

Economic and Social Council

2024 Operational Activities for Development Segment

Session 4: Overview of evaluation and independent assessment findings and management response: discussion on the recent evaluations, findings and actions taken

1. Published UN system-wide evaluations by the System Wide Evaluation Office

System-wide evaluation of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund

The evaluation made recommendations on the management and governance arrangements of the Fund and the design of projects. It highlighted a need for improved clarity in value proposition and synergy with other pooled funds. A management response was prepared and approved by the Joint SDG Fund's Operational Steering Committee (OSC). Follow up reporting noted that all eight initial recommendations were accepted and implemented by the end of 2023, including a restructuring of the OSC, a new multi-year strategy, new funding tracks, and increased collaboration with interagency coordinating bodies.

[Link to report](#)

[Link to management response](#)

System-wide evaluation of United Nations Development System Response to COVID-19

This evaluation made several recommendations to strengthen aspects of United Nations development system reform including greater integration of reform actions in entities' strategic plans. The Development Coordination Office (DCO) provided and published a management response to this evaluation in March 2023. As of April 2024, DCO and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) have initiated actions in response to all three of the overarching recommendations, including a review of the Management and Accountability Framework for the Resident Coordinator System (MAF) and creation of a "UN Development System Reform Checklist" for governing bodies of UNSDG entities.

[Link to report](#)

[Link to management response](#)

2. Published OIOS evaluations of Resident Coordinator System

The Office of Internal Oversight Services' (OIOS) Inspection and Evaluation Division has conducted annual evaluations of the Resident Coordinator System since 2021. The available reports (which include management responses) are:

- **Evaluation of Resident Coordinator system support to enabling coherent United Nations policy advice** (December 2023): [Link to report and management response](#)
- **Evaluation of the Development Coordination Office regional support** (January 2023): [Link to report and management response](#)
- **Evaluation of the Development Coordination Office: contribution of the Resident Coordinator system to country-level programme coherence** (March 2022): [Link to report and management response](#)

OIOS will conduct a triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the 2022 evaluation in late 2024.

3. Other published development system reform evaluations

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) completed a 'Formative evaluation of the UNFPA engagement in the reform of the United Nations development system' in 2022: [Link to report and management response](#)

4. Ongoing and planned evaluations

Evaluation of the Resident Coordinator System in Complex Settings (OIOS)

OIOS is currently conducting an evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness, and coherence of the RC system in delivering its sustainable development-focused mandate in settings where the Resident Coordinator is additionally

designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator and/or Deputy Special Representative of Secretary-General. The evaluation is due to be published by the end of 2024.

System-wide evaluation of the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls

In 2023, the System-wide Evaluation Office completed a Scoping and Evaluability Assessment of the Spotlight Initiative to End Violence Against Women and Girls. This was followed by the launch of an independent evaluation to meet accountability and learning needs related to gender based violence and UN development system reform which will be completed in 2024.

System-wide evaluation on country programme derivation from Cooperation Frameworks and UNCT configuration

UNSDG Principals have requested an independent system-wide evaluation on country programmes' derivation from, and alignment with, Cooperation Frameworks and UN Country Team configuration, to learn lessons from the first generation of CFs and inform revisions to the Cooperation Framework Guidance and the MAF. Consultations on evaluation objectives and scope commenced in April 2024. The System-Wide Evaluation Office will launch the evaluation in mid-2024 for completion in 2025.

Evaluation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy

The System-Wide Evaluation Office will conduct an evaluation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), five years after the strategy was launched (June 2019). The evaluation will begin in 2024 and conclude in 2025.

5. Mapping and summary of existing evaluation evidence

In addition to the above-referenced evaluations, which address UN development system reform issues as their primary focus, evaluation functions across the UN development system have produced a large body of evaluations which address reform issues indirectly or as a part of their scope. The System-Wide Evaluation Office has recently launched a cross-system initiative which aims to draw on this large body of UN evaluation evidence. This initiative will produce an interactive digital map of UN system evaluation evidence against the themes of the 2020 QCPR and develop short evidence summaries on priority topics for stakeholders involved in the 2024 QCPR process.

The UN development system has produced more than 4000 evaluation reports since January 2021.¹ The majority are evaluations of individual projects, but approximately one quarter are regional/country-level, thematic, strategic, policy, and joint/pooled funding evaluations representing a rich, but somewhat fragmented, evidence base on UN system contributions to SDG progress and development system reform issues. Initial collation of reports and preliminary mapping² shows that this body of evidence includes:

- 258 entity-level country programme evaluations (or equivalent)³
- 173 regional evaluations⁴
- 98 thematic evaluations⁵
- 88 strategic and policy evaluations⁶
- 64 UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) or Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) evaluations⁷
- 54 emergency response evaluations⁸

Increasingly, UN system evaluation offices produce **syntheses of evaluations** – for example on a particular theme, cross-cutting issue, geographic area, or SDG – to promote strategic level use of evaluation evidence. These syntheses will be highlighted in the interactive digital map; some 71 syntheses and summaries have been identified.

¹ United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) database – accessed/exported March 2024

² Preliminary mapping has been conducted on the basis of report titles, the publishing entity and evaluation type. Further, in-depth mapping based on other criteria and report content is ongoing. As such, these figures are subject to change.

³ Evaluations of Country Programme Documents, Country Strategic Plans, Country Strategic Notes and similar by UN entities, typically conducted in the penultimate or final year of a (4-5 year) programme cycle

⁴ Includes *inter alia* evaluations of regional programmes, regional office strategies, regional thematic evaluations, and evaluations of/by regional economic commissions

⁵ Corporate/global level evaluations of the work of an organization in a particular thematic area

⁶ Corporate/global level evaluations of the implementation of organizational plans, strategies and policies

⁷ Joint evaluations of the CF/UNDAF by the RCO and UNCT entities in the penultimate or final year of an UNDAF/CF cycle

⁸ Humanitarian evaluations at country, regional, or global level, including evaluations of L2 and L3 responses, COVID-19 responses etc.