

OIOS Management Actions in Response to UNEG-DAC Peer Review of the Evaluation Function of OIOS-IED		
Recommendations to Improve Credibility		Proposed Management Actions
5.7.1	Update the PPBME in order to align definitions, roles and responsibilities of evaluation on the one hand and audit and investigations on the other.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED AND NOTES THAT IT IS OUTSIDE OF OIOS AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT OIOS believes that the PPBME is indeed in need for an update, and has, through various recent reports, called for its review, clarification and update. However, OIOS does not see the updating of the PPBME as a need for re-alignment of the definitions, roles and responsibilities of evaluation as a separate function from the other oversight functions of audit and investigations. OIOS maintains that evaluation serves an important oversight function and can be effective operating alongside audit and investigations, as long as there is clarity in the distinctiveness of the functions and their operations. Additionally, it should be noted that an update of the PPBME is under the purview of the Secretary-General to initiate, or the General Assembly, to mandate. OIOS can only recommend it, and has already done so. (See Recommendation 2 of OIOS Review of Results -Based Management in the United Nations (A/63/268)
5.7.2	Communicate the distinctiveness of the evaluation function with regards to other functions performed by OIOS, especially to Member States and departments of the Secretariat.	ACCEPTED Since 2008, the OUSG of OIOS had begun organizing a series of meetings with each of the UN Secretariat managers to introduce the OIOS oversight functions of investigation, audit, inspection and evaluation. This programme of introductory meetings will continue until all Secretariat programmes are covered. OIOS envisages that this will be an on-going activity as new USGs are appointed. Furthermore, OIOS has developed an "Oversight Functions Matrix" to help clarify the distinctiveness of each oversight function. IED has also issued a new IED Manual, distinct from the manuals of IAD and ID and all three will be launched in 2009, as part of OIOS' 15 th Anniversary celebrations. OIOS is also part of the UNEG Distinctiveness of Evaluation Task Force, which will issue a UNEG position paper to further clarify the distinctiveness of evaluation from other oversight functions. All these activities will help communicate the distinctiveness of the three oversight functions.
5.7.3	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.	NOT ACCEPTED As per paragraphs 16-21 of the above letter.
5.7.4	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 misperception that evaluation is a sub-task of audit.	THIS RECOMMENDATION IS OUTSIDE OF OIOS AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT The Independent Audit Advisory Committee of the United Nations was established as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly to serve in an expert advisory capacity and to assist the General Assembly in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities (A/RES/60/248). As such, this recommendation is outside of OIOS authority to implement.
5.7.5	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.	ACCEPTED BUT PARTIALLY OUTSIDE OF OIOS AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT The D2 Director vacancy will be announced within the first quarter of 2009 and will be filled as soon as possible within Secretariat procedures. With regard to strengthening of IED's staff capacity by recruiting more senior staff, subject to the financial context for the UN during the submission of budget for 2012-13, OIOS will either propose additional senior evaluation staff posts, and/or request reclassification and/or upgrading of existing posts in order to recruit more senior staff. However, the decision will rest with the General Assembly.
5.7.6	Increase the training budget of evaluation staff significantly in order to up-grade evaluation and thematic knowledge and skills among both junior and senior staff.	ACCEPTED BUT PARTIALLY OUTSIDE OF OIOS AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT OIOS will continue to prepare training plans that meet the full need for adequate upgrading of evaluation and thematic knowledge and skills among its staff. Approval of the training budget, however, is under the authority of the General Assembly. OIOS will also seek to better leverage its limited training funds by identifying core evaluation skills and competencies where office-wide training of all staff should be conducted. For example, it recently had a one-day training work shop for the office on the conduct of focus groups.

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<p>5.7.7 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 expertise 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 evaluation.</p>	<p>PARTIALLY ACCEPTED Since 2008, with the significantly increased non-post budgetary resources available to IED, it has been able to recruit consultants as team members for many of its evaluations. For example, the teams for the evaluation of DPA, Knowledge Management in the Secretariat, DPKO UNOCI mission, PBSO/PBF, DPKO DDR, OHRM, and OHCHR have all included senior level expert consultants as members of the team. IED will continue to do utilize a mixed team approach to the conduct of its evaluations in order to strengthen the thematic expertise and knowledge of its evaluation teams.</p> <p>With regard to the recommendation to outsource more evaluations, OIOS notes the Administrative Instruction – ST/AI/1999/7 - which limits the use of external consultants by the Secretariat to those skills and knowledge areas “not normally possessed by regular staff of the Organization”, and which “cannot be met from within staff resources of the Secretariat”. Aside from the administrative constraint to using external consultants, from experience, OIOS also notes that the use of external consultants also carry additional risks for quality control as well as transaction costs and inefficiencies. As such, while OIOS can, and will, utilize external consultants to strengthen thematic expertise, as recommended, the management and conduct of evaluations will continue to be done by IED staff working with external experts. OIOS perceives strong benefits to a mixed team approach to ensure that evaluations have both internal and external expertise, and validation.</p>
<p>5.7.8 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.</p>	<p>ACCEPTED As IED moves towards a risk-based approach for planning its evaluations, there is no constraint under current practice that requires adjustment to the evaluation cycle to improve consultation. As per the newly issued IED Manual, each evaluation requires at the outset adequate consultation with stakeholders, while maintaining independence. IED will review its recent practice in consultation and to identify specific steps or ways in which participation, ownership, learning and understanding can be enhanced within the IED evaluation cycle.</p>
<p>5.7.9 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), and 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.</p>	<p>UNDER CONSIDERATION OIOS agrees that the recommendation would help improve the level of information available in IED’s reports. However, current work processes, capacities and related resources do not allow for the additional effort required to produce a separate, publication of a comprehensive report, in addition to the truncated one that is submitted formally to the General Assembly. Implementing the recommendation would entail additional resources as well as expansion of internal work processes to produce the proposed comprehensive report, possibly at the expense of reducing the number of assignments currently achievable. IED will review current work processes and capacities to explore the possibility of producing the proposed comprehensive report, on a trial basis, to see if such a production is feasible, given time, resource and workload considerations.</p>

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5.7.10	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 there-fore on lessons learned.	ACCEPTED IED has, since a self-evaluation based on UNEG norms and standards conducted in 2005, noted its weakness in ability to assess programmes' outcomes and impacts. This weakness was due to a range of factors; inadequate resources and lack of methodology on the part of then OIOS-MECD, and unclear objectives and lack of baseline data on the part of subject entities/evaluands. IED has taken several strategic initiatives to improve its focus on outcomes and impacts; including – Division management emphasis given to focus on outcome and impacts via specific directions given to evaluation team leaders, clarification of the role of IED vis-à-vis IAD assignments, with the former to focus more on outcomes and impact, and larger budget allocations to conduct of surveys for impact assessments; for example, the local population surveys contracted for evaluations of UNOCI, OHCHR and UNRWA. This is now expected to be the norm for all IED programme evaluations, subject to budget availability. IED will review its newly issued IED Manual to ensure that there is a strengthened focus on issues of outcomes and impact. With regard to more emphasis on learning aspect of evaluations and therefore on lessons learned, please see response to recommendation 6.7.11 below.
Recommendations to Improve Utility		Proposed Management Actions
6.7.11	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 and Standards, in particular norm 1.1; i.e. that all stakeholders should give accountability and learning dimension of evaluation equal attention.	ACCEPTED OIOS agrees that a better balance needs to be struck between the accountability and learning aspect of IED evaluation. OIOS proposes to improve on the learning aspects of evaluation through – i. piloting a "lessons learned" section in new evaluation assignments, which will be subject to review at the end of 2010 for possible incorporating as a norm, and as part of the IED Manual. ii. institutionalize on a more regular basis the conduct of lessons learning debriefings at the end of each evaluation, and capturing these lessons in a more systematic manner, as is presented as standard IED practice in the IED manual. iii. Briefings with programme managers following the conclusion of an evaluation for the explicit purpose of sharing lessons learned obtained through the evaluation
6.7.12	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.	ACCEPTED PARTIALLY OIOS has established as a department wide policy, a risk-based planning approach for its oversight work. IED has developed a risk based approach accordingly for its evaluation work planning. This will continue as it constitutes a critical aspect of OIOS support to the Organization in mitigating risk of its operations. Nevertheless, OIOS is committed to also be responsive, within its limited resources, to requests from individual programmes/departments for OIOS evaluations. Currently, IED has the capacity to undertake up to two ad hoc evaluations a biennium; for 2008-09, IED has responded to PBSO's request to conduct an evaluation of its PBF, to OHCHR's request to conduct an evaluation of its Torture Fund, and to DGACM's request to evaluate its IGM strategy. IED will review the demand for OIOS evaluation in consultation with Secretariat programme managers, and explore, in future budget proposals, requests for additional resources to better respond to ad hoc requests.
6.7.13	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 the Member States.	ACCEPTED IED has, since its 2005 self-evaluation, noted the need to establish a stronger relationship between its evaluations and the agenda items of the Committees and Commissions of the UN. Its ability to do this has been limited by the lack of forward planning and agenda forecasting by the Secretariats of these entities beyond a year or two, except in rare cases. IED will hold consultations with the Secretariats of these Committees and Commissions as part of its strategic planning process, without compromising its independent, risk assessment priorities.

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<p>6.7.14 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. The management response should be published together with IED evaluation reports but as a separately identifiable document or attachment and should not be inserted in the main text.</p>	<p>ACCEPTED PARTIALLY IED has already established the practice of requiring a management response stating its position vis-à-vis the thrusts of the evaluation, as well as for an action plan for implementation of accepted recommendations. IED further monitors the implementation of recommendations on a six-monthly basis through its monitoring programme “Issue Track”, and the management compacts of Secretariat managers with the SG already contain an indicator on implementation of OIOS recommendations. With regard to the recommendation that the management response be published together with IED evaluation reports as a separately identifiable document, IED will pilot requesting Secretariat programme managers to issue their responses in a new publishable format, that will be placed with the IED reports available on the Secretariat intranet – Iseek. However, it will not be possible to publish formally the programmes’ management responses due to the current word-length limitations for IED reports. Secretariat programme managers</p>
<p>6.7.15 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.</p>	<p>NOT APPLICABLE Issue Track is by design a system used to facilitate the tracking and reporting of recommendation implementation. Qualitative dimensions, such as the risk level of the recommendation issued and target date for implementation, which may serve as one proxy for the complexity of a recommendation, have recently been introduced into the system. Additionally, the system is equipped to capture other quantitative information, such as cause, impact and focus area. The use of these fields is at the discretion of each OIOS functional area.</p> <p>While IED recommendations are housed in the same Issue Track database as investigation and audit recommendations, recommendations for each functional area are already in a “separable tracking system”, which may only be modified and viewed by respective divisional staff. Additionally, the system affords each division the ability to run various summary reports on their respective recommendations. It is only select staff from the Office of the Under-Secretary-General that may view data in aggregate across all divisions for reporting purposes to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly. As noted in the report, OIOS will soon launch a new version of Issue Track with additional functionalities. As such, at this stage, OIOS does not see any merit in further exploring the issues raised with regard to Issue Track.</p>
<p>6.7.16 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 need-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 a practice in most evaluation offices of multilateral or bilateral agencies.</p>	<p>ACCEPTED BUT NOT UNDER OIOS AUTHORITY While GA reports are public documents, other non-GA evaluation reports are available to all Secretariat staff via its intranet. OIOS is limited by General Assembly resolution in making its non-GA reports publicly available as recommended. This is outside of OIOS authority. Any change to make OIOS reports publicly available would require a General Assembly resolution to that effect.</p> <p>OIOS will, however, propose a formal communications strategy for OIOS evaluations, addressing the dissemination of reports, recommendations and lessons learned to relevant audiences.</p>

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<p>6.7.17 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.</p>	<p>ACCEPTED BUT NOT FULLY UNDER OIOS AUTHORITY</p> <p>IED/OIOS currently has a mandate to provide methodological support and guidance to Secretariat programmes, including to self-evaluation units. It has provided ad hoc support in this regard by, for example, advising on evaluation TORs, assisting with data collection protocols and reviewing draft reports. The General Assembly is currently considering a proposal, with which OIOS concurs, that this support function be moved to the Department of Management.</p> <p>OIOS acknowledges the value and utility of the self-evaluations conducted by decentralized evaluation units. However, OIOS asserts that such evaluations can not substitute for the independent and objective assessments undertaken by IED. OIOS also notes that even if decentralized units are strengthened, it will maintain its current mandate to independently evaluate all 27 Secretariat programmes on a regular and periodic cycle.</p>