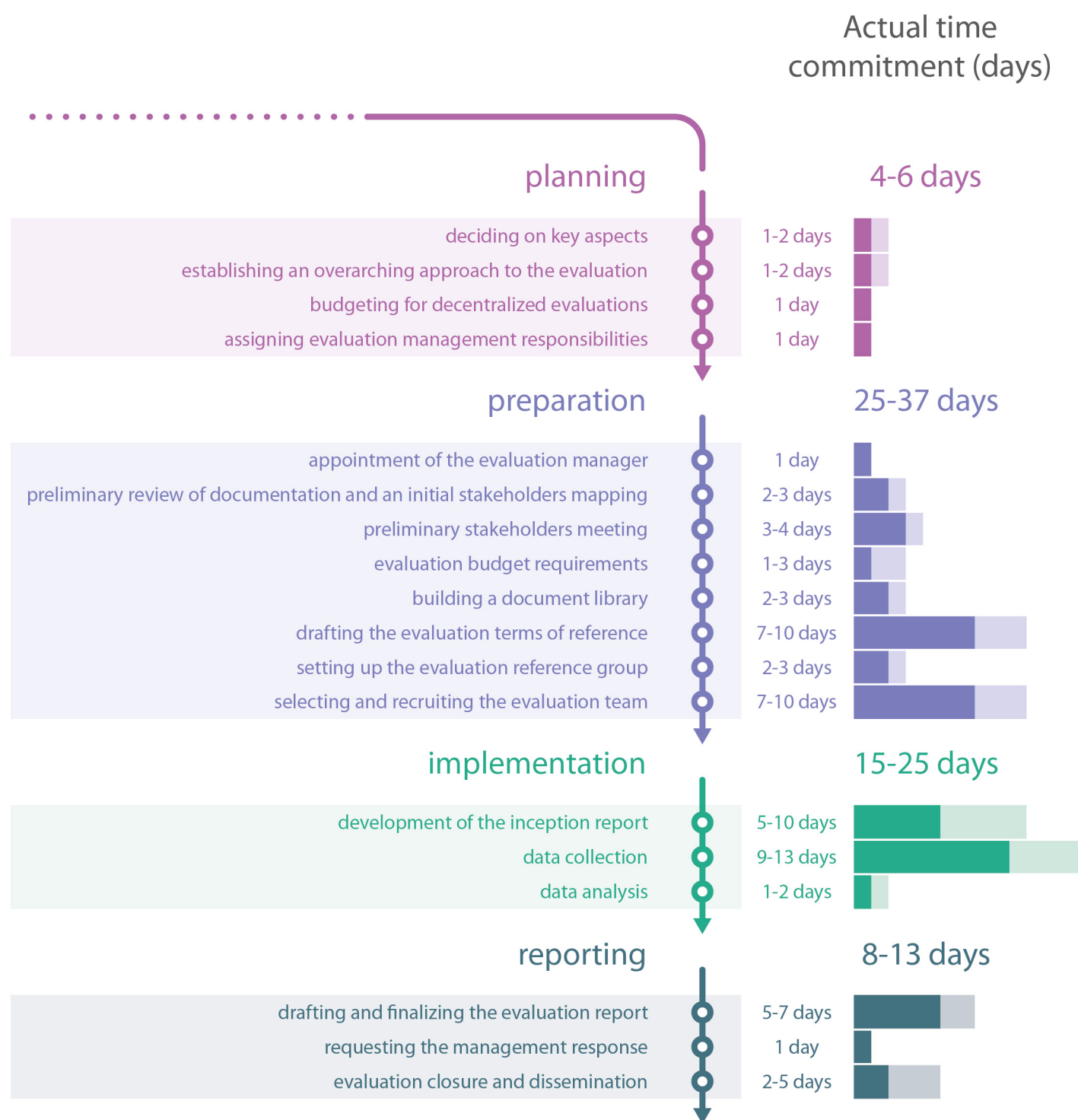
Each stage of the evaluation process can have an immediate use. The graphic below lists some of the key ones across each evaluation phase.

An evaluation is a process, not only a report



1.2 key types of evaluation

The following table (evaluation types) lists some of the key evaluation types based on what they cover. Most often, an evaluation combines several aspects and therefore supports multiple purposes for interventions and organizations. Evaluations can also be categorized depending on how they are conducted. These could include developmental or real-time evaluations, cluster evaluations, and joint evaluations. These are described in more detail in [Section 3.2.2](#).



annex