

GUIDELINE FOR APPLYING THE CLIMATE ECOSYSTEM HEALTH CRITERION IN DESIGNING, COMMISSIONING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATIONS

EvalforEarth-APEA Webinar

22 APRIL 2026



planning, monitoring
& evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Background

Growing global recognition of the threats posed by climate change and ecosystem degradation

Impacts are unevenly distributed, with the poorest and most vulnerable most affected

Increasing awareness that people and natural ecosystems are interdependent.

Human activities, especially unsustainable consumption and production, are major drivers of the crisis.

Urgent need for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient development pathways

South Africa Climate Change Framework



Foundation of South Africa's National Evaluation System (NES)



- ◆ Promotes evidence-informed decision-making.

Embeds:

- Transformative Equity (TE)
- Climate & Ecosystem Health (CEH)

Strengthens:

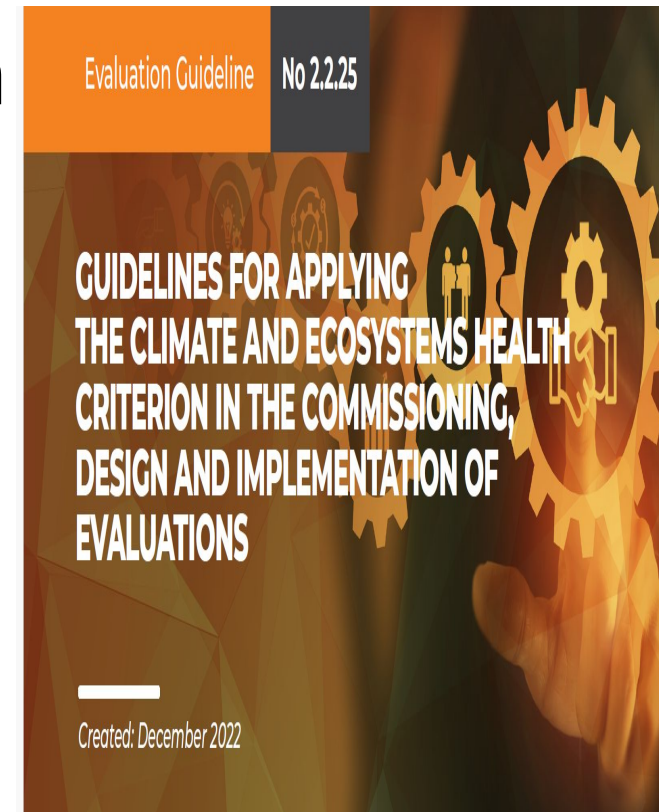
- Evaluation quality and use
- Capacity and professionalisation

- ◆ Supports adaptive and responsive governance

✓ Supports adaptive and responsive governance

Climate and Ecosystems Health Criterion




- The purpose of this guideline is to provide technical guidance on how to apply the Climate and Ecosystem Health (CEH) criterion in the commissioning, design, and implementation of evaluations.
- It introduces the CEH criterion to assess:
 - Whether an intervention degrades, maintains, or regenerates ecosystems
 - How climate and ecosystem changes affect intervention outcomes
 - Whether the intervention strengthens adaptive capacity and resilience
- The guideline aims to embed CEH considerations alongside the OECD DAC criteria in evaluation processes, targeting government M&E staff and evaluators of government programmes and policies



Climate and Ecosystem Health (CEH)



Key Questions CEH Helps Us Answer:

-  Are we **degrading or restoring** the natural environment?
-  How is **climate change** affecting interventions and outcomes?
-  Are **systems and communities** becoming more resilient and able to adapt?

CEH refers to the condition and resilience of the Earth's climate system and natural ecosystems, and how they interact with human activities and development interventions.

Criterion	Climate and ecosystems health (CEH) – does the intervention degrade or regenerate CEH and how will it be affected by changes in CEH?
Dimensions to assess/ track	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The impacts (degenerative, neutral, regenerative) on CEH of <u>the resources consumed and the waste/pollution generated in the implementation of the intervention</u>; 2. <u>The impacts of climate change and ecosystem degradation on the operation, outcomes and sustainability of the intervention</u>; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible direct effects of extreme weather events and disasters (e.g. floods or wildfires); drought; soil degradation; disrupted water, sanitation, energy and food supplies; forced displacement; or unrest and conflict. 3. The extent to which the intervention design facilitates or inhibits the capacity of the intervention and its beneficiaries <u>to adapt to the effects of climate change and ecosystem degradation</u>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the intervention increase adaptive capacity and resilience of the intervention, its beneficiaries or other stakeholders, to withstand the damage from disasters, heatwaves, droughts etc. This could be immediate (e.g. dealing with a disaster); a short-term measure (e.g. planting crops that can withstand droughts or higher temperatures; medium-term,
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How detrimental practices can be reduced or eradicated and what new practices can be introduced that could make positive contributions to CEH (mitigation and regeneration); • How the adaptive capacity of the intervention and its beneficiaries can be strengthened
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Climate health” refers to global temperatures returning to a safe level; • “Ecosystems health” refers to the capacity of ecosystems to remain stable, sustainable and resilient to external influences thereby supporting a diversity of life forms and being able to provide key benefits to society such as the provision of clean water and food.

Why CEH criterion matter

Climate risks are already affecting programme outcomes—whether we measure them or not.

Traditional evaluations often do not adequately capture environmental impacts.

CEH helps us move towards a more holistic and systems-based understanding.

It strengthens sustainability, policy coherence, and long-term impact.

Key Roles of **CEH** in Evaluation



Assess how interventions impact and depend on ecosystems



Identify risks and vulnerabilities linked to climate change



Evaluate inclusion of adaptation and mitigation measures



Strengthen resilience and sustainability of interventions



Inform better design and decision-making



Act as a catalyst for systemic change

Driving systemic change for a sustainable future

Climate Ecosystem Health: Principles

Those responsible for the commissioning of the evaluation have a vital role to play in infusing the ToRs and evaluation design with principles appropriate to CEH.

Apply a systems-thinking approach

Promote transformational and regenerative practices

Ensure inclusion and stakeholder participation

Consider intended and unintended impacts

Build awareness and capacity for CEH

Application in Evaluations

Integrate CEH into:

- Terms of Reference (ToRs)
- Evaluation design
- Data collection and analysis

Engage stakeholders early and meaningfully.

Address power dynamics and inclusion

Communicate findings in accessible formats

CEH Strengthens Evaluation Relevance and Quality



**Systemic &
Forward-Looking
Analysis**



**Climate Resilience
& Sustainability**



**Supports Climate
Resilience and
Sustainability**

REQUIRES:



Capacity Building



**Stakeholder
Engagement**



**Intentional
Integration**

For a Resilient & Sustainable Future

A photograph of the National Parliament Building in South Africa, featuring two large domes and a central flagpole, with the text "THANK YOU" overlaid in white.

THANK YOU