Chapter 3. UN Framework for HR & GE Responsive Evaluation

3.1. UNEG Norms and Standards

82. All UN entities should seek to integrate UNEG Norms and Standards into their existing evaluation processes in their entirety. Table 2 below lays out the specific UNEG Norms and Standards that call for integrating HR & GE dimensions in evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. UNEG Human Rights and Gender-Related Norms and Standards&lt;sup&gt;79&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Norm/Standard</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Competencies (Standard 2.4) – Evaluators need to have technical knowledge of, and be familiar with, the methodology or approach that will be needed for the specific evaluation to be undertaken, as well as certain managerial and personal skills.</td>
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<td>Ethics (Norm 11 and Standard 2.5)</td>
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<td>Design (Standard 3.7) – Evaluation methodologies should be sufficiently rigorous to assess the subject of evaluation and ensure a complete, fair and unbiased assessment.</td>
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3.2. UNEG Ethical Guidelines

83. One of the most important considerations when undertaking evaluations that are responsive to HR & GE is the adoption of ethical behaviour. Evaluators must acknowledge that obtaining information about violations of rights and gender inequality requires stakeholders to confront, admit to and
discuss issues that can be extremely sensitive and may, in some cases, pose risks both for them as individuals and for their relationships with others in their communities. This potentially sensitive nature of HR & GE discussions implies that both evaluators and participating stakeholders must, from the outset of the process, have a clear understanding of how information will be used, who will see it, how the information will be reported on, and who will benefit from it. Furthermore, it is also imperative to ensure that the evaluation process itself does not harm or violate the rights of those participating.

84. UNEG and some UN agencies have produced strict guidelines on ethics and behaviours for evaluators. These codes of conduct must be an integral part of the contract with any consultant undertaking such a task and apply to the conduct of all evaluations in the UN system carried out and/or managed by staff members, external consultants and/or evaluators from partner organizations.\(^\text{80}\) The UNEG guidelines note the importance of ethical conduct for the following reasons:

- **Responsible use of power**: the power to commission an evaluation implies a responsibility towards all those involved for the proper conduct of the evaluation.

- **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.

- **Responsible use of resources**: ethical conduct in evaluation increases the chances of acceptance by the parties of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation and therefore the likelihood that the investment in the evaluation will result in improved outcomes (for women and individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against).

85. The UNEG Ethical Guidelines set out a series of principles outlined below. Following these principles is essential to ensure the inclusion of the perspectives of women and individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against, thus contributing to make the evaluation process sensitive and fair to HR & GE.

- **Obligations to participants**: Evaluations shall be designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of women and men, and the communities of which they are members, in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions.

- **Respect for dignity and diversity**: Respect should be accorded to differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, sex and gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and evaluators should be mindful of the potential implications of these differences when planning, carrying out and reporting on evaluations, while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting.

- **Right to self-determination**: Prospective participants should be treated as autonomous agents and must be given the time and information to decide whether they wish to participate, without pressure or fear of penalty for not participating. From an HR & GE perspective, this implies carefully considering the issues and challenges faced particularly by

\(^{80}\) UNEG, ‘Ethical Guidelines’, <http://www.uneval.org/ethicalguidelines>
women and men who are at a high risk of having their rights violated, and the constraints and potential risks of their participation.

- **Fair representation**: Evaluators should select participants fairly in relation to the aims of the evaluation, not simply because of their availability, or because it is relatively easy to secure their participation. Care shall be taken to ensure that both women and men in relatively powerless, ‘hidden’, or otherwise excluded groups are represented.

- **Compliance with codes** for individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against: Where the evaluation involves the participation of members of vulnerable groups, evaluators must be aware of and comply with international and/or national legal codes governing, for example, interviewing children and young people. In addition, evaluators must acknowledge and understand the cultural norms that may favour or undermine the participation of members of the community involved in the evaluation, particularly those most vulnerable (e.g. victims of sexual violence). Individual agencies may also impose additional ethical guidelines specific to their mandate that evaluators should consult when applicable (e.g. ethics of research involving young children or vulnerable groups).

- **Redress**: Stakeholders should receive sufficient information on: a) how to seek redress for any perceived disadvantage suffered from the evaluation or any projects it covers; and b) how to register a complaint concerning the conduct of an implementing or executing agency. In HR & GE responsive evaluation, specific mechanisms to cater for the need for redress by women and individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against must be in place.

- **Confidentiality**: Evaluators shall respect people’s right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality. Evaluators must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source so that the relevant individuals, particularly women and individuals/groups most discriminated against, are protected from reprisals.

- **Avoidance of harm**: Evaluators should seek to minimize risks to, and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation; and to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harm that might occur from negative or critical evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation. Evaluators must be aware of the risks faced by those women and individuals/groups most discriminated against in speaking freely about rights violations and gender inequality, and be prepared to conduct the process accordingly.

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3.3. UNEG Guidance

86. UNEG has developed a number of guidance documents and resources to integrate human rights and gender equality into the practice of evaluation, including the UNEG handbook *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation - Towards UNEG Guidance*, which accompanies this document, and *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation ToR and Inception Reports*. UNEG has also endorsed for piloting a technical note and scorecard for harmonizing reporting against the UN SWAP Evaluation Indicator. In addition, UNEG is continually developing guidance tools on evaluation issues that contain information on how to integrate HR & GE in specific contexts such as the evaluation of normative work, impact evaluation, UNDAF evaluation, etc. Other UNEG references should be consulted as they become available.  

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