UNEG Peer Review Series

UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

UNEG PEER REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION OF UNICEF

ANNEXES

April 2023

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Annex 1 Independent Peer Review of UNICEF Evaluation Function Terms of Reference.

The Terms of Reference were agreed with the Peer Review Panel in a document dated 30 August 2022 embedded below.

Independent Peer Review of UNICEF E

Annex 2 Recommendations of the 2017 Peer Review

After acknowledging several strengths (including the resources committed, improving number of management responses and evidence of quality improvement), the peer review recommended:

1. A new policy for the UNICEF evaluation function should be developed. It should take full account of the decentralized structure of the organization and integrates all the requirements for the independence, credibility and professionalization of the function, in line with the 2016 UNEG Norms and Standards and with the other recommendations and actions proposed by the Peer Review.
2. UNICEF should assign to the EO full responsibility for the internal governance of the evaluation function and adequate resources for fulfilling this role.
3. UNICEF should establish new modalities for the funding of the evaluation function at all levels
4. UNICEF should develop a Strategic Human Resource plan for the evaluation function. The plan should also contain a section that defines the provisions for the selection and appointment of the Director of the Evaluation Function.
5. All evaluations planned and commissioned by UNICEF, whether by EO, programme divisions, or regional and country offices, should aim at achieving the same standards of independence, credibility and utility, and align with the guidance and procedures established by the EO. The EO should be given the responsibility to strengthen the quality of the evaluation process in UNICEF, with an active oversight role on the DEF in this respect.
6. The Director of UNICEF Evaluation should revise the internal management processes of the EO.

Annex 3 Documents used in preparing the Peer Review

The peer review team benefited from a long list of documents prepared for them by the UNICEF Evaluation Office, for which we are most grateful. The list of documents directly used in preparing the peer review is set out below.

1. Garven, Katherine, Fernando Garabito & Esther Rouleau. 2018. UNICEF GEROS Meta-Analysis 2016-2018: An Independent Review of UNICEF Evaluation Report Quality and Selected Trends from 2016-2018. Accessed via UNICEF Sharepoint.
2. Hayter, Emily, Leandro Echt, Femi Nzegwu & Vanesa Weyrauch. 2020. UNICEF Regional Evidence Diagnostics: Final Synthesis Report. INASP & Politics & Ideas. Accessed via UNICEF Sharepoint.
3. Institute of Internal Auditors Quality Services. 2019. UNICEF Internal Audit Quality Assessment. Institute of Internal Auditors. As of 9 December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/auditandinvestigation/documents/iia-external-quality-assessment-eqa-unicef-internal-audit-2019
4. Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). 2021. MOPAN Assessment Report: UNICEF, 2020 Assessment Cycle. Paris. Accessed via UNICEF Sharepoint.
5. UNEG Interest Group on Evaluation Use. 2020. Evaluation Use in Practice. UNEG. As of 9 December 2022: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2901
6. UNEG. 2008. UNEG Code of Conduct. UNEG/FN/CoC (2008). UNEG. As of 8 December 2022: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100
7. UNEG. 2014. Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. UNEG. As of 8 December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/media/54811/file
8. UNEG. 2015. UNEG Principles of Working Together. UNEG. As of 8 December 2022: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/3052#:~:text=The%20UNEG%20Principles%20of%20Working,with%20UNEG%20members%20when%20required
9. UNEG. 2016. Evaluation Use in the UN System: Conclusions from the Data. UNEG. As of 8 December 2022: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1911
10. UNEG. 2016. UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation. UNEG. As of 8 December 2022: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914
11. UNEG. 2020. UNEG Ethical guidelines for evaluation. UNEG. As of 9 December 2022: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866
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13. UNICEF Bureau Togo. 2020. Rapport de l'évaluation sommative du « Projet Ecole Amie des Enfants » dans les régions Maritime, des Savanes et des Plateaux au Togo (2014-2019). UNICEF. As of 13 January 2023: https://evaluationreports.unicef.org/GetDocument?fileID=13971
14. UNICEF Evaluation Office and Gender Section. 2019. UNICEF Guidance on Gender Integration in Evaluation. UNICEF. As of December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1221/file/UNICEF%20Guidance%20on%20Gender.pdf
15. UNICEF Evaluation Office. 2014. Standard Operating Procedures for timely preparation and implementation of management responses to evaluations commissioned by the Evaluation Office. UNICEF. As of 8 December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/media/54806/file
16. UNICEF Evaluation Office. 2017. UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards. UNICEF. As of 8 December 2022:

https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1421/file/UNICEF-Adapted%20UNEG%20Standards.pdf
17. UNICEF Evaluation Office. 2017. UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference. UNICEF. As of 8 December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/media/54786/file
18. UNICEF Evaluation Office. 2018. Corporate Implementation Framework for the UNICEF Evaluation Policy 2018. UNICEF. As of 8 December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/media/54766/file
19. UNICEF Evaluation Office. 2018. Evaluation Management Response, Guidance for UNICEF Staff. UNICEF. As of 8 December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/media/54801/file
20. UNICEF Evaluation Office. 2018. Influential evaluations: a selection of UNICEF evaluations that led to learning and change. UNICEF Evaluation Office, New York. Accessed via UNICEF Sharepoint.
21. UNICEF Evaluation Office. 2018. Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF. UNICEF. As of 8 December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1411/file/Revised%20Policy%202018%20(Interactive).pdf
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26. UNICEF Evaluation Office. 2020. Study on Influential Evaluations in UNICEF.
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30. UNICEF. 2017. UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021. UNICEF. As of 9 December 2022: https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/1581/file/2017-17-Rev1-Strategic%20Plan%202018%E2%80%932021-EN-ODS.pdf
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33. UNICEF. 2019. Annual report for 2018 on the evaluation function in UNICEF. UNICEF. As of 9 December 2022: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3803041?ln=en
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Annex 4 Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Interviewees

10 stakeholders were interviewed in person at UNICEF HQ. The interviewees were:

1. Hannan Suleiman, Office of the Executive Director, DED Management
2. Alistair Gretarsson, Global Communication and Advocacy, Chief Global Content Strategy
3. June Kunugi, Public Partnerships Division, Director
4. Steve Zimmerman, Office of Internal Audit and Investigation, Director
5. Tanya Accone, Office of Innovation, Senior Advisor on Innovation
6. Robert McCouch, Evaluation Office, Director
7. Kerry Albright, Evaluation Office, Principal Advisor
8. Vidhya Ganesh, Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, Director
9. Karoosh Rafii, retiring EAP Regional Office, Regional Evaluation Advisor
10. Karin Hulsof, Public Partnerships Division, Deputy Director

Interviews 6 and 7 were a joint interview. Subsequently, 18 stakeholders were interviewed online:

1. Sanjay Wijeskera, Director, Programme Group.
2. Saraswathi Menon, Co-Chair Audit Advisory Committee
3. Laurence Chaudy, Director of the Office of Global Insight and Policy
4. Robert Jenkins and Aboubacar Kampo
5. Thomas Davin, Director, Office of Innovation
6. Gilles Fagous, Secretary of UNICEF, Executive Board
7. El Cid Butuyan, Director of Ethics
8. Debora Comini, RD, EAPRO
9. Christian Larsson, Deputy Director, ICT
10. Jan Eijkenaar, Emergency Programmes
11. Afshan Kahn, RD, ECARO
12. Mark Beatty, Director, GSSC
13. Adele Khodr, Country Representative, Ethiopia
14. Tom Asare, Comptroller and Director, UNICEF
15. Sharif Baaser, Chief of Strategic Planning
16. Bo Viktor, Director, Office of Research
17. Omar Abdi, DED Programmes
18. Leila Pakkala, Senior Advisor, PPD

Nine people were interviewed who work with UNICEF but are external to the organisation:

1. Romulo Emmanuel Jr. Miral (Programme government: Government of the Philippines)
2. Matthew Crump (Contractor institution: IOD-PARC)
3. Ed Schenkenberg (Contractor individual)
4. Andrew Kaiser-Tedesco (Donor government: Germany)
5. Faith Tempest (Contractor individual)
6. Dorothy Lucks (Other donors/partners: EvalPartners)
7. Liliane Tarnutzer (Donor Government: Switzerland)
8. Suzanne Laszlo-Serrarens and Karina Ito (Other donors/partners: UNICEF Dutch National Committee and Standing Group of National Committees)

Focus Group Discussions

Two in-person focus groups were conducted:

1. Focus group with Regional Evaluation Advisers (n= 6)
2. Focus group with Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (n=5)

Three subsequent focus groups were conducted online:

1. Focus Group with HQ staff (n=15)
2. Focus Group with Regional Evaluation Advisors (n=4)
3. Multi-country evaluation specialists (n=8)

Further consultations

1. Consultations were held with members of the UNICEF Executive Board through regional workshops.
2. 20 sessions at the Global Evaluation Meeting were observed and the consultant team presented in one session.

Annex 5 Joint evaluations and joint synthesis studies conducted by UNICEF 2018-2022

Table 1: Joint evaluations and joint synthesis studies conducted 2018-2022

Joint work conducted over the period 2018-2021	**Organizations**
Evaluation of the H4+ Joint Programme (the joint initiative of six United Nations agencies for technical support of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health) (2018)	All agencies of the H4+ joint programme
Evaluation of the Joint UNFPA-UNICEF Programme on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation, Phase III (2021)	UNFPA
Evaluation of the UNICEF-UNFPA Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (2019)	UNFPA
Evaluation synthesis of United Nations system work towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (2021)	Multiple UN agencies and IFIs, UNICEF-led
Independent Evaluation of the United Nations System Response to AIDS 2016–2019 (joint with the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS) (2020)	UNAIDS
Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation of Cyclone Ida Response (2020)	OCHA
Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Drought Response in Ethiopia (2019)	OCHA
Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Response in Afghanistan (Carry-forward)	OCHA
Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Response in Northern Ethiopia (Carry-forward)	OCHA
Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation of the response in Yemen (2022)	OCHA
Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Response to COVID-19 (Carry-forward)	OCHA
Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG) (2020)	OCHA
Joint Evaluability Assessment (2018) and Independent Midterm Review (2019) of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (2019)	UNFPA
Joint Evaluability Assessment of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (2020)	All signatory agencies to the GAP
Joint Evaluation (UNICEF-UNFPA) of the Global Programme to Eliminate Child Marriage. Phase II. (Continued into 2023 from 2022)	UNFPA
Joint Evaluation of the Blueprint for Joint Action (Carry-forward)	UNHCR
Joint Evaluation of the Collective Service (2023)	WHO, IFRC
Joint Humanitarian Evaluation of the Evaluation Pooled Fund (2019)	OCHA
Joint Synthesis of SDG 5 (launched 2022)	UNWOMEN, UNDP, WFP, UNFPA
Meta-synthesis of Evaluation Reports to Extract Lessons Learned to Support the Implementation of Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy, Priority 5: Peace and Resilience (2022)	UNFPA
Rapid Evidence Assessment on Protecting Children on the Move (2020)	UNICEF led joint assessment as part

	of UN System-wide Evaluation
Synthesis of UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM Evaluations of the Response to the Rohingya Crisis (2019)	UNHCR, IOM
What works to amplify the rights and voices of youth? Meta-synthesis of lessons learned from youth evaluations (2015-2020) to support the implementation of the United Nations Youth Strategy (2021)	UNFPA

Source: Information provided to the peer review by the Evaluation Office

Annex 6 The formal allocation of tasks and responsibilities for implementing UNICEF's evaluation function, as envisaged in the 2018 revised evaluation policy

Divisional Directors, Regional Directors and Country Representatives should ensure that programmes and initiatives are designed in a way that permits evaluation at a later stage (founded on well-defined objectives, supported by a theory of change, have baseline information).

Regional Directors and Country Representatives should institute appropriate management arrangements to ensure the utility, credibility and independence of evaluations at the regional and country levels according to the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards, including ethical standards. They should also ensure that adequate human resources and funds are provided to conduct and manage evaluations.

Furthermore, Regional Directors, Country Representatives, the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Evaluation should ensure that provisions of the evaluation policy for reporting lines are implemented. For Regional Evaluation Advisers, Regional Directors should provide management oversight and guidance and the Director of Evaluation should provide technical guidance in accordance with the areas specified in the Evaluation Policy. Country Office Evaluation Specialists (or staff assigned to manage evaluations at the country level) should report to the Country Representative in matters related to evaluation. The Country Representative should also ensure that the assigned staff are provided the necessary environment and independence from programme planning and implementation to fully manage evaluations in accordance with the norms, coverage benchmarks and quality assurance standards of the evaluation policy.

Furthermore, Regional Directors should, on the basis of Country Programme Management Plans, Office Management Plans and the PBR approval processes, institute measures to implement provisions of the evaluation policy on reporting lines of staff managing evaluations at both regional and country levels.

Regional Directors, Country Representatives and the Director of Evaluation should ensure that completed evaluations are submitted by relevant evaluation managers to the UNICEF online evaluation database on a timely basis and that evaluation findings are disseminated to relevant stakeholders.

Division Directors, Regional Directors and Country Representatives should submit their management response to evaluation recommendations through the UNICEF online evaluation database They should also ensure that appropriate management response actions are implemented.

Regional Offices should develop action plans in support of their accountabilities, as defined in the Evaluation Policy. The action plans should specify measures to enforce provisions of the Evaluation Policy with respect to the norms and standards, coverage benchmarks, quality assurance standards, use of evaluations and efforts to achieve the 1 per cent evaluation spending target.

Country Offices are requested to revise their Costed Evaluation Plans in response to the provisions of the revised evaluation policy, including coverage benchmarks, budgets, quality assurance requirements, use of evaluations and support for National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD), and present these to their Regional Director and the Director of Evaluation. Country Offices should also update their entries in the organization's evaluation planning and information management systems to reflect the coverage benchmarks of the revised evaluation policy.

The Evaluation Office has a dual role: implementing a programme of independent corporate evaluations and providing leadership and oversight to the entire evaluation function of UNICEF. It leads in developing appropriate approaches and methodologies, in monitoring the performance of Offices in the implementation of the Evaluation Policy and in implementing a professional development programme for all staff engaged in evaluation as well as their key partners. It works closely with the Regional Offices to ensure adequate quality assurance services, especially to Country Offices. It will also work closely with the Division of Human Resources on the implementation of the competency framework of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

The Global Evaluation Committee, comprised of all Deputy Executive Directors, relevant Divisional Directors, the Director of Internal Audit and Investigations, the Director of the Office of Research and all Regional Directors, should continue to create opportunities for the use of evaluation evidence and follow up on the implementation of management responses. Through its regular meetings, the Committee should assist in following up on key evaluation performance information.

Annex 7 HQ evaluation personnel

Table 2: Number of HQ evaluation personnel by level and type of contract

Number of Personnel by Level and Type of Contract as of 12 January 2023						
Level	**Established Positions (FT)**	**JPOs**	**Temporary Assignment (TA)**	**Consultants**	**Interns**	**Total**
D2	1					**1**
P6	1					**1**
P5	6					**6**
P4	5		1			**6**
P3	5			2		**7**
P2	1	3	2	1		**7**
GS6	2					**2**
GS5	1					**1**
	22	**3**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**31**

Source: Information provided to the peer review by the Evaluation Office

Table 3: Gender balance of HQ evaluation personnel

Gender Balance as of 12 January 2023				
Level	**Male**	**Female**	**Vacant Post**	**Total**
D2	1			**1**
P6		1		**1**
P5	3	3		**6**
P4	1	3	1	**5**
P3	2	2	1	**5**
P2		1		**1**
GS6		2		**2**
GS5			1	**1**
JPOs			3	**3**
TAs	1	2		**3**
Consultants	1	2		**3**
	9	**16**	**6**	**31**
Men	**39%**			
Women	**61%**			

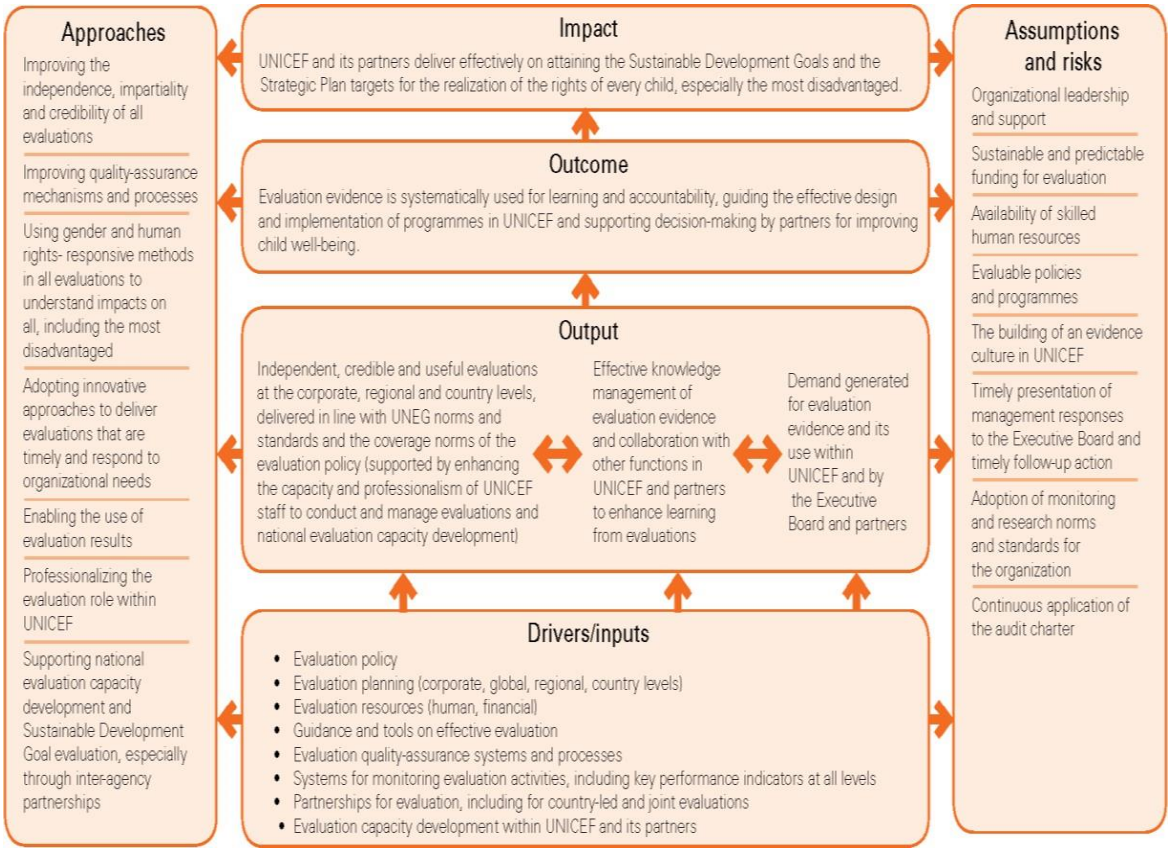
Source: Information provided to the peer review by the Evaluation Office

Annex 8 Key tools and guidance relevant to the delivery of UNICEF's evaluation function

- Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF [2018]
- UNICEF Procedure on the Implementation of the 2018 UNICEF Evaluation Policy [2018]
- Disability-Inclusive Evaluations in UNICEF: Guideline for Achieving UNDIS Standards [2022]
- Evaluation Management Response: Guidance for UNICEF Staff [2018]
- GEROS Handbook [2020]
- Guidance and Procedural Note on Managing Real-Time Evaluations Plus (RTE Plus) [2019]
- Guidance Note for Conducting Evaluability Assessments in UNICEF [2019]
- Guidance Note: Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation [2019]
- Guidance on Gender Integration in Evaluation [2019]
- Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation [2014]
- Management Response Standard Operating Procedures [2014]
- Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis [2021]
- Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference [2017]
- UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System [2008]
- UNEG Ethical Guidance for Evaluation [2020]
- UNEG Evaluation Use in Practice [2020]
- UNEG Evaluation Use in the UN System: Conclusions from the Data [2016]
- UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation [2016]
- UNEG Principles of Working Together [2015]
- UNICEF Corporate Implementation Framework [2018]
- UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards [2017]

Annex 9 UNICEF evaluation function theory of change

Figure 1: Theory of change for the evaluation function in UNICEF



Source: 2018 Revised Evaluation Policy for UNICEF, p. 22

Annex 10 Comparison of evaluation functions in four agencies (WFP, UNDP, USAID and ADB)

World Food Programme (WFP)

Independence, credibility and utility are embedded in the WFP evaluation function

The 2016-2021 WFP evaluation function was framed around three foundational components: the Evaluation Policy (2016-2021), now replaced by the 2022 Evaluation Policy,[1] the Evaluation Charter and the Corporate Evaluation Strategy (2016-2021). The 2016-2021 Evaluation policy includes a theory of change to achieve 'independent, credible and useful evaluations embedded into the policy and programme cycle'.[2] It also outlines that all evaluations are conducted by independent consultants and made publicly available. The criteria of independence, credibility and utility are upheld through the incorporation of UNEG Norms and Standards in the WFP evaluation function. For example, the credibility of the evaluation is guaranteed by the adherence to the WFP Evaluation QA System, based on the UNEG Norms and Standards.[3]

This dialogue with the UNEG Norms and Standards is one of constant evolution: the 2020 launch of UNEG's ethics guidelines promoting higher ethical standards for evaluation resulted in WFP's Office of Evaluation developing and implementing an action plan to integrate these new guidelines into evaluations, with 16 action points.[4] A peer-review of the WFP evaluation function was conducted in 2021. It highlighted that the 2016-2021 Evaluation Policy's theory of change set out a clear vision and purpose and a good governance structure covering all UNEG criteria and securing the validity and reliability of centralized and decentralized evaluations. It notably underlined that "WFP's evaluation strategy sets out a phased implementation plan with a comprehensive set of indicators. Each of the six regional bureaux has a regional evaluation strategy that mirrors the structured approach of the corporate evaluation strategy but is attuned to regional conditions."[5] Overall, the panel's assessment of independence, credibility and utility of the WFP's evaluation function was 'substantially positive'.

It should be noted that there exists a monitoring of management responses to evaluations, as "WFP is committed to providing management responses to all evaluation recommendations and to following up on the implementation of recommended actions".[6] The guidance on the *Implementation status of evaluation recommendations* provides links to new 2018 Standard Operating Procedures that "'clarify roles and responsibilities in the preparation of management responses to evaluations and their presentation to internal and external stakeholders".

An evaluation function that learned and adapted: progress made in the 2022 Evaluation Policy

The recommendations that were made in the 2021 peer review on independence have been integrated into the 2022 Evaluation Policy, namely, that 'the next evaluation policy [...] should: a) state explicitly that the Director of Evaluation reports to the Executive Board on functional issues

[1] World Food Programme. 2022. WFP Evaluation Policy 2022. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[2] World Food Programme. 2019. In Brief: WFP's Evaluation Function. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[3] World Food Programme. 2019. In Brief: WFP's Evaluation Function. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[4] World Food Programme. 2020. Annual Evaluation Report: 2021 in review. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[5] World Food Programme. 2021. Summary report on the peer review of the evaluation function at the World Food Programme. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[6] World Food Programme. 2019. Implementation status of evaluation recommendations. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

and the Executive Director on administrative issues; and b) include procedures for the dismissal of the Director of Evaluation, which should require consultation with the Executive Board".[7]

Changes in the new policy also included an updated, fully-fledged theory of change (see WFP 2022 Evaluation Policy). The 2021 peer review pointed to the need for more innovation, notably by "deploying a broader range of evaluation types and methodologies. OEV's piloting of a new, more strategic approach to impact evaluations is an important step in this direction, but there is still room for more innovation, including the piloting of developmental or formative evaluations." In the 2022 Evaluation Policy, a change has been made to the number of evaluative products, climbing from dichotomy of centralized vs. decentralized evaluations to now including impact evaluations. The new Evaluation Policy clearly details whether the Office of Evaluation, country office, regional bureaux or HQ-based divisions are responsible for the commissioning and management of each category of evaluations. The 2020 Annual Evaluation Report also shows progress in the definition and target audience of each type of evaluations, detailing differences between evaluative products in timing, responsibilities and objects.[8]

Attention has been paid to clarifying responsibilities within the evaluation function. This is, for example, shown in the enhanced feedback and reporting process to implement actions from evaluation recommendations approved by the board. The Performance Management and Monitoring Division, the Office of Evaluation and regional monitoring teams all have access to the system tracking the implementation of recommendation actions. The Performance Management and Monitoring Division "conducts follow-up exercises twice a year, collating updates from individual offices into the corporate tracking system for evaluation recommendations".[9]

As outlined below, progress has also been made in the knowledge management system and the culture of using evaluation evidence, both areas outlined by the peer review as requiring renewed focus. Despite the developments that took place over the last years, gaps remain in correcting some of the weaknesses identified by the peer review. There notably appears to have been limited progress on the contribution to humanitarian evaluation practice, cross-cutting agendas, joint evaluations and national evaluation capacity.

Focus on innovation: the evaluation windows

In its 2019-2026 Impact Evaluation Strategy, the WFP Office of Evaluation introduced 'impact evaluation windows'. These windows are "portfolios of impact evaluations in specific priority evidence areas, agreed with WFP management, that will be updated over time as the organization's evidence priorities change".[10] The Director of Evaluation determines how many windows and how many evaluations can be managed simultaneously. The impact evaluation windows are developed with WFP programme teams and co-funded by participating country offices.[11] The aim of these windows is to eventually "stimulate and shape demand for impact evaluations in priority areas and enable the Office of Evaluation to dedicate the necessary time and resources to prepare portfolios that meet WFP evidence needs".

[7] World Food Programme. 2021. Summary report on the peer review of the evaluation function at the World Food Programme. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[8] World Food Programme. 2020. Annual Evaluation Report: 2021 in review. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[9] World Food Programme. 2019. Implementation status of evaluation recommendations. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[10] World Food Programme. 2022. WFP Evaluation Policy 2022. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[11] World Food Programme. 2019. WFP Impact Evaluation Strategy (2019–2026). WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

WFP community of practice: a key component to an enabling environment for evaluation

Evalxchange is a series of virtual learning events, first held in 2020 and organized by the WFP Office of Evaluation, focused on the utility of evaluation in the context of the 2030 Agenda. By bringing together different stakeholders and partners, such communities of practice enable WFP to create an enabling environment for evaluation. The focus on development evaluation, national evaluation capacity development and gender is of particular interest.[12]

WFP, in a joint initiative with FAO, IFAD, and CCIAR, created EvalForward, a Community of Practice on Evaluation for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development.[13] The platform brings together stakeholders with the aim pf strengthening capacities for evaluation at country level, by sharing resources, sponsoring events and creating a space for discussion.

Renewed effort for a stronger knowledge-management system

The 2021 peer review diagnosed weaknesses in WFP's knowledge management system and highlighted that a "culture of using evaluation evidence in planning and programming has yet to be embedded".[14] In response to the imperative '"o develop a systematic approach to the management of knowledge generated by evaluations", WFP has developed a policy that seeks to incorporate new technologies into the knowledge management function, within one strategy: *WFP Evaluation Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2026)*.[15] This encompasses a focus on new technologies to "promote learning in a vibrant evaluation community", in order to engage key audiences through channels such as webinars, or virtual workshops. A key component of the strategy is to systematically produce a new generation of evaluation products, referred to as 'associated content', which would include videos, infographics and data-led features, in evaluation reports. This is linked to the notion of utility of evaluation, as the ultimate aim is to make evaluation evidence available and accessible to a wider audience.

Resources and staff

In terms of evaluation funding, the former WFP evaluation policy stated a commitment to progressively allocate 0.8 per cent of its total contribution income to the evaluation function and to put in place sustainable financing solutions for decentralized evaluations[16] by 2021. The resources available to the evaluation function only reached 0.31 per cent of WFP's contribution income in 2020 (26.02 million).

The 2021 peer review recommended that i) a target be set for a percentage of WFP's contribution income going towards evaluation; ii) WFP review and harmonize the different financial instruments used to support the various types of evaluation; and iii) in the absence of alternative financial arrangements, WFP modify the scope of the contingency evaluation fund to make it more flexible in supporting smallest country offices and possibly regional bureaux' decentralized evaluations. In the 2022 Evaluation Policy, a percentage target indeed appears, but is brought down to an objective of at least 0.4 per cent of WFP's total contribution income allocated to the evaluation function, with a view of reaching 0.6 per cent in 2026. There now exist four separate funding sources, each funding a different type of evaluation activities. The Contingency Evaluation Fund now supports country

[12] World Food Programme. 2021. Evalxchange: a festival of learning. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[13] World Food Programme. 2020. Annual Evaluation Report: 2021 in review. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[14] World Food Programme. 2021. Evalxchange: a festival of learning. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[15] World Food Programme. 2021. WFP Evaluation Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy (2021-2026). WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[16] World Food Programme. 2019. In Brief: WFP's Evaluation Function. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

offices with resource constraints and small country offices and is overseen by the Evaluation Function Steering Group.[17]

Finally, WFP evaluation staff appear to be an asset to the organization. The 2021 peer review recognized the contribution of the Director of Evaluation and her team to the evaluation function in WFP and recognized its professionalism.[18] It should be noted that the number of evaluation professionals in the Office of Evaluation and regional bureaux increased over the last years.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Independence, credibility and utility of evaluation function

USAID evaluation policy is laid out in the document *ADS Chapter 201 – Program Cycle Operational* Policy.[19] The requirements for external evaluation are described in section 201.3.6.5, underlining the independence of the evaluation function: evaluations falling within this section should be "led by an expert external to USAID who has no fiduciary relationship with the implementing partner". External evaluations require a statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest from the external evaluation team members. At USAID Country Missions, the Program Office staff "should manage external evaluations to enhance evaluation independence", with the support of the Technical Office team members and US Government Operating Unit members. Internal evaluations correspond to the ones that are either commissioned by USAID with a USAID evaluation team leader or conducted or commissioned by an implementing partner evaluating their own activity. The *Program Cycle Operational Policy* sets out a clear description of the different evaluative products and associated methods in USAID, divided into two broader categories: impact evaluations and performance evaluations.

In relation to the utility of the evaluation function, there is a focus on the capacity of the Agency to manage and use evidence. In 2021, the Agency conducted a Capacity Assessment that focused on the Agency's ability to *manage* and *use* evidence.[20] USAID developed a Maturity Matrix Benchmarking Tool (MMBT) to assess how the Agency used evidence across seven parameters, including evidence base, programmatic planning and capacity-building. The Maturity Matrix Benchmarking Tool is tailor-made to USAID and the Agency's own understanding of capacity in evidence generation, management and use. The assessment found that, while USAID staff use evidence from a variety of sources when they design USAID activities, they still face gaps in the available evidence required to adequately support their activity design and learning needs. USAID also develops an Annual Evaluation Plan that includes impact evaluations; this contributes to answering the Agency Learning Agenda questions, fills gaps in evidence and measures outcomes of specific programmes. USAID has also updated the Agency Learning Agenda to align with the strategic framework of the Joint Strategic Plan and emerging USAID policy priorities.[19]

Moreover, a 2016 study on evaluation utilization at USAID found that 93 per cent of evaluations have been used to some extent, frequently in project design; while 59 per cent of approved Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) referred to findings from USAID evaluations.[21] USAID's overall evaluation utilization has been assessed as strong, with 71 per cent of evaluations used to modify or support the activities of agencies on the ground. Increased spillover effects of evaluations

[17] World Food Programme. 2022. WFP Evaluation Policy 2022. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[18] World Food Programme. 2021. Evalxchange: a festival of learning. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[19] US Department of State and US Agency for International Development. 2022. Joint Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026. As of 7th February 2023: link.

were also noted by the 2016 study, notably highlighting that evaluations triggered complementary actions by USAID implementing partners.

Some limitations to the utility of the USAID evaluation function were nonetheless identified. Recommendations included developing a tracker that links evaluation recommendations to specific actions, timelines and the responsible actors; improving the accessibility of evaluation findings, notably via short dynamic products; and sharing guidance concerning evaluation best practices. A 2020 update to the *Program Cycle Operational Policy* seemed to aim at remedying some of these shortcomings in relation to planning evaluations. Some additional guidelines concerning how to plan communications products, including slide decks, videos, infographics and podcasts were added. The document now also includes links to guidance on how to address gender issues in evaluation.[22]

Finally, the notion of credibility is closely linked to that of accountability and has seen some recent developments at USAID. USAID addressed some of the 2016 study recommendations by strengthening its requirements for Post-Evaluation Action Plans. Since 2016, these must be developed by Mission and Washington Operating Units when an evaluation is completed. USAID Operating Units now must designate a point of contact responsible for implementation and track the status of actions outlined in the Post-Evaluation Action Plans.[23]

A 2022 OECD peer review found that "USAID and other agencies have access to a strong evidence base that informs US strategies, programmes and activities" and that "data are generated for both accountability purposes and for learning and based primarily on monitoring of results and evaluation of performance at project and programme levels".[24]

USAID Impact Evaluation

Between 2013 and 2021, USAID completed 159 impact evaluations. The utility of impact evaluations produced by the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Center, for example, was shown in various cases, notably in Haiti, to justify "legal reforms and government funding for the legal defense of pretrial detainees".[25]

Some shortcomings in the use of impact evaluations should be highlighted. It appears that the delay in producing IE reports results in them being too late to inform decision-making. The dissemination of these evaluative products should be improved, as well as the clarity of the recommendations they put forward. Suggestions that USAID Missions and the DRG Center should make greater use of formal evaluability assessments were made, notably by better defining the goals resulting from an impact evaluation.[26]

Lastly, a 2020 assessment of USAID impact evaluations highlighted the need to reinforce the quality of those evaluations. This could involve updating guidance on the reporting requirements for impact evaluations, standardized review checklist and report template, the commission of external peer reviews, and the integration of ethical considerations and cost effectiveness into the standards of impact evaluations.[27] It should be noted that the recommendation for impact evaluations to include a comparison group has been taken up: the *Program Cycle Operational Policy* now includes the requirement for a "credible and rigorously defined counterfactual". The place of ethical standards has also been reinforced.

The Evaluation Toolkit: centralizing resources for evaluations

The Evaluation Toolkit centralizes the USAID guidance, tools and templates that are used for evaluation and is aimed at USAID staff members involved in the evaluation process as well as implementing partners or evaluation contractors. The Evaluation Toolkit is a living online platform,

which groups resources according to the timeline of different phases of the evaluation cycle and provides a complete overview of evaluation requirements and actors' responsibilities.[28]

The Evaluation Toolkit also provides the link to a repository of evaluations. Indeed, a requirement exists for USAID to post the final evaluation report on the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) within three months of completion of the evaluation. This platform provides access to over 10,000 USAID evaluations.

Within the Evaluation Toolkit, the Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) Toolkit is of particular interest. This tool shows the capacity of USAID to learn and adapt by providing staff with the necessary resources to build on CLA. The 2022 OECD peer review highlighted the relevance of USAID's approach to CLA, allowing for strategic collaboration and adaptive management.[29]

Evaluation funding and staff at USAID

In the revised 2020 Evaluation Policy, USAID sets out to devote "approximately one to three percent of total program dollars, on average, to external performance and impact evaluation", distinct from monitoring resources.[30]

USAID staff seems to be considered an important component for the enabling environment for evaluation. The 2022 OECD peer review underlined that new staff, notably through the new post of chief economist, had the potential to create dialogue within the agency and with other stakeholders to achieve the broader goals of the evaluation function of USAID. The OECD also highlights that this would be an opportunity for the evaluation function's different levels to generate and share information by facilitating a dialogue between activity-level evaluations, evaluations of sector, thematic, country and regional programmes, as well as the monitoring function.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Independence and credibility of the evaluation function

The 2019 revised UNDP Evaluation Policy lays out the requirements for independence and credibility of the evaluation function. The Independent Evaluation Office is structurally independent and "supports the oversight and accountability functions of the Executive Board and the management of UNDP, UNCDF and UNV".[31] In this document, independent evaluations are defined as having both ethical independence, closely linked with impartiality and credibility, and structural independence. The policy pays careful attention to credibility, outlining that "evaluation procedures and findings must be credible […] and present across all the stages of the evaluation process".

On the one hand, independent evaluations include independent country programme evaluations or thematic evaluations and are fully independent of UNDP management. Decentralized evaluations, on the other hand, are commissioned by regional bureaux, country offices or by the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support and are undertaken by external evaluation consultants and are most often project evaluations.[32]

The UNDP evaluation guidelines detail the roles and responsibilities of different actors at both central and regional levels in planning, overseeing and implementing decentralized evaluations.[33]

To ensure accountability, requirements for management responses are laid out in the UNDP evaluation policy.[34] Management responses should be prepared for all independent thematic and decentralized evaluations. All responses are made public via the online Evaluation Resource Centre and their implementation status is reported yearly to the Executive Board. Management responses are required to include action plans that set specific key actions and deadlines for their completion.

Weaknesses in the independence of the evaluation function were also noted during the 2019 policy review and revision process. The 2019 Independent Review of UNDP Evaluation Policy[35] highlighted that, while "the establishment of the independence of the Independent Evaluation Office's (IEO) Director and of the Evaluation Office has been a key factor for enhancing the credibility of the evaluations, which also influences the use of evaluations", there remained a lack of understanding regarding terms. Indeed, "the interviews revealed that the key terms in the policy (independence, credibility and utility) were understood differently among the interviewees. A clear example is that 'independent' is commonly understood as equivalent to 'external'." The review also highlighted that the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC) was not fulfilling its role of oversight of the evaluation function. However, the role of the AEAC in its support to evaluation was relatively new at the time of the policy review.

It was recommended that an external team should conduct independent and external review of the evaluation function every four years. This has been agreed and the next policy review process will commence in 2024/2025. The peer review also pointed out that the Management Response System in place to oversee the implementation of IEO recommendations was not optimal, as there appeared to be "significant gaps in management response tracking and particularly in reporting". Improvements in tracking have been carried out as a result, including the quarterly assessment and the tracking of decentralized evaluation completion and quality.

Utility of the evaluation function: lessons learned?

The 2019 peer review noted that there was a lack of explicit references to evaluation use in the evaluation policy of UNDP. However, it found that interviewees acknowledged that evaluations were used to "inform the design of UNDP programmers, contributing to learning and to the reputation of UNDP as a transparent and learning organization". It can be noted that the IEO of UNDP submits to management and the UNDP Executive Board a multi-year programme of work every four years – following Board approval of the UNDP Strategic Plan. This plan sets out the evaluations to be carried out and the anticipated budget. As a further note, the UNDP IEO is now implementing a 'full coverage' approach for evaluating UNDP country programming. All country programme renewals, prior to Board consideration, include an evaluation of the previous country programming period. This country programme evaluation process also feeds into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Reviews that are commissioned through UN DCO at the country level.

UNDP evaluation guidelines highlight the importance of linking project design to the utility of evaluation: a good programme results framework (theory of change) increases the likelihood of an evaluation being useful and of high quality. To this end, the guidelines confirm that "all evaluations need to be built on explicit results frameworks and theories of change".[36]

At the time of the policy review, the quality of decentralized evaluations was of concern with IEO's annual quality assessment of decentralized evaluations in 2019 showing that less than 25 per cent% met UNDP requirements as detailed under the evaluation guidance. This has improved and in 2022 43% of decentralised evaluations were meeting quality requirements. The availability of adequate budget for decentralied evaluation remains a significant impediment, as does the availability of capable external evaluators to carry out the several hundred decentralized evaluations commissioned annually by UNDP country offices.

The evaluation function at UNDP yields evidence of learning and adaptation. When the Evaluation Office published updated Evaluation Guidelines in 2019, it was after consulting with the Regional Bureaux, Country Offices and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support.[37] The peer review saluted the Evaluation Office's collaboration with the regional bureaux and the Bureau for Policy and

Programme Support Effectiveness group in strengthening the dialogue with regional evaluation support staff. The guidance is routinely revisited to take into account suggestions from UNDP programme units and was revised in June 2021.

Knowledge management approach and community of practice

One of the 2019 peer review recommendations was for the UNDP evaluation function to encourage different and new types of evaluations and data collection methods, with a view to paying attention to innovation. In 2021, UNDP IEO established a new knowledge and data management workstream to enhance its utilization of data – at a time when the COVID pandemic restricted first-person observation. The IEO also launched AIDA (Artificial Intelligence for Development Analytics) to enable greater and faster analysis and comparisons across the more than 6,000 evaluations set out in the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre. In 2022, the data-driven efforts of UNDP IEO further coalesced into the SDG Synthesis Coalition. During the next two years, UNDP is spearheading a global synthesis effort, involving over 40 UN agencies and IFIs, plus Member State partners, to utilize evaluative evidence in a broad review of all 17 SDGs.

Resource and staff

The UNDP Evaluation policy stipulates "allocating 1 per cent of combined programmatic (core and non-core) resources to the evaluation function on an annual basis, with 0.3 per cent reserved for the work of the Independent Evaluation Office". The 2019 UNDP Evaluation Policy thus establishes a distinction between evaluation and monitoring, both in financial and human resources.[38]

This carries forward a discussion already in process during the 2016 UNDP Evaluation Policy revision, recognizing that funding for evaluation remained inadequate.

Regarding evaluation staff, the 2019 Evaluation Policy makes it a point of honour that evaluator competence is critical, focusing on the professionalism of evaluators and outlining that they must understand the difference between independently verified and self-reported data.[39] The 2019 independent review recognized the effort of the UNDP Evaluation Office to ensure an adequate staffing level to match evaluation objectives, notably with the view to conduct a greater number of independent country programme evaluations and to increase the number of thematic and corporate evaluations. It is useful to note that UNDP IEO staff lead all the evaluations it publishes and that all UNDP evaluations are made public through the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre.

The limited evaluation capacity of UNDP regional bureaux/hubs was noted in the 2019 policy review, and clarity of roles and responsibilities remains an issue between regional bureaux and the country level, preventing effective support to country offices. The UNDP IEO in 2023 will for the first time detail evaluation advisors to the regional hubs. They will report directly to the IEO and will take responsibility for IEO regional and country programme evaluations.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

In the case of the Asian Development Bank, there appears to be a less developed evaluation function than those of other agencies explored above.

An external review of the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) of ADB was conducted in 2018 and provides an oversight of where the evaluation function seems to lack.[20]

[20] Development Effectiveness Committee. 2018. *An external review of the independent evaluation department*. Asian Development Bank. As of 19 January 2023: link.

The current policy is not fit for ADB

The external review found that the current policy of the IED is not fit for ADB as a whole. Given that the policy is limited to IED, no evaluation policy covering for self-evaluation in the ADB-wide system exists. Independence of the IED is blurred with engagement, due to an ambiguity in roles and responsibilities for evaluation.

There are competing demands for different kinds of evaluations, which IED has difficulty managing. This is linked to the lack of a theory of change and of a results framework for IED evaluations.

IED lags behind in its understanding of the link between learning and accountability. The Evaluation Department is perceived in ADB as a source of accountability and cannot exert a role of knowledge sharing and learning.

The quality of evaluation reports should be improved

It is noted that IED reports generally follow international good practice standards, but that the use of technology and methodology is not up to date with the wider opportunities of the evaluation world. The heaviness of standardized processes associated with IED evaluations seems to be affecting quality. Reports are very user-unfriendly and the formats should be rethought.

The quality of evaluations also includes a staffing dimension. Indeed, if the 2018 review assesses IED's financial resources and staff positions as being adequate, it underlines that the lack of medium-term plan for staff skills development and its high reliance on consultants are of concern.

Key lessons for UNICEF

- WFP uses communities of practice to strengthen the enabling environment and build an evaluation culture. [21] WFP, in a joint initiative with FAO, IFAD and CCIAR, created EvalForward, a Community of Practice on Evaluation for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development.[22]
- WFP has an evaluation charter issued by the Executive Director in 2016 that confirms the mandate and governance of the evaluation function and establishes the necessary staff authorities, roles and institutional arrangements to operationalize the policy.
- WFP has a theory of change for the evaluation function that is much less mechanistic and more focused on evaluation outcomes than is the theory of change of UNICEF.
- WFP has a focus on innovation and uses 'innovation windows' described as "portfolios of impact evaluations in specific priority evidence areas, agreed with WFP management, that will be updated over time as the organization's evidence priorities change".[23]
- As with WFP, UNDP uses communities of practice for example: the SparkBlue platform, launched in 2020, houses the different Communities of Practice, in an effort to go beyond the traditional 'private knowledge-sharing'.[24]

[21] World Food Programme. 2021. Evalxchange: a festival of learning. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[22] World Food Programme. 2020. Annual Evaluation Report: 2021 in review. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[23] World Food Programme. 2022. WFP Evaluation Policy 2022. WFP. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[24] UNDP. 2022. *Reimagining Knowledge Management, strategy and framework for action 2022-2025.* UNDP. As of 18 January 2023: link.

- UNDP has an active knowledge management strategy and is currently reviewing how AI can help make evaluations and other knowledge products more searchable and therefore more useful.

- UNDP emphasizes that useful evaluations start with well-designed programmes with clear performance indicators.

- UNDP uses an M&E Sandbox launched in 2022, bringing into focus innovative ideas and exploring new forms of M&E that focus on flexibility and agile learning. Originally thought of as an internal space to support M&E innovation in UNDP, it was finally opened up to share knowledge more widely.[25] The M&E Sandbox stems from the belief that using systems and portfolio approaches requires different ways of doing M&E in order to better face challenges of complex systems and focusing on continuous learning and adaptation.

- USAID has what appears to be a more-detailed approach to supporting responses to evaluation, responding to evaluation findings. To help ensure that institutional learning takes place and evaluation findings are used to improve development outcomes, Mission and Washington offices must develop a Post-Evaluation Action Plan upon completion of an evaluation, with a designated point of contact who will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the action plan. Offices must review the status of actions across Post-Evaluation Action Plans during Mission portfolio reviews and document when actions are complete.

- USAID has an Evaluation Toolkit. The Evaluation Toolkit centralizes the USAID guidance, tools and templates that are used for evaluation and is aimed at USAID staff members involved in the evaluation process as well as implementing partners or evaluation contractors. The Evaluation Toolkit is a living online platform that groups resources according to the timeline of different phase of the evaluation cycle and provides a complete overview of evaluation requirements and actors' responsibilities.[26]

- USAID has a more-extensive approach to Impact Evaluation. USAID, together with the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Center, initiated a pilot programme of impact evaluations. Between 2012 and March 2021, 27 impact evaluations were completed, including by learning partners. The utility of impact evaluations produced by the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Center was shown in various cases, notably in Haiti, to justify "legal reforms and government funding for the legal defense of pretrial detainees".[27]

[25] UNDP Innovation. 2022. *How do we use M&E as a vehicle for learning?* Søren Vester Haldrup. Medium.com. As of 18 January 2023: link.

[26] USAID. 2023. Evaluation Toolkit. USAID. As of 16 January 2023: link.

[27] USAID. 2022. DRG IMPACT EVALUATION RETROSPECTIVE: Learning from Three Generations of Impact Evaluations. USAID. As of 16 January 2023: link.