



DEPARTMENT OF
**MANAGEMENT STRATEGY,
POLICY AND COMPLIANCE**

Operationalising
the Administrative Instruction on Evaluation
([ST/AI/2021/3](#)) in the
Department for Management, Strategy, Policy
and Compliance

CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY CATHERINE POLLARD, USG DMSPC

ACRONYMS

1.	INTRODUCTION	5
2.	CONCEPT OF EVALUATION IN THE UN AND DMSPC	5
2.1.	Definition of evaluation	5
2.2.	Purpose and objectives of DMSPC evaluations	5
2.3.	Categories and types of evaluation	6
2.4.	General evaluation norms	7
3.	INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DMSPC EVALUATIONS	7
3.1.	Institutional norms	7
3.2.	Roles and responsibilities	8
4.	PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR DMSPC EVALUATIONS	8
5.	CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS IN DMSPC	9
5.1.	Developing Terms of Reference	9
5.2.	Evaluation methodology	10
5.3.	Recruitment of evaluation consultants	10
5.4.	Quality assurance	10
6.	USE OF EVALUATION RESULTS	13
6.1.	Evaluation management responses and follow-up	13
6.2.	Evaluation lessons learned	13
6.3.	Information dissemination	13
7.	COORDINATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING WITH OTHER UN ENTITIES	14

FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the Department for Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance's (DMSPC) approach to operationalising the *Administrative Instruction on Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat* ([ST/AI/2021/3](#)).

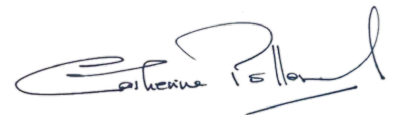
Evaluations are not new. Evaluations are:

- Mandated by Member States;
- Enshrined in Article VII of the *Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation* ([ST/SGB/2018/3](#)), or the PPBME cycle which governs how we plan and use the resources given to us by Member States to achieve our mandates; and
- An established UN system-wide approach, guided by the UN Evaluation Group's Norms and Standards.

DMSPC led evaluations do not have to necessarily focus on the overall achievement of our sub-programmes - they can focus much earlier in the results chain, on any activity or topic, any challenge or opportunity, where some independent insight could help us better deliver. For example, we may have a decision coming up, or are planning or have started a new activity. An evaluation could provide some 'fresh-eyes and cold analysis' or inform course-corrections. There may be pain-points we know our teams face where an evaluation could provide objective information to inform a solution.

Evaluation is not a 'silver bullet' – it is one of the tools available to us. The Secretary-General believes, and I fully agree with him, that we can make more use of this tool in our toolbox than we currently are. To this end, each year OUSG will be asking for your ideas on the areas that might benefit from an evaluation. This isn't about ticking a box – I am asking you to design evaluations that are meaningful but doable within the context of DMSPC.

Finally, and most importantly, knowing the impact of our work, and reflecting on what we do and how we do it is fundamental to any learning organisation. Improving the use, and the usefulness, of evaluations in our decision-making is one part of how we will achieve this.



Catherine Pollard
Under-Secretary-General
Department for Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance
17 February 2022

ACRONYMS

BTAD	Business Transformation and Accountability Division
DMSPC	Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PPBME	Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

1. INTRODUCTION

The Secretary-General is committed to instilling a culture of learning and evaluation across the Secretariat. In his report on *Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations* ([A/72/492](#)), the Secretary-General outlined his intention to strengthen the evaluation capacity of the Secretariat to better inform programme planning, performance and reporting to Member States. As a result, a new *Administrative Instruction on Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat* ([ST/AI/2021/3](#)) was promulgated in August 2021. The new Administrative Instruction (AI) and accompanying guidelines elaborate on the Secretariat's evaluation architecture as well as requirements and use of evaluations, as found under Article VII of the *Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation* (PPBME) ([ST/SGB/2018/3](#)). Each Secretariat entity is required to either develop its own evaluation policy, or align existing policies, with the AI.

This policy sets out the Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance's (DMSPC) approach to implementing the AI. The policy describes the framework and principles that will guide the Department's decisions and actions when planning and conducting evaluations, as well as disseminating and using evaluation results. The policy also establishes the Department's approach to ensuring that evaluation is a systematic and on-going part of DMSPC's programme management cycle. The policy will initially be reviewed after the first year of implementation, to ensure its relevance to the Department's evaluation needs and then every five years thereafter. The policy will also be reviewed as the need arises to ensure that it remains up to date with the Secretariat's evaluation policy framework.

2. CONCEPT OF EVALUATION IN THE UN AND DMSPC

2.1. Definition of evaluation

The UN Secretariat and DMSPC subscribe to the definition of evaluation provided by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG): “an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance... An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders”.

2.2. Purpose and objectives of DMSPC evaluations

In consideration of the above definition of evaluation, the purpose of evaluations at DMSPC is to provide evidence-based information on programme performance that is credible and reliable, so that the Department achieves the following objectives of evaluation, in adherence to regulation 7.1 of the PPBME:

- To determine in a systematic and objective manner, one or more of the following evaluation criteria when it comes to the Department’s activities, in relation to the mandate: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness or impact; and
- To engage in a systematic reflection of the Department’s programme with a view to increase its effectiveness.

With the accomplishment of these objectives, evaluations at DMSPC are envisaged to contribute to continuous learning, enhanced program performance and greater accountability for results.

2.3. Categories and types of evaluation

Regulation 7.3 and Rule 107.3 of the PPBME outline those evaluations which may be internal and/or external to the entity. Internal evaluations are conducted by entities in compliance with established evaluation guidelines and may be carried out by an external and independent evaluation specialist, while managed by the entity’s evaluation function. External evaluations may be mandated by the General Assembly. Section 1.4 of ST/AI/2021/3 thus uses the term “evaluation” to refer to evaluations conducted by oversight bodies, such as the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) as the Secretariat’s central evaluation unit, and to evaluations undertaken by entities themselves. Evaluations undertaken in DMSPC (and therefore the scope of the current policy) fall into the first of the three categories of UN secretariat evaluations seen in Table 1:

Categories	Conducted by	Scope	Purpose
Internal	DMSPC Independent Evaluation Function	Sub-programmes, processes, outputs and activities	Facilitating internal reflection and learning for programme improvement
External	OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division	Programmes and sub-programmes	Providing independent perspective on results for enhanced programme outcomes
System-wide	Joint Inspection Unit	Across UN system entities	Identifying cross-cutting issues of strategic importance across UN entities.

Table 1: Categories of UN Secretariat evaluations

The sub-programmes reflected in the Department’s programme planning and budget documents, or specific processes, outputs and activities, may be the focus of DMSPC led evaluations and included in the annual evaluation plan dependent on departmental priorities.

2.4. General evaluation norms

UNEG developed the [Norms and Standards for Evaluation \(2016\)](#) to facilitate common/standardized evaluation practice across the UN system of departments, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and affiliated organizations. The following UNEG general norms underpin the work of the DMSPC evaluation function, and provide a quality framework for the Department's conduct of evaluations:

1. **Utility** - DMSPC evaluations are conducted in a timely manner and tailored to be useful for evidence-based decision-making by managers. The analysis of findings and recommendations by evaluators considers the realities of the Department's operational context.
2. **Credibility** – DMSPC evaluations are grounded on independence, impartiality, and a rigorous methodology. The Department's evaluation process is transparent, involves relevant stakeholders and has a robust quality assurance system. Evaluation findings are derived from the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence.
3. **Independence** – In the conduct of DMSPC evaluations, the Department's evaluation function has a direct reporting line to the Office of the USG DMSPC, thus preserving the independence of the evaluation function. DMSPC evaluators will demonstrate behavioural independence and the Department will ensure they have free access to information, are impartial and free from undue pressure throughout the evaluation process.
4. **Impartiality** – The conduct of DMSPC evaluations happens in an objective and professional manner, with integrity and absence of bias. Impartiality is built into all stages and activities of DMSPC evaluations.
5. **Ethics** – DMSPC evaluators should have personal and professional integrity and abide by UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluations and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations system, to ensure that the rights of individuals involved in all evaluations are respected.
6. **Transparency** – DMSPC establishes trust and builds confidence with key stakeholders, such as Member States, by conducting and reporting on evaluations in a transparent manner.
7. **Integration of human rights, gender equality and rights of persons with disabilities** - All evaluations undertaken or commissioned by DMSPC will include a focus on the protection and promotion of human rights and gender issues following [UNEG/G\(2011\)2 Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation](#), as well as a focus on the rights of people with disabilities, according to the [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy \(2019\)](#).

3. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DMSPC EVALUATIONS

3.1. Institutional norms

In addition to the above general norms, evaluations in DMSPC are guided by the following institutional norms outlined in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation:

1. **Enabling environment** – Senior management in DMSPC recognize the benefits that evaluations provide for the Department in increased accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision-making. As a result, DMSPC senior management has a firm commitment to create an enabling

environment through seeking buy-in from managers to integrate evaluation into their way of working and make use of evaluations as a management tool.

2. **Evaluation use and follow-up** – DMSPC values the use and follow-up of evaluation results, whereby stakeholders are actively engaged during the process. Managers in DMSPC are involved in the discussions on evaluation recommendations and provide a response on the adoption of recommendations. The Chief of the Evaluation Section supports the use of evaluation results and implementation of applicable evaluation recommendations.

3.2. Roles and responsibilities

In the planning, conduct and management of DMSPC evaluations, the **Office of the USG DMSPC (OUSG DMSPC)** will be supported by the **Chief of the Evaluation Section, Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD)** as the Department's evaluation expert. OUSG DMSPC will be responsible for:

- Implementing this evaluation policy and championing the use of evaluations within the Department.
- Reviewing and endorsing this policy in line with applicable and updated UN Secretariat and UN System policy guidance.
- Developing and reviewing DMSPC's annual evaluation plan, taking into consideration the Department's priorities and ensuring that sufficient resources are available for the Department's evaluations to be carried out.
- Managing evaluations conducted by the Department.
- Monitoring the implementation of the annual plan and adjusting the plan during the year, as needed.
- Making recommendations for follow-up, including on both the dissemination of the exercises' findings and recommendations.
- Coordinating a participatory process to consult with programme managers in the preparation of management responses to evaluation recommendations.
- Monitoring the implementation of recommendations and requesting the responsible managers to update the implementation status of recommendations.
- Providing biannual updates to the USG and DMSPC Management on the implementation of evaluation activities and evaluation follow-up.

4. PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR DMSPC EVALUATIONS

Evaluations in DMSPC are planned on an annual basis, as required by section 2.1 of ST/AI/2021/3. During the planning process, OUSG DMSPC, with the support of the Chief of Evaluation Section, BTAD:

- **Consults with senior leadership and programme managers** to determine the Department's key areas of evaluation need, as may be identified through new or existing sub-programmes, outputs and activities that require:
 - an assessment of their effectiveness and impact,
 - clearer information/evidence for managerial learning and enhanced decision-making,

- improvement in programme performance and/or areas that pose a risk to DMSPC's delivery of results, if not addressed.
- **Develops an annual evaluation plan** based on the Department's strategic goals and most urgent evaluation needs (as determined from consultations), as well as the time and resources available to conduct the evaluations.
- **Ensures there is adequate evaluation capacity** to ensure the quality implementation of each annual plan. OUSG DMSPC will be guided on the level of resources required by considering the Joint Inspection Unit's ([JIU/REP/2014/6](#)) recommendation that entities allocate between 0.5% and 3% of the Department's annual budget expenditure to cater for evaluation resources and activities (e.g., staff, consultants, travel, reports). The level of resources required will depend on the nature, complexity, delivery method, existing skills, and scope of the evaluations to be undertaken.

The DMSPC annual evaluation plan outlines the number and type of evaluations planned for each year (where at least one internal evaluation is to be conducted by the Department every year), the rationale for the prioritized evaluations, how the results of the evaluation will be used, who will manage and conduct the evaluation, the resources allocated, and delivery timelines.

In the event that during the year the Department wishes to conduct an evaluation in response to an emerging need that is not in the annual plan, as per paragraph 29 of the UNEG Norms and Standards, the annual plan will contain clear guidelines to decide on the relative priority of such ad hoc requests including how the Department will ensure the quality and resourcing of any resulting evaluation.

5. CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS IN DMSPC

5.1. Developing Terms of Reference

In line with UNEG standards¹, each evaluation undertaken by DMSPC has terms of reference (TORs) which describe in detail:

- The context, purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation;
- A clear definition of the subject (e.g., sub-programme, output or activity) to be evaluated;
- The evaluation key questions and methodology;
- Management arrangements for independence and impartiality;
- Expected deliverables; and
- The evaluation process and timelines.

¹ Standard 4.3, United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*.

5.2. Evaluation methodology

According to UNEG Standard 4.5, evaluations need to be conducted using a sufficiently rigorous methodology using multiple data sources to effectively:

- respond to the scope and objectives of the evaluation;
- answer the posed evaluation questions; and
- lead to a complete, fair and unbiased assessment.

In consideration of the above, DMSPC evaluation methodologies will result in information that is objective, valid and reliable to produce credible results for use.

5.3. Recruitment of evaluation consultants

The services of external evaluation specialists/consultants may be required to supplement the Department's internal evaluation capacity. In such cases, evaluation consultants are selected through a transparent and fair process from the Inspira consultant roster, based on UNEG competencies (including educational background, evaluation experience and methodological expertise) and in consideration of gender, geographical diversity, and disability perspectives.

Selected evaluation consultants are expected to adhere to UNEG norms and standards during the conduct of the Department's evaluations and this includes demonstrating professionalism, integrity and ethical behavior in line with the [UN Secretariat Values and Behaviours](#).

5.4. Quality assurance

In the first instance, the Chief of the Evaluation Section, BTAD, ensures that DMSPC has an appropriate evaluation quality assurance system that pertains to the evaluation process, its products and the quality of all work performed by external consultants.

In line with UNEG Standard 5 on Quality, DMSPC undertakes evaluation quality control at both the design (terms of reference and inception report) and final (evaluation report) stages of evaluation. Quality control is further undertaken at the data collection stage, to ensure the validity and reliability of evaluation data.

The *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports* includes critical indicators for high-quality evaluation **terms of reference and inception report**:

Indicator	Description
1. Evaluation Purpose	The Terms of Reference specifies the purpose of the evaluation and how it will be used.
2. Evaluation Objectives	The Terms of Reference includes clearly defined, relevant and feasible objectives, in line with the overall evaluation purpose.
3. Evaluation Context	The Terms of Reference includes sufficient and relevant contextual information, such as the particular political, programmatic and governance environment.
4. Evaluation Scope	The Terms of Reference includes the scope of the evaluation which is adequate to meet the stated evaluation objectives and feasible given the available resources.
5. Evaluation Criteria	The Terms of Reference specifies the criteria that will be utilized to guide the evaluation, such as criteria against which the subject to be evaluated will be assessed.
6. Evaluation Questions	The Terms of Reference includes a comprehensive and tailored set of evaluation questions within the framework of the evaluation criteria.
7. Methodology	The Terms of Reference specifies the methods for data collection and analysis, including information on the overall methodological design.
8. Evaluation Work Plan	The Terms of Reference includes a work plan that specifies evaluation outputs, key stages of the process, clear roles and responsibilities, quality assurance and the project budget.
9. Gender, Human Rights & Disability perspectives	The Terms of Reference specifies how human rights, gender and disability perspectives will be incorporated in the evaluation design.

Table 2: Adapted from the *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports [UNEG/G(2010)1]*

The *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports* includes critical indicators for a high-quality **evaluation report (Table 3)**. Throughout the evaluation process, DMSPC also relies on the guidance of OIOS as the central evaluation unit responsible for quality standards in the Secretariat.

Indicator	Description
1. Report Structure	The report is well-structured, logical, clear and complete with a stand-alone Executive Summary and supporting annexes.
2. Objective of Evaluation	The report presents a clear and full description of the object (e.g., outcome, programme, project, group of projects, themes) of the evaluation.
3. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives & Scope	The evaluation's purpose, objectives and scope are fully explained, including evaluation criteria used.
4. Evaluation Methodology	The report presents a transparent description of the methodology applied to the evaluation that clearly explains how the evaluation was specifically designed to address the evaluation criteria, yield answers to the evaluation questions and achieve evaluation purposes.
5. Findings	Findings respond directly to the evaluation criteria and questions detailed in the scope and objectives section of the report and are based on evidence derived from data collection and analysis methods described in the methodology section of the report.
6. Conclusions	Conclusions present reasonable judgments based on findings and substantiated by evidence and provide insights pertinent to the object and purpose of the evaluation.
7. Recommendations	Recommendations are relevant to the object and purposes of the evaluation, are supported by evidence and conclusions, and were developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders.
8. Gender, Human Rights & Disability perspectives	The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object, the assessment of results and the evaluation process incorporate a gender equality perspective, human rights-based approach and disability inclusion.

Table 3: Adapted from the *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports [UNEG/G(2010)/2]*

6. USE OF EVALUATION RESULTS

6.1. Evaluation management responses and follow-up

Section 3 of ST/AI/2021/3 requires management to prepare responses to each evaluation recommendation. Programme managers will therefore be involved in a participatory process to discuss and respond to each recommendation, determining whether it should be accepted, partially accepted or rejected. In this way, concurrence is built into the process and only agreed-to recommendations are included in the final evaluation report where implementation plans are outlined for the accepted recommendations.

6.2. Evaluation lessons learned

Lessons learned from DMSPC evaluations are incorporated into the Department's subsequent programme planning and budgeting documents by reflecting the specific lessons learned from evaluations and outlining how those lessons feed into planning for the subsequent programme cycle. This informs the Department's strategic and transparent programme delivery, as specified in rule 107.4 of the PPBME.

The value of lessons learned from internal evaluations is also realized when DMSPC management promotes and uses the results of evaluations to inform continuous improvement of programmes at the process and activity levels.

6.3. Information dissemination

In the interest of accountability for results to Member States, DMSPC upholds the standard of transparency in the disclosure and dissemination of the Department's evaluation reports. As a result, DMSPC will publish its evaluation reports (including sharing them on the OIOS Evaluation Knowledge Management Platform), unless management deems the information contained in the report as confidential or sensitive, as defined by [ST/SGB/2007/6](#) (*Information sensitivity, classification and handling*). In such cases, an executive summary of the evaluation report and the management response will be made public while the full report is available to Member States upon request.

7. COORDINATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING WITH OTHER UN ENTITIES

DMSPC’s coordination and knowledge sharing begins at the planning stage where the Department’s evaluation plans are shared with OIOS. In turn, OIOS informs DMSPC if there are other entities with plans to undertake similar evaluations, which presents an opportunity for the Department to explore collaboration and a sharing of evaluation knowledge and resources with those entities.

In its most recent biennial report, OIOS classified DMSPC as a “Predominantly Management and Support” entity. DMSPC will pay particular attention to coordinating and learning from other entities in this category.