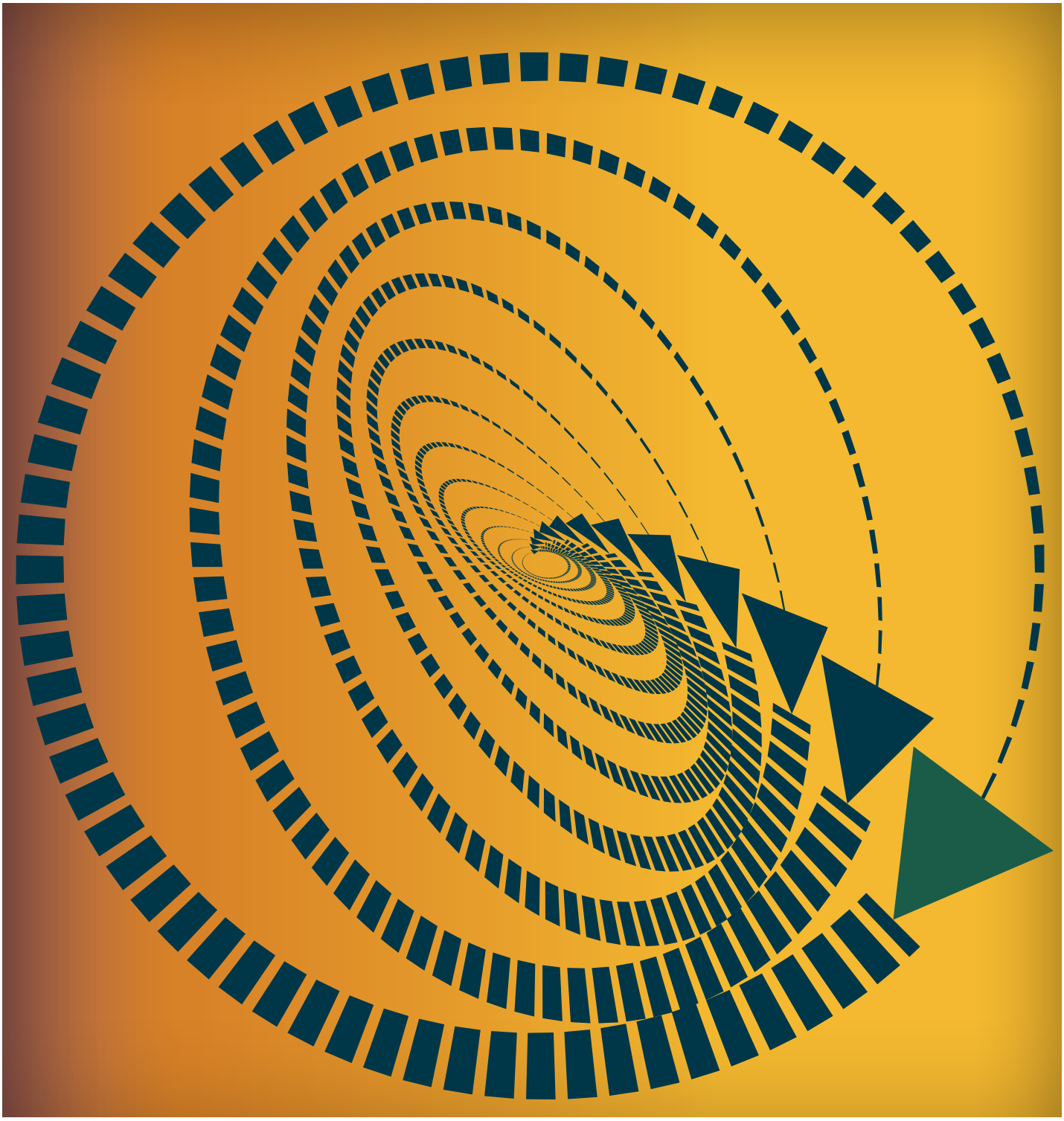

UNFPA
EVALUATION POLICY
2024

Driving evidence-based actions
Delivering rights and choices for all

UNFPA

IEO
Independent Evaluation Office

Summary

The UNFPA evaluation policy is the result of extensive consultations with key stakeholders. The policy outlines evaluation principles and procedures; sets out roles and responsibilities; describes contributions to system-wide, inter-agency and joint evaluations and national evaluation capacity development; highlights human and financial resource requirements and funding mechanisms; and concludes with a note on the policy's implementation, reporting and future review.

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Preface

As we deliver on the goals of our Strategic Plan, evaluation plays a vital role at UNFPA, helping us understand what works and what does not and enhancing overall accountability.

I welcome the UNFPA Executive Board's endorsement of our 2024 evaluation policy. The policy provides clear direction on the planning, conduct, and use of evaluations at UNFPA to support evidence-based interventions. The endorsement coincides with the rebranding of the Evaluation Office as the 'Independent Evaluation Office'.

UNFPA's new evaluation policy builds on its predecessor and is informed by the findings and recommendations of the independent peer review of the evaluation function carried out in 2023. The policy was developed through a consultative process that resulted in a framework that aligns with an evolving UNFPA and fast-changing world.

As we further strengthen the evaluation function, I encourage all UNFPA staff to take note of the roles and responsibilities outlined in this policy.

By enhancing our evaluation capabilities, I am confident that this policy will help UNFPA deliver more effectively and efficiently in support of the ICPD agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Natalia Kanem
Executive Director
UNFPA

Foreword

As UNFPA navigates a complex mandate in a dynamic landscape, a robust and independent evaluation function guides towards stronger results, evidence-based actions and enhanced accountability.

Aligned with the organization's needs and evolving contexts, the evaluation policy 2024 outlines the purpose and scope of the evaluation function. It covers centralized and decentralized evaluation functions, extending to all operational contexts, including humanitarian settings. The policy serves as a guide for planning, managing, conducting, and utilizing evaluations. It also establishes principles, norms and accountability for evaluation, laying the foundation for an even stronger evaluation culture.

The policy gives a fresh identity and brand to the Evaluation Office, now named the 'Independent Evaluation Office', reaffirming the independence and credibility of the evaluation function. The policy also promotes better coordination with other oversight functions and introduces steps to strengthen the independence, quality and coverage of decentralized and humanitarian evaluations.

The policy remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing the use of evaluation for evidence-based decision-making, accountability, and learning. It underscores the importance of meaningfully engaging young people in evaluations and developing the capacity of youth in evaluation. The ongoing commitment to enhancing UN coherence, strengthening multistakeholder partnerships, and fostering innovation, including by leveraging Artificial Intelligence, remains a key focus of the evaluation function.

The new policy builds on the 2019 policy, informed by both the independent peer review of the evaluation function and extensive consultations. I'm grateful for the rich engagement and valuable contributions of stakeholders during the policy development phase and urge a continued commitment to its effective implementation. I look forward to continued collaboration in the organization-wide roll-out of the evaluation policy.

Marco Segone

Director, Independent Evaluation Office
UNFPA

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Overview

1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation policy

The evaluation policy sets out the purpose and scope of evaluation in UNFPA, provides definitions, principles and norms, and outlines roles and responsibilities for the evaluation function. It guides UNFPA staff and partners regarding the organization's requirements for the planning, conduct and use of evaluations. The policy applies to all levels of the organization.

The evaluation policy serves the mission of UNFPA, as set out in its strategic plan and pursuant to the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).[1] The policy supports the development of a culture of evaluation for improved performance, continuous learning and adaptability, and strengthened accountability.

The policy is aligned with the Charter of the United Nations,[2] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,[3] the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[4] humanitarian principles,[5] and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[6] and includes a commitment to human rights, disability inclusion and gender equality. It responds to the call for rigorous, timely and reliable

1 A/CONF.171/13/Rev.1.

2 United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, Chapter IX, art. 55 c.

3 United Nations General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249.

4 UN General Assembly resolution 61/106.

5 UN General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 58/114.

6 UN General Assembly resolution 70/1.

evaluative evidence to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The policy also fulfils the requirements of the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system (QCPR).[7] Finally, the policy supports efforts to further strengthen national evaluation capacity development, in compliance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/237 and in keeping with General Assembly resolution 77/283 on strengthening voluntary national reviews through country-led evaluation.

The policy is guided by the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the standards for evaluating humanitarian response developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).[8] These norms and standards ensure independence, impartiality, credibility and usefulness, as well as full engagement with stakeholders and accountability to affected populations in transparent evaluation processes. It is applicable across the organization's operational contexts, including humanitarian ones, while affording the necessary flexibility within a decentralized organization. It builds on and supersedes the previous evaluation policy.

The policy is also aligned with the UNFPA Oversight Policy,[9] which aims to encourage good governance, create the necessary environment of accountability and transparency in UNFPA and ensure that the organization operates effectively and efficiently while continuously improving its performance.

In fulfilment of its overarching goal, the UNFPA evaluation function is grounded in four complementary, mutually reinforcing purposes.

Evidence to inform development, humanitarian response and peace-responsive programming

Evaluation provides insights at all stages of interventions and in all contexts. Identifying what works and what does not, for whom, under what circumstances,

7 UN General Assembly resolution 75/233.

8 Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations, Process Guidelines, May 2018.

9 UNFPA Oversight Policy, January 2015.

and why, is crucial to ensuring the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of interventions.[10] It allows decision-makers to identify the most appropriate approaches, correct course, and measure results against intended goals while being responsive, agile and flexible within constantly evolving contexts. Evaluation provides both summative and formative insights in ways that are useful for present and future action.

Oversight and accountability

Evaluations provide an independent, impartial perspective on the work of UNFPA and entail management accountability to act on recommendations.

Organizational learning

Aggregating and sharing good practices and credible evaluative evidence supports organizational learning on how to achieve the best results. Together with other functions, evaluation helps the organization replicate successes, learn from mistakes, innovate solutions, and ensure continuous organizational improvement.

Empowerment of community, national and regional stakeholders

The human rights-based approach and principles of development effectiveness require that stakeholders at all levels have access to information and skills to interpret and interrogate the policies and programmes affecting their lives. This is recognized in General Assembly resolution 69/37 and realized through evaluation capacity development initiatives. It also requires examining inclusion, respect, resource access and power dynamics, especially for the most vulnerable.

1.2 Rationale for a revised policy

Since the endorsement of the 2019 evaluation policy, the environment in which UNFPA operates has changed significantly. The landscape in which evaluations are conducted has been transformed by a global pandemic, economic and food crises, protracted conflicts and implementation of wide-ranging global accords, including those on sustainable development (2030 Agenda); disaster risk reduction (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015 2030); climate change (Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change); and financing for development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development), among others. The 2020 QCPR reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with an emphasis on disaster risk reduction and human

10 In humanitarian contexts, relevance may be replaced by appropriateness, with coverage and connectedness also considered.

rights. All these global commitments provide guidance and direction to the evaluation function at UNFPA.

This policy also takes into consideration evaluation norms and standards that are updated periodically, and evaluation methods and approaches enhanced on a continual basis to address emerging needs. In addition, it aligns, to the extent possible, with the latest evaluation policies of partner United Nations agencies.

As set out in the 2019 evaluation policy, UNFPA in 2022 commissioned an independent peer review of the evaluation function by UNEG and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC). The peer review found that the evaluation function continued to strengthen since the approval of the 2019 evaluation policy, is highly valued in UNFPA and by the Executive Board, and that the Evaluation Office is respected across the organization for its professionalism and its added value in providing evaluative evidence to inform decision-making. Although relatively small, the evaluation function has cultivated a high profile within the United Nations development system through its commitment to system-wide, inter-agency and joint evaluations. However, the peer review also highlighted that the evaluation of humanitarian action needs more attention and that the relevance, quality and learning from decentralized evaluations could be further strengthened. The independent peer review formulated 11 recommendations, accepted by UNFPA, that have guided this revised evaluation policy.

Definitions of evaluation and evaluation types covered by the policy

UNFPA applies the UNEG definition of evaluation:

UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

"An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact and sustainability.[11] *An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders."* [12]

11 In humanitarian contexts, relevance may be replaced by appropriateness, with coverage and connectedness also considered.

12 United Nations Evaluation Group: Norms and standards for evaluation (2016).

UNFPA evaluations, which cover interventions and programmes funded by both regular and other resources, fall into two main categories:

Centralized evaluations

Commissioned by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)

These kinds of evaluations are typically undertaken by external independent evaluators; however, IEO may decide to conduct selected evaluations itself. Centralized evaluations assess issues of corporate strategic significance that contribute to achieving the goals of the strategic plan as well as development effectiveness, humanitarian response and organizational performance. Centralized evaluations also comprise evaluations of responses to selected major humanitarian crises where there is a significantly serious situation within a country – or across more than one country, regionally or globally – at a scale, complexity or urgency that overwhelms the response capacity of the national government or the UNFPA country or regional office and requires an exceptional level of corporate support to save lives and livelihoods. IEO presents centralized evaluations directly to the Executive Board or relevant stakeholders, without involvement of management or other parties.

Decentralized evaluations

Commissioned by country offices and regional offices as well as headquarters business units

Decentralized evaluations include, in addition to country programme evaluations (CPEs) and regional programme evaluations, programme and project evaluations (including joint evaluations) managed by the business units responsible for the programme or project being assessed. In humanitarian situations, decentralized evaluations also include evaluations of emergency responses where the scale, magnitude and level of complexity of the emergency is such that the country office can manage with existing resources while requiring limited or additional prioritized support from the regional office and headquarters.

UNFPA also needs early, formative and forward-looking exercises to remain agile, flexible and adaptive, aimed at keeping pace with a changing operating environment, emerging issues and stakeholders' knowledge needs. Accordingly, the function embraces exercises that apply an early evaluative lens, such as formative, adaptive, developmental or real-time evaluations, among others. It also produces meta-syntheses as well as institutional effectiveness evaluations that examine internal operations, support functions and corporate initiatives.

UNFPA is fully committed to supporting independent, system-wide evaluation mechanisms as well as inter-agency and joint evaluations with other United Nations organizations, both at centralized and decentralized levels. All evaluations, including those requested by donors, should comply with this policy.

Not included in the definition – and therefore not covered under the evaluation policy – are other analytical exercises that are neither independent nor evaluative. Such exercises include studies, research, monitoring, data analyses, and after-action reviews, as well as lesson-learning exercises. Evaluations may, nonetheless, include the data from these exercises as inputs while also seeking active collaboration with the functions that produce them to meet the organization's holistic evidence and learning needs.

Principles and norms

Consistent with international best practices in evaluation, several principles help to operationalize the broad definition of evaluation and thus underpin the specific details of this policy.

- **Shared leadership and accountability for evaluation.** Implementing the evaluation policy and fostering a strong evaluation culture are 'whole-of-organization' responsibilities that rely on strong collaboration between the evaluation function and the rest of the organization. This collaboration starts with senior leaders who support the function and thoughtfully implement the policy; it is complemented by clearly defined, role-appropriate accountabilities towards this end.

- **All sources of funding,** including other resources, should contribute to the evaluation function.

- **Universally shared values** of equity, justice, gender equality and respect for diversity underpin all evaluations. Further, they take into consideration factors and characteristics often associated with discrimination and exclusion, including gender, age, culture, ethnicity, race, language, religion, disability, location, migration status, socio-economic status and health status. Evaluations also examine the intersections and intersectionality across factors affecting a person's development.

- **Decentralization necessitates organizational coherence.** Evaluation staffing, funding and governance must enable each level of the organization to generate evaluative evidence that meets their learning needs while also contributing to the broader organizational accountability.

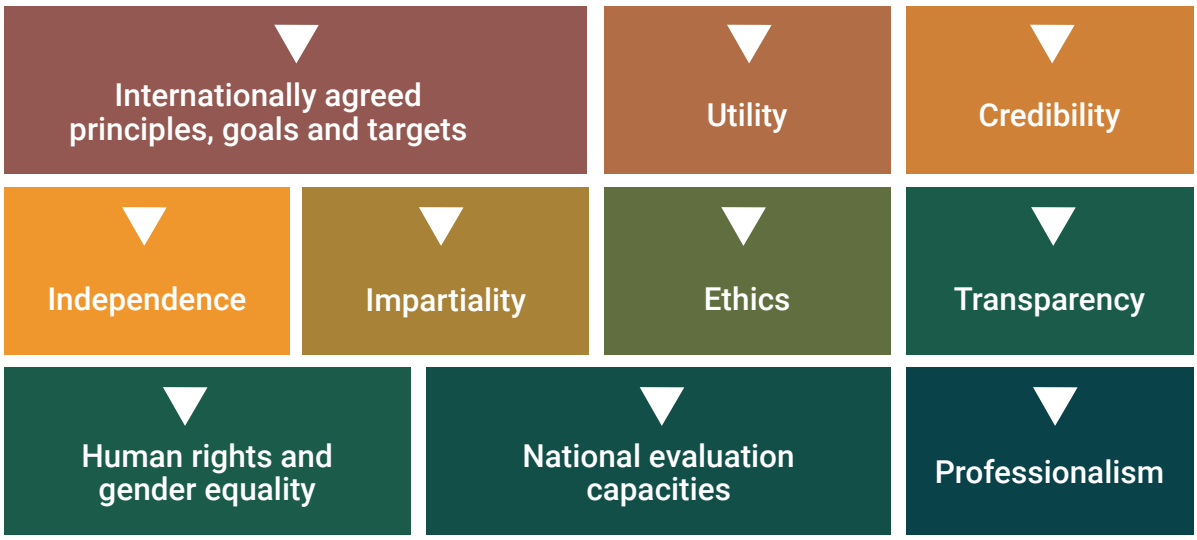
- **Efficiency in evaluation.** The drive for efficiency extends to the evaluation function itself, starting with evaluation planning processes that prioritize the most strategic relevant and useful topics using rigorous analysis as well as consultation. It also relates to its human and financial resources and its efforts to collaborate with other complementary functions. To remain relevant, evaluations are adaptive and innovative, and utilize advanced technologies, such as responsible and ethical artificial intelligence, and other innovative methods and approaches.

- **Stakeholder engagement and capacity development.** The commitment to national capacity development in evaluation is enhanced through multi-stakeholder partnerships that promote local ownership and values local knowledge, including of young people. Local ownership helps to meet the strategic plan principles of equity, leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, and gender equality. Evaluations adopt inclusive approaches, including meaningful engagement of young people, people with disabilities, as well as indigenous and marginalized communities, and integrate social and environmental dimensions. In humanitarian situations, evaluations are conducted in full respect of the UNFPA commitment to accountability to affected populations.

- **Coherence of evaluation functions in the United Nations system.** The report of the United Nations Secretary-General, Our Common Agenda, accelerates the implementation of existing agreements, including Repositioning of the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet.[13] UNFPA is committed to building a more networked, inclusive multilateral system, including by harmonizing and aligning its evaluations with the evaluation efforts of United Nations system partners (notably within the context of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks) and other development partners to better support countries to achieve sustainable development. This support includes working together more effectively at all levels and enhancing multi-stakeholder partnerships.

UNFPA evaluations adhere to the following evaluation norms, as outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016):

13 A/72/684-E/2018/7.



Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets

Within the United Nations system, it is the responsibility of evaluation managers and evaluators to uphold and promote, in their evaluation practice, the principles and values to which the United Nations is committed. They should respect, promote and contribute to the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Utility

In commissioning and conducting an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the findings, conclusions and recommendations to inform decisions and actions. Evaluations make relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, inform decision-making processes and provide accountability for results. Evaluations also generate knowledge and empower stakeholders.

Credibility

For evaluations to be credible, they must be independent, impartial and use rigorous methodology. Key elements of credibility include transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders and robust quality assurance systems. Evaluation findings and recommendations are derived from the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence. Credibility requires that evaluations be conducted and managed ethically by evaluators who exhibit professional and cultural competencies.

Independence

To be credible, evaluations must be independent. The evaluation function is both organizationally and behaviourally independent. Organizational independence requires that the central evaluation function be positioned independently from management functions; is responsible for setting the evaluation agenda; and provided with adequate resources to conduct its work. Organizational independence also ensures that evaluation managers have full discretion to directly submit evaluation reports to the appropriate level of decision-making and that they can report directly to an organization's governing body. Independence is vested in the evaluation head to directly commission, produce, publish and disseminate duly quality-assured evaluation reports in the public domain without undue influence by any party. Behavioural independence ensures the ability to evaluate without undue influence by any party. Evaluators must have full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially, without the risk of negative effects on their career development, and they must be able to freely present their professional assessment. Evaluators should also have free access to information on any given subject.

Impartiality

The key elements of impartiality are objectivity, professional integrity and absence of bias. The requirement for impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process, including planning an evaluation, formulating the mandate and scope, selecting the evaluation team, gaining access to stakeholders, conducting the evaluation, and formulating findings and recommendations. Evaluation team members must not have been (or expect soon to be) responsible for the policy setting, design or management of the evaluation subject.

Ethics

Evaluations must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for: the beliefs, manners and customs of all social and cultural environments; human rights and gender equality; and the 'do no harm' principle for humanitarian assistance. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence. They must also protect sensitive data and make sure it cannot be traced to its source. They must also validate statements made in the report with those who provided the relevant information. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of privileged information from those who provide it. When evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered, it must be reported to the UNFPA Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS).

Transparency

Evaluation processes and results[14] should be fully transparent. This requires public accessibility to key evaluation deliverables, such as terms of reference and evaluation reports. Transparency establishes trust, builds confidence in the results of the evaluation, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability.

Human rights and gender equality

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated into all stages of an evaluation. It is the responsibility of evaluators and evaluation managers to ensure that these values are respected, addressed and promoted, underpinning the commitment to the principle of 'leaving no one behind.'

National evaluation capacities

In line with General Assembly resolution 69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level and General Assembly resolution 77/283 on strengthening voluntary national reviews through country-led evaluation, national evaluation capacities aligned with UNFPA mandate should be supported upon the request of Member States and in collaboration with other United Nations agencies.

Professionalism

Evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. The UNEG Competency Framework provides clear guidance on the professional foundations and skills – technical evaluation, management and interpersonal – required to conduct and manage evaluations in the United Nations system. It also includes the ability to promote a culture of learning for evaluation.

14 Evaluation results include findings, lessons, conclusions and recommendations from a given evaluation.

Roles and responsibilities

All business units have complementary and distinct roles and responsibilities in strengthening the evaluation culture. Working together in a systemic manner, business units contribute to a coherent and effective evaluation function, as articulated in the Evaluation Policy, the corporate evaluation strategy and regional evaluation strategies. Roles and responsibilities are delineated below.

Executive Board

As the governing body, the Executive Board relies on a strong evaluation function to support its oversight of the organization in three main ways:

a. The Board's oversight role includes setting the conditions for the success of the evaluation function. The Board ensures that IEO is inscribed in a defined institutional structure that anchors it solidly as part of the UNFPA oversight function. It approves the evaluation policy and considers IEO annual reports on the evaluation function, and the related management commentaries. It approves the budget of IEO within the integrated budget, and the global multi-year costed evaluation plan. At its annual session, it considers the annual report of the evaluation function. The IEO Director meets the Executive Board's Bureau or President, as needed, on evaluation priorities and plans;

b. As a user of evaluations, the Executive Board requires independent, evidence-based analysis. Those centralized evaluations considered by the Board are submitted directly by the IEO Director, together with the corresponding management response by senior management. The institutional structure guarantees the Executive Board has continuous and easy access to IEO to obtain information on organizational accomplishments and challenges, thus facilitating a well-informed decision-making process;

c. The Executive Board is consulted on the appointment, renewal and dismissal of the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office.

Executive Director and Advisory Committees

The Executive Director is accountable for the work of UNFPA and is the principal champion of evaluation. The Executive Director:

a. Safeguards the integrity of the evaluation function, ensuring its independence from programme and management functions;

b. Provides political support and enabling environment to enhance the evaluation culture;

c. Safeguards the independence of IEO by conducting an open and transparent competitive recruitment process for the IEO Director, and by ensuring that any appointment, renewal and dismissal of the IEO Director is made after consultation with the Executive Board, as provided in paragraph 42 of the UNFPA Oversight Policy;

d. Ensures that IEO is adequately staffed and that sufficient resources are made available to fulfil its role and responsibilities. The IEO Director is appointed for a fixed term of five years, renewable once, and is thereafter barred from working for UNFPA in any position;

e. Ensures the development and implementation of management responses;

f. Ensures that the managers of business units respond to and utilize evaluation in their operational, strategic, policy and supervisory functions and that the relevant units take appropriate follow-up action on evaluation results;

g. Reports to the Executive Board on the use and follow-up of evaluations as part of the Executive Director's annual report to the Executive Board, as well as on the management commentaries to the annual report of the evaluation function. Management responses to centralized evaluations are also presented to the Executive Board.

The Executive Director is advised by the Oversight Advisory Committee, an external and independent body, on the oversight of the function and the implementation of the policy. The Oversight Compliance Monitoring Committee monitors the implementation of management responses to recommendations from centralized evaluations.

Independent Evaluation Office

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) is the custodian of the evaluation function. It reports functionally to the Executive Board and administratively to the Executive Director. The office is independent from the operational, management and decision-making functions in the organization, and is impartial, objective and free from undue influence. To enhance its independence, positioning and visibility, IEO has its own logo and brand, in line with UNFPA guidelines. IEO directly manages and decides upon the resources – human (including consultants) and financial – required for centralized evaluations and the implementation of its work plan, consistent with the UNFPA financial regulations and rules.

IEO has the authority to determine the scope, design, conduct, commissioning, dissemination, publication and communication of centralized evaluations and to submit reports directly to the appropriate decision-makers, including the Executive Board. Management cannot impose any restrictions on language, content or the publication of evaluation reports. Evaluation teams hired by UNFPA must demonstrate relevant expertise and should have a gender and geographical balance. Incrementally, young evaluators should be engaged in all evaluations. The main functions of the IEO are indicated in Annex 1.

Headquarters directors

Consistent with the principle of shared accountability, directors are responsible for implementing the policy across their functional purview and abiding to its principles within their work. Directors ensure the integration of evaluation results into the policies, programmes and strategies pertinent to their area of work.

Directors enable evaluations by establishing baselines, undertaking programme reviews, encouraging stakeholders to utilize evaluation results, preparing management responses and mobilizing funding for evaluations.

All divisions contribute to shaping evaluation planning priorities. All divisions assign focal points to help develop an understanding of the role of evaluation as well as user needs. IEO likewise assigns a focal point to become the division's counterpart.

Policy and Strategy Division

The Policy and Strategy Division, in addition to the roles and responsibilities above, promotes and supports evaluation, as part of its mandate to strengthen results-based management and improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency, by promoting and supporting the evaluability of programmes; providing the necessary capacity building on results-based management; and facilitating the use and follow-up of evaluations.

The Policy and Strategy Division manages the global management response tracking system, as indicated in Annex 2.

Humanitarian Response Division

The IEO consults the Humanitarian Response Division (HRD) on the selection of the major humanitarian responses to be included in the global multi-year costed evaluation plan. HRD also supports, together with IEO, the establishment by the regional monitoring and evaluation advisors of the list of decentralized evaluations of emergency responses.

HRD supports the Policy and Strategy Division in the preparation of management responses to centralized humanitarian evaluations.

Office of Audit and Investigation Services

Consistent with the UNFPA Oversight Policy (DP/FPA/2015/2), evaluation, while being distinct from audit and investigation, creates synergies with them.

As members of the independent oversight function, OAIS and IEO meet quarterly to coordinate and ensure complementarity, including by sharing respective evaluation and audit plans and facilitating synergies between evaluations and audits. During country office and regional office audits, OIAS assesses how management complies with requirements regarding the establishment of appropriate monitoring and evaluation posts and job descriptions, reporting lines, quality of self-reporting of implementation of management responses to evaluations, and establishment of evaluation reference groups.

Regional directors

Regional directors are accountable for implementing the policy within their regions. They promote a positive evaluation culture, including knowledge of the policy and attention to its requirements. They help establish and adopt a regional evaluation strategy aligned to the global one by identifying regional evaluation priorities and ensuring their incorporation in planning processes and strategy documents. They

monitor the use of evaluations and support representatives and other stakeholders in the implementation of management responses.

Regional directors are critical for ensuring the independence of evaluation and for maintaining the function's credibility. They encourage and monitor all country offices and the regional office to make sure adequate human and financial resources are invested in the evaluation function.

Regional directors supervise the regional monitoring and evaluation adviser (P5 level), who has a functional relationship on evaluation matters with IEO. Regional directors ensure that the regional monitoring and evaluation advisors are selected jointly with IEO.

Regional monitoring and evaluation advisors

In every region, the decentralized evaluation work is led by a regional monitoring and evaluation advisor. The responsibility of this P5-level position is described in Annex 3.

Country representative/head of office

Representatives/heads of offices are accountable for the implementation of the evaluation policy at country level. They lead in meeting the country-level commitments contained in the regional evaluation strategy, in the costed evaluation plan, and in other agreed frameworks. They ensure implementation by supporting participatory prioritization processes, integrating evaluation evidence into programme reviews and development of new programmes and projects, allocating sufficient financial and human resources (including the ring-fencing of funds for CPEs), ensuring quality standards and ethical safeguards, preparing and implementing management responses, and using evaluation results for decision-making and improved programming.

The representative/head of office supervises the country office monitoring and evaluation specialist or focal point and establishes a functional reporting relationship between them and the regional monitoring and evaluation advisor. The representative ensures that staff with evaluation management responsibilities have professional development opportunities, and that evaluation is also considered in their performance reviews.

Representatives ensure active participation of national counterparts and stakeholders, including young people, in the evaluation process, and work with the United Nations country team to integrate evaluation results into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and inter-agency work. They support efforts to strengthen the national evaluation policy and system, engage in country-led

evaluations of national policies and programmes relevant to the UNFPA mandate and the Sustainable Development Goals, and encourage the meaningful participation of young people in evaluation.

Country-level evaluation staff

Every country office must have a monitoring and evaluation specialist or focal point who is responsible for the evaluation function. The country monitoring and evaluation staff receive technical support and guidance from the regional monitoring and evaluation advisor.

The country monitoring and evaluation staff manage country-level evaluations; support national evaluation capacity development and country-led evaluations; contribute to United Nations evaluation priorities and protocols at the country level; and coordinate with management to determine evaluation priorities.

Technical, programme, humanitarian and communication staff

Technical, programme, humanitarian and communication staff have unique roles to play in terms of evaluation utilization. Technical, programme and humanitarian staff at all levels are responsible for utilizing evidence and knowledge from evaluations to improve programmes and projects and support the delivery of the management response in their relevant area. For decentralized evaluations, communication staff at regional and country offices lead the development and implementation of evaluation communication plans and related communication products, together with the monitoring and evaluation staff. Communication staff at all levels utilize evaluations as a source of powerful content to convey lessons and accountability to stakeholders.

Evaluation procedures

5.1 Strategic planning of evaluations to enhance the use of evaluative evidence

Evaluations that are not used effectively waste investment and are missed opportunities for learning and improving performance. The goal of evaluation is to provide timely, relevant, objective and credible evidence to inform strategic decisions by targeted users. This means clearly linking evaluations to the country programme and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework cycles; linking country-led evaluations to government planning cycles and the timing of advocacy initiatives; and linking centralized evaluations to the UNFPA planning and budgeting cycle and the mechanisms established by Member States to review progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the ICPD Programme of Action.

The use of evaluative evidence is enhanced by the selection of the appropriate type of evaluation for learning and accountability needs. Monitoring and evaluation staff are accountable to undertake a user-centred approach to evaluation, from the earliest stages of scoping and design to communication and facilitation of use. This approach includes joint, system-wide and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework evaluations. In this effort, monitoring and evaluation staff collaborate with communication staff in their office, for early user identification

and communication planning. IEO supports the development of capacity within the evaluation function to undertake this role. The regional monitoring and evaluation advisors also support the communication and facilitation of the use of evaluations, including centralized ones. Strategic communication plans are mandatory for all evaluations.

In this context, evaluations are planned and managed strategically at various levels of the organization, specifically:

a. The global, multi-year costed evaluation plan is prepared by IEO, in consultation with all major stakeholders, and approved by the Executive Board;

b. Regional multi-year costed evaluation plans are prepared by regional offices and include all planned regional-level evaluations, including humanitarian and project evaluation;

c. Country multi-year costed evaluation plans are prepared by country offices, with the participation of national stakeholders, and include all country-level evaluations, including humanitarian and project evaluations. Regional monitoring and evaluation advisors and IEO review country evaluation plans before their approval by the Programme Review Committee. Costed evaluation plans are annexed to the country programme documents submitted to the Executive Board.

Evaluation plans ensure sufficient coverage and enable a response to the critical challenges in the delivery of programmes. They are planned to ensure timely delivery to influence decision-making. The plans include costs for strategic evaluation use and follow-up. The selection of evaluations to be included in multi-year costed evaluation plans is guided by the criteria and questions in Annex 4.

Multi-year costed evaluation plans are rolling plans, subject to periodic revision to reflect emerging priorities, organizational learning needs and special requests, are shared on an annual basis. Changes to country multi-year evaluation plans should be approved by the regional monitoring and evaluation advisors, in consultation with IEO.

5.2 Evaluation coverage

Adequate evaluation coverage is key to providing a representative, unbiased picture of UNFPA performance and ensuring that policies, strategies and programmes are evidence based. The design of new strategies, joint programmes and country programmes must be informed by an adequate and relevant body of evaluations, including centralized and country programme evaluations.

Selected major humanitarian response evaluations managed by IEO are included in the global multi-year costed evaluation plan. The selection of major humanitarian responses to be evaluated will be led by IEO, in consultation with HRD. Similarly, a list of decentralized evaluations of emergency responses is established annually by the regional monitoring and evaluation advisors, in consultation with IEO and HRD. Being responsive to the specific situation, IEO (for major humanitarian response evaluations) and the regional monitoring and evaluation advisors (for other emergency response evaluations) consult with HRD and the regional and country offices before determining the timeframe, scope, modalities and budget of an evaluation of an emergency response.

The minimum coverage for evaluations is presented in Annex 5.

5.3 Management and conduct of evaluations

UNFPA is committed to excellence in evaluation and strives for rigour in the design, management and conduct of evaluations. Evaluations are designed, conducted and managed, in line with UNEG norms and standards, as well as those set out in the present policy. Evaluations are guided and compliant with UNEG ethical standards, UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality, and IEO guidance on disability inclusion and social and environmental standards in evaluation, among others.

Steps for ensuring useful and credible evaluation results include the following:

a. Terms of reference conform to UNEG standards and IEO guidance, provide for the use of the evaluation, and are consulted with stakeholders to promote transparency and engagement;

b. Management takes all necessary actions to ensure the objectivity, independence and impartiality of the evaluation process and persons hired to conduct evaluations. The monitoring and evaluation staff supervises the selection, management and performance assessment of the evaluation team, and manages the evaluation throughout the process;

c. The evaluation team is selected through an open and transparent process, with a balance in terms of geographical and gender diversity and includes professionals from the region or country concerned in the evaluation, including young evaluators, as appropriate;

d. Evaluations have a governance structure consisting of an evaluation reference group composed of internal stakeholders and an advisory group composed of external stakeholders. Selected stakeholders, including vulnerable and

marginalized groups and young people, are meaningfully engaged throughout the evaluation process;

e. The evaluation approach and methods follow IEO methodology and are clearly presented in the evaluation report;

f. The evaluation report meets evaluation reporting standards and is made available publicly, together with the related evaluation quality assessment and management response.

Quality assurance and assessment

The evaluation quality assurance and assessment system has two basic elements to ensure the quality of evaluations at UNFPA – quality assurance and quality assessment.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance takes place throughout the evaluation process. Its purpose is to promote quality, starting with the evaluation terms of reference, up to the draft final evaluation report. The regional monitoring and evaluation advisor delivers the quality assurance.

Quality assessment

Quality assessment takes place once the final evaluation report is finalized; it is managed by IEO. The quality assessment is shared with the responsible business units to inform them on the confidence that can be placed in the evaluation results and to strengthen their capacity to deliver better-quality evaluations in future. The quality assessment is also made public for transparency purposes.

Management response to evaluation

UNFPA is committed to developing and implementing management responses for all evaluations. In this regard:

a. The Policy and Strategy Division oversees the preparation of formal responses to all centralized and decentralized evaluations; these are developed within six weeks of the submission of the final evaluation reports. Management responses to evaluation recommendations should include specific time-bound actions with clearly assigned responsibilities to implement them. These management responses are discussed with stakeholders and published in the evaluation database along with the reports. Further, management responses to centralized evaluations are presented to Executive Board or relevant stakeholders along with the evaluation reports and published together with the evaluation reports;

b. The implementation status of all evaluation recommendations (centralized and decentralized) is monitored by the Policy and Strategy Division through the corporate management response tracking system and reported to the Executive Committee and the Executive Board through the strategic plan indicators in the annual report of the Executive Director;

c. In addition, as part of its country-level audits, OAIS periodically spot-checks the implementation status of evaluation recommendations. Results of the audit, including the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations, are shared with the Policy and Strategy Division and IEO.

Enhancing the use of evaluative evidence

An organizational culture that is accountable for using evaluative evidence – with stakeholders clear about their roles and contributions to advance its use, including the availability of required resources, capacities and support to stakeholders to fulfil this obligation – is a priority for UNFPA. Enhancing the use of evaluative evidence is a shared responsibility of the evaluation function and management.

Technical staff create opportunities to feed evaluation results into key decisions while monitoring and evaluation staff provide targeted evaluative evidence, as requested. This includes ensuring that the design of new initiatives, joint programmes and country programmes are informed by evaluative evidence. The annual report on the evaluation function, as well as the annual reports of business units, report on the use of and follow-up of selected evaluations.

As a key evaluation knowledge management platform, the evaluation database is hosted on the UNFPA website and serves as a public repository of all evaluations and their corresponding management responses, as well as the evaluation quality assurance assessment and other related products. While the evaluation database is maintained by IEO, the Policy and Strategy Division is responsible for submitting finalized management responses ready for publishing. IEO posts final evaluation reports six weeks after finalization, even if the corresponding management response is not ready.

Use extends beyond individual evaluations through evaluation meta-syntheses produced by the evaluation function. To this end, IEO links with the Global Knowledge Management Strategy (and its successor document) and the active knowledge management structures of business units to identify knowledge gaps and needs.

System-wide, inter-agency and joint evaluations

UNFPA contributes to the efforts proposed by the United Nations Secretary-General as part of a "common agenda," including engagement in "a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system anchored within the United Nations."[15]

The evaluation function seeks to enhance coherence in the evaluation function in the United Nations system in the following three areas:

Joint evaluations

UNFPA seeks opportunities with other United Nations agencies – and at the country level, in consultation with national governments – for the joint evaluation of joint programmes.

15 United Nations, Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary General, 2021, p. 4.

System-wide and inter-agency evaluations

UNFPA collaborates with the System-Wide Evaluation Office and other United Nations entities to enhance system-wide and inter-agency evaluation, including full participation in evaluations of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks at the country level. Recognizing the strategic importance of evaluating the United Nations system response to humanitarian crises, UNFPA engages in inter-agency evaluations within the framework of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) group.

Inter-agency networks

UNFPA actively engages in UNEG, in UNAIDS evaluations and in the IAHE steering group.

When IEO leads the management and conduct of a joint, inter-agency or system-wide evaluation, it also leads in ensuring a user focus and in coordinating a joint or system-wide launch and uptake of the evaluation.

UNFPA remains committed to improving its performance against evaluation-related key indicators, as set out in the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, which aims to strengthen the utility of evaluation by integrating a gender equality and disability inclusion analysis lens throughout the process.

Multistakeholder and intergenerational partnerships to strengthen national evaluation capacities

In line with General Assembly resolutions 70/1 (endorsing the 2030 Agenda), 69/237 (building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level) and 77/283 (strengthening voluntary national reviews through country-led evaluation) as well as the 2020 QCPR, UNFPA pursues multi-stakeholder partnerships with governments, voluntary organizations for professional evaluation, civil society organizations and academia, among others, in order to support national evaluation capacities.

UNFPA is focusing its support on:

a. Strengthening national evaluation policies and systems;

b. Country-led evaluation of national policies and programmes towards the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to the UNFPA mandate;

c. The generation of evidence to inform national processes and reports on progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and ICPD Programme of Action;

d. Advocacy for country-led evaluations and the use of evidence from such evaluations.

UNFPA also engages in multi-stakeholder and intergenerational partnerships with youth to enhance their capacities in evaluation. UNFPA also enhances the capacity of parliamentarians as end users of evaluation for evidence-informed national policymaking.

11

Complementarity with other UNFPA evidence-generating functions

Evaluation is a distinct yet complementary function that – with audit, monitoring, data and analytics and knowledge management – forms an 'evidence ecosystem'. Though independent, the evaluation function is committed to seeking strong linkages to these complementary functions in a 'whole-of-organization' approach, wherever appropriate and feasible.

With different perspectives (as reflected in their respective reports and treatments of UNFPA programmes and interventions), evaluation and audit are two separate oversight functions, which, together, offer complementary evidence on risk management and efficiency.

Collaboration with the results-based management function is central to development effectiveness and accountability. Evaluation-generated insights support programme leaders in establishing theories of change, assessing programme evaluability, validating results and assessing programme efficiency. Programme management data facilitates accountability analysis within institutional effectiveness and country programme evaluation portfolios.

Resources

Adequate, predictable and sustainable resourcing of the evaluation function is fundamental for delivering maximum benefits while maintaining the required level of independence.

12.1 Human resources

Evaluation is a specialized function whose practitioners require technical, strategic and interpersonal skills aligned with their level and the organizational context. The IEO Director ensures that IEO staff have evaluation management and leadership skills and experience aligned with UNEG evaluation competencies.

Country offices require evaluation capacity commensurate with their profile. Large country offices establish a monitoring and evaluation specialist post. Smaller offices designate a monitoring and evaluation focal point. The country representative ensures that monitoring and evaluation staff have adequate time to fulfil their evaluation-related duties in all independence, which should be defined separately in their workplan and performance appraisals. Regional monitoring and evaluation advisers, in consultation with the regional director, advise country offices on the staff levels and configurations appropriate for their context.

Independence requires that monitoring and evaluation staff report to the head of office on evaluation-related matters or have direct access on evaluation issues. The

monitoring and evaluation staff must also have an opportunity to periodically present to the office management team.

Rotation within the monitoring and evaluation job group (at headquarters and in regional offices) is encouraged, together with other mobility modalities, for example, inter-agency loans and stretch-assignments, aimed at strengthening staff learning and career pathways.

All staff with evaluation responsibilities are provided with opportunities to enhance their capacities and improve their professional skills, including on gender-based analysis, human rights-based approaches to evaluation, adaptive and principles-based evaluation and humanitarian evaluation, among others. Additional opportunities for professional development are identified to ensure that evaluation staff demonstrate core competencies, as outlined in the UNEG evaluation competency framework.

12.2 Financial resources

To produce high-quality evaluations, the evaluation function should be predictably and adequately resourced. Globally, to meet the coverage norms and other commitments of this policy, UNFPA allocates between 1 per cent and 1.6 per cent of its overall programme expenditure to evaluation.

UNFPA allocates funds for IEO and the centralized evaluations using a separate budget line in the integrated budget. IEO independently manages the budget for staffing, consultants and operational costs of the office. To achieve cost-effectiveness, UNFPA undertakes coordinated and joint evaluations with national, United Nations system and other development partners.

In country and regional offices, resource allocation decisions for evaluations are based on the country and regional multi-year costed evaluation plans. In view of their strategic and mandatory nature, the cost of country programme evaluations is ring-fenced into the resource allocation/distribution system funded through regular resources. The budget allocation for country programme evaluations is commensurate with and reflective of the diversity in programme country contexts, the scope and complexity of interventions, and the extent of UNFPA investments in each country. Therefore, the determination of the cost of a country programme evaluation is chiefly guided by the UNFPA classification of programme countries into three tiers. The country offices are responsible to ensure the evaluations are conducted, accordingly, and should not use the funding provided for other activities.

With the aim of optimizing resources, creating synergies and avoiding cross-subsidization from regular resources to other resources, an evaluation pooled fund (EPF) will be established in a phased manner for interventions funded by other resources. In upcoming donor funding agreements at and above $5 million, a budget

line for evaluation will be included on a voluntary basis. Country offices will directly manage the funds and the related project-level evaluation within the evaluation quality assurance system.

When such contributions reach an economy of scale, UNFPA will consider establishing an evaluation pooled fund. To ensure independence and credibility, once established, the evaluation pooled fund will be managed by IEO, in its role as budget holder and lead technical unit. Regular reporting on the use of the evaluation pooled fund will take place through the annual report of the evaluation function, presented to the Executive Board by the IEO Director at the annual regular session, as well as through audited financial statements.

Risks

The realization of this policy depends on strong risk management approaches as well as the funding made available to the organization to discharge the evaluations. Review moments and planning processes engage evaluation stakeholders to examine present, imminent and future risks. Risk mitigation measures are instituted, monitored and reported on.

Potential risks related to the realization of the evaluation policy's goals and purpose, as well as corresponding mitigation measures, are presented in Annex 6.

Implementation, reporting and review

IEO will revise the evaluation strategy, 2022-2025, aligning it with the strategic plan and this evaluation policy. Similarly, the country programme evaluation handbook and related guidance notes will also be aligned with this policy.

The status of the implementation of the evaluation policy is reported by the IEO Director to the Executive Board as part of the annual report on the evaluation function, through key performance indicators. The annual report on the evaluation function also includes progress related to centralized and decentralized evaluations; it is accompanied by a management commentary, also presented to the Executive Board.

Regional and country offices report on the use of regional and country-level evaluations on an annual basis.

An independent review of the performance of the policy will be undertaken five years after its adoption.

Annex 1: **Independent Evaluation Office responsibilities**

Responsibility	Tasks
Policy development	• Prepare, update and present the evaluation policy to the Executive Board for its approval
Planning	• Develop and present to the Executive Board for its approval, the multi-year costed evaluation plan, based on inputs from and consultations with the Executive Board, the Executive Committee, decentralized business units and other stakeholders • Directly manage and decide upon the resources – human (including consultants) and financial – required for centralized evaluations and the implementation of the IEO workplan
Technical guidance	• Develop evaluation standards, criteria and methodological guidance and maintain evaluation quality assessment mechanisms
Evaluation conduct	• Conduct or commission centralized evaluations, including selected country programme and regional programme evaluations, selected major country-level humanitarian evaluations, as well as other types of evaluations
Reporting	• Report directly, on an annual basis, to the Executive Board on the evaluation function • Report directly to the Executive Board or relevant stakeholders on centralized evaluations
Capacity development	• Provide the necessary capacity development on issues related to evaluation
Promote the use of evaluative evidence	• Publish, actively disseminate, share knowledge and facilitate the use of evaluations • Maintain a publicly accessible database of evaluations
Partnerships	• Engage in partnerships with professional evaluation networks, such as the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation Group, and support the harmonization of the evaluation function in the United Nations system • Promote multistakeholder and intergenerational partnerships to strengthen national evaluation capacities, including meaningful involvement of young evaluators

Annex 2: **Policy and Strategy Division responsibilities**

Responsibility	Tasks
Management responses	• Coordinates and oversees the preparation, completion and implementation of management responses to centralized and decentralized evaluations
Global management response tracking system	• Maintains the global management response tracking system, ensures it is updated and improved, as needed, generates the organizational effectiveness and efficiency performance indicators related to the use of evaluation, monitors these indicators, and provides management with an analytical report on its performance and suggestions for corrective actions
Management commentary on evaluation	• Prepares a management commentary to the annual report of the evaluation function to the Executive Board
Use	• Provides guidance to UNFPA business units on the use of evaluation results to improve organizational decision-making, accountability and institutional learning
Follow-up	• Coordinates the preparation of the annual report of the Executive Director to the Executive Board, which includes follow-up actions to evaluation and integration of evaluation evidence into strategic policy, planning and decision-making at the global level

Annex 3: **Regional monitoring and evaluation advisor responsibilities**

Responsibility	Regional monitoring and evaluation advisor
Overall accountability	• Provides oversight, leadership and coordination of the evaluation function in the region • Advises regional director and country representatives/ heads of office on evaluation funding, staffing and evaluation management arrangements • Contributes to IEO efforts to professionalize the evaluation function • Provides technical supervision and support to country monitoring and evaluation staff, including skills development and career growth • Supports IEO in managing the regional elements of the evaluation pooled fund, once established
Planning	• Leads the development and implementation of the regional evaluation strategy • Leads the planning of the regional evaluations • Monitors funding and budgets for evaluation at the regional office and country office levels, including a thorough review of the costed evaluation plans linked to country programme documents
Evaluation management	• Leads the implementation of the regional evaluations • Supports the implementation of IEO-managed activities in the region • Reinforces capacity development efforts at regional and country levels
Technical assistance and quality assurance	• Provides technical assistance and quality assurance to evaluations managed by country offices • Guides the preparation of management responses to decentralized evaluations

Use	• Supports the uptake of evaluation results (centralized and decentralized) at regional and country office levels • Promotes shared learning across countries and regions • Actively contributes to the use of evaluative evidence in strategic dialogues, project/programme development processes and reviews • Coordinates regional contributions to corporate discussions • Represent the region in inter-agency mechanisms and fora, as relevant
Communication	• Leads collaborative work with the regional communication team to develop and implement evaluation communication plans at regional levels
Recruitment	• Jointly by the regional office and IEO
Reporting lines	• Reports directly to the Regional Director and has a functional relationship on evaluation matters to IEO

Annex 4: **Evaluation planning**

Criteria	Key questions
Clarity of intended use for strategic decision-making	• Will the evaluation cover issues of strategic significance that contribute to the achievement of the strategic plan/regional/country programme? • Is the subject of the evaluation a priority? • Has the external/internal environment changed significantly? • Is the subject related to a humanitarian response or a protracted crisis?
Risk associated with the subject, including periodicity of efforts to avoid extended periods without evaluative attention	• Are there humanitarian, political, economic, funding, structural or organizational factors that present a potentially substantial risk for the non-achievement of results or for which further evidence is needed for decision-making by management?
Potential for system-wide, inter-agency or joint evaluation or strategic contribution/ synergy with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework evaluations	• Does the evaluation present an opportunity to evaluate jointly with other partners (United Nations country teams, national governments, donors, among others) or contribute to a United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework evaluation to avoid duplication and promote coordination? • Do complementarities with evaluation plans of other United Nations agencies and partners exist?
Significant investment	• Is the subject a significant investment in relation to the portfolio of activities of UNFPA? Is a donor requesting it?
Feasibility for implementing the evaluation	• Is the evaluability of the intervention sufficient to conduct an in-depth assessment that can provide sound findings, recommendations and lessons learned? • Does the commissioning office have the resources available to conduct or manage a high-quality evaluation within the period indicated? • In a humanitarian situation, is there sufficient time and access to conduct an evaluation?

Knowledge gap	• Will the evaluation help to fill a vital knowledge gap in relation to the UNFPA thematic focus or organizational effectiveness?
Formal commitments to stakeholders	• Are stakeholders requesting the evaluation (for example, through donor requirements in co-financing arrangements or through partner countries requesting the evaluation to inform national programmes)? • Can the request for the evaluation be satisfied through an evaluation that is already planned or a clustered evaluation?[16]
Innovation with potential for replication and scaling-up	• Would an evaluation provide the evidence necessary to identify the factors required for the success of an innovative intervention and determine the feasibility of its replication or scaling-up? Is the intervention a pilot or an innovative initiative?

16 A clustered evaluation consists of a group of programme or project evaluations combined into one single evaluation. Clustered programmes or projects should share one or more of the following characteristics: thematic area, geographic area of intervention, resource partner, type of crisis, among others. Besides potential efficiency gains, clustered evaluations allow for the analysis of the commonalities and differences of similar projects or programmes, which can help identify critical success factors and potential risks associated with future and ongoing interventions.

Annex 5: **Evaluation coverage norms**

Evaluation type	Frequency	Management arrangement
Centralized thematic evaluations	• Full coverage of outcome areas within the strategic plan period	Managed by IEO solely or jointly
Centralized institutional evaluations	• Minimum one institutional evaluation related to organizational effectiveness and efficiency every two years	Managed by IEO
Centralized system-wide, inter-agency or joint evaluations	• Minimum one global-level evaluation per year	Managed jointly by IEO with other United Nations organizations
Centralized meta-synthesis	• One global level per year	Managed by IEO solely or jointly
Country programme evaluations	• Country offices encouraged to conduct CPEs every programme cycle, and as a minimum every two cycles	Usually managed by the country office following the country programme evaluation handbook, under the guidance of and with quality assurance by the regional monitoring and evaluation advisor (RMEA). In the case of strategic evaluations, it can be managed either by (as decided by IEO in consultation with the regional office): (a) RMEA in close consultation with IEO and the country office; or (b) IEO in close consultation with the RMEA and country office
Regional programme evaluations	• Regional offices encouraged to conduct RPEs every programme cycle, and as a minimum every two cycles	Usually managed by the regional office, under the guidance of and with quality assurance by IEO

Evaluation of emergency responses	• At least one major humanitarian response[17] per year. The selection is made by IEO in consultation with HRD on a yearly basis, and regularly updated, based on evolution in the context	Evaluations of selected major humanitarian responses are managed by IEO
	• Evaluations of other humanitarian responses,[18] as decided by regional monitoring and evaluation advisors, in consultation with IEO and HRD, on a yearly basis.	Evaluations of other emergency responses are managed by the regional or country offices
Country-level United Nations joint programme evaluations, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework evaluations	• Coverage and frequency are determined by inter-agency mechanisms	Managed under the United Nations Development Coordination Office procedures or participating United Nations agencies' evaluation requirements
Country-led evaluations	• Coverage and frequency determined by partner governments	Led by national partners with UNFPA support

17 A humanitarian response is 'major' when there is a significantly serious situation within a country – or across more than one country, regionally or globally – at a scale, complexity or urgency that overwhelms the response capacity of the national government or the UNFPA country or regional office and requires an exceptional level of corporate support to save lives and livelihoods.

18 Other humanitarian responses are when the scale, magnitude or level of complexity of the emergency is such that the country office can manage with existing resources while requiring limited or additional prioritized support from regional office and headquarters.

Annex 6: **Potential risks and corresponding mitigation measures**

Risk	Mitigating measures
Low and/or unpredictable external demand for evaluation from stakeholders	• Advocacy for increased stakeholder use of evidence from evaluations • Support for national evaluation capacity development
Low internal demand for evaluation	• Attention to the relevance, timeliness and quality of evaluations • Enhanced communication of evaluation results at all levels • Ensuring evaluation evidence is considered in key corporate processes
Unpredictable and inadequate financial resources	• Corporate commitment to meeting the financial targets and related funding mechanisms as set out in the policy, subject to adequate income levels and donor commitments • Effective advocacy at headquarters and regional levels to plan, budget and mobilize resources for evaluations • Eventual establishment and effective functioning of the evaluation pooled fund
Inadequate human resources (skills and employees)	• IEO oversight in the recruitment of monitoring and evaluation advisors at the regional level • Effective technical support to regional and country-level colleagues with evaluation responsibilities
Potential risk of "doing harm" if evaluating during a humanitarian response	• Thorough consultation with HRD and country or regional office involved, as well as careful consideration of timing and access issues.

Driving evidence-based actions

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