



IEO | INDEPENDENT
Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme



2018

ANNUAL REPORT ON
EVALUATION



IEO | INDEPENDENT
Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

A large, abstract circular graphic is positioned on the left side of the cover. It features several concentric circles and segments in various shades of teal and white, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The year '2018' is prominently displayed in the center of the white circle.

2018

ANNUAL REPORT ON EVALUATION



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Acronyms

ADR	Assessment of development results (now ICPE)	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
AEAC	Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States	UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
EAP	Evaluation Advisory Panel	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ERC	Evaluation Resource Centre	UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ICPE	Independent country programme evaluation	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	UNV	United Nations Volunteers
IOM	International Organization for Migration	WFP	World Food Programme
JIU	Joint Inspections Unit	WHO	World Health Organization
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation		
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs		



Foreword

As President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), I am pleased to welcome the 2018 Annual Report on Evaluation submitted directly to the Executive Board by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP. This report is the first annual evaluation report under the 2018-2021 UNDP Strategic Plan and the four-year workplan of the IEO.

The Executive Board welcomes the IEO's commitment to further strengthening the evaluation function within UNDP. Evidence of this commitment can be seen in its workplan and its support for the improvement of evaluations being undertaken across UNDP, including in assessing the quality of UNDP decentralized evaluations, and those conducted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV). I would like to encourage the IEO to continue to lead by example in advancing evaluation within the United Nations system and beyond.

I commend the development of new evaluation guidelines to further strengthen UNDP's evaluation function and a national evaluation diagnostic tool to help programme countries build their evaluation capacities. I also appreciate the IEO's willingness to undertake additional work in response to the Board's requests for sharing relevant information and lessons learned to enhance its oversight of UNDP. I welcome the conclusion of country programme evaluations for all new country programme documents coming before the Board.

Independent evaluations at UNDP remain essential and highly relevant to ensure its transparency, accountability and credibility as a knowledge-based organization. With evaluations as drivers of organizational learning, the Executive Board looks forward to the systematic implementation of action plans to follow up on IEO recommendations.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Cho Tae-yul'.

Cho Tae-yul

Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea
President of the UNDP Executive Board



Preface

It is my pleasure to present the 2018 Annual Report on Evaluation to the President of the UNDP Executive Board, his Excellency Ambassador Cho Tae-yul. This year's report outlines the work of the IEO in 2018, a significant year for the office. It marked the start of a new four-year workplan under the 2018-2021 UNDP Strategic Plan. In addition, this was the first year the office operated under its new management structure and delivered on its commitment to the Board to evaluate all country programmes coming to conclusion.

Consistent with the Board decision accompanying the adoption of the UNDP Evaluation Policy in 2016, the attention given to evaluation by the Board and UNDP management has been essential in driving the development of the evaluation function at UNDP. It attests to the importance placed at multiple global levels on the value of critical independent reflection and learning for optimizing the quality of UNDP performance.

I wish to thank UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner for his leadership in creating the space for evaluation to be engaging and useful within the organization, as part of a constructive collaborative dialogue to use evaluation for a stronger UNDP. There has been strongly positive feedback from across the globe to the revised evaluative strategies, in particular full coverage of the programme portfolio, resulting in high levels of transparency and accountability, and a strong emphasis on learning.

Apart from the 14 independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) completed in 2018, we implemented strategies and resources to prepare for more than 38 ICPEs in 2019. Three very pivotal and timely thematic evaluations in 2018 covered operational services, pooled financing and support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries.

I wish to thank the Executive Board, UNDP management, governments, partners and stakeholders for their support to the evolution of the IEO. In particular, I want to express gratitude to my team of professionals, who work with passion and dedication to improve the quality of work of UNDP as a major global development organization. The office remains wholly committed to deepening the organization's evaluation culture to ensure resources are spent wisely, evaluation results are credible and usable, and learning is converted into action.

Indran A. Naidoo

Director

Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP

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Chapter 1

Evaluation in UNDP

This Annual Report on Evaluation details work undertaken by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2018. This included 14 independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) and 3 global thematic evaluations as well as considerable support for the evaluation function within UNDP and globally.



Independence central to evaluation

2018 marked one of the office's busiest periods as it met its obligation to the UNDP Executive Board to evaluate all country programmes due to present new programme documents, in addition to conducting the three detailed thematic evaluations in its workplan. As UNDP implements its new Strategic Plan (2018 to 2021), which defines platforms for development as well as an increased focus on innovative solutions to support development, it is increasingly relevant for the organization to have strong, credible and independent oversight. This ensures that it is held accountable and upholds transparency in its operations.

The independence of UNDP's evaluation function remains essential to insulate the IEO from influence and uphold its credibility in judging UNDP's programmatic effectiveness. The office has successfully established its own structure, budget, and professional and managerial independence. It will continue to work to protect this from erosion and undue influence to ensure the continued credibility of its work, and the transparency and accountability of UNDP as a whole.

As outlined under the 2016 Evaluation Policy, clear budgeting benchmarks were established to ensure the IEO's work cannot be restricted through financial constraints.

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner continues to affirm the importance of independence in the work of the IEO and its value in strengthening the work of UNDP. This has resulted in a four-fold increase in independent evaluations by the office, with US\$7.2 billion in programming being evaluated in 2018 and 2019. A critical mass has been reached in advancing a reflective evaluation culture.

The IEO regularly reports to the Executive Board, which approves its budget and programme of work. In addition, it engages with UNDP's Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC) and the Evaluation Advisory Panel (EAP). The latter advises on the office's work and provides periodic quality assurance of evaluations.

Oversight of the UNDP evaluation function

UNDP Executive Board

- Custodian of the Evaluation Policy
- Approves and oversees the IEO's Evaluation Plan
- Approves and oversees IEO financing
- Consulted on the recruitment of the Director of the office

Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee

- Oversees adherence to the Evaluation Policy
- Advises the UNDP Administrator and IEO Director on their responsibilities under the policy
- Reviews and advises on the Director's appointment
- Oversees implementation of the IEO workplan
- Reviews and advises on UNDP decentralized functions and national capacity programming

Evaluation Advisory Panel

- Provides methodological guidance and expert review of IEO evaluations
- Membership ensures full global and knowledge perspectives

Though independent, the office continues to engage fully with UNDP colleagues in undertaking evaluations to ensure findings, conclusions and recommendations are thoroughly considered and taken into account in policies, programmes and new development approaches across the organization.

The UNDP Executive Board

In informal and formal sessions with the UNDP Executive Board, the IEO has presented detailed evaluation findings, giving opportunities for robust discussion. In addition, the office is increasingly developing new information pieces to keep the Board informed of its work. In 2018, these included an annex to the 2017 Annual Report on Evaluation summarizing the implementation status of IEO recommendations.¹ In the first Board session of 2019, the IEO reported on its work supporting evaluation capacity development.²

The second IEO multi-year Evaluation Plan (2018 to 2021) was approved by the Executive Board at its first regular session for 2018. The plan builds on expectations set out in the 2016 Evaluation Policy.³ It cemented a resource base for the IEO of \$42.1 million from 2018 to 2021.

As noted in the UNDP integrated resource plan and integrated budget estimates: “In line with the evaluation policy approved by the

Executive Board, UNDP proposes to allocate 0.2 per cent of the estimated combined programmatic resources (regular and other) for the functions of the Independent Evaluation Office, which increases the estimated allocation by \$7 million compared to 2014-2017.”⁴

- **First regular session 2018:**
Presentation of the second costed workplan for the IEO
- **Annual session 2018:**
Annual Report on Evaluation 2017 and annex detailing the status of the implementation of IEO recommendations
- **Second regular session 2018:**
Evaluations of UNDP inter-agency operational services and pooled financing

The Evaluation Advisory Panel

The EAP is now in its fifth year of supporting the IEO. Its experts routinely assist in ensuring evaluations retain the highest quality. The 12 members of the panel come from all global regions and have academic as well as practical evaluator experience. They are considered leaders in the field of evaluation.

In May 2018, EAP and IEO staff came together over three days to discuss in detail the past five years of support from the panel, taking stock of assistance overall and exploring specific issues such as methodological approaches and national evaluation capacity development.

The EAP has helped the IEO improve the quality of its evaluations, navigate a transition towards a professional evaluation model, increase its evaluative competencies, and deepen its role in evaluation within UNDP and externally.

The Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee

The IEO has continued to engage with the AEAC, presenting its work three times in 2018 in meetings with the IEO Director as well as in key evaluations and findings. The AEAC is charged with reviewing the activities of UNDP’s oversight entities—including the IEO, the Office of Audit and Investigation, and the Ethics Office—and increasing harmonization in their work. The AEAC, a new feature under the UNDP Evaluation Policy, has been tested in operation since 2016. A policy review in 2019 will be important to reflect on its particular role with regards to the IEO.

IEO presentation to the AEAC

April
2018

- IEO workplan 2018 to 2021
- Decentralized evaluation implementation and quality
- Annual Report on Evaluation 2017
- Management actions in response to IEO recommendations

June
2018

- UNDP Executive Board annual session
- Work of the Evaluation Advisory Panel
- Independent country programme evaluations: Bhutan and Togo
- IEO Charter
- United Nations Evaluation Group week update
- Wilton Park event

November
2018

- General update on IEO activities
- IEO budget
- UNDP evaluation guidelines
- Proceedings of the National Evaluation Capacities Conference 2017
- UNDP's independent country programme evaluation briefs, 2002-2016
- Evaluation of UNDP inter-agency operational services
- Evaluation of UNDP inter-agency pooled financing
- Evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries
- Evaluation capacity development paper

Role of the Evaluation Policy in deepening UNDP accountability and transparency

The Evaluation Policy continues to frame the work of the IEO as well as the implementation of evaluation throughout UNDP.

Evaluation Policy evolution⁵



2006
UNDP
Evaluation
Policy adopted



2010
Review of UNDP
Evaluation
Policy



2011
Adoption of
new UNDP
Evaluation Policy



2014
Review of
UNDP Evaluation
Policy



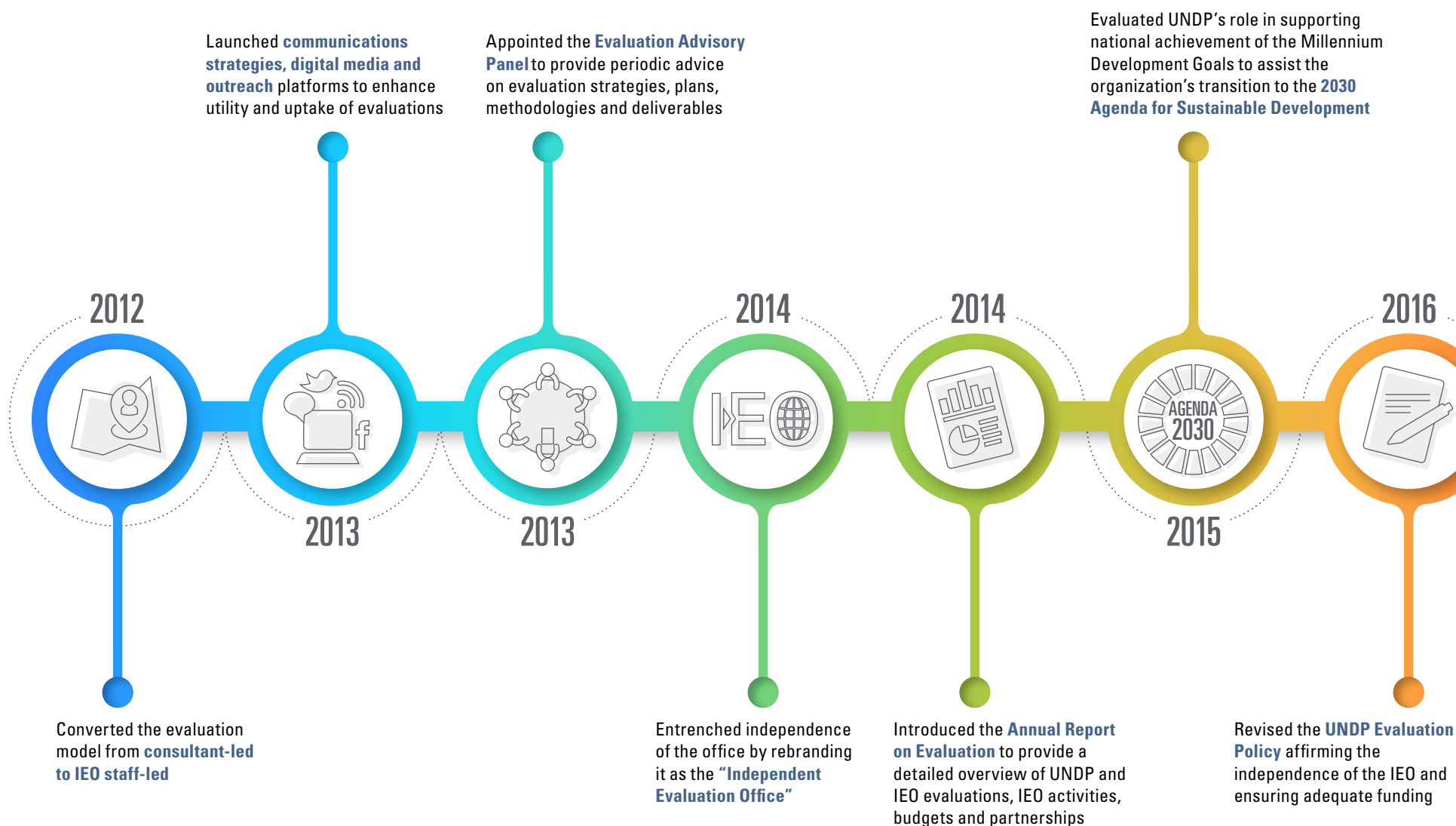
2016
Adoption of
new UNDP
Evaluation Policy

Key aspects of the current policy

- **Enhanced independence** of UNDP's evaluation function
- **Committed budget** allocation for UNDP's evaluation function
- **Expanded reporting & tracking** of management responses, including IEO spot-checking
- **New Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee**
- **Expanded services** of IEO's evaluation advisory panel to include support to UNDP at headquarters & regional levels
- **Director of the IEO reports to the Executive Board** and is limited to a single five-year term at UNDP

Key accomplishments of the IEO since 2012

Since 2012, the IEO has made considerable progress in building internal mechanisms, platforms and processes for optimizing its evaluation, oversight, quality assurance and outreach functions. For more detail, on the IEO's accomplishments see Annex 13.



Collaborated with **UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigation** to carry out joint missions and evaluate UNDP's institutional effectiveness

Organized the **largest National Evaluation Capacities Conference** with 500 participants from 113 countries

Developed a **diagnostic tool** to support governments in strengthening national evaluation systems

Launched new **UNDP Evaluation Guidelines** to assure the quality of decentralized evaluations



2017



2017



2017



2018



2018

Committed to conducting independent country programme evaluations on **100% of UNDP country programmes** ending in a given year

Streamlined evaluation processes and reduced costs from \$140,000 per evaluation in 2016 to \$75,000 in 2018

2019

Chapter 2

Key evaluations undertaken in 2018

2018 was one of the IEO's busiest years with three comprehensive thematic evaluations and 14 country programme evaluations covering \$1.9 billion in programme funds. These took place amid the move to 100 percent evaluation coverage of UNDP country programmes. In addition, the office made detailed preparations for 38 country programme evaluations, covering a further \$5.3 billion in programme funding, slated for 2019. It produced an evaluation synthesis of 15 years of country programme evaluations covering 93 countries and all five regions.



All evaluations were undertaken in close collaboration with programme units within UNDP as well as partners and stakeholders. Continued strong communication and cooperation with UNDP has ensured highly informative and detailed evaluator findings, and robust and detailed management responses to recommendations.



UNDP inter-agency operational services

The IEO conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of UNDP in providing [inter-agency operational services from 2010 to 2017](#). Findings, conclusions and recommendations aimed to improve the contributions of UNDP as a provider of these services. The evaluation synthesized information from 350 interviews and over 600 surveyed responses from UNDP and United Nations entities at the central, regional and country office levels in over 100 countries. It noted the ongoing reform of the United Nations development system, but did not comment on it.

The evaluation found that while UNDP has the largest geographical footprint of operational services among all United Nations entities, and currently serves over 80 of these organizations in about 170 countries, it has only been able to partially recover the cost of providing services, which averages about \$53 million per year. Furthermore, UNDP's effectiveness has varied across different services and locations, with lower client satisfaction at the country level. There is room for improvement in terms of efficiency, a goal to which UNDP committed in its 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

The evaluation found a lack of client orientation and transparency in the pricing of services, leading clients to question value for money. Other issues comprised under-investment in information technology, poor appraisal systems and feedback channels, and no consistent use of service level agreements and key performance indicators. A full clustering of services not dependent on given locations could have delivered greater efficiencies, savings and economies of scale.

While United Nations entities served by UNDP gain cost savings and value for money from services, these efficiencies are not enough. Organizations expect improved quality and timeliness of services as well as

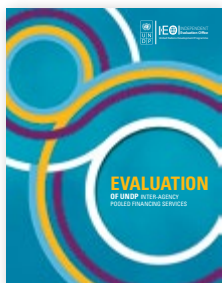
greater responsiveness and risk reductions. For UNDP, economies of scale (related to premises, procurement, banking and foreign exchange) are the most tangible sources of value addition. Intangible benefits are the opportunity to position UNDP as a leader in the United Nations system, synergies among different United Nations entities, enhanced coordination and greater visibility.

Integrated service models have provided United Nations country teams with more ownership and higher satisfaction, but a lack of mutual recognition and harmonization of policies, procedures and systems challenges further integration.

Other issues encompass insufficient financial and human resources, inadequate managerial tools and systems, and an inability to properly price and fully recover costs for services. To a degree, these issues have negatively affected UNDP's reputation and attention to its development mandate and partners. The absence of a clear vision and incentives such as performance assessments have limited corporate buy-in and demotivated UNDP staff.

UNDP management welcomed the evaluation's recommendations, which largely confirmed its own analysis based on an

internal review of management services. The [management response](#)⁶ outlined key-actions to implement the recommendations.



UNDP inter-agency pooled financing

Inter-agency pooled funds are a mechanism to receive contributions from multiple financial partners and allo-

cate these to implementing entities to achieve specific national, regional or global development priorities. United Nations pooled funds are administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, hosted by UNDP. The two major types of pooled funds are multi-donor trust funds and joint programmes.

[An evaluation of inter-agency pooled funding covered the period from 2010 to 2017.](#) It examined UNDP's efficiency and effectiveness in providing inter-agency pooled financing services through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. The evaluation took into account information from 19 countries, including United Nations agency headquarters in New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna, London, Paris and Nairobi, and interviews with a total of 35 United Nations entities, 16 donors and 6 other organizations.

The evaluation found that the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office has established itself as a strong, credible and neutral provider of pooled financing services. It is recognized by most donors and agencies as the preferred choice for an administrative agent. Concerns remain around the quality of fund design and a weak results focus, however.

Financial transfers to and from the office are recognized as prompt, often exceeding key performance indicators. But internal delays sometimes occur within participating organizations when transfers are not clearly identified. Stakeholders recognized that while the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway is a transparent tool for reporting information on donor contributions, it would benefit from more frequent reporting on expenditures.

Pooled financing has reduced transaction costs for donors, but costs increased substantially for United Nations country office staff and resident coordinators. Other concerns relate to insufficient attention to fund closure, which has undermined efficiency and accountability. Stricter compliance on timely fund closure would free up significant resources that could potentially be used by active projects.

Pooled financing in the United Nations

Pooled funds have received over \$10 billion from nearly 100 donors since their inception in 2004. Ten donors have contributed about 85 percent of total funds; about 80 donors have provided 4 percent.

Of the 52 United Nations entities receiving contributions, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) received 80 percent of total transfers. Over 110 countries received funds; the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan accounted for 45 percent of the total.

The firewall between the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office as an administrative agent and UNDP as an implementer is working as it should; there is no evidence of firewall violation. There is, however, a perception among a significant minority of participating United Nations organizations that the firewall at the country level is less effective than it should be, with greater dissatisfaction among specialized agencies.

The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office has managed a pilot for the direct transfer of funds to NGOs. This has demonstrated promising results, although delays in standardizing memoranda of understanding have impeded full roll-out for wider use.

United Nations pooled funds have promoted donor coordination and UN coherence, despite increased competition for resources among participating organizations. They have been instrumental in promoting integrated planning in support of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and national ownership. But success varies and largely depends on the commitment of key actors.

The management of UNDP and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office welcomed the evaluation and agreed overall with its findings, conclusions and recommendations, with some reservations requiring a broader dialogue within the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and with participating United Nations organizations. The [UNDP management response](#)⁷ outlined key actions to implement the recommendations.



UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries

A major [evaluation of UNDP's support to poverty reduction](#) in the least developed countries covered a priority area for UNDP support. The evaluation considered activities under the Strategic Plan from 2014 to 2017. It assessed five streams of programmatic assistance: inclusive growth, employment and social protection; sustainable livelihoods; local economic development; economic revitalization in crisis contexts; and mainstreaming the Millennium Development Goals/Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The evaluation came at a time when countries are in the process of integrating the SDGs in their respective national development strategies. Several challenges remain if the least developed countries are to achieve SDG targets.

The evaluation found that while there was progress in reducing extreme poverty, the pace of reduction has been slow. The rate of decline in sub-Saharan Africa was slower than in other regions. The evaluation also found that many of the least developed countries are constrained by structural weaknesses in their economies, poor infrastructure

development and low productivity. Further challenges are jobless growth with significant gender disparities, climate change, transborder diseases and conflict.

While the least developed countries are very diverse, they share some common structural challenges and specificities, such as a lack of effective integration into the global economy, a narrow and externally uncompetitive base of productive capacities, and limited domestic absorption capacities and revenue potential, especially in small least developed countries. The magnitude of these structural challenges distinguishes them from other developing countries, and has defined UNDP programme support.

UNDP programme and evaluation scope

UNDP has programmes in all 47 of the least developed countries, which absorb a significant percentage of its resources. From 2014 to 2017, UNDP programme expenditure was \$17.4 billion; expenditure in the least developed countries was \$7.1 billion or 41 percent of the total. Expenditure on poverty reduction was \$2.17 billion or 41 percent of total spending in the least developed countries (excluding the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan). Of the \$1.5 billion in regular resources received by UNDP from 2014 to 2017, 60 percent was assigned to the least



developed countries, with a major share going to Africa given its large number of these countries.



Key evaluation findings and conclusions

In terms of UNDP's overall strategy, its poverty reduction programmes and priority areas are highly relevant for the least developed countries. Globally, the UNDP approach has evolved. New tools have been introduced. Inclusive growth initiatives combined with environment and climate-resilience support have provided greater opportunities for demonstrating income-generation and sustainable livelihood models.

Institutional capacity-building and policy support provided by UNDP have contributed to national efforts to reduce poverty. UNDP has built a solid track record in raising financial resources for institutional capacity development and sourcing specialist expertise from its wide network.

UNDP has shown a strong commitment to fostering transformative partnerships with the private sector. It not only facilitated public-private connections but also brought in complementary resources to address policy and institutional bottlenecks, and enhance value for private actors. The evaluation points

out that the low scale of such engagement, however, is undermining UNDP's contribution to poverty reduction.

Inclusive businesses and markets were prioritized to integrate bottom-of-pyramid segments of the population as consumers, suppliers, employees and business owners in value chains and markets. UNDP has yet to use its comparative advantage of country presence and credibility to scale up work in this area, however. Interventions such as microenterprise and value chain development necessitate multipronged initiatives, spanning support to community-level enterprise development, market linkages, integration and scaling up. Most initiatives did not combine these multiple aspects, resulting in limited outcomes.

In the least developed countries, alternative and impact financing from the private sector, although conceptually relevant, is still at a nascent stage. While there are some ongoing initiatives, private sector financing successes are mostly in countries with more mature financial sectors and capital markets. UNDP is well suited to begin laying the ground to facilitate greater private sector participation in the least developed countries, and should develop robust and appropriate tools to enable engagement.

Sustainable livelihood approaches as part of environment, energy and climate change adaptation initiatives at the community level had tangible outcomes in mainstreaming environmental issues within community systems and demonstrating links to reducing poverty. They provided models that can be replicated, but UNDP has yet to pay sufficient attention to applying the insights gained to informing national policies.

In conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, **UNDP's role in and contribution to economic revitalization** have been important, enabling temporary benefits to affected populations. But such initiatives were often short-term, quick-impact programmes meant to address widespread unemployment, and not designed for long-term sustainable employment creation. The lack of adequate attention to interlinking dimensions of multiple fragilities and the challenges of limited income-generation capacities and investments reduced the contribution to poverty reduction.

UNDP management plans to provide a full management response to this evaluation at the annual session of the Executive Board in June 2019. It [presented a management note](#) during the first session of the Board in January 2019, which recognized the evaluation findings but requested additional time to develop a detailed response.

Country programme evaluations in 2018

With 2018 marking the first year of full evaluation coverage of UNDP country programmes coming to an end, 14 country programme evaluations were undertaken for Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Guatemala, Madagascar, Mali, Paraguay, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Venezuela and Yemen. Detailed preparations have also been made for Afghanistan, where an evaluation will be carried over into 2019, after the country programme was extended by two years. These evaluations covered \$1.9 billion of UNDP programme expenditure and all country programme documents coming to a conclusion in 2019.

The 100 percent evaluation coverage of concluding country programmes comes at the request of the Executive Board and has been implemented within the same envelope of funding for the IEO. This remains a manageable challenge going forward. To ensure evaluation quality at lower cost, the office has strengthened its team of professional evaluators as well as its research team, enabling more research and data collection prior to country visits when initial desk-related findings are verified. In addition, stakeholder meetings, where final evaluations are presented to UNDP country offices and their partners, are now successfully implemented remotely through online meeting platforms.

In some countries, ongoing conflict and social upheaval have prevented IEO evaluators from visiting the country or interviewing government counterparts and beneficiaries. As a result, evaluators have had to rely on UNDP corporate and country office information, and remote interviews with United Nations staff, civil society, private sector actors and bilateral donors. The conflict in Yemen meant that UNDP colleagues and implementing partners were interviewed either in the Arab States regional hub in Jordan or remotely through teleconferencing. Despite these challenges, a robust evaluation was undertaken and was

well received by the regional bureau and country office. It will be used to strengthen future programmes. The process illustrated the possibility of useful and credible evaluations even in challenging circumstances, but in order for this to happen, full support and engagement are needed.

Experiences from evaluations in challenging contexts will strengthen future work in 2019 and beyond, especially in crisis countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic, all of which will undergo evaluations in 2019.

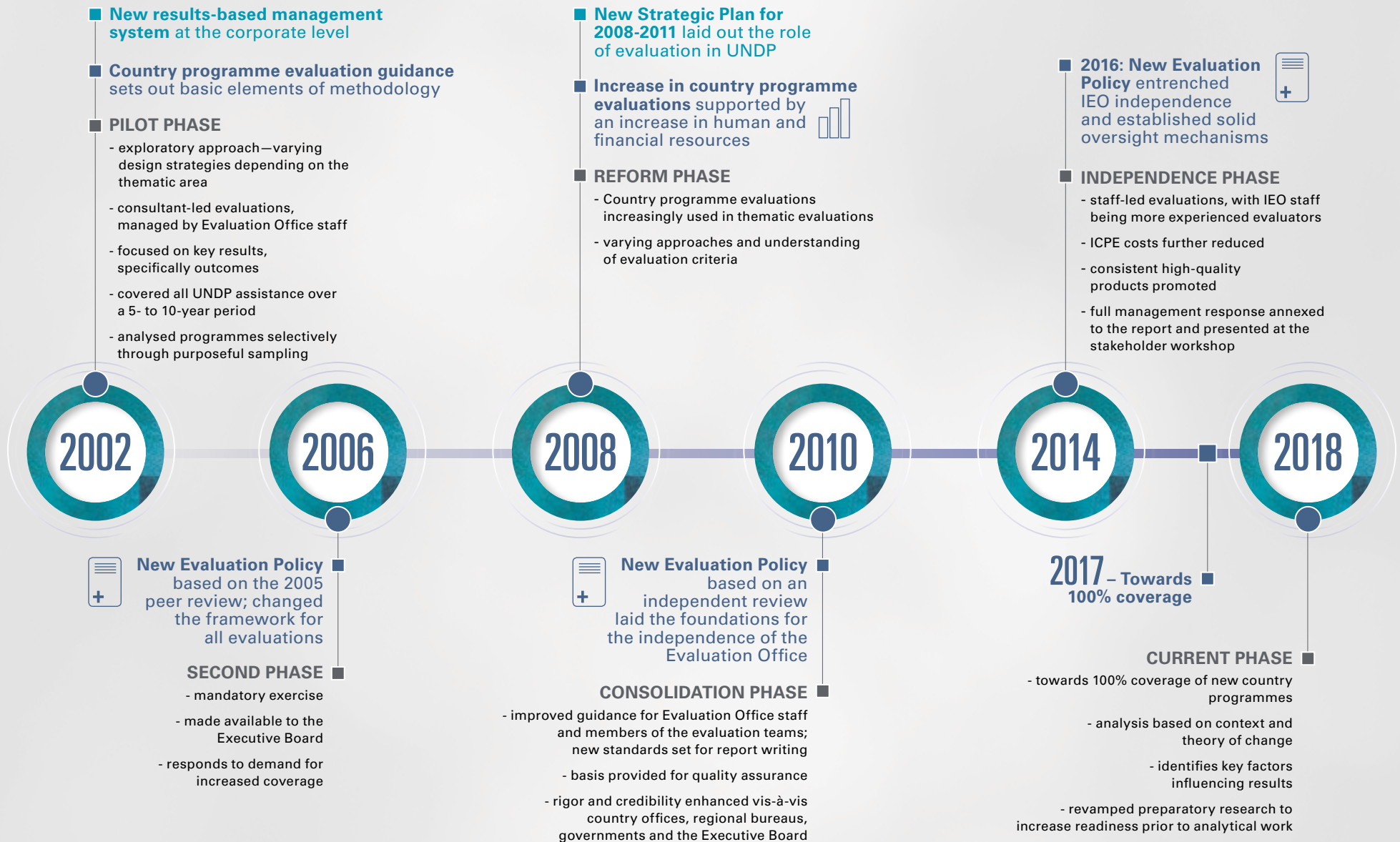


The ICPE timeline

■ UNDP

■ UNDP Evaluation Office

■ Country Programme Evaluations (CPEs)





Independent country programme evaluation synthesis and evaluation briefs

In its oversight of UNDP programme implementation, the IEO carried out 105 country programme evaluations in 93 countries between 2002 and 2016. In 2018, the office reviewed [the evaluations and synthesized findings](#) to provide UNDP and the Executive Board with an overview of how country programmes contributed to development results over the last 15 years, as part of informing future programme strategies. Key lessons drawn from the 105 evaluations included:

- 1 Relevance of comparative strengths:** UNDP is more successful at the country level, with a stronger programme fit and better results, when it takes a human development approach and focuses its efforts on institutional strengthening, resource mobilization and United Nations system integration.
- 2 Results-based management and knowledge management for improved effectiveness:** Results-based management is most often associated with

compliance-driven practices required to satisfy monitoring and reporting requirements. There is limited understanding and application of theories of change, and insufficient focus on learning from evidence to enhance knowledge management for decision-making, adaptive management and improved performance. Successful country offices are developing theories of change for each outcome, and use monitoring of progress and knowledge management of lessons as continual feedback loops, which become integrated into internal learning and improvement processes.

- 3 Key success factors for democratic governance:** Results are often driven by UNDP's involvement in strengthening national capacity for policy development and action. A focus on gaps and needs assessments is useful to ensure that interventions are demand-driven. Greater buy-in from stakeholders heightens the likelihood of sustainable results.
- 4 Key success factors for poverty reduction:** A primary factor entails strengthening national capacity to develop national multidimensional poverty strategies and initiatives that identify vulnerable and marginalized populations.

- 5 Key success factors for environmental sustainability:** UNDP achievements largely depend on the design and implementation of financing schemes that bring together governments, donors, international development banks, NGOs and the private sector to jointly address complex environmental issues.
- 6 Key success factors for crisis response and disaster risk reduction:** UNDP is perceived to be especially effective where it can effectively coordinate the United Nations system for institution-building and policy advice on one hand, and livelihood recovery and resilience-building on the other.
- 7 Factors influencing sustainability:** The sustainability of UNDP programme results is most often directly related to the extent of national ownership, sustained attention to national capacity-building, and engagement with civil society. Limits to sustainability typically stem from the lack of exit strategies and inadequate monitoring, insufficient attention to evaluation and learning for adaptive management, and missed opportunities to replicate successful initiatives.

8 Gender equality and women's empowerment as a cross-cutting issue: Many country offices are operating without adequate gender strategies and are overly dependent on one gender focal point. Offices with dedicated, comprehensive gender equality strategies and plans are better prepared to contribute to equitable development results in any context. Work on gender equality and women's empowerment cuts across all areas of intervention and therefore should not be confined to a gender expert alone. All staff should have sufficient gender expertise. Gender mainstreaming remains weaker in environment, energy and crisis response programmes.



9 Challenges with national implementation and efficiency: Nationally implemented initiatives can help to increase national ownership and the sustainability of results. Country offices often lack adequate strategies to deal with the risks and challenges associated with managing such projects, however. Additional administrative layers and the low capacity of government counterparts can impede implementation and jeopardize results.

10 Diversifying sources of funding: Country offices face increasing challenges with the decline of core funding. Those that have developed resource mobilization strategies have managed to better diversify funding sources, balancing government cost-sharing with vertical funds, and incrementally adding other sources of co-financing such as the private sector.

The analysis undertaken during the synthesis highlighted the most common institutional and programmatic recommendations from the 105 assessments between 2002 and 2017. These represent areas where UNDP continuously faces challenges in addressing weakness identified through evaluations.





TOP 10 INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strengthen** monitoring and evaluation (n=50)
2. **Leverage** and further implement activities in areas where UNDP has comparative strengths (n=45)
3. **Adapt** staffing and internal systems to meet changing landscapes and programming (n=32)
4. **Use** a responsive approach to addressing emerging issues in alignment with long-term commitments (n=30)
5. **Develop** holistic and operationalized gender equality strategies and plans (n=28)
6. **Maximize** synergies across thematic areas in the country office to be more efficient and effective (n=25)
7. **Develop** an effective knowledge management, communication and information technology strategy for the country office (n=23)
8. **Leverage** the UNDP role and value added in United Nations coordination (n=22)
9. **Develop** a systematic and operational approach to capacity development (20)
10. **Strengthen** the contribution of UNDP in coordination and programming (n=18)



TOP 10 PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Ensure** better coordination and connections between local and national needs and interventions (n=23)
2. **Strengthen** national ownership through increased capacity-building (n=22)
3. **Enhance** UNDP capacity for policy advice (n=21)
4. **Increase** civil society and community level engagement in interventions (n=22)
5. **Create** additional spaces for civil society influence in policy and decision-making (n=19)
6. **Establish** realistic programming timeframes to achieve longer term development outcomes (n=18)
7. **Strengthen** national ownership through deeper alignment with national or international priorities (n=17)
8. **Incorporate** well-defined exit strategies into all programmes and projects (n=15)
9. **Conduct** situation and gender analysis to ensure programming is responsive to country needs (n=15)
10. **Adapt** and test successful initiatives in new contexts (n=14)



The IEO produced a compendium of two-page [country programme evaluation briefs](#) covering the 105 evaluations from 2002 to 2016. The compendium, categorized by region, gives easy access to evaluation

findings, conclusions and recommendations as well as a detailed breakdown of funding sources for country programmes.

The briefs detail the relevance of UNDP's work and approach to national development priorities, its effectiveness in achieving and sustaining results, and its strategic positioning and partnership with other United Nations entities and development organizations. They offer an initial insight into UNDP challenges and achievements over the last 15 years in its work across the globe.

Chapter 3

Advancing global evaluation culture and practice in 2018

The IEO continues to work across the global evaluation community to strengthen the culture of evaluation within UNDP and the United Nations system as well as within governments. In 2018, the IEO remained highly active following the 2017 National Evaluation Capacities Conference with the publication of the proceedings and the launch of a national diagnostic tool to strengthen evaluation within government agencies. The office also retained a leading role in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). In January 2019, it presented a [paper to the Executive Board](#) outlining its support to capacity development within UNDP and beyond.⁸





The National Evaluation Capacities Conference proceedings and follow-up

The IEO organized the 2017 National Evaluation Capacities conference in Istanbul from 18 to 20 October 2017. The conference brought together more than 500 participants from over 110 countries under the theme “People, Planet and Progress in the SDG Era.” The 2018 publication of the proceedings of the conference drew together 46 papers by more than 70 authors, the majority from countries participating in the conference. It provides an excellent resource for people who attended the conference and the wider evaluation community.

The IEO supported further national evaluation capacity engagements in 2018. In response to regional demand, it financially assisted UNDP country offices in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to implement a multicountry project, “Partnering for green SDGs.” The project was designed to address the findings of a “mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support” engagement that identified significant gaps in the alignment of national

development plans with SDGs pertinent to the environment. The project also considered the need to strengthen national capacities to produce environment statistics based on the “Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics 2013” developed by the United Nations Statistical Commission as well as related tools.

In June 2018, the IEO provided financial and technical support to UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Africa to organize an Africa regional National Evaluation Capacities Workshop in Kigali, Rwanda. It brought together representatives of governments, regional institutions, evaluation networks, and United Nations and UNDP staff to share efforts in strengthening national evaluation functions and systems, and linking these to SDG evaluation and monitoring processes. The active participation of government representatives from 14 countries from different subregions was notable. Presentations on the new IEO online evaluation system diagnostics tool led the Government of Senegal to pilot the tool and prepare a diagnostic report on the country’s national evaluation system, with a view to developing a national evaluation policy.

The IEO supported the participation of government representatives from Botswana in the 2018 Asian Evaluation Week in Chengdu, China. Held for the third time,

the Evaluation Week was organized by the Asian Development Bank and China’s Ministry of Finance Asia-Pacific Finance and Development Institute. It convened 240 participants from 49 countries. The IEO facilitated a country-led session on how supreme audit institutions support evaluation that included a UNDP-sponsored joint presentation from Botswana’s Auditor General’s Office and National Strategy Office (its lead agency for evaluation).

Other activities

Wilton Park dialogue, United Kingdom: The IEO collaborated with Wilton Park in a dialogue delving into a number of pressing questions on evaluation and the SDGs. The three-day meeting brought together a select group of 25 thought leaders in the fields of development assistance and evaluation research along with specialists from other sectors, including audit, statistics, humanitarian assistance, banking, academia and the media to discuss and reflect on the topic of [“Revisiting independence, objectivity and the critically reflective role of evaluation for the SDG era.”](#)

The dialogue enabled a high-level, practical but informal debate, addressing conceptual and practical issues arising from the

intersections of accountability, independence, objectivity and the critical voice of evaluation. It explored the extent to which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with evolving understanding of the meaning of ‘development’, give rise to a new set of challenges to evaluation.

Discussion was built around five pressing questions:

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promotes a transformative, rights-based development agenda in which stakeholders are engaged and empowered, and where review and evaluation are country owned. How can the evaluation offices of large international organizations uphold a credible, independent voice while contributing to this agenda?
- Decisions about development do not stem from evidence and technical merit alone. While flows of information—from national data to big data—are increasing, it is clear that both political and technical dimensions are central to developmental outcomes.
- Impartiality amid individual agency interests is a crucial component of credibility when analysing the multiple causal factors and efforts of organizational actors that influence development results. With increasing competition among development agencies

for scarce resources, how can evaluators prepare to withstand pressures from organizational heads to use evaluation for their own purposes?

- Does evaluation need to move outside the confines of addressing matters related to the results and resources frameworks of individual organizations and discrete projects?
- With few matters of development yielding to precise explanation by way of social science methods, why do evaluators resist seeing their role as constituting professional judgment?

The International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET), Bonn: This course is one of the leading evaluation executive training programmes globally. The IEO has long partnered with the programme and supported a range of participants from

the IEO, UNDP and governments; the IEO Director remains a visiting faculty member. In 2018, the Director gave the [keynote speech](#) to participants, underlining: i) the principle of exercising the right to judgment and independence for transformation, ii) the value of being self-reflective and seeking critique to keep us honest, and iii) the value of communicating evaluations.

The IEO Deputy Director participated in the second [UN World Data Forum](#), a key biennial event for major producers and users of data and statistics. The forum was an opportunity to engage on the technical and political dimensions of data and statistics, and address how public and private sectors are meeting the data challenges and opportunities faced by the global statistical community. For evaluators, the meeting provided the chance to learn about new technologies, methodologies and solutions to gather and analyse data as evidence for evaluation purposes.

Wilton Park dialogue report

“It is easier to focus on the organisational independence of the evaluation function than on substantive independence. The former refers to the structural autonomy of an evaluation unit from operational management and decision-making responsibilities within an organisation. The latter speaks to the capacity of the individual evaluator to be demonstrably free from bias in the claims he or she makes in an evaluation.”



The United Nations Evaluation Group: the IEO's changing roles

The IEO continued to engage fully with the UNEG and across several of its working groups in 2018. It was the final year of UNDP's and the IEO's full sponsorship of the UNEG Secretariat. Moving forward, the IEO will significantly reduce its financial and staff support. UNEG heads have recognized issues around a high dependence on UNDP and the unsustainability of the current business model. This move releases much needed human and financial resources for UNDP evaluations.

From 2019, the IEO will continue to be a leading member of the UNEG. It will support the group as it establishes a governance task force to revisit the principles of different United Nations entities working together in preparation for strategic development beyond 2019. The IEO Director will continue as Vice-Chair and will participate in the core leadership team, which will work on the formulation of a new UNEG Strategy to be discussed at the 2019 UNEG Annual General Meeting.

The IEO Directorate and staff members participated in the UNEG's Evaluation Week in Rome, Italy in May 2018 along with over 160 evaluators from more than 40 United Nations

entities. Evaluation Week included a highly creative, innovative evaluation practitioners exchange organized by the Rome-based host agencies; it featured strong audience engagement. The week was followed by a two-day UNEG Annual General Meeting.

National diagnostic tool

Supported by the Norwegian Agency for International Development, the IEO has developed an online self-assessment tool for evaluation diagnostics and strategizing. The tool facilitates the development or strengthening of a national evaluation framework for the SDGs; addresses gaps in national evaluation thinking and practice; and informs country-led evaluation processes and systems. With a flexible, practical framework, the tool enables governments and other development actors to establish a systematic approach to determining key areas, pathways and parameters for evaluating national development strategies and the SDGs. It situates evaluation practices within the context of other public sector feedback mechanisms, and recognizes that an evaluation practice is not a set of outputs but is built over time.

The diagnostic process consists of four phases: planning and building ownership; preparing necessary information; carrying out a diagnosis, analysis and reporting; and undertaking identified follow-up actions. The

tool was introduced to government representatives from 14 countries at a workshop in Kigali, Rwanda. It is now being piloted in Nepal, Senegal and Uganda.

Communications and outreach

IEO's communications, advocacy and digital strategies have been integral in enhancing the utility of its evaluations, promoting an evaluation culture and increasing visibility of UNDP's transparency and accountability functions. IEO develops strategic evaluation products that disseminate its findings to target audiences and help ensure uptake of recommendations. IEO reports are packaged in a wide array of formats, including two-page briefs, illustrated summaries, videos and infographics along with full reports, and are increasingly only available electronically. Shorter reports and summaries allow decision-makers to identify key findings quickly and easily, with follow-up through more detailed technical reports.

The IEO conducted a rebranding exercise in 2018. To increase its online visibility, its website was revamped to enhance the user experience via interactive visualizations and easier navigation. The site is now mobile friendly. To target audience needs in times







of information overload, the IEO revamped its ICPE reports to integrate a storytelling approach with compelling visuals.

Analytics indicated over 86,000 visitors to the website in 2018. The IEO has more than 13,000 followers on its social media platforms.

The [Evaluation Resource Centre](#) saw further development during 2018 as the IEO worked with UNDP bureaus to strengthen oversight

and support to decentralized evaluations. The centre operates as a public database for evaluations, holding more than 4,000 UNDP and IEO evaluations across all regions and thematic areas. It is also a comprehensive management tool for the oversight of evaluation plans, supporting timeliness in implementation as well as follow-up on management responses and key actions.

2018 ERC report downloads

	Africa	>	247,984
	Arab States	>	79,688
	Asia and the Pacific	>	180,656
	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	>	135,934
	Latin America and the Caribbean	>	197,007
	Global units	>	115,024



TOTAL EVALUATION DOWNLOADS

956,293



Chapter 4

Oversight and support to UNDP decentralized evaluations

UNDP investment in evaluation in 2018

UNDP spent \$22 million on evaluation in 2018. The total comprised 0.48 percent of core and non-core UNDP fund utilization.⁹





The IEO had a budget expenditure of \$8.7 million for evaluations, institutional activities, and staff and rental costs, with \$8.55 allocated from core resources. In total, IEO allocations accounted for 0.19 percent of UNDP core and non-core funds, a slight decrease from 2017 (\$9 million, with \$8.7 million from core resources). The allocation was in line with the requested annual budget for the office approved by the Executive Board in its [first session of 2018](#).¹⁰

UNDP country offices spent \$11.5 million on evaluation during 2018. This included evaluation implementation costs (\$6.6 million),¹¹ staff costs (\$3.9 million) as well as additional evaluation-related costs (\$1 million).¹² The inclusion of additional costs in results-oriented annual reporting is a further attempt by UNDP to disaggregate evaluation expenditure and account for all related costs.

Expenditure at headquarters and by regional bureaus in implementing, supporting and overseeing evaluation amounted to \$1.8 million, including evaluation costs (\$0.3 million), staff (\$1.4 million) and additional evaluation expenditures (\$0.1 million).

In 2018, programme units reported monitoring and evaluation funds separately in the results-oriented annual reporting in line with the Evaluation Policy, which calls for clarity in funding evaluation, including through the delineation of these two functions.





Decentralized evaluation implementation in 2018

Through the Annual Report on Evaluation, the IEO continues to oversee and report on the implementation of UNDP's substantial portfolio of decentralized evaluations. In 2018, UNDP completed 283 evaluations planned for the year, a decline from 2017. UNDP completed 126 project evaluations (45 percent); 121 Global Environment Facility (GEF) project evaluations (43 percent); 21 outcome evaluations (7 percent); and 15 UNDAF, thematic or country programme document evaluations (5 percent). The decline can be seen mostly in a reduction of UNDP project evaluations, which fell from a planned 224 evaluations in July 2018 to 126 completed by 31 January 2019.

This reduction mirrored a continued difference between evaluations planned and those completed during any given year. This issue was highlighted in the 2017 Annual Report on Evaluation where a similar trend was seen (562 evaluations planned versus 315 completed). By July 2018, UNDP had planned to complete 504 evaluations with a total budget of \$16 million. By the close of the year, 283 evaluations had been completed with a budget of \$8.7 million, or 56 percent of planned expenditure.

While evaluation plan adjustments in any given year can be expected, the IEO is concerned about an overemphasis on the implementation of mandatory evaluations. Another issue is that changes and deletions within evaluation plans are not being addressed in subsequent years to ensure comprehensive evaluation coverage and balance. In some regions, adjustments to evaluation plans have become the norm as a means to ensure annual compliance and present more positive reporting. Greater support is needed to ensure that programme units plan appropriately and implement evaluations in a timely manner to capture lessons and results, and meet accountability, transparency and learning commitments under their evaluation plans.

Figure 1: Evaluation planning vs. implementation, 2018

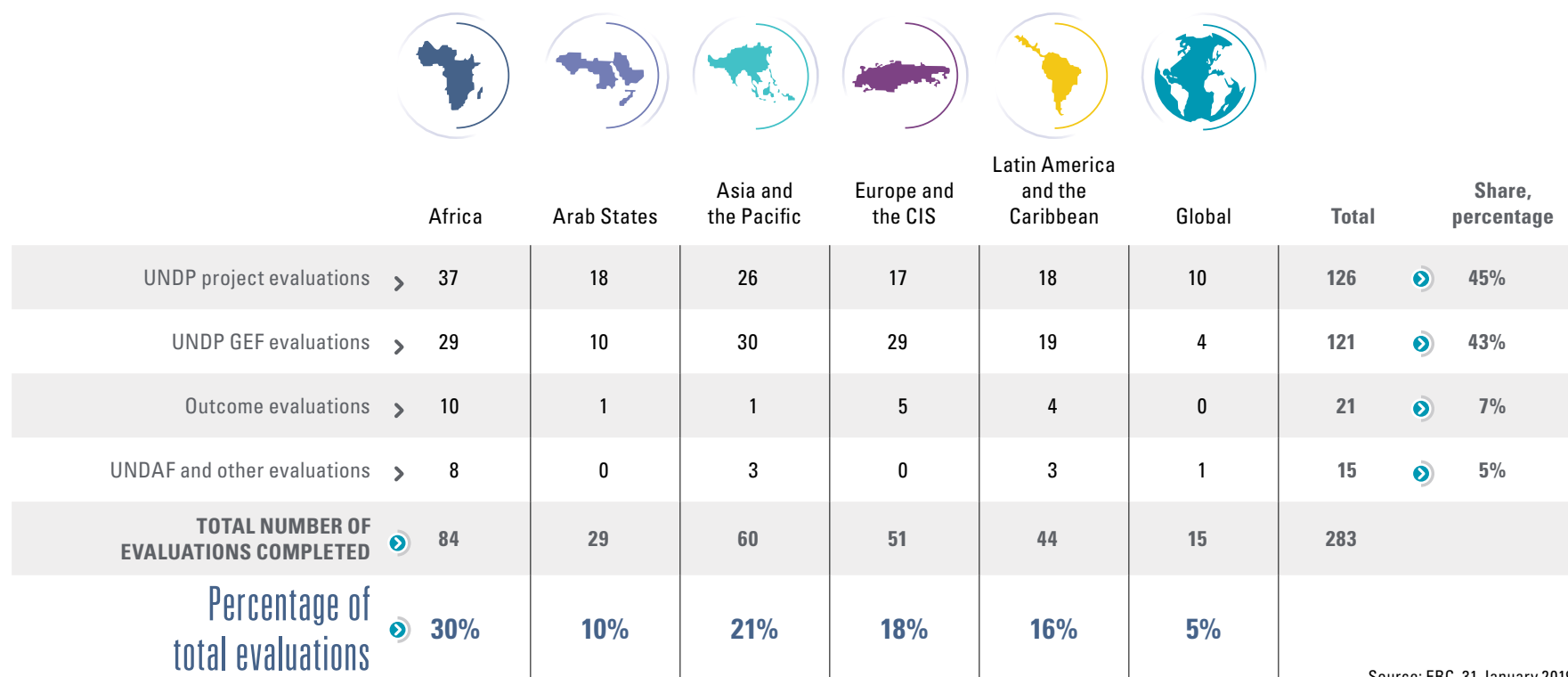
EVALUATION TYPE		Planned evaluations, 2018 (16 July 2018)	Planned evaluations, 2018 (31 January 2019)	Completed evaluations, 2018 (31 January 2019)	Evaluations completed against July plans
	UNDP project evaluations >	248	150	126	51%
	UNDP GEF evaluations >	157	140	121	77%
	Outcome evaluations >	63	27	21	33%
	UNDAF and other evaluations >	36	19	15	42%
TOTAL NUMBER ➡		504	336	283	56%
Total budget (\$) ➡		16,250,792	10,492,477	8,734,437	54%

Though the number of GEF terminal evaluations and mid-term reviews has remained steady (around 120 per year), these are increasingly the predominant evaluation type within UNDP (43 percent, up from 35 percent in 2017). GEF-financed programming is therefore overly represented in UNDP's commitments to transparency, accountability and learning. This is despite the fact that GEF projects accounted for only 9 percent of UNDP expenditure in 2018¹³ and 17 percent

of projects (754 active GEF projects out of 4,378 UNDP projects). New UNDP evaluation guidelines call for programme units to ensure that programme and project portfolios have balanced evaluation plans capturing lessons from all of UNDP's work, and are not just focused on evaluations that are mandatory, such as for GEF projects.

For 2019, 531 decentralized evaluations are planned with a budget of \$16.8 million.¹⁴

Figure 2: Numbers and budgets of completed decentralized evaluations by region, 2018



Source: ERC, 31 January 2019.

		2017, number of evaluations	2017 budget (\$)	2018, number of evaluations	2018 budget (\$)
Africa >		116	3,964,161	84	3,076,029
Arab States >		27	836,383	29	980,029
Asia and the Pacific >		55	2,260,561	60	2,030,424
Europe and the CIS >		68	1,428,357	51	1,250,370
Latin America and the Caribbean >		56	1,416,540	44	984,385
Global >		14	952,826	11	413,200
Grand total >		340	10,960,328	283	8,734,437

While the number of evaluations has declined marginally, the budget (not expenditure) for them has fallen considerably, from \$10.9 million in 2017 to \$8.7 million in 2018. Unfortunately, accurate and reliable expenditure figures are not always kept for evaluations. While expenditure data must be entered when uploading evaluations to the ERC, this is often just a reiteration of the budget rather than a realistic expenditure figure. Even with these constraints, however, the ERC shows that expenditure on evaluation during 2018 was 81 percent of evaluation budgets, amounting to \$7 million.

Quality of decentralized evaluations, 2016 to 2018

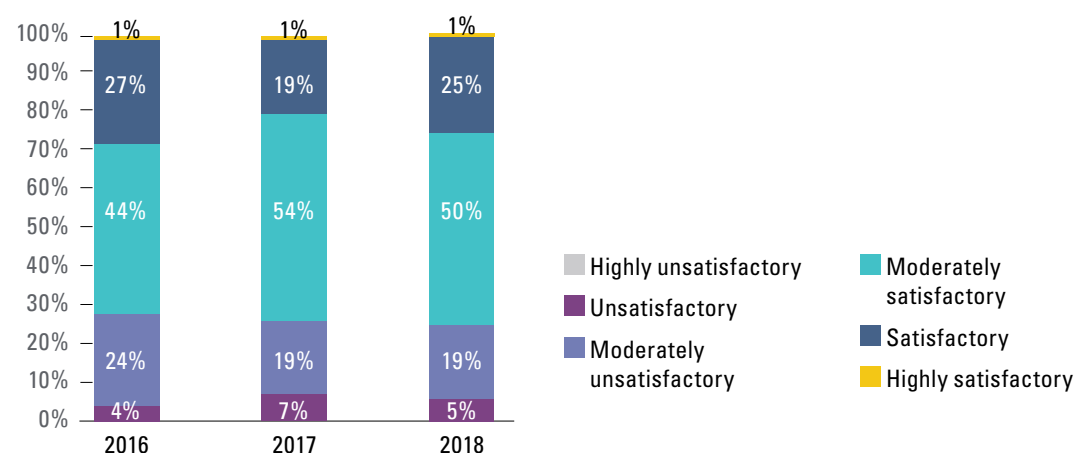
2018 marked the third year of the decentralized evaluation quality assessment process. The quality assessment tool has remained the same throughout, ensuring consistency; it will be reviewed in 2019. The IEO welcomed improved planning and implementation of evaluations during 2018 by all programme units, which allowed the quality assessment process to be undertaken and finalized earlier.

In 2018, 225 evaluations were quality assessed.¹⁷ The process showed a general improvement in quality with 76 percent (170 evaluations) considered moderately satisfactory, satisfactory or highly satisfactory, compared to 74 percent (212 evaluations) in 2017 and 72 percent (187 evaluations) in 2016.

	2015		2016		2017		2018	
	No.	Budget, \$	No.	Budget, \$	No.	Budget, \$	No.	Budget, \$
UNDP project evaluations	110	2,890,609	127	3,441,516	166	4,475,509	126	3,615,065
UNDP GEF evaluations	115	2,973,129	99	2,838,037	118	3,459,407	121	3,508,710
Outcome evaluations	37	1,610,338	26	1,059,482	25	1,227,444	21	973,462
UNDAF and other evaluations	28	1,772,796	36	1,641,500	31	1,797,968	15	637,200
TOTAL	290	9,246,872	288	8,980,535	340	10,960,328	283	8,734,437

Source: ERC, 31 January 2019.

Figure 3: Quality assessment ratings, 2016, 2017 and 2018¹⁶



The quality assessment process has seen steady improvement of evaluations, but there remains room for continued improvement. The process aids UNDP headquarters and bureaus in identifying weaknesses across the implementation of evaluations that may need further strengthening, support or capacity-building, both geographically and by evaluation type. Quality assessment data, comments and recommendations are readily available to improve implementation and use of resources.

A number of regions have sought to ensure better quality evaluations. This is especially true in the Arab States, where only 47 percent of evaluations were found moderately satisfactory or above in 2016. This increased to 65

percent in 2018, illustrating an effort by the regional bureau to support country offices and improve evaluation quality. Equally, the quality of evaluation in offices in Europe and the CIS has risen from 65 percent being satisfactory in 2016 to 83 percent in 2018.

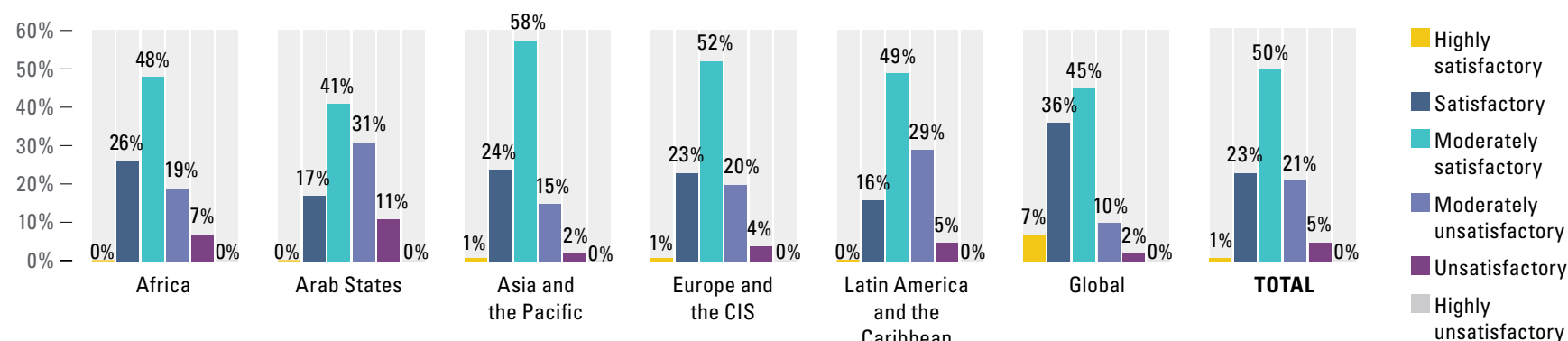
IEO and UNDP support to decentralized evaluation

Support to decentralized evaluations in 2018 focused on a comprehensive rewrite and relaunching of the UNDP evaluation guidelines, which were completed in 2018 with endorsement from the Operational Performance Group in November. The guidelines reflect UNDP's commitment to

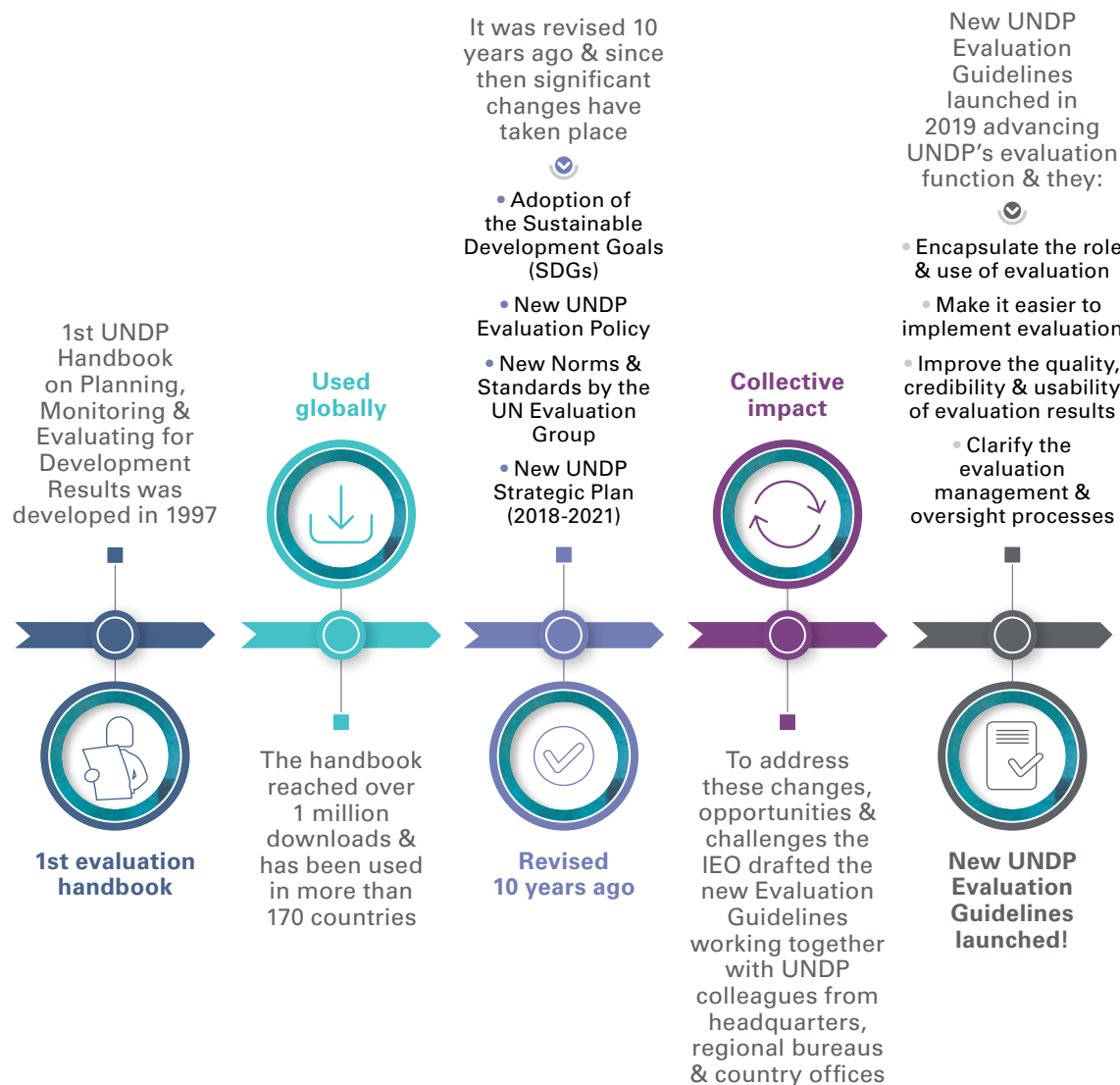
evaluation and its desire to improve evaluation quality, credibility and usability in capturing lessons learned, and ensuring future work is informed and strengthened by past experience.

The IEO led a participatory drafting process for the guidelines that included representatives from the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, regional bureaus and country offices. The new guidelines update previous guidance in line with changes across UNDP since their initial launch in 2009, including the introduction of the SDGs, the 2016 UNDP Evaluation Policy, revised norms and standards by the UNEG as well as UNDP's new Strategic Plan (2018-2021).

Figure 4: UNDP Evaluation quality 2016 to 2018



Evolution of UNDP's evaluation guidelines



The predominant changes in the guidelines entail areas communicated to the IEO during 2016-2017 workshops with regional and country office monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal points as well as observations from overseeing the implementation of evaluation plans and the annual quality assessment of evaluations. Key changes include:

- Detailed roles, responsibilities and accountability for the implementation of evaluation in programme units;
- Support and oversight structures for evaluation implementation and quality assurance;
- Detailed processes for evaluation plan development, content and adjustment throughout its life; and
- Detailed templates and guidance for terms of reference, inception reports and evaluation reports, including links to high-quality examples.

The new evaluation guidelines have been developed across six sections with the express aim of making it easier to implement and manage evaluations, and to ensure evaluation results and findings are credible, high quality and usable. The guidelines will be reviewed and updated annually to address the needs of programme units implementing evaluations.

UNDP evaluation guidelines in a nutshell

SECTION 1 Evaluation Function in UNDP



Outlines the principles that guide evaluation & also the evaluation governance structure at UNDP.

Introduces the different types of decentralized evaluations carried out by UNDP programme units, including UNDAF, outcome, project, thematic & joint evaluations, among others.

SECTION 2 Decentralized Evaluation in UNDP



SECTION 3 Evaluation Planning



Details guidance on the development of programme unit evaluation plans & required content.

Outlines comprehensive evaluation implementation processes across four key steps & provides access to templates, checklists & examples.

SECTION 4 Evaluation Implementation



SECTION 5 Roles & Responsibilities for Evaluation



Details roles & responsibilities in the development & implementation of evaluation plans & use of decentralized evaluations.

Outlines the QA purpose, roles & responsibilities, processes, tools & explains the UN System-Wide Action Plan (for gender) Evaluation Performance Indicator.

SECTION 6 Quality Assessment (QA) of Decentralized Evaluations



Over the last three years, the breadth of the IEO's work to strengthen decentralized evaluation at UNDP has been made possible through financial assistance from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. This enabled the IEO and UNDP to:

- Develop new evaluation guidance (2018);
- Deliver face-to-face training for UNDP staff in evaluation (2016, 2017 and 2019);
- Develop online training in evaluation (planned for 2019); and
- Conduct annual quality assessments of decentralized evaluations (2016, 2017 and 2018).

Beyond 2019, an organizational commitment for further evaluation funding, training, oversight and technical support will be required to ensure that gains and improvements in decentralized evaluations continue, and that a culture of evaluation is further embedded within UNDP. It is essential that senior managers make evaluation a key component of programmes. They should be held accountable for timely implementation, quality and usability of evaluations to enhance transparency and capture lessons that improve and inform future programme work.

Chapter 5

The United Nations Capital Development Fund and United Nations Volunteers

The United Nations Capital Development Fund



Key achievements in evaluation

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) stepped up its support to evaluation in 2018 in line with commitments made in its new Strategic Framework.



It completed external mid-term evaluations of two programmes. The “Mobile Money for the Poor Programme” works in 10 countries to accelerate the supply of digital financial services to the poor through a market development approach. The “Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations” programme aims to build inclusive financial markets in Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam by expanding access to and use of financial products and services among low-income people, particularly women. UNCDF also facilitated a mid-term

evaluation of the “Better than Cash Alliance” at the request of its Executive Committee, helping to ensure that relevant evaluation standards were applied.

The UNCDF Evaluation Unit began mid-term and final evaluations of three additional financial inclusion programmes. The first is the “Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations” programme in South Asia, with a particular focus on Bangladesh. A second is the “Making Access to Financial Services Possible” global programme, which

supports governments in more than 20 of the least developed countries in Africa and Asia to develop and implement financial inclusion roadmaps and strategies. The third is the “Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme” to expand formal financial inclusion and financial education through support to private sector financial service providers as well as policy-makers and regulators.

UNCDF worked closely with United Nations Member State partners on evaluation in 2018, designing and managing the evaluation of the “Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations” programme with the Australian Government and contributing to a Danish Government-commissioned evaluation of the “Access to Finance” programme in Nepal. UNCDF continued to be an active member of the UNEG, and began working with an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) working group to develop guidance measuring blended finance under the broader OECD Development Assistance Committee Blended Finance Principles. In line with UNDP’s Evaluation Policy, UNCDF continued to benefit from its close association with the IEO, such as through inclusion in IEO corporate evaluations, while the assessment of UNCDF evaluation reports by the IEO demonstrated continued strong adherence to UNDP evaluation quality standards.



To support increased activity, and in view of evaluation commitments made through 2021 in its Strategic Framework, UNCDF expanded its evaluation staff in 2018 to three professional posts, hiring a new Evaluation Specialist and welcoming a new Junior Professional Officer. Together with the costs of completed evaluations, this took total annual expenditure on evaluation to \$599,711 in 2018 or 1.15 percent of UNCDF programmatic expenditure, which exceeds the 1 percent target in the Evaluation Policy.



Key results from UNCDF evaluations

Key results from the evaluation of the “Mobile Money for the Poor Programme” highlighted the unique role that UNCDF is playing in supporting the development of digital finance markets for the poor in the least developed countries. Adopting a market development approach, and working simultaneously with regulators, financial services providers, mobile phone companies, fintech companies and partners in key sectors (agriculture, energy and education), the programme increased the organizational and financial capacity of a wide array of private sector partners. It helped to de-risk the launch of innovative business models to reach people with no access to financial

services, and contributed to positive changes in policy. Going forward, the evaluators recommended that the programme continue to incorporate innovation into its work as digital financial services markets develop and new types of providers emerge. The evaluators also recommended that the programme should better articulate and measure the impact of its work beyond financial inclusion, including through evidence not only of project successes, but also of failures to help stakeholders learn from experiences.

The mid-term evaluation of the “Shaping Inclusive Finance Transformations” programme praised a strong and flexible programme design that included a concerted gender focus in intervening in four areas of market development simultaneously. A private-sector focused Challenge Fund was judged to be doing well in incentivizing financial sector actors to develop new financial services intended to reach people in less developed and rural areas, including women. Of 13 investments financed, 7 were ongoing at the time of the evaluation, with lessons from the design and management of initial ‘windows’ being incorporated into current calls for proposals. Challenges in meeting original resource targets (despite significant support from the Australian Government) meant that capacity-building

and policy and advocacy activities were still at a preliminary stage, however. The evaluators recommended more targeted support to regulators and financial service providers going forward, with a view to fostering an appropriate environment for pro-poor private capital, as well as changes to the Challenge Fund to increase the likelihood of successful and sustainable investments. They also recommended a more targeted focus on poor and vulnerable populations, including those with disabilities.

The United Nations Volunteers



Key achievements in evaluation

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) budget for evaluation in 2018 was around \$122,500, drawn from core and non-core funds, including special voluntary funds. The budget covered the cost of the evaluability assessment of the Strategic Framework 2018-2021, five project evaluations and the salary of one Evaluation Specialist.

Under its Strategic Framework 2018-2021, UNV continued to focus on conducting external independent evaluations of selected

key projects mainly at the end-point of implementation. It remained committed to working with partners in undertaking joint thematic and impact evaluations that consider UNV's contributions to partners' results. The UNV evaluation plan accompanying the Strategic Framework foresees nine evaluations: four project evaluations, two impact evaluations and three thematic evaluations.

In 2018, UNV continued to provide technical support and quality assurance to decentralized evaluations, carrying out two project evaluations at the country level and two programme evaluations at the regional level. As part of the 2016-2017 evaluation plan, the final evaluation of the project for a National Youth Volunteer Programme in Burundi and the final evaluation of the project "Support to the establishment of the National Volunteer Program in Mauritania" were finalized at the beginning of the year. Both evaluation reports directly contribute to improving UNV's future work on volunteerism.

The final evaluation of the "Partners for Prevention Regional Joint Programme for Violence against Women and Girls Prevention in Asia and the Pacific" was jointly conducted with UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women. It also fell under the 2016-2017 evaluation plan. The evaluation viewed volunteerism as being a

vital concept and practice in the programme, leading to the recommendation that more institutionalized volunteerism in prevention programmes would be strategic. The results support the further development of prevention programming.

As part of the new four-year evaluation plan for 2018 to 2021, a final evaluation of the programme "Support to Enhancing Capacity of United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience in South and

East Asia & Pacific" rated it high in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. But questions around sustainability and the impact of the volunteer component within the multipartner project remained a challenge for the evaluators. In upcoming evaluations, UNV will seek to pay special attention to identifying the comparative advantage and value added of both volunteers and volunteerism to the results of joint projects and programmes.



A mid-term evaluation of the project for the establishment of the National Volunteer Programme in Côte d'Ivoire is ongoing and expected to be completed in early 2019.

Key challenges for UNV remain a limited evaluation culture and competing priorities within the organization. Based on lessons learned, UNV undertook an organizational transformation and strategic repositioning during 2017 and 2018, paving the way for its new Strategic Framework. The framework and its accompanying integrated results and resources matrix and theory of change establish a very clear framework for evaluation in UNV, setting out key expected results at the impact, outcome and output levels, and a series of impact pathways to achieve those results. The Strategic Framework comprises a rich and dynamic set of expected results, partnerships and broader assumptions that are fertile ground for any evaluation plan that seeks to validate and further explore the results, as well as the relevance and appropriateness of UNV's strategic focus more generally. The 2017 evaluation of the Strategic Framework 2014-2017 provided useful recommendations that were translated into specific key actions within the

respective management responses and that informed the present Strategic Framework, UNV's organizational transformation and the new evaluation plan.



Key results from UNV evaluations

In 2018, UNV concluded its transitional evaluation plan by developing a systematic evaluation work-planning process. It helps to identify the type of evaluation work required by the organization as well as a method to prioritize this work, enhancing the overall evaluation function. To further promote effectiveness and quality assurance and as a response to the recommendations of the evaluation of the Strategic Framework 2014-2017, an evaluability assessment of the Strategic Framework 2018-2021 was conducted. This directly informed the current evaluation workplan and improved reporting mechanisms for the new Strategic Framework. Additionally, the development of UNV-specific guidance for monitoring and evaluation supported further implementation of results-based management through formal guidance for both decentralized evaluation and corporate evaluation planning.

UNV greatly appreciates its partnership with the IEO, from which it receives support and guidance on evaluation quality and approaches, as well as, where relevant and applicable, additional evaluation coverage in areas where UNDP and UNV are working closely together. Comments and suggestions as well as ratings through the quality assessment system continue to strengthen UNV evaluations and the organization's accountability, transparency and learning.

UNV will continue to provide technical support and quality assurance for decentralized evaluations. The focus of this support will be on capturing the added value of volunteers and volunteerism to United Nations partners and Member States. UNV will also bolster collaboration with other UN entities to support joint evaluations capturing the role of volunteers and volunteerism. Finally, it will foster an evaluation culture through regular outreach with UNV staff and volunteers. The overriding goal is to advocate the use and benefits of evaluation throughout the organization.



Chapter 6

Staffing and finances of the IEO

The IEO is built on a foundation of skilled professional evaluators who come to evaluation with a wide variety of professional experiences and perspectives, enabling the office to offer comprehensive judgment through its evaluations. Moving forward, the office will continue to strengthen the professional capacity of its staff and is committed to their professional development.



IEO staffing

The structural division of the office across four sections operated successfully in 2018. To ensure evaluations draw on diverse insights, colleagues work across sectors. Increased commitment to country programme and thematic evaluations as well as capacity development work prompted the office to request additional staff, which led to the successful implementation of a comprehensive programme of work in 2018. This has ensured that the IEO continues to lead evaluations rather than relying on subcontracting.

The office now has a staff of 31, comprising 22 international professional staff and 9 general service staff, although 6 of these positions are temporary. The office hopes to make these fixed posts in the future to meet its commitments and the requests of the Executive Board. The office has full gender parity across professional staff.

The office's professional staff members come from 19 countries and speak over 15 languages. They have an average of 15 years of experience in evaluation and development, and have a considerable range of diverse working experiences, education and membership of professional organizations across the globe. They have worked with a wide range of multilateral, bilateral and private sector

agencies, including the Asian and African Development Banks, The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Australian Department for Foreign Affairs, and United Nations entities including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNICEF, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), UNFPA, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), FAO, GEF, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Joint Inspections Unit (JIU) and the United Nations Secretariat.

IEO structure

The IEO's section structure strengthens and organizes its work, even as individual evaluators work across a range of sections, bolstering their professional development and exposure to different evaluation types. This enables higher quality evaluation products.

Finances

In 2018, the IEO spent \$8.7 million for evaluations and other institutional activities (including staffing and rent). The total represents 0.19 percent of overall UNDP core and non-core funds.¹⁸

The office continues to partner strategically and selectively with external development agencies and governments in advancing the evaluation mandate and function within UNDP as well as externally. In 2018, it sustained or entered into strategic partnerships with the Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish and Swiss Governments to support, strengthen and expand work related to the National Evaluation Capacities Conference, the national evaluation capacities diagnostic tool and decentralized evaluation support, among other areas.



2018



IEO spent \$8.7 million



evaluations +
institutional activities



TOTAL



0.19 %



overall UNDP core +
non-core funds

IEO Structure

► Directorate

Director
Indran A. Naidoo

Deputy Director
Arild Hauge

Programme Associate
(Assistant to the Director)
Maristela Gabric

- **IT Specialist**
Anish Pradhan
- **Communication Specialist**
Sasha Jahic
- **Programme Associate**
(Assistant to the Deputy)
Concepcion Cole



► Country Programme Evaluation Section

Chief of Section
Fumika Ouchi

- **Evaluation Advisor**
Ana Rosa Soares
 - **Evaluation Specialist**
Elisa Calcaterra
 - **Evaluation Specialist**
Natalia Acosta
- **Evaluation Advisor**
David Slattery
 - **Evaluation Specialist**
Deqa Ibrahim Musa
 - **Evaluation Specialist**
Oanh Nguyen
- **Programme Assistant**
Georgiy Geyler
- **Evaluation Analyst**
Mar Guinot Aguado
- **Evaluation Specialist**
Youri Bless

► Corporate Evaluation Section

Chief of Section
Alan Fox

- **Evaluation Advisor**
Vijayalakshmi Vadivelu
- **Evaluation Specialist**
Yogesh Bhatt
- **Evaluation Specialist**
Anna Guerraggio
- **Programme Associate**
Ashley Suyeon Kim
- **Evaluation Specialist**
Amanuel Zerihoun

► Capacity Development Section

Chief of Section
Heather Bryant

- **Evaluation Advisor**
Richard Jones
- **Programme Specialist**
Jin Zhang
- **Evaluation Specialist**
Genta Konci
- **Programme Associate**
Shabbir Naik

► Operations Section

Chief of Section
Ximena Rios

- **Finance Associate**
Michelle Sy
- **Administrative Associate**
Flora Jimenez
- **Programme Assistant**
Antana Locs
- **Programme Assistant**
Sonam Choetsho

Chapter 7

Programme of work 2019

In accordance with the Evaluation Policy, the 2019 budget allocation for the IEO's evaluation work is \$10.2 million, 0.2 percent of UNDP's core and non-core budget. This is in line with the IEO's multi-year plan as reported in the 2017 Annual Report on Evaluation.



Independent country programme evaluation

In 2019, the office will undertake 38 country programme evaluations. Such a high commitment means the IEO has had to allocate greater human and financial resources.

The new ICPE methodology stresses a focus on one country programme document cycle and the following guiding evaluation questions:

- What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
- To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
- What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP's performance and, eventually, the sustainability of results?

Corporate evaluation

The corporate evaluation section remains committed to the programme of evaluations agreed under its multi-year plan for 2018 to 2021. In 2019, the corporate section will undertake two key evaluations, namely, of UNDP's assistance to vulnerable developing countries for disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience, and of UNDP's development support services to middle-income countries.

Due to commitments to ICPEs, and the disbursement of financial and human resource allocations accordingly, some delays may occur in the finalization and presentation of corporate evaluations going forward. The Executive Board will be informed accordingly, although the office remains committed to undertaking all evaluations outlined in its multi-year workplan.

Evaluation of the common chapter of strategic plans

The evaluation offices of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women are jointly evaluating the strategies, precursors, implementation modalities and initial results from the agreed joint actions in the chapter that is common to each of their individual strategic plans. Following the approval of the plans, the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF requested that evaluation offices jointly evaluate the common chapter.²⁰

In 2019, following close collaboration in 2018 and the development of a joint concept note outlining the approach to the evaluation, the four evaluation offices will further collaborate on a baseline study to:

- Analyse achievements, challenges and lessons of previous joint programming efforts by the four agencies;

The ICPEs planned for 2019 are as follows:



(for 2020 Executive Board)



Evaluations



Afghanistan, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kosovo,¹⁹ Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Panama, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Seychelles, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe

- Establish common understanding and framing of key concepts and issues within the areas of collaboration highlighted in the common chapter; and
- Contextualize and establish common understanding on expectations for common chapter achievements within the wider United Nations development system.

Evaluation Policy review

Following the approval of the current Evaluation Policy in 2016, UNDP's Executive Board requested the IEO to commission a

review of the policy in 2019. The findings will be presented to the Executive Board along with a management response and planned actions at the annual session in 2019. The review is focusing on the following areas:

- Assess progress in implementing the revised Evaluation Policy of 2016, noting strengths and weaknesses;
- Review the evaluation architecture; and
- Identify any constraints inhibiting effective implementation of the policy and areas that may require policy change.

Capacity development

During 2019, the IEO plans to hold the sixth National Evaluation Capacities Conference. This follows highly successful conferences in Turkey (2017), Bangkok (2015), Sao Paulo (2013), Johannesburg (2011) and Casablanca (2009).

The IEO will continue to support and oversee decentralized evaluation throughout 2019, and will roll out the new evaluation guidelines to country offices and regions through several regional workshops. In addition, the office is developing online certified courses for M&E focal points across UNDP and general evaluation training for programme unit staff.

The office will continue to oversee the implementation of decentralized evaluations as well as the annual quality assessment of all UNDP evaluations, and report results to the Executive Board.



Annex 1: Snapshot of all decentralized evaluations in 2018

Table 1. Evaluation planning vs. implementation, 2018, numbers and budgets

Regional bureau	Planned evaluations, 2018 (16 July 2018)	Planned evaluations, 2018 (31 January 2019)	Completed evaluations, 2018 (31 January 2019)	Evaluations completed against July plans, percentage
Africa	134	119	84	63
Arab States	62	29	29	47
Asia and the Pacific	105	60	60	57
Europe and the CIS	77	56	51	66
Latin America and the Caribbean	117	55	44	38
Global	9	17	15	167
Total number	504	336	283	56
Budget (\$)	16,250,792	10,492,477	8,734,437	54

Table 2. Number of decentralized evaluations completed by type, 2015 to 2018

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (planned)*
UNDP project evaluations	110	127	166	126	242
UNDP GEF evaluations	115	99	118	121	168
Outcome evaluations	37	26	25	21	64
UNDAF and other evaluations	28	36	31	15	57
Total number of evaluations	290	288	340	283	531

* 2019 planned evaluation numbers and budgets are from the ERC, 1 February 2019.



**Table 3. Decentralized evaluation budgets by type, 2015 to 2018, in US\$**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	2,890,609	3,441,516	4,475,509	3,615,065	7,112,729
UNDP GEF evaluations	2,973,129	2,838,037	3,459,407	3,508,710	4,869,750
Outcome evaluations	1,610,338	1,059,482	1,227,444	973,462	2,729,000
UNDAF and other evaluations	1,772,796	1,641,500	1,797,968	637,200	2,079,500
Total evaluation budget	9,246,872	8,980,535	10,960,328	8,734,437	16,790,979

Table 4. Number of decentralized evaluations completed by region, 2015 to 2018

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (planned)
Africa	74	111	116	84	108
Arab States	33	15	27	29	71
Asia and the Pacific	66	55	55	60	144
Europe and the CIS	49	47	68	51	82
Latin America and the Caribbean	56	51	56	44	102
Global	12	9	18	15	24
Total number of evaluations	290	288	340	283	531

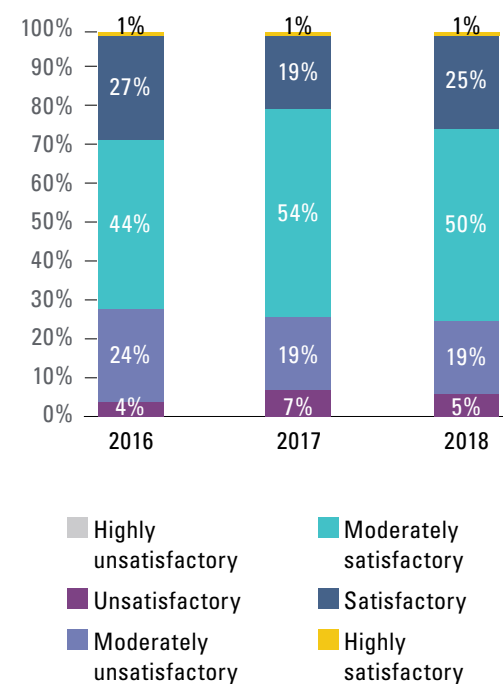


Annex 1 (cont'd)

Table 5. Decentralized evaluation budgets by region, 2015 to 2018, in US\$

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (planned)
Africa	2,952,150	3,965,557	3,964,161	3,076,029	4,471,000
Arab States	954,152	283,565	836,383	980,029	2,108,000
Asia and the Pacific	2,059,011	2,026,518	2,260,561	2,030,424	5,077,050
Europe and the CIS	1,022,820	1,008,700	1,428,357	1,250,370	1,962,429
Latin America and the Caribbean	1,345,787	1,296,675	1,416,540	984,385	2,343,000
Global	912,952	399,520	1,054,326	413,200	829,500
Total evaluation budget	9,246,872	8,980,535	10,960,328	8,734,437	16,790,979

Figure A1. Quality assessment of decentralized evaluations in 2016, 2017 and 2018



Annex 2: Africa snapshot of decentralized evaluations in 2018

Table 1. Number of decentralized evaluations completed, 2015 to 2018

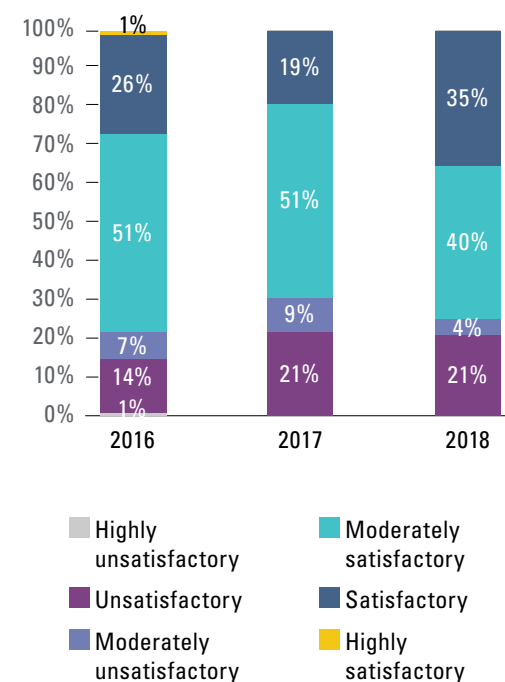
	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	22	44	56	37	29	41
UNDP GEF evaluations	26	36	28	29	24	28
Outcome evaluations	16	13	14	10	48	17
UNDAF and other evaluations	10	18	18	8	53	22
Total number of evaluations	74	111	116	84	30	108

Table 2. Decentralized evaluation budgets, 2015 to 2018, in US\$

	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	829,948	1,386,100	1,764,482	1,225,367	34	1,684,500
UNDP GEF evaluations	781,573	1,079,207	898,439	1,019,200	29	980,000
Outcome evaluations	690,070	597,250	610,298	551,462	57	766,000
UNDAF and other evaluations	650,559	903,000	690,942	280,000	44	1,040,500
Total evaluation budget	2,952,150	3,965,557	3,964,161	3,076,029	35	4,471,000

Figure A2. Quality assessment of decentralized evaluations in 2016, 2017 and 2018 (combined)

Africa



Annex 3: Arab States snapshot of decentralized evaluations in 2018

Table 1. Number of decentralized evaluations completed, 2015 to 2018

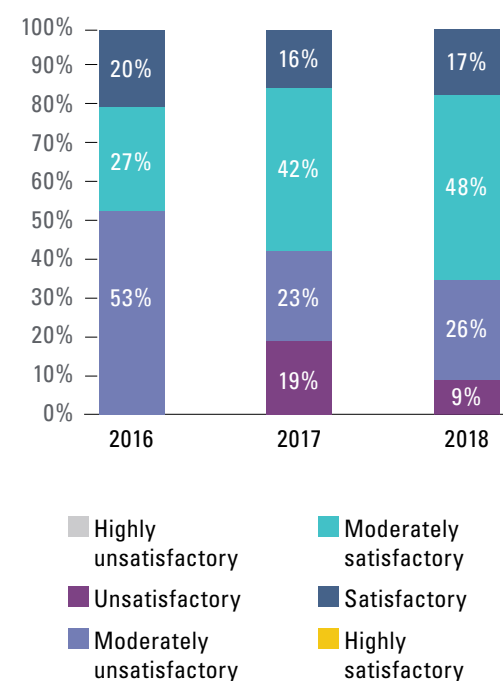
	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	15	10	24	18	14	47
UNDP GEF evaluations	12	3	3	10	8	13
Outcome evaluations	5	1	0	1	5	8
UNDAF and other evaluations	1	1	0	0	0	3
Total number of evaluations	33	15	27	29	10	71

Table 2. Decentralized evaluation budgets, 2015 to 2018, in US\$

	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	291,212	142,475	698,383	668,129	18	1,078,000
UNDP GEF evaluations	357,940	46,090	138,000	261,900	7	380,000
Outcome evaluations	225,000	25,000	-	50,000	5	550,000
UNDAF and other evaluations	80,000	70,000	-	-	-	100,000
Total evaluation budget	954,152	283,565	836,383	980,029	11	2,108,000

Figure A3. Quality assessment of decentralized evaluations in 2016, 2017 and 2018

Arab States



Annex 4: Asia and the Pacific snapshot of decentralized evaluations in 2018

Table 1. Number of decentralized evaluations completed, 2015 to 2018

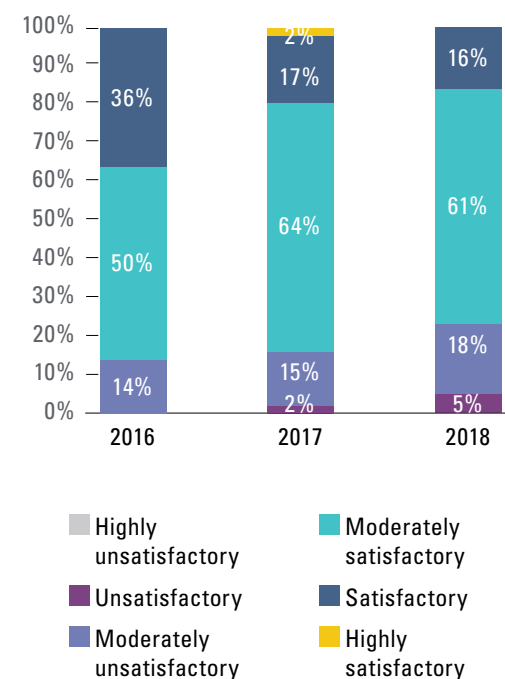
	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	30	19	21	26	21	60
UNDP GEF evaluations	28	24	28	30	25	68
Outcome evaluations	5	3	4	1	5	7
UNDAF and other evaluations	3	9	2	3	20	9
Total number of evaluations	66	55	55	60	21	144

Table 2. Decentralized evaluation budgets, 2015 to 2018, in US\$

	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	794,047	629,663	735,015	797,896	22	1,993,300
UNDP GEF evaluations	754,379	760,355	1,015,546	972,528	28	2,083,750
Outcome evaluations	328,585	135,000	360,000	50,000	5	460,000
UNDAF and other evaluations	182,000	501,500	150,000	210,000	33	540,000
Total evaluation budget	2,059,011	2,026,518	2,260,561	2,030,424	23%	5,077,050

Figure A4. Quality assessment of decentralized evaluations in 2016, 2017 and 2018

Asia and the Pacific



Annex 5: Europe and the CIS snapshot of decentralized evaluations in 2018

Table 1. Number of decentralized evaluations completed, 2015 to 2018

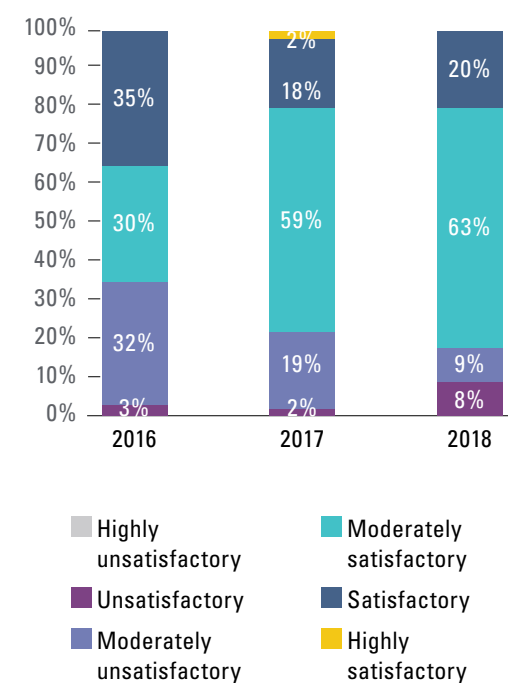
	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	18	20	34	17	13	41
UNDP GEF evaluations	19	20	27	29	24	19
Outcome evaluations	7	5	6	5	24	16
UNDAF and other evaluations	5	2	1	0	-	6
Total number of evaluations	49	47	68	51	18	82

Table 2. Decentralized evaluation budgets, 2015 to 2018, in US\$

	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	300,127	281,368	548,649	295,588	8	925,429
UNDP GEF evaluations	408,793	485,100	672,562	757,782	22	448,000
Outcome evaluations	171,900	182,232	177,146	197,000	20	445,000
UNDAF and other evaluations	142,000	60,000	30,000	-	0	144,000
Total evaluation budget	1,022,820	1,008,700	1,428,357	1,250,370	14	1,962,429

Figure A5. Quality assessment of decentralized evaluations in 2016, 2017 and 2018

Europe and the CIS



Annex 6: Latin America and the Caribbean snapshot of decentralized evaluations in 2017

Table 1. Number of decentralized evaluations completed, 2015 to 2018

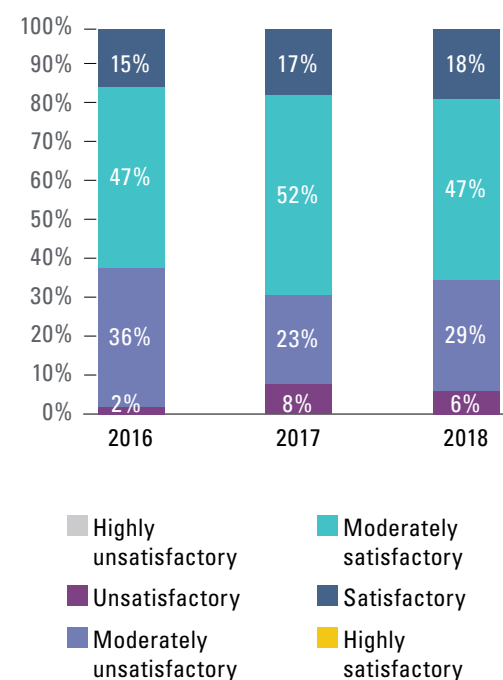
	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	19	26	25	18	14	38
UNDP GEF evaluations	28	15	28	19	16	34
Outcome evaluations	4	4	1	4	19	16
UNDAF and other evaluations	5	6	2	3	20	14
Total number of evaluations	56	51	56	44	16	102

Table 2. Decentralized evaluation budgets, 2015 to 2018, in US\$

	2015	2016	2017	2018	Regional share of global total, 2018, percentage	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	375,560	632,390	628,180	354,585	10	791,000
UNDP GEF evaluations	615,444	437,285	633,360	434,800	12	789,000
Outcome evaluations	194,783	120,000	80,000	125,000	13	508,000
UNDAF and other evaluations	160,000	107,000	75,000	70,000	11	255,000
Total evaluation budget	1,345,787	1,296,675	1,416,540	984,385	11	2,343,000

Figure A6. Quality assessment of decentralized evaluations in 2016, 2017 and 2018

Latin America and the Caribbean



Annex 7: Snapshot of global/headquarters-based decentralized evaluations in 2018

Table 1. Numbers of decentralized evaluations completed, 2015 to 2018

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	6	8	6	10	15
UNDP GEF evaluations	2	1	4	4	6
Outcome evaluations	0	0	0	0	0
UNDAF and other evaluations	4	0	8	1	3
Total number of evaluations	12	9	18	15	24

Table 2. Decentralized evaluation budgets, 2015 to 2018, in US\$

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (planned)
UNDP project evaluations	299,715	369,520	100,800	273,500	640,500
UNDP GEF evaluations	55,000	30,000	101,500	62,500	189,000
Outcome evaluations	-	-	-	-	-
UNDAF and other evaluations	558,237	-	852,026	77,200	-
Total number of evaluations	912,952	399,520	1,054,326	413,200	829,500

Annex 8: Average budgets for evaluation

Table 1. Average budgets for evaluations in 2018, in US\$*

	Africa	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and the CIS	Latin America and the Caribbean	All evaluation average
Average budget, UNDP project evaluations	33,118	37,118	30,688	17,388	19,699	28,691
Average budget, UNDP GEF evaluations	35,145	26,190	32,418	26,130	22,884	28,998
Average budget, outcome evaluations	55,146	50,000	50,000	39,400	31,250	46,355
Average budget, UNDAF and other evaluations	35,000	-	70,000	-	23,333	42,480
Average budget, all evaluations	36,619	33,794	33,840	24,517	22,372	30,864

* Based on evaluation numbers and budget data in the ERC, 1 February 2019.

Table 2. Average budgets for evaluations in 2016, 2017 and 2018, in US\$*

	All evaluation average			
	2015	2016	2017	2018
Average budget, UNDP project evaluations	26,278	27,099	26,961	28,691
Average budget, UNDP GEF evaluations	25,853	28,667	29,317	28,998
Average budget, outcome evaluations	43,523	40,749	49,098	46,355
Average budget, UNDAF and other evaluations	63,314	45,597	57,999	42,480
Average budget, all evaluations	31,886	31,182	32,236	30,864

* Based on evaluation numbers and budget data in the ERC, 1 February 2019.

Annex 9: Quality assessment of decentralized evaluations in 2016, 2017 and 2018

Figure 1. Quality assessment by region, 2016 to 2018, numbers

Region	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly unsatisfactory	Total
Africa	1	70	127	50	18	1	267
Arab States	0	11	26	20	7	0	64
Asia and the Pacific	1	32	79	21	3	0	136
Europe and the CIS	1	31	69	27	5	0	133
Latin America and the Caribbean	0	21	63	38	7	0	129
Global	3	15	19	4	1	0	42
Total	6	180	383	160	41	1	771

Figure 2: Quality assessment by evaluation type, 2016 to 2018, numbers

	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly unsatisfactory	Total
UNDP project evaluations	0	94	194	101	32	1	422
UNDP/GEF evaluations	2	35	135	32	1	0	205
Outcome evaluations	0	21	34	13	2	0	70
UNDAF and other evaluations	4	30	20	14	6	0	74
Total	6	180	383	160	41	1	771

Annex 10: Monitoring and evaluation capacity in UNDP, 2015 to 2017

Table 1. Global monitoring and evaluation capacity, 2014 to 2018*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of full-time M&E specialists	105	83	76	90	91
Number of full-time regional M&E specialists	14	13	12	10	8
	119	96	88	100	99
Number of country offices	135	136	136	136	136
Share of country offices with full-time M&E capacity, percentage	60	52	56	80	51

* Staff dedicated to M&E on a full-time basis as reported by country offices and regional bureaus.

Annex 11: Members and key activities of the Evaluation Advisory Panel in 2018

Member	Country	Evaluations and activities supported
Michael Bamberger	United Kingdom	ICPE in Paraguay, inter-agency pooled financing and operational services evaluation, Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Rachid Benmokhtar	Morocco	ICPEs in Yemen and Mali, National Evaluation Capacities Conference, Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Osvaldo Feinstein	Argentina	ICPE in Colombia, evaluation of UNDP's contribution to poverty reduction in the least developed countries, evaluation of UNDP assistance to vulnerable developing countries for disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience, Evaluation Policy review, Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Paulo Jannuzzi	Brazil	ICPEs in Angola and Cuba, Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Bagele Chilisa	Botswana	New panel member joined in late 2018; no assignments for the year, but was onboarded and given all briefing and preparatory material for the Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Zenda Ofir	South Africa	ICPEs in Madagascar and Comoros, evaluation of UNDP assistance to vulnerable developing countries for disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience, Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Ray Rist	United States of America	Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Olga Schetinina	Ukraine	ICPE in Tunisia, National Evaluation Capacities Conference, Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Thomas Schwandt	United States of America	Wilton Park event on "Revisiting independence, objectivity and the critically reflective role of evaluation for the SDG Era," Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Elliot Stern	United Kingdom	ADR/ICPE Synthesis Report, ICPE review project, Annual Meeting 2018, and the five-year review of the EAP
Daniel Weiner	United States of America	ICPE in Guatemala, Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP
Zhaoying Chen	China	ICPEs in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, Annual Meeting 2018 and the five-year review of the EAP

Annex 12: Report of the members of the Evaluation Advisory Panel to the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office following the 2018 annual meeting

The annual meeting was held from 30 May to 1 June 2018, preceded by submission by the IEO and the Evaluation Advisory Panel of preparatory material, comments and discussion points.

Introduction

The 2018 annual meeting of the EAP was held in New York between May 30th and June 1st. It was a productive and well-organised meeting that continued and deepened good practices that have evolved over previous years. The EAP valued the degree of preparation by IEO management and staff; the opportunity for EAP members to be involved in shaping meeting content; the circulation in advance of relevant papers and agendas; and the active involvement of virtually all Office staff in well-informed presentation and discussion during the meeting. The preparation of a 5-year review of past EAP advice and follow-up also underlined IEO's commitment to continuous evaluation quality improvement.

The EAP appreciated the opportunity to meet members of the Executive Board and Senior Management; the involvement of Regional Bureaux and Development Impact Group representatives; and together with the joint session with the Director of the Office of

Audit and Investigations (OAI), provided the EAP with valuable insight into the wider context within which IEO operates.

We are grateful to the IEO Directorate for making this meeting of the EAP run so smoothly.

As in previous years we have a number of specific observations that we wanted to set down following the meeting.

1. Coordinating EAP activities

Members of EAP have continued to work closely with IEO staff on a variety of assignments requested by the IEO Directorate. As the EAP has become established the volume and diversity of work has increased spanning many different IEO activities. We are now aware of the need for improving EAP-related coordination both within EAP and IEO.

EAP members have mostly worked on assignments individually. This could even be the case when working on the same assignment e.g. peer reviewing reports, when EAP members would not be aware of each other's comments. In other cases parallel inputs on separate but related assignments e.g. ICPE design and suggestions for future ICPE synthesis are made without cross referencing the implications of advice tendered. A number of solutions have been discussed. The most straightforward which we intend to implement immediately is to share outputs with each other. There may also be grounds for working together on some assignments in order to realise synergies and avoid contradictory advice; even though we appreciate that alternative suggestions can also be of use in some circumstances. EAP is committed to improved coordination in future assignments and will work to this end during the coming months.

Some of the issues encountered also require greater coordination within IEO. The Office has now implemented a clear management structure with Section Heads responsible for ICPEs, Corporate and Thematic evaluations, Capacity Development and Operational activities. Despite the strengths of this management structure the interrelationship between assignments initiated within different Sections has not always been recognised. As is suggested below, IEO evaluations will be considerably strengthened if all evaluation activities are seen as a part of a coherent evaluation system. This also applies to the way EAP activities are coordinated by IEO.

2. Strategic opportunities and challenges

Even though the full extent of the UN reform process is still not known it will present IEO with both opportunities and challenges. The reform process is likely to encourage greater coordination or even integration between UN agencies operationally and strategically. It is therefore important that IEO also deepens its cooperation across the UN system, in particular with other evaluation offices. The Office is well positioned to do so given established engagement with GEF, UNCDF and UNV and planned Common Chapter evaluation with

New York based UN agencies. Horizontal links with other UN evaluation functions offers opportunities to explore future cross-UN evaluation options, especially within the context of Agenda 2030.

UNDP reorganisation is likely to increase organisational demands on IEO within restricted budgets. This will require investments in innovation in evaluation designs and methods alongside increased focus on UNDP strategic choices. There is likely to be a need to develop new approaches to evaluate corporate and strategic priorities that go beyond current practice. Experience with the evaluation of UNDP Strategic Plan and of UNDP's Institutional Effectiveness should help but other 'systems' oriented evaluation approaches including for example foresight, modelling and network analysis would also be appropriate.

The EAP commends cooperation between IEO and OAI. At the same time it needs to be emphasised that evaluation and audit having different aims and capabilities are also sometimes best deployed to address different issues and answer different questions. It would be valuable to more clearly articulate the distinctive contributions of evaluation when considering future work with OAI.

3. Managing a major expansion of ICPE activity

The EAP appreciates the reasons to move towards 100% coverage of all country programmes and the associated major expansion in numbers of ICPEs; and has discussed with the Directorate its concerns about the consequential increase in the IEO workload. The increased load has led to an "all hands on deck" and 6-day work week approach to tackling the ICPE task, an approach unlikely to be sustainable in the long run.

We were thus pleased to note that the Office has responded positively to the suggestion that the EAP undertakes a comprehensive review and evaluation of the early experience of ICPE evaluation design and implementation. Such an activity review would be able to explore a number of potential ways further strengthen ICPE design such as:

- Incorporating UNDP-wide and country priorities for the ICPEs so as to enhance the use of ICPE findings for learning as well as for accountability
- Increasing involvement of country and regional resources (including consultants, regional think tanks and national evaluation institutions where they exist) which could also have payoffs in terms of the development of country and regional evaluation capacity

- Considering the possibility of including evaluation capacity building plans in the scope of ICPEs which could lead to synergies with IEO's overall capacity-building mission and opportunities for evidence-informed dialogue at future National Evaluation Capacities Conferences.
- Fully using existing documentation, including the outputs of other independent evaluation offices and countries own evaluations and data
- Recognising the longer term trajectories of development that may extend beyond programme planning periods and which could be captured by focussed, repeat collection of longitudinal data
- Taking account of information gaps and inconsistencies in available data and documentation that can constrain evaluation quality
- Considering how future IEO's use of new technologies, e.g. 'big data', machine learning, satellite imaging etc. can be coordinated with broader UNDP information strategies.
- Laying down the foundations for subsequent syntheses of ICPEs by systematically addressing contexts and mechanisms as well as outcomes

- Involving country offices in completing pro forma information schedules in advance of IEO work on the ICPEs, and,
- Implementing an evaluation strategy that facilitates 100% descriptive coverage of countries but allows for more selective, in-depth examination of key issues within clusters or types of countries.

It is already apparent from IEO's current plans that the challenge of expanding ICPE coverage requires both product innovation (i.e. in the content and scope of ICPEs) and process innovation (i.e. in the ways ICPEs are conducted). The proposed review and evaluation has the potential to further consolidate these and similar innovations.

4. Strengthening IEO's evaluation system

In the past EAP has mainly focussed in parallel on the different types of evaluations that IEO undertakes or supports, including ICPEs (previously ADRs), Corporate evaluations, Decentralised evaluations, joint evaluations etc. It has become clear that together these different evaluations would be far stronger if they were regarded, designed and managed in an integrated manner. In this way IEO would have the opportunity to build an evaluation system that supported more rigorous

conclusions and thematic analysis than would be the case if evaluation types are regarded as separate activity streams or silos.

As well as facilitating cross-evaluation integration, a more systemic view could take advantage of country developments over time when ICPEs revisit countries during successive Evaluation Planning periods. We have found only limited longitudinal analysis up to now.

We do not expect that such a system can be designed and implemented immediately but given the intention to simplify ICPE content, taking a systemic view is an important way to ensure that ICPEs continue to yield UNDP-wide as well as country insights. This might for example include: deciding on priority themes and inserting them across all evaluations; and making sure that Decentralised evaluation offered content as well as oversight Guidance e.g. highlighting corporate as well as Country Office priorities.

Taking a systemic approach would also open up opportunities for methodological innovation such as comparative case studies, new qualitative and quantitative synthesis approaches and improved validation of evaluation results by stakeholders.

Annex 13: Key achievements of the IEO since 2012

	Summary of change		Before	After
Across the IEO	Professionalization	Transformed evaluations from a consultant-led model to one in which IEO evaluators take the lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant team evaluation model Managed by IEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting in 2012, IEO evaluator-led model Supported by international and national thematic experts as needed
Country programme evaluations	Improved coverage for country programme evaluations	Expanded country programme evaluations to achieve full coverage of UNDP country programmes coming to an end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 country level evaluations annually (2012 to 2017) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 country level evaluations in 2018 39 country level evaluations in 2019
	Streamlined and cost-effective processes	Comprehensive streamlining of processes, methodology and data collection, substantially reducing unit costs for individual evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$140,000 per evaluation (2016) Three field missions Very broad scope 15.5 months (2017) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$75,000 per evaluation (2018) One field mission Scope tightly focused on performance 7 months (2018)
	Oversight collaboration	Strengthened collaboration with UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2017, 4 joint missions with the audit office 2017 joint evaluation on institutional effectiveness Systematic formal collaboration
Oversight and quality assurance	Evaluation Policy 2016	Developed a new policy reflecting emphasis on the IEO's independence, and a revamped oversight and reporting structure	2010 policy featured: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEO Director reporting to the UNDP Administrator No fixed budget or scope of work Ad hoc quality assurance mechanism 	2016 Evaluation Policy features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrenched independence of the IEO Fixed allocated budget: 0.2 percent of core and non-core funds IEO Director reports directly and is accountable to the Executive Board of UNDP Quality assurance mechanism via the AEAC (from 2017) and EAP (from 2013)





	Summary of change		Before	After
Evaluation culture and function	Regular reporting to UNDP	Annual reporting to UNDP through the Annual Report on Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short summary of evaluation activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEO Director presents an Annual Report on Evaluation and a costed programme of work Detailed overview of evaluations Details of IEO activities and partnerships Inclusion of quantitative analysis in the implementation and quality assurance of UNDP decentralized evaluations Detailed budget and expenditure data for evaluation across UNDP
	National evaluation capacity development	Support to national governments in developing a national evaluation culture and functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2009: National Evaluation Capacities Conference in Morocco, 55 participants from 30 countries 2011: National Evaluation Capacities Conference in South Africa, 87 participants from 34 countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017: National Evaluation Capacities Conference in Turkey, 500 participants from 110 countries. 2017: Developed a national evaluation diagnostic tool
	UNDP evaluation function	Implementation of decentralized evaluation across UNDP programme units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2002: Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) developed as a database of evaluations 2009: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2016: ERC revamped to include regional oversight of evaluation 2017: Training of M&E focal points 2019: New UNDP evaluation guidelines
		Effectively communicating evaluations to enhance their utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produced evaluation reports uploaded to the IEO website and ERC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013: Enhanced IEO's digital outreach footprint: launched social media platforms, YouTube, Flickr and newsletters 2014: Revamped IEO website and rebranded the office Produced visually compelling products and videos in 2014 Produced first interactive and illustrated annual report in 2014

Endnotes

- ¹ DP/2018/12/Add.1.
- ² DP/2019/6.
- ³ As affirmed by decision 2017/12.
- ⁴ DP/2017/39, paragraphs 22 and 38(c).
- ⁵ See: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml>.
- ⁶ DP/2018/26.
- ⁷ DP/2018/24.
- ⁸ DP/2019/6.
- ⁹ The UNDP Administrator's annual report 2018 details core and non-core fund utilization of \$4.6 billion.
- ¹⁰ DP/2018/4.
- ¹¹ Seven evaluations had expenditures of \$0 returned.
- ¹² This has been calculated using self-reported expenditure figures from results-oriented annual reporting as well as self-reported evaluation expenditure figures through the ERC.
- ¹³ UNDP executive snapshot, February 2019. UNDP expenditure and commitments in 2018 totalled \$4.6 billion. Adaptation Fund and GEF utilization and commitments for 2018 reached \$415 million.
- ¹⁴ ERC, 31 January 2019.
- ¹⁵ Figures differ from the Annual Report on Evaluation in 2017 as they reflect evaluations planned for 2014, 2015 and 2016 that were completed or uploaded to the ERC in 2018 following the finalization of the report on 31 January 2017. The 2017 report noted 287 evaluations in 2015, 283 in 2016 and 315 in 2017.
- ¹⁶ HS=highly satisfactory, meets and exceeds UNDP requirements; S=satisfactory, fully meeting UNDP requirements with minor shortcomings; MS=moderately satisfactory, partially meeting UNDP requirements with a number of shortcomings; MU=moderately unsatisfactory, more than one parameter was unmet with significant shortcomings; U=unsatisfactory, most parameters were not met and there were major shortcomings; HU=highly unsatisfactory, none of the parameters were met and there were severe shortcomings.
- ¹⁷ GEF mid-term reviews are not quality assessed.
- ¹⁸ The UNDP Administrator's annual report 2018 details core and non-core fund utilization of \$4.6 billion.
- ¹⁹ References to Kosovo are in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).
- ²⁰ DP/2018/9, Decision 2018/1 and 2018/2; E/ICEF/2018/6.

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