

Mastering ToRs for operational evaluations

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Agenda

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Essentials of ToR for operational evaluations

02

Sharing experiences in drafting ToRs

- *Silvia Comiati: IT-HR*
- *Ciera Kane: Peace*

03

Integrating aspects of impact evaluations in the ToR and exploring different approaches

- *Peter Racz: NSR*
- *Maria Domzal: NWE*
- *Simona Ene: Danube*

Objectives

Enhance knowledge-sharing and best practices to strengthen to improve drafting and implementing Terms of Reference (ToRs) for evaluations:

- Defining scope & objectives
- Stakeholder engagement
- Resource allocation & budgeting
- Integrating impact evaluation
- Effective data collection



Key topics of interest related to ToRs (registration)

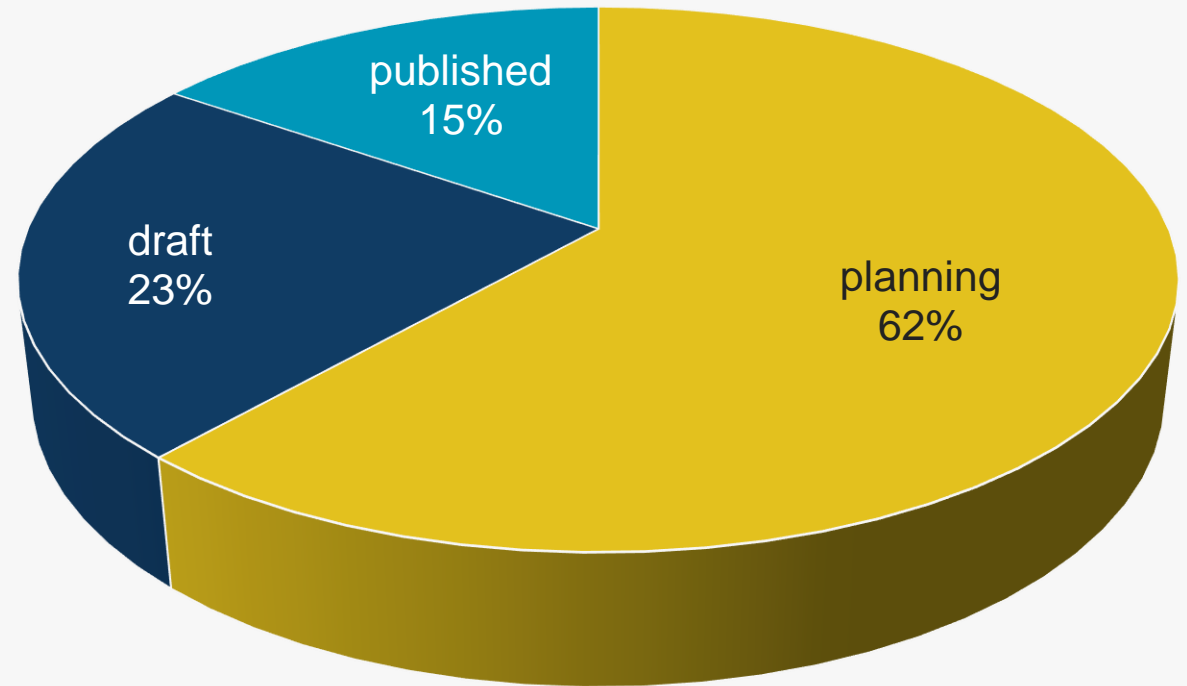


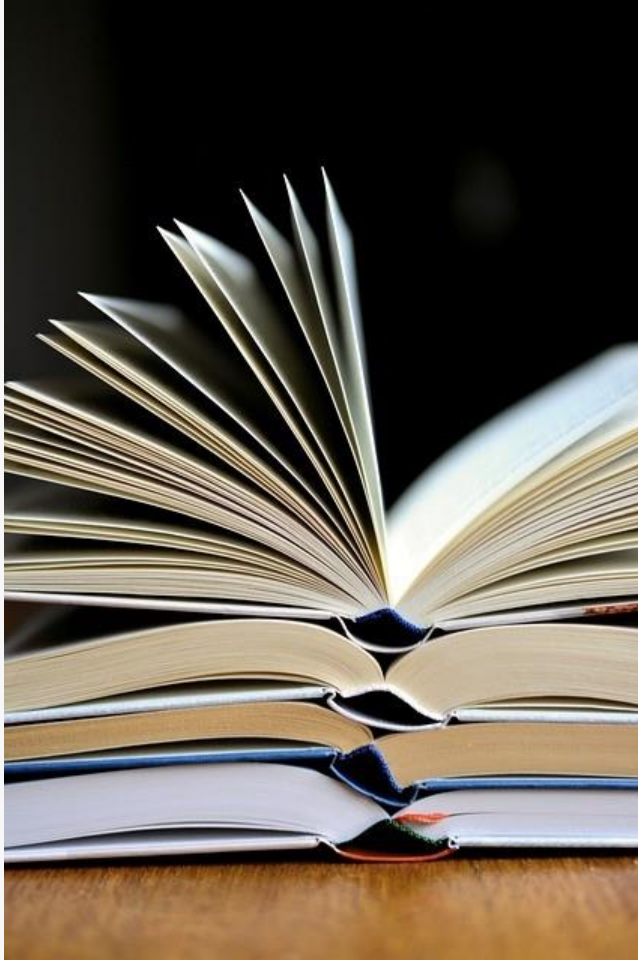
- Evaluation design & methodology: Formulating evaluation questions, data collection tools, and methods.
- Resource planning: Identifying appropriate human resources for evaluations.
- Data collection & outcomes: Effective data collection approaches and evaluation presentation.
- Interreg-specific requirements: Ensuring teams and approaches align with Interreg programme needs.
- Bidder & assessment methods: Evaluator selection, internal operational assessments, and integration with ToRs.
- Operational evaluation: How to make evaluations meaningful and rational.
- Stakeholder involvement: Role of associated partners in evaluation processes.
- Strategic alignment: Project synergies, financial management, and policy alignment.
- Impact assessment details: Level of detail required for impact evaluation methodology.
- Best practices & comparisons: Examples from other programmes, including budget and objectives.

Status quo

Feedback from the registration

Status update on ToR preparation





Essentials of ToRs for operational evaluations

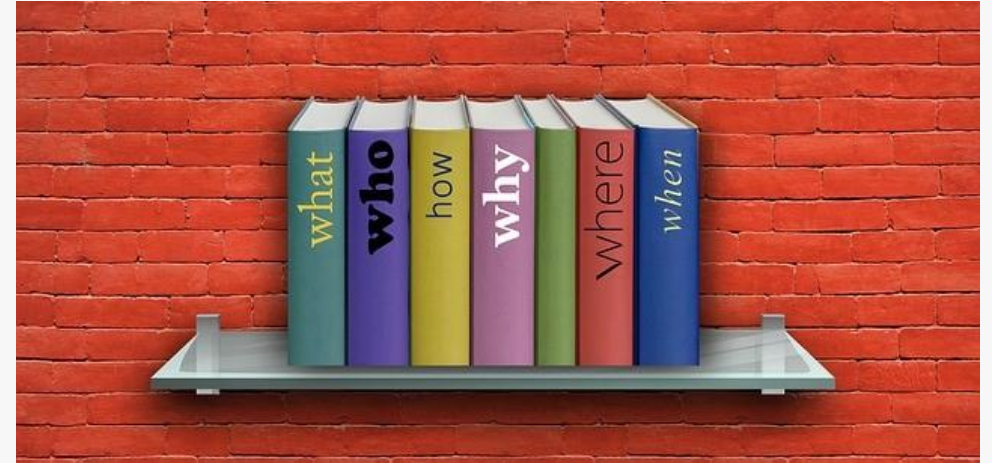




Developing good Terms of Reference (ToRs) is crucial for the quality of an evaluation. The ToRs provide the key reference framework for what can be expected from an evaluation. Practice shows, however, that the ToRs is often too unclear, too ambitious, or inappropriate.

Evaluation Practitioners Certified Training

Main purpose of ToRs



- Fair & equal competition: Establishes a transparent framework for procurement.
- Clear scope & quality standards: Defines evaluation tasks to prevent low-quality bids, especially in price-focused procurement systems.
- Cost estimation & solid offers: Enables bidders to accurately calculate costs and submit competitive proposals.



Key role in hiring external evaluators: ToRs are a crucial step in procuring evaluation services, ensuring clarity and fairness.

Framework for procuring the evaluation services (1/2)

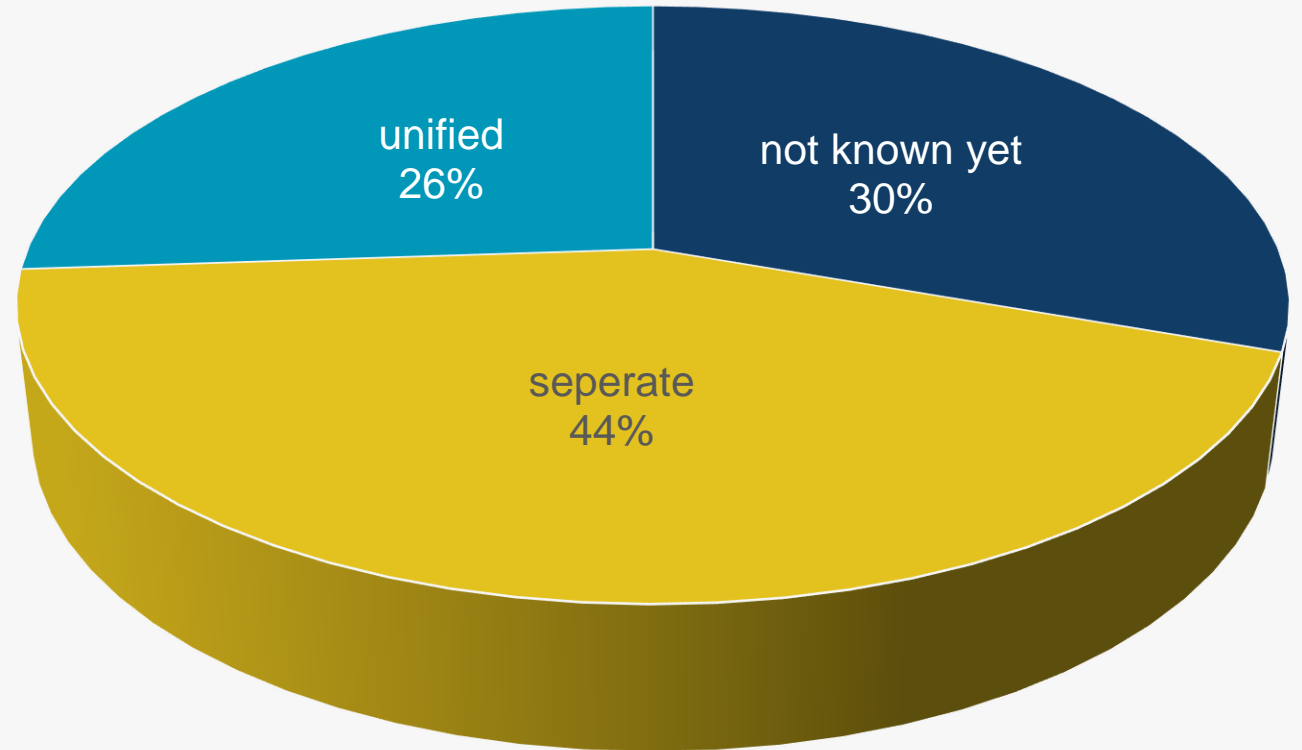
Key considerations:

- Public procurement requirement: External evaluators must be hired through public procurement.
- Budget clarity: The evaluation plan should define the available budget.
- Procurement approach: Decide between a single large contract/framework contract or separate contracts for operational and impact evaluations.
- Ongoing evaluations require a framework or long-term contract

Type of procurement

Feedback from the registration

Will you have separate or a unified ToR(s) for operational and impact evaluations?



Separate vs Unified ToRs for evaluations



- **Greater flexibility**
 - Adapt to policy or environmental changes
 - Spread risks across multiple evaluations
- **Simplified procurement**
 - Easier to prepare and manage smaller ToRs
 - More precise timing and deliverable specifications
- **Diverse expertise**
 - Work with multiple evaluators
 - Attract specialized companies
 - Reduce risks from staff changes



- **Integrated approach**
 - Ensures consistency, harmonization, and continuity between evaluations
 - Leads to a more holistic perspective
- **Single procurement**
 - Single public procurement process
 - Reduces administrative complexity
- **Efficient Collaboration**
 - Working with one evaluator can enhance mutual understanding
 - Minimizes briefing time

Separate vs Unified ToRs

What to do?

A **unified** ToR is ideal for ensuring consistency and efficiency, while **separate** ToRs offer greater adaptability, specialisation, and risk management. The choice depends on strategic priorities, decision-making factors and operational constraints.

Framework for procuring the evaluation services (2/2)

Procurement/Tendering Procedure depends on the known budget or estimated service price.

Budget estimation – Contracting authorities must provide either:

- A well-justified budget estimate for the required services.
- A defined service range with a pre-set maximum budget.

EU & national procurement rules:

- Above a certain threshold: EU procurement directive applies.
- Below the threshold: National procurement rules apply, which vary by country.

Specifying tasks and services – scope & quality (1/2)

Key considerations for developing ToRs

- Be aware of **usual fee rates** for evaluation experts (daily rates).
- Consider **expected travel costs** for experts.
- Understand the **number of person-days** required to match the budget and scope.
- Unrealistic expectations can lead to **disappointment** for both the contracting authority (MA) and the consultant.
- Certain language skills are expected from the expert team (especially for CBC programmes)

Specifying Tasks and Services – Scope & Quality (2/2)

Defining the evaluation process & methods

- Drafting realistic ToRs requires clarity on the **evaluation process** and key **methods**, such as: desk research, surveys, semi-structured interviews, workshops & seminars, focus group meetings or case studies on key projects or policy fields.
- Experienced evaluation experts will have an idea about the time required for each of the methods as such but very often the expected quantities are important to know (e.g semi-structured interviews).

A potential budgeting approach for evaluation

Task	Number of person days		Comment
	senior	junior	
Project coordination	10	20	
6 in-person meetings at seat of MA with ESG	6	6	Travel cost approx. 400 EUR per person
Task 1 Taking stock			
Data analysis and performance review	3	15	Depending on access and functionality of monitoring system
Task 2 Review of implementation proceedings			
Questionnaire development & agreement, phone/online interviews with wider programme management (10 persons), 10 beneficiaries	3	10	20 interviews, approx. 0.5 days for interview plus transcript
Online survey among all beneficiaries	0.5	2	Developing questionnaire and statistics on results
Reporting on findings	1	2	
Task X Case studies			
10 case studies	5	40	4 person days per case study (desk research, interviews, portrait & detailed impact pathway)
3 in person workshops with focus groups in 3 policy fields	5	9	Including preparation and documentation
Task Y Reporting			
Interim report	1	3	
Final report	4	5	
Number of person days	38.5	112	

Structure of a ToR

Overview

The fundamental structure of Terms of Reference (ToR) remains consistent across various types of evaluations, whether they focus on implementation (operational), impact, or a combination of both. The list on the right side outlines the typical ToR structure for evaluations. This framework has been synthesized from multiple guidance documents.

Background and context

Evaluation purpose and target audience

Evaluation objective and scope

Evaluation questions and tasks

Approach and methodology

Timing and deliverables

Evaluation team composition and required competencies

Management arrangements

Budget and payment
Proposal submission

Key components of a ToR (1/3)

1. Background and context

Provide a brief overview of the intervention, including its objectives, rationale, scale, timeframe, progress to date, stakeholder roles, relevant contextual factors, and any prior evaluations.

2. Evaluation purpose and target audience

Clearly state the reasons for conducting the evaluation, its intended accomplishments, key users of the findings, and how the results will be utilized.

3. Evaluation objective and scope

Define specific objectives (preferably two to three) and delineate the evaluation's focus, including time period, thematic coverage, target groups, and key issues, ensuring alignment with available resources.

4. Evaluation questions and tasks

Outline the evaluation tasks (e.g., literature review, data analysis, surveys) and corresponding questions, ensuring they are structured logically to build evidence and provide clear conclusions.

Key components of a ToR (2/3)

5. Approach and methodology

Specify the preferred evaluation methods or allow tenderers to propose their own, ensuring clarity on expectations while providing flexibility for methodological expertise.

6. Timing and deliverables

Detail the expected deliverables (e.g., inception report, draft report, final report) and timelines, including any additional outputs like evaluation briefs or participation in knowledge-sharing events.

7. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

Describe the desired mix of knowledge, skills, and experience for the evaluation team, specifying roles, responsibilities, and quality assurance processes.

Key components of a ToR (3/3)

8. Management arrangements

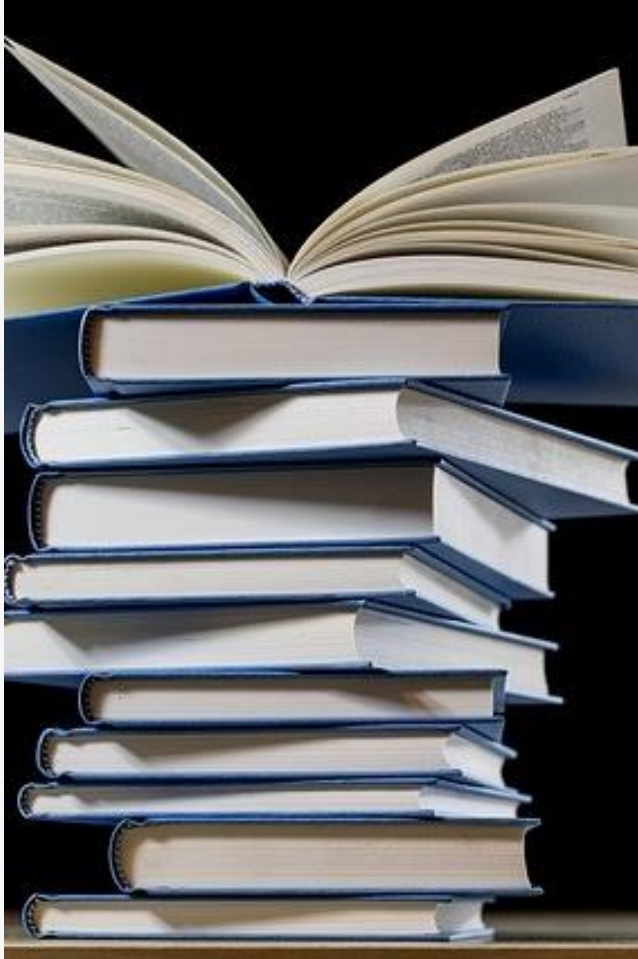
Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation team, the commissioning authority, and other stakeholders, including lines of accountability and logistical considerations.

9. Budget and payment

Outline the total budget, provide a cost breakdown by task, and detail payment terms, linking them to the acceptance of deliverables.

10. Proposal submission

Provide instructions on proposal format, content, submission procedures, deadlines, evaluation criteria, and opportunities for clarification.



Sharing experiences in drafting ToRs

Silvia Comiati: Interreg Italy - Croatia

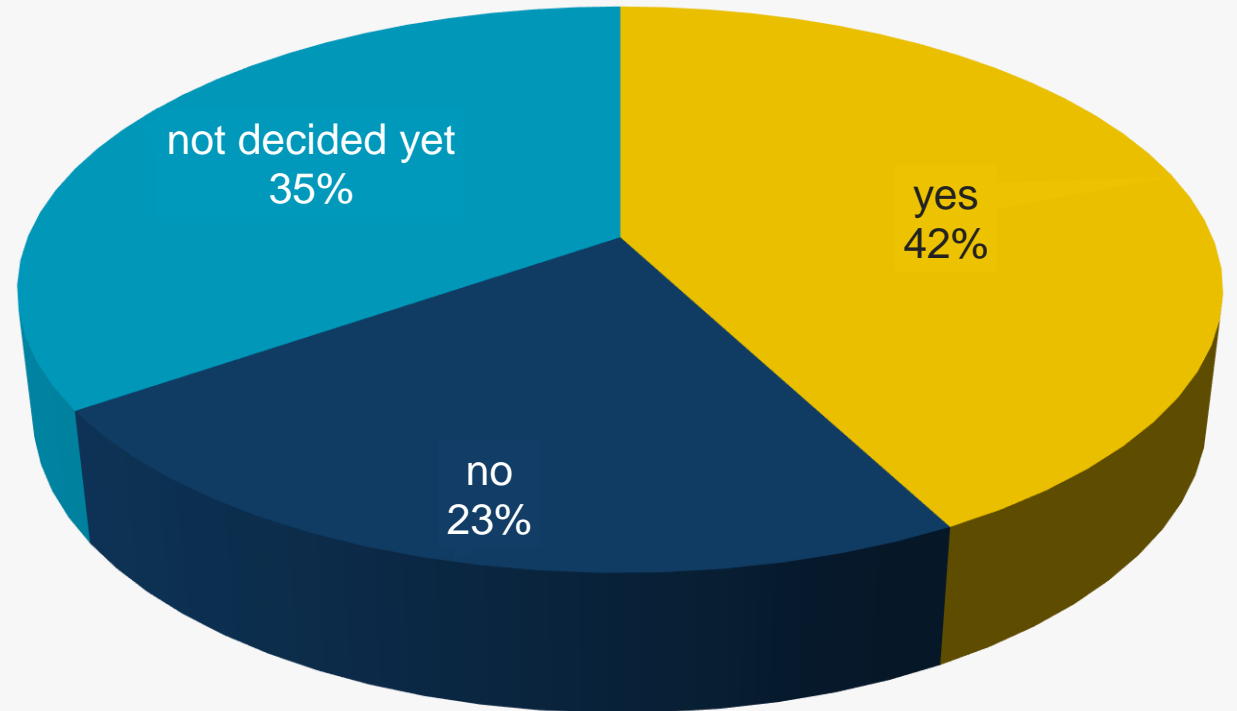
Ciera Kane: Interreg Peace



Include questions from impact evaluation

Feedback from the registration

Do you plan to also include questions related to the impact evaluation in your ToR?





Integrating aspects of impact evaluations in the ToR and exploring different approaches

- *Peter Racz: Interreg North Sea Region*
 - *Maria Domzal: Interreg North West Europe*
 - *Simona Ene: Interreg Danube Region*
- Programme*

Floor is open for discussion



- Do you any further questions related to ToR?
- Would you be interested in a ToR event for impact evaluation?
- If yes, when should that event be?
- Do you have any further wishes related to evaluation and indicators events/activities?

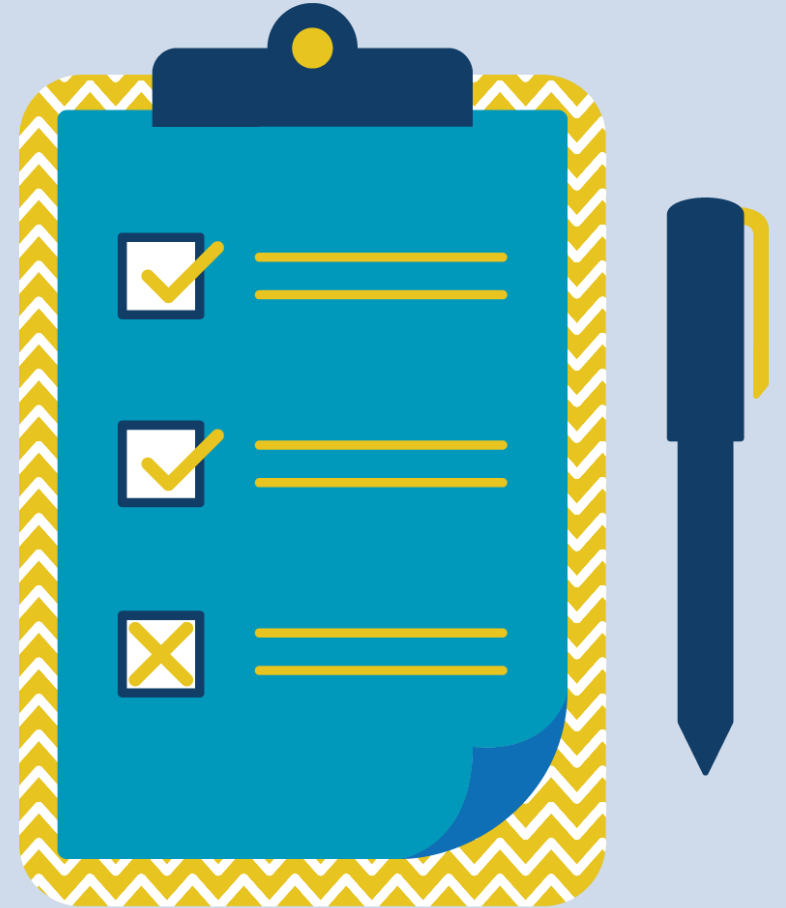
Appendix 1: Review of 4 ToRs

Topic	Findings (based on 4 ToR analysed)	Comments
Budget	Where mentioned in ToR, programmes spend between 0.4% to 1% of programme budget on evaluation	0.4% represents just operational evaluation. 1% represents both operational and impact.
Tender for operation and impact evaluations: Separate or combined	3 programmes = combined 1 programme = separate	
Duration of operational evaluation	Between 1 year and 2.5 years	
Number of operational evaluation reports	3 programmes = 2 reports 1 programme = 1 report	For 1 programme, 1 of the 2 reports, is an evaluation specifically of the application and assessment process.
Evaluation questions specified for operational evaluation	2 programme = questions specified 2 programme = not specified	1 programme invited the tenderers to propose their own questions, to be agreed with the programme during contracting.
Data sources specified for operational evaluation	3 programmes = data specified 1 programme = data not specified	3 programmes invited evaluators, in addition to monitoring data, to gather their own data through a combination of surveys, interviews, focus groups or case studies
Areas of focus (of operational evaluation)	Effectiveness = all 4 programmes Efficiency = 3 programmes Relevance = 2 programmes Coherence = 2 programmes Union added value = 1 programme	Other areas of focus specified included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Synergies - Sustainability - Communication - SCOs - Newcomers - AI - Governance
Other evaluation services requested	1 additional ad hoc evaluation = 1 programme Advice and guidance related to monitoring and evaluation = 1 programme	

Thank you for being here!

Your opinion matters to us.

Please take a few minutes to provide us with feedback to help us improve our services.



Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:

[Interact connections](#) / [Interact library](#) / [Mastering ToRs for operational evaluations](#)