

ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment 2025
Effective accountability: UN system evaluations

Guiding question on “What mechanisms exist to ensure recommendations from OIOS evaluations of the Resident Coordinator system and United Nations system-wide evaluations are implemented and used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities for development”?

1. To respond to this guiding question, I will discuss the **systematic and rigorous follow-up process** my Office follows for all evaluation recommendations, comprising:
 - Regular follow-up on recommendation implementation twice a year through a dedicated database called Teammate+ as well as on-going updates throughout the year
 - Conduct of **Triennial Reviews** three years after the completion of evaluations to assess the implementation and impact of recommendations
2. Since 2021, OIOS has issued **10 recommendations to the Development Coordination Office (DCO)**, all of which were accepted. Of these, **5 have already been implemented**, with 5 more recent recommendations still in progress.
3. OIOS is currently finalizing the **triennial review of its 2021 evaluation of country programming coherence**. The triennial review found that all the following four recommendations to DCO had been implemented, with positive outcomes:
 - In response to the recommendation to support the UNSDG in improving country-level coherence and implementation of joint workplans, DCO finalized a checklist on the implementation of development reforms, supported entities in adopting the use of the checklist, and enhanced the UNSDG data portal.
 - In response to the recommendation to strengthen knowledge sharing around country programming, DCO increased its dissemination of innovations and good practices on integrated policy.
 - In response to the recommendation to streamline reporting requirements, DCO launched a business process alignment exercise to document and harmonize reporting processes of UN entities and supported the launch of the UNSDG Output Indicator Framework.
 - In response to the recommendation to address challenges in operationalizing cross cutting issues at the UNCT level, DCO provided expert advice to RCs through subject matter experts, deployed substantive advisors in RCOs, and supported the design of joint programmes.
4. At least partly due to these efforts, the proportion of UN Country Teams that had at least one active **joint programme increased from 78 percent in 2021 to 87 percent in 2024**. More joint workplans have helped to identify areas for **complementarity across entities**, allowed **improved outreach to key partners**, and **better cooperation with government**.

2024 evaluation on Resident Coordinators in Complex Settings

5. I will use the 2024 evaluation of the RC system in complex settings to illustrate how we conduct our evaluations to strengthen accountability of the development system.
6. This evaluation assessed the **relevance, effectiveness and coherence of the RC system in delivering its sustainable development-focused mandate in complex settings** where RCs were also designated as Humanitarian Coordinator, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and/or Deputy Special Coordinator.
7. The evaluation looked at how well the RC system was designed to implement its mandate, and what results it achieved against that mandate, by asking **three main questions**:
 - To what extent is the RC system at country level fit for purpose to deliver against its mandate in complex settings – is it undertaking the right modalities of mandate implementation and in the right way?
 - How effectively has the RC system at country level enabled collaboration between UN development, humanitarian and peace and security actors in complex settings in support of sustainable development outcomes?
 - How effectively has the RC system at country level facilitated a focus on sustainable development in complex settings?
8. The **methodology for this evaluation was robust and included both qualitative and quantitative data**. It collected **primary data**, including through:
 - global RC and UNCT surveys, with good response rates of 65 per cent and 50 per cent respectively (we typically achieve even higher rates);
 - interviews with internal and external stakeholders, including UNCT members, host governments, Member States and civil society representatives; and
 - field visits to South Sudan and Ukraine.
9. Through the conduct of annual global RC and UNCT surveys, we have accumulated a significant body of historical data that we can use to conduct trend analyses and other assessments, including using Artificial Intelligence to synthesize large datasets. For example:
 - Survey data on RC and UNCT member assessments of the overall coherence of UN programming in their country showed significant improvement – 66% of RCs rated coherence as good or very good in 2021 compared to 90% in 2024, and 55% of UNCT members rated coherence as good or very good in 2021 compared to 74% in 2024.
10. The **main findings** of the evaluation were that RCs and their offices:
 - contributed to enhanced coherence of UN programming;
 - supported a continuous focus on recovery and development;
 - played a critical role in convening stakeholders at the national level;
 - directly supported governments to advance progress towards the SDGs; and
 - supported holistic programmatic approaches to advancing sustainable development alongside the humanitarian response.

11. Nevertheless, the **RC system was not adequately capacitated or fit for purpose** to meet additional demands and deliver against its expanded portfolio in complex settings.

12. OIOS made **four recommendations** to DCO to:

- review the RC system staffing structure in complex settings and produce an options paper on resourcing;
- collate, develop and share good practices and approaches on sustainable development funding and financing;
- strengthen the sharing of good practices for joined-up risk analysis and risk-informed planning in complex settings; and
- revise UNSDG guidance on humanitarian-development-peace collaboration

Concluding remarks

13. Since 2020, and following a consultative and risk-based approach for selecting evaluation topics, **OIOS has completed 4 evaluations and 1 advisory engagement of the RC system and DCO:**

- 2020 – advisory engagement on early results of the reform
- 2021 – evaluation of county programming coherence
- 2022 – evaluation of DCO regional offices
- 2023- evaluation of policy coherence
- 2024 – evaluation of RCs in complex settings

14. In **2025 OIOS is evaluating the RC system in Least Developed Countries (LDC)**, with a focus on RC system support to LDC graduation.

15. As per the PPBME and also as aligned with UN Evaluation Group norms and standards, OIOS evaluations ensure Secretariat **accountability** for the development system by assessing progress towards outcomes reform commitments and by providing invaluable **learning opportunities** through identifying the enabling factors for success as well as risks and obstacles that must be mitigated for greater effectiveness.

16. **Other OIOS evaluations** have also provided valuable assessments on the RC system, including:

- An evaluation of UN-Habitat reported that this small entity believed its voice was better heard in the reformed country teams, with the full support of RCs
- An evaluation of OHCHR reported that the Office collaborated well with UNCT and other UN entities on joint programmes under the effective coordination of the RC