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UNDP Evaluation

UNDP Evaluation Policy, 2025–2030

Summary

The document outlines the UNDP Evaluation Policy for the period 2025-2030, detailing its purpose, principles, and the institutional framework that guides the evaluation processes within UNDP and its associated entities. It emphasizes the role of evaluation in enhancing accountability, learning, and the effectiveness of development interventions. It establishes clear parameters in support of the structural and behavioral independence of the function, to promote its impartiality and credibility. It stresses the value of engaging UNDP management and other stakeholders throughout the evaluation process to enhance evaluation utility and use.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to approve the UNDP Evaluation Policy.

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I. Purpose, status and scope of the Policy

1. This evaluation policy sets out the purpose and basic principles of evaluation and defines the institutional architecture for UNDP and its associated funds and programmes. The policy covers the independent evaluations conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP; the decentralized evaluations commissioned by UNDP business units; and those of the UNDP-hosted entities: the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). It also covers the activities of UNDP and the Independent Evaluation Office to strengthen the evaluation learning ecosystem.
2. The policy has been revised following consideration of the recommendations of the independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy (DP/2025/6) which, together with a management response (DP/2025/7) formulated by UNDP management and the Independent Evaluation Office, was presented to the Executive Board at its First Regular Session, 2025.
3. This policy is aligned with the overall mandate of UNDP and its associated programmes and funds, and with the Charter of the United Nations and its objectives. The guiding principles stem from General Assembly resolutions, Executive Board decisions and the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

II. The purpose of evaluation

4. This policy follows the UNEG definition of evaluation as “an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance”.¹ Evaluations should focus on expected and achieved accomplishments, critically examining the presumed causal chains, processes, as well as contextual factors affecting the achievement of results. Evaluations determine the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the work of UNDP, to adjust and improve its organizational and system-wide contributions to development.
5. The evaluation function supports a results-driven, learning-oriented and accountable organization, where all evaluations are aligned with UNDP Results-Based Management (RBM) and Accountability Framework.
6. UNDP has a bifurcated evaluation system: with broad thematic, programmatic and country-level evaluations carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office on the one hand; and decentralized evaluations commissioned by UNDP business units (policy and regional bureaux and country offices) on the other.
7. The Independent Evaluation Office ensures the independence, credibility and quality of strategic evaluations that inform global, regional and country-level programming. At the same time, UNDP decentralized evaluations bring evidence-generation closer to operations, embedding learning and adaptation in real time. This dual system strengthens the culture of learning, innovation and course correction across the organization. It also reinforces RBM by grounding results frameworks in clear theories of change, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) indicators, and adaptive planning approaches. By integrating evaluation and evidence into decision-making, both internally

¹ UNEG Norms and Standards (2016).
www.unevaluation.org/sites/default/files/file_uploads/UNEGNormsStandardsforEvaluation_English-2017_1914_11512579289962.pdf

and with partners, UNDP can advance its mission to deliver sustainable development results that are inclusive, responsive and impactful.

A. Learning and use: Evaluations support better decision-making and promote learning among stakeholders

8. UNDP is committed to nurturing a culture of learning and strengthening capacity to harness data, knowledge and evidence for smarter, more strategic evidence-based decision-making. By embedding evaluation tools into systems and processes, UNDP helps to ensure that evidence does not just inform decisions and mitigate risk but also drives transformation.

9. To be truly effective, this must happen both within UNDP, by embedding these practices in its institutional systems, and externally, through meaningful partnerships that empower stakeholders to do the same in their own contexts.

10. A strong culture of evaluation is a prerequisite for a learning organization. Evaluations should be utility-driven, ensuring they are not only relevant but also practical, actionable and applicable across the organization. UNDP is committed to producing evaluations that generate meaningful impact, delivering valuable insights and recommendations that enhance decision-making and organizational effectiveness.

11. Evaluations are important knowledge tools that should be leveraged alongside other knowledge products to strengthen the ability of UNDP and hosted entities to learn from experience and understand the types of development support that work well, or not so well, in different contexts. The scope, design and implementation of an evaluation should generate relevant, cost-effective and timely information. All evaluations should drive organizational learning.

B. Evidence-based and strategic decision-making: Thematic, country programme, decentralized and impact evaluations, along with evaluation syntheses, strengthen evidence-based, strategic decision-making processes in UNDP

12. Evaluations serve strategic, evidence-based, course-corrective decision-making through data collection, reflection and analysis, with impartial judgement. Evaluations address critical knowledge gaps not captured by routine monitoring and the Integrated Results and Resource Framework (IRRF) architecture. The integration of different evaluation approaches across the organization, including broader use of impact evaluations and evidence synthesis, enables evidence and lessons to be captured and used to further enhance the UNDP strategic decision-making process.

13. The Independent Evaluation Office will maintain a balanced portfolio of thematic, programme-level evaluations, while placing increased emphasis on impact evaluations to further strengthen the UNDP position as a learning-oriented and evidence-driven organization.

14. Impact evaluations, which rigorously assess the causal effects of interventions, provide credible evidence on effectiveness and value-for-money, thereby enhancing transparency, accountability and strategic decision-making. Recognizing the methodological rigour and lifecycle integration required for impact evaluations, their implementation will be supported by robust impact measurement mechanisms and aligned with strengthened RBM processes, to build institutional capacity over the policy period.

15. Evidence synthesis responds to the paradox that an abundance of data can sometimes hinder its practical application. By systematically consolidating findings from evaluations and integrating them with complementary sources of evidence, synthesis enables the identification of cross-cutting trends, emerging issues and effective practices. These

synthesized insights serve as a strategic resource for informing programme design, policy development and resource prioritization. The Independent Evaluation Office will continue to advance the institutionalization of evidence synthesis approaches, including through the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and strategic partnerships, to ensure the timely, efficient and utility-driven use of evaluation evidence for decision-making at all levels of the organization.

C. Accountability: Evaluations help stakeholders hold UNDP accountable for contributing to development results at different levels

16. Evaluations play a critical role in strengthening accountability, by enabling stakeholders to assess the contributions of UNDP to development results across multiple levels. Beyond fostering learning, evaluations ensure that UNDP, along with its associated programmes and funds, remains accountable to its stakeholders, including the Executive Board, funding partners, and the governments and citizens of the countries it serves. As such, evaluations serve as a vital source of evidence for monitoring organizational performance and supporting system-wide oversight.

D. Sustainable Development Goals: Improved national evaluation capacity enhances progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

17. Support to national evaluation capacity is embraced as a programmatic priority in its own right, in line with General Assembly resolutions A/RES/69/237 and A/RES/77/283. When appropriately tailored to national circumstances and priorities, evaluation can help hold institutions accountable to their citizens and accelerate progress towards national Sustainable Development Goal priorities, drawing on contributions from Indigenous Peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders, including national parliamentarians.

III. Evaluation principles

18. Evaluations should be guided by the UNDP people-centred approach to development, which enhances capabilities, choices and rights for all men and women, framed within the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UNDP Evaluation Policy is guided by the Economic and Social Council resolution E/RES/2013/16, which required the systematic integration of gender equality into evaluation of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

19. In carrying out their evaluation functions, UNDP, UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC adhere to the interrelated evaluation principles of impartiality, credibility and utility. These organizations are expected to adhere to the principles set out below.

A. High ethical standards and norms

20. Evaluations implemented across UNDP should uphold the highest ethical standards. They should be implemented with honesty and ensure accountability, while striving for quality and impact. Evaluators must have personal and professional integrity, and all evaluators, whether staff of the Independent Evaluation Office or consultants, must conduct evaluations in line with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

21. Evaluators must be sensitive to the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environments in which they work, and evaluations must be conducted legally. In light of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality.

22. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to their source, while ensuring that individual evaluation findings are triangulated to avoid being based solely on evidence that cannot be disclosed or verified. When using AI, evaluators should follow the relevant UNEG Ethical Guidelines.

23. Where evaluations uncover evidence of wrongdoing, this must be reported to the appropriate UNDP investigative body. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate the personal performance of individuals.

24. Acknowledging the UNDP commitment to reducing social and environmental harm, evaluations will be conducted to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts on people and the environment.

B. Independence, credibility and impartiality

25. All evaluations must uphold the principle of independence, encompassing both structural and behavioural dimensions.

26. Structural independence refers to the organizational arrangements, procedural and budgetary safeguards that enable evaluators to operate autonomously throughout the evaluation process.

27. Behavioural independence ensures that evaluations are conducted with impartiality and credibility, free from undue influence that could compromise their objectivity. This should be maintained across all stages of the evaluation process, from formulation to implementation and dissemination. Credibility is, however, also derived from meaningful consultations on such matters as the scope and objectives of evaluations, the availability of accurate data, and the timing of deliverables.

C. Integrating climate, environment, resilience, South-South cooperation and leaving no-one behind

28. UNDP evaluations assess climate action, environmental sustainability, and resilience-building across all areas of the organization's work to capture and understand the interconnections between human and natural systems. Equally, evaluations should systematically incorporate and assess Leave No One Behind principles, recognizing and addressing bias and exclusion.

29. A consideration of sustainability, inclusion and equity across economic, social and environmental dimensions should be included in all evaluations, to promote equitable and lasting development outcomes. UNDP impact can be captured through the inclusion of an assessment of the UNDP social and environmental standards in evaluation processes.

30. Where appropriate, evaluation approaches should consider, assess and incorporate the principles of South-South cooperation to enhance the inclusivity, ownership and context-specific learning of the evaluation.

D. Rule-bound planning and implementation

31. All evaluations should be designed and conducted according to the UNEG norms and standards. The principles of credibility should be demonstrated through transparent and explicit evaluation processes, with due consultation and recognition of the right to respond by the evaluated party. Individual evaluations should be subject to quality assurance, and overall systems and processes of evaluation practice should be subject to periodic independent review.

32. The rationale for an evaluation should be stated clearly from the outset. The scope, design and implementation of evaluations should consider the relevant results frameworks approved by the Executive Board, particularly the UNDP Strategic Plan and the associated IRRF, as appropriate.

33. To maintain impartiality across evaluations commissioned by UNDP business units, evaluations should not be carried out by UNDP staff with a vested interest in the result. ‘Staff with a vested interest’ refers to anyone responsible for, or benefiting from, association with the subject of the evaluation. This independence provides legitimacy to an evaluation and reduces the potential for conflicts of interest.

E. Rigour and technical competence

34. The professionalism of evaluators and their effective use of appropriate evaluation methods are critical. Key questions and areas for investigation should be clear, coherent and realistic. Evaluation plans should be practical and cost-effective. Evaluations should be built on explicit results frameworks and theories of change, where available.

35. To ensure that information generated is accurate and reliable, the data collection, analysis and dissemination for all evaluations should meet the quality standards defined by UNEG and set out in UNDP guidance. Where appropriate, they should also reflect internationally recognized professional standards, with due regard for any circumstances or limitations stemming from the evaluation context. Emphasis should be placed on the development of well-crafted terms of reference.

36. Use of innovative evaluation approaches and data collection methods is encouraged to assess UNDP within the complex circumstances in which it provides support, particularly within crisis contexts. Where appropriate, evaluators should leverage advancements in technology, including but not limited to AI, Geographic Information Systems and big data, to enhance the quality and efficiency of evaluation.

37. Evaluator competence is critical. Evaluators should have the skills necessary to carry out data collection and analysis and establish the relevance and strength of evidence to support conclusions. They should also have experience with methods that combine evidence from multiple sources to reach an overall evaluative conclusion. Evaluators must understand the difference between independently verified and self-reported data. They should be up to date on new methodologies and possess proven competencies in line with the standards of the evaluation profession.

F. Transparency and stakeholder engagement

38. Meaningful consultation with UNDP management and other stakeholders is essential for the credibility and utility of independent evaluations. Evaluation topics should be chosen based on their potential use for strategic, evidence-based decision-making. Without compromising their independence, and to promote an evaluation culture based on knowledge-sharing, evaluation managers should include key users at each stage of the evaluation process. Information on the evaluation design and methodology should be shared with stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, to build confidence in the eventual findings and ensure an understanding of their circumstances.

39. All UNDP evaluations are to be made publicly available and should be presented by the Independent Evaluation Office and UNDP through relevant platforms and events.

40. UNDP recognizes the importance of valuing different forms of knowledge and different voices in its work. Evaluations at UNDP should be planned and conducted in a manner that promotes national and local ownership and increases the participation of

national counterparts, through inclusive and participatory approaches. This may involve, where appropriate, partnering with national evaluation organizations and supporting country-led evaluations. UNDP evaluations should foster a culture of inclusivity, dignity and collaboration, where all stakeholders are respected, valued and empowered, recognizing their contributions and perspectives in all evaluations.

IV. Evaluation procedures and quality assurance

A. Evaluation systems should be properly resourced, quality assured and independently assessed

41. Both the overall system and individual evaluations should be adequately resourced, and budgets should be consistent with ambition. Resources are allocated to evaluation through evaluation plans that cover programmes at country, regional and global levels, as well as through the evaluation workplan of the Independent Evaluation Office.

42. At organizational level, UNDP will aim to allocate 1 percent of combined programmatic (core and non-core) resources to the evaluation function on an annual basis, with 0.3 percent reserved for the work of the Independent Evaluation Office.

43. All decentralized evaluations commissioned by UNDP business units are designed and implemented in accordance with the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. Evaluations that have strategic significance should be prioritized.

44. The Independent Evaluation Office manages a quality assessment system for decentralized evaluations, providing feedback on performance to UNDP regional and headquarter bureaux and country offices, reported annually to the Executive Board. The system includes all evaluations commissioned by UNDP, UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC.

B. Clear delineations should be made between the evaluation and monitoring functions

45. While they are mutually supportive, there is a distinct difference between the evaluation and monitoring functions. Monitoring is a continuous management function that provides managers and key stakeholders with regular feedback on consistencies or discrepancies between planned and actual activities and programme performance, and on the internal and external factors affecting results. Evaluation is an independent judgment, based on criteria and benchmarks agreed among key partners and stakeholders. There needs to be a clear delineation between each function, and clarity on the financial and human resources provided to each.

C. Strengthening performance measurement systems enhances the quality of evaluations

46. The quality and utility of evaluations are greatly enhanced by project and programme results frameworks, which establish the logical sequence of planned results and include a theory of change articulating how activities and outputs are expected to lead to desired outcomes and results. Performance indicators should be SMART.

47. UNDP management will institutionalize key performance indicators in evaluations to ensure that evaluations are planned and implemented in accordance with the UNDP Evaluation Policy and guidelines, and are used in decision-making processes in UNDP programmes, projects and portfolios where necessary.

D. Management should respond to all evaluation recommendations

48. Management at UNDP, UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC prepare management responses to all Independent Evaluation Office corporate, thematic and programme evaluations, and decentralized evaluations. Management responses to evaluation recommendations should include specific, time-bound actions, with clearly assigned responsibilities to implement them. These responses are discussed with stakeholders and made public through the online Evaluation Resource Centre.

49. The management responses to the Independent Evaluation Office corporate, thematic, and global and regional programme evaluations are submitted to the Executive Board for review together with the corresponding evaluations. Evaluation synthesis products do not require management responses.

50. UNDP, UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC report annually to the Executive Board on their management responses and actions taken. The Independent Evaluation Office reviews these reports and individual management responses, including through in-country follow-up for Independent Country Programme Evaluations.

E. Joint programming should be evaluated jointly

51. Greater structural coherence across the United Nations system, including the expansion of joint programming and the evolving UNDP system-wide 'integrator' role, requires a corresponding effort to 'evaluate as one'. UNDP continues to play a pivotal role in the efforts of the United Nations system to achieve greater structural coherence through evaluation within the context of its role and engagement within UNEG.

F. Corporate risk should help shape the planning and conduct of evaluation

52. Thematic evaluations are carefully selected to focus on areas that are most critical to enable UNDP to achieve its strategic vision. By concentrating on the issues of highest relevance to the UNDP mandate and global priorities, these evaluations generate insights that strengthen strategic decision-making, inform policy, and enhance the organization's overall impact.

53. The Independent Evaluation Office plans Independent Country Programme Evaluations using a risk-based, prioritized approach that ensures the greatest value and impact. These evaluations focus on countries of higher levels of complexity, volatility or strategic importance, allowing for deeper, more tailored assessments in these contexts. At the same time, all country programmes are covered over time, with each evaluated at least once every two cycles. This model supports planning certainty, accommodates shifts in the renewal timing for country programme documents, and enhances the use of findings by emphasizing quality and engagement. The approach is grounded in the principles of independence, rigour and transparency, to ensure that evaluations generate actionable insights where they are most needed.

54. Prioritization decisions are made by the Independent Evaluation Office in close collaboration and discussion with the relevant regional bureau, to ensure that contextual knowledge and strategic considerations inform the Independent Country Programme Evaluation planning process.

55. UNDP business unit (headquarter, regional and country office) decentralized evaluations should equally be planned with use in mind. Decentralised evaluation plans should ensure a balance between, on the one hand, meeting the needs of donors and conducting mandatory evaluations and, on the other, supporting programme learning,

informing key decisions, and overseeing risk through strategic level decentralized evaluations.

V. UNDP evaluation architecture and institutional framework

A. Theory of Change

56. The UNDP evaluation function is grounded in a shared vision of strengthening the organization's contribution to sustainable development through a culture of accountability, learning and evidence use. This vision is realized by enabling independent, credible and useful evaluations that inform decisions at every level - from country offices to the global strategy. Underpinned by the principles of accountability, learning, independence and transparency, the evaluation function aspires to leave no one behind, while ensuring that development interventions are effective, adaptive and aligned with organizational and national priorities.

57. The theory of change for the UNDP Evaluation Function recognizes the organization's bifurcated evaluation system with a decentralized function embedded across UNDP business units, country offices, regional and central bureaux, and the Independent Evaluation Office, which operates with institutional independence to conduct corporate, thematic, country-level evaluations and evaluation syntheses. Together, these components contribute to outcomes such as evidence-informed programming and policy, institutionalized evaluation processes, increased use of evaluation by governments and development partners, and stronger programmatic effectiveness. The Independent Evaluation Office further contributes to global learning and evidence generation by producing influential, timely evaluations that inform the UNDP strategic direction, foster accountability, and advance international evaluation practice.

58. As part of this approach, the Independent Evaluation Office generates high-quality evaluations and evaluative products that are aligned with the UNDP strategic vision and most pressing evidence needs. Its work is shaped through continuous engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to identify priority themes and ensure that evaluations respond to real-time decision-making needs.

59. Beyond producing evaluations, the Independent Evaluation Office acts as a key advocate for the integration of evidence into decisions at all levels of the organization. Through accessible knowledge products, learning engagements and strategic communications, it promotes a culture where insights are applied to improve programming and policy. This contribution is enabled by robust systems, sustainable resourcing and a shared commitment to use evaluation as a driver of learning and transformation across UNDP.

B. Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Board

60. The Executive Board is the custodian of the Evaluation Policy. It approves the Policy, annually considers its implementation, and periodically commissions independent reviews of the Policy. The Executive Board also approves the biennial financial appropriation to the Independent Evaluation Office in the context of the UNDP integrated budget and financial rules and regulations, and it undertakes periodic reviews and adjustments of such appropriations based on the programme of work of the Independent Evaluation Office, which the Board also approves.

61. The Independent Evaluation Office submits independent thematic and programmatic evaluations to the Executive Board, which approves the management responses as appropriate.

62. The Board is consulted on the recruitment of the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office.

The UNDP Administrator

63. The Administrator:

(a) Safeguards the integrity of the evaluation function, ensuring its independence from operational management and activities;

(b) Ensures that adequate financial resources are allocated to the evaluation function across the organization, in accordance with financial appropriation for the Independent Evaluation Office approved by the Executive Board, and reports to the Board annually on the volume of resources that the organization has invested in evaluation;

(c) Ensures that the Independent Evaluation Office has unfettered access to data and information required for the evaluation of UNDP performance, and

(d) Appoints the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office in consultation with the Executive Board, taking into account the advice of the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee, whose roles and responsibilities are delineated below.

UNDP business units

64. UNDP business units (programme and policy units) commission decentralized evaluations according to evaluation plans that coincide with relevant programmes (central, regional and country) and global projects. These evaluations are to be carried out by independent external consultants, and UNDP management shall take all necessary actions to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of the process and persons hired.

65. All development programmes, projects and portfolios are subject to a decentralized evaluation in line with strategic priorities and needs. Shorter-term delivery instruments - including project initiation plans, engagement facilities and development services - are not subject to evaluation unless UNDP business units deem them strategically necessary to measure development impact, support the scale up of initiatives, mobilize resources, or meet funding partner requests.

66. Subject to the delegation of authority from the UNDP Administrator, the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) coordinates communication between UNDP management and the Independent Evaluation Office and advises regional bureaux on the decentralized evaluation function for UNDP, ensuring strategic level evaluations for strengthened evidence-based decision-making. BPPS works with the monitoring and evaluation staff of UNDP business units to ensure that evaluation plans are properly implemented, and that lessons inform decision making. Together with the Independent Evaluation Office, BPPS provides guidance to UNDP business units on the use of evaluation findings and lessons to improve organizational decision-making and accountability, and synthesizes evaluation lessons for institutional learning. It also monitors implementation of management responses to the evaluations of the Independent Evaluation Office and decentralized evaluations in UNDP.

67. Central and regional offices must ensure that there is adequate funding and staffing in place to support the decentralized evaluation system, that accountability and independence is ensured, and that lessons learned are appropriately adopted into the decision-making processes at different levels. Staffing should be in line with the UNDP Monitoring policy.

UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC

68. UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC have established evaluation units that commission decentralized evaluations in similar ways to UNDP business units. These organizations establish evaluation plans, allocate funding, commission evaluators, provide management responses and learn from evaluation results. The Independent Evaluation Office works closely with the evaluation offices of these organizations to ensure that evaluation processes and reports align with the UNDP Evaluation Policy, are strategic in nature, independently produced, and of high quality and utility.

The Independent Evaluation Office

69. The Independent Evaluation Office is a functionally independent unit within UNDP that supports the oversight and accountability functions of the Executive Board and the management of UNDP, UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC. The structural independence of the Independent Evaluation Office underpins and guarantees its freedom to conduct evaluations and report evaluation results to the Executive Board.

70. The main role of the Independent Evaluation Office is to conduct independent evaluations according to the plans and costed programmes of work approved by the Executive Board. The work also includes:

- (a) Developing evaluation standards, procedures, criteria and methodological guidance for UNDP evaluations, and contributing to innovation in evaluation methodology and dissemination of good practices;
- (b) Conducting thematic, programmatic and other independent evaluations, ensuring strategic and representative coverage of UNDP programmes and results against national, regional and global scales;
- (c) Providing UNDP and its development partners with timely knowledge and lessons drawn from evaluations, such as thematic and programme-level evaluation and knowledge syntheses that can feed into development programming at global, regional and country levels;
- (d) Assessing the quality of decentralized evaluations of UNDP, UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC and monitoring compliance with the best international evaluation and data collection standards, including the UNEG norms and standards, code of conduct and ethical guidelines;
- (e) Communicating its evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations through multiple channels and maintaining a searchable, publicly accessible repository of all UNDP, UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC evaluations, respective management responses and resulting actions;
- (f) Supporting the development of communities of practice within UNDP, and partnering with external professional evaluation networks to improve evaluation utility and credibility;
- (g) Supporting the harmonization of the evaluation function in the United Nations system, including contributing to the annual work programme of UNEG, participating in system-wide evaluations, and prioritizing joint evaluations with United Nations organizations, and
- (h) Promoting national ownership and leadership in evaluation through country-led and joint evaluations.

71. The Independent Evaluation Office regional evaluation advisers report to the Independent Evaluation Office Director and work closely with senior managers accountable for development results in the regions. They support the Independent Evaluation Office

activities within the region, and work closely with regional bureau management to strengthen evaluation culture and capacity in regional bureaux and country offices. This can include: supporting the assessment of regional and country office evaluation plans and decentralized evaluations; bringing evaluation insights into the development process for country programme documents and other regional or country level strategies; helping to facilitate the identification of qualified independent evaluators; supporting UNDP and national-level capacity-building on evaluation and the building of regional evaluation networks; and managing evaluations and knowledge products led by the Independent Evaluation Office.

Director of the Independent Evaluation Office

72. The Independent Evaluation Office is led by a Director who is responsible for ensuring its independence, as well as the impartiality and credibility of its work; and who reports directly to and is accountable to the UNDP Executive Board.

73. The Director manages the Independent Evaluation Office in accordance with UNEG norms and standards and UNDP policies and procedures, securing structural and operational independence.

74. In all aspects of their work, the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office shall operate within the rules and regulations of the UNDP, and in accordance with United Nations standards of conduct for the International Civil Service, United Nations staff regulations and rules, and UNEG norms and standards.

75. The Director has the freedom to engage directly with external stakeholders in the course of implementing this policy, in accordance with United Nations standards of conduct for the International Civil Service.

76. The roles and responsibilities of the Director include:

(a) Periodically manage the process of reviewing and revising this policy at the request of the Executive Board, in consultation with UNDP management;

(b) Manage the Independent Evaluation Office and its budget in a fiscally responsible manner, including contributions from partners;

(c) Manage recruitment of staff for the Independent Evaluation Office in line with UNDP recruitment procedures and UNEG competencies for evaluators, and take the final decision on selection of staff;

(d) After consultation with UNDP management, present to the Executive Board a multi-year evaluation plan aligned with the UNDP strategic planning cycle. The programme of work is to be adjusted annually through a costed programme of work presented to the Executive Board in the annual report on evaluation;

(e) Report annually to the Executive Board on the status of the evaluation function under this policy, including key issues for consideration by the Board derived from independent evaluations;

(f) Regularly alert UNDP senior management to emerging evaluation-related issues of institutional significance, without taking part in decision-making;

(g) Set evaluation standards, procedures and criteria, approve methodological guidance on UNDP evaluations, and ensure the availability of evaluation quality assessment mechanisms to continuously improve and enhance the quality, credibility and utility of UNDP evaluations;

(h) Have the final say on the content and release of evaluations carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office, in accordance with UNDP Executive Board decisions.

Evaluation reports will be issued under the imprimatur of the Independent Evaluation Office; and

(i) Ensure that evaluation in UNDP contributes to and remains consistent with United Nations policy and reforms.

Appointment of the Director, Independent Evaluation Office

77. The appointment of the Director is the responsibility of the Administrator, in consultation with the Executive Board, with consideration of the advice of the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee.

78. In addition to standard UNDP hiring procedures, selection of the Director shall include the following aspects:

(a) Selection will be based on professional evaluation expertise and competence, as defined in the UNEG guidelines and competency framework for heads of evaluation; and

(b) A full disclosure, in writing, shall be made to the Bureau of the Executive Board, outlining the selection criteria and process.

79. The term of appointment of the Director is limited to a single, seven-year term, non-renewable and barring re-entry to UNDP.

80. Dismissal of the Director due to poor performance, misconduct or malfeasance, shall follow UNDP policies and procedures, after consultation with the Executive Board through its Bureau. The Director cannot be dismissed for public statements made in the conduct of their work, consistent with UNDP staff rules and regulations and the United Nations standards of conduct for the International Civil Service.

Audit and Advisory Committee

81. The UNDP Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee serves an advisory role on evaluation matters. Its members provide advice to the UNDP Administrator and the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office in fulfilling their responsibilities for the UNDP evaluation function as set out in this Policy.

82. At least two members of the Committee will serve based on their recognized global stature and expertise in the evaluation of development organizations.

83. With respect to evaluation, the Committee will review, and advise the Administrator on:

(a) The evaluation policy;

(b) The appointment and dismissal of the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office;

(c) Multi-year and annual work plans, budget, and periodic reports of the Independent Evaluation Office;

(d) Thematic and programmatic evaluation reports and management responses; and

(e) The UNDP decentralized evaluation function, and national evaluation capacity programming.

VI. Implementation of the revised UNDP Evaluation Policy

84. Notwithstanding its independence as enshrined in this revised Evaluation Policy, the Independent Evaluation Office, as an integral division within the overall organizational structure of UNDP, will follow all applicable UNDP rules and procedures. It will likewise

be entitled to benefit from the same support services (including human resources, administration, financial services, information technology, and communication) provided to all other departments and divisions, in accordance with the prevailing rules and regulations.

85. This policy is operationalized through several strategies and plans approved by the Executive Board. These are:

(a) The multi-year evaluation workplan. This is prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office and is consistent with the UNDP Strategic Plan. It also provides the Executive Board with a costed programme of work to implement the evaluation plan on an annual basis;

(b) Evaluation workplans for UNDP business units (global, regional and country programmes). These are approved by the Executive Board concurrently with its consideration of the related programme documents, and

(c) Evaluation plans for UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC. Each organization prepares a multi-year evaluation workplan aligned with its strategic plan, and a biennial costed programme of work for evaluation concurrent with its overall evaluation budget.

86. A comprehensive and strategic evaluation plan should contain an appropriate mix of programme, project and portfolio evaluations, including joint evaluations. Evaluations required by a cost sharing agreement or partnership protocol (such as the Global Environment Facility) are mandatory, and must be included in evaluation plans.

87. All evaluation plans must be fully costed and accompanied by text explaining the logic of including the evaluations in the plan.

A. Reporting

88. The Independent Evaluation Office reports to the Executive Board on the status of implementation of this policy at each annual session as part of its annual report on evaluation. Each annual report should include the following elements:

(a) Progress. A presentation of the activities and achievements of the Independent Evaluation Office during the previous year, and programme of work for the current and following year;

(b) Decentralized evaluations. A factual description, together with an assessment of the status, quality and utility of decentralized evaluations commissioned by UNDP, UNCDF, UNV and UNOSSC, and

(c) Strengthening UNDP through evaluation. A synthesis of the main findings, conclusions and lessons from independent and decentralized evaluations about the performance of UNDP,

89. The Audit and evaluation Advisory Committee will oversee the commissioning of an independent and external review of the UNDP evaluation function prior to its renewal, with the next review to take place in 2029. It may leverage the UNEG Peer Review process to facilitate this.

Annex One: UNDP Evaluation Function Theory of Change

