

UN Sustainable Development Group System-Wide Evaluation Office

Progress Update

2024



October 2024

Background and Responsibilities

The **United Nations Sustainable Development Group System Wide Evaluation Office (SWEO)** is responsible for the provision of independent evaluation evidence to strengthen learning, transparency, and accountability, to incentivize joint work and collective learning, and to conduct system-wide evaluations and advance evidence from them on the United Nations development system's contribution towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

To ensure independence, impartiality and credibility, the SWEO is a standalone independent office, within the United Nations Secretariat. The SWEO is led by an Executive Director, reporting directly to the Secretary-General, but exercising operational independence. The Executive Director has the authority and discretion to submit reports without prior clearance at the appropriate level of decision-making and has the prerogative to share reports directly with the Economic and Social Council, as set out in A/75/79-E/2020/55.

Through the SWEO, the Executive Director supports the strengthening of oversight, accountability and lesson learning among UN development system entities. The Executive Director provides global leadership and standard-setting for the system-wide evaluation function at all levels, contributing to the Secretary-General's promotion of a system-wide culture of accountability and learning. The main **responsibilities** of the SWEO include:

- a) Commissioning and managing relevant, timely, credible, and high-quality global and (as relevant) regional system-wide evaluations of development system results and performance.
- b) Promoting increased collaboration on joint and system-wide evaluation; including by mapping the availability of evaluation evidence, to inform the development of a multi-year rolling system-wide evaluation plan.
- c) Enhancing collective knowledge sharing and learning through the production of syntheses and summaries of evaluation evidence across the UN system and supporting use of system-wide evaluation evidence to inform programme planning and the achievement of results across the United Nations development system.
- d) Leading the formulation and implementation of the system-wide evaluation policy, ensuring application of related guidance and latest evaluation practice.
- e) Advising DCO on models and guidance for the system-wide evaluation function at country and regional levels, including on evaluation quality assurance systems to support credible Cooperation Framework evaluations.
- f) Ensuring independent post-hoc quality assessment for all completed system-wide evaluations.
- g) Analysing the alignment between management responses and the recommendations of system-wide evaluations.
- h) Collaborating with the evaluation offices of United Nations entities to enhance coherence and make full use of evaluation capacities.
- i) Coordinating its work with the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Joint Inspection Unit, and the Board of Auditors.
- j) Working in partnerships to contribute to the strengthening of capacities for the generation and use of evidence to inform progress towards the achievement of Agenda 2030.

System-wide evaluation builds on and does not duplicate the work of UN entities' evaluation offices. It complements and leverages the work of United Nations entities evaluation offices, to maximize existing capacities and minimize additional costs in relation to the planning, conduct and use of system-wide evaluations and related activities.

SWEO participates as a member of UNEG to contribute to development of common technical guidance, evaluation capacity strengthening and to facilitate coordination and coherence, promote use and learning and benefit from the evaluation capacities of UNEG members.

Completed Evaluations

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

This evaluation made 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 in March 2023.

Links to [report](#) and [management response](#)

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. A management response was prepared and approved by the Joint SDG Fund's Operational Steering Committee (OSC).

Links to [report](#) and [management response](#)

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

This evaluation makes recommendations to strengthen efforts to End Violence Against Women and Girls and to strengthen aspects of United Nations development system reform. The evaluation report will be published in October 2024.

Value for Money Assessment of the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls

This report was commissioned as a companion to the evaluation to provide an assessment of the value for money of the Spotlight Initiative. The report will be published in October 2024.

Ongoing Evaluations

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

The evaluation aims to learn lessons from the first generation of CFs and inform revisions to the Cooperation Framework guidance and the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF). Following consultations with evaluation stakeholders on the scope and objectives, the evaluation Terms of Reference have been finalised and an evaluation team has been onboarded. The Inception Report will be completed in early October 2024. Data collection will be undertaken from October 2024 to December 2024, with analysis and reporting in Q1-Q2 2025.

Evaluation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy

The evaluation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), reviews progress five years after the strategy was launched (June 2019). Following consultations with evaluation stakeholders on the scope and objectives, the evaluation Terms of Reference will be finalised, and the evaluation team will start the evaluation beginning of October. The Inception Report will be completed in October 2024. Data collection will be undertaken from November 2024 to January 2025, with analysis and reporting in Q1-Q2 2025.

Mapping and summary of United Nations evaluation evidence

In 2024, SWEO launched a cross-system initiative which aims to draw on the extensive knowledge and evidence generated by independent evaluations conducted across the United Nations development system between 2021 and 2024 by producing an interactive digital map of UN system evaluation evidence against the themes of the 2020 QCPR and short evidence summaries on the following priority topics:

- (i) the Resident Coordinator system
- (ii) the UN development system regional architecture
- (iii) sustainable food systems
- (iv) humanitarian-development-peace linkages
- (v) funding quality

The summaries present key issues and learning from evaluations for consideration in the context of United Nations system-wide and intergovernmental policy discussions. Their publication is timed to provide information to stakeholders involved in the 2024 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), in line with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 78/166 (2023). The interactive map and summaries will be published on the ECOSOC QCPR status reporting [webpage](#).

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