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TERMS OF REFERENCE

UN Women Syria Programme, Phase II Evaluation

UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States

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1. Background and context

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

UN Women's mandate (GA resolution 64/289) is to lead, coordinate and promote accountability of the UN system to deliver on gender equality and empowerment of women with the primary objective of enhancing country-level coherence, ensuring coordinated interventions and securing positive impacts on the lives of women and girls, including those living in rural areas.

In support of Syria's political process under Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), and in line with the UN Security Council's landmark resolution 1325 (2000), which enshrines the essential role of women in securing and maintaining peace, UN Women has been supporting Syrian women's leadership in peace-making since 2013. This has included logistical and substantive support to the work of the Women's Advisory Board (WAB) in close collaboration with the Office of the UN Special Envoy for Syria (OSE), support to Syrian civil society, research and advocacy on gender equality and women's rights, as well as coordination activities on women, peace and security issues in the context of Syria.

2. UN Women Syria Programme

UN Women Syria Programme was launched in 2014 and supports Syrian women to meaningfully participate in and influence decision-making and political processes. The Programme began the implementation of its Phase II in January 2020.

It is based in Beirut, Lebanon, from where the team works closely with civil society partners inside and outside Syria. It also has personnel in Geneva, Switzerland, where it works in close collaboration with the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria to influence the political process. The programme's operational staff is based at the UN Women Regional Office for Arab States in Cairo, Egypt.

In the early years of the Syria Programme, it largely focused on supporting the Women's Advisory Board's capacity building and effective participation in the political process. Currently, the Syria Programme is constituted on four pillars, with greater focus on civil society's inclusion in peace and political processes: i) political process; ii) civil society; iii) research; iv) coordination. Accordingly, the Syria Programme is guided by the following Theory of Change (ToC), outcome and outputs:

ToC:

If (1) Syrian women leaders are provided support to ensure their presence at meetings and events related to the peace process;

If (2) the capacity of a diverse cadre of Syrian women leaders is built, through multiple channels, to influence the political process;

If (3) Syrian women are engaged and supported, from the international political process to grassroots, to advance women's rights and gender equality;

If (4) international actors improved their strategic coordination and policy-advocacy around women's rights and gender equality;

and If (5) research and analysis on the status of gender equality and women's rights is disseminated and available in the public domain;

Then (6) Syrian women can more effectively and meaningfully participate in, influence and respond to windows of opportunities in Syria's peace process to secure women's rights and gender equality outcomes;

Because (7) they have sustained access to and visibility in the political process, the capabilities of Syrian women at multiple levels is enhanced, international stakeholders are better coordinated in their policy advocacy to call for the inclusion of women and gender perspectives in the process; and women's groups and broader stakeholders can root their policy options in evidence and actual data on the Syria context;

And (8) evidence shows women are agents of change whose meaningful participation can lead to more sustainable peace that is reflective of women's rights and gender perspectives.

The programme ToC is captured through an outcome and five associated outputs:

Outcome 1: Syrian women meaningfully participate in and influence an inclusive peace process and transition	**Output 1.1:** Syrian women leaders participate in meetings and events related to peace processes through financial and operational support
	Output 1.2: Syrian women leaders improve technical and strategic capacity and skills to influence peace process related events and meetings to be more inclusive of gender and women's rights
	Output 1.3: Syrian women's civil society has increased access to financial and technical resources to advance gender equality and women's rights local, national and international stakeholders access high quality knowledge products on gender equality, women's rights, political participation, and socio-economic issues in the context of Syria
	Output 1.4: International stakeholders working on the political participation of women in Syria improve coordination of programming and policy interventions
	Output 1.5: National and international stakeholders have access to analytical products that improve understanding of gender equality, women's rights in the context of Syria

The UN Women Strategic Plans (2018-2021[1] and 2022-2025[2]) and the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) Strategic Notes (2018-2021 and 2022-2025) are the main planning documents guiding UN Women Syria Programme's programmatic direction and interventions. The Syria Programme is aligned with these strategic frameworks as follows:

UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025 impact area 4	**Impact area 4:** Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action	
UN Women Regional Office for Arab States Strategic Note 2022-2025	Impact 10 More women and girls in the Arab States contribute to, and have influence in, building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of conflicts and disasters, and from humanitarian action, leading to more peaceful and gender-equal societies in the region	Output 10.3.1 Syrian women leaders are supported to meaningfully participate in the political process and discussions on the future of Syria.
	Outcome 10.3 Women and women's organisations lead, participate and advocate effectively in the Syrian political process from a gender and women's rights perspective	Output 10.3.2 Syrian women's civil society organizations at the local level have increased capacity, access to financial and technical resources and ability to influence stakeholders operating on all tracks of the political process as well as key decision-makers in their communities)
		Output 10.3.3 Local, national and international stakeholders have access to high quality knowledge products that improve understanding and inform programme design on gender equality, women's rights, political participation, and socio-economic issues in the context of Syria
		Output 10.3.4 International stakeholders working on the political participation of women in Syria improve coordination and information-sharing on programming and policy interventions on gender equality and women's rights
UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Outcome 5	Outcome 5 Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action	Output 13: More commitments on women, peace and security are implemented by Member States and the UN system, and more gender equality advocates influence peace and security processes.

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[1] https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/8/un-women-strategic-plan-2018-2021

[2] UN Women (2021), UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/un-women-strategic-plan-2022-2025?gclid=Cj0KCQjwhsmaBhCvARIsAIbEbH4ka-xEQ3_kT3Y0Jc5Vq-XHDFAHWg9emp4JdsrQfnNF7f6p6-9wvtoaAtfpEALw_wcB>

		Output 14: More women play a greater role and are better served by humanitarian response and recovery efforts. Output 15: More women play a greater role in and are better served by disaster risk management processes.
UN Women Regional Office for Arab States Strategic Note 2018 – 2021, Outcome 6.6	Outcome 6.6: More commitments on women, peace and security are implemented by member States and UN entities in the Arab States region, and more gender equality advocates influence peace and security processes	Output 6.6.1: Accountability to gender equality commitments in Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action is enhanced through supporting dialogue and advocacy, and generating evidence-based research

The Syria Programme also contributes to enabling UN Women to deliver on its triple mandate and advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment through the production, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data, knowledge and research. In line with UN Women's commitment to Results Based Management (RBM), a Development Results Framework (DRF) was developed with performance indicators. The evaluation is expected to use this to assess the programmatic performance.

Financial and Human resources

The Syria Programme is funded by the following key donors: European Union, Government of Finland, Government of the Netherlands, and Government of Norway. The Syria Programme operates on non-core funds, which totalled in $4,894,588 during the Phase II.

The Programme is based in Beirut, Lebanon, but also has staff in the Arab States Regional Office in Cairo, Egypt, and at the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria in Geneva, Switzerland. The team consists of a Programme Manager; Women, Peace and Security Specialist; Programme Analyst; Gender Analyst (embedded in OSE); Technical Analyst, M&E; Project Assistant; and Operations Analyst (50%).

3.Evaluation Purpose

The UN Women Evaluation Policy[3] is the main guiding document that sets forth the principles and organisational framework for evaluation planning, conduct and follow-up in UN Women. These principles are aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, Standards for Evaluation in the UN System[4] and Ethical Guidelines[5].

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3 UN Women (2020), Evaluation Policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women < https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/08/evaluation-policy-of-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women>

[4] UNEG (2005), Standards for evaluation in the UN system <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/22> and UNEG (2005), Norms for evaluation in the UN system <http://www.unevaluation. org/document/detail/21>

[5] UNEG (2008), Ethical guidelines <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

This is a formative evaluation[6] and primarily forward-looking in scope to support the Syria Programme and its stakeholders' strategic learning and decision-making for future programme design and implementation. It will focus on assessing the contributions made by UN Women during programme phase II, largely paying attention to the processes and indication of the achievement of outcome level results. It is a priority for UN Women that the Formative Evaluation will be gender-responsive and will actively support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The primary intended users of this evaluation are:

- UN Women Regional Arab States Office and UN Women Headquarters
- Civil society representatives and partners
- Donors and international partners and stakeholders
- Target groups, programme/project partners

Primary intended uses of this evaluation are:

a. Learning and improved decision-making to support the formulation of future programmatic and operational direction;
b. Accountability for the effectiveness of the programme in terms of UN Women's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment

4. Evaluation objectives (evaluation criteria and key questions)

The specific evaluation objectives include:

1. Assess the **relevance** of UN Women Syria programme at the international and local levels and its alignment with the international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly related to Women Peace and Security.
2. Assess **effectiveness**, **efficiency,** and **coherence** in progressing towards the achievement of the programmatic results as defined in the Programme results framework.
3. Enable the UN Women Syria Programme to improve its **strategic positioning** to better support Syrian women and women's organisations to lead, participate and advocate effectively in the Syrian political processes from a gender and women's rights perspective, and building a women's movement in the context of Syria.
4. Analyse how **human rights approach and gender equality** are integrated in the design and implementation of the Syria Programme.
5. Identify and validate **lessons learned**, good practices and examples of **innovation** that can be scaled up and replicated to support gender equality and human rights.
6. Provide insights into the extent to which the UN Women has realized **synergies** between its three mandates (normative, UN system coordination and operations).
7. Provide **actionable recommendations** with respect to the Syria Programme's strategic direction and programmatic interventions.

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6 Formative evaluation is a process of gathering and analyzing feedback during the development or implementation of a program, project, or product. It identifies strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, with the aim of making adjustments to improve the quality and effectiveness of the program or product. It is important because it helps to identify areas that need improvement early on, it can save time, resources, and money in the long run. For more information-
https://www.evalcommunity.com/career-center/formative-evaluation/

The evaluation proposes to apply OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and sustainability as well as the criteria of Human Rights and Gender Equality. The Evaluation team will, however, try to limit the scope to maximum four key Evaluation criteria to provide an adequate in-depth analysis within the stipulated period of evaluation timeline.

The evaluation will seek to answer the following proposed key evaluation questions. The evaluation team will select the final criteria and associated questions during the inception phase of the evaluation.

Draft Criteria and Evaluation Questions:

Key Criteria	Sub Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance Are we doing the right things?	Alignment	1. To what extent is the Syria Programme aligned with UNSCR 1325 and international gender and human rights instruments? 2. To what extent can the programme be aligned and contribute to the UN Strategic Framework (UNSF) and the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)? 3. To what extent has the Syria Programme adapted to the contextual changes including the political process and in the changing context of Syria, and continued to be "fit for purpose"?
Efficiency Is UN Women getting the most out of limited resources?	Organizational Efficiency	1. Have strategic partnerships been optimally developed and utilized to contribute towards the programme results? 2. To what extent does the programme management structure support UN Women's collaboration and partnership with the UN entities and CSOs in Syria? What have been some of the lessons of such operational arrangement that can be shared across UN Women?
Effectiveness and sustainability The extent to which UN Women has contributed to achieving planned outcomes and mitigating negative externalities. The extent to which positive outcome(s) can be maintained and advanced independently by local actors?	Achievements	1. Are interventions contributing to the expected outcome? For whom? What unexpected outcome(s) (positive and negative) have been achieved? What are the main enabling and hindering factors of observed outcome(s)? 2. What is UN Women's comparative advantage in this area of work compared with other UN entities and key partners?
	UN Coordination	1. What contribution is UN Women making to improve the coordination of programming and policy interventions between the international stakeholders such as the UN entities, other development players through its partnership with Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria.
	Normative	1. What contribution is UN Women making to implement global norms and standards for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of Syria?

	Evidence, learning and knowledge management	1. How effective are its monitoring, evaluation, learning and knowledge management strategies and practices? 2. What are some of the key lessons learned that can be shared with other UN Women Country Offices and/ Thematic work within UN Women and beyond?
	Capacity and systems development	3. Does the programme have an exit or transition strategy? To what extent were capacity and systems developed to facilitate the programme transition and to ensure sustainability of the programme efforts and results?
	Localization/Ownership	4. Are different parts of the Syria Programme effectively localized on the ground (taking into account the programme presence being outside Syria)?
Human Rights and Gender Equality		1. To what extent the interventions are informed of gender, human rights and disability inclusion approaches and other intersectionality concerns and contributing towards gender transformative changes to advance and sustain gender equality and women's empowerment? 2. To what extent the Syria Programme interventions are adhering to the principles and standards of Leaving no one behind and targeting and benefitting traditionally excluded women and girls?

3. Evaluation Scope

The evaluation will build on and draw from the last evaluation[7] of the Syria Programme conducted in June 2019 and will cover the periods of programme Phase II from January 2020 to May 2023- see Mid-Term Evaluation 2019 Recommendations in Annex I.

It will focus on all interventions undertaken by the Syria Programme under the programme results framework. Given the current context, it will include an analysis of the programme's efforts to respond to or adapt to COVID-19 pandemic and the earthquake in February 2022.

The evaluation will be conducted remotely and in-person, using both remote/virtual and in-person data collection tools and techniques entailing travel to Lebanon.

The evaluation will not consider impact (as defined by UNEG[8]) as it is considered too premature to assess this. The evaluation team is expected to establish the boundaries for the evaluation, especially in terms of which stakeholders and relationships will be included or excluded from the evaluation. These will need to be discussed in the inception phase of the evaluation.

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[7] UN Women, Mid-Term Evaluation: Supporting Syrian Women's Engagement in the Syrian Political Process – Building a Homegrown Constituency for Peace Programme (2019) <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?EvaluationId=11410>
8 UNEG (2013), Impact Evaluation Guidance Document <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1433>

The evaluation is expected to consider the main cultural, religious, social and economic differences when analysing the contributions of UN Women.

The evaluation team will undertake an evaluability assessment in the inception phase. This will include the following:

1. An assessment of the relevance, appropriateness and coherence of the implicit or explicit ToC, strengthening or reconstructing it where necessary through a stakeholder workshop;
2. An assessment of the quality of performance indicators in the programme documents, and the accessibility and adequacy of relevant documents and secondary data;
3. A review of the conduciveness of the context for the Formative Evaluation

4. Evaluation design

UN Women evaluations are gender-responsive meaning that both the process and analysis apply the key principles of a human rights-based approach, are inclusive, participatory, ensure fair power relations, and transparent; and they analyse the underlying structural barriers and sociocultural norms that impede the realization of women's rights. UN Women evaluations are also utilization-focused, which means that it will be tailored to the needs of the organization through a participatory approach from the inception through to the development of recommendations, which will facilitate production of a useful evaluation. The evaluation will be employing a non-experimental, theory-based[9] design, apply a feminist approach and use gender-analytical frameworks to examine issues of power and to understand and evaluate whether and how the Syria Programme has contributed or led to changes in the roles of women's and women's organisations in leading, participating and advocating effectively in the Syrian peace process.

It will apply a mixed-method research approach, using qualitative as well as quantitative methods and use triangulation to validate the various sources of information. It is expected to apply a purposive sampling to ensure a diverse range of perspectives is considered.   The evaluation will employ the following analyses and methods of data collection:

A. Key analyses undertaken primarily during the inception phase will inform the evaluation approach and help to contextualize findings, conclusions and recommendations:
   1. *Evaluability assessment:* to help determine the evaluation approach and gaps in data, the quality of the programme logic (linkages between the outcomes, outputs and indicators) as articulated in the programme development results framework, the availability of baseline data, and the availability of documents necessary for the evaluation will be assessed.
   2. *Contextual analysis:* this will include an analysis of the key external influencing factors identified above and how they may affect realization of women's effective participation in peace and political processes in the context of Syria.
   3. *Content analysis* on the extent to which gender transformative approach is applied:
      - The evaluation will undertake a desk-based portfolio analysis that includes a synthesis of secondary results data of the Syria Programme
   4. *UN Women financial analysis* will explore the budget, expenditure and trends in type of expenditures.

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[9] A theory-based design assesses the performance of the programme based upon its intervention logic in the Theory of change as well as its stated assumptions about how change happens. These assumptions can be challenged, validated or expanded upon by the evaluation.

B. Interviews with key informants identified through the stakeholder analysis in consultation with UN Women;
C. Surveys of UN Women personnel and partners;
D. Focus Group Discussions.

The method will include a wide range of data sources (including documents, field information, institutional information systems, financial records, beneficiaries, staff, donors, experts, government officials, community groups etc.) It will use methodologies such as the Contribution analysis[10] to identify, assess and validate the contribution the programme has made.

5. Stakeholder participation

The inception report will detail how the evaluation will ensure participation of stakeholders at all stages, with a particular emphasis on rights holders and their representatives. A preliminary stakeholder mapping and a list of interviewees will be drafted in consultation with UN Women. This will be revised and validated during the inception stage of the evaluation.

Stakeholders should include target groups, programme and project partners, internal UN Women stakeholders, civil society representatives, political leaders and representatives, donors and UN-INGO partners; and others.

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established representing UN Women Syria Programme's key civil society, donor and UN system partners to provide input at every stage of the evaluation process.

6. Management and quality assurance

All evaluation processes at UN Women establish mechanisms to ensure high quality evaluation processes and products as outlined in the UN Women Evaluation Policy and Handbook[11]. The UN Women Evaluation Report Quality Assurance (GERAAS) criteria will be used to assure quality[12].

The evaluation will have the following structures:

1. **Evaluation team:** Evaluation team members will include a Team Leader, an international evaluation expert to support the Team leader in designing and conducting the formative evaluation and an evaluation analyst responsible for key analytical tasks, systematization of information and contribution to analysis and report and presentation preparation. The Regional Evaluation Specialist (RES) of Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) from UN Women IEAS will serve as the Team Leader and will be responsible for management of the evaluation team.

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10 https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Contribution-analysis.pdf

11 https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022

12 UN Women (2021), Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) <https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/gender%20evaluation/resourcefiles/2021/final%20geraas%20guidance%20note_july%202021.pdf?la=en&vs=713>

2. **Evaluation Reference Group (ERG):** responsible for providing technical support and stakeholder perspective, the ERG will be requested to engage and provide input at every stage of the evaluation process, from design to preliminary results and final draft report. The ERG will also be key informants and play an important role in the dissemination of the evaluation findings and recommendations to ensure the use of the information by UN Women and key partners.

   Two ERGs will be constituted- internal and external. The internal ERG will include the UN Women Arab States Regional Director, UN Women Regional WPS and HA Policy Advisor, Syria Programme Manager, Syria Programme Evaluation focal point (Technical Analyst, M&E), and Operations lead. The UN Women Arab States Regional Director will be responsible for issuing a management response to the final Formative Evaluation recommendations.

   The external ERG on the other hand will include Civil Society representatives and Development partners/donors to provide the stakeholder perspective.

In addition, the following oversight and quality assurance arrangements will be in place for the Formative Evaluation:

1. Oversight: The Director of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service oversees all activities, while the Chief of Independent Evaluation Service is responsible for the evaluation related activities; both will review the key products of the evaluation and the Director, IEAS will sign off on the final evaluation document;
2. Regional Evaluation Specialist of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service will serve as the team leader, responsible for overseeing the work of the evaluation team members, managing the contracts and assuring the quality of the work;
3. Peer Review for methodological guidance and feedback: 1 IES staff will be engaged as peer reviewers of the Formative Evaluation.

7. **Proposed Evaluation timeframe and deliverables:**

 The Evaluation team will be expected to complete the tasks within the indicative timeframe. These will be finalized during the inception phase:

Tasks/deliverables	Expected delivery date
Preparation Phase	
ToR finalisation	May 2023
Recruitment of the evaluation team	May-June 2023
Desk review of background documentation	June 2023
A one-day virtual inception meeting/workshop between evaluators and relevant UN Women staff	July 2023
Draft inception report, including interview questions for different stakeholder groups and conflict sensitivity plan	July 2023
Final Inception report	July 2023
Data collection phase	

Data collection including field visits	August 2023
Analysis and reporting phase	
Data analysis	September 2023
Presentation of preliminary findings	End of September 2023
0 draft report	End of October 2023
Final report	November 2023
Final dissemination of the evaluation, 2-page evaluation brief with infographics, and evaluation communication products (PPT)	November 2023
Management Response	6 weeks after signing of the final report

8. Evaluation team composition and qualifications:

International Consultant

Total number of days: 45 days

The International Consultant must possess the following qualifications:

Education:
- At least a master's degree in international development, gender/women studies, Middle East studies, social sciences, public policy or related field

Experience:
- At least 10-years of practical experience in conducting gender-responsive evaluations of development strategies, country portfolios, policies and programmes;
- Proven experience of conducting evaluations in the area of Women, Peace and Security programming, particularly in the context of Syria;
- Experience working in sensitive, conflict affected contexts;
- A strong record in designing and leading evaluations and proven experience in using Theory based evaluation approach, and approaches to evaluate normative, coordination and operational work;
- Extensive knowledge of, and experience in applying, qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and results-based management principles;
- Proven experience of using qualitative and mixed method data analysis software such as NVivo
- Proven knowledge of the role of UN Women and its programming, coordination and normative roles at the regional and country levels;
- Previous experience of working with UN agencies and the UN system is highly desirable;
- Country or regional experience in the Arab States region will be considered a strong asset;
- Excellent analytical, facilitation, communications and writing skills;
- Proven ability to interact with a wide range of stakeholders; and
- Ability to work in a team, process management skills, including facilitation presentations and communication skills.

Language:
- Language proficiency in English
- Knowledge of Arabic would be an advantage.

Duties and responsibilities of the international evaluation consultant:

The Evaluator will be expected to support the Team Leader and carry out the following responsibilities:

- Provide technical and methodological support for scoping, designing and delivering appropriate evaluation design and methodology;
- Support evaluation preparatory phase including facilitation of the inception workshop and preparation of the inception report with appropriate evaluation methodology and design, data collection tools, stakeholder mapping etc.
- Support the preparation of all evaluation deliverables, including data collection, data analyses and synthesis of evaluation evidence and the evaluation report drafting;

- Support the validation meetings with various stakeholders at the country level; and
- Support the preparation of evaluation knowledge and communication products.

9. Ethical code of conduct

UN Women has developed a UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form for evaluators that must be signed as part of the contracting process, which is based on the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct. These documents will be annexed to the contract. The UNEG guidelines note the importance of ethical conduct for the following reasons:

1. Responsible use of power: All those engaged in evaluation processes are responsible for upholding the proper conduct of the evaluation;

2. Ensuring credibility: With a fair, impartial and complete assessment, stakeholders are more likely to have faith in the results of an evaluation and to take note of the recommendations;

3. Responsible use of resources: Ethical conduct in evaluation increases the chances of acceptance by the parties to the evaluation and therefore the likelihood that the investment in the evaluation will result in improved outcomes.

The evaluators are expected to provide a detailed plan on how the following principles will be ensured throughout the evaluation (see UNEG Ethical Guidance for descriptions): 1) Respect for dignity and diversity; 2) Right to self-determination; 3) Fair representation; 4) Compliance with codes for vulnerable groups (e.g., ethics of research involving young children or vulnerable groups); 5) Redress; 6) Confidentiality; and 7) Avoidance of harm.

Specific safeguards must be put in place to protect the safety (both physical and psychological) of both respondents and those collecting the data. These should include:

1. A plan is in place to protect the rights of the respondent, including privacy and confidentiality;
2. The interviewer or data collector is trained in collecting sensitive information, and if the topic of the evaluation is focused on violence against women, they should have previous experience in this area;
3. Data collection tools are designed in a way that are culturally appropriate and do not create distress for respondents;
4. The interviewer or data collector is able to provide information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support.

KEY REFERENCES

UN Women Evaluation References

- [Evaluation Policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#) (UNW/2020/5/Rev.1)
- [UN Women Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form](#)
- [UN Women Core Values and Competencies](#)

Annex I: Recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation of UN Women's Supporting Syrian Women's Engagement in the Syrian Political Process – Building a Homegrown Constituency for Peace Programme[13]

Recommendations

Based on in-depth review, the mid-term evaluation identified the following recommendations to UN Women to assist in shaping the next phase of the programme. Recommendations have been organised into overall themes and sub-set recommendations.

1. Inclusion and representation

a. Increase the number of consultations and linkages with grassroots actors inside and outside Syria over the long term, including identifying opportunities for connection of grassroots activities, activism and opinions, with the formal peace process and other Track I and II initiatives. Utilise existing grassroots bodies, networks and platforms to avoid duplication of efforts, ensure relevance, and build relationships and trust with actors beyond the Programme.

b. Use consultations with participants and stakeholders to test the relevance of the topics that are intended to be tabled for dialogue in the WAB and ensure that the programme assumptions are tested in these consultations and remain in line with participants' and stakeholder priorities.

c. Seek to add more young women, emerging grassroots leaders and underrepresented groups to the WAB and/or enable them to be connected to the activities of the WAB and SWIPD through developing methods for participation and consultation specifically for people who are unable to travel or officially participate in the WAB or SWIPD.

2. Transparency and accountability

a. Continue to increase communication and transparency around the recruitment and selection process for WAB members. Do this by updating and sharing ToR for the WAB and the selection procedures with all relevant stakeholders on a regular basis.

b. Aim for internal clarity on the trade-offs between diversity and credibility of members and reflect these trade-offs in the design process for Phase 2 and articulate it in project documentation and DMEL frameworks.

c. Focus on developing ways to improve the relationship and communication between the SWIPD and WAB. Adopting some of the recommendations under the sections on 'Conflict sensitivity' and 'Do No Harm' could go towards this.

3. Conflict sensitivity

a. Update the programme ToC to ensure that it takes into account the limitations that the structural barriers and political complexity of the operating environment impose on the programme activities and objectives; also ensure that the ToC acknowledges the difficulty in achieving a common agenda while

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[13] https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/8/un-women-strategic-plan-2018-2021

simultaneously prioritising diversity and the need for credibility in the WAB. Consult with the WAB and SWIPD on a reworking of the ToC.

b. In programme design and implementation, explore the causes of gender inequality and structural discrimination that women encounter in the Syrian context. This activity could also potentially build solidarity between WAB and SWIPD members and raise awareness of internalised mechanisms of restricting women's power and agency.

4. Do No Harm

The following recommendations relate to mitigating the risks of women's participation in and association with the programme, including safety and security concerns.

a. Develop a clear protocol on planning conferences, events and activities to be more constructive and safer, documenting how they are responding to participants' needs, including the safety and security concerns faced by many of the Syrian women who take part in programme initiatives. Ensuring that practical and security concerns around planning of events are addressed is crucial to ensure some level of accessibility and protection for all.

b. Update, share and enforce the existing code of conduct for ensuring safe space for WAB and SWIPD participants.

5. Further training and capacity-building

a. Ensure training and capacity-building focus on preparing women at all levels to participate in decision-making arenas. Specific topics for training mentioned by participants included legal issues and frameworks, constitutional issues, planning and management, and decentralisation. Continue to prioritise and expand upon the training and capacity-building provided to WAB members on cross-cutting technical skills, such as mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution.

b. Deliver further training and project activity opportunities that link the WAB with interests and messages from grassroots groups. Increase investment in training and capacity-building more women and building better networks and constituencies.

c. Ensure that over 50% of the participants of training workshops undergo a needs assessment prior to training and that curricula are adapted to the needs assessment and that examples and content are made directly relevant to the Syria context.