



# Common Indicator(s) of Evaluation Use

## **AGM 2025: Background document**

### **Prepared by the Evaluation Use Working Group (SO3)**

Following the 2024 AGM discussions, the Evaluation Use Working Group was tasked with developing a framework that suggests one or more UNEG-wide indicators to measure evaluation use.

This paper presents the process and preliminary results of the Group's work in 2024 on prioritizing and selecting indicators, along with suggestions for future areas of focus.

## Process of work

The 2023 Working Group paper 'Advancing the measurement of evaluation use' identified 24 indicators and proxies to measure evaluation use. The described indicators provided examples of how to measure evaluation use, but they were numerous and generic as indicated by the feedback from the AGM 2024. In response to this feedback, the workstream 2 of the Working Group followed a three-step process to systematically select the most suitable indicators:

### 1. Developed indicator prioritization criteria

The workstream developed criteria for prioritizing and shortlisting indicators. The criteria were validated through a dedicated participatory session with UNEG Working Group members. The agreed criteria are the following:

- **Relevance:** Relevant to the overall use of evaluations by intended stakeholders (focusing on intended primary use and main stakeholders).
- **Specificity:** Specific and clearly defined, focusing on one particular aspect to measure.
- **Measurability:** Measurable from technical and financial perspectives.
- **Applicability:** Applicable for different types of evaluation and the varying sizes and setups of evaluation functions.
- **Performance- based:** Outcome or result-level based, avoiding output-level indicators.

### 2. Shortlisted indicators

The 24 initial indicators were assessed against the agreed criteria, and some were reformulated to better align with the criteria (see the Annex). This process resulted in a shortlist of seven indicators considered most relevant based on the five prioritization criteria. The selected indicators are:

1. Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited by Management/Governing Bodies.
2. Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited in organizational strategic documents.
3. Number of requests for evaluation evidence by Senior Management/Governing Bodies/donors.
4. Proportion of accepted recommendations.
5. Proportion of accepted recommendations that were incorporated into workplans, or implemented (either partially or fully) by responsible business/process owners (short-term).

6. Percentage of accepted recommendations resulting in intended outcomes after x years (medium-term).
7. Percentage of primary stakeholders reporting changed behavior, attitudes or learning from the evaluation process and findings.

### **3. Launched a UNEG-wide Survey**

From November 1 to 15, 2024, the Working Group launched a UNEG-wide survey to validate the shortlisted indicators. The survey was open to all UNEG members and shared with partners, with individual respondents as the unit of analysis. It gathered feedback from UNEG members and partners on appropriateness and feasibility of the selected indicators for potential UN system-wide use. The survey had several limitations, including a low response rate, with only 44 responses from 13 entities out of 64 UNEG member organizations. Additionally, smaller evaluation functions or entities with limited capacity were underrepresented, potentially skewing the findings toward larger or more active UNEG members.

#### ***Survey results***

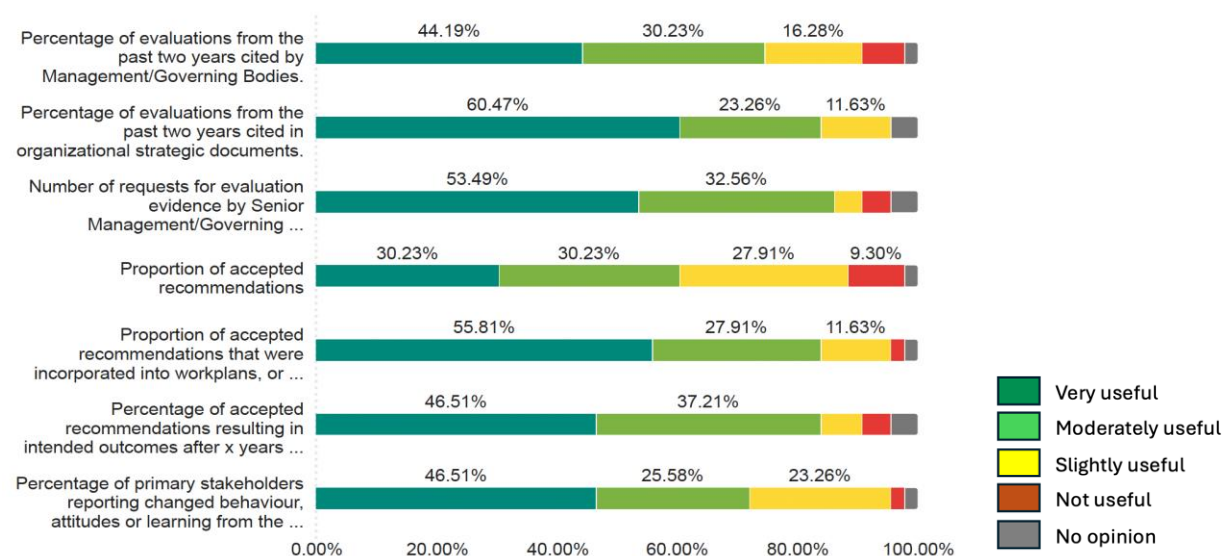
The survey results reveal that many indicators that were ranked as useful to measure the evaluation use by the UNEG colleagues participating in the survey are also the ones that have a lower potential to be tracked by their evaluation offices.

The results show that the indicators found to be very or moderately useful for measuring evaluation use were (Figure 1):

- Number of requests for evaluation evidence by Senior Management/Governing  
(37/44x100) = 84%
- Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited in organizational strategic documents (36/44x100) = 82%
- Proportion of accepted recommendations that were incorporated into workplans, or  
(36/44x100) = 82%
- Percentage of accepted recommendations resulting in intended outcomes after x years  
(36/44x100) = 82%

**Figure 1.**

Q1 - Considering your organizational context, how useful do you find the follow indicators for measuring evaluation use?



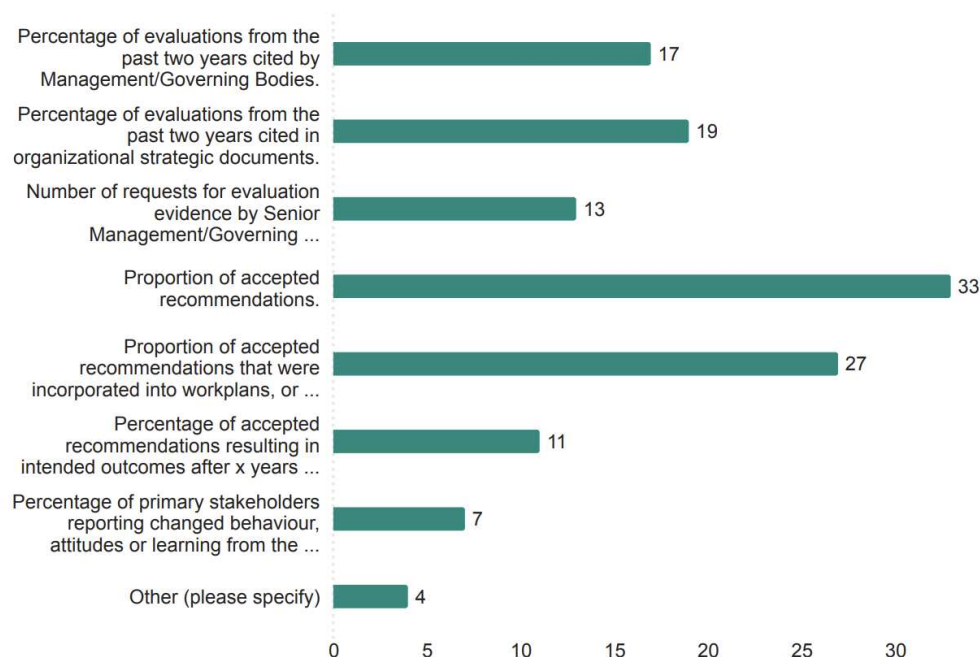
Results show that only some of the consulted entities are measuring or are likely to measure the most useful indicators to measure evaluation use (Figure 2).

- Proportion of accepted recommendations that were incorporated into workplans, or  $(27/44 \times 100) = 61\%$
- Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited in organizational strategic documents  $(19/44 \times 100) = 43\%$
- Number of requests for evaluation evidence by Senior Management/Governing  $(14/44 \times 100) = 31\%$
- Percentage of accepted recommendations resulting in intended changes after x years  $(11/44 \times 100) = 25\%$

From the listed indicators, the one found less useful for measuring evaluation use was the “proportion of accepted recommendations”, which at the same time, was the most reported to be used or likely to be used (75%). While the survey did not explore why respondents found this indicator less useful, it likely stems from the fact that it measures a necessary condition for implementation a recommendation rather than their actual use. Also, this proxy indicator is likely used more frequently than others due to the relative accessibility of data needed for measuring it.

**Figure 2.**

Q2 - Considering the resources and capacities in your office, which of the following indicators is your office currently measuring or likely to measure? (Please select all that apply) - Selected Choice



### ***Recommended indicators***

Through the indicator shortlisting process (step 2), seven indicators were initially prioritized. Based on survey results (step 3) and previous Working Group discussions, the following are a preliminary list of recommended indicators for potential UNEG-wide use:

1. Proportion of accepted recommendations that were incorporated into workplans, or implemented (either partially or fully) by responsible business/process owners.
2. Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited in organizational strategic documents.
3. Number of requests for evaluation evidence by Senior Management/Governing Bodies/donors.<sup>1</sup>
4. Percentage of accepted recommendations resulting in intended outcomes after x years.

The first indicator seems to present the best compromise between usefulness and feasibility, and its universal applicability across evaluation entities of varying sizes. It demonstrates direct application of

<sup>1</sup> Including requests for new evaluation and evaluation evidence already generated in the past.

evaluation findings into organizational actions. The established practice of tracking the indicator within many organizations highlights its practicality.

Despite relatively low feasibility for use among participated UNEG members, the next three indicators were rated highly useful and should be further explored in terms of their implementation modality of data collection and resource implications.

### ***Potential modalities for data collection***

Potential approaches for data collection based on previous mapping exercises and information collected through survey include the following:

- Proportion of accepted recommendations that were incorporated into workplans, or implemented (either partially or fully)
  - Track through progress reports of Management Response.
  - Use annual evaluation reports to track and present implementation progress and status.
  - Leverage existing institutional monitoring systems to track actions of implementation.
- Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited in organizational strategic documents.
  - Conduct a systematic review of annual reports and strategic documents to track evaluation citations.
- Number of requests for evaluation evidence by Senior Management/Governing Bodies/donors
  - Systematic capture of references through meeting records of Senior Management/Governing Bodies.
- Percentage of accepted recommendations resulting in intended outcomes after x years
  - Conduct periodic reviews of programmatic actions in response to evaluation recommendations.
  - Conduct follow-up surveys with relevant stakeholders.

### ***Potential areas of work for 2025***

- Explore the reasons behind the low intended use of highly relevant indicators (as rated in the survey) as well as high use of less relevant indicators, through interviews or follow up with entities participated in the survey. Identify key constraints and issues that can be addressed through actionable measures

- Identify existing modalities (including information systems available) and good practices for monitoring and reporting of the recommended indicators.
- Explore targets set by different agencies for tracking the shortlisted and recommended indicators.

## Annex: Pre-selection of the indicators

3-point rating scale: 0 indicates not meeting the criterion; 1 indicates partially meeting the criterion; 2 indicates meeting the criterion

Use Measure	Indicator (Or Proxy)	Revised Indicator	Relevance <sup>2</sup>	Specificity <sup>3</sup>	Measurability <sup>4</sup>	Applicability <sup>5</sup>	Performance-Based <sup>6</sup>	Average Score	Include in the Poll?
<b>Use for accountability (instrumental use)</b>									
Measure of Governing bodies and donors' use of evaluation results	Expression of interest in the evaluative evidence and in actions taken by management, by governing bodies and donors	See below	0	0	1	1	0	0.4	no
Measure of Accountability to Affected Populations through evaluation	References to evaluative evidence made by target group representatives or CSOs		0	0	0	0	0	0.0	no
(moved from "influence on organizational agenda")	References to evaluative evidence by Governing Body Representative beyond comments to individual reports	Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited by Management / Governing Bodies	2	2	1	1	2	1.6	yes
(moved from "influence on organizational agenda")	Frequency and quality of proactive consultation of Evaluation Office by management for strategy/ programme/policy design	Number of requests for evaluation evidence by Senior Management/Governing Bodies and donors.	2	2	1	0	2	1.4	yes

<sup>2</sup> Relevant to the overall use of evaluations by intended stakeholders (focusing on main use, main stakeholders).

<sup>3</sup> Specific and clearly defined, focusing on one particular aspect to measure.

<sup>4</sup> Measurable from technical and financial perspectives.

<sup>5</sup> Applicable for different types of evaluation and the varying sizes and setups of evaluation functions.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. on outcome level, not output level).



Use Measure	Indicator (Or Proxy)	Revised Indicator	Relevance <sup>2</sup>	Specificity <sup>3</sup>	Measurability <sup>4</sup>	Applicability <sup>5</sup>	Performance-Based <sup>6</sup>	Average Score	Include in the Poll?
<b>Use for programmatic of policy decisions (instrumental or process use)</b>									
User readiness to apply recommendations (use enabler)	User satisfaction on given evaluation process / products, in relation to defined criteria - e.g., relevance, timeliness, quality/credibility, anticipated use, participatory process, transparency...- refer to UNEG N&S (proxy)	Extent to which evaluands expressed use or intent to use evaluation evidence / Overall satisfaction with evaluations processes / products conducted during the year.	0	2	2	2	1	1.4	no
	User-reported learning from evaluation process and results	User-reported satisfaction on learning from evaluation results / Percentage of evaluations conducted during the year where users agree that the evaluation was useful / User-reported change behaviour / perspectives from evaluation process	1	2	2	2	0	1.4	yes
Immediate effect of recommendations on decisions or actions - with varying measures of the quality and suitability of actions taken, depending on existence of a qualitative verification	Suitability of actions proposed to address recommendations - in nature, type or timing (proxy)	Proportion of accepted recommendations	2	2	2	2	1	1.8	yes
	Recommendation-to- action ratio reported by users	Proportion of evaluation recommendations issued during year x that were adopted (either partially or fully)	2	1	2	2	1	1.6	No

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of the appropriateness of the action.		by business owners within one year of issuance							
	Proportion of evaluation recommendations that were considered by business owners		1	0	1	2	1	1.0	no
	Proportion of evaluation recommendations that were adopted (either partially or fully) by business/process owners	see row 13	2	2	2	2	2	2.0	yes
	Proportion of evaluation recommendations adopted that led to actionable changes in program processes or products		2	0	1	2	2	1.4	no
	Willingness of decision makers /business owners to participate in collecting data on evaluation use metrics, after recommendations have been submitted to them		0	0	0	2	1	0.6	no
	Effectiveness of management actions responding to recommendations – trends across evaluations, over given period, by theme, types of evaluation...	percentage of accepted evaluation recommendations resulting in intended outcomes after x years	2	2	1	2	2	1.8	yes
	Systematic references to relevant evaluation evidence or recommendations in new programme or policy documents ; or in routine strategic or operational planning documents	Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited in programme or policy documents; or in routine strategic or operational planning documents /	1	1	2	2	1	1.4	No

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		Percentage of evaluation being referenced in relevant budget proposal document the year after issuance (average of 5 year period).							
Evaluation evidence re- use	Instances of recycling of evaluation evidence for preparing new products, such as evaluation syntheses or non-evaluative products		0	2	2	2	0	1.2	no
<b>Influence on organisation agenda (conceptual use)</b>									
Extent to which evaluation-generated messages or lessons have inspired programmatic and policy orientations or agenda	Reference to evaluation-generated knowledge in corporate documents as source for a shift in approach or paradigm change; incorporation into strategic plans	Percentage of evaluations from the past two years cited in organizational strategic plans	2	2	1	1	2	1.6	yes
	References to evaluation on corporate webpages (beyond Evaluation dedicated pages) or in tweets		0	2	2	2	0	1.2	no
	Frequency of invitation of evaluation knowledge holders to corporate strategic events (e.g., Technical commission)		0	2	2	0	0	0.8	no
Measure of long-term conceptual evolution	Evolution of programme thinking aligned with evaluation		0	0	0	1	0	0.2	no

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within the organization	propositions within the organization								
Periodic stock-taking of evaluation use	Stakeholders' qualitative appreciation of evaluation utility	see line 8 above	2	0	0	1	0	0.6	no
<b>Evaluation influence on global discourse</b>									
Influence of evaluation messages or lessons onto research, public opinion and global agenda setting	Frequency of evaluation quotation in published documents		0	2	0	1	0	0.6	no
	Evidence of uptake of concepts, terms, analyses in grey literature, general policy papers...		0	0	0	0	0	0.0	no
	Demonstrated interest for jointly produced or synthesized evidence products	Average number of downloads per evaluation report per year	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	no
<b>Evaluation influence on behavioural or societal change</b>									
Behavioural changes presumably resulting from evaluations	Measures of behavioural change		1	0	0	0	1	0.4	no