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DIVISION OF
INTERNAL
OVERSIGHT
SERVICES
Evaluation Office

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UNESCO 2022-2029 Evaluation Strategy

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Purpose	3
2. Evaluation Function at UNESCO	3
3. Evaluation Key Results and KPIs	4
Result 1: UNESCO systematically generates relevant evaluation evidence	4
Result 2: Evaluation capacity is strengthened across UNESCO	4
Result 3: UNESCO evaluations are timely, credible and of high quality	5
Result 4: The use of evaluations in UNESCO is increased	5
4. Monitoring the Evaluation Strategy	6
5. Theory of Change for Evaluation at UNESCO	7

Acronyms

OAC	Oversight Advisory Committee
EFP	Evaluation Focal Point
IOS	Division of Internal Oversight Services
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
C/4	UNESCO's Medium-term Strategy 2022-2029
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

1. Introduction and Purpose

This document presents the 2022-29 Evaluation Strategy for UNESCO. The purpose of the Evaluation Strategy is to establish a comprehensive framework to strengthen and provide accountability for the evaluation function across UNESCO. It includes four key areas of work:

- 1) Systematic generation of evaluation evidence**
- 2) Evaluation capacity development**
- 3) Improving the quality and credibility of evaluations**
- 4) Enhancing the use of evaluations.**

The strategy also introduces Evaluation Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure progress and identify areas for potential improvement in each area of work.

The 2022-29 Evaluation Strategy is framed by the [2022-29 UNESCO Evaluation Policy](#) as well as the [UNESCO Medium Term Strategy 2022-2029 \(UNESCO 41 C/4\)](#). The UNESCO 41 C/4 sets out four strategic cross-cutting objectives and eleven related outcomes reflecting UNESCO's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within its specific mandate.

This Evaluation Strategy takes into consideration experience with implementing the previous Evaluation Strategy and reports from the 2020 Peer Review of the UNESCO Evaluation function, the 2019 MOPAN assessment of UNESCO and the UNESCO IOS Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC). The reports have highlighted that while the UNESCO Evaluation Office's corporate evaluation function has progressed and is considered mature, the decentralized evaluation function requires further investment to strengthen coverage and evaluation quality. Further progress is also required in adequately funding decentralized evaluations, effectively communicating evaluation results, and increasing the use of evaluations.

2. Evaluation Function at UNESCO

The purpose of evaluation in UNESCO is to strengthen learning, accountability and evidence-based decision-making to enhance the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of programs, policies and initiatives. As described in the Theory of Change for Evaluation at UNESCO (see Section 5) of this document, through building a strong evaluation culture UNESCO will ultimately become a more effective organization in contributing to the SDGs.

The UNESCO evaluation system is composed of corporate evaluations managed by the IOS Evaluation Office, and decentralized evaluations managed by other UNESCO entities such as Programme Sectors, Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes. All UNESCO evaluations must adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group ([UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)). They underscore the principles of independence, use, impartiality, transparency, ethics, credibility and the integration of inclusivity, gender equality and human rights during all stages of an evaluation.

The UNESCO Evaluation Policy outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of the IOS Evaluation Office, Senior Management (including Assistant Director-Generals and Directors of Bureaus and Divisions), Directors and Heads of Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes, Evaluation Managers, Evaluation Focal Points (EFPs) and UNESCO staff at HQ and field entities. All UNESCO staff have a responsibility to help build a stronger evaluation culture based on the evaluation principles explained above. The [UNESCO Evaluation Manual](#) offers step-by-step instructions for staff managing evaluations. It outlines the approach and methodology to effectively conduct evaluations, adhering to international evaluation standards and the principles set forth in the Evaluation Policy. It also includes tools and templates for each stage of the evaluation process.

3. Evaluation Key Results and KPIs

This section outlines the Evaluation Key Results and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under each area of work. The Evaluation Strategy includes 4 main results and 8 KPIs that differentiate between corporate and decentralized evaluation performance. The Evaluation Office will monitor and report on the KPIs through a dashboard on a six-monthly and annual basis as explained in Section 4) of this document. The Evaluation Office will also monitor other trends in evaluation performance but without specific KPIs. These include, for example, compliance with Evaluation Policy requirements¹, and the number of joint evaluation engagements with other UN agencies.

Result 1: UNESCO systematically generates relevant evaluation evidence

The generation of high-quality evaluation evidence requires adequate planning and funding for evaluations. It is essential to clarify in the planning stage why an evaluation is being conducted in the first place to ensure the evaluation will generate knowledge that is useful and relevant for UNESCO staff and partners. Outcome 1 is measured through the following 2 KPIs:

KPI 1: EVALUATION THEMATIC COVERAGE

Evaluation Priority	KPI	Description	Frequency
Evaluations adequately cover UNESCO thematic areas	Corporate evaluation coverage	# of UNESCO strategic outcomes covered by corporate evaluations	Annual
	Decentralized evaluation coverage	# of UNESCO strategic outcomes covered by decentralized evaluations	Annual

In terms of evaluation financial resources the UNESCO Evaluation Policy sets a target of 3% of the project/ programme budget for evaluation. In addition to financial resources, it is critical to plan for adequate human resources i.e. staff time for managing an evaluation.

KPI 2: EVALUATION FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Evaluation Priority	KPI	Description	Frequency
Evaluations are adequately funded	Financial resources for corporate evaluations	1. Allocations for corporate evaluations 2. Actual expenditures on corporate evaluations	Biennial
	Financial resources for decentralized evaluations	1. Allocations for decentralized evaluations 2. % of project budget actually spent on evaluation	Annual

Result 2: Evaluation capacity is strengthened across UNESCO

Evaluation capacity consists of three interconnected dimensions: individual capacity, organizational capacity, and the enabling environment.

- **Individual capacity:** The ability of individual staff to understand and effectively manage high quality evaluations.
- **Organizational capacity:** The availability of human and financial resources for evaluation, as well as systems that support planning and implementation, quality assurance and oversight, and the use of evaluations for decision-making.

¹ For example, the Evaluation Policy requires that all UNESCO initiatives with a budget larger than \$1.5 million USD must commission an independent external evaluation.

- Enabling environment:** This includes commitment from senior management, a regulatory framework like an Evaluation Policy, and a strong organizational culture of evaluation and results-based management (RBM).

Together, these aspects influence the demand, supply, and utilization of evaluation within UNESCO. They are also reflected in the Theory of Change for Evaluation.

The KPI for Result 2 measures the improvement in individual evaluation skills achieved through the percentage of EFP and staff with evaluation management responsibilities who have completed a relevant evaluation training. This can be an in-person training by the IOS Evaluation Office or an online training e.g. the UNESCO e-learning on evaluation.

KPI 3: COMPLETION OF EVALUATION TRAINING

Evaluation Priority	KPI	Description	Frequency
UNESCO staff have evaluation skills and knowledge	Completion of evaluation training	# of EFPs and evaluation managers who completed a relevant evaluation training	Annual

In addition, the Evaluation Office will also monitor the following dimensions of evaluation capacity on an annual basis:

- # of webinars, # of webinar participants
- # of visits to the Evaluation Knowledge Hub

Result 3: UNESCO evaluations are timely, credible and of high quality

Evaluation results must be timely to inform decisions on continuing, discontinuing, or redirecting a UNESCO policy or program. Additionally, the evaluation must meet high-quality standards to ensure credibility and usefulness. Both timing and quality are crucial for the evaluation's utility.

The UNESCO Evaluation Office has established a quality assurance system which comprises individual technical support throughout the evaluation process. The Evaluation Manual provides specific guidance for ensuring the quality of each evaluation product. After the

evaluation process concludes, an external company undertakes an ex-post quality rating for all completed evaluation reports which is presented to the UNESCO Executive Board.

The two KPIs under Result 3 measure the timely completion and quality of evaluations as follows:

KPI 4: EVALUATION DELIVERY

Evaluation Priority	KPI	Description	Frequency
Evaluations are implemented on time	Corporate evaluation delivery	% of completed corporate evaluations	Annual
	Decentralized evaluation delivery	% of completed decentralized evaluations	six-monthly

KPI 5: EVALUATION QUALITY

Evaluation Priority	KPI	Description	Frequency
UNESCO Evaluations are of high quality	Quality of corporate evaluations	% of corporate evaluations rated satisfactory or above	Annual
	Quality of decentralized evaluations	% of decentralized evaluations rated satisfactory or above	Annual

Result 4: The use of evaluations in UNESCO is increased

The potential use of evaluations is influenced by a range of factors. Elements such as the overall evaluation culture and commitment towards evaluation amongst senior management, and the timing and quality of the evaluation are already mentioned above. Further to this, engaging stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, as emphasized in the [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), is crucial for ensuring ownership and credibility of the evaluation.

As outlined in the Evaluation Policy all UNESCO evaluations must have a management response. The management response mechanism and transparent disclosure and dissemination of evaluation reports are important elements that facilitate the potential use of evaluation findings.

Result 4 is measured through 3 KPIs that focus on the management response follow-up mechanism and on the use of evaluation as reported by UNESCO staff.

KPI 6: COMPLETION OF EVALUATION MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Evaluation Priority	KPI	Description	Frequency
All UNESCO Evaluations must have a management response	Completion of Evaluation Management Response for corporate evaluations	% of corporate evaluations that include a Management Response	six-monthly
	Completion of Evaluation Management Response for decentralized evaluations	% of decentralized evaluations that include a Management Response	six-monthly

While KPI 6 tracks if evaluations have a management response in the first place, KPI 7 assesses the implementation status of the evaluation recommendations.

KPI 7: IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Priority	KPI	Description	Frequency
Evaluation recommendations implemented on time	Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations for corporate evaluations	Implementation status (started/ completed/ pending) of evaluation recommendations for corporate evaluations	six-monthly
	Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations for decentralized evaluations	Implementation status (started/ completed/ pending) of evaluation recommendations for decentralized evaluations	six-monthly

Finally, KPI 8 measures how much UNESCO staff have used evaluation findings, such as for developing new projects or policies or in the context of annual reporting.

KPI 8: EVALUATION USE

Evaluation Priority	KPI	Description	Frequency
UNESCO programmes and policies are informed by evaluations	Evaluation use	Extent to which staff report the use of evaluation for Project Formulation and during Annual Reporting	Annual

4. Monitoring the Evaluation Strategy

The UNESCO Evaluation Office collects information on the Evaluation KPIs every six months or annually to monitor the implementation of the Evaluation Strategy. The KPIs draw on various data sources, including corporate data platforms like UNESCORE MANAGER, the Evaluation Knowledge Hub, the IOS Teammate+ database, information from Field Offices, and external quality assessments of evaluation reports.

The KPI dashboard is shared with UNESCO staff every six months to help them take corrective actions as needed. The Evaluation Office reports on the Evaluation Strategy's implementation through the Annual Report on the evaluation function, which is presented to the UNESCO Executive Board.

5. 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



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