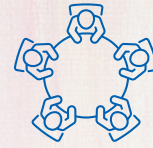




**unesco**



**DIVISION OF  
INTERNAL  
OVERSIGHT  
SERVICES**

Evaluation Office

# **UNESCO Evaluation Policy**

## **2022-2029**

**IOS/EVS/PI 202**

# Foreword by the Director-General



Faced with emerging conflicts, faced with contemporary challenges such as the climate emergency and technological revolutions, faced with persistent inequalities in our societies, UNESCO's mandate has never been more relevant, or our action more ambitious.

And to act in such a diversity of fields, UNESCO can count on the passion, enthusiasm and collective intelligence of thousands of devoted civil servants.

This intelligence is of course deployed in projects and initiatives. However, it is also visible in the time taken for reflection and self-appraisal, which allows all UNESCO's teams to keep adapting to a changing reality.

This time for appraisal and evaluation, when our Organization learns from past actions to prepare future projects, is precisely the focus of our evaluation policy. The revised UNESCO Evaluation Policy for 2022 to 2029, approved by the Executive Board, establishes a framework for this process and reiterates the principles that make it such a valuable tool – the principles of independence, proximity with the field, and transparency.

First of all, this means the independence of the UNESCO Division of Internal Oversight Services, which has a high degree of autonomy.

However, as this revised evaluation policy shows, a single centralized service cannot cover all of UNESCO's many components, programmes and projects. Nor can it go into detailed analysis or develop in-depth understanding of all the subjects necessary to reach useful and swiftly actionable conclusions. To do this, the Division of Internal Oversight Services works with experts who understand, better than most, our Organization's complex and constantly changing reality.

That is why this revised evaluation policy puts so much emphasis on decentralized evaluation. Carried out by agents and civil servants who are familiar with local circumstances, this type of evaluation sheds light on the way in which results are achieved in the field, and sets out tangible avenues for improvement.

In other words, UNESCO's evaluations must always be carried out at the grass roots level. In the same spirit, our revised policy recommends that evaluations should also be public and transparent – so they can give rise to new ideas and methods in all of our Organization's services and sectors; so everyone can track their progress and benefit from their conclusions.

For reflections and appraisals must always be followed by decisions and changes – hence the need for each evaluation to include clear recommendations, whose implementation is closely monitored, as underlined in the revised policy.

Independence, proximity to the field, transparency: to meet these objectives and join the institutional movement within the United Nations in recent years, our revised evaluation policy complies with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group. Indeed, in this field, as in many others, the agencies, funds and programmes that form this family have much to learn from each other.

*Audrey Azoulay*

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# I. Purpose, status and scope of the revised policy

1. This revised evaluation policy outlines the overall framework, principles and rationale for evaluation, and describes the evaluation architecture in UNESCO.<sup>1</sup> Its overarching purpose is to strengthen performance, independent oversight and the organization's evaluation culture, thereby contributing to accountability, learning and evidence-based decision-making. The policy applies to corporate evaluations commissioned by the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) Evaluation Office and decentralized evaluations commissioned by other UNESCO entities<sup>2</sup> such as Field Offices, Programme Sectors and Category 1 Institutes. It applies to all UNESCO staff who play a role in planning and managing evaluations, and who use evaluation evidence to strengthen their work.
2. The evaluation policy responds to the call for rigorous, timely and reliable evaluative evidence to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its premise of leaving no one behind. It is meant to contribute to the realization of UNESCO's institutional strategic objectives and programme outcomes as outlined in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41C/4) and Programme and Budget (C/5), as well as sectoral and intersectoral outcomes. It further serves to improve the performance of UNESCO's two global priorities, namely: Africa and gender equality.

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1 This policy does not provide operational details of products, processes and methods of evaluation that may need frequent updating. The detailed guidance is presented in the IOS Manual on Evaluation and regularly updated within the framework of this revised evaluation policy.

2 The term "other UNESCO entities" is used throughout the policy and is understood to include programme sectors, headquarters central services, field offices, or offices away from headquarters and Category 1 Institutes.

## II. Rationale for a revised policy

3. Transformative global events have shaped the Organization since the endorsement of the 2014 UNESCO Evaluation Policy. Most notably: the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); reform of the UN Cooperation system;<sup>3</sup> the urgency of the environmental situation; and the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these global developments, the revised policy touches on the importance of system-wide evaluation, and incorporating environmental and sustainability considerations into all evaluations.
4. This revised policy builds on the 2014-2021 policy and underwent an internal and external consultation process. It also considers the 2019 Peer Review of the UNESCO Evaluation Function which concluded that UNESCO has made significant progress towards ensuring its evaluations are independent and credible, whilst also acknowledging that, in the coming years, it must focus its efforts on further strengthening its decentralized evaluation function. Consequently, this revised policy introduces a more detailed framework for evaluations commissioned by other UNESCO entities.
5. At its 189th session,<sup>4</sup> the UNESCO Executive Board invited the Director-General to revise the evaluation policy for the 2014-2021 period. The revised policy is in line with the planning cycle of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (41 C/4) for 2022-2029.

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3 The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda established a global commitment to partner with and among countries to achieve seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To deliver on the SDGs, the UN has gone through a repositioning of its development system introducing "Cooperation Frameworks" which represent the UN's collective offer and roadmap to support countries in addressing SDG priorities and gaps. The Cooperation Framework now guides the entire programme cycle driving planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of collective UN support for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

4 189 EX/Decision 16, para. 8.

### III. Definition and purpose of evaluation

6. This policy is guided by the [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\) Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) which define transparent and ethical processes, as well as the key evaluation principles of **independence, impartiality, credibility and usefulness**. Evaluation in UNESCO abides by universally shared values of equity, justice, human rights, gender equality and respect for diversity, as well as the systematic integration of social and environmental considerations.
7. UNESCO subscribes to the UNEG definition of evaluation as: “an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders”.
8. In UNESCO, evaluations are the main independent sources of evidence for programme review. They provide insight on the relevance of a programme (i.e. “are we doing the right things?”) and on their effectiveness and efficiency (i.e. “are we doing things right?”). They are an opportunity for learning, adaptive management, a source for informed decision-making and a component for trust-building.
9. Evaluations are distinct and differ from other oversight functions or forms of assessments, such as:
  - Appraisals (a critical assessment of the potential value of an undertaking before a decision is made to implement it);
  - Monitoring (the continuous assessment of the actual situation compared to the programming information originally defined, in order to keep track of implementation and progress towards the achievement of results, and take remedial actions when needed<sup>5</sup>);
  - Audits (an assessment of the adequacy of management controls to ensure the economical and efficient use of resources; the safeguarding of assets; the reliability of financial and other information; the compliance with regulations, rules and established policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organizational structures, systems and processes); and
  - Research (a systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge).
10. Evaluation in UNESCO serves the following purposes:
  - **Learning.** Evaluations generate knowledge on results and the factors that underly them. They analyze context, counterfactuals and alternative explanations. In so doing, they help explain positive and negative outcomes to better understand how programmes are designed; if and how they make a difference; and identify what works, what does not and why.
  - **Accountability.** Evaluations reveal results achieved and demonstrate to stakeholders (such as UNESCO Member States, donors, beneficiaries and partners) if resources have been used

<sup>5</sup> [Results-Based Management \(RBM\) approach as applied at UNESCO Guiding Principles](#). BSP/RBM/2008/1.REV.10, Paris, January 2022. p. 76.

efficiently by accounting truthfully how work was done and resources were spent. Overall, evaluations promote a culture of accountability.

- **Decision-Making.**<sup>6</sup> Evaluations aim to independently provide assurance and generate evidence for better decision-making.<sup>7</sup> They provide credible insights and data to inform decision-making processes on planning, budgeting, implementation, and reporting. The evidence helps programme managers, Senior Management and UNESCO's Governing Bodies decide how to improve programmes, and whether to continue, reorient or terminate them. Lessons learned from evaluations inform the design of future programmes.
11. The strategic value of evaluation is recognized and explicitly articulated in UNESCO's approved 41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy for the 2022-2029 period which states that "evaluations (...) will inform Senior Management and Governing Bodies, staff and partners on actions that need to be undertaken to improve the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of UNESCO's actions".

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6 Evaluation is not a decision-making process per se. It can, however, serve as an input to provide decision-makers with knowledge and evidence about performance and practice.

7 IOS mission statement (2021).

## IV. Evaluation norms and standards

12. UNESCO strives to meet internationally recognized evaluation principles, norms and standards. The most important foundational document guiding and harmonizing evaluation practice across the United Nations (UN) system, and which UNESCO adheres to, is the [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#). UNESCO also follows the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#) and [the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender in Evaluations](#).<sup>8</sup>
13. The UNEG Norms and Standards, summarized below, apply to the entire UNESCO evaluation system, including corporate evaluations commissioned and/or conducted by the IOS Evaluation Office, and decentralized evaluations commissioned by other UNESCO entities. They also outline the provisions and concrete means by which the IOS Evaluation Office and other UNESCO entities conducting evaluations work to uphold them.

UNEG NORMS	PROVISION AND PRACTICE AT UNESCO
<p><b>Independence</b></p> <p>The ability to conduct or commission evaluations without undue influence by any party and free access to the needed information.</p>	<p>All UNESCO evaluations are undertaken by independent consultants/firms and/or dedicated evaluation staff from the IOS Evaluation Office;</p> <p>Structurally, the IOS Evaluation Office is positioned independently from management and programmatic functions. It consults but autonomously sets the UNESCO corporate evaluation work plan and decides if, and when, to present evaluation reports to the Executive Board, other governing bodies or other appropriate levels of decision-making;</p> <p>The Director of IOS has full discretion and control over the corporate evaluation budget which consists of 3% of programme sectors' operational programme budget;</p> <p>The corporate evaluation budget, at the discretion of the Director of IOS, can be pooled and used for cross-sectoral evaluations, as well as UN system-wide or other joint evaluations with partners.</p> <p>The decentralized evaluation budget is determined at project/programme planning as 3% of the budgetary envelope.</p>
<p><b>Use</b></p> <p>The clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions and recommendations to inform future actions.</p>	<p>UNESCO evaluation processes involve potential users and stakeholders from the outset to better understand their respective needs and expectations;</p> <p>Evaluation Terms of Reference explicitly state the intended use and users of UNESCO evaluations;</p> <p>All evaluations must develop a communication plan which outlines how findings will be disseminated and targeted with user-friendly modalities;</p> <p>Management follows-up and implements evaluation recommendations, and establishes the way forward and timeframe in a Management Response and Action Plan;</p>

<sup>8</sup> As well as the upcoming UNEG Guidance on Integrating Environmental and Social Impact into Evaluations.



UNEG NORMS	PROVISION AND PRACTICE AT UNESCO
<p><b>Impartiality</b></p> <p>The objectivity, professional integrity and absence of bias at all stages of the evaluation process.</p>	<p>IOS Evaluation Office staff have not been involved in any way in the development, design or management of the evaluation subject;</p> <p>External evaluation consultants have not been involved at any stage of the development, design or management of the project/programme being evaluated;</p> <p>Evaluation Reference groups with balanced representation are established to safeguard impartiality throughout the evaluation process</p>
<p><b>Transparency</b></p> <p>Establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability.</p>	<p>In line with UNESCO procurement guidelines, evaluation consultants and teams are selected through open, competitive and transparent processes;</p> <p>All UNESCO evaluations are made publicly available in a timely manner;</p> <p>All UNESCO evaluations set up a balanced Reference Group which advises and quality assures the evaluation process. It is kept abreast by the evaluation manager of relevant developments throughout the process.</p>
<p><b>Ethics</b></p> <p>Evaluations must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments and must be conducted legally and with due regard to the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its findings.</p> <p>They must also ensure that sensitive data is protected and cannot be traced to its source.</p>	<p>All evaluators, whether IOS staff or consultants, must conduct evaluations in line with the <a href="#">UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation</a>;</p> <p>All consultants must sign the <a href="#">Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation</a>;</p> <p>When designing an evaluation, the questions, approaches and methods explicitly integrate considerations related to social and cultural environments, customs and beliefs;</p> <p>The evaluation team incorporates a human rights and gender equality based approach;</p> <p>All evaluation Terms of Reference establish how confidentiality will be respected, and how data will be stored and protected;</p> <p>Evaluators respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and where applicable in anonymity;</p> <p>Evaluators are not expected to evaluate the personal performance of individuals.<sup>9</sup></p>
<p><b>Credibility</b></p> <p>Evaluation results are derived from the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data, and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence. Credibility requires that evaluations are ethically conducted and managed by evaluators and staff that exhibit professional and cultural competencies.</p>	<p>The rationale for an evaluation is stated clearly from the outset;</p> <p>Information on evaluation design and methodology is shared with relevant stakeholders during the evaluation process;</p> <p>Job descriptions for evaluation professionals in IOS are informed by the <a href="#">UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework</a>;</p> <p>All staff with evaluation responsibilities undergo training on evaluation;</p> <p>UNESCO evaluations undergo a quality assurance process;</p> <p>The UNESCO evaluation function undergoes a periodic UNEG peer review.</p>

<sup>9</sup> Suspected cases of wrongdoing must be reported to the appropriate investigative body.

UNEG NORMS	PROVISION AND PRACTICE AT UNESCO
<p><b>Inclusion, Gender equality and Human Rights</b></p> <p>Evaluation planning, design, methodology and analysis explicitly addresses inclusivity, human rights, gender equality. Inclusion, Human rights and gender equality principles are integrated at every stage of an evaluation.</p>	<p>Evaluations integrate the principles of UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality, the Agenda 2030 principle of leaving no one behind and principles of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy;</p> <p>Data is collected from a wide variety of participants with balanced perspectives and fair representation of different points of view;</p> <p>The design of UNESCO evaluations considers issues of inclusion such as which groups benefit, and which groups should but do not equally benefit, from a programme/project;</p> <p>Concerns of inclusion/ exclusion, equity-/equality are integrated into data analysis including, when relevant, group disaggregation;</p> <p>Insofar as possible, evaluation teams are diverse in terms of gender, and skills and competencies. They are geographically and culturally balanced;</p> <p>All evaluation consultants are supported by the <a href="#">UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality</a>, as well as other UNESCO relevant support material;</p> <p>Evaluation methodology explicitly addresses issues of gender equality and women's empowerment;</p> <p>The quality assessment of evaluation reports includes an assessment against the criteria of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).</p>

14. Evaluation in UNESCO also includes a norm on environmental sustainability, meaning evaluations must seek ways to embed environmental considerations by formulating and asking evaluation questions to understand how the programme, project or intervention interacted with and affected the natural environment.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This UNESCO norm will take effect with the adoption of this revised evaluation policy. UNEG and the IOS Evaluation Office will provide guidance in due course on this emerging evaluation norm.

## V. Roles and responsibilities for evaluation

15. An effective evaluation function and thriving evaluation culture requires the engagement and commitment of many actors throughout the evaluation process. Therefore, all UNESCO staff have a role to play and a responsibility to safeguard the evaluation norms outlined above.
16. The **General Conference and Executive Board** collectively safeguard the independence of the evaluation function. The Executive Board endorses the evaluation policy. It also reviews and discusses the UNESCO corporate biennial evaluation plan, the annual synthetic review and individual corporate evaluation reports presented by the IOS Evaluation Office. It discusses and draws on the findings and recommendations of evaluations for its oversight and approval to inform organizational policy, strategy and programmes.
17. The **Director-General** is accountable for UNESCO results. S/he safeguards the integrity of the evaluation function, ensuring its independence from operational management and activities. S/he creates an enabling environment and culture which recognizes the importance of evaluation as a key decision-making, accountability and learning mechanism. S/he ensures the evaluation function has the human and financial resources necessary for its operation. The Director-General also ensures that business unit managers respond to and use evaluation findings in their operational, strategic, policy and supervisory functions, and that the relevant units take appropriate follow-up action on evaluation recommendations.
18. In accordance with its Charter, **IOS** is a consolidated oversight mechanism covering evaluation, internal audit and investigation. IOS is the custodian of evaluation in UNESCO. The **IOS Director** is ultimately responsible for the UNESCO evaluation function. S/he approves and can modify the biennial UNESCO corporate evaluation plan before it is presented to the Executive Board. S/he is appointed for one non-renewable six-year term to ensure full independence of the function. The **IOS Head of Evaluation** has the primary responsibility for ensuring that the evaluation policy is upheld, the evaluation function is fully operational, and that evaluation work is conducted according to the highest professional standards, and in line with UNEG Norms and Standards.
19. The **IOS Evaluation Office** is responsible for upholding the norms and standards as set out in this revised policy. Specifically, it:
  - Conducts or commissions corporate evaluations according to a biennial evaluation plan;
  - Prepares the annual synthetic review of UNESCO evaluations;
  - Presents the results of corporate evaluations and the annual synthetic review of evaluations to the Executive Board and other Governing Bodies;
  - Develops and facilitates access to evaluation knowledge, guidance and support materials through a consolidated UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub;
  - Maintains a publicly accessible repository of UNESCO evaluations;
  - Produces and updates the UNESCO Evaluation Manual, and other guidance documents including on innovative methodological approaches;
  - Nurtures links with national and regional evaluation societies and other communities of evaluation professionals to expand the pool of evaluation consultants;

- Provides targeted, UNESCO context specific, evaluation capacity building and relevant materials;
- Maintains and supports the Evaluation Focal Point (EFP) Network;
- Outlines and communicates decentralized evaluation quality assurance process;
- Communicates and disseminates evaluation findings through multiple channels;
- Tracks the development of management responses and action plans for evaluations managed by other UNESCO entities;
- Contributes to the UNESCO corporate register of oversight recommendations;
- Reports on recommendation implementation and follow-up for corporate evaluations; and
- Promotes and participates, when relevant, in system-wide and joint evaluations.

20. **UNESCO Senior Management**, including the Assistant Director Generals (ADGs), Directors of Bureaux and Divisions consider the strategic implications of evaluation findings, and are accountable for the implementation and use of recommendations. They provide the Management Response to corporate evaluation recommendations under their purview, and assurance to the Director-General that evaluation findings have been integrated in knowledge management and decision-making in their respective sectors, programmes or units. ADGs ensure the allocation of 3% of Programme sector operational budget for evaluation in line with this policy. They should appoint an EFP and recognize and support his/her responsibilities as outlined in this policy and in the *EFP Terms of Reference* issued by the IOS Evaluation Office

21. **Directors and Heads of Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes** ensure the relevant provisions of the evaluation policy are applied in the conduct of evaluations at their respective levels of the Organization. This requires effective evaluation planning and adequate resources. In particular, they are responsible for:

- Ensuring all voluntary contribution programmes and projects of more than USD 1.5 million allocate 3% of funds for monitoring and evaluation purposes, and carry out (an) external evaluation(s) in line with this policy, and other UNESCO and IOS Evaluation Office guidance material;
- Guaranteeing the development of a Management Response and Action Plan to address evaluation recommendations, as well as proper follow-up to these recommendations;
- Appointing an EFP;
- Making publicly available and disseminating all external evaluations commissioned by their Field Office or Category 1 Institute;
- Encouraging the use of evaluations by reflecting on lessons learned and sharing evaluation reports and associated recommendations with project managers at the inception phase of new projects;
- Annually providing the IOS Evaluation Office with the decentralized evaluation plan of the field office or institute under their purview, as well as all completed evaluation reports so that they can be included in the Synthetic Review; and
- As part of United Nations Country Teams (UNCT), participating in the planning and implementation of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) evaluations.

22. The **Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC)**. IOS operations are subject to review by the OAC, which advises the Director-General in fulfilling his/her oversight responsibility and reports to the Executive Board once a year. It counsels on the adequacy and effectiveness of the evaluation function and relevant policies, strategies, priorities and work plans.
23. The **Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP)** promotes and supports evaluation as part of its mandate to strengthen results-based management (RBM), and improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Specifically, it:
- Uses evaluation findings to inform organizational strategies and implementation reports;
  - Monitors and reports on the overall implementation of UNESCO's Programme and Budget;
  - Provides guidance on the process of self-assessment of UNESCO's approved corporate results;
  - Provides strategic advice/input to evaluations on strategic planning, RBM, monitoring and UN system-wide issues, and ensures follow-up to evaluations in its areas of competence as applicable;
  - Promotes the interconnectedness of monitoring and evaluation and the importance of solid monitoring for quality evaluations through training and guidance documents; and
  - Proposes future evaluations on matters of strategic importance.
24. **Evaluation Focal Points (EFPs)** support the overall quality of decentralized evaluations by acting as the main point of reference for all evaluation-related matters in their respective administrative unit. Specifically, EFPs should:
- Ensure their evaluation knowledge, skills and competencies remain up to date by regularly completing the online evaluation training, and participating in other evaluation-related trainings;
  - Coach, assist and accompany programme staff in the management of decentralized evaluations, including the dissemination of findings;
  - Support the dissemination of IOS corporate evaluation reports and knowledge products; and
  - Actively participate in the EFP Community of Practice by sharing experiences and good practices with IOS and other EFPs, and by disseminating relevant knowledge and guidance material to other colleagues in their respective units.
25. **UNESCO staff in Headquarters and field entities** monitor the performance of their respective programmes, projects, services or functions to generate useful information and facilitate corporate and decentralized evaluations. Project staff may manage a decentralized evaluation and, should reach out to their respective EFP for support. Staff may also be called on to represent key stakeholders and sectors in evaluation reference groups.

## VI. UNESCO's evaluation architecture

26. UNESCO evaluations cover activities funded by regular budget and voluntary contributions. They fall under two main categories: corporate evaluations and decentralized evaluations.
27. **Corporate evaluations** are conducted or commissioned by the IOS Evaluation Office. They are undertaken by external independent evaluators and/or staff of the Evaluation Office.
28. UNESCO's Medium-term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4) sets out four ambitious cross-cutting objectives to meet the Organization's contribution to resolving major global issues within its specific mandate and across its fields of competence.<sup>11</sup> UNESCO corporate evaluations strive to assess these multi-sectoral responses to complex issues,<sup>12</sup> and focus on high-level strategic and/ or organization-wide themes.
29. In addition to corporate evaluations, the IOS Evaluation Office also conducts an annual synthetic review of evaluations, extracting systemic and cross-cutting findings and lessons from across the universe of UNESCO evaluations. The review is presented to the Executive Board and made publicly available.
30. **Decentralized evaluations** are managed by the UNESCO entity responsible for the intervention subject to the evaluation. This may be a project, programme, portfolio of projects implemented within a country or across a range of countries or a larger programme/entity. These evaluations are undertaken by external independent evaluators who have not been involved in the design, implementation or management of the subject under evaluation. The most common type of decentralized evaluation concerns initiatives funded by voluntary contributions.<sup>13</sup> Decentralized evaluations conducted during the project cycle (mid-term) provide insights on how to improve project performance and necessary course corrections. When conducted at the end of a project (final), they offer valuable lessons for the design of future projects and play a critical role in enhancing UNESCO's accountability to its donors, partners, beneficiaries, governments and other stakeholders. The nature and type of evaluation depends on the size and complexity of the project.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO Medium term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4).

<sup>12</sup> Cross-cutting thematic areas referenced in the 41C/4 include: scientific and environmental education; media and information literacy and digital competencies; artificial intelligence, digital ethics and innovation; learning for diversity; and indigenous knowledge, cultures and languages.

<sup>13</sup> There are a few cases of programmes covered by regular programme funds conducted as decentralized evaluations.

<sup>14</sup> The IOS Evaluation Office Manual and other IOS guidance documents provide further details on types of evaluations.

## Complementarity with other UNESCO Oversight and Planning Functions

31. The UNESCO Evaluation Office is part of a consolidated oversight mechanism covering evaluation, internal audit and investigation, and is co-located in IOS.<sup>15</sup> Despite their different roles and nature, there are commonalities and opportunities for synergies between these oversight functions. In particular, the work plans of the internal audit and evaluation functions are reviewed to identify areas of complementarity, and avoid duplication or overlap. Relevant findings from internal audit and evaluation reports feed into the planning of engagements and analysis. Joint engagements may also be undertaken, most notably in the form of Performance Audits which are joint assessments by the IOS Evaluation and Internal Audit Offices. These assessments integrate the focus of audit on risk management, management control and governance processes with the focus of evaluation.
32. BSP provides support for results-based programming and implementation throughout the Organization by helping programmes design their Theory of Change (ToC),<sup>16</sup> results and reporting. IOS and BSP work collaboratively on the development of monitoring frameworks and final reporting, including the preparation of self-evaluations.<sup>17</sup> Evaluations from IOS feed into the Strategic Results Report (SRR) prepared by BSP.

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15 IOS Charter.

16 A ToC is a representation of how a development intervention is expected to lead to desired results.

17 A self-evaluation is an assessment of a completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results, conducted by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of the intervention.

## VII. Planning, design, management and resources for evaluations

33. Evaluations require adequate planning, both with regards to their timing and allocation of appropriate time and resources. At the corporate level, it also means ensuring coverage of all strategic outcomes, priorities and cross-cutting themes over the eight-year period covered by the UNESCO Medium Term strategy 2022-2029.
34. Evaluation plans are prepared at various levels of the Organization. The IOS Evaluation Office, in close consultation with UNESCO Programme Sectors and relevant entities, and in line with explicit decisions of the Governing Bodies, establishes a biennial corporate evaluation plan. The corporate plan is presented to the Executive Board as part of the IOS Annual Report and may be adjusted to reflect emerging organizational priorities and new projects, as well as requests from the Executive Board, other Governing Bodies and Senior Management.
35. UNESCO entities should develop an annual evaluation plan for their unit and share it with the IOS Evaluation Office. Identifying upcoming evaluations requires a close monitoring of project/programme cycles, evaluation provisions in relevant documents and stakeholder expectations.
36. The parameters outlined in the table below assist in the plan and design of both corporate and decentralized evaluations.

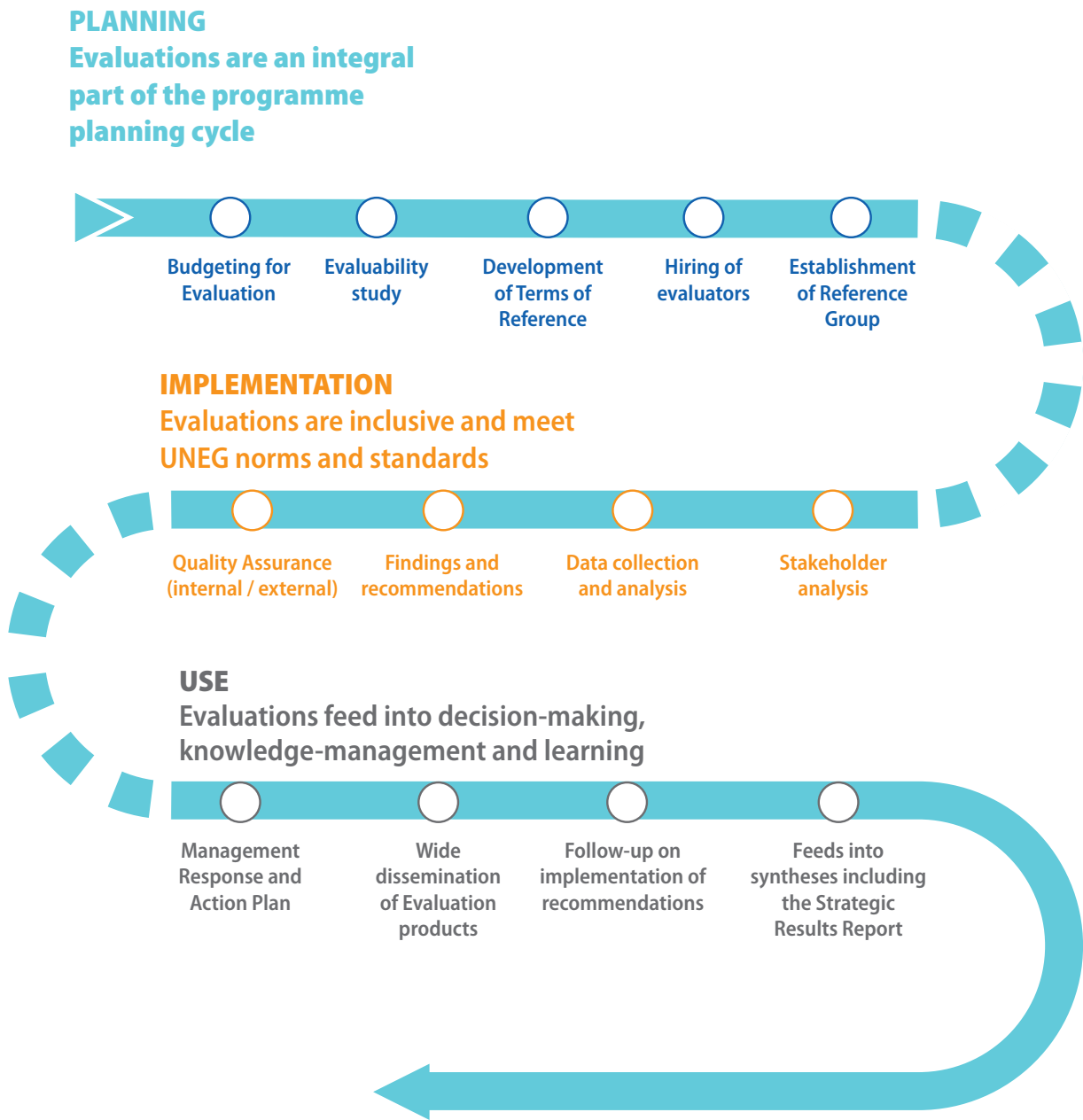
PARAMETERS FOR EVALUATION PLANNING AND DESIGN	
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the subject of the evaluation an issue of strategic significance that contributes to UNESCO's mandate, strategic plan, global priorities or cross-cutting themes?</li> <li>• Is the subject of the evaluation of critical relevance for key governance issues, policy or programme formulation?</li> <li>• Are there challenges in programme delivery that need to be assessed prior to going forward?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has there been considerable investment (time, funds) in the subject of evaluation?</li> </ul>
<b>Periodicity and Timing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the subject of the evaluation ever been evaluated and, if so, how recently? Given other developments and upcoming decisions, what is the best timing?</li> <li>• Are there upcoming decisions that need to be informed by evaluation evidence?</li> <li>• Can the evaluation findings feed into the UNSDCF and/or next country programme?</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge gap</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the evaluation help fill a vital knowledge gap in relation to the thematic focus of UNESCO?</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can the subject of the evaluation be meaningfully evaluated?</li> <li>• Is there sufficient data available?</li> <li>• Are key stakeholders taking ownership in the conduct and use of an evaluation?</li> </ul>



PARAMETERS FOR EVALUATION PLANNING AND DESIGN	
<b>Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any factors (political, economic, financial, structural, organizational, performance-related) that may prevent the subject of the evaluation from meeting its objectives?</li> </ul>
<b>Replication or scaling up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would the evaluation help determine success factors that allow replication/scaling up?</li> <li>• Is the intervention a pilot and/or an innovative initiative?</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are key stakeholders requesting the evaluation?</li> <li>• Is this part of a mandatory donor or trust fund evaluation?</li> <li>• Is this part of the mandatory requirements established in UNESCO's evaluation policy?</li> <li>• Is there a statutory requirement for an evaluation?</li> </ul>
<b>Joint and system-wide evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the evaluation present an opportunity to evaluate joint activities/programmes/objectives (e.g., UNSDCF, SDGs) or contribute to a larger effort by partners (e.g., UNESCO National Commissions, national government)?</li> </ul>

37. UNESCO's evaluation process consists of three broad phases: (i) evaluation planning; (ii) implementation; and (iii) use. The main steps of these three phases are summarized below.

Figure 1: The Evaluation Process



## Resources

38. To generate credible and independent evidence, the evaluation function needs a secure budget and skilled human resources.

### Human resources

39. Under the IOS Director (D2) and Head of Evaluation (P5), the IOS Evaluation Office is comprised of professional staff capable of conducting or managing corporate evaluations; supporting decentralized evaluations; providing guidance, including quality assurance; and ensuring evaluation capacity development across UNESCO. Evaluation Office staff should meet the requirements of the [UNEG Competency Framework](#).
40. For UNESCO entities, a network of EFPs support the decentralized evaluation function. They and other staff members are tasked with supporting decentralized evaluation processes and the application of the provisions of this evaluation policy. Senior managers and staff members managing evaluations are responsible for selecting independent evaluation consultants with sufficient experience and skills in the appropriate field/s. To the extent possible, UNESCO evaluations should be conducted with support from local evaluative expertise.

### Financial resources

41. In line with best practice across UN agencies, UNESCO sets an overall target of 3% of programme expenditure from both regular programme resources and voluntary contributions as the recommended minimum level of investment in evaluation.
42. All UNESCO initiatives funded by voluntary contributions with a budget larger than USD 1.5 million are subject to an external independent evaluation that follows the guidelines established in this policy and other IOS Evaluation Office guidance material. Funding should be directed primarily to the conduct of baseline studies, and mid-term and final evaluations. It can also contribute to evaluation capacity-building, monitoring activities or national evaluation capacity development. Up to one-third of funds can be used as pooled funding for evaluations of relevant cross-cutting, thematic or system-wide topics, regional capacity development activities, the dissemination of lessons learned and synthesis work conducted by the IOS Evaluation Office. The allocation of resources for evaluation, and the timing and nature of planned evaluations should be stipulated in cooperation/framework agreements with donors and project documents.
43. Programme sectors contribute 3% of their respective operational or activity budget for the conduct of corporate evaluations, synthetic reviews, system-wide evaluations, quality assurance and communication activities. This amount also contributes to the IOS Evaluation Office's support to the decentralized function including: building the evaluation capacity of UNESCO staff; managing the UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub; and animating the EFP network. The Director of IOS is responsible and accountable for the use of these resources. Full transparency on how evaluation resources are allocated is guaranteed through annual reporting to all key stakeholders.
44. The IOS Evaluation Office engages in targeted resource mobilization on a bilateral or multilateral basis for specific evaluations or capacity development activities. Member States and donors are encouraged to voluntarily contribute resources to a Special Account 'to support the UNESCO evaluation function or specific corporate evaluations under the management of the IOS Evaluation Office'. As part of this strategy, the IOS Evaluation Office also encourages in-kind non-monetary contributions from Member States and other sources (e.g. the private sector) in the form of secondments and/or provision of short-term expertise.

## VIII. Evaluation dissemination and use

45. All UNESCO evaluations should be planned and implemented in a way that ensures findings are used for learning, accountability and decision-making. An evaluation that is not used as planned implies wasted resources and missed opportunities.
46. Enhancing use requires focusing on the needs of identified users and ensuring that their active participation in all stages of the evaluation process is a priority. It also entails: asking the right questions at the right time; guaranteeing understanding of and access to evaluation findings; and actively following up on what happens after the evaluation. The steps for promoting evaluation use are outlined below.
47. **User participation.** Understanding who (be it groups or individuals) will use an evaluation and what type of information they need, value and for what purpose, is important when designing an evaluation. Involving users early in the scoping and development of the Terms of Reference strengthens ownership. In addition to its quality assurance role, the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) is key mechanism for facilitating stakeholder engagement and should be established for all UNESCO evaluations. ERGs accompany the evaluation process from the outset sharing subject matter expertise, background and contextual knowledge, as well as ideas for involving potential users in the evaluation process. The ERG also provides methodological advice and quality assurance of the evaluation process and its deliverables.
48. **Targeted communication strategies and evaluation products.** To further encourage use of evaluations, findings should be easy to access, in an appropriate format and speak in ways that meets the needs and preferences of users. Evaluation findings and recommendations should be clearly presented so that they readily understood by target audiences. In UNESCO, communications around evaluations should be tailored to the different audience(s) either through reports, narrative summaries, infographics, informal presentation sessions, videos, etc. At the design stage, all evaluations should develop a communication plan which outlines tailored strategies to disseminate the evaluation findings and mechanisms to monitor subsequent use.
49. All UNESCO evaluation reports should be made publicly available. Corporate evaluation reports are available on the UNESCO IOS website and are uploaded to the UNEG website for greater use among UN partners. Programme Sectors should provide public access to relevant corporate evaluations on their dedicated websites. Evaluations commissioned by Programme Sectors, Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes should be made available on their respective websites.

## IX. Evaluation follow-up

50. Evaluation recommendations are developed after evidence is analyzed to provide concrete ideas for improvement. The recommendation design process must improve ownership and accountability for recommendations. Unless steps are taken to implement recommendations and incorporate lessons into decision-making, evaluations are of limited value. Senior management are responsible for the initiative being evaluated, and are therefore ultimately accountable for the timely implementation of evaluation recommendations.
51. All UNESCO evaluation recommendations should be clear, unambiguous, feasible and within adequate human and financial resources. They should clearly state who is accountable for the recommendation and refer to the evidence that supports the recommendation. They should also, whenever possible, define criteria to help determine when a recommendation has been implemented and can be closed.
52. All UNESCO evaluations, whether corporate or decentralized, require a Management Response and Action Plan. The Management Response is management's overall acknowledgement of the report findings and recommendations. The Action Plan specifies in detail what actions needed are needed, and the timeframe and accountability for implementing the recommendation. These instruments are critical in signaling where accountability lies and confirming a strong commitment to follow-up.
53. The IOS Evaluation Office manages the monitoring of recommendation implementation of corporate evaluations. The IOS Evaluation Office shall provide a periodic overview of corporate recommendation implementation rates and overdue recommendations to Senior Management, the OAC and the Executive Board, as well as an overview of implementation of management responses from decentralized evaluations.

## X. Evaluation quality assurance and capacity development

54. Quality assurance ensures compliance with evaluation norms and standards throughout the evaluation process, from development of the evaluation terms of reference, to delivery of the evaluation report, dissemination and communication of findings, and implementation of recommendations.
55. All UNESCO evaluations should meet quality standards defined by UNEG and detailed in UNESCO guidance documents. Key questions and areas for review should be clear, coherent and realistic. Evaluation design, data collection and analysis should reflect professional standards, with due regard for special circumstances or limitations based on the context of the evaluation. To ensure this, the professionalism of evaluators, and their intellectual integrity in applying standard evaluation methods, is critical.
56. The IOS Evaluation Office has established quality assurance mechanisms based on relevant UNEG guidance documents, as well as a UNESCO-specific checklist with criteria for assessing quality that can be used by evaluation managers.
57. Evaluation quality is periodically reported on in the annual Synthetic Review Report. In so doing, capacity development and/or other alternative support processes are put in place to ensure UNESCO takes action on the basis of high-quality evaluations.

### Elements to ensure the quality of all UNESCO corporate and decentralized evaluation processes and products

- Setting aside adequate resources and a realistic timeframe
- Ensuring a participatory process that allows for active engagement of key evaluation stakeholders through, for example, reference groups.
- Developing evaluation Terms of Reference that define the scope, rationale, methods, potential evaluation questions, the intended use and timing.
- Integrating considerations of gender, human rights, inclusion and the environment.
- Defining evaluation questions that are clear, coherent and realistic.
- Building on explicit results frameworks and theories of change when available.
- Identifying an evaluation consultant or evaluation team that has the requisite experience and knowledge.
- Using appropriate evaluation methods.
- Integrating quality reviews in each step of the evaluation process. (see UNEG quality checklist)
- Including clear sections on findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- Ensuring that all evaluations have a Management Response and an Action Plan.
- Developing a tailored communication and dissemination plan.
- Putting in place a system to follow-up on evaluation recommendations.

58. The IOS Evaluation Office supports the strengthening of evaluation capacity across UNESCO by:  
(a) providing online or face-to-face evaluation trainings; (b) promoting and scaling up evaluation e-learning among UNESCO staff; (c) sharing and disseminating evaluation guidance materials; (d) providing individual tailored support during evaluation planning, management and use; and (e) managing the EFP Network.
59. Before undertaking an evaluation process, UNESCO staff managing an evaluation should consult with their respective EFP or the IOS Evaluation Office, and complete the evaluation e-learning course in MyTalent.

# XI. System-wide evaluation and partnership

60. As per the 41C/4, UNESCO will systematically engage with other UN organizations in a system-wide effort to maximize the strength and delivery capacity of the UN system at large, and make the entire range of expertise residing therein available to Member States in a coherent and coordinated manner.<sup>18</sup> Further, UNESCO is fully committed to supporting independent, system-wide evaluation, including UNSDCF evaluations. Independent system-wide evaluation is a systematic and impartial assessment of the combined contributions of UN entities towards the achievements of collective development objectives. It is a whole-of-UN approach with a focus on results and learning for achieving the SDGs.<sup>19</sup>
61. UNESCO will maintain partnerships in support of the aims of this updated evaluation policy, including with other UN agencies, international financial institutions, governments, evaluation associations, non-governmental organizations, foundations and academic institutions. It will also support the work of UNEG in enhancing partnerships for evaluation.
62. UNESCO remains committed to improving its performance against evaluation related key indicators set out in the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which aims to strengthen the utility of evaluation by integrating a gender equality analysis lens throughout the process.

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<sup>18</sup> In line with United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

<sup>19</sup> Draft United Nations System-Wide Evaluation Policy Shared Learning and Accountability for Delivering Results on the Sustainable Development Goals February 2022. Prepared by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).



## XII. Implementation and review of this policy

63. This policy supersedes the previous policy for 2014-2021 (196 EX/24.INF.) and becomes operational with its adoption by the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2022. All UNESCO Management and staff will be responsible for implementing the policy.
64. The IOS Evaluation Office will operationalize this policy through an evaluation strategy. Existing guidance materials and instructions will also be updated to reflect the contents of this policy.
65. This policy was externally reviewed by UNESCO's independent OAC, as well as a panel composed of senior UNESCO staff, and external evaluation peers and experts.
66. Evaluation performance across UNESCO will be measured periodically by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The KPIs will provide data on different dimensions of evaluation performance. The IOS Evaluation Office will regularly monitor implementation of the policy and report on achievements, challenges and lessons learned in its Annual Report to the Executive Board.
67. A peer review of the evaluation function, including the policy, will be carried out in 2024, five years after the previous UNESCO Peer Review of the Evaluation Function (2019).

# Annex 1. Theory of Change for Evaluation at UNESCO

## IMPACT

### ENHANCED PERFORMANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF UNESCO IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



#### OUTCOMES

##### Longer-term

- UNESCO programmes are strengthened by evaluation evidence
- Resources are mobilized and partnerships developed based on evaluation evidence
- UNESCO is a recognized partner for delivery in the UN system
- UNESCO is a more effective organization

##### Medium-term

- Decisions of governing bodies and management are informed by evidence generated through evaluations
- Donors and partners have confidence in UNESCO
- Programme and project design is informed by evaluations
- UNESCO has a strong evaluation culture

##### Short-term

- Evaluations effectively demonstrate the results of UNESCO's work
- Evaluations provide an evidence base for learning
- Evaluations are inclusive in their design, implementation and dissemination

#### ASSUMPTIONS

- Senior management takes ownership of recommendations and implements them in a timely manner
- sufficient time dedicated to evaluations at meetings of governing bodies, management, etc.
- Commitment of SMT to building an evaluation culture



#### OUTPUTS

- High quality evaluation reports that meet UNEG Norms and Standards
- Evaluation products are tailored to audiences and widely disseminated
- Evaluation KPIs are regularly shared through an oversight dashboard
- Evaluation findings are presented in a timely manner to relevant audiences
- Recommendations are clear, unambiguous and feasible to implement

- Evaluations reach the right audiences
- Evaluation teams/consultants have the right expertise and competencies
- Evaluability of programmes/availability of and access to monitoring data
- Existence of RBM framework
- Appropriate budget available for evaluation
- Evaluation Focal Point network has stable and committed membership



#### ACTIVITIES

- Production of evaluation guidelines and tools
- Evaluation planning integrated into programme cycle
- Management and conduct of corporate and decentralized evaluations
- Evaluation capacity development
- Stakeholders are actively engaged in evaluation process
- Provision of quality assurance and backstopping to evaluation
- Knowledge management of evaluation evidence

# Annex 2. Glossary of Key terms<sup>1</sup>

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

**Coherence:** The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. There are two types of coherence:

- **Internal coherence:** It refers to the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by UNESCO as well as their consistency with relevant international norms and standards to which UNESCO adheres.
- **External coherence:** It refers to the consistency of UNESCO's interventions with those of other actors in the same context (e.g. consistency with Member States' development needs and priorities; and consistency with United Nations partners, particularly as it concerns issues of system-wide coherence). This includes complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

**Efficiency:** The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. (i.e., conversion of funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc) into outputs and outcomes. It is a measure of how economically inputs are converted into results. Responding to the question: "Are we doing the things right?"

**Effectiveness:** The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups, and taking into account their relative importance.

**Impact:** The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. It seeks to identify effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion.

**Relevance:** The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country and partner/institution<sup>2</sup> needs, policies and priorities and continue to do so, if circumstances change. Responding to the question: "Are we doing the right things?"

**Sustainability:** The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

## TYPES OF EVALUATION

**Corporate evaluations:** Thematic or cross-cutting evaluations of large UNESCO programmes or areas of work which assess areas of high strategic importance. They are conducted and/or managed by the IOS Evaluation Office.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the definitions provided are taken from the OECD Development Assistance Committee [Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management](#) (2002), as updated by the OECD Development Assistance Committee's Network on Development Evaluation's [Better Criteria for Better Evaluation report – revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use](#) (2019). Others are drawn from UNESCO [Results-Based Management Guidelines](#) (2022).

<sup>2</sup> Partner/institution includes government (national, regional, local), civil society organizations, private entities and international bodies involved in funding, implementing and/or overseeing the intervention.

**Decentralized evaluations:** Independent external evaluations of a project, a portfolio of projects implemented within a country or across a spectrum of countries or a larger programme/entity. They are directly managed by the concerned Programme Sector, Field Office or Category 1 institute that was responsible for the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation.

**Mid-term evaluation (also known as Formative evaluation):** An evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs.

**Final evaluation (also known as Summative evaluation):** An evaluation conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced.

**Independent system wide evaluation:<sup>3</sup>** A systemic and impartial assessment of the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the combined contributions of the United Nations entities towards the achievement of collective development objectives and results. This includes an assessment, inter alia, of the implementation of policies, strategies, programmes and activities, as well as implementation of system-wide mandates and institutional performance issues.

**Meta-evaluation:** Evaluations designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It can also be used to denote the evaluation of an evaluation to judge its quality and/or assess the performance of the evaluators. In UNESCO IOS conducts and annual meta evaluation known as a Synthetic Review.

**Self-evaluation:** An assessment of a completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results, conducted by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of the intervention. A self-evaluation is conducted at different levels of intervention (e.g. project, country, expected result) and is usually recorded in SISTER<sup>4</sup> and in a final narrative report in the case of extrabudgetary project.

## EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS

**Evaluation Focal Point (EFP):** A programme specialist designated within a UNESCO Programme Sector, a Field Office or a Category 1 institute to support their entity in the establishment and implementation of the decentralized evaluation plan, in the follow-up to evaluations and the effective use of findings for future programming and learning. She/he acts as liaison between their entity and IOS, whilst also contributing to the development of an evaluation culture across UNESCO.

**Evaluation Reference Group:<sup>5</sup>** A reference group is established during the planning phase of an evaluation. It is composed of a core group of stakeholders of the evaluation subject who can provide different perspectives and knowledge on the subject, including at least one member from the UNESCO entity responsible for managing the evaluation process and representatives of the entities responsible for the promotion of Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality. It may also include, as relevant, staff from other UNESCO Programme Sectors, Field Offices and Category 1 institutes, an implementing partner, national authorities, and donor (if an extrabudgetary project evaluation) as relevant. The reference group should be consulted on the evaluation design in order to enhance its relevance; on the preliminary findings to enhance their validity; on the recommendations to enhance their feasibility, acceptability and ownership; and at any point during the evaluation process when needed. Evaluation reference groups have the following responsibilities: to review and comment on Terms of Reference; to participate in the selection of external evaluation teams; to help steer the evaluation by providing

3 [Policy for Independent System-Wide Evaluation of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System](#) (2014).

4 The System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results is UNESCO's internal programming, monitoring and reporting system.

5 [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (2016).

technical advice as necessary; to provide feedback on deliverables such as the draft and final evaluation report; and to help ensure that management uses evaluation findings and recommendations it accepted in the management response to improve programme design and implementation.

**UN-SWAP:** The United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) is an accountability framework designed by UN WOMEN that enables to assess the extent to which gender issues are mainstreamed systematically and measurably into all major institutional functions of the UN system entities. It also focuses on results and includes monitoring activities and outcomes for gender-related sustainable development goal results.<sup>6</sup> Performance indicator 4 specifically measures the consideration of gender in evaluations.

**Disability SWAP:** The System-Wide Action Plan for Disability inclusion is a means to build internal capacity, providing clear guidelines for the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities across all pillars and at all levels of the UN work. The associated accountability framework will measure their progress against a set of common indicators.<sup>7</sup> Performance indicator 4 specifically measures disability inclusion in evaluations.

## EVALUATION AND RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT TERMINOLOGY

**Action Plan:** It should detail specific actions to implement those recommendations that were agreed to by management in the Management Response. These actions should be concrete, objectively verifiable, time-bound and clear on the responsibilities for implementation.

**Evaluability:** The extent to which an activity or a programme can be evaluated in a reliable, valid and credible fashion.

**Evaluand:** The subject of an evaluation.

**Inputs:** The financial, human, and institutional (material, technological and information) resources used for the intervention.

**Management Response:** The management response provides management's views of the evaluation recommendations, including whether and why management agrees or disagrees with each recommendation and whether it accepts the recommendation or not.

**Output:** Changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products, goods and services induced by the completion of activities within an intervention. An output is the first effect of the intervention, which contributes to the achievement of outcome(s). It is within the control of the Organization/implementing team and attributable to it.

**Outcome:** Changes in the institutional and behavioural capacities or development conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of impacts. It expresses the desired change undertaken by the direct beneficiary, which is expected to be induced by the implementation of the intervention.

**Results-Based Management:** It is a management strategy which reflects the way an organization applies processes and resources to undertake interventions to achieve desired results (i.e., outputs, outcomes, impacts) integrating evidence and lessons learned on past performance and actual results into management decision-making.

<sup>6</sup> See more information here: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>

<sup>7</sup> See more information here: [https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/disability\\_swap\\_onepager.pdf](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/disability_swap_onepager.pdf)

**Results Framework:** Building on the Theory of Change, it is designed to guide the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting at all levels of the Organization. It provides the internal logic ensuring that each programme and project is consistent in itself, thereby favouring its quality. It links the impact to the activities and related key underlying assumptions. It also presents quantitative performance indicators and related qualitative assessment measures with associated information such as baselines, sources, means of verification and targets allowing to assess the level and/or degree of the achievement.

**Theory of Change (ToC):** A representation of how an intervention is expected to lead to desired results. The ToC facilitates the process of making sense of how an intervention works and is intended to lead to change. The ToC illustrates the pathway of change and articulates the causal relationships and key underlying assumptions used to explain the change process. Other related terms include but are not limited to **impact pathway, logic model** and **intervention logic**.

**Triangulation:** The use of three or more theories, sources or types of information, or types of analysis to verify and substantiate an assessment to overcome the bias that conforms from single informants, methods, observer or theory studies.

## OVERSIGHT FUNCTIONS

**Appraisal:** An overall assessment of the relevance, feasibility and potential sustainability of an intervention prior to a decision of funding.

**Audit:**<sup>8</sup> An independent and objective assurance and advisory activity performed by IOS that is guided by a philosophy of adding value to improve the operations of UNESCO. It assists UNESCO accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to assess and improve the effectiveness of the Organization's risk management and internal control.

**Evaluation:** An assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

**Investigation:** A specific examination and determination of the veracity of allegations about misconduct or other irregularities affecting UNESCO, its projects, assets or personnel. It allows for the provision of evidence for eventual prosecution or disciplinary measures.

**Monitoring:** A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the key stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. Monitoring is undertaken by the implementing team of the intervention.

Its purpose is to continuously assess the actual situation compared to the programming information originally defined in order to keep track of implementation and progress towards the achievement of results and take remedial actions when needed.

8 IOS Internal Audit Charter and Policy as reflected in Annex III of the [IOS Annual Report](#) (2015)

**Performance Audit:**<sup>9</sup> It builds on traditional financial statement audit concepts by expanding the focus beyond financials to programmes and processes. It also emphasizes accountability for outputs and outcomes with due regard to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

**Review:** An assessment of the performance of an intervention, periodically or on an ad hoc basis. Whilst similar to an evaluation, a review is a less in-depth and comprehensive assessment, that tends to emphasize operational aspects.

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9 Maria Barrados and Jeremy Lonsdale, *Crossover of Audit and Evaluation Practices: Challenges and Opportunities*, Comparative Policy Evaluation Volume 26, Routledge (2020)



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