UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

UNEG Guidelines for Professional Peer Reviews

These Guidelines have been prepared by the UNEG Peer Review Working Group and are intended to facilitate the preparation, conduct and use of future UNEG Peer Reviews and other modalities for the assessment of UN evaluation functions.

The Guidelines, originally developed in 2014 and considered an ongoing draft, build on the UNEG Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of the UN Organizations (2011) and incorporate a normative assessment framework based on the revised UNEG Norms and Standards (2016).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
EVSA	Expert Validated Self-Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICU	Independence, Credibility and Utility
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MAR	Multilateral Aid Review
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network,
PRWG	Peer Review Working Group
PVSA	Peer Validated Self-Assessment
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1. Introduction

1.   Since 2005, 23 Peer Reviews (PRs) of the evaluation functions of United Nations (UN) agencies have been carried out by panels of professional evaluation peers[1]. These reviews have been used for accountability and learning purposes, and have provided advice, technical exchange and support in improving evaluation systems and products. They have also used and promoted common quality standards, primarily the UNEG Norms and Standards[2], for evaluation functions in the UN system. An "evaluation function" goes beyond the central evaluation office/unit to encompass organisational actors such as management or decentralized evaluation systems.

2.   These Guidelines facilitate the preparation, conduct and use of future UNEG Peer Reviews and other modalities for the assessment of UN evaluation functions. Specifically, they provide:

> a.   A basis for organizing and conducting reviews and assessments, including necessary cooperation agreements and a clear overarching question to guide assessments.
>
> b.   A normative framework, including an agreed set of principles, standards and criteria against which performance should be assessed.
>
> c.   Roles and responsibilities for each review/assessment approach.
>
> d.   A set of procedures for planning, assembling and triangulating evidence and findings. These lead directly to the peer review/assessment's final result which ought to be an exchange about the conclusions drawn between evaluation professionals and the peer reviewers, with the goal of learning and improving evaluation functions.

3.   The Guidelines were originally developed by the UNEG Peer Review Working Group following the 2014 UNEG Annual Meeting (AGM) and revised following agreement at the 2021 UNEG AGM. They build on the ***UNEG Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of the UN Organisations*** (2011)[3] and incorporate a normative assessment framework based on the revised UNEG Norms and Standards (2016). The major change in the revision has been the introduction of 'lighter' versions of the peer review for smaller organisations. There were also some refinements made to better clarify how peer review panels are convened and operate.

2. Purpose of UNEG Peer Reviews and Assessments

4.   The ***UNEG Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN Organisations*** (2011) describes a peer review as a "systematic examination and assessment of the performance of an organisation by peers with the ultimate goal of helping the organisation improve its policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established standards and principles".

5.   UNEG Peer Reviews and related assessment approaches align closely with this description and serve to:

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[1] See Annex 2.
[2] Available at www.unevaluation.org/2016-Norms-and-Standards.
[3] Available at www.unevaluation.org/peerreviewframework.

- **Provide independent and professional assessments of evaluation functions** and the extent to which UNEG norms and standards have been adopted. In addition to accountability, they identify areas to improve evaluation policy, as well as the practice, mandate, independence and credibility of the evaluation function.

- **Enhance the use of evaluation** by management, governing bodies and other stakeholders. UNEG Peer Reviews/Assessments increase understanding of the utility of evaluations as well as the need for credibility. Reviews can recommend improvements in the planning, conduct (improved evaluation practice) or use of evaluations, including better integration of the evaluation function and findings into performance management, project/programme development, strategy and policy development. In addition, UNEG Peer Reviews/Assessments provide a way of "**evaluating the evaluators**" against the UNEG Norms and Standards, thereby increasing trust and confidence in UN evaluation functions and **accountability**.

- **Provide support and mutual learning** through the sharing of good practices, tools and experiences. This contributes to the enhanced professionalization of UN evaluation functions.

6.   The key question common to all UNEG assessment modalities is:

Are the agency's evaluation function and its products independent, credible and useful for learning and accountability purposes?

7.   The use of UNEG Peer Reviews/assessments goes beyond the evaluation function to intended users and stakeholders, including internal management, governing bodies, partner governments and donors.

3. Key Principles of UNEG Peer Reviews and Assessments

8.   The core assessment criteria for UNEG Peer Reviews/assessments are:

- **Independence of evaluations and evaluation system(s).**

    The evaluation function and process should be impartial and independent from both policy-making processes as well as an organisation's delivery and management.

    Independence is a recognized pre-condition for credibility, validity and usefulness. Indicators of independence are broadly covered by UNEG Norm 4 and amplified in the relevant Standards.

    Independence enables the impartiality of evaluations (Norm 5) which, together with quality (Standard 5) and transparency (Norm 7), lead to credibility.

- **Credibility of evaluations.**

    The credibility of evaluations (Norm 3) depends on the expertise and independence of the evaluators and the transparency of the process. Credibility requires that evaluations report successes and failures, and publicly disclose evaluation findings (Standard 1.5).

    Organisations being reviewed should fully participate in evaluations to promote credibility and commitment.

    Assessments of credibility include whether and how the organisation's approach to evaluations relates to internationally agreed principles, goals and targets (Norm 1); fosters partnerships; and helps build ownership and capacity, as appropriate.

- **Utility of evaluations.**

    To have an impact on decision-making, evaluation findings must be perceived as relevant and useful. They should be presented clearly and concisely, and fully reflect the different interests and needs of the many parties involved. Utility is covered in UNEG Norm 2 and amplified in the relevant Standards.

4. Assessment Modalities

9.   This section describes the modalities used to evaluate, review or assess the evaluation functions of UNEG member agencies. The descriptions address the pros and cons of each review / assessment modality against Independence, Credibility and Utility (ICU) criteria.

10.   Annex 2 situates these review and assessent modalities in the context of other assessments of UN evaluation functions such as the OIOS Dashboard, Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessments and Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) evaluations.

Modality 1: UNEG Peer Validated Self-Assessment

11.   The UNEG Peer-Validated Self-Assessment (PVSA) is an assessment against the UNEG normative framework prepared by the evaluation function itself. The self-assessed 'maturity' of the function with respect to a set of criteria is supported by detailed reference to sources of evidence.

12.   The collated evidence is assessed, verified and triangulated by a small team that includes two senior members of staff from UNEG member agencies, or one senior member of staff from a UNEG agency and one from an EvalNet member agency. Ideally, one panel member should be an evaluation 'Head'.

13.   The team makes a three or four day visit to the function to engage with evaluation staff and key stakeholders. This visit forms the basis of a short report containing a series of observations aimed at enhancing the evaluation functions. The use of independent consultants to support this process is optional and depends, at least in part, upon available resources.

Pros and cons of a PVSA		
	Pros	**Cons**
Independence	• The modality offers an independent viewpoint beyond pure self-assessment	• Limited independence as it relies heavily on information collated in a self-assessment; there may be a bias towards positive information presented to the panel which has limited time to verify, triangulate or collate additional information.
Credibility	• The views of evaluation experts from the UN and bilateral donors provide credibility to a 'light' exercise focused on improvement of the function. • Covers all UNEG Norms and Standards and assesses the quality of the evaluation reports.	• Details within the assessment may be limited which may curtail credibility for accountability purposes compared to Peer Reviews / Independent Evaluations.
Utility	• A PVSA furnishes useful feedback for the evaluation function for improvement purposes and raises the profile of the function with senior management member states and donors. • It may yield some opportunity for active 'peer engagement' and staff learning within the evaluation function.	• A PVSA provides limited accountability assurances for the evaluation function.

14.   Benefits of this assessment modality include:

- Lower cost as a budget to support a consultant may not be required while funds to allow for travel of panel members may be necessary.

- Places emphasis on learning and improvements of the function and peer exchanges.

15.   Additional considerations include:

- Validation of findings by UNEG peers may be limited by available time.

- Approach depends heavily on thorough and diligent preparation by the function under assessment.

- Modality requires UNEG Peers and EvalNet members to volunteer staff time and, possibly, cover their own travel costs.

Modality 2: UNEG Expert Validated Self-Assessment

16.   For a UNEG Expert Validates Self-Assessment (EVSA) modality, the evaluation function prepares a detailed self-assessment against the UNEG normative framework. The self-assessed 'maturity' of the function with respect to each criterion of the normative framework is supported by reference to sources of evidence.

17.   An Advisory Panel, established by the Peer Review Working Group (PRWG), oversees the process, providing advice and quality assurance.[4]

18.   The Advisory Panel selects and recruits an independent consultant to consider, verify and triangulate the evidence collated through the self-assessment. The consultant makes a 5-7 day visit to the function where they engage with evaluation and other staff / stakeholders. This forms the basis of a report that articulates observations aimed at enhancing the evaluation function. In view of the lighter level of direct engagement by UNEG Peers this is, perhaps, a modality best reserved for functions that have previously undergone in-depth assessments. The PRWG may organise a virtual 'Peer Exchange' whereby experiences relevant to the assessment exercise and its findings are shared.

Pros and cons of a EVSA		
	Pros	**Cons**
Independence	• External consultants hired through the PRWG bolster independence.	• EVSA's are not fully independent. They rely on information collated in a self-assessment. Biases towards positive information being presented may exist. • The consultant has limited time to verify or collate additional information.
Credibility	• The views of independent expert consultants familiar with the UN and the N&S provide credibility to a 'light' exercise focused on improving the function. • The PRWG selects designated members to serve as a reference group and approve key stages of the assessment process as well as helping ensure consistency and quality of the process and deliverables.	• There are limits to the detail of the assessment which may similarly limit credibility for accountability purposes compared to Peer Reviews / Independent Evaluations. • The absence of EvalNet participation may limit the credibility for accountability purposes in the eyes of donors and some Member States.
Utility	• Provides quick and, hopefully, useful feedback for the evaluation function for improvement purposes, raises the	• Less useful for Member States from an accountability perspective.

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[4] There may be agencies that function with independent audit committees, who may constitute an important body for Peer Review panels to engage with during the Peer Review process, and who should receive the results.

profile of the function with senior management, Member States and donors. • May provide some opportunity for active 'peer engagement' with the consultant expert and designated members of the PRWG to promote staff learning within the evaluation function.	

19.   Other benefits are that this modality:

- Is affordable.

- Places an emphasis on assessing learning and improvements of the function and peer exchanges.

- Can be completed in a relatively short timeframe (usually 3- 4 months).

20.   Considerations:

- The validation of findings by an independent consultant will be limited by available time.

- The approach depends heavily on the thorough and diligent preparation of the function under assessment.

- The exercise will likely require 15-20 working days for the consultant and travel costs.

- The PRWG plays a stronger role in this modality and will designate PRWG members to serve on an Advisory Panel to work on a specific assessment.

- Peer exchange most likely to be achieved through online engagement.

Modality 3: 'Standard' UNEG Peer Review[5]

21.   UNEG Peer Reviews aim to systematically assess the maturity of an evaluation function in terms of ICU. They are assessments that focus specifically on the evaluation function and are anchored in the UNEG Norms and Standards. A UNEG self-assessment (see modalities 3 and 4) can be conducted as a preliminary step prior to the standard peer review and the peer review panel can then draw from this self-assessment.

22.   A Peer Review is typically conducted by three-to-five person panels consisting of a UNEG Head of Evaluation, an OECD/DAC Evaluation Network (EvalNet) member, a senior evaluator from a UNEG

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member agency and a consultant. Panels may be enlarged to include representatives from key stakeholder groups relevant to the evaluand.

23.   Peer Reviews may not be a suitable modality for small evaluation functions due to the:

      i)   Limited ability of the evaluation function and senior management to which it reports to receive a team and to engage meaningfully; and

      ii)   Costs required in the context of limited budgetary provision for evaluation.

24.   Further, the capacity and volume of work completed/undertaken by the evaluand may be insufficient to justify the level of effort the Peer Review entails.

25.   The cost of a Peer Review depends on the size of the evaluation function (see below).

Pros and cons of a UNEG Peer Review		
	Pros	**Cons**
Independence	• The external members of the Review Panel - e.g. EvalNet or other independent experts enhance the independence of a peer review. • An independent consultant does much of the detailed analytical work to inform the panel.	• Some stakeholders may perceive UN evaluation 'peers' and the Peer Panel to be less independent than an independent evaluation commissioned externally to the evaluation function.
Credibility	• Participation of EvalNet members brings a bilateral donor perspective and bolsters credibility. • UN evaluation experts provide an in-depth understanding of UN contexts and Norms and Standards. • The normative framework is broad in scope and provides a comprehensive framework for assessment.	• Perceptions that UN 'peers' may offer a less critical assessment of an evaluation function may affect credibility. • The broad scope of the normative framework may, especially in the case of large evaluation functions with decentralized arrangements, limit the 'depth' of the assessment given the available time and resources.
Utility	• Knowledge of UN settings can help ensure recommendations are appropriate. • Peer Reviews provide a good forum for 'peer-to-peer' learning among evaluation staff and the Peer Panel.	the external members of the panel - e.g. EvalNet or other independent experts - increases its independence. Similarly, all external members of the panel, not only EvalNet members, bolster credibility

Modality 4: Independent External Evaluations of UN agency evaluation functions

26.   Independent External Evaluations of UN agency evaluation functions are undertaken as a policy requirement in some UN agencies or as a consequence of a Governing Body decision. **They are not conducted under the auspices of UNEG.**

27.   Independent External Evaluations are:

- Undertaken by external consultant evaluators managed by a separate committee operating either as part of an organisation's internal oversight mechanism or as a sub-committee of the board or governing body.

- Rigorous evaluations that cover the UNEG Norms and Standards, and explore the independence, credibility and utility of the function. They often also assess the performance of the function in delivering against its evaluation strategy and/or policy.

- Required to have an adequate budget and dedicated staff resources to support the process.

Pros and cons of an Independent External Evaluation		
	Pros	**Cons**
Independence	• High levels of independence and accountability • Commissioned and managed independently of the evaluand	
Credibility	• Very high levels of independence enhances the credibility for member states and donors	
Utility	• Useful feedback for the evaluation function, senior management, member states and donors	• May provide less opportunity for active UNEG 'peer engagement' and staff learning within the evaluation function.

28.   Of UNEG members, ILO, UNDP and FAO have undergone independent external evaluations.

Role of the UNEG Peer Review Working Group

29.   The UNEG PRWG coordinates, oversees and quality assures the planning, preparation, conduct and reporting of UNEG Peer Reviews / assessments. When needed, the PRWG also liaises with OECD-DAC EvalNet regarding the particpation of their members in the peer review.

30.   In general, the PRWG:

- Encourages UNEG members to both undergo and participate in review processes;

- Keeps track of requests for reviews from UNEG members;

- Monitors the progress of ongoing review processes;

- Coordinates / assists the formation of panels for PRs and PVSAs;

- Selects evaluation experts and establishes Advisory Panels for EVSAs;

- Provides feedback on draft review reports with the aim of enhancing quality and consistency;

- Develops, and periodically modifies, policy/standard procedures, guidance, tools and templates to support review processes;

- Liaises with OECD Evalnet regarding their partcipation in UNEG review proceses; and

- Encourages broader particpation across UNEG to undergo and contribute to review efforts.

31.   Specific roles of the PRWG are described below within the descriptions of the different steps in the review modalities.

5. Stages of Review/ Assessment Modalities

Preparatory Stage

1.   Request for a UNEG review/ assessment.

2.   Agreement on the review modality.

3.   Agreement on leadership and composition of the review panel.

4.   Identification of available resources from the agency and UNEG.

5.   Preparation of the review Terms of Reference (ToRs) and budget.

Request for a UNEG review/ assessment

32.   The head of the evaluation function of the interested organisation [the evaluand] informs the PRWG of their wish to undergo a UNEG review/assessment. The evaluand sets out the objectives and expectations and conveys the indicative resources (human and financial) available to support the exercise.

- See Time and Budget estimates

Agreement on the appropriate review modality

33.   Once the initial request for the review/ assessment has been submitted:

Step 1	The head of the evaluation function and PRWG coordinators select an appropriate review/assessment modality.
Step 2	Once agreed, the review/assessment is incorporated into the work plan of the PRWG, together with a tentatively agreed timeline. *Note: This does not constitute a formal commitment by either party but facilitates planning at both the agency and UNEG levels.*
Step 3	The evaluand seeks formal endorsement by their senior management (or communicates an instruction from the Governing Body), indicating a timeframe and budget envelope.
Step 4	Once endorsed by senior management, a formal request should be sent by the head of the agency to the UNEG chair, copied to the PRWG coordinators and head of the evaluation function detailing: • The modality for the review / assessment exercise; • The tentative timeline; • Key issues to be covered; and • Budget available from agency sources to support the review / assessment. The request should be sent at least six months prior to the planned start of the exercise.

Leadership of the Review / Assessment Process

Peer Review/ PVSA

34.   Once the official request has been received, the PRWG coordinators identify a volunteer from a UNEG member agency to chair the Peer Review or PVSA panel. The proposed Peer Review and PVSA chairs are recommended by the PRWG coordinators to the UNEG Executive Steering Committee and the head of the evaluand for approval on a no-objection basis.

35.   The chair of a Peer Review panel should be a UNEG Head. The Chair of a PVSA Panel should be either a UNEG Head or an EvalNet head. However, senior staff from a UNEG member agency with approval from their respective head will also be considered.

36.   The Panel Chair is responsible for:

- Managing the process.

- Actively engaging with the organisation's senior management and/or governing body to encourage their interest and involvement in the peer review and its results.

- Ensuring that key conclusions and possible lessons from the review are communicated to UNEG, and that the review report and supporting evidence are easily accessible to UNEG members and other interested parties.

37.   The PRWG will, to the extent possible, match the experience and skillsets of the Panel Chair with the mandate of the evaluand (e.g., for an agency with a focus on humanitarian issues with decentralized evaluation arrangements, the PRWG would seek a UNEG Head with substantive familiarity with such contexts and arrangements to lead the process).

38.   To avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest, former heads of evaluation of UNEG member agencies should not serve on the review panel assessing their former employer.[6]

39.   To increase the potential pool of UNEG heads available to support UNEG reviews, the 2020 AGM decided "*that the head of an office who undergoes a peer review commits to chairing a peer review [or assessment] of another agency*".

EVSA

40.   For an EVSA, the PRWG coordinators will identify UNEG members to serve on Advisory Panels to support assessment processes. To facilitate efficient working arrangements, an EVSA Advisory Panel may serve several EVSA processes on the PRWG work plan.

Panel Composition

Peer Review/ PVSA

41.   The Peer Review Panel Chair will, in consultation with the PRWG, select three to five additional panel members. For these selections, consideration must be given to knowledge of relevant technical areas (i.e., emergency, development sectors, gender and human rights, etc.) and cost. Informal consultations with the head of the evaluation function under review regarding panel composition should be made prior to final panel selections.

42.   Preferably, both UNEG and DAC EvalNet are represented. Representatives from partner countries or other key stakeholder groups are optional. Factors influencing the number and choice of panel members include:

- The scope of the exercise;

- The interest and availability of UNEG and DAC EvalNet members;

- The complexity of the issues and technical areas to be covered; and

- Budget availability.

43.   Panels for PVSAs are comprised of a Panel Chair, a supporting senior panel member and, optionally, a consultant expert. OECD-DAC members may also participate on the panel.

44.   The major criteria for selection of the Panel Members, including the Chair, are:

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[6] Similarly, panel members should not serve on a Panel if they have applied, or intend to apply, to vacant (or soon to be vacant) staff positions in the evaluand function.

a) Independence - both perceived and actual - from the evaluand;

b) Professional evaluation expertise, including in the management of an evaluation function;

c) Understanding of the context and use of evaluation in development cooperation/humanitarian assistance and multilateral organisations;

d) Acceptable gender mix;

e) Participation from UN organisations;

f) Participation from bilateral agencies and/or international financial institutions, where relevant;

g) Participation from country/ies receiving assistance, including those with evaluation responsibilities, where relevant;

h) Participation from independent evaluation experts and, where relevant, other research fields, oversight disciplines or knowledge-sharing expertise; and

i) Capacity to deal with senior management and governing bodies.

45.   The panel should be tailored to the scope of the Peer Review/ PVSA, including the size and mandate of the evaluation function to be reviewed. It should include members who are knowledgeable about the entity's thematic focus, to help frame the evaluation function in the context of their mandate. The Panel Chair will select any consultants recruited to support the Peer Review or PVSA.

46.   The PRWG will appoint a Focal Point to liaise with each Peer Review and PVSA Panel. Their job is to keep track of progress in the review process, offering guidance and advice at the Panel's request.

EVSAs

47.   For EVSAs, the PRWG coordinator convenes an Advisory Panel composed of UNEG Members. The Advisory Panel selects a consultant to deliver the Expert-Validated Self-assessment (EVSA).

Overview: Panel leadership and composition		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
Based on the availability of senior evaluation professionals within the UN, the UNEG PRWG approaches and confirms the choice of Chair of the Panel (a UNEG Head); the evaluand is consulted to identify substantive objections prior to the final selection. The PRWG appoints a Focal Point to liaise with the Peer Review Panel.	Based on the availability of senior evaluation professionals within the UN, the UNEG PRWG approaches and confirms the choice of Chair of the Panel. The evaluand is consulted to identify whether substantive objections exist prior to the final selection. The PRWG appoints a Focal Point to liaise with the PVSA panel.	Based on the availability of senior evaluation professionals within the UN, the UNEG PRWG coordinator establishes an Advisory Panel. The Advisory Panel selects the Consultant Expert, and the evaluand is consulted to identify whether any substantive objection exists prior to final selection. The Advisory Panel oversees the process and reviews the deliverables from the Consultant Expert.

The Chair of Peer Review Panel, with input from the PRWG, selects Panel members who should have experience in the thematic focus areas of the organisation, as well as the range and type of evaluations being conducted.	Chair of Peer Review Panel with input from the PRWG selects a supporting Panel member who should have experience in the thematic focus areas of the organisation as well as the range and type of evaluations being conducted.	As above.
The Chair, in consultation with other Panel members selects a supporting consultant. The PRWG supports this process by providing a list of UN evaluators who are available to conduct such exercises.	If a supporting consultant is to be used, the PRWG supports by providing the names of suitable consultants who are experienced in conducting peer reviews of acceptable quality, and who ideally have knowledge of the thematic focus of the organisation being assessed and of the evaluations being conducted.	Consultant selection is by the PRWG Advisory Panel.

Identifying available resources

48.   When the evaluation function of a UN agency decides to undergo a review/ assessment, the UNEG Head of the evaluand should first consult with the function's staff to canvass views on key issues to be assessed. This 'zero-step' should include checking the availability of a) financial resources for the exercise selected, and b) staff time to prepare background documents and participate in the review / assessment process.

Preparing the Terms of Reference

49.   The ToR of the review/ assessment detail the scope, timetable and information on the issues to be covered and the process to be followed. They also specify how the governance function will be involved and the normative framework to be used (based on the UNEG Norms and Standards).

50.   For Peer Reviews or PVSAs, the PRWG will provide the Panel Chair with an appropriate ToR template. The ToR are then tailored to the evaluand by the Panel under the leadership of the Chair, with contextual inputs from the Head of the evaluation function to be reviewed / assessed.

51.   For ESVAs, the ToR are prepared by the PRWG, with contextual inputs from the Head of the evaluation function to be assessed. The normative framework is developed on the basis of UNEG Norms and Standards and other criteria as needed.

Basic information on the evaluand

52.   For all review / assessment modalities the Head of evaluation should provide text for the preparation of the section of the ToR describing the evaluand, including its context, structure and recent

history/evolution. It should also include any key issues the evaluand would like to include in the purview of the review / assessment process.

Normative Framework

53.   The **'UNEG Self-Assessment Maturity Matrix for UN Evaluation Functions'** (Annex 1) forms the baseline normative framework for use in Peer Reviews, PVSAs and EVSAs. It specifies a set of 51 organisational and performance criteria that form a framework for the assessment of the maturity of a UN evaluation function against the UNEG Norms and Standards[7] – which now include ten general norms to be upheld in the conduct of any evaluation and four institutional norms that should be reflected in the management and governance of evaluation functions.

54.   All evaluands **must** complete the '*UNEG Self-Assessment Maturity Matrix for UN Evaluation functions'*. The evaluand makes a self-assessment of the level of maturity the function has reached for each criterion and develops a written narrative and corresponding sources of documentary evidence to support the judgements made[8].

55.   The normative framework draws on the assessment criteria and benchmarks used by UN entities, such as the Joint Inspection Unit, and on earlier peer reviews of UN evaluation entities carried out under the auspices of UNEG. The normative framework is forwarded to the Panel by the PRWG and additional criteria may be added to the framework by the Panel during the elaboration of the ToR to ensure all attributes of the evaluand are covered. For example, decentralised evaluation arrangements are not fully covered by the baseline normative framework and additional criteria may need to be added to address such arrangements.

Tailoring the ToR to the evaluand, review and finalisation of the TORs

Peer Reviews and PVSAs

56.   Once the text describing the evaluand (including its context, structure, recent history/evolution, funding and budget and any key issues to be covered) has been submitted, the Panel Chair and members prepare a draft ToR that includes a normative framework. The normative framework and the review process are the main topics of the TORs. Any adjustment to the ToR and normative framework to the evaluand are made.

57.   The Panel Chair shares the ToR and normative framework with the PRWG and the Head of the evaluation function to be reviewed. After feedback is received, Panel members amend the ToR accordingly. The revised draft ToR is then shared with the Head of evaluation, senior managers and external stakeholders of the evaluand for additional review and comments. The Panel, led by the Chair, responds to any final comments received and makes any necessary revisions to the draft ToR.

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[7] The Normative Framework was developed using the JIU (2013) report Maturity Matrix - The Evaluation Function in the UN System: Framework for the Analysis of the Level of Maturity of the Central/Corporate level Evaluation Function in each Organization and Variations across Organizations.

[8] The judgment can be recorded in the table by adding a coloured background fill to the relevant cell in each criterion row of the matrix.

58.   The ToR is then finalized by the Chair and shared with the Panel, the PRWG and the evaluand.

Overview: Preparing the ToR		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The PRWG provides the Panel Chair with the ToR template. The evaluand drafts the background information describing the evaluand and key issues. The ToRs undergo further tailoring to the evaluand by the Panel.	The PRWG provides the Panel Chair with the ToR template. The evaluand drafts the background information describing the evaluand and key issues. The ToRs undergo further tailoring to the evaluand by the Panel.	The PRWG Advisory Panel uses the EVSA ToR template and the evaluand is requested to provide draft text for the background information describing the evaluand and key issues. The ToRs undergo further tailoring to the evaluand by the PRWG.
The Chair of the Panel further reviews the ToR to ensure that both the normative framework and the specific needs of the evaluand can be met. After review and feedback is received from the evaluand, the ToRs are amended and agreed to by the Panel, signed off by the Chair and shared with the PRWG.	The Chair of the Panel further reviews the PVSA ToR ensuring that both the UNEG normative framework and the specific needs of the evaluand can be met within the more limited scope of this exercise. After review and feedback is received from the evaluand, the ToRs are agreed to by the Panel, signed off by the Chair and shared with the PRWG.	The PRWG Advisory Panel proposes final draft ToRs for the exercise and finalizes the ToRs following review and feedback from the evaluand.

Developing a budget and timeline

59.   In the initial request to the PRWG for the review/assessment, the evaluand indicated available resources. Based on this information, the Panel, in consultation with the evaluand, prepares a detailed budget and timeline for the review/assessment. This is submitted to the PRWG coordinators.

60.   Where the evaluand's resources are insufficient to cover the full cost of the exercise, the PRWG may submit a request for funding from the UNEG Fund. The request should be sent to the PRWG Coordinators who will liaise with the UNEG Treasurer and Secretariat. As agreed at the 2023 UNEG AGM, the maximum level of financial support from the UNEG Fund is USD 20,000 per review/assessment.

61.   Panel members from both UNEG and EvalNet are expected to pay for their own participation in UNEG Peer Reviews and assessments, including staff time and travel. The work is *pro bono* and can legitimately be considered as a professional development exercise for individual panel members.

62.   To reduce costs and the environmental footprint of the review/ assessment, it is preferable that panel members are from the same geographic region as the headquarters of the evaluand.[9] To keep costs low, use of information and communication technology for meetings and sharing files is also encouraged.

Indicative estimates of time and budget for different review / assessment modalities					
	Time required			Period from inception to completion	Indicative Cost (Consultant fees & travel)
	Panel Chair	Panel Member	Consultant Expert		
Peer Review – large agency evaluation function	4-6 weeks	3-4 weeks	8-10 weeks	1 year	$50,000 – $150,000
Peer Review medium-sized agency evaluation function	3-4 weeks	2-3 weeks	40-60 days	10 months – 1 year	$35,000 - $50,000
PVSA	2-3 weeks	1-2 weeks	30-50 days	4 - 6 months	$25,000 - $45,000
EVSA	n/a	n/a	30-40 days	3 – 4 months	$25,000 - $35,000

63.   For Panel Chairs and members conducting a peer review of a larger evaluation function, repeat missions may be needed.

64.   Future working approaches, in a post COVID-19 world, may place greater emphasis on the use of telecommunication technology for Panel interactions with the evaluand, keeping travel costs to a minimum. Nevertheless, face-to-face engagement is highly desirable between panel members and staff of the evaluand. The main factors affecting the time required for the review are the number of panel visits to the evaluand and the size/level of decentralisation of the organisation (greater number of interviews required for robust coverage).

65.   The main costs of a peer review and a PVSA (when a consultant is used) relate to the consultant expert's fee, travel and per diem. Past examples show that a peer review can cost between USD 40,000 and USD 150,000 depending on the scope of the review and the size of the agency. Peer reviews of smaller agencies with reduced capacity and scope incur lower costs.

66.   Where possible, the entire cost of the exercise, including hiring a consultant and other expenses such as printing the report, should be borne by the evaluand. Once the consultant is recruited (see below) the timeline will be re-visited, refined and re-confirmed by the Panel Chair, the UNEG Head of the evaluand and the consultant.

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[9] It may be cost-effective to have panel members from the same geographic region as the Headquarters of the evaluation function but it would not improve diversity in panels.

Overview: Preparing a budget and timeline		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The Panel Chair, in consultation with the evaluand, prepares a detailed budget and timeline for the Peer Review that will allow for it to be conducted according to UNEG standards [normative framework plus main elements of a standard ToR]. The budget is submitted to the PRWG. Where the resources available from the evaluand are insufficient to cover the full cost of the exercise, a request for funding is sent to the UNEG Treasurer and Secretariat by the PRWG Coordinators.	The Panel Chair, in consultation with the evaluand, prepares a budget and timeline for the Peer Panel assessment that will allow the exercise to be conducted according to UNEG standards [normative framework plus minimum elements of a standard ToR}. The budget is submitted to the PRWG. Where the evaluand's resources are insufficient to cover the full cost of the exercise, a request for funding is sent to the UNEG Treasurer and Secretariat by the PRWG Coordinators.	The PRWG prepares a budget for the assessment. Where the evaluand's resources are insufficient to cover the full cost of the exercise, a request for funding is sent to the UNEG Treasurer and Secretariat by the PRWG Coordinators.

6. Intiating the Data Gathering and Review Process

Recruiting the Expert Consultant

Peer Review

67.   The PRWG Focal Point supplies a job description template to the Panel Chair who, on the basis of the ToR and agreed roles and responsibilities of the Panel and the consultant, amends and approves a job description for the consultant that is shared with the PRWG Focal Point. The job description should clearly state that the consultant reports directly to the Panel Chair.

68.   To the extent possible, the funds to support the review / assessment should be administered by the Panel Chair's agency. When this is not possible, the funds to support the review / assessment may be administered by the UNEG Secretariat.

69.   The PRWG may suggest / recommend potential candidates. The selection process should be jointly carried out by panel members.

70.   Where the Chair's agency administers the resources, the Chair will approve and authorise payment of the consultant against deliverables. Where the UNEG Secretariat administers the review/assessment resources the Chair approves payments for deliverables which are then authorised for payment by the UNEG Secretariat.

71.   It is proposed that where the Chair's agency is not administering the finances, the UNEG contribution to a review/assessment process (USD 20,000) remains with UNEG Secretariat and that the

evaluand agency's contributions to support the review/assessment process are transferred to the UNEG Secretariat.

72.   A review / assessment process cannot proceed until the financial requirements have been adequately met/agreed with the PRWG. The principle of having a separation between the evaluand and payments made to consultant experts is important to ensure external perceptions of the independence of review/assessment processes are not jeopardised.

PVSA/ EVSA

73.   For PVSAs, if the funds to support the assessment cannot be administered by the Panel Chair's agency, the fiduciary responsibility should remain with the evaluand agency evaluation office, noting that it will be the Panel Chair that approves the ToRs, consultant selection decisions and payments for the consultant's deliverables.

74.   For EVSAs, the fiduciary responsibility will usually remain with the 'evaluand' agency evaluation office, noting that it will be the PRWG Advisory Panel that approves ToRs, consultant selection decisions, and payments for consultant's deliverables.

Overview: Recruiting a consultant expert		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The PRWG supplies a job description template to the Panel Chair. On the basis of the ToR and agreed division of labour between the Panel and the consultant, the Panel Chair amends and approves a job description for the consultant that is shared with the PRWG.	If a consultant is to be used, the PRWG supplies a job description template to the Panel Chair. On the basis of the ToR, the division of labour between the Panel and the consultant enables the Panel Chair to amend and approve the job description for the consultant which is shared with the PRWG.	The PRWG use the approved ToRs to prepare a job description for the consultant.

Evaluand's information package

75.   Appointing a senior staff member from the evaluand function as a focal point for the exercise is considered good practice. The focal point should collate an "information package" that will be stored in an online repository (Teams, SharePoint, Dropbox, etc.) to which the Panel Chair, Panel Members, the consultant expert and the PRWG Coordinators have access.

Key evaluation documents

76.   The information package should include the following documents:

- A narrative describing the most relevant events in the history of evaluation in the agency;

- The Evaluation Policy;

- Evaluation manual and guidelines;

- Information regarding the evaluation portfolio in the past 4-5 years and a list of completed and on-going evaluations;

- Evaluation work-plans;

- Evaluation reports;

- Minutes of meetings involving the Head of Evaluation and senior management and/or governing body;

- Information on recommendation compliance / follow-up, including Evaluation Management responses;

- Organigrammes for the evaluation function, and the organisation;

- Staff lists and key staffing profiles;

- List of key stakeholders including Governing Body representatives;

- Evaluation function budget;

- Post-hoc quality assessments where available, such as reporting against disability inclusion (UNDIS) and gender inclusion (UNSWAP-EPI), for example;

- A completed self-assessment using the UNEG normative framework; and

- Referenced sources of evidence to support judgements made in the self-assessed normative framework.

Selecting evaluation reports for quality assessment

77.   The Peer Panel of a Peer Review or PVSA and the PRWG for EVSA will select evaluation reports for an in-depth assessment of report quality. This is usually a purposive sample to cover the range of evaluation types and thematic areas of relevance to the evaluand agency. Recent reports are afforded higher priority. The number of reports selected for review will depend upon the number of evaluation reports produced by the evaluand and the level of effort that can be allocated for their assessment within the context of the review / assessment modality and the resources available. UNEG's Quality Checklist for evaluation reports[10] is usually applied to inform judgements; other rubrics that reflect international good practice for assessing evaluation report quality may also be chosen by the Panel.

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[10] http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/853

Overview: Evaluand's information package		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The evaluand collates a comprehensive online repository of documentary information for use by the Panel, consultant expert and PRWG.	The evaluand collates a comprehensive online repository of documentary information for use by the Panel and PRWG (and, the consultant expert if applicable).	The evaluand collates a comprehensive online repository of documentary information for use by the consultant expert and the PRWG Advisory Panel.
The evaluand should prepare a self-assessment of performance against the maturity matrix (normative framework), including an assessment of how mature the function is against the four – scale maturity index and documenting sources of evidence.	The evaluand should prepare a self-assessment of performance against the maturity matrix (normative framework), including an assessment of how mature the function is against the four – scale maturity index and documenting sources of evidence.	The evaluand should prepare a self-assessment of performance against the maturity matrix (normative framework), including an assessment of how mature the function is against the four – scale maturity index and documenting sources of evidence.

Desk review

78.   A desk review of the information package should be undertaken before any mission to the evaluand. This is usually prepared by the consultant expert or, in the absence of such a role, by the Peer Review Panel. The desk review examines the documentation submitted in the information package and makes a preliminary analysis of the self-assessment document, highlighting key issues for more in-depth examination during the review / assessment process. The desk review should begin to collate tentative findings against the outline structure of the review / assessment report. The Peer Review Panel or consultant expert may make further information requests to the evaluand, who is expected to respond to such requests in a timely manner.

79.   During the desk review phase, the list of key informants for the review / assessment process is agreed by the Panel (or by the PRWG Advisory Panel for an EVSA) and, following discussion with the evaluand, is finalised. Similarly, the interview protocol is discussed and agreed by the Peer Review Panel (or by the PRWG Advisory Panel and the consultant expert for an EVSA). On request, the PRWG can provide examples of interview protocols used in earlier Peer Review exercises.

Field visits

Preparing the visit

80.   A field visit implies that the Panel members/consultant expert travel to meet the evaluand agency in person at their Headquarters or where the evaluation function is located.

81.	The evaluand should provide logistical information and administrative support (for in-person Panel/consultant expert visits this could include office space, printing and photocopying facilities, visitor's passes, etc.) to help facilitate the visit.

82.	The evaluand function will assist the Peer Panel / consultant expert arrange an interview schedule (in person and / or via videoconferencing) with staff and stakeholders as requested by the Panel Chair / consultant expert. It is usual for the Chair of a Peer Review process to pay a courtesy visit to the Executive Head of the evaluand agency which is arranged by the evaluation function.

Overview: Evaluand's information package		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The Peer Review Panel and consultant review: i) the documentation provided; ii) the self-assessment; iii) the evaluations selected for detailed assessment. The consultant expert undertakes a desk review of this material which is shared with the Peer Panel. Preliminary findings and observations are collated, and a list of key informants, interview protocols by type of stakeholder, survey questionnaires for remote interviews is developed.	The Peer Review Panel (and consultant, if used) review: I) the documentation provided; ii) the self-assessment; and iii) the evaluations selected for detailed assessment. The Peer Panel (or consultant expert) undertakes a desk review of this material. Preliminary findings and observations are collated, and a list of key informants, interview protocols by type of stakeholder, survey questionnaires for remote interviews is developed.	The external expert reviews: i) the documentation provided; ii) the self-assessment; and iii) the evaluations selected for detailed assessment. The consultant expert undertakes a desk review of this material which is shared with the PRWG. Preliminary findings and observations are collated, and a list of key informants, interview protocols by type of stakeholder, survey questionnaires for remote interviews is developed.
The evaluand provides logistical information and administrative support to the Peer Review Panel and consultant expert.	The evaluand provides logistical information and administrative support to the Peer Review Panel (and consultant, if used).	The evaluand provides logistical information and administrative support to the consultant expert.

Review visit

Meetings and interviews

83.	The Peer Review Panel visit to the evaluand usually lasts 5-7 working days whereas the visit for a PVSA would be 3- 5 working days. The EVSA consultant will usually work alone, so the visit may take 7-8 working days.

84.	The review visit usually begins with the Panel Chair (or for the EVSA consultant) briefing staff of the central evaluation function on the purpose, scope, process, methods and timeline of the review / assessment. A courtesy visit is paid by the Panel Chair to the agency Executive Head.

85.	The Peer Review Panel and / or consultant expert will meet with various key informants during the visit. This might normally include: staff of the function, senior managers, other professional staff,

representatives of the Governing Body and donors. Such meetings usually last between 40 minutes and one hour.

86.   Peer Review Panel members usually conduct the meetings in pairs. One leads the questions while the other takes notes. To maximise interview coverage during the visit, PVSA panel members may also attend meetings individually. Some stakeholder meetings may be organised by video conference. This can occur either within the period of the visit or at another time.

Overview: Review visit meetings and interviews		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
Peer Review Panel visits the evaluand and meets key stakeholders (evaluation staff, management, governing body representatives, etc.) The visit is typically 5-7 working days. Interviews and meetings may also happen online within or outside the period of the visit.	Peer Review Panel visits the evaluand and meets key stakeholders (evaluation staff, management, governing body representatives etc.) The visit is typically 3-5 working days. Interviews and meetings may also happen online within or outside the period of the visit	The consultant expert visits the evaluand and meets key stakeholders (evaluation staff, management, governing body representatives etc.) The visit is typically 7-8 working days. Interviews and meetings may also happen online within or outside the period of the visit.

Peer Exchange Workshop

87.   The 'Peer Exchange Workshop' is an important part of the peer review process. Much like UNEG's annual Evaluation Practice Exchange, a Peer Exchange Workshop focuses on sharing knowledge and experiences among professional evaluation peers.

88.   The Peer Review Panel, the consultant expert and available staff of the evaluand evaluation function should participate in the Workshop. Possible topics for discussion include: the preliminary findings of the review / assessment exercise or findings from the self-assessment, as well as other topics of interest identified by the evaluand. The Workshop, which should be no longer than 2 hours, can be led / facilitated by the Panel Chair jointly with the Head of evaluation of the evaluand. The Workshop should be informal, designed to maximise participation, dialogue and exchanges.

89.   For EVSAs, a Peer Exchange Workshop may be held virtually to allow members of the PRWG Advisory Panel to participate and share their experiences. Other UNEG members with experience relevant to the evaluand may be invited to attend.

Overview: Peer Exchange Workshop		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The Peer Exchange is usually held during the Panel visit to the evaluand. It takes the form of an interactive dialogue among staff of the evaluand and the Panel	The Peer Exchange is usually held during the Panel visit to the evaluand. It takes the form of an interactive dialogue among staff of the evaluand and the Panel	The Peer Exchange Workshop will be held online and involve members of the evaluand and the PRWG Advisory Panel. Other UNEG members with knowledge

around a series of jointly agreed topics with the aim of sharing knowledge and experiences.	around a series of jointly agreed topics with the aim of sharing knowledge and experiences.	and experience of relevance to the evaluand may also be invited.

Mission debrief

90.   The review mission by the Panel for peer reviews / PVSAs, or the consultant expert for an EVSA, should conclude with a debrief between the Head of the evaluand and the Panel Chair / consultant expert respectively. Emerging findings may be discussed, and information gaps highlighted. The remaining process steps for the review exercise are summarised and the expected timeline clarified.

Report production

Draft report preparation, review and commenting process

91.   Once the visit to the evaluand is completed and all the gathered information has been collated and analysed, preparation of the draft report begins. The PRWG will supply a template to help ensure adequate coverage of issues and to enhance quality and consistency.

92.   For a UNEG Peer Review, the consultant expert, under the supervision of the Chair / Panel, prepares an initial draft report for discussion among the Panel members. In a PVSA, the report may be prepared directly by Panel members or by a consultant. For an EVSA, the consultant expert prepares the initial draft report which is discussed by members of the PRWG Advisory Panel.

93.   Once the draft report is cleared (by the Chair for a Peer Review and a PVSA, or the PRWG Advisory Panel for an EVSA), it is circulated to the evaluation function of the evaluand via its Head for comments and factual corrections. The timeline for feedback by the evaluand on the initial draft is set by the Panel / PRWG but is usually two or three weeks. The Panel members discuss the feedback and any amendments to the draft report are made as deemed necessary by the Panel / Chair (by the PRWG Advisory Panel for an EVSA). The draft final report is next sent to the Head of the evaluation function and senior managers of the evaluand for final comments and any remaining factual corrections.

Overview: Report preparation, review and commenting		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The consultant expert prepares a draft report for discussion and review by the Peer Review Panel. Once cleared by the Chair, the report is shared with the evaluand function for comments and factual correction within a specified timeline. Once feedback is received, any required amendments to the report are made and it is then circulated	The Peer Panel (or the consultant expert) prepare a draft report for discussion. Once the report is cleared by the Chair, it is shared with the evaluand function for comments and factual corrections within a specified timeline. Once feedback is received any required amendments to the report are made and it is then circulated	The consultant expert prepares a draft report for discussion and review by the PRWG designated member(s). Once cleared by the PRWG, the report is shared with the evaluand function for comments and factual corrections within a specified timeline. Once feedback is received, any required amendments to the report are

Standard Peer Review	PVSA	EVSA
with the evaluand's evaluation function and senior management for a further round of comments. In response to feedback the Peer Review Panel make any necessary further amendments to the report before it is finalised.	with the evaluand's evaluation function and senior management for a further round of comments. In response to feedback, the Panel makes any necessary further amendments to the report before it is finalised.	made and it is then circulated with the evaluand's evaluation function and senior management for a further round of comments. In response to feedback, the PRWG and the consultant make any necessary further amendments to the report before it is finalised..

Quality Assessment and finalisation of review report

94.   Panels have shared duty to produce reports of high quality, but the responsibility for each review / assessment report ultimately rests with the Panel Chair for Peer Reviews and PVSAs, and with the PRWG Advisory Panel for EVSAs. In all cases there will be a separate review of the draft final report from the assigned Focal Point of the PRWG to provide feedback on report quality and completeness. Once comments from all stakeholders have been received and considered, as deemed appropriate by the Panel Chair, the report is finalised.

Overview: Report quality assessment		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The Peer Review Chair is responsible for overall report quality. The PRWG Focal Point will also give feedback to the report at draft final stage through a quality-assessment process.	The Panel Chair is responsible for overall report quality. The PRWG Focal Point will also submit feedback to the report at draft final stage through a quality-assessment process.	The PRWG Advisory Panel is responsible for overall report quality. The PRWG will also offer additional feedback to the report at draft final stage through a separate quality assessment process.

Final report communication and dissemination

95.   The final review report is sent with an accompanying cover letter by the Panel Chair to the Executive Head of the evaluand with copy to:

- The Head of the Evaluation function;

- The UNEG Chair;

- Review Panel members;

- The PRWG coordinators; and

- The UNEG Secretariat.

96.　　In the case of an EVSA, the report will be sent by the Chair of the PRWG Advisory Panel. The Head of the evaluand is responsible for further dissemination of the report, and it is an expectation that all stakeholders that participated in the review process will receive a copy.

Management response, follow-up and reporting

Management Response

97.　　The timeline for preparation of the management response by the evaluand is set by the Panel / PRWG but is usually four to eight weeks.

98.　　The evaluand prepares a formal management response to the review / assessment outlining the proposed actions to be taken in response to the findings of the review / assessment. The management response should follow *UNEG Good Practice Guidelines for Follow up to Evaluations*[11]. The evaluand sends the management response back to the Panel Chair and the PRWG coordinators. For an EVSA the management response is sent to the Advisory Panel.

Presentation to the evaluand and the evaluand's Governing Body

99.　　The Panel Chair, individually or with the assistance of other Panel members (especially those from OECD DAC EvalNet), presents the main findings of the review / assessment to the evaluand agency and, ideally, to its governing body.

100.　　For an EVSA, the designated member of the PRWG Advisory panel and the consultant expert will present the findings to the evaluand agency. The presentation should be virtual unless an in-person meeting can be achieved at minimal costs.

Reporting to UNEG

101.　　The PRWG will coordinate reporting back to the UNEG Executive Steering Committee and EvalNet on the progress and outcome of all UNEG review / assessment exercises. The evaluand agency will update two successive AGMs (or until all recommendations are addressed, whichever the sooner) on the implementation actions made in response to the UNEG review / assessment that will from part of the PRWG's report to the UNEG AGM.

Overview: Management response, follow-up and reporting		
Standard Peer Review	**PVSA**	**EVSA**
The PRWG coordinator regularly reports on progress with ongoing Peer Reviews to the UNEG Executive Steering Committee. The evaluand agency reports on progress against the	The PRWG coordinator regularly reports on progress with ongoing PVSAs to the UNEG Executive Steering Committee. The evaluand agency reports on progress against the	The PRWG coordinator regularly reports on progress with ongoing EVSAs to the UNEG Executive Steering Committee. The evaluand agency reports on progress against the

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[11] www.unevaluation.org/GPG/followup.

implementation plan to two successive AGMs via the PRWG's progress report to the UNEG AGM.	implementation plan to two successive AGMs via the PRWG's progress report to the UNEG AGM.	implementation plan to two successive AGMs via the PRWG's progress report to the UNEG AGM.

Annex 1 Self-assessment maturity matrix for UN evaluation functions[12]

Introduction

This document presents a set of 53 organisational and performance criteria to help assess the maturity of the evaluation functions of United Nations (UN) agencies against the established norms for evaluation agreed in the updated UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation. It draws on the assessment criteria and benchmarks used by UN entities, such as the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and has been used in recent peer reviews of UN evaluation entities carried out under the auspices of UNEG.[13]

This Maturity Matrix helps operationalize the Norms and Standards by defining a practical normative framework for the assessment of the maturity of an evaluation entity against a set of defined **performance criteria** and **maturity benchmarks.** It is intended for use in self-assessment exercises and/or as a framework to inform more formal assessment exercises. In proposing these maturity benchmarks, this document supports the professionalization activities of any UN evaluation entity that is a UNEG member considering the commitment by members to move towards full adherence to the Norms and Standards. The document is conceived as a living document and will be updated to incorporate feedback from ongoing peer reviews and any future changes to the *UNEG Norms and Standards*.

The starting point for this exercise, as with all UNEG professionalization activities, is the agreed definition for evaluation in the Norms and Standards, namely:

> '...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 and sustainability. An evaluation should provide useful, credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations, and lessons into the decision – making processes of organisations and stakeholders'.

> 'The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning. Evaluation aims to understand why – and to what extent – intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting and contribute to evidence-based policymaking, development effectiveness and organisational effectiveness.'

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[12] Full documents available at www.unevaluation.org/Maturity_Matrix.

[13] The development of the self-assessment matrix was tested as part of the Peer Reviews of UNESCO and ICAO undertaken in 2019, and this version of the Matrix was used in the Peer Reviews of the UNITAR and UNHCR in 2021.

Performance criteria and benchmarks by UNEG Evaluation Norm

Part A – General Norms for Evaluation

Norm 1 - Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets

'Within the United Nations system, it is the responsibility of evaluation managers and evaluators to uphold and promote, in their evaluation practice, the principles and values to which the United Nations is committed. In particular, they should respect, promote and contribute to the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
1) Extent to which evaluation managers are upholding and promoting the principles and values to which the UN is committed and, in particular, the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Evaluation managers and evaluators show very little or no consideration of 2030 goals and targets in their work.	Consideration of 2030 goals and targets evident to a limited extent in the work of evaluation managers and evaluators but the evaluation function is focused mostly internally on their own development and immediate needs.	Evaluation managers and evaluators promote and consider 2030 goals and targets global trends and challenges in planning /coverage, joint work and methodology for complex evaluands and contexts.	Evaluation managers and evaluators promote, consider and make contributions to the 2030 goals and targets. The function demonstrates it is fully cognizant of global trends and challenges. The function is seeking new approaches and partnerships and revising old partnerships for cognitive diversity and new imperatives.

Norm 2 - Utility

'In commissioning and conducting an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. The utility of evaluation is manifest through its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organisational learning, informed decision-making processes and accountability for results. Evaluations could also be used to contribute beyond the organisation by generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
2) Timeliness in meeting stakeholder demands	There is no work plan/set schedule for evaluations.	Evaluations are rarely completed within the set schedule nor readily feed into decision- making processes.	Evaluations are often completed within the set schedule and usually planned to feed into decision-making processes.	Evaluations are always completed within the set schedule and regularly feed into decision-making processes.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
3) Dissemination and communication strategy	There is no dissemination and no communication strategy.	There is some dissemination, but it is not organized or systematic. There is no communication strategy.	There is a clear dissemination and communication strategy. Dissemination is well-organised and systematic. Standard approaches are used but not differentiated by audience.	There is a clear dissemination and communication strategy, it is fully resourced and communication / dissemination approaches are differentiated by audience.
4) Internal sharing of evaluation results	Evaluation results are not distributed or are distributed to only a limited internal audience. There are no established networks and systems for internal lessons learning and discussions.	Evaluations results are occasionally distributed internally and reach most internal audiences. There are few networks and systems for internal lessons learning and discussions, but these have not yet been institutionalised.	Evaluation results are regularly distributed internally, they reach a broad internal audience and are discussed with management. There are several networks and systems for internal lessons learning and discussions; they are partly institutionalised.	Evaluation results are systematically distributed across the organisation internally and discussed with management. Briefs and notes on lessons or innovations are developed and shared. There are continuous formal and informal meetings with stakeholders on evaluation findings and recommendations. Networks and systems for internal lessons learning and knowledge management are well established and functioning effectively.
5) Sharing of evaluation results externally	Evaluation results and lessons learned are not shared or are rarely shared with other UN organisations and external stakeholders.	Evaluation results and lessons learned are sometimes shared with other UN organisations and external stakeholders. The unit participates (on an ad hoc basis) in some external networks and systems for lessons learning and discussions.	Evaluation results and lessons learned are shared with other UN organisations. The unit participates in some external networks and systems for lessons learning and discussions. It sometimes makes presentations about its work via UNEG and/or to external stakeholders (including other evaluators, Members States beneficiaries, professional networks etc.).	Evaluation results and lessons learned are regularly and systematically shared with other UN organisations and external stakeholders (including other evaluators, Members States, beneficiaries, etc.). The unit participates in several external networks and systems for LL and discussions. It regularly makes presentations about its work.
6) Contributions to advancing evaluation in the	No initiatives	Few ad hoc initiatives are undertaken. Reflections are made.	Several initiatives undertaken periodically as part of	Initiatives are undertaken on a regular basis. The Unit is making a visible

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
context of the UN system's work beyond UNEG[1]		Unit participates in forums and learning about advances.	the annual work plan. The Unit is partially engaged and making a contribution.	contribution and sharing innovations.
7) Effect of evaluation use on organisational effectiveness and evidence of impact	There is no evidence or examples of the effect of use of evaluations on organisational effectiveness	There are a few examples showing effect of use of evaluations on organisational effectiveness.	There are many examples showing effect of use of evaluations on organisational effectiveness.	There is a comprehensive set of evidence that shows significant impact of the effect of use of evaluations on organisational effectiveness.

[1] Elements to be included: i) innovations in evaluation (please specify); ii) new methods for what the UN does and how it works in addressing complex contexts and complicated evaluands (e.g. systems models; assessing normative work; real-time evaluation etc.); and iii) others (please specify).

Norm 3 - Credibility

'Evaluations must be credible. Credibility is grounded on independence, impartiality and a rigorous methodology. Key elements of credibility include transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders and robust quality assurance systems. Evaluation results (or findings) and recommendations are derived from – or informed by – the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence.'

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
8) Professional integrity and identity of the function	None	Low: < 4 elements apply	Moderate: 4 to 7 elements apply	High: >7 elements apply
Elements of professional integrity and identity show (check as applicable):				
☐ There is independence but not isolation. There is engagement by the evaluation entity with the organisation through clearly defined processes throughout the evaluation design and management cycle.				
☐ Evaluation is overshadowed by other disciplines or made compliant to other related disciplines (monitoring, research, audit, assessments etc.), thus not fulfilling its value added.				
☐ Staff managing and conducting evaluation have training and experience in managing and conducting evaluations (on top of other disciplines) in line with the UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework.				
☐ Function has prominence or standing in the organisation and with the governing bodies, for example, via regular peer review or external review exercises of the function, and independent quality assessment of evaluation reports.				
☐ Evaluations address both performance ("doing things right") and addresses critical evaluation questions of "doing the right things", and strategic direction setting and appropriate positioning of the organisation for added value and advancement.				
☐ The approaches and methods used follow professional methods for evaluation in line with the Norms and Standards and appropriate quality assessment standards for evaluation reports.				

	The accountability for results objective is an integral part of the entity's evaluation practice alongside an objective to support strategic learning and adaptive management. Evaluation methods ensure that evaluation findings seek to demonstrate directly attributable results as well as results that the organisation is contributing to along with others.
☐	
☐	When co-located, there is equivalent treatment with other functions in terms of resourcing, coverage, recognition, status and staffing.
☐	The evaluation entity (Evaluation Office or Evaluation Unit) is recognized throughout the organisation as an advocate for evaluation principles and is a respected custodian or steward of good UN evaluation practice.

9) Methodologies and types of evaluation	Little consideration of best-suited methods or types of evaluation.	Some consideration given to the application of different methods and types of evaluations, but the evaluation function is limited in what it can do.	The evaluation function applies a range of different methods and undertakes various types of evaluation.	The evaluation function applies a wide range of different methods and undertakes various types of evaluation. It generates innovations in methodology and contributes to progress in the field.
10) Controls and stakeholder engagement at various stages of the evaluation to ensure quality / content validity	There are no controls in place.	The evaluation function uses only 1-3 of these controls. They are systematically and consistently used.	The evaluation function frequently uses a number of these controls (>3). These are systematically and consistently used.	The evaluation function always uses a variety of controls and stakeholder involvement (>5). These are systematically and consistently used.

Elements of controls and stakeholder engagement to ensure quality / content validity (check as applicable):

☐	Internal quality assurance tools (based on evaluation norms and standards) at various stages of the evaluation (checklists, templates, etc.)
☐	Internal peer review mechanisms
☐	UNEG quality checklists
☐	Expertise and mix of team members tailored to the evaluand ☐ Use of consultants as evaluation and thematic experts
☐	Reference / Advisory Groups made up of
	☐ Internal experts
	☐ Experts from other UN organisations
	☐ Experts from outside the UN
☐	External Readers or review mechanism
☐	Formal endorsement of report by Reference / Advisory Groups or External Readers
☐	Periodic meetings with stakeholders at various stages of the evaluation, validating the evaluating results ☐ Others (please specify): _____

11) Empirical/objective assessments of evaluation reports and compliance with N&S and other requirements	There are ad hoc assessments of the quality of reports.	There are regular assessments of the quality of reports (> every 2 years)	The quality of evaluation reports has not been assessed.	There are regular independent external assessments of the quality of reports (at least every 2 years)

Type of assessment (check as applicable):				
☐ Internal assessment of reports on the basis of:			☐ UNEG N&S	☐ other criteria
☐ External assessment of reports on the basis of:			☐ UNEG N&S	☐ other criteria
☐ Statements by Board				
☐ Statement by internal stakeholders				
12) Quality of reports (corporate/central level) **Please specify assessment rubric(s) the function uses to assess evaluation quality[1]: Recent = last 2-3 years**	Report quality is variable. Some recent reports are of low quality.	Report quality is variable. Very few recent reports of low quality, most reports are of average quality.	Report quality is consistent, all recent reports attain a good level of quality. A few recent reports are of very high quality	Report quality is consistent, all reports attain a high level of quality. A few recent reports are of outstanding quality.

1. Rubrics may include UNEG Report quality checklist, OIOS Evaluation Dashboard, UNICEF GEROS, UNDP QA etc.

Norm 4 - Independence

'Independence of evaluation is necessary for credibility, influences the ways in which an evaluation is used and allows evaluators to be impartial and free from undue pressure throughout the evaluation process. The independence of the evaluation function comprises two key aspects: behavioural independence and organisational independence. Behavioural independence entails the ability to evaluate without undue influence by any party. Evaluators must have full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially, without the risk of negative effects on their career development, and must be able to freely express their assessment. The independence of the evaluation function underpins the free access to information that evaluators should have on their evaluation subject.

Organisational independence requires that the central evaluation function is positioned independently from management functions, carries the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda, and is provided with the adequate resources to conduct its work. Organisational independence also necessitates that evaluation managers have full discretion to directly submit evaluation reports to the appropriate level of decision-making and that they should report directly to an organisation's governing body or its executive head. Independence is vested in the Evaluation Head to directly commission, produce, public and disseminate duly quality-assured reports in the public domain without undue influence by any party.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
13) Positioning of the central evaluation function in the organisation	There is no central evaluation unit.	Unit is embedded within management functions such as programme monitoring, policy development, the design and implementation of programmes.	Unit is separate from programme management functions, but the evaluation Head reports to a Programme Manager not the Executive Head/Director.	Unit is located outside the office of the Executive head and management. It is independent of decision-making and implementation and with a direct reporting line to relevant governing bodies. OR Unit is separate from functions AND is located in or under the office of the Executive Head/Director and with an agreed reporting line to relevant governing bodies. programme management
14) Development and issuance of evaluation reports: Independence of the Head of evaluation (Head of Oversight if applicable)	The Head of Evaluation does not have full discretion over the development and issuance of evaluation reports to Member States and the public. The Management Response is not attached.	The Head of Evaluation has some discretion over the development and issuance of evaluation reports. Reports have to be cleared internally before issuance to Member States and the public. There is potential for interference by management. The Management Response is not attached.	The Head of Evaluation has significant discretion over the development and issuance of evaluation reports. However, they have to be cleared by the Head of the Organisation before issuance to Member States and the public. There are few or no risks of interference. The Management Response is attached.	The Head of Evaluation has full discretion over the development and issuance of evaluation reports to Member States and the public. The Management Response is attached. The Head of Evaluation interacts directly with Member States in deliberations over reports. There are no risks of interference.
15) Planning of the evaluation Work programme (PoW)	The Head of Evaluation does not have full discretion over the evaluation PoW. There are no safeguards for independence.	The Head of Evaluation has some discretion over the evaluation PoW. It is approved by the Head of the Organisation. There are potential violations of independence.	The Head of Evaluation has significant discretion over the evaluation PoW. It is approved by the Head of the Organisation. There are safeguards for independence and no violations of independence.	The Head of Evaluation has full discretion over the evaluation PoW. It is approved by the Governing Body. There are safeguards against external pressures/ influences and no violations of independence.
16) Access to information	There is no formal requirement for staff of the organisation to provide evaluators with full access to information.	There is a formal requirement for access to information. Staff respect this. However, there are often difficulties in obtaining full access to people or information.	There is a formal requirement for access to information. Staff respect this. However, there are sometimes difficulties in obtaining full access to people or information.	There is a formal requirement for access to information. All staff respect this and there are no obstacles to obtaining information.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
17) Regular reporting to Member States on evaluation	The Annual / periodic report is not considered by Member States.	The Head of Evaluation issues the Annual / periodic Report to Member States via another unit or the Head of the Organisation.	The Head of Evaluation issues the Annual / periodic report directly to Member States. However, information on evaluation is limited and is mixed with other functions e.g. audit. It does not provide a comprehensive overview of evaluation in the organisation for decision-making.	The Head of Evaluation issues the Annual / periodic report directly to Member States. It provides a separate and comprehensive overview of evaluation in the organisation for decision- making.

Norm 5 - Impartiality

'The key elements of impartiality are objectivity, professional integrity and absence of bias. The requirement for impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process, including planning an evaluation, formulating the mandate and the scope, selecting the evaluation team, providing access to stakeholders, conducting the evaluation and formulating findings and recommendations.

Evaluators need to be impartial, implying that evaluation team members must not have been (or expect to be in the near future) directly responsible for the policy setting, design or management of the evaluation subject'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
18) Controls and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and balanced perspectives / impartiality	There are no controls or mechanisms to promote impartiality in place.	The unit uses only 1-2 controls/ approaches in the footnoted list (a-f).	The unit frequently uses some (>3). of these controls/approaches (a-f)	The unit uses a full variety of controls / approaches (>4) (a-f)
19) Role of staff across the organisation	The unit can cite numerous examples whereby staff have exerted some form of undue influence on the evaluation process, thereby not abiding by accepted norms and standards.	The unit can cite a few examples whereby staff have exerted some form of undue influence on the evaluation process, thereby not abiding by accepted norms and standards.	Staff abide by accepted norms, standards and guidelines examples of undue influence on the evaluation process are rare.	Staff fully abide by all accepted norms, standards and guidelines Their performance / behaviour is exemplary. There are no known cases of undue influence on evaluation processes.
20) Role of Governing Bodies	None The unit can cite numerous examples whereby Member States have exerted some form of undue influence on the	Low The unit can cite a few examples whereby Member States have exerted some form of undue influence on the	Moderate Member States abide by accepted norms, standards examples of undue influence on the	There are no known cases of undue influence on evaluation processes.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
	evaluation process, thereby not abiding by accepted norms and standards.	evaluation process, thereby not abiding by accepted norms and standards.	evaluation process are rare.	

The extent to which an evaluation entity is promoting impartiality in its evaluation exercises can be judged using the following criteria:

- use of consultants to provide impartial expertise;
- use of evaluation management/reference/independent advisory groups;
- external readers to vouch for impartiality in the conduct of the evaluation exercise;
- formal endorsement of the report by evaluation management/reference/independent advisory groups or external readers;
- periodic meetings with stakeholders and transparency regarding the evaluation process;
- audit trail of all sources of information including interview notes and comments and suggestions made on draft reports;
- others (please specify)

Norm 6 - Ethics

'Evaluation must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the 'do no harm' principle for humanitarian assistance. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, must ensure that sensitive data is protected and that it cannot be traced to its source and must validate statements made in the report with those who provided the relevant information. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of private information from those who provide it. When evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered, it must be reported discreetly to a competent body (such as the relevant office of audit or investigation).'

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
21) Systems are in place to ensure respect of the four UNEG guiding ethical principles for evaluation: integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence	No systems are in place.	Some consideration to ethical principles in evaluation work but they are not systematically respected in evaluation design and conduct.	Systems are in place with respect for the majority of ethical principles in evaluation design and conduct. Some principles are not adequately covered.	Systems are in place with full respect of the principles in evaluation design and conduct.

Norm 7 - Transparency

'Transparency is an essential element of evaluation that establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability. Evaluation products should be publicly accessible'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
22) Systems are in place to ensure transparent processes of evaluation and design and conduct	No systems are in place.	Systems are in place for transparent evaluation design and conduct but not respected systematically.	Systems are in place with some respect of the principles of transparent evaluation design and conduct in practice.	Systems are in place with full respect of the principles of transparent evaluation design and conduct in practice.
23) Accessibility and transparency of completed evaluation reports	Reports are not available on the website, either intra- or public website.	Reports are only available on the intranet.	Reports are available on the intranet, and some on the public website.	Reports are systematically uploaded onto the public website when finalised.

Norm 8 - Human rights and gender equality

'The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality needs to be integrated into all stages of an evaluation. It is the responsibility of evaluators and evaluation managers to ensure that these values are respected, addressed and promoted, underpinning the commitment to 'leaving no one behind'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
24) Human rights (HR) and gender equality values are respected, addressed and promoted in support of the principle of 'leaving no one behind'	Gender, HR and diversity perspectives are not considered in evaluation work leading to a rating of 'missing requirements' in the UN System-Wide Action Plan (UN SWAP) exercise.	Gender, HR and diversity are considered to some extent, but not systematically across all evaluation work, leading to a rating of 'approaches requirements' in the UN SWAP exercise.	Gender, HR and diversity are considered in a systematic way throughout the evaluation process by a balanced/diverse team leading to a rating of 'meets requirements' in the UN SWAP exercise.	Gender, HR and diversity are considered in a systematic way across all evaluation work by a balanced/ diverse team. Different approaches are used for different groups when required and this is reflected in evaluation, processes findings, conclusions and recommendations. This leads to a rating of 'exceeds requirements' in the UN SWAP exercise.

Norm 9 - National evaluation capacities

'The effective use of evaluation can make valuable contributions to accountability and learning and thereby justify actions to strengthen national evaluation capacities. In line with General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level, national evaluation capacities should be supported upon the request of Member States.'

National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD)		
Is there an organisational mandate for NECD?	No ☐	Yes ☐
Has the function formally articulated that it will engage in NECD?	No ☐	Yes ☐

If 'No', has the function formally articulated why it will NOT engage in NECD		No ☐	Yes ☐
Is a mandate for NECD expressed in the evaluation policy?		No ☐	Yes ☐
Is there a vision and integrated strategy and /or work plan for NECD?		No ☐	Yes ☐
Select activities as appropriate:			
☐	Engaging perspectives of nationals (including experts and institutions) in the conduct of evaluations		
☐	Including nationals in reference groups and advisory panels		
☐	Evaluations led by national experts or institutions		
☐	Conduct of NECD training events		
☐	Others (please specify)_____		

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
25) NECD	There is no consideration of NECD in any formal documentation regarding the evaluation function.	Consideration of the function's position regarding NECD is presented in evaluation documents but not mentioned in the evaluation policy. Some initiatives are taken on an ad hoc basis.	Adoption of NECD mandates and respect of UNEG Norm on national evaluation capacity development. Policy statement on NECD, but not integrated in the work. Initiatives taken on a regular basis. OR A clear well-argued rationale for the evaluation function's approach and level of engagement in NECD is articulated in formal documentation (can take the form of an articulation of why NECD is not being operationalized).	Full adoption of an NECD mandate. The Unit has a policy statement, strategy and workplan for NECD. Initiatives are an integral part of the work.

Norm 10 - Professionalism

'Evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. Professionalism should contribute towards the credibility of evaluators, evaluation managers and evaluation heads, as well as the evaluation function. Key aspects include access to knowledge; education and training; adherence to ethics and to these norms and standards; utilization of evaluation competencies; and recognition of knowledge, skills and experience. This should be supported by an enabling environment, institutional structures and adequate resources'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
26) Staff competencies	Staff responsible for designing, conducting and managing evaluations do not have core evaluation competencies;	Staff responsible for designing, conducting and managing evaluations have relevant technical evaluation expertise as per the UNEG	Staff responsible for designing, conducting and managing evaluations have sound technical expertise, as per the UNEG competency framework, solid professional experience, and a range of	Staff responsible for designing, conducting and managing evaluations have extensive technical competencies, solid professional experience, and strong complementary knowledge and skills

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
	have little professional and managerial experience; and have limited understanding of organisational and institutional issues.	competency framework, but have limited professional and managerial experience, and complementary knowledge (including limited understanding of organisational and institutional issues).	other complementary knowledge and skills (including managerial skills if managing consultants, etc.). They have a good understanding of organisational and institutional issues.	(including strong managerial skills if managing consultants, etc.). They apply innovative knowledge and skills to advance evaluation methodology. They have an excellent understanding of organisational and institutional issues.
27) Consultant competencies	There are no mechanisms in place to ensure that professional / technical standards are met by all consultants.	External consultants meet the defined levels of content and professional expertise required. Evaluation experts partially meet the UNEG evaluation competency standards (Standard 3.1- 3.2). Mechanisms to ensure that professional/ technical standards are met by all consultants.	External consultants meet/surpass the defined levels of content and professional expertise required. Evaluation experts meet the UNEG evaluation competency standards (Standard 3.1-3.2). There are mechanisms to ensure that professional/ technical standards are met by all consultants, but these are not always effective.	External consultants meet/surpass the defined levels of content and professional expertise required, and have solid professional experience. Thematic experts are familiar with evaluation principles and methodologies. Effective mechanisms are in place to ensure that professional/ technical standards are met by all consultants.
28) Respect by evaluators and managers of evaluations of accepted elements of the practice of evaluation	None There are numerous examples whereby evaluators and evaluation managers have not abided by accepted norms, standards and guidelines of professionalism, ethics, integrity and cultural sensitivity. The examples are recurrent.	Low There are a few examples whereby evaluators and evaluation managers have not abided by accepted norms, standards and guidelines of professionalism, ethics, integrity and cultural sensitivity.	Moderate Evaluators and evaluation managers usually abide by accepted norms, standards and guidelines of professionalism, ethics, integrity and cultural sensitivity. There are infrequent exceptions.	High Evaluators and evaluation managers fully abide by all accepted norms, standards and guidelines of professionalism, ethics, integrity and cultural sensitivity. Their performance / behaviour is exemplary. There are no known cases whereby these norms and standards have been breached.
29) Professional development of staff	There are no opportunities for staff to enhance their evaluation skills and be trained on the	There are ad hoc opportunities for some staff to enhance their evaluation skills and be trained on the	There are clear policies, and opportunities for all staff to enhance their evaluation skills and be trained on the latest evaluation methods.	There are clear policies and all staff engage in multiple opportunities for learning and sharing (including training, publications, presentations in conferences and sharing of

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
	latest evaluation methods.	latest evaluation methods.		knowledge and skills by delivering training).
30) Participation in UNEG	Not a member.	Member of UNEG but not active in work groups. Unit uses UNEG products.	Member of UNEG and active in work groups. Unit uses UNEG products.	Member of UNEG and active in driving the work of UNEG. Unit actively uses and promotes use of UNEG products.
31) Absence of bias by evaluators and managers of evaluation	Evaluation managers and evaluators are not formally required to reduce bias in evaluations.	Evaluation managers and evaluators are formally required to reduce bias and errors in the design and conduct evaluation but there are no instructions / guidelines on how to do so.	Evaluation managers and evaluators are formally required to reduce bias and errors in the design and conduct evaluation using professional/technical standards. There are instructions / guidelines on how to do so.	Evaluation managers and evaluators are formally required to reduce bias and errors in the design and conduct of evaluation using professional/technical standards. There are instructions/guidelines on how to do so and these are applied consistently across the unit.

PART B - Institutional Norms

Norm 11 - Enabling environment

'Evaluation requires an enabling environment that includes an organisational culture that values evaluation as a basis for accountability, learning and evidence-based decision-making; a firm commitment from organisational leadership to use, publicise and follow up on evaluation outcomes; and recognition of evaluation as a key corporate function for achieving results and public accountability. Creating an enabling environment also entails providing predictable and adequate resources to the evaluation function'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
32) Evaluation architecture	Evaluation is not formally undertaken. An architecture for evaluation is non-existent or not defined.	Architecture for evaluation is partially articulated. Linkages to decentralised evaluation arrangements (where they exist) other oversight, monitoring and/or performance reporting functions are made to some extent but are not fully operational.	Architecture for evaluation is well articulated. Linkages to decentralised evaluation arrangements (where they exist), other oversight, monitoring and/or performance reporting functions are made and are operational but not fully embedded / integrated in systems and Standard Operating Procedures.	Architecture for evaluation is well articulated. Linkages to decentralised evaluation arrangements (where they exist), other oversight, monitoring and/or performance reporting functions are fully operational, embedded and effective.
33) Governance structure	The governance structure for	The governance structure for	The roles and responsibilities of	The governance structure for evaluation

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
* Legislative * Management * Evaluation	evaluation is not defined. Governing bodies are not active in their role with respect to evaluation. Formal Governing Body meeting agendas never feature evaluation topics or issues.	evaluation is defined. In practice the roles and responsibilities of legislative/ governing bodies and senior management are unclear. There are no guidelines or operational directives. Governing bodies are occasionally active in their role with respect to evaluation. Formal Governing Body meeting agendas occasionally feature evaluation topics or issues.	legislative/ governing bodies and senior management are clearly defined. There are guidelines/ operational directives. Governing bodies are quite active in their role with respect to evaluation. Formal Governing Body meeting agendas regularly feature evaluation topics or issues.	is effective. The roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Legislative/ governing bodies and senior management play a key role in strengthening and promoting an evaluation culture. Governing bodies are very active in their role with respect to evaluation. Formal Governing Body meeting agendas always feature evaluation topics or issues. There are different and specific structures in place regularly looking at evaluation. e.g. a dedicated committee on oversight / evaluation issues
34) Support to decentralised/ self/management-led evaluations functions by the central evaluation unit	There is no support to decentralised or technical evaluation functions by the central evaluation unit.	Support to decentralised or technical evaluation functions by the central evaluation unit is recognised as important but is limited. There is no well-defined strategy of how the central unit can support or enhance the quality of decentralised evaluation, nor clear guidelines for the decentralized evaluation function.	Support to decentralised or technical evaluation functions by the central evaluation unit is good. There is a clear understanding of decentralised evaluation and its role in the evaluation architecture. Guidelines or manuals for decentralised evaluations have been produced and disseminated. Linkages and alignments are being established between the central and decentralised functions.	The central evaluation unit provides extensive support to decentralised or technical evaluation functions. There are guidelines/ manuals and/or strategy/ for decentralised or technical evaluations. The central and decentalised/technical evaluation functions are well-defined and linked/aligned.
35) System wide harmonization, collaboration, coherence and efficiency	There is no coordination or collaboration with other UN organisations in the conduct of evaluations.	Coordination with other UN organisations is limited to sharing of information. There is no collaboration	There is active coordination and some collaboration with other UN organisations. Evaluation plans and activities are systematically shared with other UN organisations.	The unit is active in UN reform and harmonization, and demonstrates excellent coordination and collaboration.

Norm 12 - Evaluation policy

'Every organisation should establish an explicit evaluation policy. Taking into account the specificities of the organisation's requirements, the evaluation policy should include a clear explanation of the purpose, concepts, rules and use of evaluation within the organisation; the institutional framework and roles and responsibilities; measures to safeguard evaluation independence and public accountability; benchmarks for financing the evaluation function that are commensurate with the size of function of the organisation; measures to ensure the quality and use of evaluations and post-evaluation follow up; a framework for decentralized evaluations, where applicable; and provisions for periodic peer review or external assessment. The evaluation policy should be approved by the governing body and/or the executive head to ensure it has a formally recognized status at the highest levels of the organisation. References to evaluators in the policy should encompass staff of the evaluation function as well as evaluation consultants'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
36) Appropriate Evaluation Policy in place including clear mandate from governing/legislative bodies (see attributes below)	There is no clear mandate for evaluation. There is no Evaluation Policy and little or no codification of practices.	There is a formal mandate for evaluation. The Evaluation Policy recognizes the adoption of the *UNEG Norms & Standards* exist, but does not sufficiently cover the UNEG criteria a – c for an Evaluation Policy.	There is a clear mandate for evaluation and the Evaluation Policy articulates what it covers and its purpose. However, it does not link evaluation to the rest of the organisation (approval and follow up mechanisms). The Evaluation Policy covers UNEG criteria a to c and most of d to I, and it describes how the organisation will adapt the UNEG Norms & Standards to fit the organisation.	The mandate for the evaluation function is strong. The Evaluation Policy clearly includes reference to all UNEG attributes mentioned below (a – i) as well as other good practices (j-t) as relevant. The Policy extensively describes adaptation of the UNEG Norms & Standards, and inclusion of other norms to fit the context of the organisation.
37) Strategy for evaluation and support from senior management for evaluation	There is no organisational strategy for evaluation. Senior management leadership and support for the evaluation function is missing; there is no evaluation culture nor understanding of the added value of evaluation	There is an organisational strategy for evaluation which operationalizes the evaluation policy. There is a results framework (with some indicators, of variable quality) for evaluation. There is some understanding on the part of senior management of the	There is an organisational strategy for evaluation which operationalizes the evaluation policy. It specifies the role of evaluation and what will make the evaluation function effective/efficient, have impact and be sustainable. There is a results framework (with a full set of indicators of	There is an organisational strategy for evaluation which operationalizes the evaluation policy. It clearly specifies the role of evaluation and what will make the evaluation function effective/efficient, have impact and be sustainable. There is an articulated theory of change for the organisation, supported by a results framework (with a

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
		added value of evaluation. There are a few 'champions' who promote the function.	variable quality) for evaluation. Most senior managers understand the role and added value of evaluation, and there are several 'champions' who promote the function.	comprehensive set of SMART indicators) for evaluation. Senior management fully understand the role and added value of evaluation, and actively support and promote the function within the organisation.
38) Supporting guidelines and/or structures²	There are no guidelines / documents or structures in place for implementation of the Policy.	There are some guidelines / documents and structures in place for implementation. However, they do not refer to key aspects of the policy (i.e. UNEG attributes for an evaluation policy [a – d] in criterion 31).	There are many guidelines / documents and structures in place for implementation. They refer to selective aspects of the policy [> 4 attributes including a-d].	There are documents and structures in place for implementation. They are comprehensive and cover all aspects of good practice for the policy.
39) Monitoring of policy implementation and revision of the policy	There is no policy.	A policy exists but its implementation is not monitored. There is no plan to review or update the policy and have it formally approved.	There is ad hoc monitoring of policy implementation (e.g. the monitoring of performance indicators and some level of reporting to senior management or governing bodies). The policy is updated on this basis and formally approved.	There is on-going monitoring of policy implementation. Adjustments are made regularly (policy revised at least every 5 years) on the basis of: An assessment of implementation, evolving norms and standards, organisational changes, new demands and views of stakeholders.
40) Continuous assessment of the fulfilment of the policy/ norms and standards	No initiatives taken for a continuous assessment of the fulfilment of the policy/ norms and standards [independence, credibility, utility]	Few ad hoc initiatives are undertaken. Adaptation and the change process is slow. Unit is focused on mechanical implementation issues rather than broad, strategic ones.	Several initiatives are undertaken periodically as part of the annual work plan. Adaptation and change is on-going. The Unit occasionally reviews and / or improves evaluation guidelines and manuals	Initiatives are undertaken on a regular basis. Adaptation and change is an integral part of the work of the unit. Frequent and regular review and / or improvement of evaluation guidelines and manuals are undertaken.

1. UNEG good practice for inclusion in policy:

    a)   The role of evaluation within the organisation (purpose)

    b)   The various types of evaluations applied within the organisation (self, independent, centralised/ decentralised...)

c) The difference between evaluation and other types of assessments carried out within the organisation

d) Definition of the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation professionals, senior management and program managers

e) The need for adherence to the organisation's evaluation guidelines

f) How evaluations are prioritised and planned

g) How evaluations are organized, managed and budgeted

h) Management response for the follow up of evaluations

i) Statement on disclosure and dissemination (see discussion under Resources (criteria 15-19); we might add another criterion here, (j) to read 'Statement on, or formula for costing the evaluation function.)

Other good practices (as identified by JIU and OIOS):

j) Assesses value for the function. Adapts and adds policy elements as appropriate to the purpose, goal and requirements of evaluations

k) Addresses a set of guiding principles/mandates/goals important for the organisation mandate& structure of operation

l) Defines roles for levels of governance in evaluation (Governing Body, Management; Evaluation)

m) Defines independence in inclusive manner (structural, built-in structural, professional/technical, behavioural) as a means of achieving impartiality

2. Refers to guidelines / documents not produced by the Evaluation Office e.g. Results-Based Management manual and / or guidance material, project / programme manuals, project / programme appraisal or review committees.

Norm 13 - Responsibility for the evaluation function

'An organisation's governing body and/or its executive head are responsible for the establishment of a duly independent, competent and adequately resourced evaluation function to serve its governance and management needs. The evaluation budget shall be commensurate to the size and function of the organisation'.

The governing body and/or executive head are responsible for appointing a professionally competent head of evaluation and for fostering an enabling environment that allows the head of evaluation to plan, design, manage and conduct evaluation activities in line with the *UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation.* The governing body and/or the executive head are responsible for ensuring that evaluators, evaluation managers and the head of the evaluation function have the freedom to conduct their work without risking their career development. Management of the human and financial resources allocated to evalauton should lie with the head of evaluation in order to ensure that the evaluation function is staffed by professionals with evaluation competencies in line with the UNEG Competency Framework.

Where a decentralized evaluation function exists, the central evaluation function is responsible for establishing a framework that provides guidance, quality assurance, technical assistance and professionalization support'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
41) Appointment of Head of Evaluation (Head of Oversight if applicable)	There is no central evaluation unit.	The appointment is made by the Head of the organisation without consideration of UNEG evaluation competencies.	The appointment is made by the Head of the organisation with consideration of UNEG evaluation competencies.	The appointment is made by the Governing/Legislative Board with consideration of UNEG evaluation competencies.
42) Core resources[1]	There are no core resources to support staff	Human resources available for evaluation are shared with	There are clear dedicated staff resources for evaluation but funding to	There are clear/separate dedicated staff resources

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
	dedicated to evaluation.	monitoring and/or other oversight activities. Support for staff positions is uncertain, unstable and / or unsustainable. Transaction costs are incurred in mobilizing resources.	support staff positions can be unstable and/or unsustainable. Transaction costs sometimes incurred in mobilizing resources..	for evaluation which are stable and sustainable. Core resources are commensurate with requirements for comprehensive evaluation coverage of the organisation. Resources for evaluation support a function which is proactive and focused on refining itself.
43) Non-core/ extra budgetary financial resources	The evaluation function is highly dependent on non-core/extra budgetary resources, and there are no measures in place to (a) safeguard independence and (b) ensure sustainability of the function.	The evaluation function is highly dependent on non-core/extra budgetary resources and there are few measures in place to (a) safeguard independence and (b) ensure sustainability of the function (ensure use aligned with organisational mandate or needs of unit).	The evaluation function is not solely dependent on non-core resources, and there are adequate measures in place to (a) safeguard independence and (b) ensure financial sustainability of the function.	The evaluation function benefits from adequate non-core resources for its operations. There are strong measures in place to (a) safeguard independence and (b) ensure sustainability of the function. Non-core resources are managed at the discretion of the unit Head. The unit effectively mobilises and uses non- core resources to strengthen its programme of work.
44) Results-based Management (RBM) framework	The organisation does not have an operational RBM policy or system. The overall organisational culture for results and accountability / learning is poor.	An RBM policy / system exists and is operational. Linkages (among evaluation, strategy, budget, programmatic areas, etc.) are not well defined. Implementation of RBM is not complete (results-based reporting is not comprehensive). The organisational culture for results and accountability / learning depends on individuals.	The RBM policy/system exists and its implementation/ coverage is more or less complete. It provides some key elements to support the conduct of evaluation (logical framework, results, performance indicators, reporting and data systems are of high quality) but evaluation is not fully integrated into the system (the linkages are not well/fully developed). The organisational culture for results and accountability / learning is only partially reflected in the organisation's practices. There are occasional capacity	The RBM policy/system exists and its implementation / coverage is comprehensive. It provides all key elements to support the conduct of evaluation (logical framework, results, performance indicators, reporting and data systems are of high quality). Evaluation is fully integrated into the system (the linkages are well/fully developed) and its role (advisory or other) defined. The organisational culture for results and accountability / learning is fully reflected in the organisation's practices.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
			building initiatives for enhancing the organisational culture.	There are systematic capacity building initiatives for enhancing the organisational culture.
45) Planning for coverage (see criteria below)	Evaluations are not planned and prioritized according to clear selection criteria.	Evaluations are planned but the selection criteria are unclear and/or not systematically applied.	Evaluations are planned and prioritized according to clear selection criteria.	Evaluations are planned and prioritized according to clear and strategic selection criteria. They allow for flexibility and maximum coverage.
46) Actual coverage and responsiveness of the plan	Coverage is ad hoc. Few areas are covered on a selective basis. The plan is inflexible to respond to changing conditions and demands.	Coverage is weak and selective. The plan is somewhat flexible but mostly focuses on own internal capacity and limited resources. Not sure how supportive of decision-making the plan is. >50% of substantive* areas are covered within a 5-year period but on a selective basis. (* themes or topics deemed as key priorities within the organisation's approved programme of work.)	Coverage is adequate and the plan is adaptable. The plan supports demand and decision-making at various levels of the organisation. It recognizes the need for balancing various activities. >75% of substantive areas are covered within a 5- year period.	Coverage is good/excellent. The plan is flexible to changing conditions and demands and is supported by a strategy for doing so. It is clearly linked to demands and decision-making at various levels of the organisation. 100% of substantive areas are covered within a 5-year period.
47) Technical and managerial evaluation guidelines and tools	No evaluation guidelines or tools are available.	There are few evaluation guidelines and tools. Those that exist are not comprehensive nor are they not applied consistently across the organisation.	There are evaluation guidelines and tools, covering key areas. They are applied somewhat consistently across the organisation.	There is a comprehensive set of evaluation guidelines and tools which are applied consistently across the organisation.

1. Core refers to resources coming from an organisation's regular/central budget, as compared to extrabudgetary resources from specific donor agreements (non-core).

The following planning/selection criteria are used (check as applicable):	
☐	Organisation strategic plan / priorities
☐	Internal and external stakeholder demand
☐	Emerging / global trends
☐	Internal and external coherence
☐	Evaluability assessment
☐	Funding amount

☐	Up-scaling value
☐	Others (please specify) Yes _____

Norm 14 - Evaluation use and follow-up

'Organisations should promote evaluation use and follow up, using an interactive process that involves all stakeholders. Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and/or management addressed by its recommendations that clearly states responsibilities and accountabilities. Management should integrate evaluation results and recommendations into its policies and programmes.

The implementation of the evaluation recommendations should be systematically followed up. A periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations should be presented to the governing bodies and/or the head of the organisation'.

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
48) Recommendation tracking system	There is no follow-up mechanism.	Follow-up mechanisms are in place and there is ad hoc follow-up on the implementation of recommendations.	Follow-up mechanisms are in place and well designed. There is systematic follow-up on the implementation of recommendations.	The follow-up mechanism is well designed and of high quality. There is systematic follow-up of recommendations. Reporting on implementation status is mandated.
49) Recommendation implementation rates	There is no follow-up on the implementation of recommendations. There is no clear indication of recommendation accepted and implemented.	Less than 50% of recommendations are implemented within the first three years.	Between 50-85% of recommendations are implemented within the first three years.	More than 85% of recommendations are implemented within the first three years. The evaluation function assesses implementation of recommendations and the results achieved as a result of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations
Nature of use for central evaluation reports (check as applicable):				
☐	High level – For developing corporate strategies and policies for strategic decision-making in the organisation by the governing/legislative bodies and senior management			
☐	Mid-level – For management and broader programmatic decisions by senior and mid-level management			
☐	Implementation level – For on-going adjustments at project and programme level by project and programme managers			

Factor	Level 1 (Rating of 1-2)	Level 2 (Rating of 3-4)	Level 3 (Rating of 5-6)	Level 4 (Rating of 7-8)
High Level **50) Corporate/ summative use (use for strategic direction setting at organisational level)**	Not used	Low use	Moderate use	High use
Mid Level **51) Corporate/ summative use** (use for strategic direction setting at higher programmatic level; tied to performance)	Not used	Low use A few evaluations have been used as input for the development or revision of the organisation's programme of work or thematic strategies.	Moderate use Some evaluations have been used as input for the development or revision of the organisation's programme of work or thematic strategies.	High use All evaluations are used as input for the development or revision of the organisation's programme of work or thematic strategies.
Implementation Level **52) Formative use for on-going adjustments at project and programme level for programmatic improvement and learning** – what is working, what changes to make, etc. (during interventions)	Not used	Low use	Average use	High use
53) External use of evaluation	Evaluations are never cited outside the organisation.	Evaluations are rarely cited outside the organisation.	Evaluations are occasionally cited outside the organisation.	Evaluations are often cited outside the organisation.

Annex 2 History and background of UNEG Peer Reviews

First and Second-Generation Peer Reviews

There were 20 Peer Reviews of UN evaluation functions between 2005 and 2020. Ten of these were 'first generation' peer-reviews, where Peer Review methods and approaches were tested and consolidated. These were conducted for UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, OIOS, GEF, UNIDO, UNEP, UN-Habitat, FAO and UN Women. The 'first-generation' Peer Reviews focused primarily on the three critical core criteria - *independence, credibility and utility -* which, together, provide a perspective on the performance of the evaluation function.

In 2013, UNEG published a *Lessons Learned Study of Peer Reviews of UNEG Evaluation Functions* which highlighted key aspects considered to be "best practice" which have been incorporated into the current guidance:

- A common understanding of the intent and expectations of the peer review;

- Benefits should justify costs;

- A clear agreement on cooperation, the assessment process and questions. This agreement should serve to clarify expectations and provide a basis for a detailed peer review ToR, work plan and timetable;

- A defined context, scope and focus and issues for quality assurance;

- A ToR and a normative framework to be developed for each peer review: the normative framework should have an agreed set of principles, standards (aligned to the UNEG N&S) and criteria against which the performance of the evaluation function is to be reviewed;

- Designated parties including panel members and a consultant with clear roles and responsibilities in carrying out the peer review;

- Panel members should be tailored to the organisation and selected based on competence and experience; and

- A set of procedures for initiating and conducting the review. A peer review process should involve three distinct phases: (i) **the preparatory phase:** in which the panel is established, the ToR formulated, the normative framework developed, and self-assessment of the evaluation function takes place; (ii) **the fact-finding phase**: which involves document review, information collection, visit of the peer panel to conduct interviews and collect and validate information; and (iii) **the peer exchange and reporting phase:** in which the panel members exchange with stakeholders on findings, conclusions and recommendations and identify possible issues where views of the panel and the reviewed organisation diverge. In this phase, the panel carries out a final review, drafts the report and transmits it to the evaluation office for comments. The final report incorporates comments received and is transmitted to the organisation reviewed, either directly or through UNEG. Subsequently the panel presents the main findings to the organisation reviewed and, ideally, to its governing body.

The 'second generation' of Peer Reviews from 2013-2020 continued to use the principles of independence, credibility and utility but also focused on specific issues, identified jointly by the panel and the evaluand function e.g., UNDP (2013), GEF and WFP (2014). The second UNDP Peer Review (January 2013) focused on methodology and knowledge sharing; while the second-generation Peer Review of WFP (October 2014) covered the three core criteria and, in addition, focused on decentralized evaluations (operations evaluations) and the trade-offs between strategic and operations evaluations. The second Peer Review of the Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF IEO), October 2014, focused on strategic issues, including improving evaluation policy and practice, identifying options to strengthen evaluation methodologies, and enhancing knowledge and sharing of evaluation findings. During this period there were also Peer Reviews of UNRWA, ITC, UNODC, UNICEF, IFAD, UNFPA, UNESCO, ICAO and a third Peer Review of GEF. The reviews of UNESCO and ICAO, conducted in 2019, were the first to trial the new normative assessment framework. It is hoped that UNEG Peer Reviews / assessments from 2021 onwards will follow the guidance laid out here.

The landscape of reviews and assessments of UN evaluation functions

There are two key types of assessments of UN evaluation functions. First, oversight entities of the UN system, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), have a mandate, among others, to assess and report on the performance of evaluation functions in the UN system and the UN Secretariat. Second, bilateral donors and their networks, for example MOPAN assesses evaluation functions as an integral part of broader multilateral development effectiveness reviews and assessments. These assessments can be system-wide or general or focus on one agency or on a specific sector, such as trade capacity-building. In addition, UN entities undertake assessments of evaluation functions or parts thereof. For example, UNESCO developed a self-assessment tool for its evaluation function and the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF annually reviews the quality of evaluation reports submitted by its implementing agencies (e.g. UNDP, UNIDO and UNEP) according to its assessment criteria. In this context, the UNEG-DAC EvalNet PRs, are unique learning and accountability exercises for UN entities in that they provide an in-depth assessment of an evaluation function, and have a scope and methodology tailor-made for an individual organisation. More information on the approach for each type of assessments is summarized below.

The most comprehensive review of UN evaluation functions was conducted by the JIU in 2014. The *Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the UN System*[14] sought to contribute to ongoing efforts across the system, directed at strengthening the capacity of the evaluation function in order for them to meet professional standards, address emerging challenges and play a role in enhancing the value of the UN. The JIU study assessed 28 UN entities including funds and programmes and specialized agencies. The study focused primarily on the corporate evaluation function and secondarily on the decentralized evaluation functions of the UN system. Of the 28 UN entities included, 24 had corporate evaluation functions. The relative performance of these 24 functions was assessed against a 'maturity matrix' that identified five areas and 66 indicators to benchmark against established standards endorsed by UNEG, JIU and development partners. The areas assessed were: a) the enabling environment, institutional framework and support systems; b) relevance, responsiveness, efficiency and adaptability; c) independence/impartiality and with stakeholder inclusion for enhanced credibility; d) quality - technical and managerial rigour for enhanced credibility; e) utility - use and impact of use; and f) relevance and readiness to support UN and system-wide

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[14] Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System. JIU/REP/2014/6.

reforms, and to address emerging changes and challenges. Detailed 'maturity matrices' were prepared for each entity as well as summative ratings. The study provided nine recommendations – seven to the executive heads of UN system organisations and two to UN system legislative bodies.

Since 1988, **OIOS** has conducted biennial studies of the Secretariat's evaluation functions and associated programmes and presents them to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation[15]. The objectives *United Nations Evaluation Dashboard* presents an aggregate summary of the Secretariat Evaluation Dashboard results. It provides statistics for each area for an overarching view of the state of evaluation and as a point of comparison across entities. It also presents group summaries and individual entity dashboards within each group with a description of the status of the indicators for each entity. For the 2018-2019 biennium it included a snapshot of entity objectives, key features of evaluation functions, areas for strengthening evaluation capacity, and other evaluation activities that did not result in evaluation reports (e.g. guidance, training, and norm-setting. The study involves preparation of 'evaluation dashboards based on 15 indicators of evaluation practice. The indicators used are based on the UNEG Norms and Standards. The OIOS evaluation dashboard is prepared for each Secretariat evaluation entity and provides some summative indications of evaluation performance in the form of scores against each indicator. In recent years Secretariat entities are provided with detailed findings underpinn9ng their dashboard assessments to provide a solid basis for adaptive management and improvement.

MOPAN is a network of 19 donor countries with a common interest in assessing organisational effectiveness of, and evidence of, contributions to development and humanitarian results achieved by the multilateral organisations that they fund. It was created in 2002 and produces assessments of multilateral organisations[16]. The MOPAN Common Approach Methodology was developed to address the recognised need for a common comprehensive system to assess multilateral organisations and it goes beyond assessing evaluation functions, which is just one part of the assessment. It aimed to respond to the particular needs of donors about the performance an organisation by producing information that would not be available otherwise. MOPAN covers four areas of organisational effectiveness: a) strategic management; b) operational management; c) relationship management; and d) knowledge management. The MOPAN review assesses evaluation function under the dimension on knowledge management as a Key Performance Indicator on evaluating results. It examines structural independence, evaluation policy, coverage, quality of evaluation reports and stakeholder participation in the evaluation process. The MOPAN assessment of multilateral organisations is based on information collected through a survey of key stakeholders, document review and interviews with the staff of multilateral organisations. MOPAN 3.1 is the latest version of the assessment methodology used for assessments beginning in 2020. It introduces integrated measures related to important new agendas in the multilateral system: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, and the reform of the United Nations Development System. In addition, MOPAN 3.1 includes a streamlined indicator framework and improved processes and tools that build on lessons from past assessments

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[15] The reports respond to regulation 7.4, which requires that a brief report summarizing the conclusions of the Secretary-General on all evaluation studies be submitted to the General Assembly at the same time as the proposed medium-term plan (now the "strategic framework").
[16] FAQ. See MOPAN website at http://www.mopanonline.org/faq.

Other development effectiveness reviews: There are a number of other bilateral development effectiveness reviews of UN entities that include the evaluation function as part of the overall performance review. The approach of *Development Effectiveness Review* was developed under the guidance of DAC EvalNet in 2010-2011[17], responding to a request from DAC members for more systematic information on the development results of multilateral institutions. The approach is designed to complement the periodic assessments done by the MOPAN and to try to reduce the demand for ad hoc reviews by individual donors. The method covers six development criteria and 19 sub-criteria, including a criteria on using evaluation and monitoring to improve development effectiveness. Three different scenarios can be chosen depending on the strengths of reporting systems and evaluation function of multilateral organisations[18]. For instance, in scenario two, where a multilateral organisation has weak reporting system but strong evaluation function, the methodology involves a systematic structured meta-analysis of a sample of multilateral organisation evaluation reports.

Another important bilateral assessment is the *Multilateral Aid Review (MAR)*[19] undertaken by DFID which examined 43 multilateral organisations in the areas of contribution to results, strategic and performance management, transparency and accountability and cost and value consciousness. Evaluation functions were reviewed under strategic and performance management, applying key analytical categories of EvalNet's methodology on evaluation. The first MAR was conducted in 2011. The subsequent MAR update scrutinized the improvements multilateral organisations had made since 2011 was completed in 2013. Other bilateral donors conduct similar reviews which can cover the organisation in its entirety or parts thereof. For instance, Norway has undertaken a review on the effectiveness of its support to Trade Capacity-Building, covering the UN agencies active in this field and incorporating assessments of the evaluation functions.

Compared with these other assessments and reviews, **the UNEG Professional Peer Review** offers an in-depth analysis of an evaluation function and its products against the UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation. The key added value of the UNEG Professional Peer Review is that it is an assessment that focuses entirely on the evaluation function of one organisation. As a joint effort between the DAC EvalNet and UNEG, it has the potential to generate synergies and efficiencies and reduce overlaps with regards to the assessments of evaluation functions conducted by bilateral donors (who often use PRs as inputs into their own assessments). Another advantage of the Peer Review is that it is conducted by professional peers, people with a deep insight into the various aspects of an evaluation function and who are well placed to promote peer learning. The participation of DAC EvalNet expands the peer element and provides additional credibility as an external partner.

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[17] See OECD/DAC website http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/evaluatingmultilateraleffectiveness.htm.
[18] See Assessing the Development Effectiveness of Multilateral Organizations: Guidance on the Methodological Approach. Available at http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dcdndep/50540172.pdf.
[19] See more on the Multilateral Aid review at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/multilateral-aid-review.

Annex 3 Reference Documents

UNEG Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN organisations

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