

United Nation Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Evaluation Policy

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Table of Abbreviations

AI	Administrative Instruction
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary General
EP	Evaluation Plan
EPIG	Evaluation Policy Implementation Plan
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PPMU	Programme Planning and Monitoring Unit
RPMS	Resources Planning and Management Section
SMT	Senior Management Team
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

Introduction

1. Evaluation is an essential requirement for the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's (UNDRR) results-based management approach. This evaluation policy aims to support UNDRR programme and project managers at all levels to assess the implementation of UNDRR's programmes and projects effectively.
2. The basis for enhancing evaluation within the United Nations system stems from the report on 'Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: ensuring a better future for all', dated 27 September 2017 (A/72/492). In line with this, administrative instruction (ST/AI/2021/3) dated 6 August 2021 mandates all UN Secretariat entities to adopt an evaluation policy, develop an evaluation plan and ensure adequate allocation of funds for evaluation capacity to deliver the plan. The norms and standards for evaluation of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) provide additional non-binding advice on the conduct and management of evaluations.
3. Evaluation, as agreed within the UN Evaluation Group, is defined as follows: *"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. 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."*¹
4. The aim of an evaluation is to determine how an intervention has met the "relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and/or sustainability of any element of a programme's performance relative to its mandate or goals".² Evaluation also examines coherence with other programmes internal, and possibly external, to an organization.
5. An effective evaluation framework is intended to provide several benefits:
 - Provide feedback and recommendations to management to enhance informed decision-making.
 - Ensure accountability for results.
 - Provide evidence of value for money.
 - Improve planning and programming both at the strategic and programme or project level.

¹ UN Secretariat Administrative Instruction (ST/AI/2021/3).

² Administrative Instruction on Evaluation United Nations Secretariat Guidelines, p. 3.

- Suggest opportunities for learning, knowledge generation and sharing.
 - Create feedback loops that lead to informed and responsive decision-making.
6. This Evaluation Policy defines the scope of evaluations, the types of evaluation and their guiding principles, and outlines the institutional framework for establishing evaluation functions within UNDRR. Moreover, this policy identifies criteria for selection of evaluations, and outlines roles and responsibilities to facilitate and track implementation of recommendations produced by evaluations. It sets a foundation to promote the use of knowledge generated through evaluations for institutional learning, delivery coordination, and accountability.



Scope of evaluations

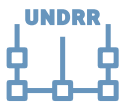
7. The Evaluation Policy applies to the entire Organization, including programmes and projects funded from extra-budgetary resources. Resources and capacity to commission evaluations should be included in the Organization's work programme and project budgets.
8. The Evaluation Policy applies solely to UNDRR's evaluation function. UNDRR's Evaluation Policy is not applicable to any review or assessment functions that do not meet the formal definition of evaluation. This includes performance-reporting procedures, the conduct of after-action reviews, needs assessments, or any analytical lessons learning studies. The Evaluation Policy, moreover, does not govern UNDRR's monitoring activities, although it may supplement the analysis found therein. The provisions of this policy do not apply to assessment or similar audit oversight and investigation activities undertaken by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The findings of OIOS reports may, however, contribute to evaluations and commonly would be available to commissioned evaluators. This policy does not address joint evaluations that may be conducted in conjunction with other agencies, funds and programmes of integrated activities. The policy does not apply in the case of independent evaluations of UNDRR conducted by external entities, such as donors, the OIOS or the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). The policy complements such evaluations by ensuring that UNDRR performs its own autonomous evaluations, regardless of initiatives or requests from third parties, as UNDRR recognizes that performing self-evaluations represents an essential function for the Organization's management and governance.
9. The UNDRR Evaluation Policy Implementation Guidelines (EPIG) provide additional guidance with an operational focus, in complement to the UNDRR Evaluation Policy. The EPIG will provide further operational details regarding the planning, management, response and utilization of evaluations within UNDRR.



Conceptual framework

UN Secretariat Evaluation Framework

10. The Evaluation Policy is informed by existing evaluation policies within the United Nations while meeting the particular needs of UNDRR. It also aims to reflect the experience accumulated by UNDRR adapting to new, emerging organizational, accountability and learning needs.
11. UNDRR evaluations are conducted in line with standards established by the Joint Inspection Unit's Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System prepared in June 2014³; by the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluations⁴, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation⁵, the UN Secretariat Administrative Instruction on Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat⁶, and Administrative Instruction on Evaluation United Nations Secretariat Guidelines.
12. The policy outlines evaluation activities in compliance with the established definition for evaluation specifically based on the UN ST/AI/2021/3 and, more generally, on guidance from the 2005 UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation.



UNDRR Strategic and Programmatic Framework

13. The evaluation function informs and complements UNDRR's planning documents, including the UNDRR Strategic Framework, Work Programme and project documents.
14. The evaluation function sits alongside UNDRR's risk-management planning regime, as assessment of risks to performance and achievement of the organization's mandate may be considered in the selection, risk-based planning and conduct of evaluations.
15. An evaluation plan (EP) should define planned evaluations at strategic level, taking into consideration organizational priorities, the organization's mandate and the overall policy framework and developments. For each planned evaluation, the EP

3 JIU/REP/2014/6 - Joint Inspection Unit, Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System (2014)

4 United Nations Evaluation Group, Norms and Standards for Evaluations (June 2016)

5 United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (June 2020)

6 ST/AI/2021/3 United Nations Secretariat, Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat (6 August 2022)

should define the subject of evaluation, rationale for choosing this subject, timeframe, budget allocation and the expected outcome. The EP is a living document open to amendments as needs arise.

16. Under provisions specified below, the UNDRR evaluation function falls within the Director's responsibility, with Senior Management Team (SMT)⁷ providing oversight and coordination.
17. Conducting evaluations is dependent upon the consistent application of results-based management principles in the organization's programme and project management. Each UNDRR activity should be documented by a programmatic document defining the intervention in objectives, outcomes and outputs.



Types of evaluation

18. UNDRR evaluations in UNDRR may be focused on either programme or project assessment, with view to assessing impact and business processes (results versus process). They may be commissioned at the mid-term stage of an intervention, or the terminal or summative phase. The Director reserves the right to commission independent discretionary evaluations.
19. Under the auspices of the Director, internally mandated evaluations will be triggered by the SMT and contribute to overall assessment and evaluation of UNDRR functions and delivery. This includes strategic evaluations of relevance to the organization looking at regional, global programmes covering cross-cutting issues. These evaluations may be commissioned to focus on a specific project, intersectional cross-programme delivery, internal performance or process issues⁸.
20. Upon approval by the SMT, internal evaluation topics will be selected for inclusion in the EP by the SMT based on criteria contained in the evaluation policy and on UNDRR strategic and annual priorities. These are assessments used to assess issues of corporate strategic significance concerning organizational performance and normative and operational coherence. Internal evaluations of this nature are independent assessments, undertaken typically with the support of external evaluators.

⁷ SMT is a senior management consultative body with a restrained membership. Its members are appointed by the Director.

⁸ Secretariat entities conduct their own evaluations with an internal scope relating to their programmes, sub-programmes, functions, activities and/or processes. The purpose of entity-led evaluations is to facilitate internal assessment and reflection on how to enhance the performance of the entity, to serve as a management tool and learning function, and to support programme managers with identifying areas for improvement. Administrative Instruction on Evaluation United Nations Secretariat Guidelines, p. 2.

21. These evaluations are often of an inter-agency nature, requiring a highly collaborative approach to planning and management. Externally mandated evaluations typically focus on policy and performance issues related to the delivery system as a whole.⁹
22. UNDRR is also subject to system-wide evaluation at the discretion of the Executive Office of the Secretary General (EOSG) and the JIU¹⁰. UNDRR thus will participate in any relevant inter-agency, joint or system-wide evaluation.
23. UNDRR is committed to participating in relevant, interagency, joint or system-wide evaluations and lessons learned initiatives, provided it has the capacity and funds to do so. Any request for interagency or joint evaluation with UNDRR, which is carried out in conjunction with an external entity, other United Nations entities or implementing partners, requires SMT approval. Such requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.



Guiding evaluation principles

24. UNDRR will take measures to ensure that the principles and values the United Nations is committed to are upheld and promoted in its evaluation practice. UNDRR will ensure all its evaluations include an assessment of whether and how the activities, projects or programmes being evaluated have promoted and contributed to the achievement of the goals and targets of relevant overarching policy frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 or the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
25. Evaluations in UNDRR are conducted in line with universally accepted values and principles of human rights and gender mainstreaming. Moreover, participation and inclusion are key principles guiding the UNDRR evaluation function.
26. In practice, this means that all evaluations should incorporate these principles as lines of analysis of the evaluation, by reviewing how these principles were respected and promoted throughout the design and implementation of the project, programme or area under evaluation. UNDRR also seeks to

⁹ Secretariat entities conduct their own evaluations with an internal scope relating to their programmes, sub-programmes, functions, activities and/or processes. The purpose of entity-led evaluations is to facilitate internal assessment and reflection on how to enhance the performance of the entity, to serve as a management tool and learning function, and to support programme managers with identifying areas for improvement. Administrative Instruction on Evaluation United Nations Secretariat Guidelines, p. 2.

¹⁰ The System-wide evaluation unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary General (EOSG) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) conduct UN system-wide evaluations. The purpose of these evaluations is to provide UN system-wide assessments of cross-cutting issues and topics of strategic importance for the United Nations organization. Administrative Instruction on Evaluation United Nations Secretariat Guidelines, p. 2.

ensure that the evaluation process itself applies these same principles, and that evaluations ultimately contribute to promoting and reinforcing them.

Human-rights-based approach

27. Evaluations should adhere to the human-rights-based approach in their design, implementation and delivery. Respect should be accorded to differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, sex and gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and evaluators should be mindful of the potential implications of these differences when planning, carrying out and reporting on evaluations, while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting.

Gender mainstreaming

28. Evaluations should assess institutional accountability for mainstreaming gender in all activities and products, and assess the extent to which these activities and products support the empowerment of women and girls and promote gender equality. In the design and implementation of expected deliverables, evaluations must question the extent to which efforts were made to identify and strengthen opportunities for the inclusion of women and girls in the development process, and to ensure greater representation of women and girls as stakeholders in the design and implementation of UNDRR activities.
29. This policy incorporates specific principles and safeguards to ensure that all evaluations undertaken or commissioned by UNDRR include a focus on the protection and promotion of human rights and gender issues following UNEG's Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation. Evaluations should conduct gender-sensitive analysis, assess levels of gender-mainstreaming of the programmes and activities, and make specific gender-relevant recommendations.

Participation and inclusion

30. Evaluations should also assess the extent to which activities and products are participatory and inclusive. Assessment of the work of UNDRR should consider whether all stakeholders, including national counterparts and beneficiaries, were able to take active roles in project implementation and whether particular emphasis was given to the inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups. Similarly, the evaluation process should involve all stakeholders, including programme managers and other implementing partners, in an inclusive manner in the evaluation design, data collection, and quality-assurance process.

Utility

31. Evaluations must respond to a management need and contribute to improved operational effectiveness of UNDRR or the broader system. In all evaluations commissioned by UNDRR, there should be a clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. Findings should be grounded in the realities of the delivery context and be the product of reliable information obtained through rigorous evaluation methodology. At UNDRR, the utility of evaluation manifests through its use to foster accountability, managing for results, creating learning, innovation and organizational change. This is ensured through a deliberative process to select, design and conduct evaluations and institutionalise a proper evaluation follow-up process.
32. Evaluation products must be timely, and tailored to meet the needs of their intended users. An evaluation will provide evidence-based information that is reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of UNDRR. The analysis of findings by evaluators must consider the realities of the programme or context. The subject of evaluation, including the evaluation scope and questions, are identified to provide relevant contributions to organizational learning, informed decision-making, and accountability for results.

Credibility

33. All evaluations at UNDRR are to be carried out through evaluation processes that are inclusive, involving relevant stakeholders, under rigorous methodology and with robust quality assurance to ensure the credibility of evaluation results, findings, recommendations and lessons learned. All stakeholders should be consulted in the evaluation process to create ownership and facilitate credibility of the process. Terms of reference (TORs) and evaluation reports should be shared with representatives of implementing partners and made accessible to the public, where appropriate.

Independence

34. UNDRR takes all possible measures to safeguard the independence of the evaluative process from undue influence. The evaluation function operates independently from the concerns of any particular organizational or management function within UNDRR. While evaluations at UNDRR are managed by the Director's Office and support sections, measures are taken to maximize, to the extent possible, the independence of the evaluation function.
35. To ensure independence of evaluators, the function of UNDRR staff is limited to setting the UNDRR evaluation policy and guidelines, evaluation planning, task oversight of evaluations, quality assurance, and creation of feedback loops. To

ensure further independence, UNDRR staff do not participate as evaluators, but limit their involvement to the planning and management of evaluations. UNDRR contracts its evaluators externally, and independence from the subject of evaluation is a prerequisite for selection. UNDRR ensures that evaluators have access to all relevant information and are allowed to freely express findings from the assessment. This includes unfettered access to all documentation, beneficiaries, partners and relevant stakeholders. UNDRR commits to full freedom to conduct evaluative work without the risk of negative consequence on career development.

36. From an institutional perspective, to ensure adequate independence for its evaluation function, the following measures see that the central evaluation function is positioned independently from management functions, carries the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda and is provided with adequate resources to conduct its work. UNDRR management must not impose any type of restrictions specifically on the content and recommendations of evaluation reports.

Impartiality

37. The key elements of impartiality are objectivity, professional integrity and absence of bias. The entire evaluation process is governed with impartiality. UNDRR will ensure impartiality at all stages of the evaluation process, including the planning and design of evaluations, selection of any evaluation consultants.
38. Evaluators must not have been directly responsible for the design or management of the evaluation subject, and should be impartial with regards to the subject being evaluated and in formulating findings and recommendations, ensuring the validity of evaluation results and taking into consideration the views of all stakeholders.

Transparency

39. The evaluation process at UNDRR is transparent and involves relevant stakeholders at key stages of the UNDRR evaluation process. UNDRR accepts that transparency in the evaluation process improves credibility and the quality of the evaluations. Consultation with major stakeholders is required during all stages of the evaluation process with the express knowledge that the findings may become publicly available.

Ethical standards

40. As established by UNEG norms, UNDRR will ensure that evaluations are conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment. Evaluators must respect the 'duty of care' principle to safeguard the rights of institutions and individuals to provide

information in confidence and that sensitive data is protected and cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of private information from those who provide it, and pay particular attention to protocols, codes and recommendations that may be relevant to their interactions with stakeholders.

41. Likewise, evaluators must abide by the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation¹¹. Evaluators must make every effort to avoid conflict of interest, and must uphold the principles of independence, impartiality, integrity and accountability. Evaluators must engage evaluation participants respectfully, respect the rights of individuals involved, and uphold the principles of confidentiality and anonymity, along with the principles of human rights, gender equality, and the avoidance of harm.
42. In accordance with UNEG ethics norms, evaluators are required to sign the Pledge of Commitment to Ethical Conduct in Evaluation¹².
43. In cases where wrongdoing is uncovered, evaluators must report discreetly to a competent investigative body (such as the relevant office of audit or investigation). Evaluators are not expected to evaluate the personal performance of individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with due consideration for this principle.

Professionalism

44. All UNDRR evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. Professionalism is ensured through rigorous selection processes of evaluation staff and external consultants (evaluators), rigorous evaluation methodologies and quality-control systems. Each evaluation should employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality-oriented and evidence-based, covering appropriate and replicable methodologies for data-collection and analysis.

11 <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>, published in June 2020. These guidelines are consistent with the standards of conduct in the Charter of the United Nations, the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, and in the Regulations Governing the Status, Basic Rights and Duties of Officials other than Secretariat. They are also consistent with the United Nations' core values of Integrity, Professionalism and Respect for Diversity, the humanitarian principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality and Independence and the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

12 Annex to the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, retrievable on <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/3683>.



Operationalization of the Policy

Roles and responsibilities

45. The evaluation administrative function at UNDRR is located in the Director's Office. The **UNDRR Director** is responsible for:

- Overseeing management of all evaluations in UNDRR.
- Ensuring organization-wide ownership of the overall evaluation functions in UNDRR.
- Chairing the SMT and ensuring that it convenes as required, either physically or virtually.
- Approving and forwarding the EP developed by the Evaluation Focal Point and endorsed by the SMT to relevant UNDRR staff for action.
- Identifying emerging issues that are likely to require evaluation and propose within the SMT for consultation.
- Developing and implementing mechanisms that ensure evaluation recommendations are appropriately addressed, findings are incorporated within the strategic policy development, and corrective measures are implemented.

46. The primary purpose of the UNDRR SMT is to advise the Director on the allocation of resources and time to meet the evaluation needs of UNDRR. The SMT maintains an advisory and oversight function over evaluation.

47. The role of the **SMT** is to:

- Identify functional areas that may require evaluation.
- Make and consider proposals for evaluation in line with the established criteria within this policy.
- Advise the Chair on the priorities for the EP.
- Review UNDRR's EP in advance of approval by the Chair, taking into consideration UNDRR's priorities, available human and financial resources.
- Approve the terms of reference for an evaluation.
- Manage the review process on draft evaluations for comments as necessary, including through steering consultations of relevant organizational units across the organization.
- Ensure timely inputs towards the preparation of management response, where relevant

- Endorse UNDRR Biennial Evaluation Report which reflects key findings, lessons learned and recommendations from evaluations.
- Formulate recommendations for follow-up, including on both the dissemination of the exercises' findings and recommendations at HQ and regional level.

48. The Director will designate an **Evaluation Focal Point** who will coordinate the overall evaluation function and support the Director and SMT in this regard. In particular, the Evaluation Focal Point's support will cover the following areas:

- Secretariat support for SMT proceedings and other evaluation-related workflows.
- Planning for evaluation, including through promotion of enhanced results-based management principles in the programme and project design phase, and for systematic consideration of the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in evaluations.
- Provide quality assurance on workflows and products related to implementing the evaluation policy.
- Establish and maintain a corporate repository or tracking mechanism to monitor the implementation of accepted evaluation recommendations, and follow up on progress in implementing recommendations.
- At the Director's discretion, organize stakeholder consultations, validation seminars or focus-group meetings to create feedback loops.

49. UNDRR Resource Planning and Management Section (RPMS) will support the Director and the Evaluation Focal Point in the planning and design of relevant evaluations, in their implementation and in their follow-up. RPMS will ensure coherence between the evaluation function and the strategic, programmatic and budgetary planning. RPMS will provide assurance that:

- Sufficient allocations are identified in the organization's cost plans and in project budgets, as appropriate.
- Projects approved by the director provide logical framework elements necessary for potential evaluations.
- Each individual evaluation design builds upon and maintains coherence with UNDRR's Strategic Framework, Work Programme and Results Framework.
- Design of UNDRR's Strategic Framework, Work Programme and Results Framework.

50. All UNDRR staff have a role to play in facilitating evaluation.

- Branch, Sections and Office Chiefs are accountable for ensuring the full participation of their staff in evaluation initiatives, allocation of resources as agreed in the EP, logistical arrangements and any other task, effectively support implementation of the evaluation policy.
- Project management teams are responsible for ensuring full access to the project data and cooperation of the entire project team with the evaluators during the evaluation of projects.
- Upon instructions by SMT or the Director, relevant UNDRR staff from concerned organizational units are responsible for reviewing and providing input to the evaluation process as appropriate.
- Branch, Sections and Office Chiefs are responsible for ensuring appropriate response and follow up to those recommendations that are addressed to their organizational units, and for reporting on their progress.
- The Communications Section is responsible for dissemination of the evaluations products and findings, as per the dissemination policy below.

Criteria for selecting evaluations

51. Evaluations will be selected based on priority and relevance to UNDRR's strategic goals. The SMT will review evaluation topics submitted by UNDRR branches, sections and regional offices included in the EP and presented to the Director. To this aim, SMT may call for the Extended Management Team (EMT)¹³ to provide inputs and suggestions to the EP.

52. Evaluations will focus on the following areas:

- Strategic priorities: address areas critical to UNDRR's work based on the UNDRR Strategic plan goals or other strategic documents.
- Thematic areas: cross-cutting or inter-sectional for the whole of UNDRR.
- Regional programmes and initiatives.
- Earmarked projects: evaluation exercises requested by donors.
- Topics, themes or projects for which an evaluation could generate resource mobilization or strategic advocacy benefits.

¹³ The Extended Management Team includes senior and mid-level managers. It has a broader membership than the SMT. Its members are appointed by the Director.

53. UNDRR should conduct at least one internal evaluation per year.

54. Criteria for selection is defined in the table below.

Selection criteria	Selection criteria
<p>Strategic priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and future strategic priorities • Upcoming programming or process decision-making points • Strategic-gap identification • Assess partnership arrangements and delivery coordination • Inform multi-year strategic planning
<p>Organization performance / accountability-related considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage of thematic, programmatic or project-evaluation topics • Significance of investment • Significance of time period • Consecutive multi-year interventions • Donor requirement for evaluation as defined in binding agreements • Prevalence of risk or potential risk (reputational, political, funding, delivery mechanisms) • External system-wide evaluation evaluations as prescribed at the discretion of the EOSG and JIU
<p>Needs of the organization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and future needs (resource mobilisation, budgetary, staffing levels, deployment) • Staff capacity
<p>Organizational learning and knowledge-sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for scaling up • Additional knowledge requirement • Assess an intervention's inventiveness or those that are pilot in nature
<p>Resource mobilization or strategic advocacy benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic is under scrutiny by donors • Validate perceived achievement, that can be used as success story

Evaluation follow-up

55. The EP should be clearly accounted for in UNDRR's overall work programme and budget. Evaluation plans are subject to review by UNDRR's SMT when necessary. Evaluation plans are given to all UNDRR staff.
56. Evaluations require a commitment to respond and act from the respective authorities and managers, addressing the recommendations derived from evaluation. Systematic follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations is facilitated through tools provided in the annex of this policy.

Budgeting for evaluation

57. The UNDRR Director is responsible for ensuring sufficient funding is available for evaluations to be carried out, based on advice, analysis and input from RPMS.
58. The following budget documents will allocate resources for evaluations:
 - The overall UNDRR Cost Plan will allocate resources from unearmarked funds to the generic Evaluation function
 - Budgets of individual projects, when falling in the EP, will allocate resources for project-level evaluations. Evaluations carried out in the frame of a project funded by earmarked contributions will need to comply with obligations stemming from agreements with their respective donors, including regarding the period for implementation.
59. For the overall allocation of financial resources to the evaluation function, the general range of evaluation funding should be between 0.5 per cent and 3 per cent of organizational expenditure, as per standards established by the Joint Inspection Unit¹⁴ (in its report JIU/REP/2014/6, para 77).
60. The SMT will recommend to the Director when adequate capacity and resources are available to support implementation of the evaluation function in line with the provisions of the current policy. This includes support for the travel, and other requirements, of evaluation teams, including staffing of members drawn from elsewhere in UNDRR, if necessary.

14 See JIU/REP/2014/6, para 77

Identification of issues of serious concern

61. If, during the course of an evaluation, issues of serious concern such as, inter alia, safety and security, significantly enhanced levels of operational or other risk, conduct and discipline or malfeasance are identified, the evaluation team leader will immediately report these findings to an authorised investigative body.

Dissemination

62. Findings and recommendations of all programme and project evaluations, regardless of their findings, will be made available to stakeholders, beneficiaries, the United Nations system and the general public, subject to Director approval. The Director may decide not to publish an internal evaluation or part of it, or to restrict its dissemination. The Director may opt to define specific sections of the report as internal.
63. Internal evaluation reports will be posted in SharePoint to promote knowledge-sharing among executive structures in line with coordination of knowledge products and sharing of knowledge. Evaluation reports will be disseminated to staff through appropriate channels.
64. Upon finalisation, to the extent possible with respect to consent and privacy, as decided by the Director, evaluation reports will be made available on UNDRR's website (www.undrr.org). Dissemination may be supported by executive summaries posted on UNDRR's website or through organized consultations. Regional Offices are encouraged to translate executive summaries into local languages and use other means to inform stakeholders of findings, and to enhance learning and transparency. Executive summaries and reference to publicly available evaluation material evaluations may also appear via UNDRR social-media outreach. Further dissemination of evaluation reports rests with the respective managers, or stakeholders, in consultation with the UNDRR SMT.
65. Unless expressly stated, all evaluation reports and material become the property of UNDRR and may not be disseminated without explicit consent of the Director. Consideration must be given to the ethical, legal aspects and implications of an evaluation.
66. As required by the UNEG standards, UNDRR will produce a Biennial Evaluation Summary Report, which will be shared with the UNDRR SMT and posted on the UNDRR website. Management responses and evaluation summary reports will be made accessible to all UNDRR staff through its publications in its intranet.



Approval

67. This policy is effective as of 17 November 2022.
68. It will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect major evolution in United Nations evaluation practice. The next scheduled review should be conducted no later than 16 November 2025. This notwithstanding, the UNDRR Director may at any time initiate a review of any UNDRR official policy.

Contact

69. The contact for this policy is the Director's Office, responsible for the evaluation function within UNDRR.

History

70. This policy was originally approved on 17 November 2022 and comes into effect in 17 November 2022. It is due for review in 16 November 2024
71. This policy is in line with superior United Nations guidance regarding the systematic evaluation of operational activities of the United Nations system, including the assessment of their impact, and the 2005 UNEG Norms and Standards. The policy also reflects recommendations of the OIOS related to impact evaluation, as well as current organizational priorities contained within the UNDRR Work Programme 2022-23 and the Strategic Framework, 2022 – 2025.

72. Approved by:

Review date: 17 November 2022
Effective date: 17 November 2022

水島直美

Mami Mizutori

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Appendix

Glossary of terms

Accountability

The obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted with agreed rules and standards, and to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and responsibilities.

After-action review

A process used by an implementing team to capture the lessons learned from past successes and failures, with the goal of improving future performance. It is an opportunity for a team to reflect on a project, activity, event or task with the aim of improving overall performance.

Appraisal

A critical assessment of the potential value of an undertaking before a decision is made to implement.

Assessment

The process of gathering and studying specific information with the objective to extract analysis. This is undertaken as an element of an evaluation.

Audit

An assessment of the adequacy of management controls to ensure the economical and efficient use of resources; the safeguarding of assets; the reliability of financial and other information; the compliance with regulations, rules and established policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organizational structures, systems and processes.

Benchmark

A reference point or standard by which progress or achievements can be assessed. A benchmark refers to performance that has been achieved in the recent past by other comparable initiatives, or what may be reasonably inferred to have been achieved in similar circumstances.

Coherence

The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a region, country, sector or institution. Coherence has an increased focus on the synergies (or trade-offs) between policy areas; it considers and scrutinises cross-government, cross-institutional, or cross-organizational coordination, particularly in settings of conflict and humanitarian response, and to address the climate emergency.

Credibility

The extent to which evaluation evidence and the results are perceived to be valid, reliable and impartial by stakeholders and, particularly, by the users of the evaluation results.

Effectiveness

The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, stated objectives and results; the extent to which a project, programme or policy achieves objectives and yields established outcomes. The achievement of objectives is assessed under effectiveness.

Efficiency

The extent to which the intervention achieves, or is likely to achieve, results in an economic and timely way. Efficiency is a measure of how resources or inputs (funds, expertise, time) are converted into outputs. It is an economic term that signifies that the project uses resources appropriately to achieve the desired results. A manner to examine this is to compare alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs and assess if the most efficient process has been adopted.

Evaluation

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, impact and sustainability. 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.

External evaluations

Evaluations mandated by bodies external to UNDRR, such as a donor as part of a bilateral funding agreement or upon the initiative of the Joint Inspection Unit or another entity authorised by the UN Secretariat.

Gender mainstreaming

Evaluations should assess institutional accountability for mainstreaming gender in all activities and products and assess the extent to which these activities and products support the empowerment of women and girls and promote gender equality.

Human-rights-based approach

The principle that evaluations should adhere to a human-rights-based approach in their design, implementation and delivery. Respect should be accorded to differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, sex and gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and evaluators should be mindful of the potential implications of these differences when planning, carrying out and reporting on evaluations, while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting.

Impact

The extent to which the intervention has generated, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, direct or indirect, and intended or unintended higher-level effects. The effects may be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or other. Impact addresses the final state and potentially transformative effects of the intervention.

Impact evaluation

A specialized type of evaluation that uses research methods to provide rigorous evidence on whether an intervention (programme, project, policy measure or reform) has changed people's lives and whether outcomes are directly attributable to the intervention.

Indicator

Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of an intervention.

Inputs

The financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for the intervention.

Inspection

A general examination that seeks to identify vulnerable areas and malfunctions and to propose corrective action.

Interagency or joint evaluation

An evaluation carried out in conjunction with an external entity, the purpose of which is to provide United Nations system-wide assessments of cross-cutting issues and topics of strategic importance for the United Nations organization. An interagency or joint evaluation is one in which different agencies or partners participate.

Internal evaluations

Evaluations that are specific to UNDRR and are undertaken at the request of the Senior Management Team (SMT). They are de facto independent, decentralised, self-evaluations commissioned by UNDRR.

Intervention

Intervention encompasses all the different types of development and humanitarian efforts that may be evaluated using these criteria, such as a project, programme, policy, strategy, thematic area, technical assistance, policy advice, institutional performance, financing mechanism, instrument or other activity.

Investigation

A specific examination of a claim of wrongdoing and provision of evidence for eventual prosecution or disciplinary measures.

Knowledge management

A systematic and integrated process of creating, analysing, logging, storing and disseminating knowledge resources, intangible assets or intellectual capital.

Lessons learned

Observations based upon evaluation experiences with projects, programmes, or policies of similar scope and design that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons learned highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact. Lessons learned summarize knowledge at a point in time, while incorporating the understanding that learning is an ongoing process and has the potential to improve future actions.

Management response

Written responses from management to the evaluation process, findings and recommendations outlining future management actions to address identified issues. It is typically included as addendum to the evaluation report.

Monitoring

An organization's continuous tracking and examination of progress achieved during the implementation of an undertaking; typically, to track progress and compliance alongside a monitoring plan to inform any necessary corrective action.

Needs assessment

A systematic assessment process for determining and addressing need, in particular between current conditions and desired outcomes. Used to inform and plan interventions.

Objective

A desired result or end state that is pursued over the course of a policy, programme or project intervention.

Outcomes

The intended or achieved short- and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs, usually requiring the collective efforts of partners. Outcomes represent changes in conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of impact.

Outputs

The products and services that result from the completion of activities within an intervention.

Oversight

The general process of review, monitoring, evaluation, supervision, reporting and audit of an organization's activities, policy implementation and results. Oversight ensures organizational, financial, operational and ethical accountability, effectiveness of internal controls and the prevention of fraud and malpractice.

Participation and inclusion

Involvement of individuals and organizations in which they are positioned to take active roles in project planning and implementation, particularly, but not limited to, participation and inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups. Evaluations should assess the extent to which activities and products are participatory and inclusive.

Performance

The degree to which an intervention operates according to specific criteria, standards and guidelines, and achieves results in accordance with stated goals or plans.

Performance indicator

A quantitative or qualitative variable that allows the verification of changes produced by an intervention relative to what was planned.

Performance measurement

A system for assessing performance of interventions against stated goals and objectives. Performance measurement relies upon the collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting of data for performance indicators.

Performance monitoring

A continuous process of collecting and analysing data to compare with expected results how well a project, programme or policy is being implemented (achievement of outputs and progress towards outcomes).

Policy research

A systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge and policy making.

Qualitative

A systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge and policy making.

Quality assurance

Any activity designed to assist and improve the merit and worth of an intervention or its compliance with a given standard.

Quantitative

Quantitative approaches assign numerical values or quantity to data as a basic unit of measurement.

Relevance or Reliability

Consistency or dependability of data and evaluation judgements, with reference to the quality of the instruments, procedures and analyses used to collect and interpret evaluation data.

Research

A systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge.

Results

Changes in a state or condition which derive from cause-and-effect relationship. Types of such changes are typically intended or unintended, or positive or negative; these are set in motion by the outputs, outcome and impact of an intervention.

Results chain

The causal sequence for an intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives – beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts and feedback. A results chain is based on a theory of change, including underlying assumptions.

Results framework (logical framework)

A framework that captures the logic explaining how results are to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions. The results framework is an application of the logframe approach at a more strategic level, across an entire organization, for a country programme, a programme component within a country programme or a project-level intervention.

Results-based management

A management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Review

A periodic or ad hoc assessment of the performance of an undertaking.

Stakeholders

Any actor involved in activities related to the project, programme or policy evaluated, including staff from departments, beneficiary governments, implementing partners, civil society organizations, donors, project, programme or policy beneficiaries, and other actors such as non-governmental organizations.

Sustainability

The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue, after its termination. Consideration of the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time.

Terms of reference (ToR)

The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue, after its termination. Consideration of the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time.

Theory of change

An expression of the underlying beliefs and assumptions that guide a delivery strategy. The connection between activities and outcomes, with the articulation of this connection the key component of the theory of change process; big-picture analysis of how change happens in relation to a thematic area.

Validity

The extent to which the data-collection strategies and instruments measure what they purport to measure.

Reference documents

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