

Peer Review of the Evaluation

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Function of the Office of

Rachel Sauvinet-Bedouin (FAO), Vibecke Dixon (Norad), Belén Sanz Luque (UNIFEM)

Internal Oversight Services

Peer Panel Advisors: Stein Hansen (NCG), Urs Zollinger (King Zollinger)

of the United Nations (OIOS)

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Foreword

The present report is the result of the fifth professional peer review of the evaluation function at a multilateral organization. It was carried out at the request of OIOS to the DAC Network on Evaluation. The review is a joint effort by a group of international evaluation experts (Peer Panel and advisors), coming from bilateral and UN agencies, who have assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation function at OIOS. The report concludes with a number of recommendations aimed at improving the evaluation function at OIOS. The experts have abstained from proposing fundamental structural changes as the existing structure reflects the mandate of the 5th Committee of the General Assembly of the UN.

The aim of this review is to stimulate constructive peer exchange about possible improvements in the evaluation function. In the Framework for Professional Peer Reviews established by the joint UNEG-DAC peer review task force it is stated that:

“This approach has several purposes: building greater knowledge, confidence and use of evaluation systems by management, governing bodies and others; providing a suitable way of “evaluating the evaluators”; sharing good practise, experience and mutual learning. The primary intended audience for the results of these peer reviews is one of decision-makers and other users of evaluation – including where appropriate the intended beneficiaries in member countries.”

Based on the framework, the OIOS/IED evaluation function was assessed along the criteria *independence, credibility* and *utility*. The UNEG norms and standards provide a sound basis to operationalize these criteria.

The review has been a very rewarding exercise and learning process for the Peer Panel members and the advisors. The open, collaborative and frank response of OIOS/IED to the review was an excellent basis for a professional peer exchange. The review team would like to thank everyone who has invested time for interviews, questionnaires and self-assessments or has provided time and energy in other ways. Special thanks go to the OIOS/IED-team who has generously shared facts and provided comments throughout the process, enabling the review team to finalize the report as planned.

Berne, January 31st, 2009

For the Peer Panel

Gerhard Siegfried
Chair

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Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ACABQ | Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions |
| AGM | Annual General Meeting |
| CEB | Chief Executives Board |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CPC | Committee for Programme and Coordination |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DDA | Department of Disarmament Affairs |
| DESA | Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| DGACM | Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (United Nations Secretariat) |
| DM | Department of Management |
| DPA | Department of Political Affairs (United Nations Secretariat) |
| DPI | Department of Public Information (United Nations Secretariat) |
| DPKO | Department of Peacekeeping Operations (United Nations Secretariat) |
| DSS | Department of Safety and Security |
| ECA | Economic Commission for Africa |
| ECE | Economic Commission for Europe |
| ECG | Evaluation Cooperation Group |
| ECLAC | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| ECOSOC | Economic and Social Council |
| EOSG | Executive Office of the Secretary-General |
| ESCAP | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific |
| ESCWA | Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia |
| GA | General Assembly |
| HABITAT | United Nations Human Settlements Programme |
| IAAC | Independent Audit Advisory Committee |
| IAD | Internal Audit Division (of UN OIOS) |
| ID | Investigations Division (of UN OIOS) |
| IED | Inspection and Evaluation Division (of UN OIOS) |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| ITC | International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO |
| JIU | Joint Inspection Unit |
| MECD | Monitoring, Evaluation and Consulting Division (of UN OIOS) |
| NCE | National Competitive Examination |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| OHCHR | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| OHRLS | Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (United Nations Secretariat) |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OIOS | Office of Internal Oversight Services |
| OLA | Office of Legal Affairs (United Nations Secretariat) |
| OOSA | Office for Outer Space Affairs |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| PPBME | Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation |
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SG | Secretary-General of the United Nations |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Agency |
| TCPR | Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNEG TFQS | UNEG's Task Force on "Quality Stamp" |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNODC | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (formerly ODCCP) |
| UNOG | United Nations Office at Geneva (United Nations Secretariat) |
| UN OIOS ES | United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services-Eval. Section |
| UNON | United Nations Office at Nairobi (United Nations Secretariat) |
| UNOV | United Nations Office at Vienna (United Nations Secretariat) |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees |
| USG | Under-Secretary-General |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

Executive summary

Peer Review of evaluation is an approach used to assess multilateral agencies' own evaluation capacity and performance. It reviews to what extent a multilateral agency's own central evaluation function produces evaluations that are credible and useful for learning and accountability purposes as tested by internationally recognized professional evaluation peers.

Against the lack of uniformity and in view of the considerable variation in UN evaluation practice across the UN system, an initiative to undertake Peer Reviews was launched in the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD by Denmark in 2006, in collaboration with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), with the intention to decrease the demand for multi-donor evaluations of UN organizations. The reasoning was that a Peer Review of the evaluation function of a UN organization would establish the credibility of evaluation reports coming from the organization itself, and would thus decrease the need for external multi-donor evaluations.

This Peer Review is of the Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the UN Secretariat. It is undertaken at the request of the USG of OIOS and organized along the dimensions of *independence*, *credibility* and *utility* as reflected in UNEG's standards and norms for such Peer Reviews. The data upon which the Peer Review is based were collected by means of in-depth interviews with OIOS staff and management, department/programme representatives of the Secretariat (subjected to evaluations) and Member State representatives, focusing explicitly on these three evaluation dimensions.

In addition, the Panel has reviewed a sample of IED evaluation reports from the perspective of the UNEG standards, and all relevant IED and OIOS documents and reports on policy, procedures, planning, prioritization, staffing and budget, made available to the Panel.

Conclusions

The Panel noted the dynamism and commitment of the IED team. Over the past three years, IED has undergone major transformations. It has been strengthened both in terms of human and financial resources. The mandate of IED has been sharpened by the removal of the management consulting and the programme reporting from the evaluation division, which has reduced potential conflicts of interest and focused its work on oversight functions of inspection and evaluation. The most recent evaluation reports are of good quality with straightforward messages and recommendations.

The Panel's overall view of IED along the three core criteria established by the Peer review process is as follows (see Chart 1):

Independence The Panel sees no serious concerns regarding the independence of OIOS/IED along the independence dimensions that have been peer reviewed, i.e. (a) IED’s location relative to other management functions, (b) independence to select evaluation topics, (c) budgetary independence, (d) access to information and informants, (e) discretion in submitting its reports, (f) independence to track follow-up of management’s response to evaluations, (g) independence of the IED head and evaluators. No evidence of infringement of independence was uncovered. However, the strong emphasis on independence may partly isolate IED and may to a certain extent hinder the dialogue with its evaluands.

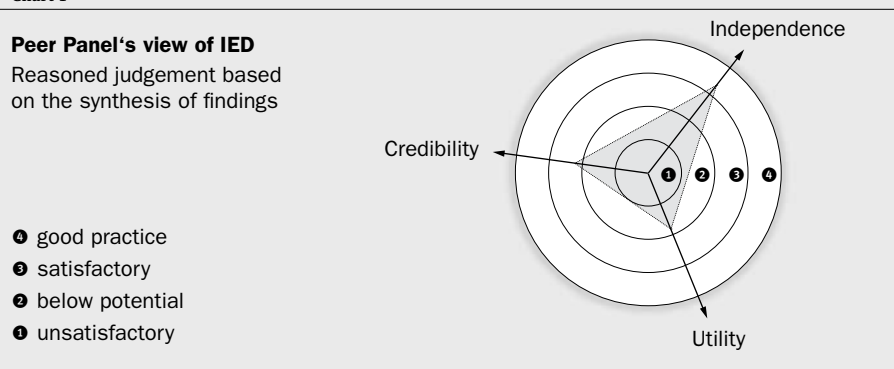
While IED is located sufficiently independently from the other management functions, the location of IED in OIOS carries a disadvantage in that IED is primarily seen as an oversight body and much less as an agent facilitating learning in the Secretariat. The other aspect of IED intimate proximity with audit and investigation functions is a too strong focus on organizational performance and an insufficient emphasis on programme effectiveness and impacts.

Credibility Overall IED’s credibility is satisfactory having recently been strengthened by a significant increase in human resources and several initiatives like the *Risk-based Planning Process*, the *IED Quality Assurance Process* and the new *Inspection and Evaluation Manual*. These initiatives have contributed to strengthening the credibility of the evaluation function but it still faces a number of challenges.

IED’s credibility is challenged by

- limited thematic expertise of IED to cover the many diverse UN programmes,
- the sheer size of the 27 programmes of the UN Secretariat in relation to the limited IED capacities,
- insufficient human resource capacity: The lack of high level posts and limited number of experienced evaluators in IED, is an obstacle to establish a much needed authority, credibility and integrity of IED within the UN system,
- too short evaluation reports (lacking essential information to ascertain validity), and
- lack of or too limited emphasis on key evaluation questions of relevance and effectiveness.

Chart 1



Utility The use of IED's evaluation results is below its potential. The utility of IED's evaluation results is challenged by several factors:

- IED's dissemination policy and practices beyond Member States and departments directly concerned by evaluations is unsatisfactory, as is the lack of public accessibility of IED reports.
- The response mechanism of management to evaluations does not necessarily ensure that recommendations are systematically considered and implemented by management.
- IED is operating in a politically highly sensitive environment.
- Evaluation in the Secretariat is primarily a small oversight function alongside the much larger audit and investigation functions, and is not operating as a fully fledged evaluation function. The perception of evaluations as primarily an oversight and accountability instrument has impaired the development of evaluation as a *learning tool* and *agent of change*.
- IED is operating in a relatively non-conducive environment for quality, in-depth evaluations within the area of the GA. Neither the Fifth Committee nor the CPC can meet the expectation that evaluations are discussed substantively and that steering is based on evaluation results. While the Fifth Committee is an appropriate body to discuss evaluations that deal with organizational performance of the UN programmes, it is less relevant when topics are more technical.
- Furthermore, because of the nature of its business, the Fifth Committee focuses on processual issues (i.e. on 'doing the thing right') and not on the effectiveness (outcomes and impacts) of the work carried out by the programmes evaluated.
- The GA mandated reports should be discussed in other relevant committees that are directly concerned by the programmes evaluated, as is done for programmes that have their own governing bodies.
- The subsidiary organs of the ECOSOC (the technical commissions) can provide an appropriate venue in addition to the Fifth Committee to discuss relevant evaluation results.
- As a result, neither departments nor Member States fully value the contribution evaluations can make to a more effective UN.
- Finally, IED's mandate is too broad. This limits the utility of IED evaluations since meaningful coverage is almost impossible, an issue accentuated by the sheer size of some of the larger UN programmes (e.g. DPKO, UNEP, UNHCR, etc.).

However, the usefulness of evaluations is only partly under the control of the evaluation office.

Recommendations

Following are the Panel's recommendations along the core Peer Review criteria. Some of the recommendations relate to more than one criterion.

1. Update the PPBME in order to align definitions, roles and responsibilities of evaluation on the one hand and audit and investigations on the other.
2. Communicate the distinctiveness of the evaluation function with regard to other functions performed by OIOS (i.e. audit and investigation), especially to Member States and departments of the Secretariat.
3. Use the term *inspection* as defined in the UNEG Norms. And – in order to reduce the potential of confusion – remove the term *inspection* from the division's name. While keeping the acronym *IED*, the division could be re-named to become the *Independent Evaluation Division* (IED). This would establish a clearer evaluation *branding*.
4. Rename the IAAC to become the *Independent Evaluation and Audit Advisory Committee* (IEAAC), and include two internationally recognized evaluation experts as IEAAC members, in order to further strengthen the standing of *evaluation* in OIOS. The current IAAC – both in name and composition – only strengthens the perception that evaluation is a sub-task of audit.
5. Strengthen IED's staff capacity by recruiting more senior staff. Furthermore, the director (D2) must be appointed as soon as possible in order to give IED more 'weight' within OIOS and the UN system.
6. Increase the training budget of evaluation staff significantly in order to upgrade evaluation and thematic knowledge and skills among both junior and senior staff.
7. Strengthen the thematic expertise and knowledge of evaluation teams on the subject area being evaluated. The panel recommends IED to recruit consultants – as team members for each evaluation – with the required technical expertise, in particular *thematic* expertises that have to do with UN mandates and Secretariat programmes, e.g. gender equality, human rights, or humanitarian action. IED should furthermore out-source more evaluations and conduct less evaluations itself, but should maintain the ultimate responsibility for quality control. This requires more financial resources for non-staff. It will help achieve a better coverage of the programmes and contribute to improved technical expertise of IED evaluations.
8. Adjust the *Evaluation Cycle* in order to allow for greater consultation with stakeholders at all stages, including at the initial stage of drafting the TOR *before* IED clearance. This could help not only to foster participation, but also ownership, learning and understanding of the potential of the evaluation function for the evaluands' own work, and as a means to improve the enabling environment for evaluation. Moreover, the *Evaluation Cycle* should allow for some flexibility in order to respond to clients' needs regarding more or less consultation.

9. Prepare one comprehensive report of each evaluation (or review) including an executive summary. The comprehensive report should include all relevant information, i.e. a description of the methodology, a thorough analysis, background information, the terms of reference (TOR), the team composition and expertise, a list of references and other annexes as appropriate. In order to respect the length-restriction (8,500 words), only submit the executive summary to the Fifth Committee (and only have the executive summary translated into all UN languages). The executive summary could be much shorter than 8,500 words and should only contain key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The management responses should be attached as a separate document to the comprehensive report. The comprehensive report should be shared with the programmes and departments under evaluation, with Member States on demand and to any other interested body.
10. Undertake more systematic analyses of the programmes' outcomes and impacts. The prime focus on process and outputs (i.e. the delivering of products) should be de-emphasized in favour of a stronger focus on outcomes and impacts (positive and negative long-term effects/change achieved with the outputs) as well as on the question '*Are we doing the right thing?*'. These criteria form the distinctiveness of evaluation and accountability on results. More emphasis should be on the learning aspect of evaluations and therefore on lessons learned.
11. Establish a better balance between the accountability and the learning aspects of the evaluation function in order to ensure full adherence to the UNEG Norms & Standards, in particular *norm 1.1*, i.e. that all stakeholders should give the accountability and learning dimensions of evaluation equal attention.
12. Implement a more flexible planning approach in order to better respond to requests from individual programmes/departments and to better coordinate with decentralized evaluation units. Consultation at an early stage in the process with programmes/departments would help increasing *relevance* and *timeliness* of evaluations. A rolling work plan of evaluations would allow some flexibility and adjustment of the work plan.
13. Follow a cycle of evaluations that matches those of the Committees and Commissions and other relevant governing bodies to which each evaluation is presented. For this to happen, IED should stay in close contact with the Secretaries of the various UN Committees and Commissions in order to better know the needs of Member States.
14. Establish a systematic response mechanism whereby management states its positions vis-à-vis the thrusts of the evaluation as well as each of the recommendations and indicates actions planned to be taken with a timeframe for implementation. Commitments made in the management response should be linked more systematically to the *management compacts* of management with the SG.¹ The management response should be published together with IED evaluations reports but as a separately identifiable document or attachment and should not be inserted in the main text.

¹
In order to strengthen accountability mechanisms at the senior management level, the Secretary-General has introduced the performance management compact.

15. Upgrade the *Issue Track* by means of having parameters measuring the *quality* dimension of recommendation and reconsider the practice that IED recommendations are more or less in the same place within the *Issue Track* as audit and investigation recommendations, and explore the feasibility of having a separable tracking system for evaluation recommendations within the same IT system.
16. Implement a broader sharing of evaluations (going beyond the Fifth Committee and the programmes/departments directly concerned) and the development of a knowledge building mechanism in addition to a more needs-based planning and dissemination of evaluations. On the one hand, recommendations and lessons learned should not only be shared with the Fifth Committee but with other UN Committees and Commissions and other relevant governing bodies. On the other hand recommendations and lessons learned should be shared within the UN System, i.e. the UN organizations, more proactively. As a first step, all IED evaluation reports should be made publicly available on the OIOS website as it would strengthen IED's transparency. This is also the practice in most evaluation offices of multilateral or bilateral agencies.
17. Strengthen and upgrade the decentralized evaluation units of the larger UN programmes (e.g. UNEP) that have own governing bodies, into independent evaluation functions reporting directly to their governing bodies. This would take away the pressure from IED to cover all 27 programmes over a fixed period of time. IED could focus more on those programmes in the Secretariat that do not have separate governing bodies and on cross-cutting issues touching on different entities within the UN System.

Some of the recommendations mentioned above are partly or fully outside the sphere of influence of OIOS and IED and will require the support of other actors in order to be implemented (see Table 1).

Table 1

Responsibilities to implement recommendations

| | Recommendation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| IED | | | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| USG of OIOS | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | ■ | | ■ |
| Departments/ programmes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | ■ |
| Secretary-General | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| Fifth Committee | | | | ■ | | ■ | | | | | | | ■ | | | | ■ |
| Other commissions/ committees | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | |

1 | Introduction

1.1. Organization of report

After this introductory chapter on background, purpose and methodology of the Peer Review, the evaluation at the United Nations Secretariat and the functions of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) are briefly described (Chapter 2).

The actual review begins with an assessment of the overall environment for evaluations (Chapter 3), followed by an in-depth discussion of the three core criteria independence (Chapter 4), credibility (Chapter 5) and utility (Chapter 6). Sub-chapters address different aspects of each criterion. The sub-chapters are organized as follows:

- Each sub-chapter is introduced by the relevant UN Norm for evaluation.
- The UN Norm is followed by the overall Panel finding (in bold). The overall Panel finding is non-judgmental.
- The overall finding is followed by a detailed presentation of findings, including stakeholder perceptions, findings emerging from the analysis of documents and Panel perceptions.
- Each sub-chapter ends with the Panel conclusion. The conclusions are judgmental and reflect the Panel's view.

The main chapters on the three core criteria end with Panel recommendations.

The report ends with the Peer Panel's overall view of IED (Chapter 7).

1.2. Background and purpose of the Peer Review

Against the lack of uniformity and in view of the considerable variation in UN evaluation practice across the UN system, an initiative to undertake Peer Reviews was launched in the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)/Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) by Denmark in 2006, in collaboration with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), with the intention to decrease the demand for multi-donor evaluations of UN organizations and as a process for joint learning. The reasoning was that a Peer Review of the evaluation function of a UN organization would establish the credibility of evaluation reports coming from the organization itself and would thus decrease the need for external multi-donor evaluations.

Peer Review of evaluation is an approach used to assess multilateral agencies' own evaluation capacity and performance. It reviews whether a multilateral agency's own central evaluation function produces evaluations that are credible and useful for learning and accountability purposes as tested by internationally recognized professional evaluation peers.

The ultimate purpose of professional peer reviews is to enhance the capacity of the evaluation function and ultimately the performance of multilateral organizations. Peer Reviews aim to assess the structural aspects of how the evaluation function operates in the organization.

The Peer Review process is currently operating on a voluntary basis, funded through contributions by members of the DAC Evaluation Network, as well as voluntary in-kind contributions from members of UNEG.

This Peer Review is conducted in line with the Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of Evaluation Functions in Multilateral Organizations established by the DAC/UNEG (UN Evaluation Group) Joint Task Force. Following the Peer Reviews of the evaluation function of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), the Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) volunteered as a fourth office for such a review.

The purpose of this Peer Review is to provide the Under-Secretary-General (USG) of OIOS and the management of IED of OIOS with an independent assessment of the functioning of IED and the quality of its work.

The proposal to participate in a Peer Review came from the IED management. The USG of OIOS supported the proposal since the other two OIOS divisions – Internal Audit and Investigations – had already been subject to external assessments.

Prior to 2008, the IED was called the Monitoring, Evaluation and Consulting Division (MECD). Following a Comprehensive Review of Governance and Oversight in 2005, it was observed that there was a conflict of interest involved in having the same division providing both management consulting services as well as oversight evaluation and inspection services. Consulting services were thus moved to the Department of Management (DM). Similarly, it was agreed that performance monitoring and reporting is the purview of management and this function has also been transferred to DM.

This created a much clearer and more focused evaluation division (IED). Stated simply, IED's vision is to be the best source of information on whether the UN works well or not. This change has clarified the lines of responsibility between evaluation and audit, where the audit focuses on management systems, rules, regulations and risk assessment, i.e. compliance issues, while evaluation is expected to address UNEG evaluation criteria and assessing outputs, and outcomes.

Based on this OIOS restructuring, the current IED management team came in with a change agenda, and it sees a need for further clarification of roles, responsibilities and routines in several areas.

IED thus requested this Peer Review as an opportunity for an independent, objective assessment of itself – its structure, processes and work. Following the restructuring mentioned above, the idea was that a Peer Review would be particularly helpful and relevant at this stage in order to provide OIOS and IED with external views on its current change process, in addition to those from the internal teams. IED has expressed the expectation to be able to use the findings and recommendations set forth by the Peer Review Panel in further strengthening of the Inspection and Evaluation Division.

While the USG of OIOS is to be the primary client of the Peer Review, the Secretary-General's (SG) office, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly (GA), the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC) may also have an interest in the outcome of this review, insofar as IED is the central evaluation unit of the entire UN Secretariat.

This Peer Review draws on the experience and lessons learnt from previous Peer Reviews of the evaluation functions in the UN system, including those of UNDP (2005), UNICEF (2006), and WFP (2007).

1.3. Review process

The USG of OIOS, formally requested the Chair of the DAC/UNEG Task Force to assemble a Peer Review Panel on May 18, 2007. The DAC/UNEG Task Force Chair approached the Department for Evaluation and Controlling of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to take the lead in this Peer Review. SDC accepted in January 2008.

During the first half of 2008 the Peer Panel was established, composed of representatives from the evaluation units of Norad, FAO and UNIFEM in addition to SDC. Furthermore, the approach and work plan were prepared and two advisors to the Panel were recruited.

In July 2008 IED carried out a self-assessment and provided the advisors with background material. The advisors prepared an Inception Report.

In July/August, the advisors conducted a desk review and carried out a first round of interviews with different stakeholders at the UN Secretariat in New York (25–29 August 2008). Subsequently, a Factual Report was prepared and submitted to the Panel Members in September.

At the beginning of October 2008, the Panel members and the advisors met in Zurich in order to discuss the Factual Report and the preliminary findings therein.

On 3–7 November, the Panel members and the advisors conducted a second round of interviews and group discussions with selected stakeholders in New York based on a revised set of questions and issues identified in the Factual Report.

Following the second mission to IED, a draft Peer Review Report was prepared by the advisors in November and shared and discussed with the Panel members. Subsequently, the draft Peer Review Report was shared and discussed with IED in a review meeting in mid-January 2009 and presented to the USG of OIOS. The Peer Review Report was finalized taking these discussions into account.

The final Peer Review Report was submitted to OIOS in the first quarter of 2009.

1.4. Peer Panel members and advisors

Taking the norms and standards for UN Peer Reviews as a starting point, a number of considerations have been taken into account when composing the Panel membership: (i) relevant professional experience, (ii) independence – to avoid any potential or alleged conflict of interest or partiality, the Panel members should not have any close working relationship to OIOS that might influence the Panel’s position and deliberations and (iii) broader membership – experience and viewpoints from donors and UN organizations should be represented in the Panel.

The combination of these criteria together with the voluntary nature of serving on the Panel resulted in the following composition (see also Appendix 6 for background data):

- Chair of the Peer Panel: Gerhard Siegfried, Head of the Corporate Controlling Division, (Chair of the Peer Panel), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bern, Switzerland
- Anne Bichsel, Advisor, Corporate Controlling Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bern, Switzerland
- Vibecke Dixon, Advisor, Evaluation Department, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), Oslo, Norway
- Rachel Sauvinet-Bedouin, Senior Evaluation Officer, Evaluation Service, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome, Italy
- Belén Sanz Luque, Head of Evaluation Unit, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), New York, USA

The Panel was assisted by two advisors:

- Stein Hansen, Senior Economist/Chairman of the Board, Nordic Consulting Group A/S, Oslo, Norway
- Urs Zollinger, Partner, King Zollinger & Co. Advisory Services, Zurich, Switzerland

The Panel members’ cost was covered by the individual agencies. The advisors were financed by SDC and Norad.

1.5. Focus of the Peer Review

In line with the Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of Evaluation Functions in Multilateral Organizations, the Peer Review of the evaluation function of

OIOS applied three core criteria that need to be satisfied for evaluation functions and products to be considered of high quality:

- a) **Independence** of evaluations and the evaluation system(s). The evaluation process should be impartial and independent in its function from the process concerned with the policy making, the delivery and the management of assistance. *A requisite measure of independence of the evaluation function is a recognized pre-condition for credibility and usefulness.*
- b) **Credibility** of evaluations. *The credibility of evaluation depends on the expertise and independence of the evaluators and the degree of transparency of the evaluation process.* Credibility requires that evaluations should report successes as well as failures. The evaluands should, as a rule, fully participate in evaluation in order to promote credibility and commitment.
- c) **Utility** of evaluations. To have an impact on decision-making, *evaluation findings must be perceived as relevant and useful and be presented in a clear and concise way.* They should fully reflect the different interests and needs of the many parties involved. Importantly, each review should bear in mind that ensuring the usefulness of evaluations is only partly under the control of evaluators. It is also critically a function of the interest of managers and Member States through their participation on governing bodies, in commissioning, receiving and using evaluations. Implementation of recommendations by management is the key success factor to enhance utility of evaluations.

1.6. Methodology

The Peer Review is guided by an overall assessment framework (see Appendix 3) similar to those used for the previous Peer Reviews of the evaluation functions at UNDP, UNICEF and WFP. The assessment framework is a set of approximately 40 questions drawn from the UN Norms and Standards for Evaluation of the UN System, which are clustered along the three core criteria independence, credibility and utility. The UN Norms of April 2005 are the guiding principles for evaluating the results achieved by the UN system, the performance of the organizations, the governing of the evaluation function within each entity of the UN system, and the value-added use of the evaluation.

Data collection

In order to establish a sound database, three different methods were used: (a) self-assessments, (b) interviews and group discussions with stakeholders, and (c) documents review.

- a) The self-assessment included the assessment of the adherence of OIOS evaluation policy and practice to the UN norms for evaluation. As requested by the Review Panel, a mixed group of management and staff members, consisting of two managers and three IED officers, were involved. The self-assessment used the same methodology as in the 2005 self-assessment, which allowed for initial rudimentary comparison of the IED perceptions of change in key review parameters over the last three years.

Moreover, IED completed the UNEG's Task Force "Quality Stamp" Questionnaire.

- b) Two rounds of interviews and/or group discussions with stakeholders took place. The first round of interviews was conducted by the advisors. The second round of interviews was conducted by the Panel members.

The first round of interviews was designed to cover a sample of OIOS staff members (OIOS USG's office, the OIOS division chiefs, IED managers and team leaders), a sample of department/programme representatives (subjected to IED evaluations), the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), and the Secretary of the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC).

The advisors developed and used a comprehensive questionnaire along the assessment framework derived from the UN Norms. Each interview was scheduled to take 60–90 minutes and included ratings and comments. Five different stakeholder groups were aggregated separately. These were:

- IED management; three respondents.
- IED team leaders; three respondents.
- OIOS staff members (not from IED); three respondents.
- department/programme representatives (subjected to IED evaluations); four respondents.
- members of IAAC; two respondents (one was conducted as a telephone interview).

For the second round of interviews in November 2008, the questionnaire was adapted by the Panel members to focus on issues that had previously been identified as either critical or where there was no clear evidence (no rating). Interviews took place with:

- the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS;
- eight Member State representatives from different regions;
- five additional department/programme representatives;
- additional IED staff .

In addition to bilateral interviews, three group discussions took place:

- IED management;
- IED team leaders;
- IED Section for Peace-keeping.

Persons interviewed (including group discussions) are listed in Appendix 1.

- c) The screening of documents included IED evaluation reports, General Assembly reports, UN resolutions, Secretary-General's bulletins and IED internal documents. The documents reviewed are listed in Appendix 2.

Data analysis

The data collected through the self-assessment, the first round of interviews and the screening of documents were captured by the advisors in a draft Factual Report that was shared with IED management, who were given the opportunity to correct factual errors in the report. The finalized Factual Report was analysed and discussed by the Panel members during their Panel meeting in Zurich (2/3 October 2008). The Panel identified a number of key issues and challenges along the three core criteria of independence, credibility and utility.

Subsequently, the issues identified were addressed during the Panel mission to IED in November 2008. The second round of interviews had a double purpose, both to gather additional data and to triangulate preliminary findings. Furthermore, the Panel took the opportunity to discuss preliminary issues identified and to test ideas with the IED staff.

During the mission to IED, the Panel members further analysed and discussed the various emerging issues among themselves in order to arrive at preliminary conclusions and recommendations.

1.7. Limitations and challenges of the Peer Review

A Peer Review is not a formal evaluation; it is a less comprehensive and less in-depth assessment but follows the same methodology, applying the key principles of evaluation while taking full advantage of the particular benefits of peer mechanisms.

The focus of this Peer Review is on the evaluation work of the Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) in the OIOS. The other divisions of OIOS – Audit and Investigations – were not reviewed.

The review was conducted at OIOS Headquarters in New York. As the offices in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna do not carry out evaluations, they were not included in the Peer Review. Moreover, the review did not assess the decentralized evaluation capacities in the different programmes of the Secretariat.

2 | Evaluation at the United Nations Secretariat

2.1. Evaluation Framework at the UN Secretariat

The UN Regulations of 2000 adopted by the UN General Assembly (GA) provide the legislative directives established by the GA governing the planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation of all activities undertaken by the United Nations, irrespective of their source of financing.

These Regulations and Rules of 2000 are referred to as PPBME² in this report. The regulations and rules in the PPBME dealing explicitly with evaluation are established in Article VII, where Regulation 7.1 states that the objective of evaluation is:

- a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives;
- b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.

In addition to the PPBME, the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards (2005) constitute a key reference framework for evaluation in the UN.

2.2. Evaluation capacity in the UN Secretariat

According to the PPBME, all programmes are to be evaluated on a regular, periodic basis. There are two types of evaluation in the UN Secretariat: Self-evaluation done by the programmes themselves, and independent evaluations done by independent evaluation units, including the central evaluation unit (IED).

The Secretariat carries out the diverse day-to-day work of the Organization. It services the other principal organs of the United Nations (e.g. General Assembly) and administers the programmes and policies laid down by them. The duties carried out by the Secretariat are as varied as the problems dealt with by the United Nations. These range from administering peacekeeping operations to mediating international disputes, from surveying economic and social trends and problems to preparing studies on human rights and sustainable development. The United Nations, while headquartered in New York, maintains a significant presence in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna, and has offices all over the world.

A recent IED Report³ finds that by three measures – dedicated evaluation function, evaluation policies, and evaluation coverage – the capacity of the programmes

² Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and Methods of Evaluation, Secretary-General's bulletin, ST/SGB/2000/8.

³ Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives (IED-08-006), 2008.

under the UN Secretariat has been growing. Twenty-one programmes report having posts devoted either full-time (14) or part-time (seven) to evaluation.⁴ In March 2007, 16 of 27 programmes surveyed had dedicated evaluation units. OIOS identified five large programmes at that time as not having a dedicated evaluation capacity despite meeting benchmarks for needing such capacity: Namely the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), the Department of Management (DM), the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). Since then, only DPKO has managed to establish its evaluation unit. The others have only made proposals to establish dedicated evaluation functions, with no indication of their establishment. Dedicated resources planned for these new capacities are still inadequate, according to OIOS. While, as of July 2007, nine programmes had final or draft evaluation policies, as of June 2008, 18 programmes have such policies. In addition, less than half of all sub-programmes (48 percent) had been subject to some form of evaluation in the 2004–2005 biennium, and while not directly comparable, 64.5 percent of programmes had been subject to evaluation in the 2006–2007 biennium. Finally, evaluation plans for 2008–2009, compared with plans from the last biennium, typically show an enhanced evaluation agenda.

The overall improvements discussed above are not consistent throughout the Secretariat as evaluation activity is uneven within the Organization: 11 of 31 programmes (35 percent) had no evaluations (as per the OIOS operational definition) for the 2006–2007 biennium. Five programmes account for a majority of all evaluation reports (65 percent) submitted to OIOS for the biennium.⁵

All in all, the overall evaluation capacity at the central, programme and sub-programme levels of the Secretariat is – according to OIOS – inadequate. This is due to insufficient financial and staffing resources, uneven competencies, and lack of senior leadership support. Budgets for evaluation continue to be low, despite showing some improvement. The Department of Management states that resources identified for monitoring and evaluation activities were estimated to be US \$43.9 million in the context of the proposed programme budget for the 2008–2009 biennium, which represents an increase of 80.1 percent compared with the resources identified for 2006–2007. However, even with these increases, resources dedicated to evaluation are still below the suggested general evaluation capacity benchmark of one to three percent of total programme costs being earmarked for evaluation activities. A comparison of programme evaluation plans for 2006–2007 and evaluations conducted in the biennium reveals that most have not been fully implemented.

2.3. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/218B of 28 July 1994, established the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), to assist the Secretary-General in fulfilling his oversight responsibilities in respect of the resources and staff of the Organization through internal audit, monitoring, inspection, evaluation and investigation services.

4

The programmes without posts dedicated for evaluation, as reported in the OIOS programme focal point survey in March 2008: UNON, UNOG, DPA, UNOV, DGACM, DESA and OIOS.

5

These five programmes are: UNEP, UNODC, ITC, OCHA, and UNHCR.

OIOS is located directly under the UN Secretariat (see figure Appendix 5) and covers all United Nations activities under the Secretary-General's authority, including: the UN Secretariat in New York, Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna, five regional commissions, peacekeeping missions and humanitarian operations; assistance to Funds and Programmes administered separately under the authority of the Secretary-General (including UNHCR, UNEP, UN HABITAT, and OHCHR), and other entities that have requested OIOS services such as UNCCD and UNFCCC.

OIOS assists Member States and the organization in protecting its assets and in ensuring the compliance of programme activities with resolutions, regulations, rules and policies as well as the more efficient and effective delivery of the organization's activities; in preventing and detecting fraud, waste, abuse, malfeasance or mismanagement; and in improving the delivery of the organization's programmes and activities to enable it to achieve better results by determining all factors affecting the efficient and effective implementation of programmes.

The strategy of OIOS is focused on ensuring that the organization has an effective and transparent system of accountability in place and the capacity to identify, assess and mitigate the risks that might prevent it from achieving its objectives. To that end, OIOS does:

- a) propose measures to assist the organization in responding rapidly to emerging risks and opportunities;
- b) provide independent information and assessments to assist effective decision-making;
- c) provide independent reviews of the effectiveness of the use of the organization's resources; and
- d) promote a culture of change, including accountability, planning, integrity, results orientation, and risk awareness and management.

OIOS aims to be an agent of change that promotes responsible administration of resources, a culture of accountability and transparency, and improved programme performance. Each year OIOS issues more than 200 reports and more than 1,500 recommendations to improve internal controls and correct underlying obstacles to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The Office:

- conducts comprehensive internal audits;
- monitors and evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of programmes and mandates;
- conducts inspections of programmes and organizational units;
- investigates reports of mismanagement and misconduct;
- monitors the implementation of recommendations emanating from audits, evaluations, inspections and investigations.

To undertake these tasks, OIOS is divided into three main divisions, each of which carries out different parts of the OIOS mandate: (i) Internal Audit Division (IAD), (ii) Investigations Division (ID), and (iii) Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED). IAD is by far the largest division of OIOS with currently approximately 90 auditees, followed by ID. IED, in spite of a considerable recent increase in staff (see Chapter 5.2 below) remains a much smaller division in terms of staff and allocated resources.

The findings and recommendations arising from OIOS activities are communicated via reports to the responsible programme managers directly or through the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. OIOS has started classifying certain recommendations as critical to encourage improvements in areas that have far-reaching consequences for the organization. Internal audit and investigations traditionally issue the highest number of recommendations, while inspection and evaluation recommendations are often the result of broader programme assessments.

OIOS, as a member of United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), coordinates regularly with other evaluation units of the UN System. OIOS also coordinates with the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), to ensure that potential duplications and overlaps in the conduct of oversight work are avoided and to minimize gaps in oversight coverage. Aside from sharing work plans, the Office holds bimonthly meetings with the Board of Auditors to discuss issues of mutual interest and meets with the Joint Inspection Unit on an ad hoc basis when issues arise. Annually, senior representatives from these entities take part in a tripartite meeting to discuss inter alia, oversight coordination.

2.4. The Evaluation Function of OIOS

The Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) was formally established on 1 January 2008 after deliberations by the Member States and the Secretariat in the context of the 2005 World Summit mandated “Comprehensive Review of Governance and Oversight within the UN System”. Previously known as the Monitoring, Evaluation and Consulting Division (MECD), IED today focuses on the conduct of independent inspections and evaluations on behalf of the Secretary-General and the Member States.

IED’s evaluation mandate is established in ST/SGB/2000/8 (Art. VII, Evaluation, regulation 7.1), where it is stated that:

“(a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization’s activities in relation to their objectives; (b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.”

and furthermore in ST/SGB/2002/7 (para. 14), which states that:

“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the Organization’s programmes and legislative mandates. It shall conduct programme

evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization.”

IED assists the Secretary-General in fulfilling his internal oversight responsibilities by providing him with reports on the work of the different programmes.

IED’s unique oversight role is distinct from the other OIOS oversight functions, such as audits (which focus on internal controls and compliance with UN rules and regulations) and investigations (which focus on the determination of wrongdoing), by its focus on assessing how well a programme is working and why.

The Division’s programme of work is shaped by its role in ensuring programme accountability, its core principle of independence, and its dual “clientele” consisting of both the Member States and the Secretary-General. Evaluation and inspection topics are identified through a strategic risk assessment, or they may be requested by the Secretary General, and by Member States (e.g. through inter-governmental bodies like the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) or the General Assembly), as well as by Secretariat programme managers.

IED produces the following evaluation and inspection outputs:

Programme Evaluations: Programme evaluations (also referred to as “in-depth” evaluations when mandated by the CPC) assess the overall relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of a single programme or sub-programme. The meaning of ‘programme’ in this context is equivalent to departments. Examples of past programme evaluation reports include those on the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA).

Thematic Evaluations: Thematic evaluations typically assess a single cross-cutting theme or activity across several Secretariat programmes. They can sometimes assess the cumulative effects of multiple programmes sharing common objectives and purposes, or the effectiveness of coordination and cooperation between different programmes. Examples of past thematic evaluation reports include those of Knowledge Management or the HQ-field linkages in Poverty Eradication.

Inspections: An inspection is a review of an organizational unit, issue or practice perceived to be of potential risk in order to determine the extent to which it adheres to normative standards, good practices or other pre-determined criteria and to identify corrective action as needed. Examples of past inspection reports include those of evaluation capacities and needs in the United Nations Secretariat, Results-Based Management (RBM) practices at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and Results-Based Budgeting in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Ad hoc Inspections and Evaluations: Ad hoc requests for inspections or evaluations are made by any of the organization’s stakeholders, subject to IED’s review of the proposed topic’s strategic importance and potential risk to the organization. Examples of ad hoc evaluations include those of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) for Children in Armed Conflict and the evaluation of the Peace Building Fund.

Biennial Report on Evaluation: IED is mandated to produce a biennial report on “*strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives*”. Reports prior to 2008 have focused on reviewing both internal programme self-evaluation and central evaluation practice and capacity in the Secretariat. From 2008, the biennial report will provide a synthesis of the findings of all Secretariat programme self-evaluations.

Triennial Reviews: A triennial review is conducted three years after a programme evaluation to assess the implementation of its recommendations. Examples of triennial reviews include those of UN-Habitat and of the Programme on the Public Administration, Finance and Development.

3 | Enabling environment for evaluations

The Governing Bodies and/or the Heads of organizations in the UN system are responsible for fostering an enabling environment for evaluation. (norm 2.1)

Although the enabling environment for evaluations has been strengthened over the past three years, the Panel found several factors challenging the environment for evaluations.

On the positive side, interviewees from the Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) and Secretariat departments consider the overall environment for evaluations as sufficiently enabling and that the situation has improved over the last three years. Three reasons were mentioned.

- First, the budget and the human resources for IED evaluations have increased significantly (see Chapter 4.3. Budgetary independence).
- Second, the mandate of IED has been sharpened by the removal of the management consulting and the programme reporting from the evaluation division, which has eliminated potential conflicts of interest and made it a pure evaluation division.
- Third, the Fifth Committee and the Secretary-General have a ‘hands-off’ approach to evaluations enabling IED to conduct its work. The Panel found no evidence of attempts to constrain IED’s independence and impartiality. The mandate given to OIOS by the General Assembly is respected and assures the necessary impartiality and independence.

On a more critical note, the Panel notices the politically highly sensitive environment in which IED operates. IED cannot conduct evaluations in total isolation from the political UN environment. Furthermore, the Panel found that the prime focus of the main recipients of IED reports – the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly – is on administrative and budgetary matters. Compliance with rules and regulations is the Fifth Committee’s prime responsibility and the Committee has neither the time nor the incentive to discuss evaluations in-depth. Content discussions take place in the Committee for Programme Coordination (CPC). However, several interviewees felt that the CPC was not a forum that could adequately make-up for the limited attention the Fifth Committee is able and prepared to pay to evaluations. The CPC’s agenda and priorities appear not to be sufficiently compatible with the attention required for evaluations.

Regulation 6.1 in PPBME states that the role of evaluation is to “*enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflections, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organisation by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives*”. Thus, indeed it stands

to reason that IED has the mandate to provide information to help Member States question relevance; i.e. review objectives.

However, the Panel found that Member State representatives of the Fifth Committee have varying perceptions and recognition of evaluations. They do not always distinguish audit or investigations from inspections and evaluations. Evaluations are primarily perceived as ‘control’ instruments along with audit and investigations. This suggests that the importance and value of evaluations as a learning tool is unlikely to be fully recognized. One interviewee suggested that some Member State representatives perceive OIOS as a predominantly donor driven instrument. In this regard, the nationality of the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS is claimed to be important. Moreover, one Member State representative challenged IED’s ‘right’ to question the relevance of programmes mandated by the General Assembly.

Finally, the overall evaluation capacity in the Secretariat is not adequate to evaluate some of the larger Secretariat programmes such as peacekeeping operations. A recent OIOS report⁶ concludes that “Overall evaluation capacity at the central, programme and sub-programme levels of the Secretariat continues to be inadequate, despite an increase in budgets for the function over the last two bienniums.” This view was confirmed by a number of interviewees during the Peer Review (see also Chapter 2.2. Self-evaluation capacity in the UN Secretariat, Chapter 4.3. Budgetary independence, and Chapter 5.2. on strengthening of Staff competencies and capacities).

Panel conclusions: The efforts made to strengthen the evaluation function over the past three years will likely contribute to an increase in the recognition of the evaluation function. At the same time, the attention and recognition given to evaluations by the Fifth Committee falls short of the required engagement, as will be elaborated in Chapter 6.4.

In spite of the significant increase in the IED budget, the resources are inadequate to cover all programmes of the Secretariat and to compensate for the overall limited evaluation capacity in the Secretariat.

6
GA Document (2008), Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives to the General Assembly, Reporting Period 2006–2007, IED-08-006, 2008, New York.

4 | Independence

4.1. Institutional structure

The evaluation function has to be located independently from the other management functions so that it is free from undue influence and that unbiased and transparent reporting is ensured. (norm 6.1.)

There is uniform agreement among the interviewees that the location of OIOS is considered to be sufficiently independent of management. These perceptions reflect the formal set up.

The Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) is located in the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The Under-Secretary-General (USG) for OIOS reports directly to the Secretary-General (SG). OIOS supports the Secretary-General in his internal oversight responsibility vis-à-vis the General Assembly. In other words, OIOS reports to the General Assembly (the Fifth Committee) through the Secretary-General. As such, OIOS is *internal* to the Secretariat but independent of the departments and programmes of the Secretariat. In that sense, OIOS is *external* to operations but internal to the Secretariat. OIOS enjoys a higher degree of independence than the evaluation units anchored in the different programmes and departments (called self-evaluations).

The Panel found no evidence of any outside attempts to influence or edit IED reports. IED safeguards the integrity of its processes and its reports closely.

Full independence of IED is only limited by two factors. First, OIOS is under the authority of the Secretary-General. Second, IED is under the authority of the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS.

Panel conclusions: IED is located sufficiently independent of other management functions. Reporting lines are clearly established and go to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General. However, the location of IED within OIOS carries a disadvantage in that IED is primarily seen as an oversight body and less as an agent facilitating learning in the Secretariat. The other aspect of IED's intimate proximity to audit and investigation functions is a too strong focus on organizational performance and an insufficient emphasis on programme effectiveness and impact.

4.2. Independence to determine topics to evaluate

IED is independent in that the department may undertake any evaluation that it deems appropriate without interference from the Fifth Committee or the Secretary-General.

Both IED management and team leaders are of the view that IED has full discretion to select evaluation subjects as formally established in a General Assembly Resolution (see Box 1).

Box 1

General Assembly Resolution on full independence of OIOS (including IED)

“The Office of Internal Oversight Services shall exercise operational independence under the authority of the Secretary-General in the conduct of its duties and, in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter, have the authority to initiate, carry out and report on any action which it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities with regard to monitoring, internal audit, inspection and evaluation and investigations as set forth in the present resolution;”

Source: General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/218 B, paragraph 5.a), 12 August 1994.

In order to establish its work plan, IED has introduced a *Risk-based Planning Process* based on comparable risk indicators (see Table 2). The intention is to focus IED’s limited resources on those areas of the Secretariat activities that require most urgent attention; i.e. those at highest risk of not attaining their mandates. The focus is on risk of ineffectiveness and irrelevance.

Table 2

IED’s Risk-based Planning Process

| Risk Indicators |
|--|
| 1. Total resources |
| 2. Number of posts |
| 3. Discretionary vulnerability |
| 4. Complexity of co-ordination needs |
| 5. Output implementation rate |
| 6. Availability of Programme Performance Info |
| 7. Evaluation Coverage |
| 8. Resources spent on Evaluation |
| 9. Time of Outstanding OIOS Recommendations ⁷ |
| 10. Timeliness of Reporting – (Slotting Dates) |
| 11. E-pas compliance rate ⁸ |
| 12. Gender equality |

Source: IED Work Plan and Budget for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011, 7 November 2008.

The independence to select the subjects of evaluation is only limited by the fact that both the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme Coordination (CPC) can mandate or request evaluations as is established in the Secretary-General’s Bulletin of 2002. Therein, one of the core functions of the evaluation division is stated as “*Providing the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the General Assembly, at their request, with in-depth evaluation studies for their consideration ...*”.⁹ This is commensurate with their oversight function.

⁷ Number of years that an OIOS recommendation has not been implemented; basically, the longer the time outstanding recommendations remain, the greater the risk of mismanagement /non-compliance.

⁸ The Electronic Performance Assessment (E-Pas) System for UN staff members; basically, the lower the rate of E-pas compliance, the higher the risk that management is weak/ inadequate.

⁹ Secretary-General’s Bulletin, Organization of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, ST/SGB/2002/7, paragraph 6.2 (f), 16 May 2002.

Panel conclusions: The risk-based selection of evaluation topics is considered to be a useful approach. It strengthens transparency in the selection of subjects on the one hand and the relevance and timeliness of the evaluations conducted by IED on the other hand.

4.3. Budgetary independence

The Governing Bodies and/or the Heads of organizations are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to enable the evaluation function to operate effectively and with due independence (norm 2.3).

Although the budgetary independence from operations is assured, the Panel found some factors constraining full budgetary independence.

Overall, the level of budgetary independence is considered satisfactory by the IED management. The IED budget is part of the OIOS budget. IED can propose a budget that must be endorsed by the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS. Thereafter, the Department of Management (DM) reviews the OIOS budget proposal. However, DM can neither endorse nor reject the budget. Rather, it can make *suggestions*. Finally, the overall OIOS biennium budget must be approved by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

The IED budget – which mainly derives from the regular budget of the UN – asserts budgetary independence from the entities that are the subjects of IED evaluations. In general, IED has – within its approved budget – independence from operations and it can decide how to use its resources for evaluations. Some of the evaluations requested by the programmes and departments of the Secretariat are financed through extra-budgetary resources by the programmes and departments themselves (see Table 3). This is in particular the case for evaluations of peace keeping operations. Since IED has control of the use of these evaluation budgets, budgetary independence is secured.

However, there could be some limitations to full budgetary independence. First, IED must conduct the evaluations mandated by the General Assembly. Second, the Under-Secretary-General's independence with regard to the overall OIOS budget is limited in so far as personnel posts cannot be moved between divisions (e.g. from audit to evaluation).

Panel conclusion: IED's degree of budgetary independence is satisfactory.

Table 3

Resource requirements for inspection and evaluation; biennium 2008–2009

| Category | Resources (thousands of US dollars) | | Posts | |
|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2006–2007 | 2008–2009 (before recosting) | 2006–2007 | 2008–2009 |
| Regular budget | | | | |
| Post | 5 162.5 | 7 557.8 | 18 | 34 |
| Non-post | 231.5 | 1 820.3 | — | — |
| Subtotal | 5 394.0 | 9 378.1 | 18 | 34 |
| Extra-budgetary | 1 842.0 | 4 023.3 | 3 | 5 |
| Total | 7 236.0 | 13 401.4 | 21 | 39 |

Source: General Assembly document A/62/6 (Sect.29).

4.4. Independence in access to information and informants

The independence of the evaluation function should not impinge the access that evaluators have to information on the subject of evaluation (norm 6.5).

The Panel found no evidence that any stakeholder impinges on the independence of IED in conducting its evaluations either by restricting access to information or to informants or obstructing the evaluation processes.

This was confirmed by all interviewees including IED staff, department representatives subjected to evaluations and the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC).

IED's access to information is assured formally. In fact, IED has the same authority as the other divisions in OIOS (audit and investigation) in accessing all persons and records considered relevant (see Box 2). However, mandated access does not guarantee the usefulness, reliability and relevance of data at hand. In case of non-cooperation, the Under-Secretary-General has the authority to demand full compliance.

Panel conclusion: IED's access to information and informants is satisfactory.

Box 2

Secretary-General's Bulletin on full access to all persons and records

"...The staff of the Office shall have the right to direct and prompt access to all persons engaged in activities under the authority of the Organization, and shall receive their full cooperation. Additionally, they shall have the right of access to all records, documents or other materials, assets and premises and to obtain such information and explanations as they consider necessary to fulfil their responsibilities. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services shall have the authority to demand compliance from programme managers concerned if information or assistance requested is refused, delayed or withheld."

Source: Secretary-General's Bulletin to Members of the staff on the Establishment of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, ST/SGB/273, paragraph 4, 7 September 1994.

4.5. Independence in submitting evaluation reports

The evaluation function needs to have full discretion in submitting directly its reports for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making pertaining to the subject of evaluation (norm 6.1)

The Panel found that the USG for OIOS has full independence in submitting evaluation reports.

The “true” head of Evaluation; i.e. the person designated as responsible for evaluation in the Organization, is the USG for OIOS, who in turn has delegated the responsibility for the conduct of evaluations to the Head of IED, while retaining ultimate responsibility for every report produced by OIOS, including IED. Thus, the USG’s independence is the primary consideration for assessing the independence of submission of evaluation reports.

All IED’s GA-mandated reports are first submitted to the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS (see Table 4). It is the Under-Secretary-General’s prerogative to submit any OIOS reports, under whatever name, to the General Assembly. The Under-Secretary-General submits reports mandated by the General Assembly to the office of the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General makes reports available to the General Assembly as they are submitted by OIOS together with separate comments if deemed necessary (see Box 3). *Evaluation* reports go through the Committee for Programme Coordination to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. Inspections and reviews go directly to the Fifth Committee.

For non-GA reports, i.e. reports to Programme Managers, IED has delegated authority to submit them to Programme Managers without prior review of the USG and without going through the office of the Secretary General.

There is a decrease in the share of IED reports that are being submitted to the General Assembly (Fifth Committee) (see Table 5).

Table 4

Mandatory and optional submission of IED reports

| | Reports mandated by the General Assembly | Reports requested by departments | Reports initiated by IED |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Under-Secretary-General of OIOS | mandatory | optional | optional |
| Office of the Secretary-General | mandatory | optional | optional |
| Committee for Programme Coordination | only evaluations (not e.g. reviews) | optional | optional |
| Fifth Committee of the General Assembly | mandatory | optional | optional |
| Secretariat departments | optional | optional | optional |

Source: Peer Review Panel based on IED data.

Table 5

Share of IED reports submitted to the General Assembly and Secretariat departments

| | General Assembly | Secretariat departments only |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| 2006 | 100% | 0% |
| 2007 | 33% | 67% |
| 2008 | 43% | 57% |
| 2006–2008 (average) | 53% | 47% |

Source: IED

IED management and team leaders consider their own discretion in submitting reports for consideration at the appropriate decision-making level as satisfactory. The different layers of submission outlined above seem not to restrict IED's ability to ensure that the appropriate decision-makers have access to their reports.

Panel conclusions: Given the fact that IED is part of OIOS and that OIOS is an internal oversight body to support the Secretary-General in his oversight responsibilities, the degree of discretion in submitting reports is considered appropriate.

Box 3**General Assembly Resolution on the submission of reports to the General Assembly**

"... the Office of Internal Oversight Services shall submit to the Secretary-General reports that provide insight into the effective utilization and management of resources and the protection of assets; the Secretary-General shall ensure that all such reports are made available to the General Assembly as submitted by the Office, together with any separate comments the Secretary-General may deem appropriate ..."

Source: General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/218 B, paragraph 5.e), 12 August 1994.

4.6. Independence to track follow-up of management's response

The head of evaluation must have the independence to ... track follow-up of management's response resulting from evaluation (norm 6.2).

The Panel found that OIOS/IED has the independence to track follow-up to management's response to evaluations.

OIOS/IED has two means to track follow-up of management's response to recommendations. First, evaluations mandated by the General Assembly require a triennial review of the implementation of recommendations to track follow-up. Second, OIOS introduced a monitoring system called *Issue Track*, which is a database allowing online review of the implementation status of recommendations. The database is updated on a six monthly basis and includes all recommendations made by OIOS (including audit and evaluations).

This is a significant improvement in terms of tracking follow-up activities to evaluations. At the same time, however, this Issue Track has a significant limita-

tion as the tracking system only reports on numbers of recommendations implemented (quantitative approach). (see more under Chapter 6.3. Management response and follow-up to evaluations)

Panel conclusions: IED's independence to track follow-up to management's response to evaluations is assured. The Issue Track is a very useful and valuable database. However, the kind of recommendations stored there does not help much from the perspective of effectiveness and learning, since it is often confused and mistaken by recipients for audit and investigation information.

4.7. Independent head of evaluation

The head of evaluation must have the independence to supervise and report on evaluations ... (norm 6.2).

The head of evaluation is under the supervision of the Under-Secretary-General for OIOS. The Panel found that the head of OIOS, the Under-Secretary-General, has a high degree of independence.

The Under-Secretary-General of OIOS is appointed by the Secretary-General and approved by the General Assembly. The independence of the Under-Secretary-General is strengthened by the fact that she/he is appointed from outside the UN System, that the contract has a limited, non-renewable five-year term¹⁰ and that the Under-Secretary-General can not be employed by the UN System once the term comes to an end. This eliminates many sources of potential conflict of interest at this level.

The head of evaluation within OIOS is at the D2 level (currently vacant). The D2 is appointed by the Under-Secretary-General and approved by the Secretary-General. Currently, the D2 is a General Temporary Assistance post and hence subject to further review for regularization and subject to the UN mobility policy.¹¹ Following the mobility policy, any D2 has to find a new post in the Secretariat after a maximum of six years. However, it is understood that in practice the mobility policy is not always enforced.

Panel conclusions: The independence of the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS is strong and appropriate. However, the independence of the head of evaluation (D2) is weaker, as he/she is under the supervision of the Under-Secretary-General and subject to the UN mobility policy.

4.8. Independent evaluators

The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that evaluations are conducted in an impartial and independent fashion. They are also responsible for ensuring that evaluators have the freedom to conduct their work without repercussions for career (norm 2.4).

¹⁰ General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/218 B, paragraph 5.b), 12 August 1994.

¹¹ Mobility is broadly understood as the movement of staff within and between functions, departments, occupations, duty stations and organizations within the UN system. All staff members on 100 series contracts from G5 to P5 with appointments of one year or longer will have a post occupancy limit of five years and six years at the D1 and D2 level. The full details of the mobility policy are set out in policy documents ST/SGB/2002/5 and ST/AI/2002/4.

To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators need to be independent, implying that members of an evaluation team must not have been directly responsible for the policy-setting, design, or overall management of the subject of evaluation, nor expect to be in the near future (norm 6.3).

Evaluators must have no vested interest and have the full freedom to conduct impartially their evaluative work, without potential negative effects on their career development. They must be able to express their opinion in a free manner (norm 6.4).

The Panel found that the IED staff – the evaluators – enjoy a high degree of independence.

All stakeholders including Member State and department representatives concur that the evaluators are independent and free to conduct their work without repercussions for career development. Moreover, there was no evidence from any of the interviews that IED is being influenced in any way to edit their reports. Only one interviewee reported an incident related to a specific evaluation that had to be reworked because of political considerations.

Also, formally, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General have given the necessary protection to ensure that OIOS/IED staff have the freedom to conduct their work without repercussion for career development (see Box 4). In addition, the UN has introduced (in 2006) a whistle-blowing protection policy.

Box 4

General Assembly Resolution on the protection of OIOS staff against repercussion

“Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Office of Internal Oversight Services has procedures in place that provide for direct confidential access of staff members to the Office and for protection against repercussions, for the purposes of suggesting improvements for programme delivery and reporting perceived cases of misconduct”

Source: General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/218 B, paragraph 6., 12 August 1994.

Evaluators do not sign a separate statement on potential conflict (as suggested in the UN Standards for Evaluation 2.1). However, the UN Code of Conduct and the rules and regulations that are part of any UN staff contract include the necessary ethical standards and ensure that there is no conflict of interest for internal evaluators. Also consultants sign similar statements as part of their contract.

With regard to the potential for conflicts of interest, the removal of the consulting services and performance monitoring from the evaluation division reduced some of the previous existing potential for conflicts of interest (i.e. elimination of a situation in which IED staff would be evaluating their own work).

However, IED management reports that a *potential* certainly exists for IED staff’s evaluative judgement being mixed with motivations for prospective career development elsewhere in the UN System, in particular since regular staff is subject to the UN mobility policy, i.e. regular staff have to move to another post in the United Nations after a maximum of five years. OIOS/IED staff consists of regular UN staff (with open-ended contracts) and staff with contracts of limited duration (with a possibility of renewal). Regardless of the type of appointment, there

is a potential conflict of interest as there is no restriction on OIOS staff being hired by the Secretariat. Younger IED staff on contracts with limited duration might face a conflict of interest between drawing critical conclusions from evaluations and securing a permanent job in the UN. Despite these challenges, which are common within most evaluation units, the Panel found that there is a strong culture of independence within IED.

According to IED management, it is the responsibility of the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS and the IED management to assure impartiality and to strengthen a culture of integrity in order to reduce the risk of compromising the independence of the evaluators.

The Panel also found that the relatively strong culture of independence within OIOS/IED's may create other challenges. In situations when independence is overemphasized, it may result in isolation, as mentioned by one Member State representative. Some IED staff and department representatives agree that occasionally IED overemphasizes the issue/value of independence.

Panel conclusions: IED evaluators enjoy a high degree of independence. The potential conflict of interest between being critical and the desire to further one's career cannot be eliminated entirely and is faced by all evaluation units. There is a strong culture of integrity from IED management and their staff to adequately address the potential conflict of interest.

4.9. Overall Panel conclusion on independence

The Panel sees no serious concerns regarding the independence of OIOS/IED. OIOS/IED has a strong reputation of independence and a very strong independence ethic, which is considered appropriate. No evidence of infringement of independence was uncovered. However, the strong emphasis on independence may partly isolate IED and may to a certain extent hinder the dialogue with its evaluands.

5 | Credibility

5.1. Evaluation policy and guidelines

Each organization should develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation. The policy should provide a clear explanation of the concept, role and use of evaluation within the organization, including the institutional framework and definition of roles and responsibilities; an explanation of how the evaluation function and evaluations are planned, managed and budgeted; and a clear statement on disclosure and dissemination. (norm 3.1)

The Panel found that IED has gone a long way in defining key concepts and approaches of evaluation.

The key policy document is the Secretary-General's bulletin titled *Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME)* of 2000. The PPBME spells out the evaluation policy of OIOS/IED. The concept of evaluation is defined and described in the PPBME, as are the roles and responsibilities in evaluation. Moreover, the PPBME *Glossary of terms* provides many useful definitions (e.g. in-depth evaluation, self-evaluation, etc.).

However, the PPBME does not sufficiently define the various oversight functions of OIOS, including audit, evaluation, inspection and investigation. IED has gone beyond the PPBME in defining and clarifying their evaluation role. Most recently, the new *Inspection and Evaluation Manual*, which was still in a draft form during the Peer Review, spells out the specific definitions, mandates, objectives, focus and methodologies of audit, evaluation, inspection and investigation. Moreover, the new *IED Quality Assurance Process* establishes clear guidelines and benchmarks for the entire evaluation cycle. In addition, IED has introduced a *Risk-based Planning Process* based on comparable risk indicators (see also Chapter 4.2). The risk-based planning process explains how evaluations are selected, planned and budgeted.

While in theory many concepts have been clarified, in practice there is still ambiguity regarding concepts among Member States and department staff. IED is mainly perceived as being an OIOS entity with an emphasis on *control* and compliance, thereby ignoring the fundamental difference between audit and evaluations.

A particular case is the concept of *inspections*. Some people outside OIOS confuse inspections with *investigations*. And in peacekeeping and military operations, the term 'inspection' has a completely different meaning. IED defines inspections as "...a review of an organizational unit, issue or practice perceived to be of potential risk in order to determine the extent to which it adheres to normative

standards, good practices or other pre-determined criteria and to identify corrective action as needed.”¹² Yet, the UNEG Norms define inspections as “... a general examination that seeks to identify vulnerable areas and malfunctions and to propose corrective action.”

Also among IED staff members, the understanding of some concepts is not fully in-line with the policy. The difference between for example *inspection* and *evaluation* is blurred. Also the concept of *internal* versus *external* evaluation is open to different interpretations. While some IED staff consider the in-depth evaluations as external evaluations, the PPBME *Glossary of terms* defines external evaluations as performed by entities outside the United Nations Secretariat (like the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)). In the Glossary, both self-evaluations and in-depth evaluations (conducted by IED) are considered *internal* evaluations.

The new IED *Inspection and Evaluation Manual* contains many useful definitions, methodologies and templates. While the Manual very much focuses on IED processes, some key evaluation concepts do not get much attention. In particular, it does not highlight the distinctiveness of the evaluation function and its emphasis on assessing results (outputs, outcomes and impacts) and relevance. The evaluation focus on results and the different types of results (output, outcome, impact) is dealt with in only a few lines.

Panel conclusions: The three recent IED initiatives: the new *Inspection and Evaluation Manual*, the new *IED Quality Assurance Process* and the new *Risk-based Planning Process* provide good up-to-date guidance to IED and its staff. However, the IED *Inspection and Evaluation Manual* does not sufficiently highlight the distinctiveness of the evaluation function. In particular, much more emphasis should be given to the role of evaluation in assessing results (outputs, outcomes and impacts) and in responding to the question of relevance (“Are we doing the right thing?”).

With regard to the PPBME, it does not reflect the refined definitions used by IED.

There is a mismatch between IED’s role and responsibility as it is defined on paper, and the stakeholders’ understanding of IED’s role and responsibility, in particular among department staff and Member States representatives. This weak position is very much a result of IED being a marginal unit (relative to audit and investigation) in an oversight office, as contrasted to the roles and position of the independent evaluation function in other UN agencies and Bretton Woods institutions and most bilateral development cooperation agencies.

Finally, the term ‘inspection’ creates confusion and diverging expectations.

5.2. Staff competencies and capacities

Each organization of the UN system should have formal job descriptions and selection criteria that state the basic professional requirements necessary for an evaluator and evaluation manager. (norm 9.1)

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Inspection and Evaluation Manual, Draft, IED, September 2008.

The Head of the evaluation function must have proven competencies in the management of an evaluation function and in the conduct of evaluation studies. (norm 9.2)

Evaluators must have the basic skill set for conducting evaluation studies and managing externally hired evaluators. (norm 9.3)

Although there has been a significant increase in human resources in IED, the Panel found several shortcomings with regard to staff capacity and competencies.

At the outset, it is important to note that contrary to many other evaluation offices, where staff is primarily managing evaluations and hiring external consultants to conduct evaluations, IED staff members conduct all evaluations themselves. It is only recently that consultants have been engaged but this is done to a very limited extent.

There has been a significant increase in human resources in IED since 2005. Before the restructuring, three professional staff conducted evaluations, producing on average four reports a year including one in-depth evaluation of one of the 27 Secretariat programmes that are under OIOS' oversight mandate (e.g. Department of Political Affairs, or UNEP). The current IED now has 24 posts (see Table 6), 23 of which are financed from the regular UN Secretariat budget. Only one post is financed from the budget of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, despite the relatively large peacekeeping programme and the great importance of peacekeeping operations within the overall work of the UN Secretariat. 20 staff members are at the management and programme level and four are general staff. This should allow for four in-depth evaluations a year and reviewing of each programme on average every eight years (from every 27 years previously). The overall increase in staff is very much appreciated and acknowledged by IED management and team leaders.

However, the Panel found several caveats with regard to staff competence and capacity.

First, the D2 post is not occupied and the D1 post has been occupied – on a temporary basis – since November 2006 by a P5. Only since January 2009 is the D1 position actually held by a D1. The vacancy at the top of IED limits not only the capacity of the office, but also affects IED's credibility, as seniority, professional skills and experience among staff members are crucial elements to ensure the professionalism and credibility of evaluations.

Second, the newly recruited staff members are mostly at the junior level (P2s, P3s). This happened due to the UN regulations by which approval of junior staff is easier than senior staff. However, IED management and team leaders share the view that, although the young staff members are very dedicated, they can not compensate for more senior staff. Having a high proportion of junior staff as compared to senior staff may negatively affect IED's credibility for three reasons;

- (i), the evaluation experience and expertise of junior staff is limited. Some candidates from the National Competitive Examination (NCE) join IED with no previous evaluation experience.

- (ii), knowledge about and experience with the UN System are limited. Department representatives made a point of emphasising the importance of evaluators' understanding and knowledge of the political and multicultural environment/context in which the Secretariat operates.
- (iii), the status of junior staff makes it hard credibly to approach and evaluate the work of more senior UN colleagues.

IED is aware of the above limitations and the young professionals have appropriate tasks corresponding to their experiences. Given this situation and the coverage of IED's evaluation programme, the number of evaluators is very limited.

Table 6

Staff numbers and profile of the Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) – 2009

| Status Nov. 08 | Regular budget | | | | | | | extrabudgetary | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|----------|
| | D2 | D1 | P5 | P4 | P3 | P2/1 | GS | Total | P4 | Total |
| Occupied | 0 | 1 | 3* | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 22 | 1 | 1 |
| Vacant | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 23 | 1 | 1 |

* = 1 P5 occupied by a P4; GS = General Service

Source: IED.

Third, the fact that IED staff conducts the evaluations themselves poses a challenge in terms of thematic expertise required. There is a tremendous diversity in the 27 programmes being reviewed by IED ranging from human rights to environmental programmes. While department representatives praise the methodological competence of the IED staff, they at times question the thematic expertise of the evaluation teams. Although IED makes an effort to compose evaluation teams along individual expertise, there are no systematic measures to ensure that the required technical expertise is available in the teams. There is consistent information indicating that evaluation teams are not tailored to the areas of analysis of evaluations.

Moreover, IED is making very limited use of external experts. On the one hand, this is because the funds available for consultants have been very small and still are, in spite of a recent increase. The budget for external consultants for the 2008-2009 biennium is \$718,800 (i.e. \$359,400 per year).¹³ On the other hand, the Panel found some reluctance among IED staff to use consultants. Some individuals are of the view that the transaction costs are too high or that it is simply a 'luxury'.

Fourth, evaluation team leaders do not have much say in the composition of their evaluation teams. This is an internal issue of work management and processes. Teams are put together according to availability of staff and the capacity of the office rather than according to the technical and thematic needs of the evaluations (expertise), although management is trying to match requirements with competencies in the office. Furthermore, there is no policy defining the criteria for the selection of an evaluation team in the PPBME. IED can practice what is considered appropriate on a case by case basis.

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UNEG has not set a specific benchmark figure for evaluation expenditure. Comparing across multilateral or bilateral organizations is not straightforward due to differences in budget structures. It matters for example whether benchmarks are expressed as percentage of overall budget or as percentage of programme budget. However, a recent internal FAO study concluded that in 2004 the average UN agency expenditure on evaluation is 0.6% of the total organizational expenditure (average of 15 UN agencies). Only one of the 15 UN agencies reported spending on evaluation more than 1% of total organizational expenditure. As an example of a UN agency, FAO has now approved an evaluation budget that should correspond to 0.8–1.0% of the core (regular) funding of the organization. As an example of a bilateral agency, SDC dedicates 0.7% of its budget for evaluation activities (central and decentralized evaluations), but not including evaluation office staff cost.

Fifth, the IED training budget – which would allow for compensating some of the shortcomings – is extremely limited. In 2008, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) allocated less than 10% of the proposed training budget to IED. The budget proposal for upgrading substantive skills was US \$78,160 for 2008. OHR was able to allocate only US \$5,628 to IED. For lack of alternatives, most of the training is in-house as outlined in new *Training Guidelines*¹⁴.

Finally and more generally, there are justified doubts as to whether or not the number of staff – although increased significantly – allows for adequate evaluation of some of the larger Secretariat programmes such as political affairs¹⁵ and peacekeeping operations. The Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the largest Secretariat (and UN) programme with an annual budget of about \$6 billion is evaluated by only a single P4 evaluation officer supported by a small team.

Panel conclusions: IED staff is dedicated and the evaluation knowledge of the office as a whole is high. Also at the individual level, many IED staff members appear to be very professional and experienced.

However, the number of junior staff with limited experience compared to the number of senior experienced staff is too high and does affect IED's credibility, as does the lack of staff at D-level. Moreover, the thematic expertise in IED is not sufficient to cover the diversity of the 27 programmes of the UN Secretariat adequately without external expertise. The fact that the evaluation teams are composed based on availability rather than thematic expertise furthermore affects credibility of evaluation results. Due to the current staffing situation, the use of external consultants will be crucial for improving the quality of evaluations by bringing in thematic expertise.

Moreover, the training budget is almost non-existent, which is a serious shortcoming in a situation where training of new and inexperienced staff and the upgrade of the evaluation skills of more experienced staff should be a priority.

All in all, the IED competencies and capacities are not sufficient to meet the high and diverse evaluation needs of the organization.

5.3. Impartiality and stakeholder participation

Impartiality is the absence of bias in due process, methodological rigour, consideration and presentation of achievements and challenges. It also implies that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account. In the event that interested parties have different views, these are to be reflected in the evaluation analysis and reporting. (norm 5.1)

¹⁴ IED training guidelines in support of career development and a more effective Division, August 2008.

¹⁵ The in-depth evaluation of political affairs required seven reports to cover all its sub-programmes and activities, and was completed over a period of three years, requiring a level of effort of 90 working months in total (average of 2.5 staff persons a year).

Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. This improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. (norm 10.1)

The Panel found that the IED’s impartiality is widely acknowledged and that it makes efforts to engage stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.

All interviewees from the different stakeholder groups considered IED to be impartial.

The *Quality Assurance Process* introduced is likely to contribute significantly to an impartial evaluation process. The objective of the Quality Assurance Process is ‘to establish internal standards and processes to ensure a consistent level of quality in IED work utilizing a peer review approach’.¹⁶ Now IED has a multi-layered vetting in place. Evaluators make an effort to talk to all stakeholders to obtain information from different angles as a means to triangulate. In addition to the triangulation of information from stakeholders, IED uses all available data and evidence (i.e. records, direct observation, text analysis, external benchmarking, etc.) to further ensure impartial findings. The reflection of different views is reported to be rather good, but these differences could still be better reflected in the evaluation reports. It is important that the evaluators have a good understanding of the logic and context of the programmes they are evaluating, and UN experience is of imperative importance in this respect.

IED staff makes an effort to engage stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. However, the perceptions of the evaluands on their own involvement vary significantly. Some department representatives praise the close and continuous involvement during the entire evaluation process, while other managers found the evaluation process and their own involvement too intense and time consuming.

Other department staff complain that they were only given the opportunity to respond in writing to the draft final report. In particular during the drafting of the terms of reference (TOR) for evaluations, IED’s consultation with the stakeholders is limited. Some IED staff members maintain that it is a conscious decision not to share the TORs at an early stage in order to safeguard IED’s independence. The internal guidelines *Evaluation Cycle*¹⁷ envisage sharing the TORs with departments only at a very late stage after IED clearance.

The end beneficiaries of the programmes are only consulted in IED evaluations to a very limited extent. This is largely linked to IED’s focus on the work of the Secretariat at Headquarters. End beneficiaries are included by means of surveys when budget and security situation permits, but this is not always possible and very seldom practiced. The limited travel budget of IED has often prevented such information gathering from being conducted optimally, but this has improved somewhat since 2005.

Panel conclusions: IED staff conducts evaluations with a high degree of impartiality. IED makes an effort to engage stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. In this regard, the *Evaluation Cycle* is an excellent foundation. However, IED does not sufficiently consult with concerned staff and managers throughout the evaluation process and, in particular, at the initial stage of drafting the TORs. This may affect the relevance of the analysis and the acceptance of the results of evaluation by those who are directly concerned with the implementation of the recommendations.

¹⁶
IED Quality Assurance
Process.

¹⁷
IED Quality Assurance
Process.

5.4. Quality of evaluation reports

Each evaluation should employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented, covering appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation. (norm 8.1)

Evaluation reports must present in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations. They must be brief and to the point and easy to understand. They must explain the methodology followed, highlight the methodological limitations of the evaluation, key concerns and evidenced-based findings, dissident views and consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. They must have an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, and facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons. (norm 8.2)

The Panel found that the quality of IED’s evaluation reports varies significantly, but has improved over the last three years.

IED reports are considered credible and of good quality by the Member State Representatives of the Fifth Committee. They express satisfaction with the length and structure of the reports. However, it must be noted, that Member States barely distinguish between IED reports and other OIOS reports (i.e. audit, investigations) and that some representatives admittedly only read reports that have budgetary implications or give details of a crisis, and thus read very few evaluation reports. Department representatives express mixed views on the quality of IED’s evaluation reports, ranging from high quality to rather poor quality, due to a lack of IED’s understanding of key issues (e.g. human rights based approach). IED itself is of the view that the quality of their evaluation reports has improved over the last three years, as reported in the self assessment.

IED has introduced an internal *Quality Assurance Process*¹⁸ that includes quality assurance on draft reports. This has contributed to better quality reports. At the same time, the ‘Peer Review Checklist’ is not fully aligned with the ‘Standards for Evaluation in the UN System’ (Chapter 4.) against which the Panel assessed (and rated) six IED evaluation reports from the last three years (see Table 7).

Table 7

IED evaluation reports assessed by the Peer Panel

| Year | Report title | Symbol |
|------|--|----------------------|
| 2008 | Review of results-based management (RBM) at the United Nations Secretariat: RBM has been an administrative chore of little value to accountability and decision-making | A/63/268 |
| 2008 | In-Depth Evaluation of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM): Key Objectives Remain Unachieved, OHRM Faces Significant Challenges | A/63/221 |
| 2007 | Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs: summary report | E/AC.51/2007/2 |
| 2007 | Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs: Security Council affairs | E/AC.51/2007/2/Add.2 |
| 2006 | Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of knowledge management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium | E/AC.51/2006/2 |
| 2006 | Independent Review of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) for Children in Armed Conflicts (CAAC) | MECD-2006-02 |

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IED Quality Assurance
Process.

The quality of evaluation reports reviewed by the Panel varies significantly but has improved over the last three years. The Panel found the reports to be good against the following standards:

- the basic information contained in the title and opening pages (Standard 4.1); the latest reports (2008) have eye-catching titles containing the key messages.
- the description of the role and contributions of the UN organizations and other stakeholders to the subject being evaluated (Standard 4.4);
- the description of the stakeholders' participation (Standard 4.10);
- the discussion of the relative contributions of stakeholders to results (Standard 4.13); and
- the identification of reasons for accomplishments and difficulties of the subject being evaluated, especially constraining and enabling factors (Standard 4.14).
- the quality of the recommendations, in particular with regard to relevance (Standard 4.16); in general, the recommendations are well formulated, straight forward and clear. However, not all are realistic and easily applicable.

The Panel found the reports to be satisfactory according to the standards, but with some shortcomings. Some of the shortcomings might be due partly to the fact that the reports going to the Fifth Committee and the Committee of Programme Coordination are limited to 8500 words. This obviously has implications on how comprehensive the descriptions can be.

- the Executive Summaries (Standard 4.2); the description of the methodology is missing in most Executive Summaries.
- the explanation of the evaluation objectives and scope (Standard 4.7); the explanation could be more elaborate especially with regard to scope.
- the consideration of gender and human rights (Standard 4.8); more gender disaggregated data could be used.
- the description of the evaluation methodology applied (Standard 4.9); the description could be more comprehensive and detailed.
- the measure of outputs, outcomes and impact (Standard 4.12); the data basis supporting the findings is generally strong. However, the evaluations focus very much on process, outputs and compliance. Outcomes and impacts are rarely addressed.
- the quality of the conclusions, in particular the consistency with findings and data collection (Standard 4.15); the quality of the conclusions is uneven. At times, the added value of the conclusions to the findings is limited.

Against the following standards, the Panel found the reports to be unsatisfactory:

- the description of the subject being evaluated (Standard 4.3); none of the assessed reports include a logic model and/or the expected results chain. It appears that they do not exist for the subjects being evaluated in the first place. The evaluation team does not attempt to build analytical frameworks that should underpin the analysis of the programmes' effectiveness.
- the description of the purpose of the evaluations (Standard 4.5); *why* evaluations are conducted is not clear in most reports.
- the description of evaluation criteria (Standard 4.6); the criteria are described only rather generically and generally lack benchmarks.
- the lessons learned (Standard 4.17); almost no lessons learned are presented in the six evaluation reports reviewed by the Panel.

The Panel had difficulties assessing the following Standards:

- the discussion of the safeguards (Standard 4.11); however, confidentiality is assured throughout all reports.
- the quality of the annexes (Standard 4.18); the reports come in general without annexes. This is a serious limitation, as the reader needs sufficient background information (e.g. on methodology) to assess the validity of the findings.

Panel conclusions: The length-limitation on evaluation reports poses a significant challenge to meet the UN standards for evaluation reports. However, even within the given limitations faced by IED reports, the UN standards could be adhered to more systematically. Furthermore, the evaluation reports lack analyses of the programmes' effectiveness, including an analysis of outcomes and impact. Even though the UN Norms & Standards emphasize that evaluations need to assess the results (outcomes and impacts) of the UN work, the evaluations reports do not pay enough attention to this.

5.5. 'Are we doing the right thing?'

Evaluation is about 'Are we doing the right thing?'. It examines the rationale, the justification of the undertaking, makes a reality check and looks at the satisfaction of intended beneficiaries. Evaluation is also about 'Are we doing it right?'. It assesses the effectiveness of achieving expected results. It examines the efficiency of the use of inputs to yield results. Finally, evaluation asks 'Are there better ways of achieving the results?'. Evaluation looks at alternative ways, good practices and lessons learned. (norm 1.7)

The Panel found that IED evaluations generally focus on the question 'Are we doing it right?'. The evaluation criteria 'Are we doing the right thing?' is much less prominent.

The question ‘*Are we doing the right thing?*’ is about *relevance, effectiveness* and *impact* of programmes and mandates. Along with efficiency and sustainability, they are the key evaluation criteria of any evaluation work. IED’s evaluation mandate is also explicit in this regard (see Box 5).

The Panel found significant variation in views among the various stakeholders interviewed regarding whether or not IED is posing the question ‘*Are we doing the right thing?*’. IED management is of the view that the main focus of IED is on internal efficiency of the programmes rather than on a programme’s relevance or whether it is designed to do ‘the right thing’. However, IED team leaders themselves are of the opinion that they cover both dimensions in their evaluations. Yet, OIOS staff from the audit and investigations divisions share the view of IED management that whether or not the programmes ‘are doing the right thing’ receives less attention.

Representatives from the departments (subjected to evaluations also) have diverging views. Some believe that IED addresses both dimensions, while others state that their programmes are merely assessed against the UN norms and regulations, i.e. with a focus on compliance. In their views, evaluations should assess whether the regulations and norms etc. are useful, relevant and appropriate in a given area of activity before assessing compliance.

There are also conflicting views among Member State representatives on this matter. While some support a focus on relevance, others are of the view that IED should not question the mandates given by Member States. Based on the evaluation reports reviewed (see Chapter 5.4) the Panel also found that the evaluation reports generally focus on efficiency and not on whether the programmes ‘are doing the right thing’.

Panel conclusion: IED focuses more on questions related to ‘doing the things right’ than on questions related to ‘doing the right thing’. Stepping out of the OIOS compliance culture and shifting to a focus on relevance is a particular challenge for IED.

There is a need to distinguish the relevance of a programme as a whole from the relevance of what the programme does. With regard to the former, it may be indeed difficult to question an overall mandate that has been given by Member States unless requested specifically. With regard to the latter, this is part of evaluation work and it is unclear to the Panel why it is not done more systematically.

Box 5

IED’s evaluation mandate is established in a Secretary-General’s Bulletin, where it is stated that:

“(a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization’s activities in relation to their objectives; (b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.”

Source: ST/SGB/2000/8 (Art. VII, Evaluation, regulation 7.1).

5.6. Overall Panel conclusion on credibility

The work of IED is credible in that it is based on systematized processes for evaluations and application of evaluation methods to gather information, internal guidelines, dedicated staff and expanded capacities, impartiality, stakeholder consultations and improved quality reports. At the same time, IED's credibility is challenged by

- a) limited thematic expertise of IED to cover the many diverse UN programmes,
- b) the sheer size of the 27 programmes of the UN Secretariat in relation to IED's capacity,
- c) insufficient human resource capacity: limited number of experienced evaluators in IED,
- d) too short evaluation reports (lacking essential information to ascertain validity) and
- e) lack or too limited emphasis on key evaluation questions of relevance and effectiveness.

5.7. Recommendations

In order to strengthen IED's credibility, the Panel makes the following recommendations:

1. Update the PPBME in order to align definitions, roles and responsibilities of evaluation on the one hand and audit and investigations on the other.
2. Communicate the distinctiveness of the evaluation function with regards to other functions performed by OIOS, especially to Member States and departments of the Secretariat.
3. Use the term *inspection* as defined in the UNEG Norms. And – in order to reduce the potential of confusion – remove the term *inspection* from the division's name. While keeping the acronym *IED*, the division could be renamed to become the *Independent Evaluation Division* (IED). This would establish a clearer evaluation *branding*.
4. Rename the IAAC to become the *Independent Evaluation and Audit Advisory Committee* (IEAAC), and include two internationally recognized evaluation experts as IEAAC members, in order to further strengthen the standing of *evaluation* in OIOS. The current IAAC – both in name and composition – only strengthens the perception that evaluation is a sub-task of audit.
5. Strengthen IED's staff capacity by recruiting more senior staff. Furthermore, the director (D2) must be appointed as soon as possible in order to give IED more 'weight' within OIOS and the UN system.

6. Increase the training budget of evaluation staff significantly in order to upgrade evaluation and thematic knowledge and skills among both junior and senior staff.
7. Strengthen the thematic expertise and knowledge of evaluation teams on the subject area being evaluated. The panel recommends IED to recruit consultants – as team members for each evaluation – with the required technical expertise, in particular *thematic* expertises that have to do with UN mandates and Secretariat programmes, e.g. gender equality, human rights, or humanitarian action. IED should, furthermore, out-source more evaluations and conduct less evaluations itself, but should maintain the ultimate responsibility for quality control. This requires more financial resources for non-staff. This would help achieve a better coverage of the programmes and contribute to improved technical expertise of IED evaluations.
8. Adjust the *Evaluation Cycle* in order to allow for greater consultation with stakeholders at all stages, including at the initial stage of drafting the TOR *before* IED clearance. This could help not only to foster participation, but also ownership, learning and understanding of the potential of the evaluation function for the evaluands' own work, and as a means to improve the enabling environment for evaluation. Moreover, the *Evaluation Cycle* should allow for some flexibility in order to respond to clients' needs regarding more or less consultation.
9. Prepare one comprehensive report of each evaluation (or review) including an executive summary. The comprehensive report should include all relevant information, i.e. a description of the methodology, a thorough analysis, background information, the terms of reference (TOR), the team composition and expertise, a list of references and other annexes as appropriate. In order to respect the length-restriction (8,500 words), only submit the executive summary to the Fifth Committee (and only have the executive summary translated into all UN languages). The executive summary could be much shorter than 8,500 words and should only contain key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The management responses should be attached as a separate document to the comprehensive report. The comprehensive report should be shared with the programmes and departments under evaluation, with Member States on demand and to any other interested body.
10. Undertake more systematic analyses of the programmes' outcomes and impacts. The prime focus on process and outputs (i.e. the delivering of products) should be de-emphasized in favour of a stronger focus on outcomes and impacts (positive and negative long-term effects/change achieved with the outputs) as well as on the question '*Are we doing the right thing?*'. These criteria form the distinctiveness of evaluation and accountability on results. More emphasis should be on the learning aspect of evaluations and therefore on lessons learned.

6 | Utility

The utility of evaluation depends on many factors, including the independence of the evaluation function and the credibility of evaluations, in particular the quality of the evaluation process and product. As such, the previous chapters on independence and credibility – including the previous recommendations – must be taken into account while reading this chapter on utility. Having said that, this chapter looks at the utility dimension from the perspectives of what is made of evaluation reports once they are published (the use of evaluations): relevance of the evaluation topic, timeliness of the evaluation, consultation on the results of the evaluation, dissemination of evaluation results and mechanisms and processes put into place for the systematic consideration of evaluation results.

6.1. Priority setting and planning of evaluations

Proper application of the evaluation function implies that there is a clear intent to use evaluation findings. In the context of limited resources, the planning and selection of evaluation work has to be carefully done. Evaluations must be chosen and undertaken in a timely manner so that they can and do inform decision-making with relevant and timely information. Planning for evaluation must be an explicit part of planning and budgeting of the evaluation function and/or the organization as a whole. Annual or multi-year evaluation work programmes should be made public. (norm 4.1)

The Panel found that apart from GA-mandated evaluations, the planning of evaluations is very much an IED-driven exercise. Department/programme demands are not the main priority criteria in selecting evaluation subjects.

As elaborated earlier, IED has introduced a *Risk-based Planning Process* in order to establish evaluation priorities and its work plan (see also Chapters 4.2 and 5.1). The intention is to focus IED's limited resources on those areas of the Secretariat's activities that require most urgent attention. The focus is on risk of ineffectiveness and irrelevance. The independence to select the subjects of evaluation is only limited by the fact that both the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme Coordination (CDC) can mandate or request evaluations.

The *Risk-based Planning Process* also takes *cyclical* coverage into account. While previously each of the 27 UN programmes was the subject of an in-depth evaluation only once in 27 years on average, the current target is to evaluate programmes on average every eight years. However, IED intends to pay limited attention to cyclical coverage as the cyclical criteria may run against more strategic criteria.

All in all, the *Risk-based Planning Process* is very much an IED-driven exercise. IED emphasises the importance of setting evaluation priorities *independently*. Although the process takes into account ‘*issues of strategic importance*’ to the organization, specific stakeholders’ needs are only marginally taken into consideration. Moreover, not all evaluations are timely. For example, the Panel was told that the DPKO evaluation started too early, while the RBM evaluation should have been done prior to the preparation of the accountability framework.

IED’s evaluation work plan is not publicly available on the IED website. However, the evaluation work plan is submitted to the Fifth Committee for approval. The IED work plan for 2008/2009 is presented in the biennial GA report IED-08-006 “*Report of the OIOS on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives*”. Like any GA report, this report is available on the internet. So, technically speaking, the work plan is publicly available. In practice, however, the title of the report and its location on the internet do not facilitate accessing the work plan easily.

Panel conclusion: The *Risk-based Planning Process* is an appropriate instrument to plan the work of IED. What is unclear is how mandated evaluations and non-mandated evaluations are combined and fit into the planning approach.

The *Risk-based Planning Process* lacks the stakeholder demand dimension (needs-based) approach, and is an *oversight* driven approach. There is limited flexibility to respond to requests of individual programmes/departments, including from those that have their own evaluation units. This affects both the timeliness and at times the relevance of IED evaluations.

It is moreover unclear – apart from the GA-mandated evaluations – to what extent Member State demands are being taken into account in the planning process.

Finally, it appears that there is insufficient coordination at the planning stage with the decentralized evaluation units and other oversight bodies, including the JIU.

6.2. Dissemination, access to evaluation and user-friendliness

Each organization should develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation. The policy should provide a clear ... statement on disclosure and dissemination. (norm 3.1)

While the Panel found that the IED has a dissemination policy, access to evaluation reports is limited. The user-friendliness of IED reports is considered satisfactory by stakeholders.

With regard to dissemination and disclosure of evaluation results, the PPBME states that the findings should go to Member States and departments (see Box 6), although the PPBME is not very clear on this matter. Until 2006, all OIOS reports were submitted to the GA. However, with the large increase in the number of such reports prepared (mostly audit reports), the OIOS USG complies with the policy that only the GA-mandated reports are submitted to the Member States. The USG carefully selects which reports should go to the CPC and Fifth Commit-

tee, as these committees are generally swamped with reports. Even when not all OIOS reports are automatically submitted to the Member States, Member State representatives can request any report. For example, the United States Mission to the UN has a permanent request for all OIOS reports, and makes them available to the public on their own web-site.

Stakeholders outside of IED consider the IED dissemination policy to be unsatisfactory. Beyond the mandatory and optional submission of IED reports to Member States and departments (see also Chapter 4.5. on the submission of reports), IED does not have a clear dissemination policy, although IED has made an effort to develop a *Communication Strategy*. The strategy has however not yet been implemented as it is an internal IED document not yet approved by the USG of OIOS. Various components of the Strategy have been implemented, with longer term initiatives in progress. However, the dissemination within the Secretariat and the wider UN system happens only sporadically. Some reports are shared with the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG).

Box 6

Dissemination and disclosure policy

Regulation 7.1 "b) Evaluation findings shall be communicated to Member States through intergovernmental bodies and to heads of departments and offices in order to facilitate the reconsideration of existing mandates, policies, strategies and objectives, the substantive content of programmes and its utility to the users." ... Rule 107.4 (a) Evaluation findings in respect of ongoing or continuing activities shall be directly and immediately communicated to those responsible for programme planning and management to permit mid-course correction if required."

Source: PPBME, 2000.

Evaluation reports that are submitted to the governmental bodies (i.e. Fifth Committee and CPC) are also accessible on the OIOS website¹⁹. General Assembly reports are accessible on the internet. Evaluations that are *not* submitted to the GA are not necessarily available on the UN website. As the share of evaluations not submitted to the GA has increased over the last three years, the overall accessibility to evaluation reports on the UN website has decreased (see also Table 5 in Chapter 4.5). Although the US mission has a permanent request for all OIOS reports that are publicly accessible on the US website, only a few IED reports are easily accessible, even on the website of the US mission.²⁰

The user-friendliness of IED reports seems satisfactory. The evaluation outputs produced by IED are perceived by interviewees to have improved over the past three years. Member States representatives interviewed expressed satisfaction with the length and structure of the reports and consider the reports useful for their review. However, it must be noted again, that Member State representatives do not always distinguish between IED reports and other OIOS reports.

Department staff is of the view that the language used in the evaluation reports has improved over the past three years. It is now stronger and clearer. Also the titles of the reports have become catchier. In parallel, it was noted that the language used is occasionally somewhat judgmental, which – according to clients – should be avoided. The executive summaries have also improved and are now crisp and more conclusions-oriented. In addition, IED organizes briefings and

¹⁹ www.un.org/Depts/oios/pages/rep_and_pub.html.

²⁰ http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov/Issues/oversight_main.php.

presentations of evaluation findings, some of which are highly appreciated by department representatives.

Panel conclusions: IED's dissemination policy and practices are unsatisfactory in terms of transparency. Public accessibility to IED reports is too limited.

The fact that OIOS/IED reports that are not available on the OIOS' website can be made available from the websites of Member States demonstrates IED's short-coming in this matter. For the sake of transparency the OIOS/IED practice must be reviewed.

The USG's practice to submit only selected reports to Member States (apart from the GA-mandated reports) is appropriate.

Dissemination goes beyond the circulation of evaluation reports, however. It is a matter of how the results are presented and to whom. It is crucial to have a proper forum to discuss evaluation results meaningfully. The Panel questions whether this is in place in a satisfactory manner (see Chapter 6.4. Use of evaluations for decision making).

There is room for further sharpening of the user-friendliness of IED's reports vis-à-vis CPC and Fifth Committee, taking into account the fact that both committees struggle with an overflow of reports.

6.3. Management response and IED follow-up to evaluations

Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and management addressed by its recommendations. This may take the form of a management response, action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities. (norm 12.1)

There should be a systematic follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management and/or the Governing Bodies. (norm 12.2)

There should be a periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations. This report should be presented to the Governing Bodies and/or the Head of the organization. (norm 12.3)

The Panel found that management provides formal comments on evaluations, and IED tracks the follow-up to recommendations made. However, management commitment to implement recommendations remains vague.

Department managements provide formal comments on the draft evaluation report, indicating concurrence or non-concurrence with findings, conclusions and recommendations. However, this is not done systematically on each evaluation report and comments do not necessarily state whether management agrees or not. These comments are integrated into the final report if they are found valid by the evaluation team leader. When there are disagreements with the final re-

sults, the comments are also included in the evaluation report but separated in the text in *italics*. For thematic evaluations, comments are received from each individual programme covered by the evaluation.

However, comments do not reflect how management intends to take up recommendations and no commitment is made on the part of management regarding the implementation of agreed recommendations. Furthermore, management comments are sometimes considered to be too cryptic by some members of the Fifth Committee.

With regard to the follow-up to recommendations, OIOS has a strong GA mandate to report at least twice a year (see Box 7). Programme managers have clear instructions to comply with final recommendations (see Box 8).

IED has two means to report on the follow-up of recommendations (see also Chapter 4.6 Independence to track follow-up of management's response). First, evaluations mandated by the GA require a triennial review. Triennial reviews are a formal, and rigorous mechanism for tracking implementation of recommendations. Second, OIOS has introduced a monitoring system called *Issue Track* to review the implementation status of recommendations. IED follows-up twice a year with an annual and semi-annual report to the SG. This is a significant improvement in terms of tracking follow-up activities to evaluations.

Box 7**General Assembly Resolution on reporting on the implementation of recommendations**

“The Office [OIOS] shall report to the Secretary-General as and when necessary but at least twice yearly on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the programme managers...”

Source: General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/218 B, paragraph 5.c), 12 August 1994.

Box 8**Secretary-General's Bulletin on compliance with recommendations**

“The programme managers shall ensure prompt compliance with final recommendations and report to the Office, on a quarterly basis, on the status of implementation. In carrying out his responsibilities, the Under-Secretary-General responsible for the programme area shall monitor implementation of corrective action by programme managers.”

Source: Secretary-General's Bulletin to Members of the staff on the Establishment of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, ST/SGB/273, paragraph 22., 7 September 1994.

Both IED management and team leaders consider the follow-up to recommendations to be satisfactory, quantitatively speaking. Departments incorporate OIOS recommendations into their work plans.

However, the Panel found that the follow-up to evaluations is weakened by several factors.

- First, as the share of GA-mandated evaluations is decreasing (see also Chapter 4.5.), the share of reports subject to triennial reviews is also decreasing

and with that the rigor of follow-up on recommendations. This is expressed by IED in its self-assessment.

- Second, the *Issue Track* has significant limitations as the tracking system only reports on numbers of recommendations implemented (quantitative approach). The system neither captures the relevance nor the effects of recommendations implemented (qualitative approach). Among several of the interviewees there is thus a perception that there is an in-built incentive to put into operation the trivial recommendations that are easy to implement. However, the Panel found no evidence to verify this perception as no assessment has been done on what types of recommendations are implemented.
- Third, access to the *Issue Track* is limited to OIOS staff. The Panel was told that in future departments and programmes staff should be able to enter data in the *Issue Track* themselves.
- Fourth, IED recommendations are more or less in the same place within the *Issue Track* as the recommendations made by audit and investigations. As the absolute number varies significantly – there are many more audit and investigation recommendations than evaluation recommendations – IED recommendations appear somewhat marginalized, although more important than the absolute number of recommendations is the qualitative dimension and the utility of each recommendation and its ultimate impact on the organization in terms of change and improvement.

Panel conclusions: The current practice to include diverging views from management in *italics* into the evaluation report is considered unsatisfactory. Moreover, the current consultative process does not necessarily ensure that recommendations are systematically considered and implemented by management.

The Panel considers the *Issue Track* a ‘good practice’ within the evaluation community to follow-up on recommendations made. It is a useful starting point. However, to be useful, the weaknesses mentioned above unnecessarily limit the potential of the *Issue Track*. The *Issue Track* needs to take the qualitative aspects of the implementation of recommendations into account as well as the quantitative.

6.4. Use of evaluation for decision making

Evaluation is not a decision-making process per se, but rather serves as an input to provide decision-makers with knowledge and evidence about performance and good practices. Although evaluation is used to assess undertakings, it should provide value-added for decision-oriented processes to assist in the improvement of present and future activities, projects, programmes, strategies and policies. Thus evaluation contributes to institutional policy-making, development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness. (norm 1.5)

The Panel found limited evidence that evaluations inform policy making and guide the improvement of strategies and programmes. However, it has improved over the last three years.

The views expressed with regard to how IED evaluations inform policy making vary among the different stakeholders interviewed. Some department representatives did state that the evaluation directly influenced the decision-making process (e.g. the Office of Human Resources Management²¹, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)²²).

Based on interviews with Member States, department representatives, IAAC representatives and OIOS staff, the Panel found that the use of evaluation findings and recommendation is limited when it comes to their influence on policy making processes.

At the same time, interviewees expressed the opinion that it has improved over the last three years. However, the perception prevails that there is still considerable room for improvement. One interviewee outside of OIOS put it this way: *'Evaluations are a powerful management tool, but they remain somewhat in the 'toolbox'*.

The Panel found several factors limiting the use of evaluations.

- First, it appears that there is some discrepancy between formal comments on recommendations made by department management and actual implementation. Interviewees suggest that at times there is a mismatch between recommendations made on the one hand and the resources needed (and available) to implement them on the other hand.
- Second, OIOS/IED cannot control when evaluations are discussed in the Fifth Committee. The Secretary of the Fifth Committee sets the agenda with little flexibility for adjustments. Third, because of the nature of its business, the Fifth Committee focuses very much on efficiency and *'Are we doing it right?'*. Members of the Fifth Committee tend to see evaluation, inspection, investigation and audit as mainly the same, namely as control instruments. Discussions of thematic programmes, their effectiveness (outcomes and impacts) and recommendations from evaluations are not the focus of the Fifth Committee.
- Fourth, it appears that although the CPC is supposed to address and discuss the thematic evaluations, this is not so in practice. Stakeholder opinions shared with the Panel indicate that the CPC does not perform to its full potential. The Panel was informed that some Member States have withdrawn from this committee.
- Fifth, IED itself emphasises the role of the evaluation function as a control and accountability tool for the SG and the Member States. Views expressed by IED staff suggest that they perceive the learning dimension of evaluations to be outside their responsibility and should rather be covered by the evaluation units located in departments and programmes, the so called self-evaluations.
- Sixth, it appears that the *evaluation culture* among the different stakeholders – departments and Member States alike – is not conducive to taking full advantage of the potential benefits of good evaluations. OIOS/IED is perceived as a *threat* (oversight) rather than a service provider for learning, developing

21
In-Depth Evaluation of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM): Key Objectives Remain Unachieved, OHRM Faces Significant Challenges, (A/63/221), 2008

22
Inspection on Results-based management (RBM) practices at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2007

and improvement. In this regard, interviewees say that there is a need for more leadership by the management of the organization and Member States to recognize the usefulness and positive force of evaluations for change.

- Finally, a more general constraint lies in the fact that the IED's overall coverage of programmes is limited, which consequently limits the impact evaluations can have on the organization as a whole.

More generally, the Panel found that the limited influence on policy making is in part caused by IED being part of OIOS, the activities of which are dominated by audit and investigations. OIOS is perceived by Member States and department management to be primarily an oversight body with a focus on accountability. This perception includes IED, which is rather small compared with the other two OIOS divisions and it is frequently confused with audit and investigation. Therefore, the evaluators are at times perceived as auditors or investigators focusing on accountability. The general perception is that IED focuses, and should focus on the accountability (control) aspect of evaluation at the expense of the learning dimension of evaluation, which is much less recognized.

Panel conclusions: Evaluations in the UN Secretariat remain focused on accountability issues at the expense of the learning dimension. OIOS, and with that IED, has an image of 'whistle-blower' (like investigations) rather than the image of an agent facilitating learning in the Secretariat. Thus, much of the learning aspect of evaluation is lost.

Neither the Fifth committee nor the CPC are set up to pay enough attention to the impact and outcome lessons from evaluations. While the Fifth Committee is the appropriate body to discuss evaluations that address administrative and management performance (e.g. results-based management), it is not be the most appropriate body to discuss thematic evaluations (e.g. in the area of human rights). And the CPC can not substitute for the Fifth Committee.

6.5. Contribution to knowledge building

Evaluation contributes to knowledge building and organizational improvement. Evaluations should be conducted and evaluation findings and recommendations presented in a manner that is easily understood by target audiences. (norm 13.1)

Evaluation findings and lessons drawn from evaluations should be accessible to target audiences in a user-friendly way. A repository of evaluation could be used to distil lessons that contribute to peer learning and the development of structured briefing material for the training of staff. This should be done in a way that facilitates the sharing of learning among stakeholders, including the organizations of the UN system, through a clear dissemination policy and contribution to knowledge networks. (norm 13.2)

The Panel found that the contribution to wider knowledge building in the Secretariat – going beyond the specific programmes being evaluated – is limited.

All stakeholders interviewed – including IED staff – agree that lessons are not widely shared. The Panel also found that almost no lessons learned are presented in the six evaluation reports reviewed by the Panel (see Chapter 5.4. Quality of evaluation reports).

The views expressed by stakeholders regarding whether or not evaluations contribute to knowledge building reveal that the question is hard to substantiate. It appears that stakeholders do not know for sure whether or not evaluations contribute to knowledge building. One interviewee expressed that the mere process of evaluation is often more important than the report itself when it comes to learning and knowledge building. There are no systematic knowledge-building processes in place; there is no systematic sharing of evaluation results – between IED and the programmes.

Meta-evaluations (e.g. tri-annual reviews), however, allow for aggregation of evaluation results across programmes and contribute to learning across the organization. However, the addressee of these meta-findings are not the programmes but the GA.

IED has a well-developed *internal* learning mechanism. As part of the new IED *Quality Assurance Process* (see Chapter 5.1. Evaluation policy and guidelines), the IED team discusses each evaluation after completion (what went well and what went not so well). Lessons learned regarding methodologies and processes are documented and shared with all IED staff and stored electronically for reference. Some experiences are shared with the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG). However, peer learning going beyond IED is limited. IED has neither a mandate nor the necessary resources to develop training material or undertake external training.

Panel conclusions: The *Quality Assurance Process* provides for a quite systematic and well-functioning approach to share lessons learned in IED internally. However, while IED has a well-developed internal knowledge building system, there is a need to improve the process for knowledge building externally to ensure that lessons learned are shared and used. IED faces a particular challenge in this regards as its work over-emphasises accountability at the expense of organizational learning.

6.6. Overall conclusions on utility

The Panel concludes that IED is operating in a politically highly sensitive environment. Evaluation in the Secretariat is primarily a small oversight function alongside the much larger audit and investigation functions. As a result, neither departments nor Member States fully value the contribution evaluations can make to a more effective UN. The perception of evaluations as primarily an oversight and accountability instrument has impaired the development of evaluation as a *learning tool* and agent of change.

The planning of evaluations should be more needs-based in order to increase the demand from programmes and departments (including the decentralized eva-

uation unites) and Member States – for recommendations resulting from evaluations.

IED is operating in a relatively non-conducive environment for quality, in-depth evaluations within the area of the GA. Neither the Fifth Committee nor the CPC can meet the expectation that evaluations should be discussed substantively and that decisions are based on evaluation results. While the Fifth Committee is an appropriate body to discuss evaluations that deal with organizational performance of the UN programmes, it is less relevant when topics are more technical. Furthermore, because of the nature of its business, the Fifth Committee focuses on processual issues (i.e. on ‘doing the thing right’) and not on the effectiveness (outcomes and impacts) of the work carried out by the programmes evaluated. The GA-mandated reports should be discussed in other relevant committees that are directly concerned about the programmes evaluated, as is done for programmes that have their own governing bodies. The commissions have substantive discussion on the programmes and would provide an appropriate venue to discuss effectiveness. The subsidiary organs of the ECOSOC (the technical commissions) can provide an appropriate venue in addition to the Fifth Committee to discuss relevant evaluation results. IED’s dissemination policy and practices beyond Member States and departments directly concerned by evaluations is considered to be unsatisfactory by the Panel, as is the public accessibility of IED reports.

The response mechanism of management to evaluations is not systematic and well structured and does not ensure that recommendations are systematically considered by management and that follow-up to the recommendations will be carried out.

Finally, IED’s mandate is too broad. This limits the utility of IED evaluations since meaningful coverage is almost impossible, an issue accentuated by the sheer size of some of the larger UN programmes (e.g. DPKO, UNEP, UNHCR, etc.).

6.7. Recommendations

11. Establish a better balance between the accountability and the learning aspects of the evaluation function in order to ensure full adherence to the UNEG Norms & Standards, in particular *norm 1.1*, i.e. that all stakeholders should give the accountability and learning dimensions of evaluation equal attention.
12. Implement a more flexible planning approach in order to better respond to requests from individual programmes/departments and to better coordinate with decentralized evaluation units. Consultation at an early stage in the process with programmes/departments would help increase *relevance* and *timeliness* of evaluations. A rolling work plan of evaluations would allow some flexibility and adjustment of the work plan.
13. Follow a cycle of evaluations that matches those of the Committees and Commissions and other relevant governing bodies to which each evaluation

is presented. For this to happen, IED should stay in close contact with the Secretaries of the various UN Committees and Commissions in order to better know the needs of Member States

14. Establish a systematic response mechanism whereby management states its positions vis-à-vis the thrusts of the evaluation as well as each of the recommendations and indicates actions planned to be taken, with a timeframe for implementation. Commitments made in the management response should be linked more systematically to the *management compacts* of management with the SG.²³ The management response should be published together with IED evaluations reports but as a separately identifiable document or attachment and should not be inserted in the main text.
15. Upgrade the *Issue Track* by having parameters measuring the *quality* dimension of recommendations and reconsider the practice that IED recommendations are more or less in the same place within the *Issue Track* as audit and investigation recommendations, and explore the feasibility of having a separable tracking system for evaluation recommendations within the same IT system.
16. Implement a broader sharing of evaluations (going beyond the Fifth Committee and the programmes/departments directly concerned) and the development of a knowledge-building mechanism in addition to a more needs-based planning and dissemination of evaluations. On the one hand, recommendations and lessons learned should not only be shared with the Fifth Committee but with other UN Committees and Commissions and other relevant governing bodies. On the other hand, recommendations and lessons learned should be shared within the UN System, i.e. the UN organizations, more proactively. As a first step all IED evaluation reports should be made publicly available on the OIOS website, as this would strengthen IED's transparency. This is also the practice in most evaluation offices of multilateral or bilateral agencies.
17. Strengthen and upgrade the decentralized evaluation units of the larger UN programmes (e.g. UNEP) with their own governing bodies into independent evaluation functions reporting directly to their governing bodies. This would take away the pressure from IED to cover all 27 programmes over a fixed period of time. IED could focus more on those programmes in the Secretariat that do not have separate governing bodies and on cross-cutting issues touching on different entities within the UN System.

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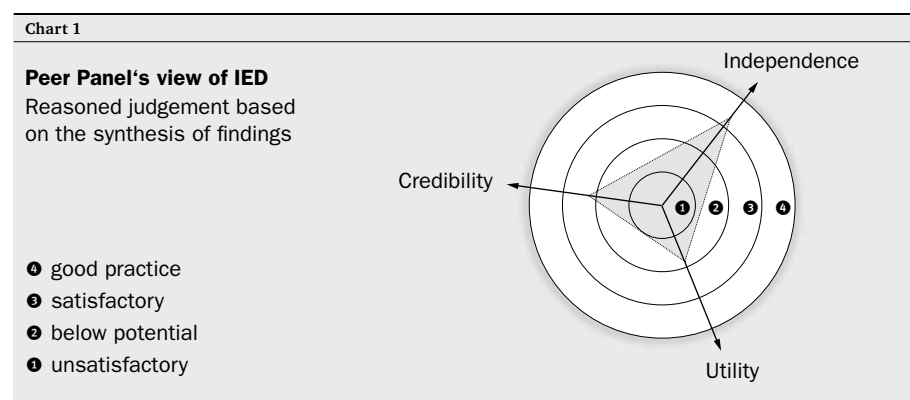
In order to strengthen accountability mechanisms at the senior management level the Secretary-General has introduced the performance management compact.

7 | The Peer Panel's overall view of IED

The Panel noted the dynamism and commitment of the IED team. Over the past three years, the office has undergone a major transformation. The office has been strengthened both in terms of human and financial resources. The mandate of IED has been sharpened by the removal of the management consulting and the programme reporting from the evaluation division, which has eliminated potential conflicts of interest and made it a pure evaluation division. The most recent evaluation reports are of good quality with straight forward messages and recommendations.

The Panel's overall view of IED along the three core criteria established by the Peer review process is as follows (see Chart 1):

Independence Although IED does not have complete independence, the Panel views the set-up of IED as a 'good practice' mainly because it is located separate from the department/programmes and also due to its strong independence ethics.



Credibility Overall, IED's credibility is satisfactory, having recently been strengthened by a significant increase in human resources and several initiatives like the *Risk-based Planning Process*, the *IED Quality Assurance Process* and the new *Inspection and Evaluation Manual*. It is fair to say that these initiatives have contributed to strengthening the credibility of the evaluation function, but it still faces a number of challenges.

At the same time and as outlined in this report, there are a number of ways in which credibility can and must be further strengthened. Most of all, IED should focus more on the relevance, outcomes and impacts than is currently the case. Evaluations should respond to the key question: '*Are we doing the right thing?*'. This is what demonstrates the added value of the evaluation function. Moreover, there should be more emphasis on the learning aspect of evaluations and, therefore, on lessons learned.

Furthermore, IED needs to prepare more comprehensive evaluation reports than is currently the case, including an executive summary to be submitted to the governing bodies.

Last but not least, IED needs more experienced evaluators and the presence of thematic expertise in the evaluation teams should be strengthened.

Utility The utility of its work poses the greatest challenge to IED. The use made of IED evaluation results is below potential. IED should make an effort to make their evaluation reports and results publicly available on the internet, and should also make sure that their reports are tailored to their recipients (i.e. comprehensive, fully-fledged reports to programme management, executive summaries to the Fifth Committee and CPC). Furthermore, IED should disseminate their evaluation results more actively through presentations and seminars. However, the usefulness of evaluations is only partly under the control of evaluation offices. IED is operating in a politically highly sensitive environment. As outlined earlier in the report, neither the departments of the Secretariat nor the Member States, in particular the representative in the Fifth Committee, fully value the contribution evaluations can make to a more effective UN. The perception of evaluations as primarily an oversight and accountability instrument limits the usefulness of evaluations as a *learning tool* and agent of change.

Finally, IED's mandate is too broad. This limits the overall utility of IED, since meaningful coverage is almost impossible, an issue accentuated by the sheer size of some of the larger UN programmes. In the long-term, the decentralized evaluation units of the larger UN programmes with their own governing bodies should be strengthened and up-graded into more independent evaluation functions reporting directly to their governing bodies. This would take away the pressure from IED to cover all 27 programmes over a fixed period of time. IED could focus more on those programmes in the Secretariat that do not have separate governing bodies and/or weak internal evaluation functions. Moreover, IED could focus more on cross-cutting issues across the UN System.

The main responsibility to implement the recommendations made in this report lies with IED. However, other actors also have some responsibilities in order to strengthen the evaluation function in the Secretariat (see Table 1 in the executive summary).

Appendix 1:

Persons interviewed

Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED), Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), UN

(Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Acting Head
Demetra Arapakos, Section Chief, Inspection and Evaluation
Arild Hauge, Section Chief, Inspection and Evaluation
Kishan Sirohi, Section Chief, Inspection and Evaluation (group discussion)
Christa Lex, Programme Management Officer and evaluation team leader
Juan Carlos S. Pena Alvarez, Programme Management Officer
and evaluation team leader
Robert McCouch, Programme Management Officer and evaluation team leader
David Nyskohus, Programme Management Officer and evaluation team leader
(group discussion)
Carmel Kooros, Programme Management Officer and evaluation team leader
(group discussion)
Ellen Vinkey, Programme Management Officer and evaluation team leader
(group discussion)
Elise Duman, Associate Evaluation Officer (group discussion)
Emily Hampton-Manley, Inspection and Evaluation Officer (group discussion)
Jessica Xiaojie-Guo, Inspection and Evaluation Officer
Audric Villanueva, Programme Assistant (group discussion)

Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), UN

Inga-Britt Ahlenius, Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
Dagfinn Knutsen, Director, Internal Audit Division
Michael Dudley, Deputy Director, Investigations Division
Maria Elena Munoz, Programme Officer, Office of the
OIOS Under-Secretary-General

United Nations Secretariat

Sandra Haji-Ahmad, Acting Director, Strategic Planning and Staffing Division,
Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM)
Serguei Agadjanov, Chief Monitoring and Reporting Section, Strategic Plan-
ning and Staffing Division, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM)
Karina Gerlach, Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General,
Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs (DPA)
Rune Forseth, Chief, Strategic Planning Unit, Office for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
Seth Adza, Operational Review Officer, Office of the Director, Administrative
Support Division, Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO)

Movses Abelian, Secretary, Administrative and Budgetary (Fifth) Committee of the General Assembly and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC)

Radhika Coomaraswamy, Under-Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Carolina Owens, Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Donna-Marie Chiurazzi-Maxfield, Chief of Staff, ad interim, Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, Chief, Accountability & Oversight Support Office, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management

Mario Baez, Deputy Director, Accountability & Oversight Support Office, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management

Independent Advisory Audit Committee (IAAC)

David Walker, Chair IAAC, President & CEO, Peter G. Peterson Foundation

Vijayendra Nath Kaul, Vice-Chair IAAC, Comptroller and Auditor General of India (phone interview)

Member State Representatives

Ken Mukai, Counsellor Permanent, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

Anja Bille Bähncke, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations

Nagesh Singh, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

Jean-Louis Servais, First Secretary, Permanent Representation of Belgium to the United Nations

Thomas Gass, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

Rita Grünenfelder, Advisor, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

Motumisi Tawana, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations

Mona Juell, Deputy Permanent Representative, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations

Appendix 2:

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Appendix 3:

Assessment framework

Independence

1. How does the *Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General* foster an enabling environment for evaluation? (Norms 2.1 & 2.2)
2. Is the OIOS IED located sufficiently independently from the other management functions so that it is free from undue influence and that unbiased and transparent reporting is ensured? (Norm 6.1)
3. How do the *Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General* ensure that evaluations are conducted in an impartial and independent fashion? How do they ensure that there is no conflict of interest for internal evaluators and ensure they have the freedom to conduct their work without repercussions for career development? (Norm 2.4 & 6.2–6.5)
4. Are adequate human resources allocated to the evaluation function in order to comply with the evaluation policy? (Norm 2.3)
5. Are the OIOS IED budget and plan of evaluations linked so that it is clear that adequate resources are allocated to enabling the OIOS IED to operate effectively and with due independence? (Norms 2.3, 2.6 & 4.2)
6. Does the *Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services*
 - a) control the evaluation budget?
 - b) have full discretion to select evaluation subjects? (Norm 6)
7. Does the independence of OIOS IED impinge on the access that evaluators have to information on the subject being evaluated? (Norm 6.5). If yes, please elaborate.
8. Do all evaluators routinely sign a statement on potential conflict of interest or include statements of potential bias in evaluation reports? (Standard 2.1)
9. Does the OIOS IED have full discretion in submitting directly its reports for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making pertaining to the subject of evaluation? (Norm 6.1)
10. Does the OIOS IED have the independence to track follow-up of management's response to an evaluation? (Norm 6.2)

Credibility

11. Does OIOS IED have an evaluation policy that explains the concept of evaluation, roles and responsibilities and how evaluation evidence will be used in a clear and easily accessible manner? (Norm 3.1).
12. Do evaluations ask questions related to both if ‘we are doing the right thing’ and also if ‘we are doing it right’? (Norm 1.7). If no, please elaborate.
13. Is the professional competence and capacity of the Director of OIOS IED and staff to deliver credible evaluations assured? (Norms 2.5 & 9.1–9.3)
14. Does the OIOS IED verify if there is clarity in the intent of the subject to be evaluated, sufficient measurable indicators, assessable reliable information sources and no major factor hindering an impartial evaluation process? (Norm 7.2)
15. Are systems and approaches in place to ensure the impartiality of OIOS IED evaluations? Does the evaluation take account of all stakeholder views? Does the evaluation reflect the different views of interested parties in analysis and reporting? (Norms 5.1–5.3)
16. Does the evaluation policy explain how evaluations are planned, managed and budgeted? (Norm 3.1)
17. Is there a clear statement on disclosure and dissemination? (Norm 3.1)
18. Does the evaluation policy or guidelines provide guidance on approaches and methods designed to provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful? (Norm 1.2)
19. How does OIOS IED ensure that its evaluators have personal and professional integrity? What control is there over compliance with ethical standards? (Norms 11.1 – 11.5)
20. Does the evaluation policy define criteria for the selection of an evaluation team (e.g. external or mixed, technical expertise, gender balance)? (Norm 9.1)
21. To what degree are stakeholders identified and consulted in planning an evaluation and kept informed throughout the evaluation process? Are country governments considered primary stakeholders or ‘implementing partners’ and do they participate in the evaluation process? (Norm 1.6; Standards 3.11.)
22. To what extent are beneficiaries involved in the evaluation process? (Norm 1.7)
23. Do evaluation reports describe the level of participation of stakeholders and the rationale for selecting that level? (Standard 4.10.)

24. Do evaluations follow UN treaties, mechanisms and instruments related to human rights and other relevant norms? Do evaluations demonstrate sensitivity to issues of discrimination and gender equality, and address these issues? Do evaluation reports indicate the extent to which gender issues and relevant human rights considerations were incorporated? (Norm 11.4; Standard 3.9.; 3.15.31; 4.8)
25. Does the evaluation process (particularly decentralized evaluation) foster evaluation capacity building in member countries? Are evaluations undertaken jointly with governments or other stakeholders? Does the evaluation include activities to raise awareness of evaluation and/or build evaluation capacity in government and civil society? (Norms preamble, Standards 3.14.29; 1.7.9)

Utility

26. Is there a clear intention to use evaluation findings and are evaluations planned and targeted to coincide with planning cycles and inform decision-making with relevant and timely information? Is there a system in place for explicit planning of evaluation and for systematic consideration of findings, conclusions, recommendations and? (Norms 1.3; 4.1; 2.6)
27. Does the Secretariat (and its departments) respond to recommendations made in evaluations (e.g. management response, action plan)? Is there a systematic follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management (Norm 12.1–12.3)
28. Is the evaluation work programme published? Is there a set of guidelines for evaluation? Is there transparency and consultation with major stakeholders at all stages of the evaluation? (Norms 4.1; 10.1–10.2; Standard 1.6.8)
29. How are organization-wide or broader lessons distilled from individual evaluations and shared? (Norms 1.7; 2.7)
30. Do intended users participate at all stages of the evaluation process, including the early design phase prior to drafting the terms of reference? How?
31. What formal and informal networks exist between OIOS IED and the Secretariat's key decision makers to ensure that evaluation findings are integrated with policy and practice?

The next three questions survey the impact of OIOS IED evaluations. The subjective nature of the answers is useful but should not be mistaken for an assessment of use/impact.

32. Does evaluation inform policy making and guide the improvement of present and future strategy, projects and programmes? (Norm 1.5)
33. Does evaluation contribute to development effectiveness in programme countries, and organizational effectiveness? (Norm 1.5)

34. Does evaluation contribute to knowledge building and organizational improvement? (Norm 13.1)
35. Are evaluation findings and lessons accessible to target audiences in a user-friendly way? Are they public documents? Is there a clear dissemination policy that facilitates the sharing of learning among stakeholders, including the organizations of the UN system? Are evaluation outputs tailored to suit the needs of different users or stakeholders? Is evaluation knowledge and experience processed for peer learning and as training material? (Norms 13.1–13.2)

Appendix 4:

Assessment matrix for assessing IED evaluations

The criteria below are taken from the *'Standards for Evaluation in the UN System'*, in particular from Chapter 4. 'Evaluation Reports'.

Standard 4.1:

The title page and opening pages should provide key basic information.

Standard 4.2:

The evaluation report should contain an Executive Summary.

Standard 4.3:

The subject being evaluated should be clearly described, including the logic model and/or the expected results chain and intended impact, its implementation strategy and key assumptions.

Standard 4.4:

The role and contributions of the UN organizations and other stakeholders to the subject being evaluated should be clearly described.

Standard 4.5:

The purpose and context of the evaluation should be described.

Standard 4.6:

The evaluation report should provide an explanation of the purpose of the evaluation.

Standard 4.7:

The evaluation report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation objectives as well as the scope of the evaluation.

Standard 4.8:

The evaluation report should indicate the extent to which gender issues and relevant human rights considerations were incorporated where applicable.

Standard 4.9:

The applied evaluation methodology should be described in a transparent way, including any limitations to the methodology.

Standard 4.10:

The evaluation should give a complete description of stakeholder participation.

Standard 4.11:

The evaluation report should include a discussion of the extent to which the evaluation design included ethical safeguards where appropriate.

Standard 4.12:

In presenting the findings, inputs, outputs, and outcomes / impacts should be measured to the extent possible (or an appropriate rationale given as to why not).

Standard 4.13:

Analysis should include appropriate discussion of the relative contributions of stakeholders to results.

Standard 4.14:

Reasons for accomplishments and difficulties of the subject being evaluated, especially constraining and enabling factors, should be identified to the extent possible.

Standard 4.15:

Conclusions need to be substantiated by findings consistent with data collected and methodology, and represent insights into identification and/or solutions of important problems or issues.

Standard 4.16:

Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis, be relevant and realistic, with priorities for action made clear.

Standard 4.17:

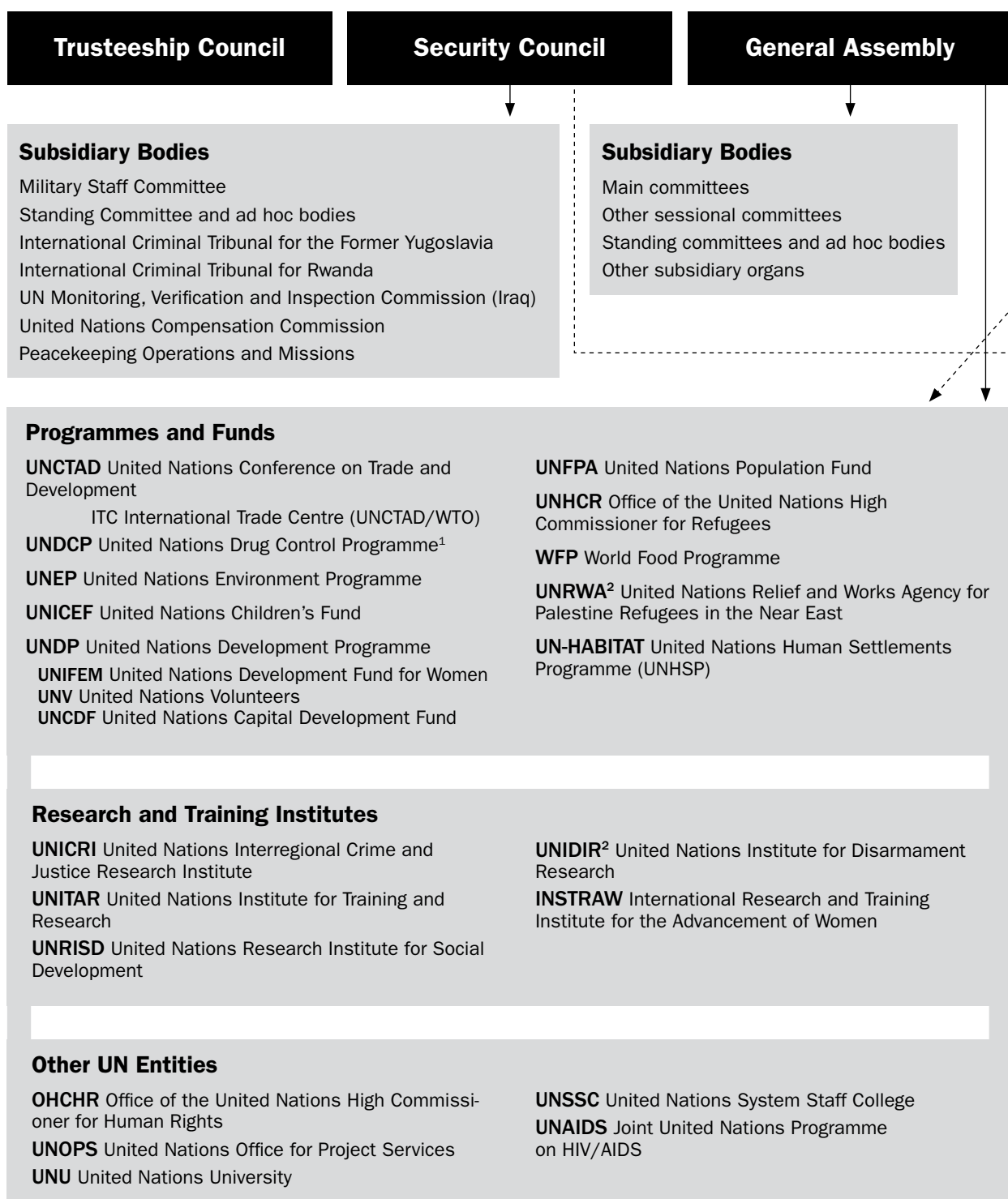
Lessons, when presented, should be generalized beyond the immediate subject being evaluated to indicate what wider relevance they might have.

Standard 4.18:

Annexes should be complete and relevant.

Appendix 5: The United Nations system – overview

PRINCIPAL ORGANS



NOTES: Solid lines from a Principal Organ indicate a direct reporting relationship; dashes indicate a nonsubsidiary relationship. ¹The UN Drug Control Programme is part of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. ²UNRWA and UNIDIR report only to the GA. ³The World Trade Organization and World Tourism Organization use the same acronym. ⁴IAEA reports to the Security Council and the General Assembly (GA). ⁵The CTBTO Prep.Com and OPCW report to the GA. ⁶Specialized agencies are autonomous organizations working with the UN and each other through the coordinating machinery of the ECOSOC at the intergovernmental level, and through the Chief Executives Board for coordination (CEB) at the inter-secretariat level.

Economic and Social Council

International Court of Justice

Secretariat

Functional Commissions

Commissions on:

- Human Rights
- Narcotic Drugs
- Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- Science and Technology for Development
- Sustainable Development
- Status of Women
- Population and Development
- Commission for Social Development
- Statistical Commission

Regional Commissions

- Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
- Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Other Bodies

- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII)
- United Nations Forum on Forests
- Sessional and standing committees
- Expert, ad hoc and related bodies

Related Organizations

- WTO³** World Trade Organization
- IAEA⁴** International Atomic Energy Agency
- CTBTO Prep.com⁵**
PrepCom for the Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organization
- OPCW⁵**
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Specialized Agencies⁶

- ILO** International Labour Organization
- FAO** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- WHO** World Health Organization

World Bank Group

- IBRD** International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- IDA** International Development Association
- IFC** International Finance Corporation
- MIGA** Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
- ICSID** International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes

- IMF** International Monetary Fund
- ICAO** International Civil Aviation Organization
- IMO** International Maritime Organization
- ITU** International Telecommunication Union
- UPU** Universal Postal Union
- WMO** World Meteorological Organization
- WIPO** World Intellectual Property Organization
- IFAD** International Fund for Agricultural Development
- UNIDO** United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- WTO³** World Tourism Organization

Departments and Offices

- OSG** Office of the Secretary-General
- OIOS** Office of Internal Oversight Services
- OLA** Office of Legal Affairs
- DPA** Department of Political Affairs
- DDA** Department for Disarmament Affairs
- DPKO** Department of Peacekeeping Operations
- OCHA** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- DESA** Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- DGACM**
Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
- DPI** Department of Public Information
- DM** Department of Management
- OHRLLS**
Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
- UNSECOORD**
Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator
- ^^
- UNODC**
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- UNOG** UN Office at Geneva
- UNOV** UN Office at Vienna
- UNON** UN Office at Nairobi

Based on the UN Department of Public Information DPI/2342-March 2004

Appendix 6:

Background data of the Peer Panel members and advisors

Peer Panel members

Gerhard Siegfried (Panel Chair) is currently head of the controlling division within the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), which is based in Berne, Switzerland. He joined SDC in 1988 and has worked in the organization for 6 years in organization and personnel development, 10 years in operations in East Africa and 4 years in evaluation and controlling. Mr. Siegfried has introduced systematic assessments tools for personnel development into SDC, has worked a lot for a new Swiss role in harmonization and alignment in Eastern Africa and has further developed the SDC evaluation function. He has participated in many joint evaluations and some peer reviews.

Anne Bichsel has been an evaluation officer in the Controlling Division at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Berne, Switzerland since the end of 2001. Before joining SDC, she was a foreign policy analyst in the Centre for Analysis and Prospective Studies in the Swiss Foreign Ministry, which she joined following a posting as economic and political analyst at the US Embassy in Bern. In 1992–1998 she represented Alliance Süd, a coalition of large Swiss development NGOs in Washington, D.C., where she worked on World Bank, IMF and GEF issues. In 1990–1992 she conducted public awareness campaigns on environmental issues for Alliance Süd in Switzerland. She is a cultural anthropologist with extensive research experience in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Rachel Sauvinet-Bedouin has more than 20 years professional experience, a large part of which is related to evaluation. She is a senior evaluation officer and, since March 2008, is office in-charge of the FAO Independent Office of Evaluation. She leads and/or manages major complex and strategic evaluations and reports directly to Senior Management and Governing Bodies of the Organization. During these years, she has been working for multilateral agencies, specializing in the fields of rural development, food security and vulnerability information, analysis and policy and disaster preparedness. She participates on behalf of the office in various inter-agency initiatives, including active participation in steering groups of inter-agency evaluations and she co-chairs the UNEG Task Force on Evaluation Quality Enhancement. Prior to her joining FAO, she was an economist in the Agriculture Department of the Asian Development Bank. Her background is in economics.

Vibecke Dixon has been an Evaluation Advisor in Norad's Evaluation Department in Oslo, Norway since 2008. Previously, she was Associate Partner in Nordic Consulting Group (1997–1999), where she conducted programme and country

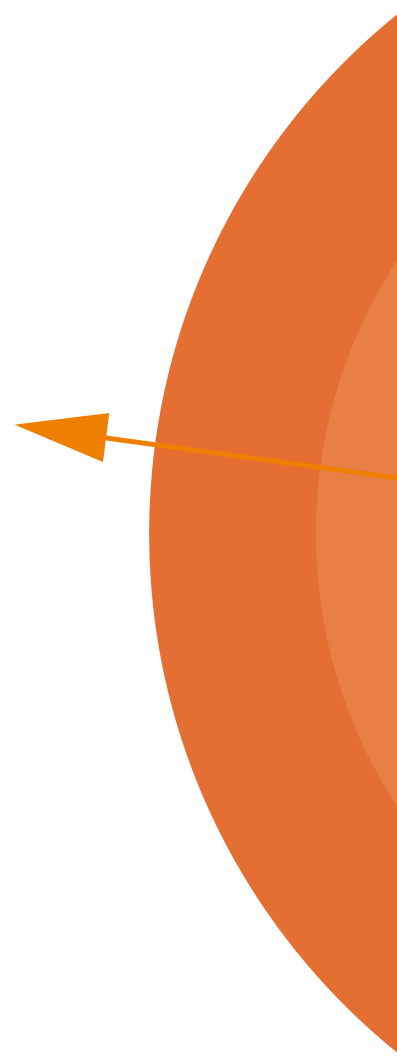
evaluations and studies for Multilateral and Bilateral development institutions. From 1999–2002, she headed IFAD’s (UN International Fund for Agricultural Development) Gender Programme in East and Southern Africa, based in Rome, Italy. Ms Dixon worked for UNICEF Pakistan in 2003–2004, developing a five-year strategy for Girls’ Education. She has also worked as an independent consultant for Multi- and Bilateral agencies for several years, mainly conducting evaluations, studies and programme appraisals in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. She has, furthermore, taught Political and Economic Anthropology and Anthropology of Development at Goldsmiths College, University of London, and has been a Guest Lecturer and External Examiner in Development Studies at Oslo University College. She is a social anthropologist with extensive research experience of Nicaragua and Cuba.

Belén Sanz is Head of the Evaluation Unit in the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Her academic background is in Social Anthropology, with postgraduate studies in both Anthropology and Evaluation of Public Policies. Previous to the UN, Ms Sanz worked as Head of Evaluation in Spanish Development cooperation, and acted as Vice-Chair of the DAC / OECD Evaluation Network. She has experience in the evaluation of numerous development projects, programmes and strategies in different sectors, as well as on gender equality issues.

Peer Panel advisors

Stein Hansen, a graduate in economics from the University of Oslo in 1968, is currently senior economist, partner and Chairman of the board of Nordic Consulting Group AS (NCG), Norway. He has been an NCG partner since NCG was formed in 1983. Before that he served for 6 years as Vice-President in charge of economic and social analyses at Norconsult AS, Norway, after two years as an economics researcher at Harvard Institute for International Development, Harvard University. He was Associate Professor of Economics at Molde University College, Norway 1971–1975, and research economist at Norway’s Transport Economics Institute since 1968. Mr. Hansen has world-wide experience in the evaluation of development-related policies, projects and organizations, and has done extensive economic project and policy analytic work in the fields of environment, natural resources, energy, transport, agriculture, water resources and macro-policies (structural and sectoral adjustment reforms and poverty reduction strategies, etc).

Urs Zollinger, is founder member and partner of King Zollinger & Co. Advisory Services (Zurich) a consultancy specialized in multilateral development cooperation. Before founding King Zollinger in 2003, he worked for the Swiss Foreign Ministry (1999–2003) representing Switzerland on the Executive Board of the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Earlier, he served in the UNDP Evaluation Office in New York (1997–1999). Prior to this, he worked for the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in India (1995–1997). He obtained his Master’s degree in economics from the University of St. Gallen in 1992 and is currently a guest lecturer at the University of Berne.



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