



## Policy Instruction

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## Evaluations

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Approved by: John Holmes, Emergency Relief Coordinator and  
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs  
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Contact: Chief, Evaluations and Studies  
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## Policy Instruction Evaluations

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### **A. PURPOSE**

1. The policy seeks to strengthen the institutional framework for the conduct of evaluation activities by OCHA and to establish a common understanding and approach to the function.
- 1.1. Evaluation is a routine function which promotes transparency and accountability through the provision of systematic and objective judgments about the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of humanitarian intervention. Evaluation facilitates systematic reflection, learning and decision making around issues of enhanced effectiveness and impact in the future. OCHA uses evaluation both as a tool for assessing its own coordination activities and as a direct support to the international humanitarian community through the application of system-wide and joint evaluation processes at the request of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)<sup>1</sup> or the United Nations General Assembly.

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### **B. SCOPE**

2. The present policy instruction provides an overarching framework of the principles, roles and management accountabilities for evaluation within OCHA. The scope of the policy reflects the unique mandate of OCHA as an inter-agency co-ordination entity.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182, adopted in December 1991, created the high-level position of ERC. Soon after, the Secretary-General assigned the ERC the status of Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs (USG-HA). For the sake of simplicity, the term ERC will be used throughout this document.

- 2.1. The evaluation policy shall include a multi-year evaluation strategy. The Strategy shall have an operational focus and shall be harmonized with the time frame of OCHA's Strategic Planning Framework. The Evaluation Strategy shall also include a tentative four-year indicative plan and a budget for evaluation activity, which shall be conducted during the life of the Strategic Framework. The Evaluation Strategy will subsequently be updated through Annual Evaluation Work Plans. A set of detailed Evaluation Guidelines shall provide further operational details regarding the management and utilization of evaluations within OCHA.
  - 2.2. The present policy instruction covers evaluation activities which fully meet the established definition for evaluation based on the 2005 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation.
  - 2.3. The evaluation policy governs only OCHA's central evaluation function. It does not cover evaluation activities which may be initiated by OCHA at the country and regional levels. OCHA Country and Regional Offices shall be free to initiate their own evaluations based on their own management needs or at the request of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) or the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT); however, all such evaluation activity shall fall outside the scope of the present policy instruction and will therefore not be governed by the same definitions, budgetary rules, analytical standards and framework for management accountabilities as contained in the present policy instruction.
  - 2.4. OCHA's evaluation policy shall not govern any review or assessment functions, which do not meet the formal definition of evaluation. This includes performance reporting procedures in the OCHA Annual Report, the conduct of After-Action Reviews, lessons learning studies or any analytical work related to needs assessment. The evaluation policy moreover does not govern OCHA's monitoring activities. A detailed glossary of terms of definitions is attached.
  - 2.5. The policy does not apply in the case of independent evaluations of OCHA conducted by external entities such as the UN Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) or the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).
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## **C. RATIONALE**

3. The goal of the evaluation policy is enhanced impact and effectiveness for OCHA and the international humanitarian community as a whole. The policy anticipates the following results:
  - Greater understanding of the effects of humanitarian intervention on the lives of women, men, girls and boys affected by disasters.
  - Improved relevance, definition and implementation of key objectives, strategies and policies related to humanitarian coordination.
  - Better resource allocation efficiency within OCHA and across the humanitarian system.
  - Improved integration of evaluation as a tool for supporting learning and operational decision including a more rigorous approach to the identification of lessons learned and strengthened longer-term application of lessons learned.
  - Enhanced results reporting and accountability at all levels.

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## D. POLICY

### 4. Types of Evaluations

- 4.1. Two basic types of evaluation are undertaken by OCHA at the corporate level:
- 4.2. Internally-mandated evaluations are specific to OCHA and are undertaken at the request of the ERC. These evaluations focus on internal performance issues.
- 4.3. Externally-mandated evaluations are evaluations mandated by bodies external to OCHA such as the UN General Assembly or the Inter Agency Standing Committee and are managed by OCHA's central evaluation function. These evaluations are often of an inter-agency nature requiring a highly collaborative approach to planning and management. External evaluations typically focus on policy and performance issues related to the humanitarian system as a whole.

### 5. Guiding Principles for Evaluation within OCHA

- 5.1. The guiding principles for evaluation emanate from decisions taken by the UN General Assembly, and from the 2005 UNEG Norms and Standards and the 2007 UNEG Code of Conduct for evaluation. The basic principles shall be as follows:
- 5.2. OCHA will harmonize its definition and understanding of evaluation with that of the UN System and in particular the core definition provided by the United Nations Evaluations Group (UNEG) which is as follows: an evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, program, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors, and causality in order to understand the achievements or the lack thereof. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the UN system. An evaluation will provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision making processes of the organization of the UN system and its members.
- 5.3. OCHA uses evaluation to answer three fundamental questions: Is the right thing being done? Is it being done well? Are there better ways of doing it? The first question is addressed by examining the rationale and relevance of the undertaking; the second by examining the effectiveness with a view towards optimizing the use of resources; and the third by identifying and comparing alternatives, seeking best practices and providing relevant lessons learned.
- 5.4. All evaluations will be triggered by a request from the UN General Assembly, the IASC or the ERC.
- 5.5. Evaluation at all levels within OCHA must serve an explicit management purpose, and will be conducted in a manner which promotes follow up and use.
- 5.6. Evaluators must have skills in evaluation, together with personal and professional ethics and integrity.

- 5.7. Evaluation teams shall be formed in a manner to ensure that skills in human rights and gender equality analysis are included. The composition of evaluation teams shall be gender balanced, geographically diverse and include professionals from the countries or regions concerned.
- 5.8. Evaluation findings, recommendations, and lessons shall be made widely available and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders.
- 5.9. Evaluation results and recommendations shall be duly considered, with management responses and action plans developed and disseminated as appropriate.
- 5.10. Evaluations must be carried out in a participatory and ethical manner. The welfare of stakeholders should be given due respect and consideration.
- 5.11. Evaluations must be conducted in a gender and culturally sensitive manner. This includes respecting the confidentiality, protection of source and dignity of those being interviewed and the routine use of gender-disaggregated data and analysis.

## **6. Guiding Principles for Internally Mandated Evaluations**

- 6.1. Internally-mandated evaluations shall be triggered by the ERC and contribute to the improved management of OCHA through the analysis of effectiveness and impact.
- 6.2. Evaluations shall be used to reinforce and complement OCHA's results-oriented planning, monitoring and reporting framework through the provision of in- depth independent analysis about how and why results have or have not been achieved.
- 6.3. Internal evaluation topics shall be selected for inclusion in the Annual Evaluation Work Plan by the ERC based on criteria contained in the Evaluation Strategy and the Indicative Evaluation Strategy Timetable.

## **7. Guiding Principles for OCHA Participation in Externally Mandated Evaluations**

- 7.1. OCHA shall promote and participate in any relevant inter-agency, joint or system-wide evaluations.
- 7.2. OCHA may agree to conduct and directly manage external evaluations of inter-agency or joint activities on behalf of the IASC or the ERC to the extent that it has the capacity and the funds to do so.
- 7.3. The ERC when commissioning inter-agency, joint or system-wide evaluations, shall ensure that follow up to these evaluations is discussed and agreed to by any relevant inter-agency committee (e.g. IASC).
- 7.4. System-wide, inter-agency or joint evaluations should be co-financed by all participating agencies.
- 7.5. OCHA is committed to the promotion of joint humanitarian impact evaluations. Due to the high cost and data intensity of such exercises, the use of impact evaluations will be on a highly selective basis.

## **8. Guiding Principles for the Application of Lessons Learned from Evaluations**

- 8.1. All evaluation results and recommendations shall be presented to senior management and other relevant stakeholders.
- 8.2. All evaluations shall require a formal management response. The management response shall address all recommendations and clearly identify where accountability for follow up action resides. The management response shall be prepared within three months of the completion of the evaluation.
- 8.3. The ERC shall assign responsibility within OCHA for the preparation of a management response to specific evaluation recommendations. The designated Branch or Section shall provide a written response to all recommendation indicating its agreement or disagreement including a clear explanation for rejecting or modifying any of the recommendations. There shall be an action plan with clear time frames for implementing all recommendations that have been accepted.
- 8.4. In the case of evaluations of an interagency or joint nature managed by OCHA, OCHA shall coordinate the preparation of a management response to all recommendations in accordance with the same principles.
- 8.5. Lessons learned arising from inter-agency, system-wide and joint evaluations which are relevant for OCHA shall be reviewed and acted upon by senior management in the same manner as if the evaluation has been undertaken by OCHA.
- 8.6. All management units assigned responsibility for implementing evaluation recommendations shall report back to the ERC regarding the current status of implementation one year after finalization of the response and thereafter as requested to do so by the SMT or until such time as all the required follow up actions have been implemented.

## **9. Independence of the Evaluation Function**

- 9.1. To ensure adequate independence and credibility for its evaluation function, the following measures shall be put into place:
- 9.2. The evaluation function shall be considered to operate independently from the concerns of any particular organizational or management function within OCHA.
- 9.3. Whereas the Chief of the Evaluation Section reports administratively to the Chief of the Policy Development and Studies Branch (PDSB) and ensures close collaboration and feedback on evaluation findings within PDSB, he or she shall possess the necessary independence to supervise and report on all evaluations and to submit directly evaluation reports and findings for consideration at the appropriate level of decision making.
- 9.4. The Chief of the Evaluation Section shall ensure independence for the function by ensuring that all evaluations meet professional quality standards and that all evaluation staff possess the necessary professional background, technical expertise and independence to operate in an effective and impartial manner.
- 9.5. To ensure the availability of adequate resources for the evaluations function, an amount of no less than one percent of OCHA's total annual budget will be dedicated to the central evaluation function, including all staff costs.

10. **Transparency, Disclosure and Dissemination of Evaluation Reports**

- 10.1. Once finalized, all externally-mandated evaluation reports shall be made available on OCHA On Line and on Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int). All internal evaluation reports shall be posted on OCHANet.
- 10.2. The OCHA Annual Evaluation Work Plan will be announced in OCHA in 201x and also made available on OCHANet and on OCHA On Line.
- 10.3. Transparency and consultation with major stakeholders shall be required during all stages of the evaluation process. Evaluation terms of reference and reports shall be discussed with all major stakeholders.
- 10.4. The management response to all evaluations shall be recorded in a Management Response Matrix to be completed within three months of the evaluation's completion. The matrix shall reflect all the recommendations made by the evaluation team and be posted together with the evaluation report.
- 10.5. As required by the UNEG standards, the ES shall produce an Biennial Evaluation Report which shall be shared with the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG) and posted on OCHA On Line, OCHANet and on Reliefweb.

11. **Institutional Framework and Management Accountabilities**

- 11.1. The ERC shall ensure an enabling environment for the evaluation function within OCHA. Specific aspects of such an environment shall require that:
  - a) Adequate capacity and resources are available to support implementation of the evaluation function in line with the provisions of the current policy;
  - b) The Evaluation section possesses the necessary independence and that evaluations are conducted in an impartial and independent manner;
  - c) All relevant findings and lessons learned are utilized and contribute to decision making and management;
  - d) The evaluation function is led by a professionally competent evaluation head and that evaluation staff have the necessary background and expertise;
  - e) A system is in place for explicit planning for evaluation and for systematic consideration of the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in evaluations;
  - f) A corporate repository of evaluations exists and is maintained;
  - g) Mechanisms are in place for distilling and disseminating lessons to support learning and systemic improvement; and
  - h) In the case of external evaluations, the ERC and the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinators (DERC) will ensure that all relevant evaluation findings and recommendations are brought to the attention of the UN Secretary General, the UN General Assembly and to the IASC.

### **The Role of the Senior Management Team (SMT) Members**

- 11.2. In relation to this policy directive, each member of OCHA's SMT shall:
- a) Make proposals for evaluation in line with the established criteria within this policy;
  - b) Prioritize and agree upon evaluation proposals for final inclusion in the OCHA Annual Evaluation Work Plan;
  - c) Actively participate in all Evaluation Advisory Groups (for internal evaluations only);
  - d) Review all findings and recommendations from evaluations and ensure timely inputs towards the preparation of management response where necessary; and
  - e) Oversee follow up actions within their respective area and advise the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) on the current status of follow up actions.

### **The Role of the Evaluation Section (ES)**

- 11.3. OCHA's ES shall have the main operational responsibility for the implementation of OCHA's central evaluation function. In this context, the Section shall perform the following core activities:
- a) Develop and implement the OCHA Evaluation Policy and Strategy.
  - b) Work closely with SMT members, the SPU as well as other Branches and Services to develop and finalize the Annual Evaluation Work Plan.
  - c) Implement the Annual Evaluation Work Plan modifying as necessary during the year to reflect changing priorities and capacities.
  - d) Work closely with other UN Agencies, NGOs, donors, UNEG and the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) Network to strengthen the normative framework for the evaluation function within OCHA and across the humanitarian sector.
  - e) Ensure all OCHA evaluation activities are conducted in an independent manner and in accordance with recognized professional standards. This includes actively ensuring proper supervision and quality control of the entire evaluation cycle beginning from the design and inception phase, through to the research, validation and final reporting phases.
  - f) Arrange for briefing and dissemination events to ensure all stakeholders are informed of evaluation findings and recommendations. In this context, present key evaluation findings to OCHA's SMT at strategic points during the year.
  - g) Prepare an OCHA Biennial Evaluation Report which reflects key findings, lessons learned and recommendations including details of any related support activities provided by the Section throughout the previous two years.



- h) Within available capacity and resources, provide consulting and/or advisory services to other OCHA Branches and Services in the area of monitoring and evaluation methodology.

#### **The Role of the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU)**

- 11.4. In relation to this policy directive, the SPU shall perform the following core activities:
- a) Assist the ES in the prioritization and screening of internal evaluation proposals for inclusion in the OCHA Annual Evaluation Work Plan.
  - b) Participate as a member of all relevant Evaluation Advisory Groups
  - c) Highlight for SMT on a regular basis strategic implications for OCHA arising from evaluation findings
  - d) Work closely with the ES to prepare any relevant lessons learned for dissemination in OCHA's Annual Report. Such reporting will focus in particular on how OCHA intends to make use of evaluation results both external and internal to improve performance.
  - e) Review all evaluation recommendations and make preliminary recommendations to the ERC on the preparation of a management response and monitor completion of the management response within three months of the finalization of an evaluation report.
  - f) Provide oversight related to follow up by OCHA management to evaluation recommendations.
  - g) Request relevant units to provide updates as needed related to the current status of follow up actions and keep the ERC advised accordingly.

#### **The Role of the Policy and Guidance Management System**

- 11.5. The Head of the Policy and Guidance Management System shall ensure that lessons learned from OCHA evaluations are properly reflected within official OCHA guidance.

#### **The Role of Staff Development and Learning**

- 11.6. The Head of Staff Development and Learning shall ensure that lessons learned from OCHA evaluations are properly reflected within OCHA trainings.

#### **The Role of Evaluation Advisory Groups**

- 11.7. Evaluation Advisory Groups (AG) shall play a critical role in the evaluation process helping to increase ownership, transparency and learning effects arising from evaluations. Group Members shall participate in meetings convened by the ES Task Manager at critical junctures during the evaluation and in this context assist in steering the evaluation process throughout its cycle. The AG comments on the evaluation design and reviews the draft evaluation reports, the recommendations, the lessons identified and related follow-up.

- 11.8. For internal evaluations, AGs shall be representative of the SMT membership. In the case of external evaluations, inter-agency advisory group mechanisms shall also be established based on the willingness of different agencies to be represented and to engage in a joint evaluation process.

### **The Role of Staff**

- 11.9. Once evaluation reports are available, relevant OCHA staff from other sections, branches and divisions shall be responsible for commenting upon the reports as appropriate. Branch Chiefs shall also be responsible for ensuring appropriate response and follow up to those recommendations that are addressed to their branch.
- 11.10. Branches shall provide annual feedback to the SPU regarding the implementation rate of evaluation recommendations by providing an updated management response matrix when requested to do so. Branch staff may also be requested to participate in AGs for specific evaluations as appropriate.

### **The Role of Country and Regional Offices**

- 11.11. Country and Regional offices shall within available capacities help ensure local planning and facilitation for all OCHA evaluations. This includes providing administrative assistance to evaluation teams, arranging all the necessary meetings and field visits, ensuring access to all key persons and arranging for all evaluation briefings and debriefings with key stakeholders within a country. The responsibility for the co-ordination of the evaluation visit in the field rests with the Country Office.
- 11.12. Once evaluation reports are available, OCHA Country and Regional offices shall help to validate the key findings of the report by providing written comments as appropriate.
- 11.13. Country offices are responsible for ensuring a local response, a formal management response and follow up to those recommendations arising from evaluations that are addressed to the field level. They must also provide feedback to the annual tracking exercise conducted by SPU on the implementation rate of evaluation recommendations. This is done through providing an updated management response matrix as and where appropriate.
- 11.14. COs also have an obligation to keep relevant units, sections and branches in HQ appraised of efforts related to their area of work, and to consult with entities in HQ on these efforts. CO's should also always keep their nearest Regional Office (RO) updated and informed. COs should expect to benefit from the support of their RO. For specifics on the nature of the support provided please see OCHA's Policy Instruction on the Roles and Responsibilities of Regional Offices.

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## **E. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

12. The Glossary below is aligned to the approved UN Harmonized Terminology for Results-Based Management as well as to the 2002 OECD/DAC definitions contained in the Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management.

- 12.1. Accountability: The obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted with agreed rules and standards and to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and responsibilities.
- 12.2. Appraisal: A critical assessment of the potential value of an undertaking before a decision is made to implement it.
- 12.3. Audit: An assessment of the adequacy of management controls to ensure the economical and efficient use of resources; the safeguarding of assets; the reliability of financial and other information; the compliance with regulations, rules and established policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organizational structures, systems and processes.
- 12.4. Benchmark: Reference point or standard against which progress or achievements can be assessed. A benchmark refers to the performance that has been achieved in the recent past by other comparable organizations, or what can reasonably be inferred to have been achieved in similar circumstances.
- 12.5. Impact: Positive and negative effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. The effects can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of any other type.
- 12.6. Impact evaluation: A specialized type of evaluation which uses research methods to provide rigorous evidence on whether a humanitarian intervention (program, project, policy measure, or reform) has changed people's lives and whether outcomes are directly attributable to the intervention.
- 12.7. Inputs: The financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for the humanitarian intervention.
- 12.8. Indicator: Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention or to help assess the performance of a humanitarian actor.
- 12.9. Inspection: A general examination that seeks to identify vulnerable areas and malfunctions and to propose corrective action.
- 12.10. Internal management consulting: Consulting services to help managers to implement changes that address organizational and managerial challenges and improve internal work processes.
- 12.11. Investigation: A specific examination of a claim of wrongdoing and provision of evidence for eventual prosecution or disciplinary measures.
- 12.12. Knowledge management: A systematic and integrated process of creating, analyzing, storing and disseminating knowledge resources, intangible assets or intellectual capital.
- 12.13. Lessons learned: Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths, weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact.
- 12.14. Monitoring: Management's continuous examination of progress achieved during the implementation of an undertaking to track compliance with the plan and to take necessary

- 12.15. Needs Assessment: An assessment of the humanitarian assistance requirements of an affected population. Utilized to plan humanitarian relief.
- 12.16. Oversight: The general process of review, monitoring, evaluation, supervision, reporting and audit of OCHA's activities, policy implementation and results. This is to ensure organizational, financial, operational and ethical accountability, effectiveness of internal controls and the prevention of fraud and malpractice.
- 12.17. Outcomes: The intended or achieved short- and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs, usually requiring the collective efforts of partners. Outcomes represent changes in humanitarian conditions which occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of impact.
- 12.18. Outputs: The products and services which result from the completion of activities within a humanitarian intervention.
- 12.19. Performance: The degree to which a humanitarian intervention or partner operates according to specific criteria, standards or guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated goals or plans.
- 12.20. Performance Indicator: A quantitative or qualitative variable that allows the verification of changes produced by an intervention relative to what was planned.
- 12.21. Performance measurement: A system for assessing performance of humanitarian interventions against stated goals and objectives. Performance measurement relies upon the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of data for performance indicators.
- 12.22. Performance monitoring: A continuous process of collecting and analyzing data to compare how well a project, program or policy is being implemented against expected results (achievement of outputs and progress towards outcomes).
- 12.23. Policy Research: A systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge and policy making.
- 12.24. Quality Assurance: Any activity that is concerned with assisting and improving the merit and worth of a humanitarian intervention or its compliance with a given standard.
- 12.25. Results: Changes in a state or condition which derive from cause-and effect relationship. There are three types of such changes (intended, or unintended, positive and/or negative) which can be set in motion by an intervention – its outputs, outcome and impact.
- 12.26. Results chain: The causal sequence for a humanitarian intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives – beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts and feedback. A results chain is based on a theory of change, including underlying assumptions.
- 12.27. Results Framework: The logic that explains how results are to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions. The results framework is the application of the logframe approach at a more strategic level, across an entire organization, for a country program, a program component within a country program or a project-level intervention.
- 12.28. Results-based management: A management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts.

- 12.29. Review: The Periodic or ad hoc often rapid assessments of the performance of an undertaking that do not necessarily apply the due process of evaluation. Reviews tend to emphasize operational issues.
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## **F. REFERENCES**

### **Normative or superior references**

- A/RES/51/194 paragraph 15b or A/RES/51/94
- A/ST/SGB/2000/8 Article 7 or ST/SGB/2000
- A/RES/62/94, paragraph 14
- GA Resolution 59/250
- ECOSOC 2003/5 paragraph 35c
- ECOSOC 2006/5 paragraph 19
- ECOSOC 2007/3 paragraph 14
- OCHA 5 Year Strategic Vision

### **Related guidance**

- OCHA Results-oriented Planning and Monitoring Guidelines (interim, 2009)
  - ALNAP Assessing the quality of humanitarian evaluations: the ALNAP Quality Proforma
  - UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System (April 2005)
  - UNEG Code of Conduct (2007)
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## **G. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

13. The ERC ensures compliance with the terms of this policy.
- 13.1. OCHA ES shall oversee implementation of the policy and provide senior management with an annual update on the status of the evaluation function within OCHA. ES shall also provide quarterly reports to the ERC on the current status of the work plan.
- 13.2. After one year of implementation, the ES shall conduct a review of the implementation of the present policy which may result in further modification and adjustments.
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## **H. DATES**

14. This policy is effective 18 June, 2010. It will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect major evolutions in United Nations and humanitarian practices. The next scheduled review shall be conducted no later than 18 June, 2012. Per OCHA's Policy Instruction on OCHA Guidance Materials, however," the ERC / USG-HA may at any time recall or initiate a review of any OCHA official guidance."
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## **I. CONTACT**

15. The contact for this policy is the Chief, Evaluations and Studies.

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**J. HISTORY**

16. This policy is an update of the unofficial 2005 OCHA Evaluation Policy, and is in line with superior United Nations guidance regarding the systematic evaluation of operational activities of the UN system, including the assessment of their impact, and the 2005 UNEG Norms and Standards. The policy also reflects follow up to recommendations of the UN's Office for Internal Oversight Services (IOS) as well as current organizational priorities related to impact evaluation contained within OCHA's strategic five-year vision (2007-2012).
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**SIGNED:**

**DATE:**

*John G. Hones*  
*18 June 2010.*

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## ANNEX A. OCHA Evaluation Strategy 2010 to 2013

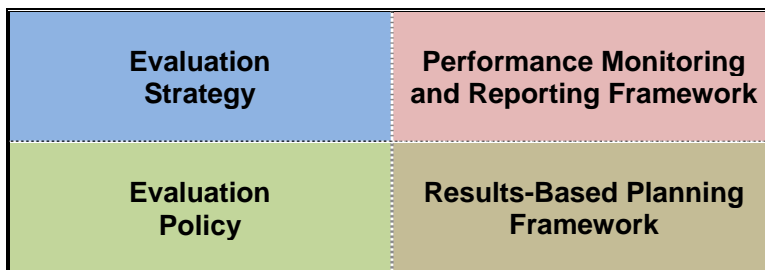
### Background

1. OCHA's evaluation policy (EP) stipulates that the Evaluation Section is responsible for implementing OCHA's central evaluation function. The Policy further stipulates that an activity-focused evaluation strategy (ES) be developed to reflect the main strategic directions for OCHA's evaluation function. The strategy should include a tentative evaluation plan, which is then translated into annual evaluation work plans. The present strategy has been prepared in fulfillment of this requirement.
  - 1.1. The evaluation policy (EP) forms an integral part of the ES and is updated from time to time to reflect the continuing evolution of the evaluation function within OCHA. The ES is highly operational in focus. It proposes a set of activities to be undertaken by the Evaluation Section.
  - 1.2. The ES is approved by OCHA's Senior Management Team, but remains in large element indicative. It is subject to on-going consultation within OCHA and with partners. Flexibility will be required regarding the proposed implementation modalities so as to ensure that the strategies proposed can respond to changing priorities and to unanticipated requests for evaluation activity.

### The Role of the Evaluation Function Within OCHA

2. The EP establishes an overarching framework of the principles, roles and responsibilities for evaluation within OCHA. The EP is aligned broadly to i) OCHA's Strategic Plan; ii) OCHA Strategic Planning & Monitoring Framework for 2010-2013; iii) the 2005 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for evaluation and iv) the Rules and Regulations established by the General Assembly for the evaluation function within the UN Secretariat and v) resolutions arising from the General Assembly and ECOSOC in relation to monitoring and evaluation.
  - 2.1. OCHA's results-based planning, monitoring and reporting framework, the EP and the present ES together function as a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for OCHA as shown in the diagram below.

**Components of OCHA's  
Results-based  
Monitoring & Evaluation Framework**



- 2.2. Within OCHA, evaluation is a routine function which promotes transparency and accountability through the provision of systematic and objective judgments about the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of humanitarian intervention. Evaluation facilitates systematic reflection, learning and decision making around issues of enhanced effectiveness and impact in the future. OCHA uses evaluation both as a tool for assessing its own coordination activities and as a direct support to the international humanitarian community through the application of system-wide and joint evaluation processes.
- 2.3. The specific implementation strategies contained in the ES will serve to further strengthen and consolidate the evaluation function within OCHA. In this context, expanded evaluation coverage, quality and management use are regarded as effective means for bringing about increased organizational effectiveness and impact.
- 2.4. A cross cutting concern throughout both the ES and the EP is not only to increase the supply of high quality evaluations available to decision makers but also to generate more demand and capacity within OCHA to make effective use of evaluation feedback as a routine management practice and to translate this learning into improved performance. In this way, OCHA's evaluation function is one of the principal drivers of a broader knowledge management system.
- 2.5. The ES guides the work of OCHA's central evaluation function. It does not cover monitoring and evaluation functions performed by OCHA's country and regional offices in relation to a common program cycle or to joint needs assessment processes. Such activities will be covered under the broader corporate strategies formulated as part of Strategic Objective 2.4 for 2010 to 2013.

### **The Evaluation Strategy (2010 to 2013)**

3. The ES will make use of three core implementation strategies, namely i) management of system-wide humanitarian evaluations; ii) management of OCHA internal evaluations; and iii) evaluation capacity building measures.

#### System-wide Humanitarian Evaluations

- 3.1. OCHA will actively participate in and manage evaluations with a system-wide focus. Priority attention will be given to evaluations mandated by the UN General Assembly and by the IASC. In the case of joint evaluations which are not mandated by the UN General Assembly or by the IASC, the ERC will decide on which other system-wide evaluations will be undertaken through OCHA's evaluation function.
- 3.2. The strategy will focus on making use of evaluations to support operational decision making in humanitarian field operations and to support management of the ongoing humanitarian reform process. OCHA will aim to engage in one to three such evaluations on annual basis depending upon staffing capacity and the availability of resources.
  - *Evaluations to support timely operational decision making in the field*
- 3.3. Consequent to the IASC's strong endorsement of the regular implementation of inter-agency real-time evaluations in July 2009, priority attention will also be given to strengthening the methodological underpinnings of the approach and to build implementation modalities which support the direct and immediate use of findings and recommendations by field actors in the



aftermath of a new crisis. The main audience and users of these evaluations will be humanitarian country teams at the country level. Priority attention will be given to inter-agency real-time evaluations conducted under the aegis of the IASC.

- *Evaluations of common humanitarian financing mechanisms*

3.4. ESS will accord priority to undertaking global evaluations of key humanitarian financing mechanisms such as the Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF), the CERF and the Emergency Relief Funds (ERFs). Evaluations undertaken will be at the global level only and with a multi-country focus and with a major emphasis on policy learning. The main audience for these evaluations will be the UN General Assembly, and donors to these funding mechanisms.

- *Impact-oriented evaluations for learning about the effects of humanitarian intervention*

3.5. Priority will be given to coordinating joint evaluations processes and mechanisms which assess the impacts of the humanitarian intervention and its role in improving the lives of disaster-affected populations including women, men, girls and boys. Evaluations may also be conducted in this context of a collective response to a large-scale humanitarian crisis. Emphasis will also be placed to the extent possible on addressing human rights and gender issues as well as developing national evaluation capacities. Other evaluations focused on different thematic concerns and of broad system-wide appeal and use may also be undertaken such as joint evaluations of poorly-funded or “forgotten” emergencies. Given the high cost and complexity of impact-oriented evaluations will need to be undertaken on a highly selective basis. The main audience for these evaluations will be the humanitarian system as a whole.

#### OCHA Internal Evaluations

3.6. Internal evaluations will be used to help strengthen OCHA’s system of internal oversight. This will be achieved through a mix of evaluations designed to provide in-depth analysis around critical performance areas and the verification of key results.

3.7. A primary concern underpinning the expansion of internal evaluation will be the need to meet the basic requirements set forth by the UN General Assembly in the PPMBE (ST/SGB/2000), which calls for the institutionalization of regular evaluation coverage.

3.8. The ERC will approve topics for internal evaluations on an annual basis taking into account both the four-year provisional plan which is annexed to the present Evaluation Strategy and an agreed set of selection criteria.

- *Priority coverage areas*

3.9. Evaluation topics shall be selected by the ERC based on the need to ensure adequate coverage within three priority areas: i) at the level of select OCHA strategic framework objectives; ii) at the level of OCHA country and regional operations; iii) through a focus on particular themes or policy issues; iv) through a focus on the work of individual units, sections or branches at Headquarters and v) in the case of declared corporate emergencies.

- *Selection criteria*

- 3.10. Internal evaluation proposals will be further selected and prioritized by the ERC based upon factors such as: i) high potential to address organizational learning needs; ii) the need to obtain objective and independent feedback on new and innovative approaches or strategies; iii) the need to develop insight and perspective on areas which have been found to be problematic or where results are at risk of not being achieved; iv) proposals from individual line managers for evaluations dealing with areas immediately under their supervision; v) the need to ensure regular coverage of large country-level field operations, meaning those country and regional offices with annual budgets exceeding US\$5 million for three consecutive years.

#### Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Measures

- *ECB with a system-wide focus*

- 3.11. OCHA will continue to build the normative and methodological framework around humanitarian evaluation both within the United Nations and across the humanitarian community. Priority attention will be accorded to building partnerships and developing common approaches for the monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian intervention. OCHA will work through the IASC to better define the role of monitoring and evaluation procedures in the context of a common humanitarian programming and needs assessment functions.
- 3.12. OCHA will as appropriate seek to build coalitions and other partnerships which help build consensus around issues of evaluation methodology. Priority attention will be accorded to evaluating impact and towards improving the methodological underpinnings of inter-agency real-time evaluations.
- 3.13. OCHA will work closely with and support the ALNAP and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) as key fora for strengthening partnerships related to humanitarian monitoring and evaluation. OCHA will also work with the evaluation units of partner UN agencies, ECHO, and other donors and NGOs on co-ordination around methodology issues.
- 3.14. OCHA will seek to develop a pool of donors who are interested in the further development of the evaluation function. OCHA will also develop a pool of evaluators and seek to arrange for their training in issues related to the new humanitarian co-ordination architecture.

- *ECB with an OCHA internal focus*

- 3.15. Strengthening OCHA's internal evaluation capacity means building evaluative capacity throughout the organization. It also requires a cultural change in attitudes which values the contribution of evaluation to OCHA's broader management reform framework and agenda. In this context, the Evaluation Section will: i) organize briefings and orientations on specific issues related to OCHA's overall monitoring and evaluation framework and will also prepare detailed operational guidelines for the conduct of evaluation activities by OCHA; ii) work closely with the Staff Development and Learning Section to integrate lessons learned from all evaluations as well as relevant M&E concerns into all staff training programs and iii) to the extent that it has the capacity provide a Help Desk function to other units, sections and branches of OCHA undertaking their own reviews and assessments.

### Follow up and use of evaluations

- 3.16. Evaluation activities provide only limited value added if they are not used in the sense of implementing recommendations and making conceptual use of key findings to strengthen policies and other related decision making processes. The follow up and monitoring of evaluation use are integral to the ES.
- 3.17. OCHA's Evaluation Section may at the request of OCHA's SMT organize ad hoc monitoring activities, reviews and meta evaluations as necessary to ensure that OCHA-managed evaluations are effectively being used by the organization.
- 3.18. The ES will also seek to improve the design of the current systems in place for tracking evaluation follow up, especially at the level of individual evaluation recommendations which have been accepted or partially accepted by management for implementation.
- 3.19. The Evaluation Section will also work closely with OCHA's Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) to ensure all follow up activities are coordinated with SPU's efforts to ensure a coherent organization-wide response to all oversight recommendations including audits, inspections and evaluations conducted by external bodies and various internal reviews which are not conducted as part of OCHA's Evaluation Policy.

### Required Resources

- 3.20. As stipulated in the EP, implementation of the ES will require that OCHA program annually no less than 1 percent of its total annual budget to cover the costs of the central evaluation function. This minimum amounts required may need to increase depending on requests from the UN General Assembly, from the IASC or from OCHA SMT based on the need for additional, unplanned evaluations. In the event that additional funding beyond this benchmark does not become available, then the number of evaluations may need to be curtailed to match up with existing capacities.
- 3.21. OCHA will adopt an organizational structure which is commensurate with implementing the core strategies contained within the ES. To do so, over the course of OCHA's 2010-2013 Strategic Plan, the Evaluation Section will be expanded from five to seven full-time professionals including a full-time Chief of Section, three professionals for coordinating system-wide humanitarian evaluations, two professionals for managing OCHA internal evaluations and one professional to support evaluation capacity building measures. Job descriptions for these posts will be profiled accordingly. The Section will also make use of additional capacity in the form of Junior Professional Officers (JPO) subject to the availability of additional donor funds.

### A Four-Year Indicative Evaluation Strategy Timetable

Key Area	Year 1 2010	Year 2 2011	Year 3 2012	Year 4 2013	Estimated Budget
<b>Externally-mandated evaluations</b>	✓ Cluster Evaluation Phase 2	✓ IASC Real-time evaluations	✓ IASC Real-time evaluations	✓ IASC Real-time evaluations	Y1 \$1,200,000
	✓ IASC Real-time evaluations	✓ System-wide impact-oriented evaluations	✓ System-wide impact-oriented evaluations	✓ System-wide impact-oriented evaluations	Y2 \$1,500,000
	✓ Evaluation of the Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF)	✓ Global ERF Evaluation			Y3 \$1,500,000
		✓ Global CERF Evaluation			Y4 \$1,500,000
<b>Internally-mandated evaluations</b>	✓ Thematic evaluation of OCHA's role in strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator System	✓ Evaluation of 2 OCHA Strategic objectives	✓ Evaluation of 2 OCHA Strategic Objectives	✓ Evaluation of 2 OCHA Strategic Objectives	Y1 \$ 500,000
	✓ Country-level OCHA performance evaluation	✓ Country-level performance evaluation	✓ Country-level performance evaluations	✓ Country-level performance evaluations	Y2 \$1,000,000
	✓ Independent Review of OCHA's Gender Equality Policy	✓ Policy-related evaluation	✓ Policy or thematic evaluation	✓ Policy or thematic evaluation	Y3 \$1,000,000
	✓ Evaluation of a corporate emergencies (if declared)	✓ Evaluation of all corporate emergencies (if declared)	✓ Evaluation of all corporate emergencies (if declared)	✓ Evaluation of all corporate emergencies (if declared)	Y4 \$1,000,000

Key Area	Year 1 2010	Year 2 2011	Year 3 2012	Year 4 2013	Estimated Budget
<b>Evaluation Capacity Building Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Briefing activities for OCHA staff on monitoring and evaluation issues</li> <li>✓ Participation in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)</li> <li>✓ Participation in ALNAP</li> <li>✓ Development of RTE rosters</li> <li>✓ Develop guidance materials for monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Briefing activities for OCHA staff on monitoring and evaluation issues</li> <li>✓ Participation in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)</li> <li>✓ Participation in ALNAP</li> <li>✓ Review of the implementation of the OCHA evaluation policy &amp; strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Briefing activities for OCHA staff on monitoring and evaluation issues</li> <li>✓ Participation in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)</li> <li>✓ Participation in ALNAP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Briefing activities for OCHA staff on monitoring and evaluation issues</li> <li>✓ Participation in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)</li> <li>✓ Participation in ALNAP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Y1 \$250,000</li> <li>Y2 \$250,000</li> <li>Y3 \$250,000</li> <li>Y4 \$250,000</li> </ul>
<b>Follow Up and use of evaluations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordination with SPU on evaluation recommendations response and tracking as well as ad hoc verification measures when requested.</li> <li>✓ Development of improved tracking systems for measuring evaluation follow up</li> <li>✓ Integration of all relevant lessons learned from evaluations into OCHA's Guidance Management System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordination with SPU on evaluation recommendations response and tracking and ad hoc verification measures when requested.</li> <li>✓ Development of improved tracking systems for measuring evaluation follow up</li> <li>✓ Integration of all relevant lessons learned from evaluation into OCHA's Guidance Management System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordination with SPU on evaluation recommendations response, and ad hoc verification measures when requested.</li> <li>✓ On-going integration of all relevant lessons learned from evaluations into OCHA's Guidance Management System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordination with SPU on evaluation recommendations response and ad hoc verification measures when requested.</li> <li>✓ On-going integration of all relevant lessons learned from evaluations into OCHA's Guidance Management System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Y1 \$50,000</li> <li>Y2 \$50,000</li> <li>Y3 \$50,000</li> <li>Y4 \$50,000</li> </ul>