



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

UNEG Strategy 2014–2019

The UNEG Strategy 2014-2019 was finalized and published following the UNEG Annual General Meeting in New York, in April 2013 and the UNEG Extraordinary Meeting in Rome, in September 2013.

This document was updated in May 2015 as Section 4 “How We Will Work Together” has been taken out and updated to be a stand-alone document, titled “UNEG Principles of Working Together”.

May 2015

Table of Contents

Foreword	1
1. Introduction	3
2. Vision and Mission	4
VISION	4
MISSION	4
3. Strategic Objectives 2014–2019	5
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 - EVALUATION FUNCTIONS AND PRODUCTS OF UN ENTITIES MEET THE UNEG NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION	6
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 - UN ENTITIES AND PARTNERS USE EVALUATION IN SUPPORT OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROGRAMME LEARNING	7
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 - EVALUATION INFORMS UN SYSTEM-WIDE INITIATIVES AND EMERGING DEMANDS	8
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4 - UNEG BENEFITS FROM AND CONTRIBUTES TO AN ENHANCED GLOBAL EVALUATION PROFESSION	10
4. Risks	11
5. Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation	12
6. UNEG’s Impact Pathway	13

Foreword

Evaluation everywhere, and at every level, will play a key role in implementing the new development agenda. [...] Evaluation is not easy. Nor is it popular. But it is essential. The current constrained budgetary climate makes it more important than ever.

-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

A UNEG Fit for Purpose

The UNEG Strategy 2014-2019 was first published in November 2013, following a UNEG Independent Assessment. It sets out four Strategic Objectives for the years 2014-2019. In the following months, UNEG has developed and implemented its working programme around the identified four Strategic Objectives.

Great work and much progress have been done in the past months. In this regard, our efforts have focused on two aspects. First, UNEG has continued to consolidate UNEG's core business of strengthening the evaluation functions within the UN system. These activities include updating the UNEG Norms and Standards, enhancing the peer review mechanisms, and strengthening the professionalization of evaluation in the UN system.

Second, UNEG has ventured in new areas and is working at optimizing partnerships, including exploring how to enhance the utilization of evaluation, and leveraging strategic opportunities raised through the International Year of Evaluation and the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/237 "[Capacity building for the evaluation of development activities at the country level](#)." Cooperating with partners, we have continued to contribute to the UN system wide evaluations and national evaluation capacity development.

UNEG is a diverse network. We have 45 members responsible for evaluation in the UN system, including the Secretariat offices and departments, regional commissions, funds, programmes and affiliated organizations. In this context, I want to ensure that UNEG remains relevant to all of its membership, no matter the size, location, different subject focuses and structures. As the new UNEG Chair, I am truly excited and committed to lead this wonderful network and community of colleagues.

In 2015, the global evaluation community is celebrating the International Year of Evaluation, in order to advocate and promote evaluation and evidence-based policy making at international, regional, national and local levels. Also, in September, world leaders will gather at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, to renew their commitment for development and adopt the new Sustainable Development Goals agenda. This is to say that the current, and following years are important times for us, which we certainly intend to use to the fullest to advance the "cause" of evaluation.

As the UNEG Strategy states, “UNEG envisions that evaluation is fully realized in every entity of the UN system through appropriate evaluation policies, resources, skills and activities. Thereby, evidence produced by evaluation informs a more relevant, efficient and effective UN system with greater impact on the lives of the people it serves.”

I am fully confident that, with the support and engagement of each of UNEG colleagues, we will be able to consolidate and sustain the excellent work UNEG has been doing so far. And, together, we will make UNEG fit for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Segone', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Marco Segone
UNEG Chair
New York

May 2015

1. Introduction

1. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) is a voluntary network that brings together units responsible for evaluation in the UN system. UNEG helps advance the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the UN system's work by promoting and strengthening evaluation. The Group's central role has been to develop and advocate for common norms and standards for all UN evaluations. The UNEG Norms and Standards underpin professionalization of UN evaluation functions that enables UN organizations to continuously learn and improve organizational effectiveness and responsiveness.
2. The demand for evaluation is growing. In the context of declining resources, UN entities are being challenged by Member States and donors to provide evidence that they are achieving results and that they are becoming more efficient. Moreover, as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) draw to a close and the new Sustainable Development Goals are developed, the UN is being challenged to assess and report on its contribution to improving the lives of people. By assessing the results that the UN has achieved and by making recommendations that feed into policy and programme development, evaluation plays an integral role in helping the UN system become more effective overall.
3. Evaluation is emerging as a mature profession. This is demonstrated by the increasing formalization of evaluation core competencies in recruitment, training and higher education, the establishment and strengthening of international, national and regional associations and the establishment and use of internationally recognized norms and standards. Furthermore, national governments increasingly recognize that evaluation is an important professional function to enhance the effectiveness of interventions and transparent governance in its own right.
4. Acknowledging these demands and the changing global landscape, UNEG's role and priorities have evolved to acquire enhanced relevance and provide support for UN reform. This Strategy and its associated Impact Pathway set the course for UNEG's future work, building on its past achievements. It is based on an independent assessment of UNEG, conducted between November 2012 and April 2013, which recommended that UNEG increase its partnerships with other professional evaluation networks and organizations, revise its governance and decision-making structures, and define a strategy.
5. The Strategy sets out an ambitious agenda for concerted action and priority areas for 2014-2019. It is based on the normative values of the United Nations. It outlines how the Group will continue to support its members and partners as they strengthen the independence, credibility and use of evaluation and it outlines how UNEG will inform UN reform processes and cooperate with the global evaluation community. The Group has assessed the options available for moving forward. It recognizes that continuing the past approach risks not being able to provide the leadership on evaluation, while becoming more ambitious risks stretching thin the resources of a voluntary organization.¹
6. UNEG is at an exciting crossroads regarding its strategic direction and operational modalities. In acknowledging the progress made to date, the different demands on UNEG in the future, the increasing

¹ UNEG governance, working methods, membership and partnership are defined in a separate document, *UNEG Principles of Working Together*.

diversity of the agenda, and the growing interest from various partners to participate in its activities, this Strategy articulates what the Group intends to achieve. In so doing, it intends to shape the architecture for strengthening evaluation and enhancing accountability in the UN system.

2. Vision and Mission

Vision

7. UNEG envisions that evaluation is fully realized in every entity of the UN system through appropriate evaluation policies, resources, skills and activities. Thereby, evidence produced by evaluation informs a more relevant, efficient and effective UN system with greater impact on the lives of the people it serves.

Mission

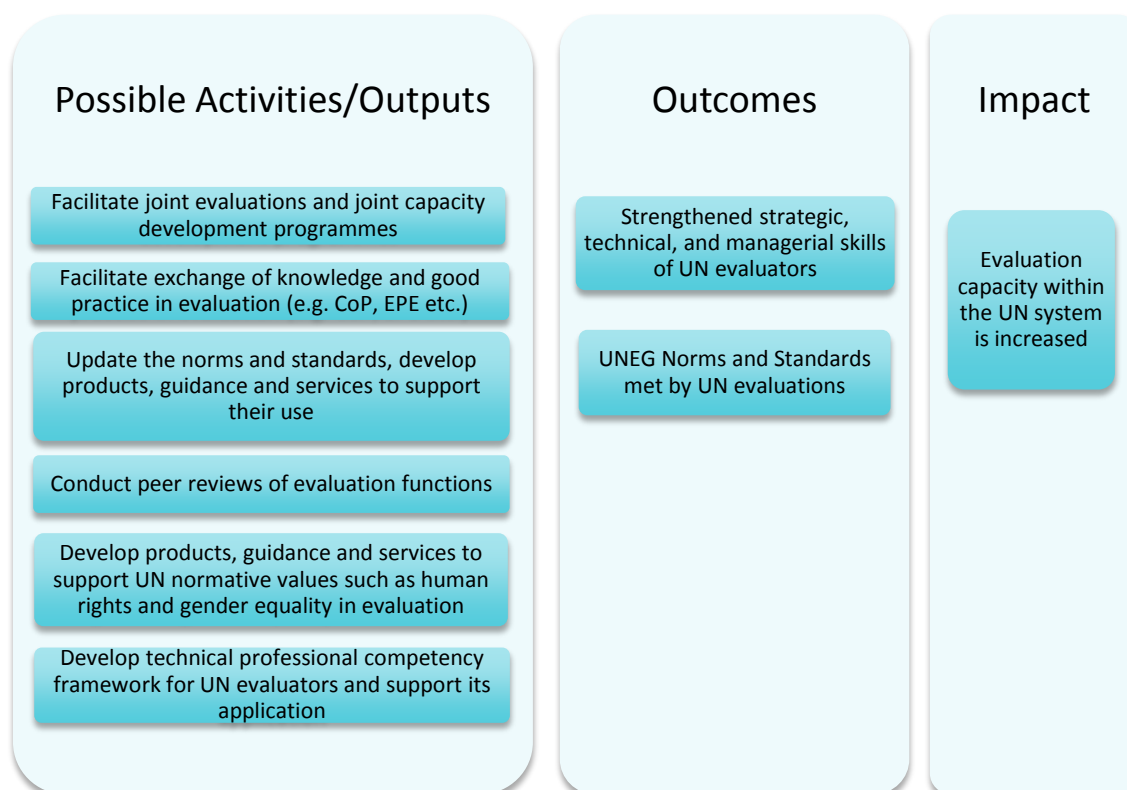
8. UNEG's mission is to promote the independence, credibility and usefulness of the evaluation function and evaluation across the UN system, to advocate for the importance of evaluation for learning, decision-making and accountability, and to support the evaluation community in the UN system and beyond.

3. Strategic Objectives 2014–2019

9. To achieve its mission, UNEG’s work is focused on four strategic objectives: 1) Evaluation functions and products of UN entities meet the UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation; 2) UN entities and partners use evaluation in support of accountability and programme learning; 3) Evaluation informs UN system-wide initiatives and emerging demands; and 4) UNEG benefits from and contributes to an enhanced global evaluation profession.
10. This Strategy is a framework to guide UNEG’s work. Each strategic objective has a series of associated activities and outcomes that are intended to lead to an impact, as depicted in the UNEG Impact Pathway at the end of this document. With the oversight and support of the Chair, the Vice Chairs and their associated Strategic Objective groups and sub-groups articulate how each objective is to be achieved by specifying the priority activities, outputs and outcomes.

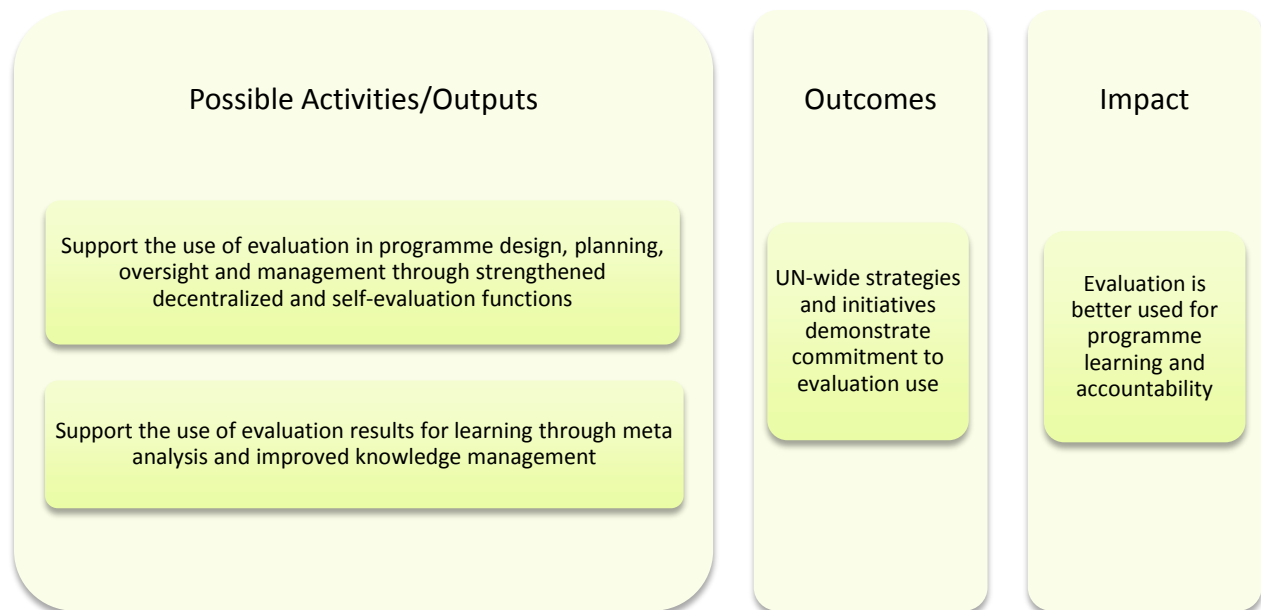
Strategic Objective 1 - Evaluation functions and products of UN entities meet the UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation

11. Building evaluation capacity within the UN has always been a core area of work for UNEG, and it continues to be UNEG's priority. UNEG advances the professionalization of evaluation within the UN system and promotes adherence to the norms and standards through the external review processes of evaluation functions, the development of relevant guidance materials, as well as the development of a professional competency framework for UN evaluators.
12. Work under this strategic objective strengthens the strategic, technical and managerial skills of UN evaluators by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences. In addition to the Evaluation Practice Exchange seminars, UNEG uses innovative capacity development methods such as communities of practice, webinars and other knowledge management tools.
13. The following diagram outlines possible activities, outputs and outcomes associated with this strategic objective. The Vice Chair of this strategic area, working with associated Strategic Objective groups and sub-groups, is encouraged to develop a results framework to articulate precisely how this objective will be achieved.



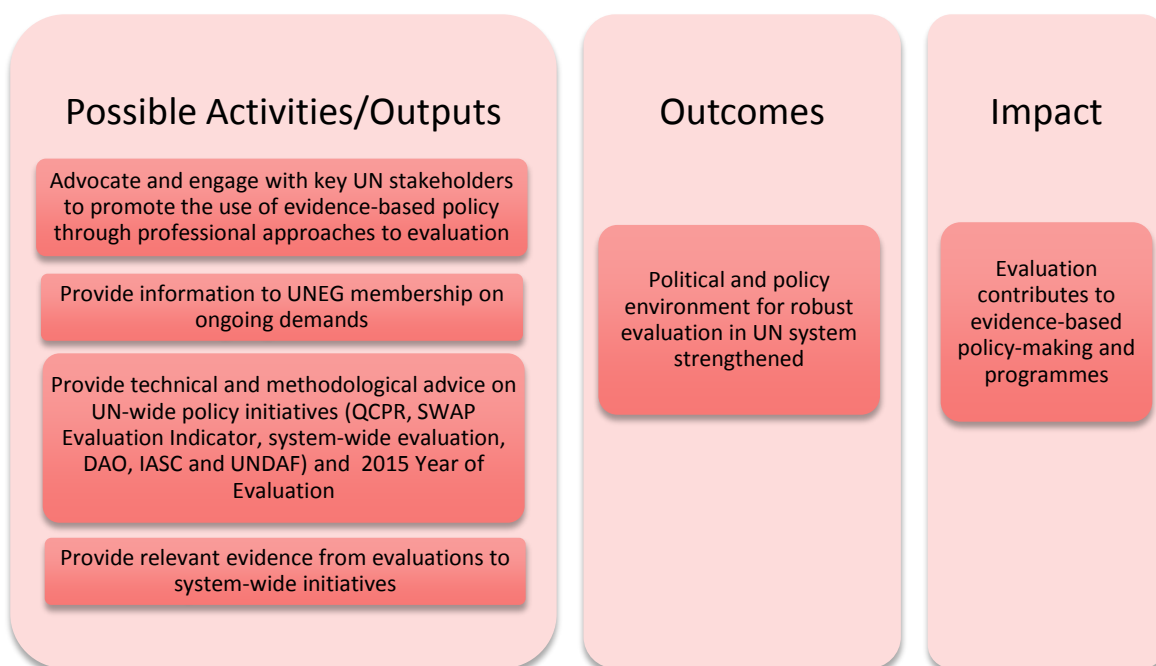
Strategic Objective 2 - UN entities and partners use evaluation in support of accountability and programme learning

14. Since the Millennium Declaration in 2000, there has been a renewed focus on development effectiveness and country ownership. This implies a key role for evaluation as part of more integrated planning, programming management, and learning, recognizing that the primary responsibility rests with management.
15. UNEG works to support the improved utilization of evaluation by UN entities and partners by promoting the use of evaluation approaches and principles into planning and management systems, as well as strengthening the follow-up mechanisms where evaluation results are used in strategic decision-making and learning. UNEG facilitates capacity development of its partners and promotes exchange of knowledge and good practices so that evaluations are better used in their policy- and decision-making.
16. The following diagram outlines possible activities, outputs and outcomes associated with this strategic objective. The Vice Chair of this strategic area, working with associated Strategic Objective groups and sub-groups, is encouraged to develop a results framework to articulate precisely how this objective will be achieved.



Strategic Objective 3 - Evaluation informs UN system-wide initiatives and emerging demands

17. Since 2007, UNEG’s mission has been to promote the visibility and importance of evaluation for learning, decision-making and accountability within the UN system. This vision is increasingly shared by key UN stakeholders, as confirmed by the Secretary-General in his recent intervention at UNEG Evaluation Week that evaluation “has a key role to play in UN reform, accountability and effectiveness”.
18. This strategic objective is to better position UNEG to support decisions around UN reform processes. UNEG works to build on its profile by reaching out more directly to Member States and UN senior management, communicating what UNEG does and continuing to advocate for evaluation as a key element of the UN’s work.
19. The activities under this strategic objective enable UNEG to offer technical and methodological inputs to key UN initiatives (see Box 1) as well as work together with key stakeholders to create a political and policy environment that increasingly values evaluation as a key element of UN relevance and effectiveness.
20. The following diagram outlines possible activities, outputs and outcomes associated with this strategic objective. The Vice Chair of this strategic area, working with associated Strategic Objective groups and sub-groups, is encouraged to develop a results framework to articulate precisely how this objective will be achieved.



Box 1. UNEG and Independent System-Wide Evaluation

UNEG participates in, fully supports, and provides normative guidance for independent system-wide evaluation (ISWE), as a member of the ISWE Coordination Secretariat housed in the Joint Inspection Unit. Below is a text from the draft Policy for Independent System-Wide Evaluation of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System.

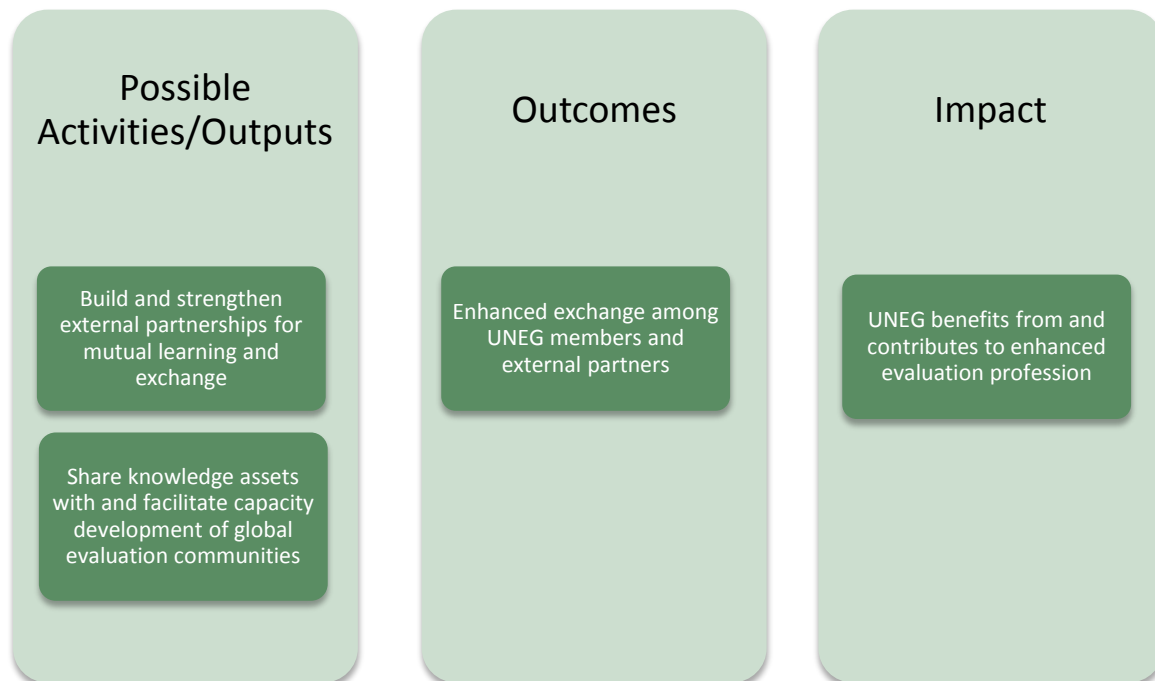
The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)...will contribute to the broader independent system-wide evaluation policy framework by developing support tools and approaches for undertaking joint evaluations, as well as coordinating evaluations where possible. Specific tools foreseen in this context include a Resource Pack and Tool Kit to help guide the design and implementation of joint evaluation work in cross-agency settings.¹ UNEG, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDOCO), will provide support for the further development and improvement of UNDAF evaluations through the provision of methodological support and advice.²

¹ Other support tools foreseen include, among others, “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations”, and “The Role of Impact Evaluation in UN Agency Evaluation Systems: Guidance on Selecting, Planning and Managing Impact Evaluations”.

² In collaboration with UNDOCO, UNEG has prepared some useful guidance on planning and using UNDAF evaluations, including: “UNEG Guidance on Preparing Terms of Reference for UNDAF Evaluations” (2012); and “UNEG Guidance on Preparing Management Responses to UNDAF Evaluations”. The guidance has been endorsed by UNDG: <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1532>.

Strategic Objective 4 - UNEG benefits from and contributes to an enhanced global evaluation profession

21. One of the key findings of the independent assessment was that UNEG’s work has been predominantly focused on supporting internal capacity development of UN entities and, as a result, UNEG has had a limited external profile. UNEG members increasingly learn new approaches and methodologies from other groups and networks.
22. UNEG works to collaborate with national, regional and international evaluation networks and associations. UNEG will contribute to the international community of evaluation practice by sharing its knowledge, engaging in norm setting, and providing a venue for exchange among experts and practitioners. By working with other entities UNEG can contribute to international efforts to increase the importance of evaluation in public policy and planning.
23. The following diagram outlines possible activities, outputs and outcomes associated with this strategic objective. The Vice Chair of this strategic area, working with associated Strategic Objective groups and sub-groups, is encouraged to develop a results framework to articulate precisely how this objective will be achieved.



4. Risks

24. In implementing the Strategy, it is important to monitor and manage risks. While developing results frameworks against each strategic objective, each Vice Chair also needs to identify relevant risks and mitigating actions.
25. More generally, several broad risks can be noted. First, the Strategy is implemented in a period when resources allocated to the UN are likely to decline and evaluation units may face budget cuts. This may limit not only contributions to UNEG from members but also curtail the time staff are able to devote to UNEG. It is important that UNEG monitor budgets for evaluation across the membership and advocate for maintaining adequate evaluation budgets. In this regard, an important rationale is that evaluation can help to identify waste and improve targeting of activities, thereby boosting value for money.
26. Second, UNEG relies on voluntary efforts by the membership. These inputs are vulnerable if staff are required to commit to competing priorities. This risk can be mitigated if staff in member organizations negotiate to include in their personal work plans objectives which are specifically linked to UNEG outputs. UNEG should encourage managers to give recognition to such tasks.
27. Third, organizing UNEG's work under four strategic objectives carries a risk that 'silos' will develop. Therefore, it is important for staff across the membership to keep in close touch, e.g. via the UNEG Community of Practice, to compare notes and identify synergies. Periodically, the Vice Chairs will facilitate exchanges among staff, with a view to strengthening horizontal coordination, communication and networking. Strategic Objective groups and sub-groups need to organize work in ways that minimize overlap and duplication.

5. Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation

28. In line with the good evaluation practice that UNEG seeks to promote, this Strategy will be monitored and evaluated.
29. To facilitate monitoring, the Vice Chairs are encouraged to develop a results framework for the duration of their tenure in their areas of responsibility, linked with the work plan of relevant Strategic Objective groups and sub-Groups. The Vice Chairs regularly monitor the progress achieved in their work plans, and report the progress made against the respective strategic objectives and suggest the way forward at the AGM. The monitoring and reporting should enable UNEG Heads to assess whether the implementation of the Strategy is on track, and take corrective actions if needed. In addition, UNEG members may wish to conduct a mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategy in 2015-2016 and the evaluation of results achieved at the end of the Strategy period in 2018-2019.

6. UNEG's Impact Pathway

Evaluation is fully realized in every entity of the UN system through appropriate evaluation policies, resources, skills and activities.

Evidence produced by evaluation informs a more relevant, efficient and effective UN system with greater impact on the lives of the people it serves.

Vision

