Guidance in Support of the Operationalization of the Evaluation Policy

Real-Time Evaluations

Technical Evaluation Reference Group
ADAPTATION FUND

This guidance note is part of a series of technical guidance from the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) supporting reliable, useful, and ethical evaluations aligned with the Adaptation Fund's Evaluation Policy. The development of the initial series of the evaluation guidance notes was led by Scott Chaplowe (independent consultant). The authors of this guidance note were Jindra Cekan (Valuing Voices) and Margaret Ann Spearman (independent consultant). The focal points for this work were AF-TERG members Susan Legro and Carroll Patterson. Special thanks are also extended to all the members of the AF-TERG, Dennis Bours (AF-TERG Secretariat Coordinator in the period July 2019 – April 2023), Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat, and all other stakeholders who provided support in the delivery and finalization of this guidance note.

AF-TERG guidance documents are intended to be succinct, but with sufficient information to practically guide users, pointing to additional resources when appropriate. Additional AF-TERG evaluation resources on various topics can be accessed at the online AF-TERG Evaluation Resource Webpage. Feedback is welcome and can be sent to AF-TERG-SEC@adaptation-fund.org.

The Adaptation Fund was established through decisions by the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. At the Katowice Climate Conference in December 2018, the Parties to the Paris Agreement decided that the Adaptation Fund shall also serve the Paris Agreement. The Fund supports country-driven projects and programmes, innovation, and global learning for effective adaptation. All of the Fund's activities are designed to build national and local adaptive capacities while reaching and engaging the most vulnerable groups, and to integrate gender consideration to provide equal opportunity to access and benefit from the Fund's resources. They are also aimed at enhancing synergies with other sources of climate finance, while creating models that can be replicated or scaled up. www.adaptation-fund.org

The Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) is an independent evaluation advisory group accountable to the Fund Board. It was established in 2018 to ensure the independent implementation of the Fund's evaluation framework, which will be succeeded by the new evaluation policy from October 2023 onwards. The AF-TERG, which is headed by a chair, provides an evaluative advisory role through performing evaluative, advisory and oversight functions. The group is comprised of independent experts in evaluation, called the AF-TERG members. A full-time secretariat provides support for the implementation of evaluative and advisory activities as part of the work programme. While independent of the operations of the Adaptation Fund, the aim of the AF-TERG is to add value to the Fund's work through independent monitoring, evaluation, and learning, www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/

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Acronyms

AF-TERG	Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund
IE	Implementing Entity
RTE	Real-time evaluation
ToR	Terms of Reference

1. What is this guidance note?

The purpose of this guidance note is to support the planning and implementation of fit-for purpose project real-time evaluations (RTEs) in accordance with the Adaptation Fund's Evaluation Policy. The intended audience for this guidance note is people who plan and manage Fund evaluation activities, primarily within Fund Implementing Entities, the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG), and the Fund secretariat and Board. It is intended as a flexible resource that can be adapted to various Fund contexts. As such, this guidance note may also be useful to others conducting RTEs or interested in the topic of RTEs and evaluations in the climate change adaptation community and wider.

This guidance note defines what an RTE is and what are its benefits. It provides guidance on when to undertake RTEs, who should do it, and how to plan for an RTE, and conduct data collection, analysis, and reporting. This discussion is not exhaustive, and additional resources are provided in the annexes.

2. What is an RTE?

At the Fund, an RTE encompasses, "a range of evaluative approaches, reviews, and assessments with the purpose of understanding and articulating issues that need to be addressed in an ongoing development or humanitarian response, that can be fed back immediately into programming, decision-making and management processes with the overall aim of improving the response." [1]

The primary objective of a RTE is to provide immediate evaluative learning while the evaluated program or project is being implemented to support timely decision making and adaptive management for improvement. RTEs are both retrospective and prospective: they look back over the project to assess prior implementation, but they also look forward and provide actionable recommendations to improve ongoing and future performance. One common question is how RTEs differ from mid-term reviews. Mid-term reviews typically occur halfway through a project/programme to inform the remaining period of implementation. In contrast, RTEs can be conducted at any point during an intervention or even iteratively throughout the project/programme.

RTEs are typically stand-alone exercises, designed to be rapid and efficient and conducted within a brief timeframe ranging from one to three months. However, their length can vary, and sometimes a series of RTEs is conducted at regular intervals throughout a project/programme cycle as part of a more comprehensive evaluation plan.

RTEs have had notable uptake and use in the humanitarian sector, which is understandable as disaster, emergency, and conflict contexts are typically dynamic and unpredictable, requiring rapid feedback to respond to unanticipated change and modify programming. However, their use has spread to non-emergency contexts that are nevertheless complex and dynamic. RTEs are increasingly used wherever project management seeks information for timely decision making and adaptive management.

1. Buchanan-Smith and Morrison-Métois, 2021, as cited in the Evaluation Policy: 15-16.

3. What are the benefits of RTEs?

Six key benefits or features can be identified for RTEs. These benefits are interconnected; for example, the participatory emphasis in RTEs is critical for their focus on learning for improvement.

1. Learning for improvement. RTEs identify what is working, what is not working, and what needs to be changed, stressing actionable learning to help better understand and respond to climate adaptation needs. Given the participatory nature of RTEs (see below), they capitalize on collective, peer-to-peer learning.

2. Engagement. RTEs are typically very interactive, engaging stakeholders in sensemaking and action planning so they can apply evaluative learning immediately. As with any evaluation, this participatory approach also bolsters the credibility, legitimacy, and follow-up of RTE, as stakeholders and end-users are more likely to accept and act on findings and recommendations if they have been meaningfully consulted and engaged in the evaluation process.

3. Perspective. RTEs provide an opportunity to step back amidst the day-to-day demands of an intervention, providing a pause to identify and mitigate potential risks and problems before they become significant issues. The emphasis on engagement supports perspective by allowing for multiple viewpoints to be considered.

4. Timeliness. As reflected in its name, RTEs excel in providing immediate, real-time learning from evaluation to rapidly identify arising problems, trends, needs, opportunities, and other types of emergent learning to inform adaptive management and improvement.

5. Flexibility and efficiency. RTEs are noted for stressing efficiency over methodological rigor, and therefore can be readily used or adapted according to need. While they do not have the more generous timeframe or rigor of a traditional evaluation, their findings are made available quickly, to a wide range of stakeholders, and in time to make valuable course corrections.

6. Responsiveness to complexity. RTEs are especially well suited for complex and uncertain contexts by providing timely evaluative learning to adapt to changing circumstances. This is particularly relevant for the type of work pursued by the Adaptation Fund, reflected in its **“Complexity Sensitive and Adaptive” evaluation principle**. This principle recognizes the dynamic and complex contexts in which Fund interventions are delivered, and it calls for Fund evaluation to “be prepared to flex and adapt around the needs of stakeholders, emergent learning, and any unexpected challenges.”[2]

2. See the Fund’s Evaluation Principles Guidance Note for a more comprehensive overview of this and the other evaluation principles.

4. When to conduct an RTE?

The Fund's Evaluation Policy states that RTEs are encouraged but not mandatory. They are especially appropriate when the nature of unpredictable environmental and social dynamics, (e.g., disruptions such as natural disasters, economic recessions, pandemics, or social conflict), require projects to be nimble and course correct according to contextual changes and emergent learning during project implementation. However, there are a range of other instances when RTEs may be useful, as reflected in **Box 1.**

RTEs are often conducted during the early stages of an intervention at a time when it is not too late for evaluative learning to be applied to drive improvement. However, RTEs may be conducted at other times during the project lifecycle, depending on need and context. For instance, an RTE may be conducted to respond to an unexpected event affecting programming well after project start, or towards the end of a project to inform whether to continue a project or prepare for project exit.

BOX 1: Examples Uses of RTEs[3]

✓ Inform a new or complex climate adaptation intervention beyond the implementing entity's experience.

✓ Respond to unexpected event impacting programming, i.e., natural disaster, political change, civil conflict.

✓ Respond to a sudden increase in the scale of a response, i.e., a large influx of refugees into existing program area.

✓ Respond to changes in an intervention, i.e., transitioning from disaster response to development.

✓ Explore issues or risks identified from project/programme monitoring, i.e., community dissatisfaction with programming.

✓ Respond to unresolved issues that require additional research.

✓ Validate an existing evaluation or management decision.

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3. Adapted from INTRAC, 2017

✓ Examine whether to continue or terminate an intervention.

✓ Compensate for absent or limited baseline or monitoring data.

✓ Provide a more time or cost/resource effective alternative to a more rigorous and robust evaluation.

The last example in Box 1 underscores an important consideration when deciding whether to conduct an RTE: the economic and agile character of RTEs comes at a cost in rigor and depth. Given their focus on speed and efficiency, RTEs prioritize providing immediate feedback to inform adaptive management and improvement, rather than establishing definitive causal links between activities and outcomes for impact assessment.

In other words, **RTEs are more suitable for evaluating processes and progress rather than assessing impact and sustainability.** Evaluating impact often requires an extended timeframe, which is not usually feasible or practical when RTEs are used. However, there are two important caveats to consider in this regard:

1. RTEs can provide valuable insights for organizational and systemic change through learning generated about performance and implementation. For example, RTEs learning can help improve internal and external coherence, collaboration, coordination, and partnership issues in climate adaptation work, or the links (or not) between project activities and policy formulation.

2. Although RTEs may not be suitable for conducting attribution analysis in impact evaluation, RTEs can support impact evaluation when combined with other evaluation approaches, such as final and ex-post evaluations. Evidence generated by RTEs can be triangulated with other evidence for **contribution analysis** by providing feedback on the extent to which an intervention is contributing to the intended outcomes. In addition, RTEs can establish a baseline for future comparisons and identifying specific areas that require attention, which contributes to the overall assessment of impact.

5. Who is involved in an RTE?

Implementing entities (IEs) commission and typically manage the RTE for projects in the Adaptation Fund portfolio. **The AF-TERG** may also conduct RTEs to obtain rapid feedback on various aspects of the Adaptation Fund, its funding windows, and certain types or elements of projects in its portfolio.

RTEs may be conducted either independently, semi-independently, or as a self-evaluation - see **Table 1**. The RTE purpose and context will determine which type of evaluation team is preferable. For instance, if an implementing entity has the resources and experience to conduct evaluations, it may decide to pursue a self-conducted RTE. On the other hand, if experience is limited, the project team is extremely busy, or a more objective perspective is sought, an independent or semi-independent RTE may be more suitable.

Table 1: RTE Types

RTE Type	Description
Independent	Independent RTEs are conducted by external consultants, personnel from the AF-TERG, or an implementing entity's own independent evaluation office. They provide expertise, perspective, and objectivity, and can be suitable if those implementing a project are too busy to conduct an RTE.
Semi-independent	Semi-independent RTEs pairs an independent evaluator with personnel from the team of the project being evaluated. They can also include other project stakeholders. They optimize learning potential by combining technical or evaluation expertise with insiders' intimate knowledge of the context, history, and stakeholders of the project context (evaluand). Semi-independent RTEs may be useful for generating deeper formative lessons to inform decisions around an initiative's design and reforms.
Self-conducted	Self-conducted RTEs are conducted by personnel from the team of the project being evaluated, and they may include other project stakeholders. Self-conducted RTEs are recommended for refining the project/initiative when relatively rapid and/or continuous learning is required to optimize implementation effectiveness.

RTE team size and composition vary, with **smaller teams generally preferred** for ease of recruitment and management within time and resource constraints. Smaller teams also reduce the burden on the project team.

In addition to evaluation and relevant subject matter expertise for the evaluated intervention, the Implementing Entity **should take steps to ensure that the RTE team is gender-balanced,** (in alignment with the Fund's evaluation principle for Equitable and Gender Sensitive Inclusivity. Related, it is also important to leverage local individuals as team members who can bring cultural and linguistic competencies.

It is important to remember that **stakeholder participation is a key feature of RTEs** regardless of who performs the RTE. By involving stakeholders from the start of the evaluation, including the drafting of the RTE's Terms of Reference (ToR), a demand-driven and aligned evaluation can be ensured, promoting shared understanding and buy-in, managing stakeholder expectations, and supporting learning for those responsible for real-time implementation of lessons.

6. How do you conduct an RTE?

6.1 Planning the RTE

When RTEs are planned, they should be incorporated into the M&E project budget during project design. However, (as discussed earlier), planning for an RTE during project design may not happen when the RTE is conducted in response to an unexpected need that arises during programming. Nevertheless, planning will need to occur once the decision to pursue an RTE is made.

Table 2 provides a summary of key tasks and resources for planning RTEs. It is important to note that stakeholder engagement is not identified as a specific step in this table because it cuts across all steps and should be carefully considered and incorporated into all stages of the RTE.

Table 2: Key tasks for the planning phase of the RTE

Task	Description	Supporting Resources
1. Review Fund's Evaluation Principles	The Fund's seven evaluation principles encompass the values, norms, and best practices to guide a reliable, ethical, and useful evaluation function that contributes to learning, decision making, and accountability for the Fund to pursue its mission, goal, and vision. It is important to ensure the evaluation principles are upheld throughout all phases of the RTE, as well as complementary gender, environmental, and social priorities at the Fund.	• Evaluation Principles Guidance Note • Environmental and Social Policy • Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy.
2. Budget for the RTE	The RTE budget is best planned as early as possible, ideally during project design and budgeting. Typically, RTE budgeting involves estimating and aggregating costs for evaluation activities, including costs for labour, travel, equipment, publications, etc	• Evaluation Budgeting Guidance Note
3. Develop the Evaluation Management Plan	The evaluation management plan is an internal document developed and used by the Evaluation Manager or Evaluation Management Team to guide the management of an evaluation. It includes management related details, such as roles and responsibilities, and the evaluation's intended timeline and key evaluation outputs and milestones. This plan should be regularly reviewed and revised according to the stage of the evaluation, and emergent needs and learning.	• Commissioning and Managing Guidance Note

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Task	Description	Supporting Resources
4. Determine evaluation criteria and questions to be evaluated	The Fund's Evaluation Policy identifies nine evaluation criteria to guide the focus of evaluations, and evaluation question are used to drill down to specific issue to assess. Given the rapid nature of RTEs, the number of questions is often smaller than in an mid-term review.	• Evaluation Criteria Guidance Note • Commissioning and Managing Guidance Note • Mid-Term Evaluation Guidance Note
5. Develop, validate, and disseminate the terms of reference	A Terms of Reference (ToR) provides an overview of what is expected in an evaluation to communicate a shared understanding of the exercise and provide the basis for recruiting evaluators. It can include specific methodological detail, or it may be more general with the vision that the eventual recruited RTE team will specify the methodological approach in the Inception report. Stakeholder input is especially important during this stage of planning.	• Terms of Reference Guidance Note
6. Select an RTE team	As discussed in Section 5 of this guide, RTE teams may be conducted either independently, semi-independently, or as a self-evaluation. Smaller teams are often preferable, as they are more manageable, and attention should be given to evaluation and relevant subject matter expertise, as well as to gender balance and local expertise.	• Commissioning and Managing Guidance Note
7. RTE team develops the RTE Inception Report	Once the RTE team is recruited, its first primary deliverable is to develop an inception report, that demonstrate a clear understanding and realistic plan of work for the RTE, checking that the evaluation plan agrees with the TOR, or if changes are proposed, that they approved by the evaluation commissioners and other key stakeholders.	• Evaluation Inception Report Guidance Note

6.2 RTE data collection and analysis

The methods used for data collection and analysis will vary according to what is realistic and feasible given the RTE's purpose, scope, timeframe, context, and existing capacities and resources. Evaluation good practice recommends combining **(triangulating)**[4] different data sources and using different (mixed)[5] methods to provide different perspectives, using various types of analysis for more credible and robust evaluations. For RTEs, triangulating different perspectives is particularly important to crosscheck the accuracy of findings given the compressed timeframe for data collection that often characterize this evaluation type.

4. See INTRAC. 2017. Triangulation
5. USAID. 2013. Conducting Mixed-Method Evaluations

RTEs are noted for their reliance on qualitative data, especially individual and group interviews. This is because the rapid nature and complex contexts in which RTEs are typically conducted can pose challenges for employing conventional quantitative statistical methods, such as surveys, which can be logistically challenging given the need for survey instrument development, translation, piloting, enumerator training, and transportation (when administered in-person).

However, there are a variety of rapid quantitative methods that can and have been used for RTEs, such as short surveys conducted using small, targeted samples of respondents who are readily accessible, such as an online or phone survey with implementing entity project team partners.

Regardless of the methods selected, data collection and analysis are best conducted quickly, efficiently, and flexibly to enable timely learning for use in real time. It is important to consider the impact of the evaluation on implementing entity and project staff and other key stakeholders to prevent overwhelming or diverting attention from project activities. Overburdening these participants may result in resistance and underutilization of the RTE, undermining its intended purpose. **Box 2** provides tips for reducing the burden of RTEs on the projects they are evaluating.

BOX 2: Tips for reducing the burden of RTEs

✓ **Dial down the RTE scope** and adapt a "necessary and sufficient" approach to data collection (as well as analysis and reporting).

✓ **Reduce the number of primary data points and sample strategically,** using small, targeted, and purposeful sampling

✓ **Utilize the desktop review of secondary data** to minimize primary data collection, (i.e., from relevant and reliable government ministries/ departments and international agencies)

✓ **Utilize remote data collection** (e.g., phone/online interviews) to reduce and focus in-person data collection

✓ **Utilize group interviews** rather than key informant interviews

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✓ **Design short and efficient surveys:** i.e., online, and accessible through smart phones

✓ **Plan parallel data collection exercises** to reduce the duration of the RTE

✓ **Keep surveys short** (e.g., six key questions), using interviews to probe further. Shorter surveys are not just more efficient to enumerate, but also translate.

✓ **Conduct a joint survey or piggyback on an existing survey with another organization**

✓ **Utilize observation, photos, and checklists** to obtain quantitative data and offset the data collection burden on stakeholders

Source: Chaplowe, S. Forthcoming 2024. Real-Time Evaluation – Past and Potential. In Research K. Newcomer and S. Mumford (Eds.), Handbook on Program Evaluation. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing,

Throughout the data collection process, stakeholder engagement is critical. RTEs provide timely feedback on project implementation; therefore, they can be most effective when they actively engage stakeholders in the data assessment to reinforce their understanding, ownership, and use of evaluative learning.

6.3 RTE reporting

Relative to conventional evaluations, RTE reporting is more frequent and concise, and typically starts prior to a formal end-of-evaluation written report – this is understandable given RTE's focus on providing immediate evaluative learning to affect ongoing project implementation. Table 3 summarizes the different types of RTE reporting formats and outlets, organized by delivery mode.

Table 3: Example RTE reporting formats and outlets[6]

In-person	Synchronous	Asynchronous
✓ Incidental reporting data collection itself (interviews) ✓ Reporting at in-person meetings ✓ End-of-field visit (mission) debriefs ✓ Validation workshops (of RTE findings) ✓ Daily or weekly check-in meetings with RTE team	✓ Teleconferencing ✓ Live video/audio presentations ✓ Virtual meeting, workshops, webinars ✓ Chat tools using instant messaging, i.e., Slack or Microsoft Teams ✓ Interactive whiteboards ✓ Collaborative editing of shared documents using online tools like Google Docs	✓ Updates, briefs, progress reports, and infographics shared through social media or websites ✓ Short (or longer) recorded video reports, podcasts, and webcasts ✓ Interactive online dashboards or visualizations ✓ Blogs and microblogs ✓ Online forums, communities of practice, and discussion boards ✓ Conventional end of eval report

Source: Chaplowe, S. Forthcoming 2024. Real-Time Evaluation – Past and Potential. In Research K. Newcomer and S. Mumford (Eds.), Handbook on Program Evaluation. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing,

In situ reporting, such as field visit debriefs and workshops, can effectively address sensitive issues and prevent unexpected surprises by involving stakeholders throughout the RTE process. Interactive validation workshops and collective online reviews of draft reports can also help ensure accuracy and timely learning.

While the emphasis of an RTE is on real-time reporting, the final RTE report also plays an important role in contributing to institutional learning and supporting accountability and knowledge sharing when disseminated beyond the implementing organization. Establishing a Reference Group to review the final RTE report, comprised of representatives from different stakeholder groups, can facilitate quality control and accuracy while supporting shared learning and follow-up with immediate action points.

6. **In-person reporting** involves the direct exchange of information through face-to-face interaction; **synchronous** reporting involves real-time communication and interaction using virtual platforms; **asynchronous reporting** uses virtual platforms to communicate recorded information at different times without immediate interaction.

ANNEX 1. Additional Resources

While not exhaustive, the recommended resources below provide additional insights on the topic of RTEs.

- Buchanan-Smith, M. & Morrison-Métois, S. (2021). *From Real-Time Evaluation to Real-Time Learning: Exploring new approaches from the COVID-19 response.* London: ODI/ALNAP
- Chaplowe, S. Forthcoming 2024. Real-Time Evaluation – Past and Potential. In Research K. Newcomer and S. Mumford (Eds.), Handbook on Program Evaluation. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing,
- Cosgrave, J; Ramalingan, B & Beck, T. (2009). *Real-time evaluations of humanitarian action: An ALNAP Guide.* London: ODI.
- IASC. (2011) *Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (IASC) of emergency humanitarian operations: Procedures and methodologies.* IASC Steering Group. New York: OCHA.
- INTRAC. (2017). *Real-Time Evaluation.* International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC).
- Rogers, P. (2020). *'Real-Time Evaluation',* monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management. East Melbourne: BetterEvaluation.
- UNICEF Guidance and Procedural Note on Managing Real-Time Evaluations Plus (RTE Plus) | UNICEF Evaluation in UNICEF

ANNEX 2. RTE Checklist for IEs

This checklist provides a quick reference of key tasks to consider when conducting an RTE, as well as who will likely lead the task. When using the checklist, it is important to remember that it is not exhaustive, and it should be tailored according to the RTE context and needs. Refer to the Commissioning and Managing Guidance Note for more details on responsibilities for the management of evaluations at the Fund.

RTE Review Checklist	
Key Tasks	**Responsibility**
1. PREPARATION	
1) Identify the Evaluation Manager or Management Team	Implementing Entity
2) Review relevant policy, principles, and guidance to competently and successfully commission and manage an evaluation	Implementing Entity
3) Scope the evaluation	Implementing Entity
4) Crosscheck the evaluation budget	Implementing Entity
5) Draft an Evaluation Management Plan	Implementing Entity
6) Develop and disseminate an evaluation ToR	Implementing Entity
7) Recruit the evaluator(s)	Implementing Entity
8) Contract the evaluator(s), [when external evaluators are employed]	Implementing Entity
2. INCEPTION – see the Fund's Evaluation Inception Report Guidance Note for more detail	
9) Orient the evaluator(s)	Implementing Entity
10) Provide relevant background documents/literature, including the Fund's evaluation principles and evaluation criteria	Implementing Entity
11) Agree on methodological approach, roles, responsibilities, and timeline	Implementing Entity & Evaluator(s)
12) Review background (secondary) data and conduct relevant consultations to inform the inception report	Evaluator(s)
13) Develop data collection tools	Evaluator(s)
14) Write inception report	Evaluator(s)
15) Review and approve the inception report	Implementing Entity

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3. IMPLEMENTATION	
16) Revisit and revise the Evaluation Management Plan (based on the Inception Report)	Implementing Entity
17) Socialize the evaluation (with key stakeholders targeted for data collection)	Implementing Entity
18) Provide support, oversight, and quality assurance	Implementing Entity
19) Collect primary data, (ensuring relevant stakeholders are consulted)	Evaluator(s)
20) Collect primary data, (in preparation for report drafting)	Evaluator(s)
4. REPORTING – note that RTE reporting is iterative in real-time (see Section 6.3 above), and refer to the Fund's Evaluation Reporting Guidance Note for more detail on evaluation reporting.	
1)	Evaluator(s)
2) Prepare a draft RTE report following the Fund's evaluation template	Evaluator(s)
3) Complete round(s) of review and revision of draft RTE report	Implementing Entity & Evaluator(s)
4) Present initial findings to stakeholders	Evaluator(s)
5) Revise the report incorporating stakeholder feedback and comments, as applicable and submit final draft	Evaluator(s)
6) Share the final RTE report and evaluation findings with stakeholders, beneficiaries, and promote usage	Implementing Entity
5. FOLLOW-UP – note that RTE follow-up is immediate or near time before the final report, and strategically timed thereafter.	
7) Conduct evaluation communication and learning follow-up activities	Implementing Entity
8) Conduct post-evaluation review and evaluator assessment	Implementing Entity
9) Optional management response, unless RTE is used as a a mid-term review	Implementing Entity
10) Incorporate learning into current project implementation and future AF Fund work	Implementing Entity

ANNEX 3. Illustrative Evaluation Inception Report Template

This template provides an illustrative structure for an evaluation inception report for the Fund. The template can be tailored according to the evaluation needs and structure. Please refer to the Fund's [Inception Report Guidance Note](#) for more detailed on each item in the outline.

Adaptation Fund Illustrative Evaluation Inception Template and Checklist
1. Title page
2. Optional front material ☐ **Preface** ☐ **Acknowledgements**
3. Table of contents
4. Acronyms
5. Executive summary – standalone, concise overview of the essential parts of the report in two to five pages. ☐ **Introductory overview** of the evaluation's purpose, scope, audience, intended use, time period, geographic coverage, and target population groups. ☐ **Summary of the report and contents** (to assist readers to navigate the document)
6. Evaluation background ☐ **Object of evaluation** – describes the intervention being evaluated (e.g., project or strategy), and why ☐ **Implementation context** – describe the larger context in which the intervention is being implemented ☐ **Stakeholder analysis** – describes the needs, expectations, and potential risks associated with relevant stakeholder groups for the evaluation
7. Evaluation criteria and questions ☐ **Evaluation purpose and scope** ☐ **Evaluation criteria** that specify the standards that provide the basis for evaluative judgment ☐ **Evaluation questions** that elaborate the evaluation criteria, specifying what is to be assessed ☐ **Evaluation Matrix** that details how each evaluation is answered, what indicators to measure and which data collection tool will be applied – see Annex 4.
8. Evaluation approach and methods ☐ **Evaluation principles** – the Fund's seven evaluation principles are identified in its Evaluation Policy and elaborated in its Evaluation Principles Guidance Note ☐ **Evaluation data sources** – primary and secondary information sources for the evaluation ☐ **Evaluation data collection methods** – quantitative and qualitative collection methods and their procedures, including a discussion of the rational for their selection ☐ **Evaluation data analysis** – the analytical framework or approach that will be used to synthesize and interpret evaluation findings ☐ **Evaluation stakeholder engagement,** including the level and type of engagement ☐ **Ethical considerations** related to data collection and use ☐ **Methodological limitations** –, their implications for the evaluation, and any mitigation measures taken in response.

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9. Evaluation work plan and management ☐ **Evaluation work plan** ☐ **Evaluation timeline, milestones, and deliverables** ☐ **Roles and responsibilities** ☐ **Quality assurance** ☐ **Risk management and mitigation measures** ☐ **Outreach and dissemination plan**
10. Annexes ☐ **Evaluation's ToR** ☐ **Detailed timeline (if applicable)** ☐ **Detailed methodology (if applicable)** ☐ **Evaluation matrix** ☐ **Data collection tools** ☐ **Evaluation timeline** ☐ **Evaluability assessment (if applicable)** ☐ **Detailed ToC/Results Framework** ☐ **Detailed stakeholder analysis (if applicable)** ☐ **Bibliography / reference list** ☐ **Any other information relevant to the MTR evaluation report**

ANNEX 4. Illustrative RTE Final Report Template

This template provides an illustrative structure for an RTE final report for the Fund. The template can be tailored according to the evaluation needs and structure. Please refer to the Fund's Final Report Evaluation Final Report Guidance Note for more detailed on each item in the outline.

Adaptation Fund Illustrative Evaluation Reporting Template and Checklist
1. Title page
2. Optional front material ☐ **Preface** ☐ **Acknowledgements**
3. Table of contents
4. Acronyms
5. Executive summary – standalone, concise overview of the essential parts of the report in two to five pages.
6. Introduction and background ☐ **Evaluation features** – provides an introductory overview of the evaluation's purpose, scope, audience, intended use, time period, geographic coverage, and target population groups. ☐ **Report introduction** – introduces the report structure and contents ☐ **Object of evaluation** – describes the intervention being evaluated (e.g., project, programme, or strategy) ☐ **Implementation context** – describe the larger context in which the intervention is being implemented
7. Evaluation scope and objectives ☐ **Evaluation scope** clearly delineating what is and is not to be included in the evaluation ☐ **Evaluation criteria** that specify the standards that provide the basis for evaluative judgment. ☐ **Evaluation questions** that elaborate the evaluation criteria, specifying what is to be assessed ☐ **Evaluation Matrix** that details how each evaluation is answered, what indicators to measure and which data collection tool will be applied – see **Annex 4**.
8. Evaluation approach and methods ☐ **Evaluation principles** – the Fund's seven evaluation principles are identified in its Evaluation Policy and elaborated in its Evaluation Principles Guidance Note ☐ **Evaluation data sources** – primary and secondary information sources for the evaluation ☐ **Evaluation data collection methods** – quantitative and qualitative collection methods and their procedures, including a discussion of the rational for their selection ☐ **Evaluation data analysis** – the analytical framework or approach that will be used to synthesize and interpret evaluation findings ☐ **Evaluation stakeholder engagement,** including the level and type of engagement ☐ **Ethical considerations** related to data collection and use ☐ **Methodological limitations** –, their implications for the evaluation, and any mitigation measures taken in response.

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9. Evaluation findings and conclusions

☐ **Findings and conclusions should respond to the evaluation criteria and questions.**

☐ **Findings and conclusions should provide insights to inform solution analysis and recommendations**

☐ **Findings should include unanticipated outcomes and impacts.**

☐ **Findings and conclusions should be presented in a logical, coherent format**

☐ **The logical relationship between findings and conclusions should be reinforced**

☐ **Findings and conclusions should be individually numbered,** so they can be readily cross-referenced elsewhere

10. Optional lessons learned – a section devoted to lessons learned can be a useful way to highlight learning that is not specific to the evaluated intervention and context (evaluand), but applicable to the wider Fund and climate change adaptation community.

☐ **Lessons should be concise and presented in a logical, coherent manner,** individually numbered for cross-referencing

☐ **Clearly identify the relevance of the lesson and intended audience/use.**

☐ If appropriate, explain **how and why the lesson was learned.**

11. Evaluation recommendations

☐ **Recommendations should respond to the evaluations intended purpose and use,** written to support management response and other evaluation follow-up and learning

☐ **Recommendations should be supported by evidence** linked to the evaluation's findings and conclusions that substantiates the proposed actions

☐ **Recommendations should be specific, practical, and feasible for implementation**

☐ **Recommendations should identify who is responsible for follow-up and by when.**

☐ **Additional information can be used to elaborate recommendations,** such as prioritizing recommendations or the resources and budget required to achieve a recommendation.

☐ **Recommendations should be presented in a logical, coherent manner,** individually numbered for cross-referencing. Consider using a table to format and present recommendations, as illustrated below

Example recommendation matrix

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibilities	Priority	Timeframe

12. Report Annexes

Examples of annexes include:

- ✓ Evaluation Terms of Reference (or Evaluation Inception Report)
- ✓ Additional methodological information
- ✓ Theory of change, logframe, or results framework
- ✓ Stakeholder or landscape analysis / mapping
- ✓ Summary of performance data to date
- ✓ Summary of budget data to date
- ✓ List of secondary data sources consulted (e.g., background documents)
- ✓ List of primary data sources, (e.g., participant/stakeholder list or interview schedules)
- ✓ Data collection tools
- ✓ Evaluation timeline
- ✓ Bibliography / reference list (consistently use a suitable style or format, e.g., APA)