How to write recommendations

✓ Recommendations are concise but detailed, direct but non-judgemental and, above all, clear

✓ Recommendations are no more than 2 pages long

✓ Recommendations are presented with bullet points rather than numbers

✓ ONLY make recommendations if there is something concrete to say; general observations should go in the conclusions or evaluation notes

Focus on your target audience:

→ First, bear in mind who you are trying to communicate with
→ Then, delineate your messages very clearly – maybe even categorising recommendations according to stakeholder

Formulate recommendations clear, short, direct and feasible:

Clarity

→ Communicate key messages and actions that you are suggesting
→ Make them so clear that even readers who didn't read the full report understand
→ Don't mix conclusions with recommendations (conclusions are what you are surmising on the basis of your evaluation; recommendations are what you are advising others to do on the basis of the evaluation)

Brevity

→ Keep in mind that short messages have the most impact
→ Have the courage to say what you mean
→ But don't sacrifice clarity for brevity (some level of detail is needed so that a reader can act on recommendations)
→ Be directive but not prescriptive

Directness

→ Avoid generic expressions of wishful thinking ("All sectors need to work together in future emergencies")
→ Make clear suggestions for practical action (maybe something like "Create a strategy for responding to an emergency that has input from every sector, and is produced collaboratively")

Feasibility

→ Strike a balance between being realistic and make clear what really needs to be done at a more macro level
→ Remember that even if change may not be immediately actionable, the fact that recommendations call for it can set the wheels in motion
→ Note that recommendations are not a shopping list but a practical guideline for action in resource-limited countries

Beware of systemic issues:

→ If a problem seems systemic, address it at the start of the recommendations and don't mention it again
→ Say something new, otherwise readers will switch off

Structure recommendations clearly:

→ Categorise either according to stakeholder or by theme
→ Use as few subheadings as possible
→ Avoid abbreviations