Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

SYS
PONS

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS REPORT

RAPID EVIDENCE QUALITY ASSESSMENT 2025

Preliminary Key Findings

30.06.2026

AUTHORS

Syspons GmbH

Lennart Raetzell,
Lena Häberlein,
Franziska Lammers-Engelbrecht

info@syspons.com

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
Economic Cooperation and Development Division
Evaluation Unit (WEQA)

Johannes Schneider,
Nicola Malacarne

we.evaluation@seco.admin.ch

1 Introduction

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs' Economic Cooperation and Development Division (SECO-WE) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), with support from Syspons, developed the **Rapid Evidence Quality Assessment (REQA)**, a rubric-based tool applied retrospectively to all evaluation reports to assess the methodological robustness of evaluative evidence. REQA rates six core criteria (adequacy, transparency, triangulation, appropriateness, strength of causal claims, and usability of recommendations) on a 0 to 4 scale, focusing specifically on the inherent evidence value of evaluation reports rather than structural compliance. Beyond quality control, REQA serves as a learning and accountability tool, making evaluation strengths and limitations visible to decision-makers and signalling quality expectations to evaluators over time. The ratings are conducted by external experts of Syspons on an annual basis. REQA is not used to assess project performance.

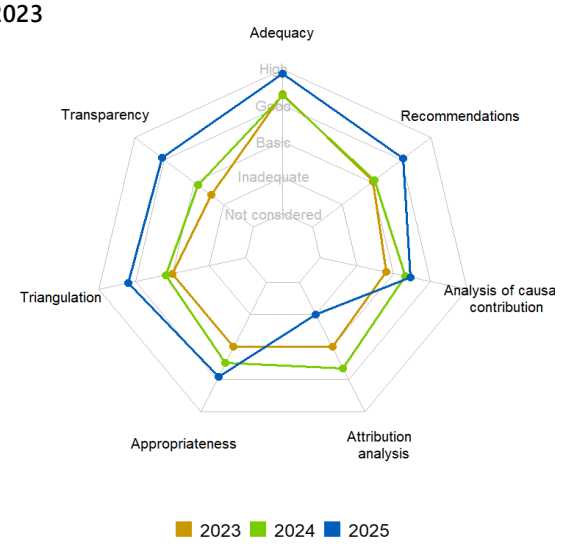
The assessment results of SECO-WE's 2025 evaluation reports are presented in this overview. Detailed, contextualised and final results will be published in SECO-WE's Performance & Quality Report 2025-26.

For more information on the REQA method, see SECO-WE's Performance & Quality Report 2023-24.

2 Key Results

The analysis revealed a significant improvement in the quality of the evaluation reports over the last three years.

Figure 1: Development of average REQA scores since 2023

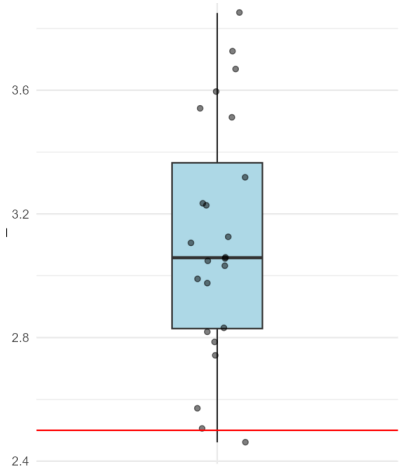


- Overall, we see a slight improvement from 2023 to 2024 and a significant improvement from 2024 to 2025.
- This is particularly true in the areas of transparency, triangulation, and recommendations.
- Notably, the reports are more complete: In 2025, all examined reports include a dedicated section on methodology and recommendations.
- Whether this can be considered a consistent improvement will have to be determined in next year's assessment.

However, the range of quality among the evaluations remains wide.

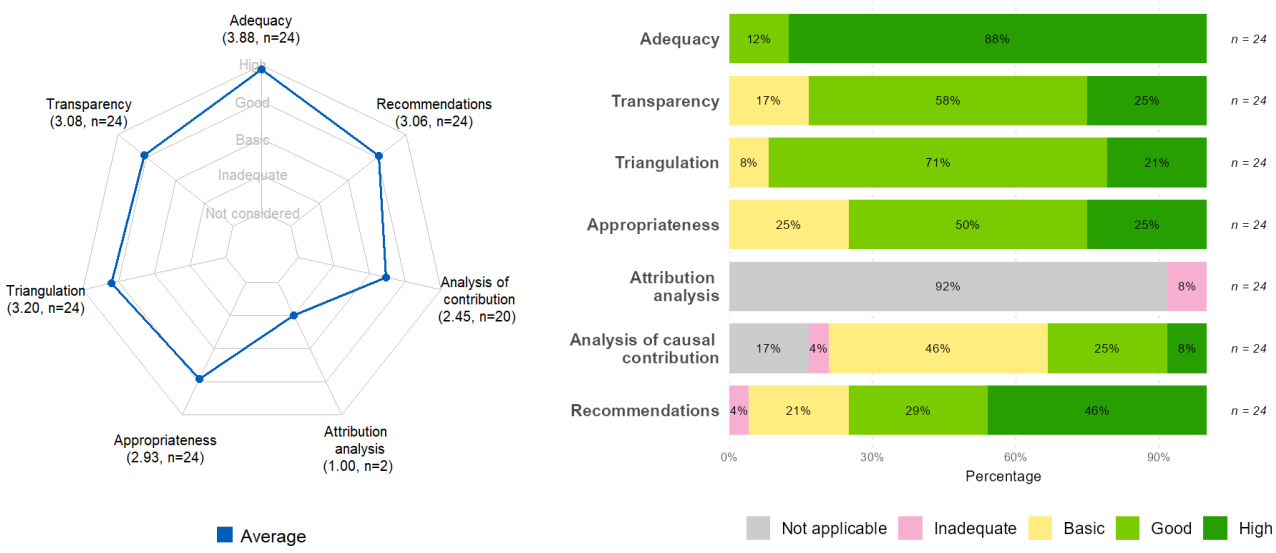
- All reports score at least as "basic" on average with the majority of reports performing well in the midfield.
- Approximately one fourth of reports are suitable to serve as good practice examples.

Figure 2: Distribution of the overall REQA Score in the 2025 sample on a scale from 1 (inadequate) to 4 (high)



Despite notable progress, there is room for improvement, particularly in making recommendations more useful and causal analysis more robust.

Figure 3: Average REQA scores 2025 (left) and scores per criterion (right)



- The quality of the recommendations has improved significantly. Yet, this is still an area where the greatest room for improvement remains in terms of transparently linking them to findings, explicitly addressing recommendations to those stakeholders responsible, and setting out a prioritised roadmap for their implementation.
- While the number of evaluations, which explicitly analyse project contribution to outcomes or impacts, has increased from 5 in 2023, 13 in 2024 to 20 in 2025, the number of attribution analyses remains low. The intention to use causal analysis methods is clearly evident. However, the application and quality of analyses of contribution and attribution remain relatively weak.

Overall, the results of the 2025 assessment highlight promising progress towards greater methodological rigour and transparency in SECO-WE's evaluation portfolio.

3 REQA Results by Project

Table 1: List of evaluations assessed with their respective REQA ratings

Number WEQA	Evaluation Title	Year	Adequacy	Transparency	Triangulation	Appropriateness	Attribution claims	Contribution claims	Recommendations
WEHU 228	Ex-Post Impact Evaluation of the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme	2025	High	High	Good	Good	Not applicable	High	High
WEHU 229	Ex-Post Evaluation of Sustainable Cocoa Production Program (SCPP) in Indonesia	2025	High	High	High	High	Not applicable	High	Good
WEHU 230	External Evaluation of the Swiss Programme on Capacities for Trade Policies (C4TP) in the last Year of Implementation	2025	Good	Basic	Good	Good	Not applicable	Basic	Good
WEHU 231	Mid-term Evaluation – Sustainable Landscape Program Indonesia	2025	High	High	Good	High	Not applicable	Good	High
WEHU 232	Mid-term and Impact Evaluation (MTE) of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO)	2025	High	High	Good	High	Not applicable	Basic	Good
WEHU 233	TISS II Mid-Term Evaluation	2025	High	Good	Good	Basic	Not applicable	Basic	Good
WEIF 137	Outcome Accelerator Inaugural Phase Evaluation	2025	High	Good	Basic	Good	Not applicable	Not applicable	Basic
WEIF 138	Mid-term Evaluation of the SDG Impact Finance Initiative	2025	High	Good	High	Basic	Not applicable	Basic	High
WEIF 139	Evaluation of the IFC Green Bond Technical Assistance Program	2025	High	Basic	Good	High	Not applicable	Good	Basic
WEIF 140	External mid-term review of the Technical Assistance Programme for Small and Medium Enterprises in South Africa	2025	High	Good	Good	Good	Not applicable	Basic	Good
WEIF 141	Impact Evaluation for the SECO-World Bank Group Secured Transactions Program in Colombia	2025	High	Good	Good	Basic	Inadequate	Basic	High

WEIF 142	Evaluation of 'Better Than Cash Alliance' strategy, 2022–2024	2025	High	High	Good	Good	Not applicable	Good	High
WEIN 100	Energy Advisory Services Evaluation of Smart Energy Municipalities Project (SEMP) Albania	2025	High	Good	Good	Good	Not applicable	Good	Inadequate
WEIN 104	Energy Advisory Services External Evaluation of MEEMP Serbia	2025	High	Good	Basic	Basic	Not applicable	Good	Good
WEIN 101	Executive Summary - Post Delivery Assessment of Water Sector Project Impacts	2025	High	Basic	Good	Basic	Inadequate	Basic	Basic
WEIN 102	External Evaluation of the Integrated Urban Development Project – Phase II	2025	High	High	Good	High	Not applicable	Not applicable	High
WEIN 103	(5-year) Independent Evaluation of the Multidonor Trust Fund for the Development of Sustainable Cities in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIT)	2025	High	Good	High	Good	Not applicable	Not applicable	High
WEIN 95	External Evaluation of the Local Economic Development Support Programme in iLembe District, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa	2025	High	Good	Good	Good	Not applicable	Good	High
WEIN 99	External, End-of-Project Evaluation of the Municipal Infrastructure Programme (MIP) III/IV in Albania	2025	Good	Basic	Good	Good	Not applicable	Inadequate	Good
WEIN/WEMU 97	Evaluation of the Technical Assistance Supporting Municipalities in South Africa through the ICBF and the IMDF - INCA Portfolio Managers	2025	High	Good	Good	Good	Not applicable	Basic	Basic
WEIN/WEMU /WEIF 98	End of Term Evaluation for CSP 2 and Design Evaluation for CSP 3	2025	High	Good	Good	Good	Not applicable	Basic	High
WEMU 123	Evaluation of the Strengthening African Supreme Audit Institutions (SASAI) Programme, Phase I	2025	Good	Good	High	Good	Not applicable	Not applicable	High
WEMU 124	IMF Fiscal Reforms in Southeast Europe Program: Phase III (SEE III) Mid-term external evaluation	2025	High	Good	Good	Basic	Not applicable	Basic	High
WEMU 125	Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism Thematic Fund -PHASE III Mid-Term Evaluation	2025	High	Good	High	High	Not applicable	Basic	Basic