

EVALUATING FOR RESULTS

CHAPTER 5

This chapter presents a holistic view of the UNDP evaluation function in order to help managers and staff of programme units and partners make strategic decisions about evaluations. The chapter describes why evaluation is important for UNDP and how evaluative information should be used, then briefly presents the UNDP evaluation policy, types of evaluations that are commonly conducted in UNDP, key roles and responsibilities in evaluation, and evaluation requirements as stipulated in the evaluation policy.

5.1 WHY EVALUATE? USES OF EVALUATION

Evaluation is critical for UNDP to progress towards advancing human development. Through the generation of ‘evidence’ and objective information, evaluations enable managers to make informed decisions and plan strategically. UNDP success depends, in part, on the ability of UNDP and its counterparts to carry out credible evaluations and use them to make evidenced-based decisions. The effective conduct and use of evaluation requires adequate human and financial resources, sound understanding of evaluation and most importantly, **a culture of results-orientation, learning, inquiry and evidence-based decision making**. Everyone in UNDP and its stakeholders have to share the same vision and be open to change.

When evaluations are used effectively, they support programme improvements, knowledge generation and accountability.

Supporting programme improvements—Did it work or not, and why? How could it be done differently for better results?

The interest is on **what works, why and in what context**. Decision makers, such as managers, use evaluations to make necessary improvements, adjustments to the implementation approach or strategies, and to decide on alternatives. Evaluations addressing these questions need to provide concrete information on how improvements could be made or what alternatives exist to address the necessary improvements.

Building knowledge for generalizability and wider-application—What can we learn from the evaluation? How can we apply this knowledge to other contexts?

The main interest is in the development of knowledge for global use and for generalization to other contexts and situations. When the interest is on knowledge generation, evaluations generally apply more rigorous methodology to ensure a higher level of accuracy in the evaluation and the information being produced to allow for generalizability and wider application beyond a particular context.

Evaluations should not be seen as an event but as part of an exercise whereby different stakeholders are able to participate in the continuous process of generating and applying evaluative knowledge. UNDP managers, together with government and other stakeholders, decide who participates in what part of this process (analysing findings and lessons, developing a management response to an evaluation, disseminating knowledge) and to what extent they will be involved (informed, consulted, actively involved, equal partners or key decision makers). These are strategic decisions for UNDP managers that have a direct bearing on the learning and ownership of evaluation findings. An evaluation framework that generates knowledge, promotes learning and guides action is an important means of capacity development and sustainability of results.

Supporting accountability—Is UNDP doing the right things? Is UNDP doing things right? Did UNDP do what it said it would do?

The interest here is on determining the merit or worth and value of an initiative and its quality. An effective accountability framework requires credible and objective information, and evaluations can deliver such information. Evaluations help ensure that UNDP goals and initiatives are aligned with and support the Millennium Declaration, MDGs, and global, national and corporate priorities. UNDP is accountable for providing evaluative evidence that links UNDP contributions to the achievement of development results in a given country and for delivering services that are based on the principles of human development. By providing such objective and independent assessments, evaluations in UNDP support the organization's accountability towards its Executive Board, donors, governments, national partners and beneficiaries.

The intended use determines the timing of an evaluation, its methodological framework, and level and nature of stakeholder participation. Therefore, the use has to be determined at the planning stage. Box 26 provides a set of questions to guide UNDP and its stakeholders in assessing the potential use of evaluations.

These uses are not mutually exclusive and evaluation, in general, has multiple uses. Throughout the evaluation process, the identified use has to be revisited and redefined, as necessary, in consultation with stakeholders. This inclusive process ensures the credibility and ownership of the evaluation process and products, hence resulting in its optimal use.

Box 26. Assessing the use of an evaluation

What information is needed? Examples:

- Information on the relevance of intended outputs or outcomes and validity of the results framework and results map
- Information about the status of an outcome and factors affecting it
- Information about the effectiveness of the UNDP partnership strategy
- Information about the status of project implementation
- Information on the cost of an initiative relative to the observed benefits
- Information about lessons learned

Who will use the information? The intended users of evaluation are those individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the evaluation results and are in a position to make decisions or take action based on the evaluation results. Users of evaluation are varied but generally fall within the following categories in the UNDP context:

- UNDP management and programme or project officers and managers, others involved in design and implementation
- National government counterparts, policy makers, strategic planners
- Development partners
- Donors and other funders
- Public and beneficiaries
- The UNDP Executive Board and other national oversight bodies

How will the information be used? Examples:

- To design or validate a development strategy
- To make mid-course corrections
- To improve project or programme design and implementation
- To ensure accountability
- To make funding decisions
- To increase knowledge and understanding of the benefits and challenges of development programmes and projects intended for the enhancement of human development

5.2 EVALUATION POLICY: PRINCIPLES, NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION

The evaluation policy was adopted in 2006 to strengthen the evaluation function in UNDP. The guiding principles, norms and standards as expressed in the policy and the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN system³³ guide the practice and use of evaluation in UNDP. Norms for evaluation—how evaluation should be conducted in order to meet the required quality standards and its intended role—are summarized in Box 27.

The remaining evaluation section of this Handbook aims to provide practical guidance on how these norms and principles can be applied throughout the evaluation process.

33 UNEG, 'Norms for Evaluation in the UN System', 2005, available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/uneqnorms>; and UNEG, 'Standards for Evaluation in the UN System', 2005, available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/uneqstandards>.

Box 27. Norms for evaluation

Evaluation in UNDP should be:

- **Independent**—Management must not impose restrictions on the scope, content, comments and recommendations of evaluation reports. Evaluators must be free of conflict of interest (see Box 34, page 155).
- **Intentional**—The rationale for an evaluation and the decisions to be based on it should be clear from the outset.
- **Transparent**—Meaningful consultation with stakeholders is essential for the credibility and utility of the evaluation.
- **Ethical**—Evaluation should not reflect personal or sectoral interests. Evaluators must have professional integrity, respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, and be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments.
- **Impartial**—Removing bias and maximizing objectivity are critical for the credibility of the evaluation and its contribution to knowledge.
- **Of high quality**—All evaluations should meet minimum quality standards defined by the Evaluation Office (see Annex 3).
- **Timely**—Evaluations must be designed and completed in a timely fashion so as to ensure the usefulness of the findings and recommendations
- **Used**—Evaluation is a management discipline that seeks to provide information to be used for evidence-based decision making. To enhance the usefulness of the findings and recommendations, key stakeholders should be engaged in various ways in the conduct of the evaluation.

Source: UNDP, 'The Evaluation Policy of UNDP', Executive Board Document DP/2005/28, May 2006. Available at: <http://www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf>.

5.3 TYPES OF EVALUATION IN UNDP

INDEPENDENT AND DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

UNDP support and services consist of **programmes, projects, partnerships** and '**soft assistance**' such as advocacy, policy advice and coordination support, which may or may not be delivered within a project framework. Programmes and projects have results frameworks that detail the results map and intended results at the output and outcome levels. Evaluations in UNDP are carried out to adequately cover this wide range of UNDP initiatives in order to assess their worth and merit and support the organization's learning efforts and accountability. The architecture of evaluation in UNDP, therefore, corresponds to the UNDP programmatic structure and its components.

There are two categories of evaluations in UNDP: independent and decentralized evaluations. The UNDP Evaluation Office is mandated by the Executive Board to carry out **independent evaluations**. They are referred to as independent since the Evaluation Office is independent from programme management and is not part of subsequent decision-making processes regarding the subject of an evaluation. The Evaluation Office is also required to conduct country programme evaluations (known as Assessments of Development Results or ADRs), regional and global programme evaluations, and thematic evaluations in accordance with the programme of work that is approved by the Executive Board.

The programme units carry out various types of **decentralized evaluations** and ensure that they provide adequate information about the overall performance of UNDP support in a given context. In doing so, the programme units draw from a range of evaluation types that are based on business units of their development assistance at the country, regional or global levels. These include: UNDAF; country, regional or global programmes; outcomes; thematic areas; and projects. The most common decentralized evaluations are **project and outcome evaluations**. The programme units do not conduct these evaluations themselves, but rather commission external evaluation consultants to do so.

Together, these two categories of evaluations are intended to provide comprehensive information about UNDP performance at the project, programme, corporate and UN system levels, with a view to supporting sound management of UNDP initiatives and strategic direction.

Relationship between independent and decentralized evaluations

Although the institutional arrangements—including mandates, lines of accountability and operational modalities—of independent and decentralized evaluations are different, they complement and reinforce each other. For example, decentralized evaluations, particularly outcome evaluations, carried out in a given country provide a substantive basis for an independent evaluation of the country programme or the ADRs that are conducted by the Evaluation Office. Therefore, outcome evaluations and their associated project evaluations should be completed before the ADRs. Moreover, in conducting country case studies of a thematic or regional programme evaluation, the Evaluation Office may apply a meta-evaluation approach³⁴ and draw extensively from country or region-specific decentralized evaluations. In the absence of adequate and credible decentralized evaluations, independent evaluations may have a limited evaluative basis and may require more time to collect necessary data. Similarly, evaluators for decentralized evaluations may use the analysis provided in the relevant independent evaluations and case studies as a building block for their analysis. Table 21 documents the main types of evaluations carried out in UNDP, including responsible parties mandated for carrying them out and main users of these evaluations.

OUTCOME EVALUATION

Outcome evaluations in UNDP assess UNDP contributions towards the progress made on outcome achievements. These outcomes are generally identified in the programme or project results frameworks to which UNDP initiatives contribute.

Outcome evaluations are undertaken to:

- Provide evidence to support accountability of programmes and for UNDP to use in its accountability requirements to its investors
- Provide evidence of the UNDP contribution to outcomes

³⁴ **Meta-evaluation** is an evaluation of evaluations. It uses findings from a series of evaluations and requires a robust quality assurance mechanism to ensure that the evaluations used as secondary data are credible and of good quality.

Table 21. Examples of different types of evaluations carried out by the Evaluation Office and programme units

Mandated Responsibility for Evaluation	Evaluation Type							Projects or Outcomes	
	Strategic Plan	Programme Areas (e.g. governance, South-South cooperation)	Thematic Areas or Topics (gender, capacity building, RBM)	Programme Evaluations			Global, Regional or Country Programme Outcomes		UNDAF Outcomes
				Global Programme	Regional Programme	Country Programme			
Evaluations Conducted by Evaluation Office*									
Evaluation Office	Thematic evaluations			Evaluation of Global Cooperation Framework	Evaluation of Regional Cooperation Framework	Assessment of Development Results			
Primary users	Executive Board, UNDP management			Executive Board, UNDP management, BDP	Executive Board, UNDP management, regional bureaux	Executive Board, UNDP management, country office, national partners			
Evaluations Commissioned by Programme Units**									
BDP	Cross-programme area evaluations	Outcome or outcome-oriented thematic evaluations	Outcome or outcome-oriented thematic evaluations	Midterm evaluation			Outcome or outcome-oriented evaluations (see section 5.3)	Project evaluations	
BCPR									
Regional bureaux					Midterm evaluation				
Other units***									
Country offices						Midterm or end of cycle evaluation		Project evaluations (e.g. Global Environment Facility terminal evaluations)	
UNCT								UNDAF evaluation	
Primary users	Management and partners						Management and partners	Management, partners, and donors	

*The Evaluation Office is required to conduct all evaluations outlined in the programme of work approved by the Executive Board. **Programme units are required to conduct all evaluations planned in their evaluation plan. *** Other units with programmatic responsibilities such as the Bureau of Management and the Partnership Bureau, as relevant.

- Guide performance improvement within the current global, regional and country programmes by identifying current areas of strengths, weaknesses and gaps, especially in regard to:
 - The appropriateness of the UNDP partnership strategy
 - Impediments to the outcome
 - Midcourse adjustments
 - Lessons learned for the next programming cycle
- Inform higher level evaluations, such as ADRs and evaluations of regional and global programmes, and subsequent planning
- Support learning across UNDP about outcome evaluation

Outcome evaluations are strategic, addressing: broad-based linkages with development; partnerships across agencies; analysis of the external local, regional and global environment in the analysis of success; and the comparative value of UNDP and significance in development. Another distinct characteristic of outcome evaluations is that they explicitly recognize the role of partners in the attainment of those outcomes and provide critical information for the purpose of enhancing development effectiveness and assisting decision and policy making beyond a particular project or initiative. Outcome evaluations also provide a substantive basis for higher level evaluations (e.g., UNDAF evaluations) and independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office. Therefore, the conduct of outcome evaluations during the programme cycle is mandatory for all programme units in UNDP.

As UNDP works in a wide range of development contexts and situations, the requirements for outcome evaluations can be fulfilled through different arrangements. For instance, joint evaluations, focusing on themes, large projects or geographical areas that address specific outcomes as predefined in planning documents (such as country, regional and global programme documents) may be considered as fulfilling requirements for outcome evaluations.

Whatever the arrangements may be, in order to meet the requirements for outcome evaluations, **the evaluation must be outcome oriented**. Outcome evaluations must meet the objectives to assess the following:

- Progress towards achieving the outcome, including unintended effects of activities related to this outcome
- The contributing factors to the outcomes
- The contribution the UNDP has made to the outcomes
- The effectiveness of the partnership strategy in achieving the outcomes

In consultation with relevant partners, UNDP programme units may decide which outcomes to choose and what modality to use in evaluation. The existing partnerships on the ground, the nature of the programme, planned evaluations by partners and government (so as to seek opportunities for joint evaluations) and other programme-specific factors may influence such decisions. For more details, please refer to the compendium on outcome evaluations.

PROJECT EVALUATION

UNDP programme units may commission evaluations of their respective projects as needed. Managing for results requires, as a starting point, a good knowledge of projects, their effectiveness, internal and external factors affecting effectiveness, their added value and their contribution to higher level outcomes. A project evaluation assesses the performance of a project in achieving its intended results. It yields useful information on project implementation arrangements and the achievement of outputs. It is at this level that direct cause and attribution can be addressed given the close causal linkage between the initiatives and the outputs.

The primary purpose of a project evaluation is to make improvements, to continue or upscale an initiative, to assess replicability in other settings, or to consider alternatives. Therefore, although project evaluations are mandatory only when required by partnership protocols, **programme units are strongly recommended to commission evaluations, particularly of pilot programmes, before replication or upscaling, projects that are going into a next phase, and projects more than five years in duration.** Increasingly, project evaluations play an important role in accountability to donors and governments involved in financing projects. For their own accountability reasons, donor agencies and other cost-sharing partners³⁵ may request UNDP to include evaluation requirements in the UNDP-donor partnership agreements. Mid-term and final evaluations of Global Environment Facility projects are examples of project evaluations, as they are carried out within the clearly defined scope of a single project.³⁶

When a project is undertaken in partnership with other development actors, the evaluation needs to take into consideration the objectives, inputs and contributions by each partner. The overall evaluation conclusions need to highlight how these different elements integrate to achieve the intended outputs, and what can be learned from the added value of the collaboration. Therefore, it is of central importance that UNDP and the partners involved in a project work together, voice their expectations and issues, and own the evaluation from the planning phase throughout the whole process.

PROJECT VERSUS OUTCOME EVALUATIONS

There are several important differences between project evaluations and outcome evaluations, as illustrated in Table 22.

The increasing focus on outcome evaluations in UNDP does not mean that outcome evaluations have replaced project evaluations. Many programme units continue to undertake project evaluations because they yield useful information on project implementation arrangements, administrative structures and the achievement of outputs. Further, project evaluation provides a basis for the evaluation of outcomes and programmes, as well as for programme and thematic evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office, and for distilling lessons from experience for learning and sharing knowledge.

35 See section on mandatory evaluations on page 142.

36 The Global Environment Facility, 'Monitoring and Evaluation Policy', February 2006. Available at: http://www.undp.org/gef/05/documents/me/GEF_ME_Policies_and_Precedures_06.pdf.

Table 22. Differences between project and outcome evaluations

	Project Evaluation	Outcome Evaluation
Focus	Generally speaking, inputs, activities and outputs (if and how project outputs were delivered within a sector or geographic area and if direct results occurred and can be attributed to the project)*	Outcomes (whether, why and how the outcome has been achieved, and the contribution of UNDP to a change in a given development situation)
Scope	Specific to project objectives, inputs, outputs and activities Also considers relevance and continued linkage with outcome	Broad, encompassing outcomes and the extent to which programmes, project, soft assistance, partners' initiatives and synergies among partners contributed to its achievement
Purpose	Project based to improve implementation, to re-direct future projects in the same area, or to allow for upscaling of project	To enhance development effectiveness, to assist decision making, to assist policy making, to re-direct future UNDP assistance, to systematize innovative approaches to sustainable human development

Source: UNDP, Guidelines for Evaluators, 2002

*Large projects may have outcomes that can be evaluated. Further, small projects may also make tangible contributions to the achievement of CPD outcomes or even project-specific outcomes. In such instances, these project evaluations may be considered to be fulfilling requirements for outcome evaluations.

To ensure the relevance and effective use of evaluation information, evaluations should be made available in a timely manner so that decision makers can make decisions informed by evaluative evidence.

THEMATIC EVALUATIONS

In addition to project and outcome evaluations, senior managers of programme units may choose to commission thematic evaluations to assess UNDP performance in areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contribution to development results. They may focus on one or several cross-cutting themes that have significance beyond a particular project or initiative. Examples of thematic evaluations commissioned by programme units include the evaluation of UNDP initiatives in a particular results area, such as democratic governance, and the evaluation of a cross-cutting theme, such as capacity development or gender mainstreaming in UNDP programming in a given country.

COUNTRY, REGIONAL OR GLOBAL PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Country offices may commission a country programme evaluation to assess UNDP attainment of intended results and contributions to national development results in a given country. The evaluation examines key issues that are similar to those in the ADRs, such as UNDP effectiveness in delivering and influencing the achievement of development results and UNDP strategic positioning. The country programme evaluation contributes to the greater accountability of UNDP and the quality assurance of UNDP initiatives at the country level. As in the ADR, it allows findings and recommendations to feed into the preparation of subsequent programmes. It can

be used to facilitate dialogue with the government and other national partners and may also provide lessons that are useful for the government in its aid management work and its relationship with other development partners. Despite a number of similarities, country programme evaluations commissioned by country offices are distinct from the ADRs in terms of their scope and management arrangements. They are usually focused on a given programme cycle with a greater focus on performance at the project level. Further, decentralized country programme evaluations are commissioned by those responsible for programme management, as opposed to the independent Evaluation Office.

Similarly, regional bureaux and policy and practice units may decide to carry out mid-term evaluations of their respective regional and global programmes. These mid-term programme evaluations allow for mid-course adjustment of programmes and also feed into the regional and global programme evaluations that the Evaluation Office is mandated to conduct towards the end of the programme period.

IMPACT EVALUATION

An impact evaluation is an evaluation of the effects—positive or negative, intended or not—on individual households and institutions, and the environment caused by a given development activity such as a programme or project. Such an evaluation refers to the final (long-term) impact as well as to the (medium-term) effects at the outcome level.

By identifying if development assistance is working or not, impact evaluation also serves the accountability function. Hence, impact evaluation is aligned with RBM and monitoring the contribution of development assistance towards meeting the MDGs. An impact evaluation is useful when:

- The project or programme is functioning long enough to have visible effects
- The project or programme has a scale that justifies a more thorough evaluation

Impact evaluation does not simply measure whether objectives have been achieved or assess direct effects on intended beneficiaries. It includes the full range of impacts at all levels of the results chain, including ripple effects on families, households and communities; on institutional, technical or social systems; and on the environment. In terms of a simple logic model, there can be multiple intermediate (short and medium term) outcomes over time that eventually lead to impact—some or all of which may be included in an evaluation of impact at a specific moment in time.

This definition emphasizes the need for understanding the consequences of development initiatives in the longer term. Another important issue connected to impact evaluation is attribution—that is, determining to what extent an initiative, rather than other external factors, has contributed to observed impacts. There are many methods that can be applied to deal with the attribution issue. It is important that this issue be taken into account in the design of the initiative, as well as the evaluation ToR and design.³⁷

37 Further materials on impact evaluation can be found on the World Bank website sections on Impact Evaluation (www.worldbank.org/impactevaluation) and Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie/).

UNDAF EVALUATION³⁸

UNDP programmes, projects and operations operate in concert to support **UNDAF objectives and outcomes** that address national priorities. The UNDAF describes the collective response of all UN operations in a country. While UNDP outcome evaluations focus on CPD outcomes, **UNDAF evaluations** focus on UNDAF outcomes, their contributions to national priorities and the coherence of UNCT support. The UNDAF evaluation is timed to provide inputs to the preparation of the next UNDAF, country programmes and projects by individual agencies. The UNDAF evaluation should take place at the beginning of the penultimate year of the programme cycle and build on UNDAF annual reviews as well as major studies and evaluations that have been completed by individual agencies. Although the results of the UNDAF evaluation are meant to contribute to managing for results, it is an external function, which should be separated from programme management. UNDAF monitoring and evaluation should always be aligned with existing national monitoring and evaluation systems or focus on their development and institutionalization if they are premature or absent.

The scope of the UNDAF evaluation depends on the previous evaluations and studies already conducted during the cycle and on the nature of UNCT operations in a country. UNDAF evaluations are jointly commissioned and managed by the heads of UN organizations and national governments. They are conducted by external consultants selected by mutual agreement between the United Nations and the government through a transparent and thorough selection process. The 2007 CCA and UNDAF Guidelines³⁹ should be consulted for more information.

Box 28. Categorizing evaluations by timing

Evaluations can be defined in terms of different modalities of UNDP support, such as project and programme, and also different levels or frameworks of results such as outcome, UNDAF and themes. Evaluations can also be defined by when they are carried out:

- **Ex-ante evaluation** is a forward-looking assessment of the likely future effects of new initiatives and support such as policies, programmes and strategies. It takes place prior to the implementation of an initiative.
- **Midterm evaluation** generally has a *formative* nature as it is undertaken around the middle period of implementation of the initiative. **Formative evaluation** intends to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programmes.
- **Final or terminal evaluations** normally serve the purpose of a *summative* evaluation since they are undertaken towards the end of the implementation phase of projects or programmes. **Summative evaluation** is conducted at the end of an initiative (or a phase of that initiative) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. It is intended to provide information about the worth of the programme.
- **Ex-post evaluation** is a type of summative evaluation of an initiative after it has been completed; usually conducted two years or more after completion. Its purpose is to study how well the initiative (programme or project) served its aims, to assess sustainability of results and impacts and to draw conclusions for similar initiatives in the future.

Evaluations defined by the modality of development initiatives or level of results can be further defined by the timing. For example, a programme unit may undertake a final project evaluation or a midterm UNDAF evaluation.

38 UNDG, 'CCA/UNDAF Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines', 2007. Available at: <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=259>.

39 Ibid.

REAL TIME EVALUATIONS

Real time evaluations are often undertaken at an early stage of an initiative to provide managers with timely feedback in order to make an immediate difference to the initiative. They are commonly applied in humanitarian or post-conflict contexts to provide implementing staff with the opportunity to analyse whether the initial response or recovery is appropriate in terms of desired results and process. They can also be used in crisis settings where there may be constraints in conducting lengthier evaluations. These constraints include the absence of baseline data, limited data collection efforts due to a rapid turnover of staff members (for example, lack of institutional memory) and difficulty conducting interviews and surveys due to security issues.

JOINT EVALUATION

Joint evaluation is one modality of carrying out an evaluation to which different partners contribute. Any evaluation can be conducted as a joint evaluation. Increasingly, UNDP is engaged in joint evaluations and there are various degrees of ‘jointness’ depending on the extent to which individual partners cooperate in the evaluation process, merge their evaluation resources and combine their evaluation reporting.⁴⁰

The joint evaluation approach became popular in the 1990s with the promotion of the approach through the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance, which

Box 29. Benefits and challenges of joint evaluations

Benefits

- Strengthened evaluation harmonization and capacity development: shared good practice, innovations and improved programming
- Reduced transaction costs and management burden (mainly for the partner country)
- Improved donor coordination and alignment: increase donor understanding of government strategies, priorities and procedures
- Objectivity and legitimacy: enables greater diversity of perspectives and a consensus must be reached
- Broader scope: able to tackle more complex and wider reaching subject areas
- Enhanced ownership: greater participation
- Greater learning: by providing opportunities for bringing together wider stakeholders, learning from evaluation becomes broader than simply for organizational learning and also encompasses advancement of knowledge in development

Challenges

- More difficult subjects to evaluate (complex, many partners, etc.)
- Processes for coordinating large number of participants may make it difficult to reach consensus
- Lower-level of commitment by some participants

Source: Adopted from OECD, ‘DAC Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations’, Paris, France, 2006; and Feinstein O and G Ingram, ‘Lessons Learned from World Bank experiences in Joint Evaluation’, OECD, Paris, France, 2003.

40 OECD, ‘Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-based Management’, Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Paris, France, 2002. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>.

stated, “Joint donor evaluation should be promoted in order to improve understanding of each others’ procedures and approaches and to reduce the administrative burden on the recipient.”⁴¹ The Paris Declaration also reinforced the joint evaluation approach through the commitment made by development agencies and partner countries to find more effective ways of working together.⁴² Joint evaluations can be characterized by a number of benefits and challenges as shown in Box 29.

At the country level, one of the most obvious examples of a joint evaluation is the UNDAF evaluation, in which a number of UN organizations and the government participate. In addition, a UNDP country office may jointly carry out, together with the partner government or with a donor, a joint outcome evaluation that looks where both parties are mutually and equally responsible for the evaluation exercise. For guidance on how to organize and manage a joint evaluation process, see Chapter 6.

5.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EVALUATION

The UNDP evaluation policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of key constituents of the organization in evaluation. Programme units and the UNDP Evaluation Office in Headquarters carry out different types of evaluations in order to objectively assess UNDP contributions to development results.

Senior managers of the programme units are responsible for commissioning **decentralized evaluations** in the programmatic areas for which they are responsible and using the information in managing for results. In order to enhance the impartiality and objectivity of decentralized evaluations, the programme units hire external experts and institutions to carry out an evaluation. Decentralized evaluations help ensure that UNDP remains accountable to the relevant programme country and its people and is responsible for contributing to development results in the most relevant and efficient way.

In programme units, there has been an increase in the number of dedicated **M&E specialists** who contribute to the enhanced quality of the monitoring and evaluation function at the decentralized level. As successful evaluation requires the involvement of all stakeholders, this function entails close communication and coordination with all involved in various stages and aspects of results-based programme management, including UNDP country office management, programme and project officers, national counterparts, partners, UN organizations, regional bureaux and the Evaluation Office. At the individual project and programme level, the primary responsibility for planning for monitoring and evaluation and implementation rests with the implementers and UNDP programme officers. M&E specialists are expected to provide those responsible for monitoring and evaluation planning, implementation

41 OECD, ‘DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance’, Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Paris, France, 1991, p.8. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/32/41029845.pdf>.

42 OECD, ‘DAC Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations’, Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Paris, France, 2006. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/28/14/37484787.pdf>.

and follow up with technical guidance, and support to enhance the quality of their work. In terms of evaluation, to enhance its independence and technical rigour, it is advised that the M&E specialists manage the evaluation in close consultation with programme staff who are responsible for the subject of evaluation.

Due to different organizational and programme structures at the decentralized level, organizational relationships cannot be generalized and prescribed to all programme units. However, it is recommended that **the M&E specialists report to senior management on evaluation-related matters in order to ensure effective coherence, coordination and independence of the function.**

UNDP M&E officers, programme officers, partners, stakeholders and evaluators all play different roles in the evaluation process. Their respective roles and responsibilities are described in relevant sections of Chapter 6.

In the case of independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office, programme units concerned (for example, a country office subject to an ADR or the case study of a thematic evaluation) are expected to play certain roles such as providing necessary documentation, arranging meetings, supporting logistics and providing feedback on the draft evaluation report.

As the custodian of the evaluation function, the **UNDP Evaluation Office** conducts independent evaluations (see Section 5.3); sets standards and guidelines; manages the systems for quality assurance and evaluation planning and use, such as the ERC (see Box 30); and develops products to support organizational learning, knowledge management and evaluation capacity development. The Evaluation Office also participates in the UNEG, which works to strengthen the objectivity, effectiveness and visibility of the evaluation function across the UN system. The Evaluation Office hosts and supports the UNEG Secretariat.

Box 30. Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC)

The ERC, available online at erc.undp.org, is the UNDP information management system to support management accountability for evaluation. It provides timely data on the status of evaluations in the evaluation plans, management responses and follow-up. The Evaluation Office reports on evaluation practices and compliance, using the data in the ERC in its Annual Report on Evaluation to the Executive Board. Regional bureaux and other oversight units also use the ERC data. ERC is a public website.

Detailed roles and responsibilities of key actors in decentralized evaluations are outlined in Table 23.

Table 23. Roles and responsibilities in decentralized evaluations

Who: Actors and Accountability	What: Roles and Responsibilities	When
<p>Senior Management of Programme Units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ UNDP contribution towards national goals ■ Progress, problems and trends in the achievement of UNDAF level and programme results ■ Patterns and efficiency of resource use ■ Use of evaluative knowledge for learning and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure the development of an evaluation plan (see Chapter 3) ■ Promote joint evaluation work with the UN system and other partners ■ Ensure evaluability of UNDP initiatives, clear and comprehensive results frameworks are in place, and effective monitoring is implemented ■ Safeguard the independence of the evaluation exercise and ensure quality of evaluations ■ Prepare a management response to all evaluations and ensure the implementation of committed actions in the management response 	<p>Planning</p> <p>Planning and monitoring</p> <p>Commissioning of evaluation</p> <p>Post-evaluation and follow-up</p>
<p>Heads of Thematic Units and Programme Officers/Project Staff</p> <p>Heads of Thematic Units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ UNDP portfolio of programmes and projects in a thematic area—UNDP contribution to particular outcomes within a programme <p>Programme Officers or Project Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Progress towards and achievement of outputs and outcomes ■ Problems and issues related to implementation ■ Practical project-level collaboration with and monitoring of partners' contribution, as well as resource mobilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate and involve relevant stakeholders in developing an evaluation plan ■ Ensure evaluability of UNDP initiatives in a given thematic or results area ■ Facilitate and ensure the preparation and implementation of relevant management responses ■ Facilitate and ensure knowledge sharing and use of sectoral or thematic evaluative information in programming 	<p>Planning</p> <p>Planning and monitoring</p> <p>Post-evaluation and follow-up</p>
<p>M&E Specialists/Advisers and Regional Evaluation Advisers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Coherent M&E framework and systems in place and implemented at the programme and project levels ■ Enhanced quality of planning, monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support programme evaluability by facilitating the development of a coherent results framework and a monitoring system, and providing programme and project staff with tools, guidance and training ■ Support evaluation planning and upload and maintain the evaluation plan in ERC ■ Provide guidance in drafting evaluation ToR, selecting evaluators, mapping stakeholders, reviewing draft evaluation reports, and identifying evaluation questions and methodologies ■ Facilitate the preparation of timely management responses to all evaluations ■ Ensure management response tracking through ERC and support M&E capacity development and knowledge sharing 	<p>Planning</p> <p>Planning and ongoing implementation</p> <p>Post-evaluation and follow-up</p>
<p>Stakeholders and Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Actively participate in the development of the evaluation plan for UNDP ■ Participate, as relevant, in evaluations as a member of the reference group 	<p>Planning implementation and follow-up</p>
<p>Oversight Units: Regional Bureaux and the Executive Office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regional bureaux: provide oversight to ensure that the relevant country offices fulfil the requirements as outlined above⁴³ ■ The Executive Office provides oversight for evaluations carried out by the regional bureaux and other corporate units such as BDP, BCPR and Partnership Bureau 	<p>Planning, monitoring, implementation and follow-up</p>
<p>Evaluation Office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide norms, standards, guidelines and tools to support the quality enhancement of evaluations ■ Maintain and improve management systems for evaluation, known as the ERC 	

43 The Evaluation Resource Centre or ERC provides timely information to support the regional bureaux oversight responsibilities in evaluation.

5.5 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAMME UNITS

Since the 2002 version of the Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results, requirements for evaluation practices have been adjusted in many ways. Table 24 lists the policy requirements before and after the introduction of the Evaluation Policy in 2006. As discussed in Chapter 3, each evaluation plan should indicate, at a minimum, mandatory evaluations. The implementation status of the evaluation plan and committed actions in management responses will be monitored by responsible oversight units in ERC.

Tool	Before the Evaluation Policy (2001 – May 2006)	After the Evaluation Policy (May 2006 on)
Project Evaluation	Optional	Only mandatory when required by a partnership protocol (including Global Environment Facility) and included in the project document. Strongly recommended to evaluate pilot projects before replication or upscaling, projects that are going into a next phase, and projects more than five years for accountability and learning purposes.
Outcome Evaluation	A certain number of them are required during the programme period, depending on the size of the total programme.	Outcome evaluations or outcome-oriented evaluation planned in the evaluation plan. For more information on outcome information requirements, see the evaluation section in the POPP.
Evaluation Plan	Country-level evaluation plan is prepared by country offices electronically, and submitted to the Evaluation Office for approval.	All programme units are required to prepare a plan for the programme period. It is made available to the Executive Board along with the programme document before its approval. It is uploaded in the ERC to monitor and report on evaluation compliance. The Evaluation Office no longer reviews or approves the evaluation plan.
Management Response	Optional	All evaluations require a management response. It is entered in the ERC to monitor and report on the status of committed follow-up actions.
Information Disclosure in the ERC	It contains evaluation plans and reports for UNDP country offices. It is accessible to UNDP account holders only. It is optional for programme units to upload information.	Programme units are required to upload evaluation plans, ToRs, reports, and management responses. ERC also contains summary reports, information on evaluation focal points in each programme unit, and various reporting tools for all programme units. It is a publicly accessible site.

EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSOCIATED FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

The evaluation units of the Associated Funds and Programmes—United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV); their programme units, such as regional, subregional and country offices; as well as Headquarters-based thematic units carry out evaluations of their respective initiatives. Box 31 outlines their respective mandatory evaluation requirements.

Box 31. Mandatory evaluation requirements for UNDP associated funds and programmes

- **UNCDF**—Midterm and final evaluation of all programmes of a duration of five years or more and a budget of USD 2.5 million or more, or when stipulated in a partnership agreement. Project evaluations of UNCDF funded (or UNCDF and UNDP joint projects) should be included in the relevant UNDP country office evaluation plan. UNCDF also carries out strategic, thematic and outcome evaluations.
- **UNIFEM**—One thematic assessment every two years and one evaluation during the lifecycle for all programmes with a budget of between USD 1 million and USD 3 million. A mid-term and final evaluation is required for all programmes with a budget of USD 3 million or more.
- **UNV**—Evaluation of programmatic initiatives financed from the Special Voluntary Fund, thematic assessments in accordance with organizational priorities, and project evaluations as required by a partnership protocol.