Exploring Evaluation Quality: An Examination of How International Development Organizations Issue and Contract Evaluations

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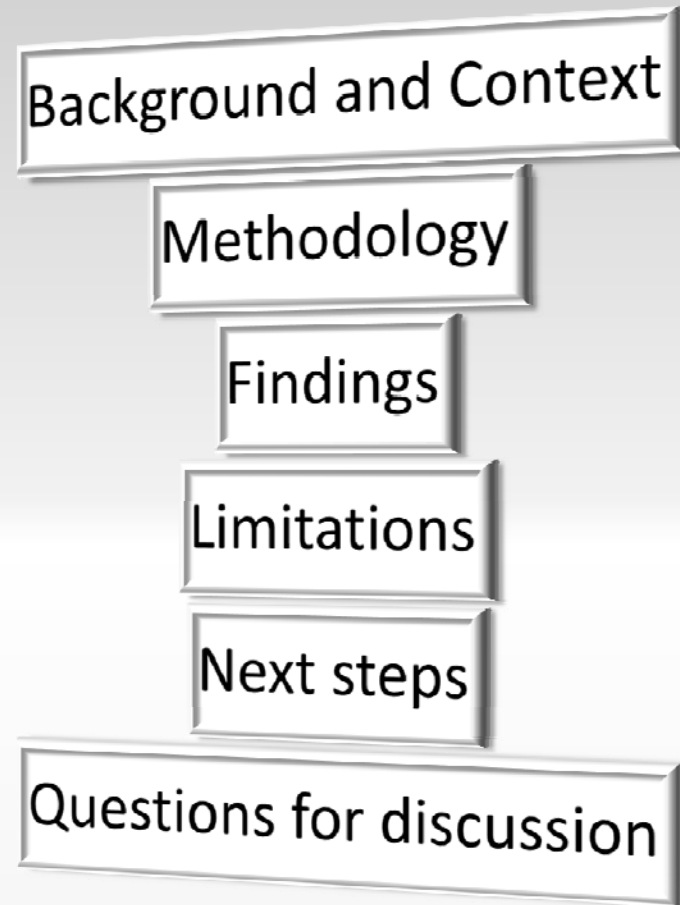Jim Rugh, Independent Consultant

Before We Begin

Please introduce yourself.

What is your experience/ interest in international development evaluation?

What is your experience/ interest in *contracting* international development evaluations?

Overview

- Background and Context
- Methodology
- Findings
- Limitations
- Next steps
- Questions for discussion

Background and Context

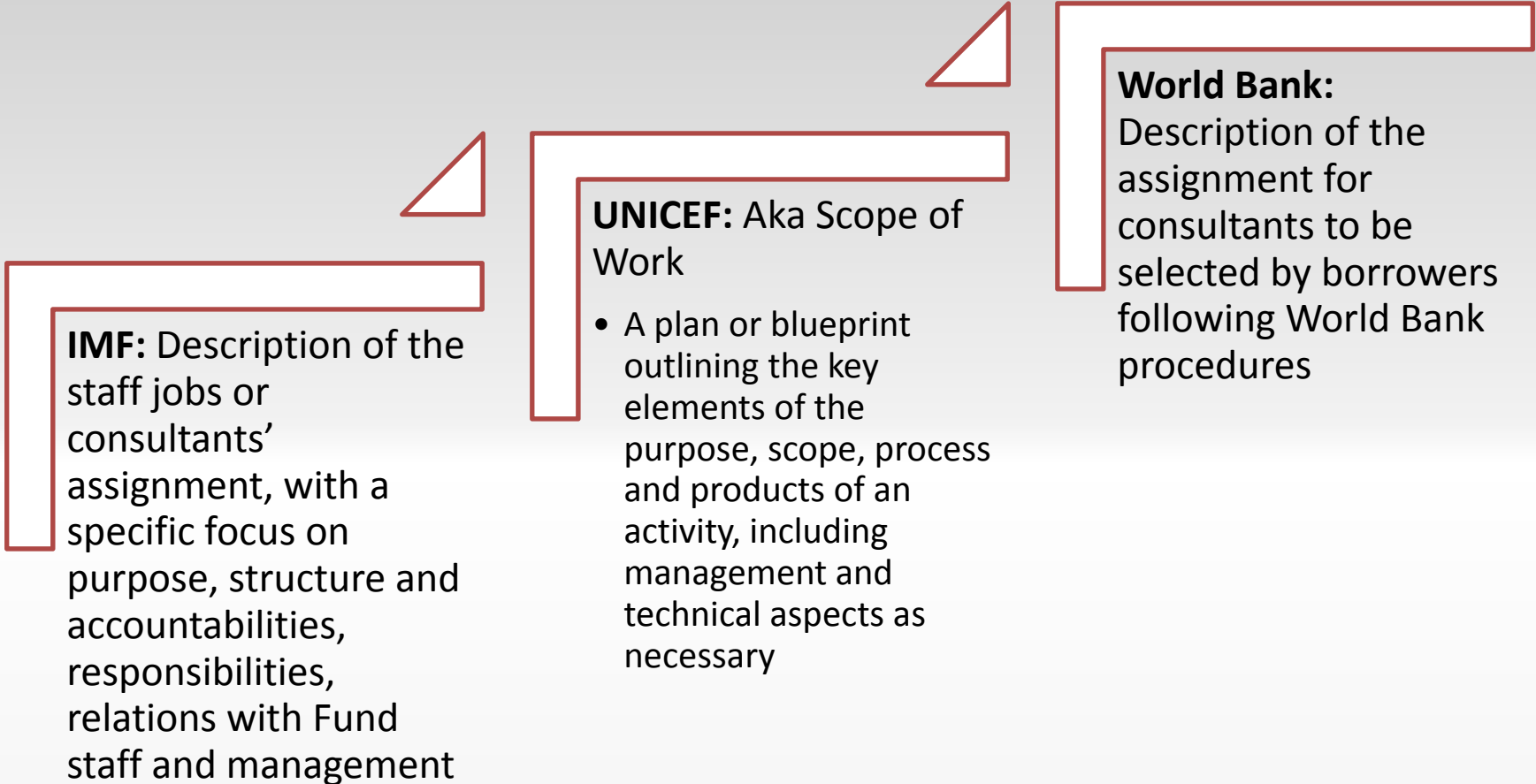**Interest in increasing portfolio of international development evaluations**

Perception of poor TORs

- Short turn around time for proposals
- Rushed start dates
- Short evaluation timeline
- Strict familiarity/experience requirements
- Rigid guidelines for evaluation conduct

Lack of research
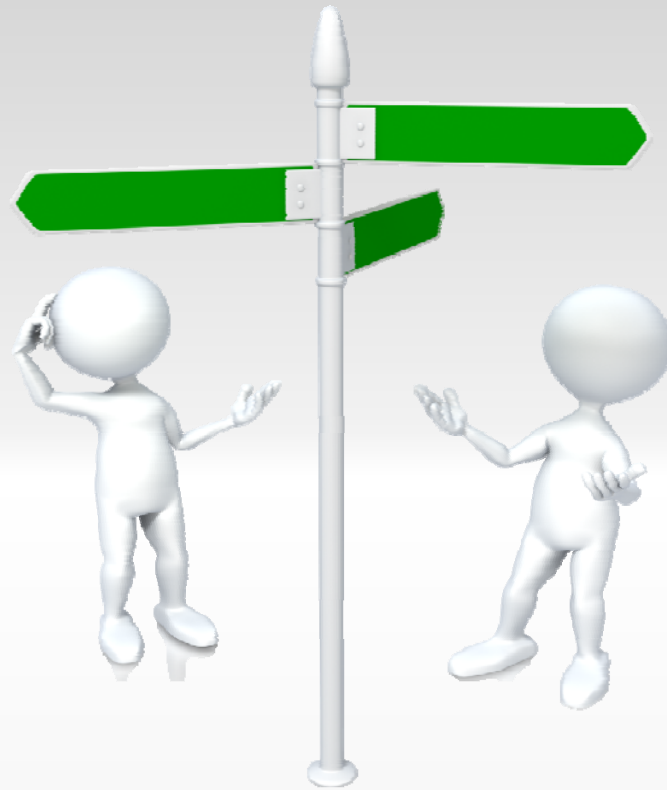
TORs defined

IMF: Description of the staff jobs or consultants' assignment, with a specific focus on purpose, structure and accountabilities, responsibilities, relations with Fund staff and management

UNICEF: Aka Scope of Work

- A plan or blueprint outlining the key elements of the purpose, scope, process and products of an activity, including management and technical aspects as necessary

World Bank: Description of the assignment for consultants to be selected by borrowers following World Bank procedures

RFPs defined

World Bank:

A written solicitation used when the Bank wants the option of making an award on initial proposals or by conducting discussions with the vendor.
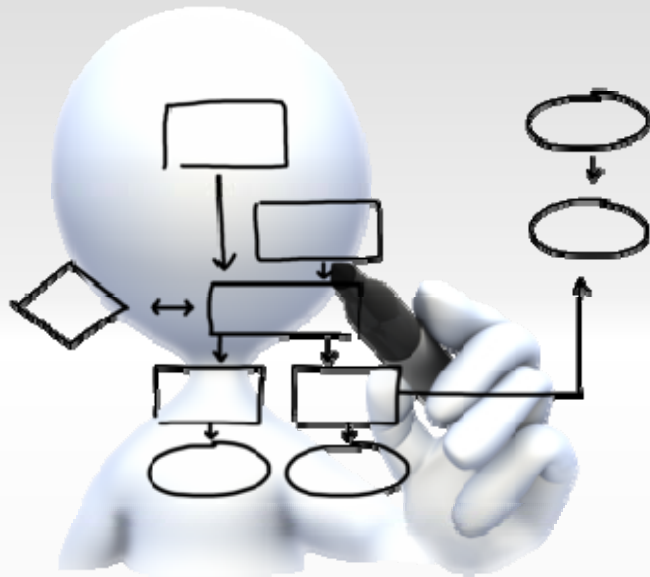
Muller (2003): Allows the selection of a vendor providing a service or product needed by the entity issuing the RFP.
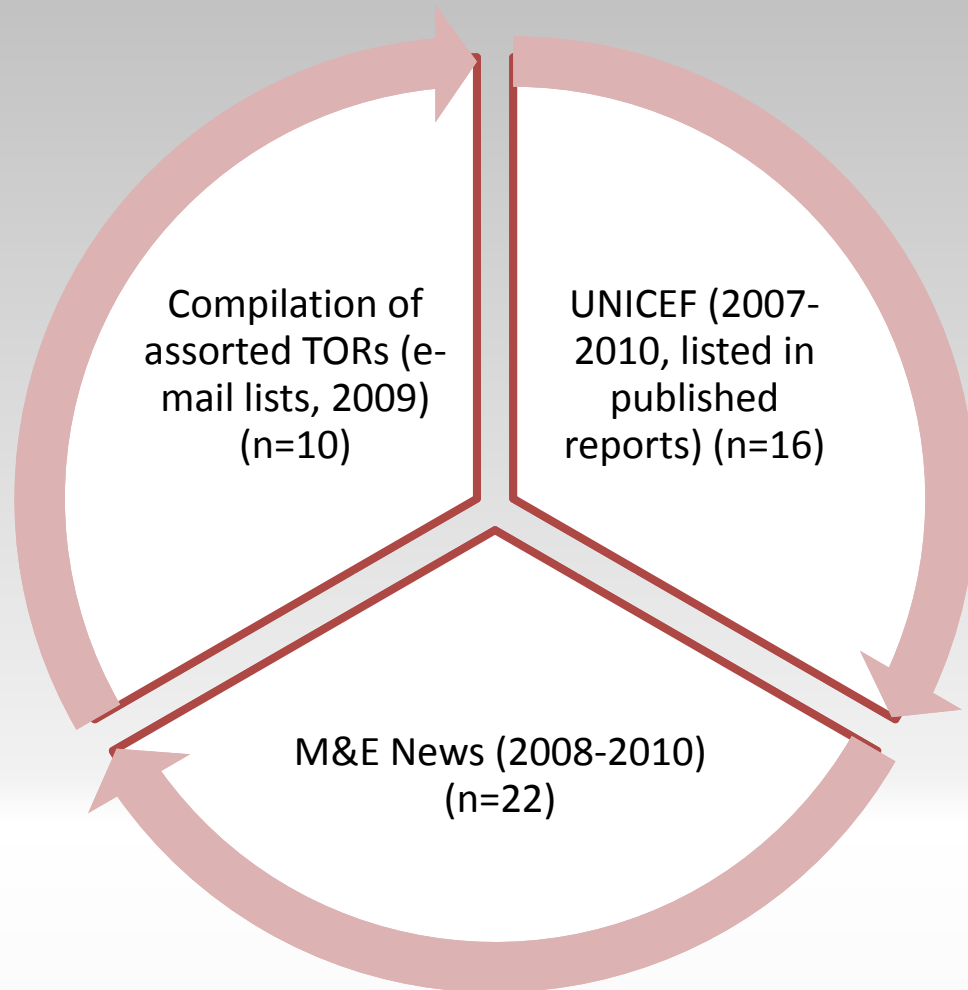
Cartwright (1999):

A documentation device that describes what an institution wants and how vendors should present proposals to provide the items requested.
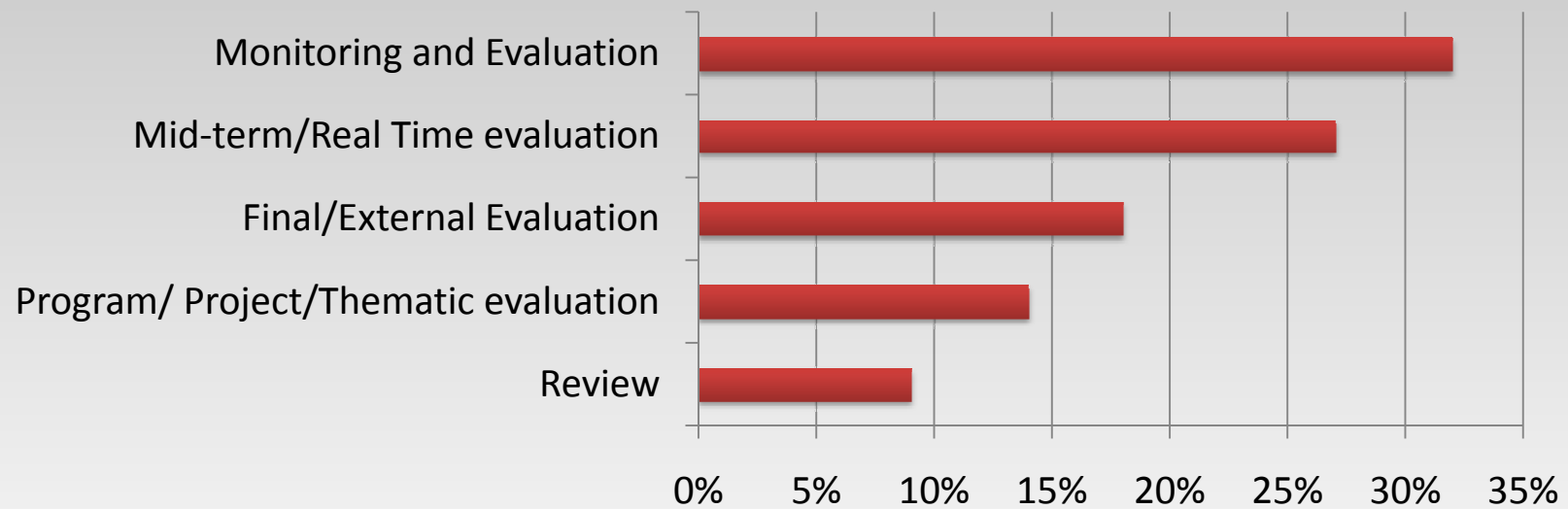
Methodology

- 2 coders analyzed each sample, cross-checked by 2 additional coders
- Coded for:
  - Timing for evaluation proposal
  - Evaluation timeline (start date and duration)
  - Evaluation type (e.g., midterm, final)
  - Evaluator qualifications
  - Methodology
  - Evaluation criteria
 - Evaluation questions

Samples

Three sets of evaluation TORs

Compilation of assorted TORs (e-mail lists, 2009) (n=10)

UNICEF (2007-2010, listed in published reports) (n=16)
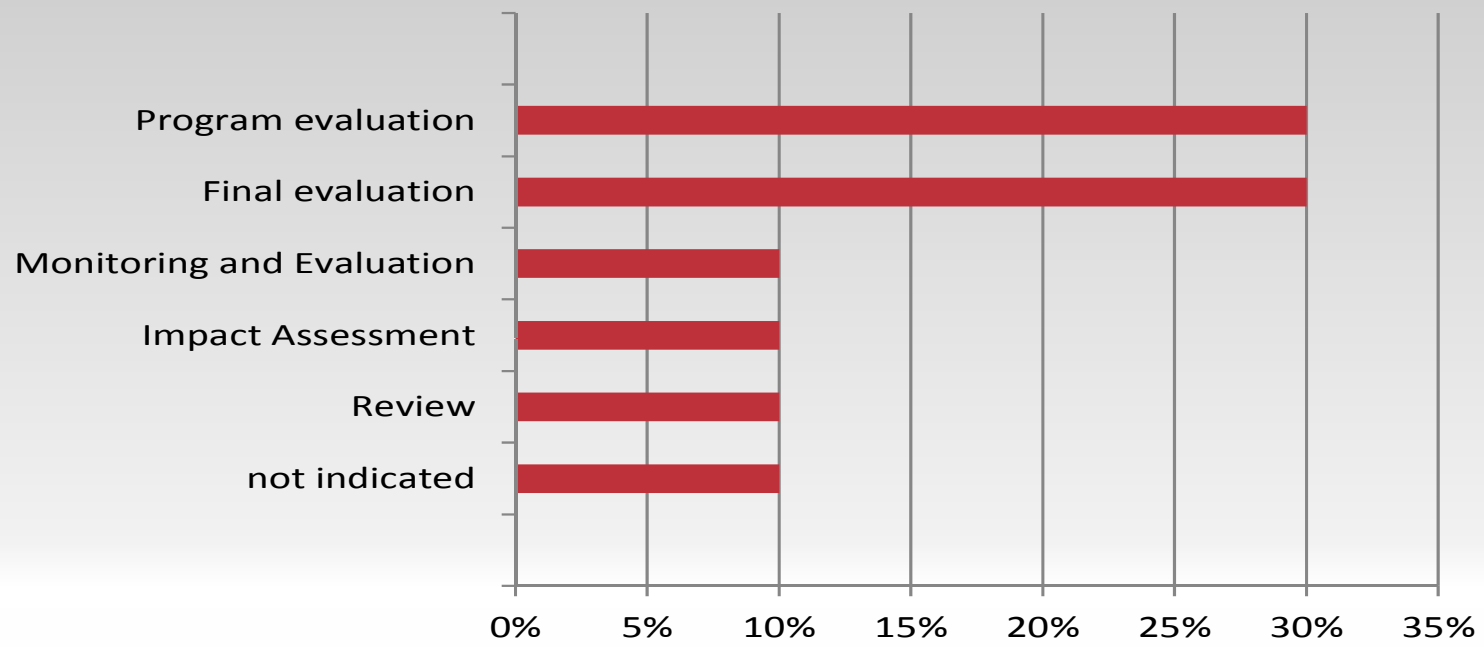
M&E News (2008-2010) (n=22)

M&E News

Year	# of evaluation reports with TOR attached	# of evaluation reports without TOR attached	Total # of evaluation reports
2007	6	6	12
2008	7	7	14
2009	3	9	12
Total	16	22	38

Since 2010, evaluation reports do not include the original TORs

UNICEF
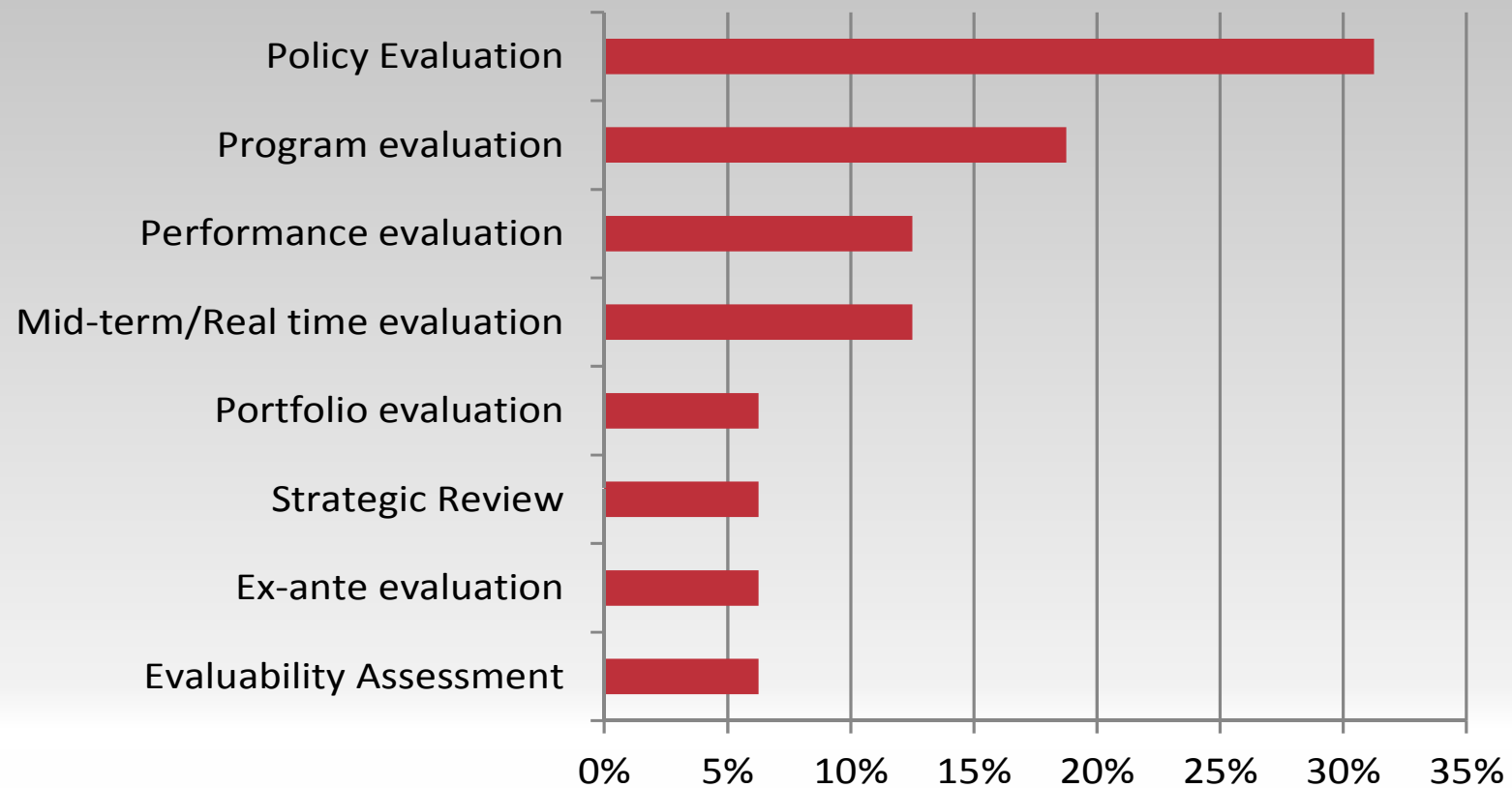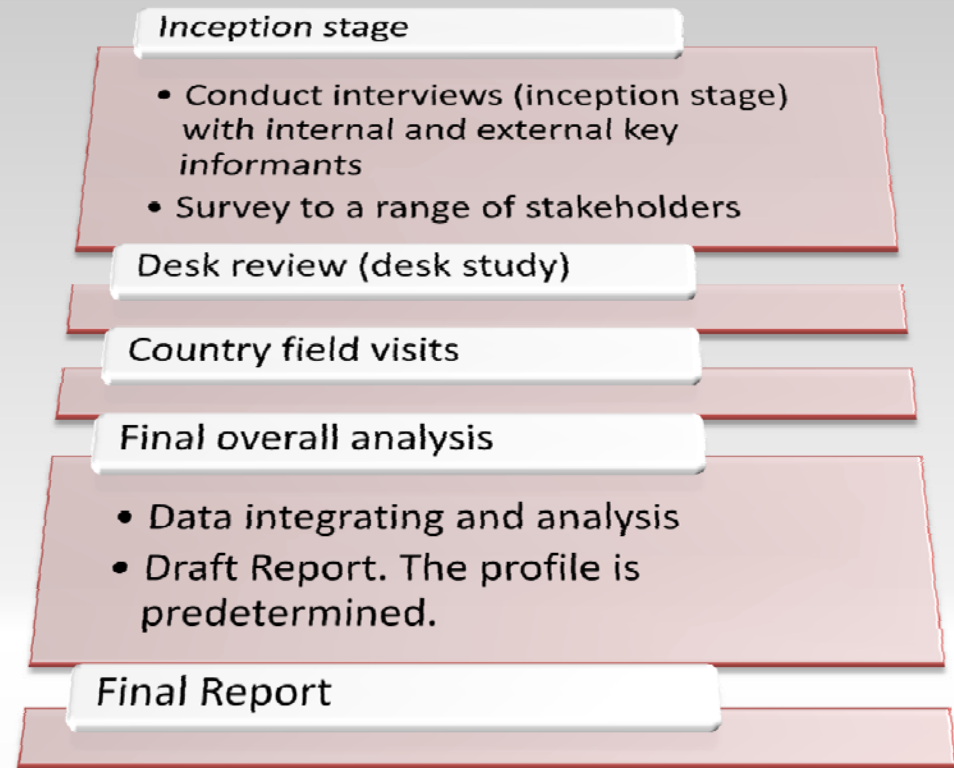
UNICEF

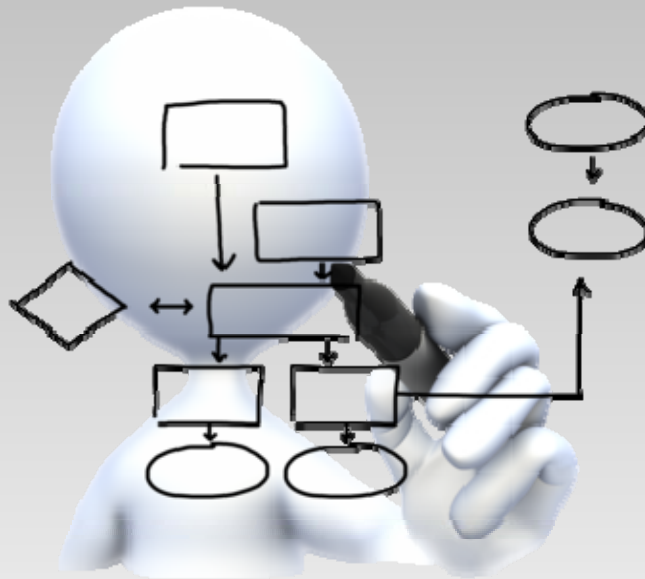**Compilation from e-mail lists**

Methodologies

82% suggested a methodology to be followed by evaluators.

Only 28% of these indicated flexibility to change the methodology.

The figure shows common methodological framework.

Inception stage
- Conduct interviews (inception stage) with internal and external key informants
- Survey to a range of stakeholders

Desk review (desk study)

Country field visits

Final overall analysis
- Data integrating and analysis
- Draft Report. The profile is predetermined.

Final Report

M&E News:
Desired Methodologies

Only one TOR suggested flexibility with the methodology

All others mandated a methodology and prescribed the evaluation process

UNICEF:
Mandated Methodologies

None of these TORs suggested which methodology to be used, but tasks were well-defined

Compilation from e-mail lists: Methodological Liberty

Criteria

•35% explicitly indicated the DAC criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability) completely or partially

•50% included a participatory approach in the evaluation design stage

•Only 9% included a gender approach

•Just one indicated both approaches
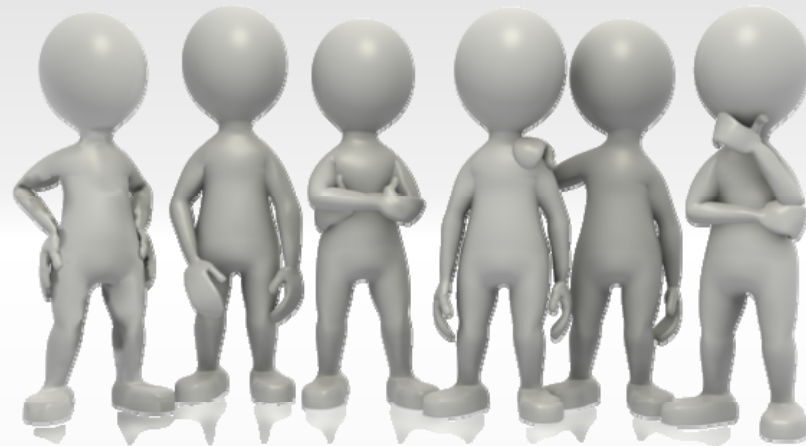
M&E News:
Criteria

- 69% explicitly indicated the DAC criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability) completely or partially
- 31% requested a participatory approach in the evaluation design
- 50% of them requested a gender approach
- 4 requested both approaches

UNICEF: Criteria

- Only 1 out of 10 TORs mentioned the DAC criteria
- No TOR mentioned participatory or gender approaches

Compilation from e-mail lists: Criteria

Timelines

	Period of time to submit a proposal	Period of time from submission to start date	Duration of the evaluation
Mean	17.3	27.4	66.6
Standard Deviation	6.5	30.8	44.7
Median	16.5	18.0	50.0
Minimum	5	1	17
Maximum	30	106	180
Number of cases	22	18	21

Time for decision-making for selection within this time frame

M&E News: Time Frames

	Duration of the evaluation
Mean	175.2
Standard Deviation	128.6
Median	131.5
Minimum	15.0
Maximum	480.0
Number of cases	16

Period of time to submit a proposal and time from submission to project start date could not be determined

UNICEF:
Time Frames

	Period of time to submit a proposal	Period of time from submission to start date	Duration of the evaluation
Mean	12.3		98.7
Standard Deviation	7.1		93.3
Median	13		65.0
Minimum	0.0		24.0
Maximum	24.0		270.0
Number of cases	7 of 10		6 of 10

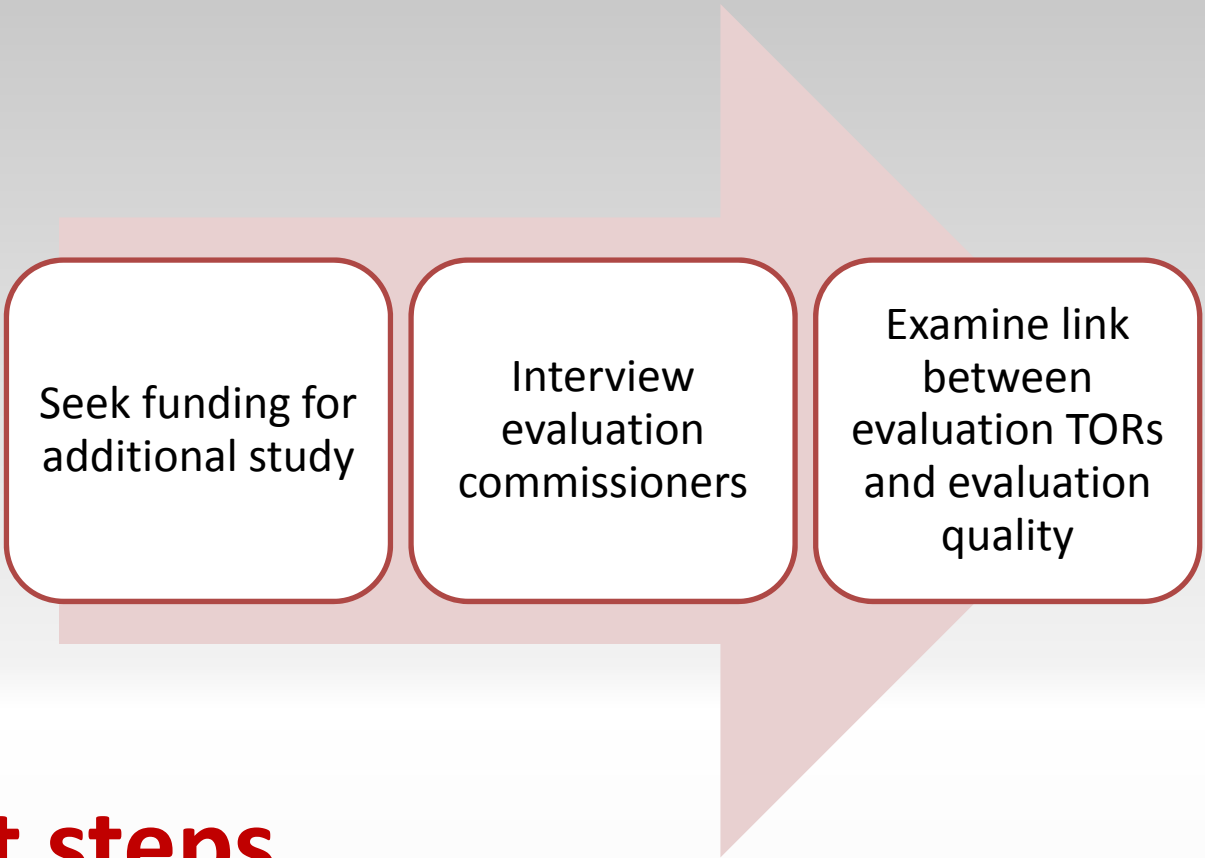# Compilation from e-mail lists: Time Frames

Small sample

Convenience sample

• Excludes TORs distributed by other means

Zero budget

No analysis of link between TOR and evaluation quality (at this time)

Limitations of the assessment

Seek funding for additional study

Interview evaluation commissioners

Examine link between evaluation TORs and evaluation quality

Next steps

Questions for Discussion

1. How can TORs be improved?
2. What is the link between evaluation TORs and evaluation quality?
3. What is a realistic timeframe for (proposal submission, evaluation start date, evaluation duration)?
4. When does providing suggestions for the conduct of an evaluation impede an evaluator's control over the evaluation process?
5. Are there objectivity concerns when requiring evaluators to have intimate familiarity or experience with the program being evaluated?
6. What options do evaluators have when responding to rigid TORs (e.g., turn them down, offer suggestions)?