

# UNAIDS EVALUATION POLICY

**Additional documents for this item:** UNAIDS/PCB (44)/19.5; UNAIDS/PCB (44)/19.6

**Action required at this meeting—the Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:**

*Approve* the UNAIDS Evaluation Policy and *request* that an evaluation plan is presented to the 45th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board as well as annual reporting on the implementation of the evaluation plan.

**Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions:** included in the UNAIDS 2020–2021 Workplan and Budget

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The international community has embraced the ambition of ending the AIDS epidemic as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>1</sup> This has presented the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) with a critical opportunity and obligation to chart the way forward and lead the global AIDS response, in accordance with ECOSOC Resolution 1994/24<sup>2</sup>, which established UNAIDS.
2. An effective and independent evaluation function has been absent in UNAIDS' efforts to strengthen accountability, transparency and organizational learning. The need for UNAIDS to strengthen its evaluation function has been highlighted by the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), as well as by Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and other external reviews of UNAIDS.
3. At the 38th PCB meeting in June 2016, appreciation was expressed for the increased emphasis on external evaluations under the UNAIDS 2016–2021 Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF),<sup>3</sup> and the Board encouraged “the further strengthening of performance reporting with independent evaluation and validation” (Decision point 7.3).
4. The Executive Heads of UNAIDS Cosponsors have also emphasized the need for a strong and independent evaluation approach. Accordingly, several steps have been taken to strengthen the UNAIDS evaluation function in order to identify potentially successful approaches and likely challenges and solutions, as well decide what must be done or done differently to achieve the Fast-Track targets and end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat.
5. This document presents the UNAIDS' evaluation policy, which draws on inputs and feedback from UNAIDS Cosponsors, Member States, civil society and other partners. It sets out the purpose and use of evaluation; provides definitions, principles and norms; and outlines accountabilities and performance standards for the evaluation function. It also defines the institutional basis, parameters and oversight of the evaluation function. A key objective of the policy is to enhance the use of evaluations for evidence-based decision-making, learning and accountability.
6. The policy applies to the evaluation of the UNAIDS Secretariat's work and of the collective work of the UN Joint Programme on AIDS—i.e. the HIV-related activities of the 11 Cosponsors and the UNAIDS Secretariat.
7. The policy is aligned with the evaluation policies and practices of the Cosponsor Evaluation Offices, which cover Cosponsors' individual work. With an increased emphasis on UN coherence, the policy promotes system-wide and joint evaluations related to HIV at global, regional and country levels.
8. The evaluation policy and its implementation are guided by internationally accepted norms and standards, notably those of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG, 2016)<sup>4</sup> and the principles for the evaluation of development cooperation used by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC).<sup>5</sup>

## DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

9. UNAIDS has adopted the UNEG definition of evaluation: an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of a project, programme, strategy, policy, theme, sector or institutional performance.
10. An evaluation analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, using criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence, adopted by OECD/DAC.<sup>6</sup> An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.
11. The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability, support evidence-informed decision-making and learning. Evaluations aim to understand why and to what extent the intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results. Evaluations can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting, and should contribute to evidence-based policymaking, development and organizational effectiveness.
12. Evaluation approaches and methods must be adapted to consider the joint and cosponsored nature of UNAIDS as a Joint Programme. This includes the collective contribution of UNAIDS Cosponsors, as well as the core functions of the UNAIDS Secretariat of leadership, advocacy and communication; partnerships, mobilization and innovation; strategic information; coordination, convening and country implementation support; and, governance and mutual accountability. Where possible and relevant, system-wide and joint evaluations will be conducted jointly and cost-shared with UNAIDS Cosponsors and/or other partners.

## PRINCIPLES AND NORMS

13. Guiding principles of evaluation in UNAIDS are based on:
  - *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* Evaluation in UNAIDS takes place within the broader framework of implementing and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030. Five SDGs are most relevant to the AIDS response: good health and well-being (SDG 3); reduced inequalities (SDG 10); gender equality (SDG 5); peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16); and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17). As a set of indivisible goals, the SDGs present a mandate for integrating efforts while the AIDS response can be a leader in leveraging strategic intersections with the SDGs.
  - *The UNAIDS mission and strategy.*<sup>7</sup> Evaluation in UNAIDS is fully aligned with the overall mandate, mission and vision of UNAIDS, as well as the UBRAF.
  - *United Nations system coordination.* Evaluation draws on and contributes to collaboration and joint action within the United Nations (UN) system. The conduct of system-wide and joint evaluations is in line with both ongoing UN reform efforts and the emphasis on transparency, accountability and decision-making that is closer to the point of delivery. It is also consistent with UNAIDS' nature as a joint and cosponsored programme of the UN.

- *Partnerships and ownership.* As relevant, UNAIDS evaluations are planned and conducted in partnership with national and international stakeholders, addressing issues pertinent to priorities and results at the country, regional or global levels.
- *Greater meaningful engagement of communities, civil society and people living with HIV, women and youth groups and key populations<sup>i</sup>* to realize their right to participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives, is strongly promoted.
- *Leaving no one behind.* The dignity of the individual is fundamental and UNAIDS strives to reach those who are furthest behind in the AIDS response. Evaluation should assess the extent to which the Joint Programme responds to the needs of key and vulnerable populations.

14. UNAIDS evaluations are carried out in accordance with the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations System, as follows:

### **Utility**

15. In commissioning and conducting an evaluation at UNAIDS, there should be a clear intention to use the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations to inform decisions and actions. Relevant managers should commit to strategic consideration of evaluation results and appropriate follow-up actions (through management responses to evaluation recommendations).
16. The utility of evaluation is manifest when it is used to make relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, decision-making processes and accountability for results. Evaluations in UNAIDS should also contribute beyond the organization by generating knowledge more widely and empowering stakeholders. To enhance utility, UNAIDS' evaluations should involve a range of stakeholders, and the selection of evaluation topics should consider which key decisions, actions, processes or other might be meaningfully informed by evaluation. UNAIDS is committed to involve stakeholders early in the process and to ensure that they can contribute to evaluation design.

### **Credibility**

17. Evaluations must be credible. Credibility is grounded in independence, impartiality, a rigorous methodology and the competencies (both in terms of technical skills and professional comportment) of evaluation staff and evaluation team members in the conduct of an evaluation. That includes their interactions with various stakeholder groups. Evaluations should be conducted with transparent processes, inclusive approaches that involve relevant stakeholders and robust quality assurance systems. Evaluation findings and recommendations are informed by the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data, and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence. Evaluations are conducted following ethical principles and are managed by evaluators who exhibit professional and cultural competencies.

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<sup>i</sup> In the context of the AIDS response, five main key population groups are (a) sex workers and their clients, (b) gay men and other men who have sex with men, (c) transgender people, (d) people who inject drugs and (e) prisoners and people in other closed settings.

## **Independence**

18. Independence of evaluation is necessary for credibility and to allow evaluators to be impartial and free from undue pressure.

### Behavioural independence

19. Behavioural independence refers to the ability to evaluate without undue influence by any party. Evaluators have the full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially, without the risk of negative effects on their career development or future assignments, and can freely express their assessments. Evaluators must have free access to all available information on the evaluation subject.

### Organizational independence

20. The UNAIDS Evaluation Office is positioned independently from management functions, carries the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda and is provided with adequate resources to conduct its work. The Director of Evaluation has full discretion to directly share evaluation reports to the appropriate level of decision-making and reports directly to the PCB. Independence is vested in the Director of Evaluation to directly commission, produce, publish and disseminate duly quality-assured evaluation reports in the public domain without undue influence by any party.

## **Impartiality**

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

## **Ethics**

22. Evaluation must be conducted with the highest standards of professional integrity and respect for the beliefs and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the "do no harm" principle for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.
23. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of private information from those who provide it. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence. They must ensure that sensitive data are protected, they must ensure anonymity as appropriate, and they must validate statements made in the report with the sources of the relevant information. When evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered (such as financial mismanagement, sexual exploitation, abuse and/or harassment), it must be reported to a competent body (such as the Office of Internal Oversight Services at the World Health Organization).

### **Transparency**

24. Transparency is an essential element of evaluation. This includes the evaluation process as well as the evaluation products. It establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability. Accordingly, all evaluation reports will be published and documentation on evaluation methodology made available.

### **Human rights and gender equality**

25. Evaluation is guided by the people-centred approach of UNAIDS, which enhances capabilities, choices and rights for all people, with full respect for diversity. Gender equality refers to equal rights and responsibilities of women and men, girls and boys. The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated into all stages of an evaluation. It is the responsibility of evaluators and evaluation managers to ensure that these values are respected, addressed and promoted, underpinning the commitment to the principle of "no-one left behind". UNAIDS follows UNEG guidance on the conduct of human rights and gender-responsive evaluations (see [UNEG Human Rights and Gender Equality guidance](#)).<sup>8</sup>

### **National evaluation capacities**

26. The effective use of evaluation can make valuable contributions to accountability and learning—and can thereby justify actions to strengthen national evaluation capacities. In line with General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level,<sup>9</sup> strengthening national capacities for evaluation is a priority for UNAIDS. At the UNAIDS Secretariat, the programme branch (strategic information department) is responsible for providing country support on evaluation, together with staff working on strategic information in Country Offices. The promotion of multistakeholder partnerships for national evaluation capacity development is a priority for UNAIDS, but lies beyond the scope of this evaluation policy, which focuses on evaluation of the work of the Joint Programme and Secretariat.

### **Professionalism**

27. Evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. The Director of Evaluation must have clearly-demonstrated competencies in the design and management of evaluations. Persons engaged in planning, designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities should possess the necessary evaluation competencies and training, combining management, technical and evaluation experience and competencies with the appropriate skills sets. Those skills sets include the ability to engage with all key stakeholder groups in a manner consistent with the aforementioned principles of human rights and gender equality.
28. UNEG standards<sup>10</sup> will inform the formal job descriptions and selection criteria that set out the basic professional requirements. Evaluators will adhere to the highest ethical and technical standards, apply methodological rigour and respond to all criteria of professionalism, impartiality, credibility and transparency as well as the responsible handling of confidential information.



## TYPES OF EVALUATIONS

29. The UNAIDS evaluation function covers the work of the Joint Programme, i.e. the work of the UNAIDS Secretariat and the HIV-related work of the Cosponsors. The UNAIDS Secretariat commissions:
  - *UNAIDS Secretariat evaluations*, which are aimed at organizational learning, evidence-informed decision-making and accountability of the UNAIDS Secretariat's actions and activities; and
  - *UNAIDS Joint Programme evaluations*, which are aimed at organizational learning, evidence-informed decision-making and accountability of the UNAIDS Joint Programme, and which are performed with Cosponsors to assess collaborative HIV efforts, i.e. system-wide or joint evaluations.
  
30. Evaluations may cover any aspect of the work of UNAIDS Secretariat and/or the Joint Programme. There are different types of evaluations; the choice will depend on the rationale and circumstances of the evaluation being considered. It is expected that over time a mix of types of evaluations will be carried out, although this cannot be determined in advance. Evaluation types include, but are not limited to:
  - *Programmatic evaluations*, which focus on a specific programme, project or the work of the organization/s in a country, region or at headquarters with respect to objectives and commitments, including partnerships, technical, normative and advocacy work;
  - *Thematic evaluations*, which focus on selected HIV topics, a policy or policies, areas of work or core functions, or an emerging issue of corporate interest, generally cutting across organizational structures and themes; and
  - *Management evaluations*, which assess the organizational structure and behaviour or processes at global, regional or Country-Office levels (these aspects can also be covered under the other evaluation types).
  
31. The design of evaluations varies according to evaluation needs. Examples include formative evaluations (to make early improvements to a programme, project or activity), summative evaluations (after the completion of a programme, project or activity) and evaluations that focus on long-term and sustainable results, as well as intended or unintended consequences. UNAIDS will support the best available, most appropriate and internationally recognized methods for all evaluation types. UNAIDS also encourages innovation in evaluation methods to support timely learning and decision-making.
  
32. In UNAIDS, evaluations fit into two broad categories:
  - *Centrally managed evaluations*, which are managed, commissioned or conducted by the UNAIDS Evaluation Office and which include programmatic evaluations, thematic evaluations and management evaluations; and
  - *decentralized evaluations*, which are managed, commissioned or conducted by UNAIDS Secretariat units at headquarters or by Regional Support Teams or Country Offices. In this instance, the Evaluation Office role is to provide quality assurance and technical backstopping as and when required. Decentralized evaluations are not part of the evaluation plans which UNAIDS submits to the PCB, but are integrated in programme, regional or country workplans.

33. The UNAIDS Secretariat and the Joint Programme are one of many sources of support to countries. UNAIDS' results are the joint product of global, regional and country level activities and investments by donors, governments and civil society. This means that it is, in most cases, not possible to directly attribute outcomes to UNAIDS support alone. UNAIDS evaluations recognize the model of shared accountability and aim to identify and assess UNAIDS's contributions to outcomes and end results—including contributions to positive and negative results alike, and to intended and unintended results.
34. Evaluations are primarily contracted to external independent consultant/s or evaluation firms. All selected evaluators must agree to the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system.<sup>11</sup> Any conflict of interest should be disclosed and dealt with openly and honestly. In some cases, often with the primary aim of organizational learning, the UNAIDS Evaluation Office may also conduct internal reviews and assessments.
35. System-wide and joint evaluations will be pursued, recognizing the benefits of a common approach in promoting collective learning, shared accountability and reduced costs. System-wide evaluations are defined as evaluations that measure the collective contribution of the UN system. System-wide evaluations usually engage all 11 Cosponsors and the UNAIDS Secretariat and are comprehensive in scope or address a cross-cutting theme. Joint evaluations usually involve a subset of agencies and assess their joint contributions. Joint evaluations tend to focus on a narrower or more specific theme or topic.
36. Stakeholders such as Member States, donors or other partners may commission external evaluations of UNAIDS to assess the performance and/or accountability of the UNAIDS Secretariat and/or the Joint Programme. The UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors will facilitate such evaluations and make information available as requested.

## PRIORITIZATION AND PLANNING

37. *Costed evaluation plan.* A plan of evaluation activities is developed every two years, indicating the purpose, nature and scope of evaluations, as well as the resources needed to conduct them. The development of the evaluation plan is led by the UNAIDS Evaluation Office, and is based on consultations and inputs from the UNAIDS Secretariat, Cosponsors and key stakeholders. It is also based on a set of criteria for identifying areas most in need of evaluation—with the aim of balancing consultation/transparency with the prerogative of the Evaluation Office to exercise independence in selecting and proposing evaluations.
38. A systematic approach is used by the Evaluation Office to identify evaluations to be included in the evaluation plan, drawing on independent analyses of key information (e.g. through a risk-based approach) the methodology and results of which are transparently shared with key stakeholders. The planning and selection of system-wide and relevant joint evaluations is done together with the Cosponsor Evaluation Offices. Multistakeholder consultations are envisaged to ensure that the evaluation plans are discussed with and reflect the views of Member States, civil society, Cosponsors and the Secretariat.

39. The biennial evaluation plan has two main components: Secretariat-specific evaluations, as well as system-wide and joint evaluations with Cosponsors. It should also include (as an annex for information) the HIV-related evaluations that are planned individually by Cosponsor Evaluation Offices. System-wide and relevant joint evaluations should be part of the corporate evaluation plans of Cosponsors. The biennial plan is discussed by the Cosponsor Evaluation Group and presented to the PCB for approval, along with reports on the implementation of the previous evaluation plan.
40. The following categories shall be considered in the development of criteria for the selection of evaluation topics:
- strategic significance of the subject, in relation to Joint Programme and Secretariat priorities, as well as public health, human rights or political priorities, levels of investment, potential risks, need for evidence for decision-making, and performance issues or concerns in relation to achievements of expected UNAIDS Strategy and UBRAF results;
  - organizational utility relating to a cross-cutting issue, theme, programme or policy question, importance of the knowledge gap that is to be filled, potential for staff or institutional learning (innovation), potential for replication and scaling-up, and degree of comparative advantage of UNAIDS;
  - potential for applicability beyond the Joint Programme, system-wide, joint or United Nations development assistance framework evaluations;
  - feasibility for implementing the evaluation: evaluability and resources to conduct a high-quality evaluation within the time period; and
  - organizational requirements relevant to global or regional AIDS commitments, specific agreements with stakeholders, partners or donors, and requests from the PCB.
41. *Evaluability and evaluability assessments.* Ensuring evaluability is a duty of management and those responsible for programme design and results frameworks. The UNAIDS Evaluation Office supports efforts that enhance the extent to which programmes, projects and activities can be evaluated and does so without undermining independence. Those efforts may include appraising proposed design, baseline measures and the capacity for evaluation, as well as assessing innovative and pilot work. Prior to evaluations, the Evaluation Office undertakes evaluability assessments, that consist of verifying clarity in the intent of the subject to be evaluated, availability of data (or collectability at a reasonable cost), and that no major factor is hindering an impartial evaluation process. If evaluability is not established, the Office will take measures to address the problem, such as adjusting the theory of change or revising the expectations.
42. *Performance monitoring.* An enabling environment for evaluation requires adequate monitoring and reporting capacity in relation to the work of the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors. The UNAIDS Strategy and the UBRAF are the basis for results-based planning at all levels and comprise a broad range of monitoring tools. Quantitative data, using standardized indicators, are combined with narrative descriptions of progress in implementation. UBRAF indicators have baselines, milestones and targets and are collected through a web-based tool, the Joint Programme Monitoring System (JPMS).

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ASSESSMENT

43. The main features of the UNAIDS evaluation quality assurance and assessment system are:
- guidance and tools for conducting and managing evaluations that are consistent with the UNEG norms and standards;
  - establishment of evaluation ad hoc management and/or reference groups to review the terms of reference of corporate evaluations;
  - review by the UNAIDS Evaluation Office of terms of reference, inception and final reports for decentralized evaluations;
  - recruitment of evaluators, based on proof of qualifications, skills and experience;
  - use of standard UNEG checklists and quality criteria<sup>12</sup> for assessing evaluation reports; and
  - external quality assessment of evaluation reports, commissioned by the UNAIDS Evaluation Office, and using external assessors who are prequalified by Cosponsor Evaluation Offices.
44. Quality assurance takes place throughout the evaluation process. Its purpose is to promote quality and credibility, starting with the evaluation terms of reference and ending with the evaluation report, as well as the preparation of management responses and follow-up/verification of their implementation. As a key aspect of quality assurance, people who are expected to benefit from UNAIDS/Joint Programme actions, and communities more broadly, will be involved in the process. Quality assessment takes place after an evaluation is completed (ex post), whereby the final evaluation report is quality assessed by an external assessor for reporting and accountability purposes.
45. *Proprietary issues around data use.* All rights, including ownership of the original data and information, and copyright thereof, rest with UNAIDS. Use of data and information collected through an evaluation can only be made with the agreement of UNAIDS. Evaluation reports may be used, referred to and/or cited provided that the source is acknowledged.

## RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EVALUATION

46. The UNAIDS Evaluation Office is a structurally and functionally independent unit of the UNAIDS Secretariat. It is headed by a Director of Evaluation, who is responsible for ensuring the independence as well as the impartiality and credibility of evaluations. The Director is accountable for the management of the evaluation function and responsible for the implementation of the evaluation policy. The UNAIDS Evaluation Office staff, including its Director, are required to meet the requirements of the UNEG competency framework.
47. The Director of Evaluation submits reports directly to the PCB. The Director presents a biennial budget and evaluation plan to the PCB and reports annually on implementation. A bi-annual update is presented to the PCB Bureau.
48. The appointment of the Director of Evaluation is the responsibility of the UNAIDS Executive Director, following consultation with the PCB Bureau. In addition to standard UNAIDS hiring procedures, the selection of the Director will be based on professional evaluation expertise and competence, as defined in the UNEG guidelines and

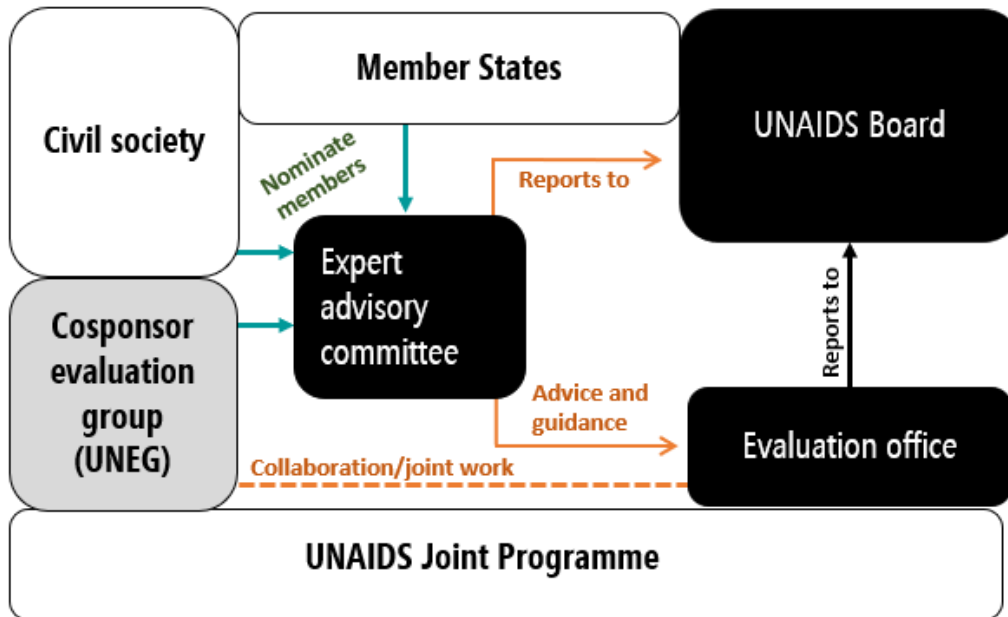
competency framework for heads of evaluation. Full disclosure, in writing, shall be made to the PCB Bureau, outlining the selection criteria and process. The term lasts five years. The Director is barred from continued employment with or re-entry to the UNAIDS Secretariat after the expiry of the term.

49. Specific responsibilities of the Director of Evaluation include:
  - establishing the evaluation policy and updating it as required;
  - developing a biennial evaluation plan, as well as necessary guidance and tools, and providing an independent report annually to the PCB on the plan's implementation;
  - ensuring effective utilization of resources for implementation of the evaluation plan and for evaluation capacity development throughout the organization;
  - designing, commissioning and managing independent evaluations that meet the highest professional standards, including innovative approaches and methodologies, and ensuring the timely dissemination of results for action by management and other stakeholders;
  - ensuring that UNAIDS senior management and Cosponsors (as relevant) respond to evaluation recommendations, and maintaining a system to monitor and report on management responses to evaluations;
  - promoting the use of evaluations and knowledge management for evaluations, including through innovative approaches;
  - promoting strategies and systems to build awareness and evaluation capacity, including quality assurance of decentralized evaluations;
  - promoting partnerships, national ownership and leadership of evaluation activities; and
  - supporting global partnerships and networks and using them to promote innovation and evaluation capacity development.
50. Although housed within and led by the Evaluation Office under the Director's leadership, evaluation is an organizational responsibility that is shared by all. It is an integral part of results-based management at UNAIDS.
51. UNAIDS directors at all levels support activities that promote and enable evaluations, including strong monitoring systems and testing of new initiatives and pilots for scaling up. They undertake programme reviews for continuous improvement in delivery, and ensure access to data and information for evaluations and for the timely preparation and implementation of management responses to evaluations. They also promote the use of evaluation results for decision-making, improved programming and operations.
52. At the country level, the UNAIDS Country Directors facilitate the use of evaluation results in country programming. They uphold the norms and standards set out in the evaluation policy in the management and conduct of evaluations, and they promote the skills staff need to meet their evaluation accountabilities, including relevant professional development opportunities.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

53. The institutional architecture of the evaluation function in UNAIDS is outlined in Figure 1 and in the paragraphs below it. This architecture is designed to facilitate implementation of the evaluation policy and biennial evaluation plans.

**Figure 1. Accountability and oversight of evaluation**



### Programme Coordinating Board

54. The PCB approves the UNAIDS evaluation policy, the biennial evaluation plan and the budget of the UNAIDS Evaluation Office. It considers annual reports on the implementation of the plan and the status and effectiveness of the evaluation function. It ensures a robust evaluation function and the implementation of evaluation recommendations. It also adopts decisions and recommendations conveying expectations and guidance on the evaluation function. The PCB considers strategic evaluations and draws on the findings and recommendations of evaluations and evaluation syntheses for the purposes of governing the organization. Specific evaluation reports are not as a rule presented to the PCB for approval.

55. The PCB appoints an Expert Advisory Committee to provide advice and guidance on evaluation and ensures that it has the required technical expertise and is geographically representative, as well as gender-balanced.

### UNAIDS Executive Director

56. The Executive Director is responsible for:

- safeguarding the integrity and independence of the evaluation function;

- guaranteeing the necessary human and financial resources for evaluation;
- fostering an enabling environment for evaluation;
- promoting a culture of learning, accountability and results-based management;
- ensuring that evaluation recommendations are acted upon; and
- providing opportunities for the use of evaluation findings and evidence.

### **Expert Advisory Committee**

57. The Evaluation Expert Advisory Committee provides advice and guidance on the UNAIDS evaluation function. It is an independent, external body which reports to the Board. The Committee advises the Director of Evaluation and the Executive Director on the implementation of UNAIDS evaluation policy and the development and implementation of UNAIDS evaluation plan to enhance use of evaluations and organizational learning, and ensure alignment with UNAIDS Strategy, the UBRAF as well as UNEG norms and standards for evaluation. A summary of the work and recommendations of the Committee is presented annually to the Board.
58. The Committee shall consist of up to seven technically strong members who are nominated by Member States (5), the PCB NGO delegation (1) and Cosponsor Evaluation Group (1).
59. All members of the Expert Advisory Committee shall be technical experts in the field of evaluation and have:
  - in-depth knowledge and understanding of evaluation and performance measurement as well as collection, analysis and use of quantitative and qualitative data;
  - extensive experience of evaluation of complex programmes and organizational performance to improve relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence; and
  - good understanding of HIV, health and/or related issues and familiarity with the work of UNAIDS Cosponsors and/or Secretariat at country, regional or global levels.
60. Committee members are appointed for a two-year period and can be re-appointed once. The Committee meets at least once a year in person and holds regular virtual meetings. The UNAIDS Evaluation Office serves as Secretary of the Expert Advisory Committee.

### **Cosponsor Evaluation Group**

61. A UNAIDS Cosponsor Evaluation Group brings together representatives of the Cosponsor Evaluation Offices, as a sub-group of the UNEG. A key role of the Group is to leverage Cosponsor capacities and resources on evaluation and share knowledge and experience.
62. The aim of the Group is to promote and advise on system-wide and joint evaluations related to HIV, provide inputs and resources (e.g. funding, staff-time, best practices) to the design and implementation of evaluations, and serve as a reference for HIV-related evaluations.

63. The Group shares information on Cosponsor evaluations related to HIV and provides guidance on mainstreaming HIV in existing evaluations. It also contributes to compatible methodologies and a systematic approach to HIV-related evaluations to improve harmonization and potential meta-analyses of findings. It actively supports the dissemination and use of HIV-related evaluation products.
64. The Group discusses system-wide and joint evaluations to be included in the UNAIDS biennial evaluation plan. The Group meets once a year in person (at the level of Heads of Evaluation Offices or alternates with delegated authority), usually at the time the UNEG annual meeting. Other meetings are conducted virtually. One member of the Group represents the Cosponsors on the UNAIDS Expert Advisory Committee on Evaluation.

## RESOURCING, DISCLOSURE AND USE OF EVALUATION

65. The Executive Director ensures that adequate resources are available to implement the evaluation policy and biennial evaluation plans. Based on the range recommended by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2014/6)<sup>13</sup>—that is between 0.5% and 3% of organizational expenditures—1% of UNAIDS annual expenditures of UBRAF resources, mobilized by UNAIDS Secretariat, shall be allocated for evaluation.
66. The allocation for evaluation in UNAIDS budget includes the evaluations that are to be conducted, as well as the staff costs of the Evaluation Office and the activities that are required to strengthen the evaluation culture and the professionalization of evaluation across UNAIDS.
67. The Executive Director and the CCO (as appropriate) are responsible for ensuring that evaluation recommendations are implemented and that evaluation results contribute to organizational decision-making and management. The Director of Evaluation facilitates the development and tracking of management responses to evaluations, with clear accountability for implementation of approved recommendations, to ensure that relevant evaluation results inform future activities.
68. Relevant managers will provide a management response within three months of the submission of an evaluation report. The aim of a management response is to strengthen the use of evaluations by UNAIDS Secretariat, Cosponsors and stakeholders. Management responses facilitate strategic consideration of evaluation results and appropriate follow-up actions.
69. Management responses will be drafted in a format that provides a holistic review of the evaluation report and indicates whether management agrees, partially agrees, or disagrees with the recommendations in the evaluation report. The response will include a written formulation of time-bound action plans, with assigned responsibilities for implementation and monitoring of the planned actions.
70. Evaluations that are not used are wasteful and are missed opportunities for learning and improving performance. The use of evaluation findings depends on the credibility of the evaluation, as well as the relevance of the evaluation questions and the timing of the evaluation. This, for instance, requires linking country evaluations to UNDAF and



government planning cycles and the mechanisms established by Member States to review progress towards the SDGs.

71. The Director of Evaluation is responsible for ensuring that evaluation findings and recommendations are presented in a manner and format that is easily understood by target audiences and tailored to their specific needs. The Director is also responsible for disseminating, through various knowledge-management platforms, lessons learned from evaluations. A dissemination plan should be drafted at the outset of the process and evaluation reports and management responses should be made public, in accordance with UNEG guidelines. Structured briefing materials and other dissemination products will be prepared, as required.
72. UNAIDS will publish final evaluation reports concurrently with the corresponding management responses and maintain a publicly accessible repository of evaluations and management responses.
73. The evaluation policy will be reviewed by independent experts—in the context of UNEG (e.g. UNEG peer review)— every four years to assess its continued relevance, adequacy, applicability and effect on the functioning and performance of the UNAIDS Evaluation Office.

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<sup>1</sup> Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. A/RES/70/1

[https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>2</sup> Economic and Social Council. Resolution 1994/24

<https://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1994/eres1994-24.htm>

<sup>3</sup> 2016-2021 Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF)

[http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media\\_asset/20160623\\_UNAIDS\\_PCB38\\_16-10\\_Revised\\_UBRAF\\_EN.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/20160623_UNAIDS_PCB38_16-10_Revised_UBRAF_EN.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/50584880.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Available at:

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

<sup>7</sup> UNAIDS Strategy 2016-2021

[http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/UNAIDS\\_PCB37\\_15-18](http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/UNAIDS_PCB37_15-18)

<sup>8</sup> Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (2014).

<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616> and Integrating Gender Equality and Human Rights in Evaluation - UN-SWAP Guidance, Analysis and Good Practices (2014).

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>

<sup>9</sup> Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2014

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=111&nr=8136&menu=35>

<sup>10</sup> For example: UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1915>

<sup>11</sup> UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system (2008)

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100> and UNEG Ethical Guidelines (2008)

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

<sup>12</sup> For example: UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (2010)

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/607> and Improved Quality of Evaluation

Recommendations Checklist (2018). <http://web.uneval.org/document/detail/2124>

<sup>13</sup> Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System (2014)

[https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\\_document\\_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU\\_REP\\_2014\\_6\\_English.pdf](https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_document_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2014_6_English.pdf)

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