



Evaluation Use in Practice

A review of UNEG members' practices to boost evaluation use

UNEG Interest Group on Evaluation Use

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organization
EO	Evaluation Office
EUIG	Interest Group on Evaluation Use
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HR	Human Resources
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
KM	Knowledge Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MR	Management Response
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Plan
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWOMEN	United Nations Women
WFP	World Food Programme
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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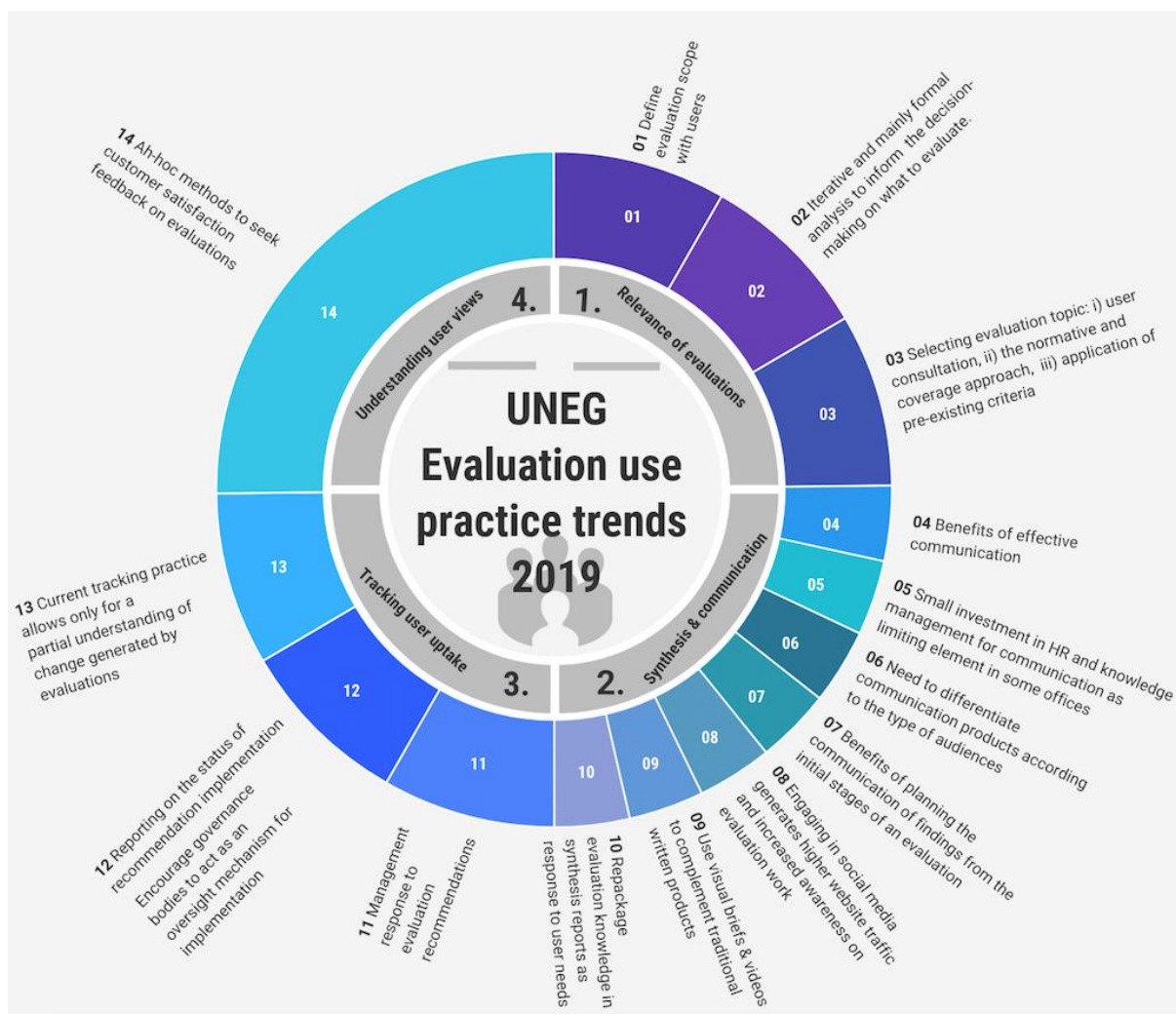
It reflects the practices reported by the following 10 UNEG member agencies: FAO, GEF, IAEA, ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, WFP and WIPO. Thanks go to all contributors to this document.

KEY POINTS PRESENTED IN THIS DOCUMENT

ON TRENDS AND PRACTICES WITHIN UNEG TO PROMOTE EVALUATION USE

This paper constitutes the continued effort of UNEG to promote the use of evaluation. Four dimensions serve for the analysis of practices about the use of evaluation in UN agencies. The dimensions are as follows: i) in the first place, ways to maximise the relevance for user needs for evaluations; ii) once evaluation evidence is available, how UN agencies synthesize evaluation knowledge; iii) practices in the tracking of the implementation of evaluation recommendations, the latter constituting "user uptake"; and iv) ways to capture and track user opinion on evaluation.

The graphic below summarizes the main findings of this study, grouped according to the four research dimensions.



INTRODUCTION

UNEG works on promoting the use of evaluation. Work has been on-going for many years, lead by UNEG's Interest Group on Evaluation Use¹ and yielded the following results to date:

In 2016, a UNEG study on "Evaluation Use in the UN System" identified six key messages about evaluation use dynamics in the UN system, taken as a starting point:

1. Users and stakeholders should be involved and consulted throughout the evaluation process.
2. The support of senior decision-makers is key, as is their commitment to the implementation of recommendations.
3. Evaluators need to ensure that recommendations are feasible and relevant.
4. Independent evaluations must attempt to capture organizational realities.
5. Management responses and follow-up processes must take place and be adequately supported.
6. Sharing of findings enables cross-organizational learning and use.

In 2017, in line with these previous messages, UNEG organized webinars to share knowledge related to promoting evaluation use (cf. key message 6), and published further guidance papers:

- Guidance on Principles for stakeholder engagement (cf. key message 1)
- Study on the implications of governance structures in promoting the use of evaluative evidence for informed decision-making (cf. key message 2)
- Checklist for quality recommendations (cf. key message 3)

In 2019, against this background, the Interest Group identified **four areas** on which UNEG members' practices and knowledge could supplement the collective learning on **what boosts evaluation use**:

1. Ensuring the **relevance** of evaluations to users knowledge needs (ex-ante outreach)
2. **Packaging** evaluation knowledge to increase appeal (ex-post dissemination)
3. Tracking **users uptake** of evaluation knowledge (evaluation impact)
4. Understanding **users views** on evaluation effectiveness to improve programmes (satisfaction)

Seeking to capture trends and good practices within UNEG related to these topics, members of the Group² shared information on their practices. This document presents the results of the consultations and aims at synthesizing the lessons and good practices that influence the use of evidence from evaluations within this sample of UNEG members. The document serves as a reference for UNEG members wishing, to enhance evaluation use.

The document is divided into four sections reflecting each of the four areas listed above, and presenting information collected from the UNEG EUIG members, based on questions and endorsed by all members of the interest group (see Annex A). Annexes B to G contain complementary information on the four research dimensions.

¹UNEG's Interest Group on Evaluation Use (EUIG) was established under Objective 2 of the UNEG strategy 2013-2019

² From the following agencies: FAO, GEF, IAEA, WFP, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and WIPO

1

ENSURING RELEVANCE OF EVALUATIONS TO USER KNOWLEDGE NEEDS

UNEG Standard 4.1


"Evaluations should be designed to ensure that they provide timely, valid and reliable information that will be relevant to the subject being assessed and should clearly identify the underlying intentionality."



CONSULTING EVALUATION USERS AND CONSTITUENCIES

IDENTIFIED PRACTICE TREND

USERS CONSULTATION
The involvement of **evaluation users** to assist in defining of the scope of the evaluation through the formation of an **Evaluation Reference Group**



Through an **Evaluation Reference Group**

When consulted, users' inputs add value to their evaluation portfolio




METHODS AND PROCESSES TO SELECT TOPICS FOR EVALUATION

Using mixed methods contributes to **evaluation use at an organizational level**

IDENTIFIED PRACTICE TREND

FORMAL ANALYSIS
All the organizations studied use an iterative and generally formal analysis as an input into the decision-making on what to evaluate



IDENTIFIED PRACTICE TREND

MIXED METHODS
Using various approaches including:

- user consultation
- a normative and coverage approach
- application of pre-existing criteria

contributes to evaluation use at an organizational level

SECTION 1: Maximizing the relevance of evaluations to user knowledge needs.

This first section of the document presents ways in which some agencies have worked to maximize the relevance of evaluations to users' needs, and thereby enhanced the chances of evaluations being used.

For UNEG's General Norms of evaluation (Norm 2), relevance is a crucial principle for evaluation utility. It is defined, as follows:

"In commissioning and conducting an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. The utility of evaluation is manifest through its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, informed decision-making processes and accountability for results. Evaluations could also be used to contribute beyond the organization by generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders".

1.1 Consultation with evaluation users and constituencies

The majority of organizations who provided inputs consult with stakeholders in one way or another to select which evaluations should be commissioned and conducted. There is a wide variety in the type, format and channels used to consult myriads of stakeholders. **All organizations consult evaluation users** to define the scope of their evaluations. The difference among the organizations resides in the depth of the engagement with users (number of times consulted and evaluation phases) and the level of use of the feedback provided by these users.

Key finding

All the organizations use an iterative and generally formal analysis as an input into the decision-making on what to evaluate and to determine the evaluation scope.



1.2 Methods and processes to select topics for evaluation

There are various mechanisms for users to express **evidence gaps and knowledge needs** that evaluations may address, mixing informal and formal mechanisms. Examples include:

- **Demand and consultative processes:** WFP undertook a formal consultative process with senior managers to identify key themes that would be topics for strategic evaluations. The analysis and suggested topics, along with their sequencing, were presented to senior managers for discussion (not approval). The analysis was based on evidence gap analysis,

assessment of priority themes from the WFP Strategic Plan and on interviews with stakeholders. In short, in this process WFP ask stakeholders about their priority topics of interest.

- **Criteria setting, evidence-gap analysis and consultation:** UNFPA and WIPO use the results of a formal evaluation evidence-gap analysis/knowledge gap exercise to strategically plan evaluations. To identify evaluations for 2018-2021, UNFPA followed three key steps to identify (a) strategic evaluation priorities concerning the UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021; and (b) knowledge gaps where centralized evaluations would add value.

In WFP, Country Offices' preparation of a Concept Note for its Country Strategic Plan contribute to identifying evidence gaps, knowledge and learning needs at the country level to strengthen evidence-based programming.

WIPO undertook an in-depth knowledge gap analysis on the evidenced provided by the evaluation in the previous 6 years. Annex B contains further examples of gaps analysis, as practiced in UNFPA, WFP and WIPO.

2

SYNTHESISING EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE TO INCREASE APPEAL

UNEG Standard 4.11

“Communication and dissemination are integral parts of evaluations. Evaluations functions should have an effective strategy for communication and dissemination that is focused on enhancing evaluation use”



GROWING AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR MORE COMMUNICATION



Need of communication from the **INITIAL STAGES** of an evaluation



Awareness of **BENEFITS** of effective communication to enhance the utilization of the evaluations

INVESTMENTS IN COMMUNICATION FOR EVALUATION USE



HUMAN RESOURCES commensurate to the communication needs and strategy of the office

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ACKNOWLEDGE THE BENEFITS OF TAILORING PRODUCTS TO AUDIENCES



TARGETED PRODUCTS according to the audience type

TYPICAL COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS USED



SOCIAL MEDIA engagement increases awareness of evaluation work



INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS are increasingly being used to share findings



PRODUCTS FOR DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS specific targeted products

PRACTICES RELATED TO THE SYNTHESIS OF EVALUATION REPORTING



EVALUATION SYNTHESIS addressing key findings, lessons learned and recommendations

“short and just in time” material for decision-makers and senior managers

SECTION 2: Synthesizing evaluation knowledge to increase appeal

This second section examines UNEG members' practices to attract user interest in the evaluation products, related to processes and products to communicate evaluation knowledge and increase appeal.

2.1 Growing awareness of the need for more communication

The practices of UNEG members related to communication reflect a **growing recognition** that, to reach a wider audience or increase the interest of traditional evaluation users, evaluation functions need to stay attuned to fast-evolving models of communicating and adjust their practices and products accordingly.

Many offices report an **interest in investing** more for this purpose, evidenced by efforts in developing new communication products and diversifying channels to communicate evaluation evidence.

The fact that many offices³ have updated (or are in the process of developing) a **communication strategy** and/or **knowledge management (KM) strategy** is one reflection of awareness of the importance of working on the communication and dissemination of evaluation results, to be more systematic in using communication tools to enhance evaluation use.

Most UNEG members⁴ require that evaluations plan the communication of findings **from the inception phase**, as per their standard evaluation approaches and guidance. FAO, UNFPA, ILO, GEF, UNWOMEN and UNFPA report that a **communication and dissemination plan** should be included in the evaluation terms of reference. This plan reflects how to communicate evaluation results to different audiences.

Key finding

Evaluation offices appear to have understood the benefits of effective communication to enhance the utilization of the evaluations.



2.2 Communication strategies: tailoring products to audiences

The primary purpose of communication strategies is to identify the types and number of audiences and outline the best products to reach them. FAO and ILO distinguish between the primary, secondary and tertiary level of audiences, while UNWOMEN developed different Theories of Change for an external and internal audience. Only a few agencies conduct a mapping of audience needs and provide

³ FAO, GEF, ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and WFP

⁴ FAO, ILO, UNFPA, UNWOMEN, WFP and WIPO

detailed information on which products will be developed, and for which audience (ILO, UNWOMEN, WFP).

Communication channels are established with key and conventional users of the evaluation knowledge at the preparatory stages of the evaluation. Still, **these are well defined mainly for decision-makers and governing bodies**, as evaluation findings and recommendations tend to aim primarily at them. All evaluation offices have **clearly identified** products for their Executive Board, Council or other governing bodies. Products for decision-makers **mainly consist of written material** in three main forms:

- evaluation reports
- summaries or briefs
- annual or semi-annual reports.

Members also acknowledge that users vary from evaluation to evaluation and that **messages and outreach tools need to adapt** to their needs. However, only a few are actively doing it. Several offices (FAO, GEF, ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP) tailor their products and presentations to the needs of decision-makers (e.g. senior management or technical staff in headquarters; decentralized offices). Webinars are used to reach out to decentralized officers by UNFPA when it is not possible to present in person.

Key finding

There is a general understanding of the need to differentiate communication products according to the type of audiences to enhance the use of evaluation.



2.3 Communication products used within UNEG

UN agencies use websites, newsletters, webinars and social media to complement the more traditional communication channels of reports, summaries and briefs. Annex C provides further details on the mainstream communication products.

Practice – The WFP Approach

WFP has developed web-based interactive reports into which videos or other media are inserted for further information. These are posted on the WFP external website and advertised through an emailed newsletter and are done for the Annual Evaluation report.

Practice – The UNWOMEN Approach

The UNWOMEN 'Transform' magazine for gender-responsive evaluation is accessed on average 2000 times annually, which is *4 times more than evaluation reports. Their video on Evaluating SDGs has been viewed more than 4K times in its English version and even more in all language versions combined.

Advanced communication products: The use of visual storytelling tools and infographics are more often being used by all UNEG members including short videos used by several offices to communicate to broader audiences (FAO, WFP, UNFPA, UNWOMEN, GEF). They are not only used to share contents from evaluations, but also to raise awareness about methodologies (e.g. Evaluation pills of UNFPA), or to show the perspectives of people on the ground. Also, they enable key messages to be summarized attractively and help get people's attention. Evaluation offices have understood the power of audio-visual communication, and they often have videos produced professionally. Audio files are also used, for posting short messages in the form of podcasts on websites, mainly when resources do not allow producing videos.

Key finding

Overall, UNEG members reported evidence that engaging in social media generates higher website traffic and increased awareness of evaluation work.



Communities of Practices are used to assist in sharing knowledge and create awareness and FAO, WFP, IFAD, ILO and GEF have supported their establishment and use as dissemination channels, and more broadly as a way to engage with practitioners and evaluators. Some agencies (WIPO and WFP) are developing on-line courses on evaluation for appropriate stakeholders in the evaluation process.

Key finding

Beyond traditional written products, other, more innovative channels are increasingly being considered and used to share results and enhance evaluation use. Visual briefs and videos are amongst the most popular outreach tools: those who are not producing them already, report an interest in investing more resources for their production.



Annex D contains communication products and strategies specific to decentralized evaluations, while Annex E lists mainstream products to communicate evaluation findings.

2.4 Actual investments in communication for evaluation use

The extent to which different agencies systematically **put into practice** the principles reportedly included in their guidance **varies**. For instance, UNWOMEN reports that despite their established "Minimum communication package", communication is not systematically done. FAO notes that

despite it being a requirement for all evaluations, communication plans are more often formalized for major evaluations. Last, WFP report that although the plan is always done, it is not always completed. The GEF appears to invest more systematically into communication activities, as shown in Annex C.

Key finding

Standard evaluation guidance generally recommends planning the communication of findings and dissemination from the initial stages of an evaluation. Still, most agencies report that communication efforts for each evaluation are far from systematic or exhaustive.



Some members (UNFPA, FAO, WFP, GEF) mention a specific effort relative to visually representing evaluation results but report that using visuals is constrained by the fact that evaluators rarely plan enough **time** required to produce visuals, and often underestimate the **workload** required for acquiring and processing data. Also, teams often miss the necessary **skills** set to produce visuals.

Each agency determines its own mixture of full-time or part-time staff, its use of consultants and the focus of their work, for example, communication in general, knowledge management or social media.

Only a few make a significant investment: for example, WFP reports a commitment to strengthening the Communications Unit and related investment in technology/software/platforms; GEF also invests into communication, in the form of planning for these activities as an office effort. ILO invests in applying new technologies and software to highlight evaluation results in a more interactive and user-friendly manner. UNICEF recently created a section dedicated to the use of evaluation.

Key finding

The number of staff supporting communication efforts should be commensurate to the communication needs and strategy of the office. The small investment in HR and communication tools has been a limiting element in some offices.



2.5 Practices related to the synthesis of evaluation reports

Most of the evaluation offices (FAO, ILO, WFP, WIPO, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, and GEF) prepare synthesis reports/meta-analysis of clustered project evaluations/country programme evaluations periodically.

Traditionally, the synthesis and packaging is a demand-driven exercise, and the analysis is frequently disaggregated into different levels (e.g. regional, country).

Additional examples of synthesized evaluation products include:

- FAO prepare programme evaluation reports on a biannual and annual basis, respectively.
- IAEA adopted a combined country-level evaluation and audit approach, as a way to provide clients with benefits of each discipline, minimize the burden on the evaluand, generate efficiency gains, and increase acceptance and interest with more comprehensive reports.
- The GEF IEO prepares meso-level evaluation products that synthesize existing evaluation evidence with limited fieldwork, on a topic that is known to be of interest (e.g. transformational change; additionality). These products target stakeholders with the governance function (Council), stakeholders that carry out decisions of the governing bodies (GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies), as well as country clients.

A limited number of agencies report having searchable databases. UNFPA and UNICEF EO report efforts in this direction, for data sources to be more accessible. These are reported to require dedicated HR. Annex F provides further insights into the practices of synthesising evaluation results.

Key finding

UNEG members repackage evaluation knowledge in the form of synthesis reports, mainly addressing key findings, lessons learned and recommendations as a response to user needs.



UNEG Standard 2

Standard 2.1 states “An adequate follow-up mechanism on the implementation of actions” whilst Standard 2.2 requires “Reporting, dissemination and the promotion of learning”



PRACTICES ON RESPONSES TO EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP

management responses

are required by most responded Agencies



tracking system in place for implementation of recommendations based on management responses



IDENTIFIED PRACTICE TREND

TRACKING

A management response to evaluation recommendations is a **good practice** approach, and all evaluation offices have a system in place to **track the management response** to the evaluation recommendations



PRACTICES RELATED TO TRACKING ACTIONS TAKEN BY EVALUATION USERS BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS

IDENTIFIED PRACTICE TREND

IMPLEMENTATION

Reporting by evaluation offices to their governing bodies on the status of **management response implementation** and encouraging those bodies to act as an oversight mechanism for implementation



IDENTIFIED PRACTICE TREND

CHANGE

Current UN agency practice allows for a partial understanding of the **change generated by evaluations**



SECTION 3: Tracking user uptake of evaluation knowledge

This section examines the extent to which evaluation offices effectively engage in the uptake of evaluation knowledge by the end-users.

UNEG Standards promote a pro-active approach from evaluation offices, through “An adequate follow-up mechanism on the implementation of actions” (UNEG Standard 2.1), and “Reporting, dissemination and the promotion of learning” (UNEG Standard 2.2).

3.1 Tracking evaluation use

Communication strategies are often not well known or owned by evaluation offices, beyond the communication team. Offices do not systematically analyse the extent to which their various products are used and by whom. Some (FAO, ILO, WFP) have tracked evaluation use through a survey to users and other measures, yet evaluation offices have little feedback on whom they reach and how effective they are in generating interest and change.

The **human resources** dedicated to communication remain limited in comparison to the full range of strategies forth by evaluation offices to use communication tools to increase evaluation use. Despite investment in HR for communication and KM in the last 10 years, few offices have permanent staff dedicated to it. Few offices have enough people working on the topic⁵.

Practice – UNICEF Approach

UNICEF has created a new section titled, Innovation, Learning and Uptake dedicated to enhancing evaluation use. Included is also innovation work, KM, communication and dissemination aspects of evaluation.

3.2 Following-up on evaluation recommendations

Most agencies use management responses to follow-up of evaluation recommendations, and tracking systems to measure progress on evaluation recommendations implementation.

Evaluation stakeholders do not systematically comply with the obligation to provide a response to recommendations, despite it being a standard requirement. The compliance varies among Agencies and between types of evaluations. FAO, for example, reports more difficulty in getting responses on project evaluations than for country programme or thematic and strategic evaluations.

A good practice applied in some agencies is to **review the quality** of responses. In WFP, management responses need to undergo an approval process based on their quality, for both centralized and decentralized evaluations.

To **follow-up on the implementation of recommendations** based on management responses, most Agencies have **electronic tracking systems** in place. These platforms are online and accessible to both

⁵ **FAO** has one non-permanent person; **WFP** one P-4 Communications Officer (under recruitment) plus 2 full-time consultants; **UNFPA** one permanent staff supported by a social media consultant (part-time); **ILO** one full-time official dedicated to communications and KM; **GEF** one full-time staff dedicated to KM; and **UNWOMEN** one consultant dedicated to communication.

the evaluation functions/offices and evaluation stakeholders, which allows feeding corporate decision-making.

At UNESCO, evaluation recommendations are included in a corporate database along with those from internal and external audits and JIU. All provide essential input for strategic management decisions. In the IAEA, evaluations and audits also use the same commercially available software called *TeamMate*. The GEF IEO presents the Management Action Record to the Council and makes the Record public through its website.

Key finding

All evaluation offices have a system in place to track evaluation recommendations at least for strategic evaluations.



3.3 Tracking actions taken to address recommendations

The type of **engagement with stakeholders in following up** on the recommendations varies from none, when users self-report the status of the implementation (usually in the case of decentralized evaluations) to periodic dialogues with users. Some offices, such as at the IAEA and WIPO, only close recommendations when evidence related to their implementation is provided.

The **frequency in the follow-up** varies from every quarter (WIPO, UNICEF) to every six months (UNESCO, IAEA, UNWOMEN) to once a year (GEF) or longer. When FAO conduct follow-up evaluations of similar projects or on similar topics, they integrate processes to measure the extent to which issues raised in previous evaluations (including the implementation of recommendations) have been addressed.

Most evaluation offices periodically **report on the status of recommendation implementation** to their governing bodies and management.

Good Practices – The role of institutionalized processes

Some agencies, such as ILO, WIPO and UNESCO, report to **dedicated Oversight Committees** on the status of recommendations implementation. Some plays an active role in **advising on, or endorsing the closing of recommendations**, such as ILO's Evaluation Advisory Committee, for high-profile evaluations.

At FAO, strategic evaluations presented to Governing bodies are subject to formal follow-up reporting on the implementation of recommendations. This offers an opportunity for Governing bodies to request further details on the implementation of recommendations. This **increases the ownership** of evaluation clients regarding the actions they need to take. Rather than reporting to the evaluation function, the clients are accountable to the Governing bodies.

At GEF, its independent evaluation office (IEO) prepares an annual Management Action Record, which tracks the level of adoption of GEF Council decisions, which are based on the IEO evaluation recommendations. One aim is to **increase the GEF management accountability** on recommendation implementation.

In UNWOMEN, the **implementation status of evaluation recommendations** as one of the nine evaluation Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Data is aggregated and sent by the evaluation office to the senior management.

Key finding

Reporting by evaluation offices to their governing bodies on the status of recommendation implementation and encouraging those bodies to act as an oversight mechanism for implementation.



Beyond the tracking of evaluation recommendations, evaluation offices do **not systematically or regularly seek to measure or understand the use of evaluations**. The focus on the management response potentially misses other factors and mechanisms to encourage the utilisation of evaluation results. Some Agencies have already **made efforts to measure the impact of evaluation** beyond recommendation implementation (see Annex G).

Key finding

Current UN agency practice allows for a partial understanding of the change generated by evaluations.



Challenges in measuring the uptake of evaluation knowledge include limited resources and methodological challenges. The latter pertains to the difficulty in quantifying the 'soft' aspect of evaluation use such as awareness, appreciation and commitment towards evaluations.

4

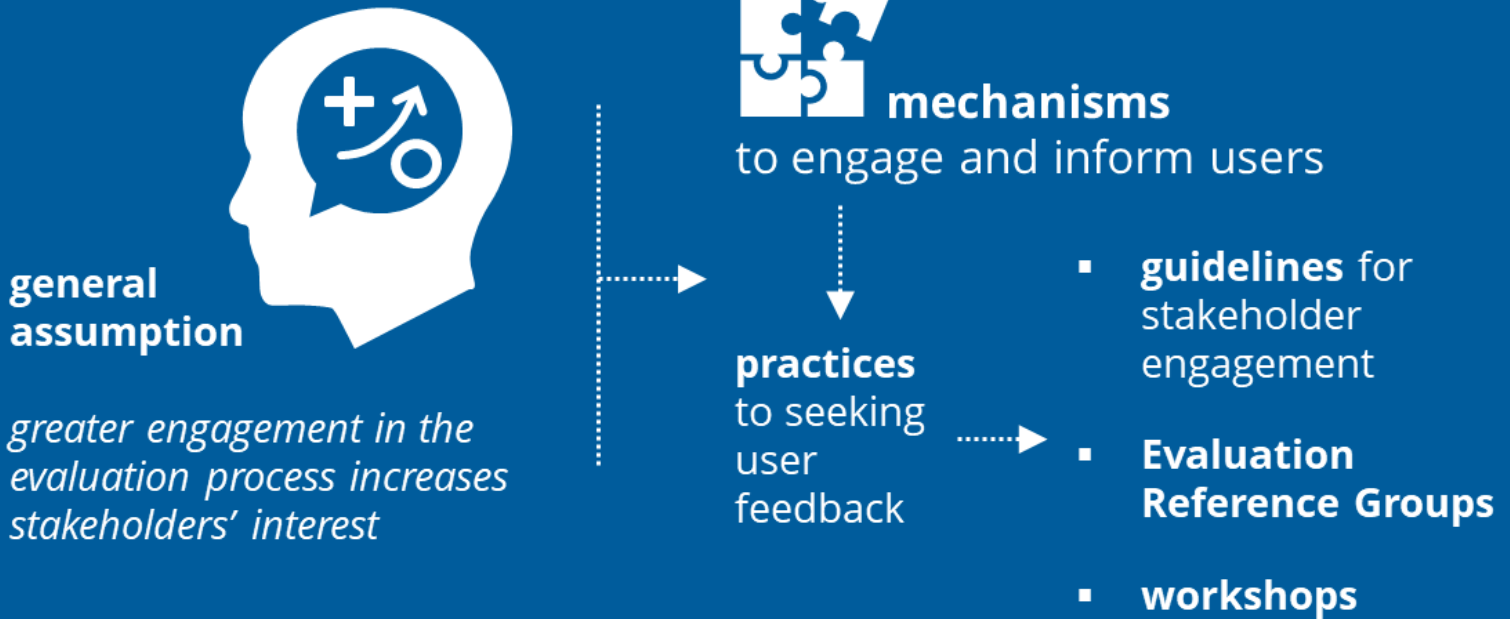
UNDERSTANDING USER VIEWS ON EVALUATION EFFECTIVENESS

UNEG Norm 14

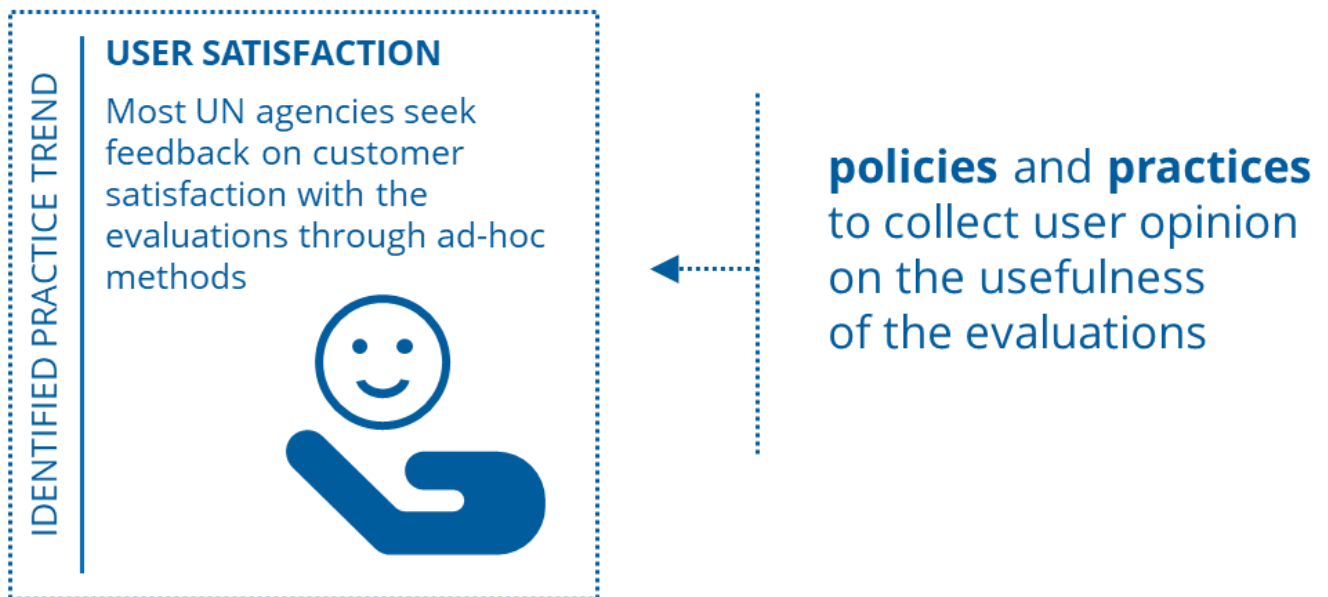
"Organizations should promote evaluation use and follow-up, using an interactive process that involves all stakeholders"



EFFORTS TO RAISE USER INTEREST IN EVALUATIONS



TRACKING USER SATISFACTION WITH EVALUATION



SECTION 4: Capturing user opinion on evaluation effectiveness to improve programmes

This fourth section examines the extent to which evaluation offices developed policies and carried out practices to canvas and collect user opinion on the usefulness of the evaluations.

4.1 Efforts to raise user interest in evaluations

Nearly all agencies have **established mechanisms to engage and inform users**. UNEG members reported practices about seeking user feedback on evaluation somewhat overlapped with the question of stakeholder engagement. Standard practices include having guidelines in place for stakeholder engagement, forming evaluation reference groups or holding evaluation inception workshops, among others. Although the general assumption is that greater engagement in the evaluation process increases stakeholders' interest, none of the agencies reported having any systematic method to measure whether users' engagement affected their interest in evaluations.

4.2 Tracking user satisfaction with evaluation

Two of the eight respondent agencies have formal mechanisms (user satisfaction surveys) to track user satisfaction, of which one cited the challenge of low response rates to such surveys. Most others do this in an informal or ad-hoc manner. Agencies like GEF, FAO and WIPO, on the other hand, build-in user benefits and satisfaction related components in their periodic knowledge management needs assessments, professional peer reviews or independent evaluation of the evaluation function. Those who do such surveys tend to have an anonymity clause in place.

WFP used to have a formal 'end of the evaluation survey', a form of a 360-degree appraisal. Findings from this were also used during annual discussions with firms with whom WFP had long-term agreements, allowing for more discussions on the findings. This practice is no longer used because the end of evaluation survey that was carried out in the Office of Evaluation (OE) using a 360 assessment was linked to a specific evaluation series, which ended after 4 years. Another model of one-way feedback had also been in place but was discontinued to redesign one consolidated mechanism to be used for all WFP evaluations. With the new Evaluation Policy and Corporate Evaluation Strategy came a host of new priorities. As a result, a new end of the evaluation survey has yet to be reinitiated.

Practice – The World Bank Approach

The World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) since 2009, undertakes periodic comprehensive client surveys to gather opinions on the quality and impact of IEG evaluations and help obtain feedback on awareness and attitudes towards IEG. The survey includes questions around use, satisfaction, influence and outreach of IEG evaluations and results are published on their website.

Since most agencies do not have a formal system of receiving user satisfaction surveys, they also do not get any concrete evidence base for reflections on satisfaction levels. This said, most agencies do undertake informal reflections or allow users/stakeholders to give direct feedback to the office. GEF is the only agency (among the eight who responded) that holds 'after action reviews' after major evaluations, but the extent to which users participate in such reviews is not clear.

Key finding

Most UN agencies seek feedback on customer satisfaction with the evaluations through ad-hoc or informal methods, affecting the robustness of the evidence base.

Performance Survey Professional
Customer Service Products
SATISFACTION Consumers
Experience Reliability Like
Satisfied Recommend Share
Efficiency Feedback Agreement
Staff Services Respect User Quality
Clients Marketing Smile Value

ANNEX A: Research questions

SECTION 1 - Ensuring relevance of evaluations to user knowledge needs

Q1. What method does your evaluation office use to select evaluation topics? (Do you reach out to your users? If so, to whom? And how?)

Q2. What about evaluation questions? (Are evaluation users generally consulted on the evaluation scoping? If so, whom? And how?)

Q3. For those who consult users, what are their most frequent types of response to these consultations? (Are they genuinely interested? Do their inputs add value to the evaluation portfolio?)

Q4. Has your office tested institutionalized or informal mechanisms by which evaluation stakeholders may express their evidence gaps, knowledge or learning needs that evaluations may address? Please describe briefly the type of mechanisms.

SECTION 2 – Synthesising evaluation knowledge to increase appeal

Q1. Do evaluators in your Office systematically reflect on the best ways to communicate their findings in appealing manner? (this refer to process as well as products)

Q2. Does your evaluation office create different products or use different processes or channels to reach out to different types of users? If so, which users do we reach best? How and why?

Q3. Does your Evaluation Office make efforts to repackage evaluation knowledge to adapt to certain users' needs? (e.g. regional or thematic synthesis) How and why?

Q4. How does your Office work to increase appeal of evaluation products to users? (e.g. by having a KM focal point a KM strategy and specific actions)

SECTION 3 - Tracking user uptake of evaluation knowledge

Q1. Does your Evaluation Office track the implementation and/or measure the effects of evaluation recommendations?

Q2. If the answer above is yes, how far does your Office go into measuring the actions taken by evaluation users or any change that has come about as a result of evaluations?

Q3. If yes: Does the process of following up on recommendations lead to a dialogue with users?

Q4. If yes: how effective are we in understanding the changes generated by evaluations? What may be hampering this understanding?

Q5. Does your Evaluation Office have any systems/tools in place to track what users learned from evaluations? Please describe.

Q6. What are the main challenges that your Evaluation Office faces when measuring uptake of evaluation knowledge and outreach to users?

SECTION 4 - Understanding user views on evaluation effectiveness

Q1. During the conduct of evaluation, when we interact with evaluation users, do we have ways to raise users' interests in the evaluation process and possible outcomes? Are they effective?

Q2. Do we track whether users are satisfied with the benefit they got from evaluations? Are these anonymous?

Q3. If we do, do we have a system to ensure we reflect on our practice, when users are not satisfied?

ANNEX B: Practices in gaps analysis to identify evaluation needs

Practice in Depth – The WFP Approach

WFP has an interesting mechanism to identify evidence gaps, knowledge and learning needs at the country level to strengthen evidence-based programming. Each WFP Country Office is required to prepare a Concept Note for its Country Strategic Plan that describes the context, country priorities and WFP lessons learned and results to date, among other things. The Concept Note is reviewed by the Office of Evaluation with a particular focus on the 'Lessons Learned' section to determine the extent to which evaluation evidence was used to inform the programme design and decision-making. This assessment is provided to the Country Office by the Director of Evaluation during a Strategic Programme Review Process meeting chaired by the AED, which is the first step in a two-step process. The written "review" of the Concept Note, including links to evaluative evidence and Technical Notes on Country-specific Evaluation Planning and Budgeting, is shared with the CO following the meeting.

The second phase of this process involves a review of the full Country Strategic Plan where officers look at the extent to which the Country Offices has made any of the changes that the evaluation recommended in the first phase regarding the use of evaluative evidence. They also look at the concrete plans and budgets for evaluations.

Practice in Depth – The WIPO Approach (Phase 1)

WIPO conducted a knowledge gap analysis on the evidenced provided by the evaluation in the previous 6 years. For this purpose, they developed and populated a database representing the universe of evaluations findings, conclusions and recommendations linking them to WIPO's main planning framework and more specifically WIPO strategic objectives, Programs and sectors. The team analyzed findings, conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation reports against these frameworks:

- (a) The major areas of WIPO's work and type of evaluations;
- (b) All administrative sectors of the organizations;
- (c) Organization strategic goals and Programs; and
- (d) Geographic and thematic coverage of evaluations.

Practice in Depth – The WIPO Approach (Phase 2)

In a second phase, the team analyzed the data by identifying and extracting each finding, conclusion recommendation from the 20 evaluation reports. Each finding, conclusion, recommendation and evaluation question was coded and linked to one of the five evaluation criteria. All these pieces of information were attributed independently by the two members of the team to one of three following categories: substantive - when the topic presented IP related substance, managerial - when the main topic described a Programmatic or procedural issue and crosscutting - when its nature encompasses more than one issue alone.

Additionally, the data and information were stratified by attributes such as evaluation criteria, geographic, thematic and organizational/type of intervention criteria. The evaluation team described the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the evaluative evidence Synthesizing findings, conclusions and recommendation describing an evidence gap map of the organization.

Practice in Depth – The UNFPA Approach

To identify evaluations for 2018-2021, UNFPA followed three key steps to identify (a) strategic evaluation priorities concerning the UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021; and (b) knowledge gaps where centralized evaluations would add value.

- First, an evidence/gap analysis was conducted by assessing the coverage of centralized evaluations managed during 2014-2017 against the outcomes and outputs of the UNFPA strategic plan.
- Second, based on 8 criteria (strategic relevance, associated risk, potential for joint or UN-wide evaluation, investment, evaluation feasibility, potential for replication and scaling up, knowledge gap and formal commitment to stakeholders) a tentative list of proposed centralized evaluations was subject to selectivity analysis to assess their relevance and utility. The list of potential evaluations was used as the basis for bilateral consultations with major stakeholders at all levels of the organization.
- Third, consultations presenting the draft quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan were held with the UNFPA Executive Committee, senior management at headquarters and regional levels, the Oversight Advisory Committee, and the Executive Board. Consultations were also undertaken with other United Nations organizations, to identify possible joint evaluations.

ANNEX C: The GEF approach to communication

Practice in Depth – The GEF Approach

In the GEF, communication is quite systematic for every evaluation targeted to their Council Replenishment Group, and the Assembly: GEF IEO evaluations are discussed at the semi-annual GEF Council meetings. The Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF is planned to make sure timely communication of its findings to the Replenishment Group. At the GEF Assembly (every 4 years), the GEF IEO hosts side events and presents videos. Comprehensive or strategic evaluations also have a set of dedicated communication tools, such as briefs, webinars, and infographics. The IEO reaches out to the global environmental conventions to which GEF is a financing mechanism. The office also shares evaluation findings with country stakeholders by participating in expanded constituency workshops.

ANNEX D: Communication products and strategies specific to decentralized evaluations

UNWOMEN corporate evaluations mainly target HQ Senior Management and the Executive Board, while decentralized evaluations mainly target Regional / Country Office staff and national partners. They produce a global meta-analysis and a global meta-evaluation every year. There might be some overlap when it comes to talking to donors or UN agencies, but generally, responsibilities are well defined.

WFP has defined specific communication channels for decentralized evaluations as part of the communication plan attached to the ToR: it has a different target audience owing to their location and structure (report to different management committees). Regarding engaging communities and beneficiaries, the Office of Evaluation launched a dedicated grant for Country Offices managing decentralized evaluations in 2018 to unfold the principle of Accountability to Affected Population. Since then, video-animations and participatory workshops on evaluation results have been successfully organized with key national/local stakeholders, including communities in rural/indigenous areas (e.g. by using drawings - Colombia).

Practice – The UNFPA Approach

Country offices conduct UNFPA decentralized evaluations. The main aim of these evaluations is to inform the development of a new country programme. Therefore, the audience is mainly internal: senior management in HQ and technical staff. The country office, however, may communicate directly with donors and national government counterparts where appropriate.

ANNEX E: Mainstream products to communicate evaluation findings

As well as producing reports and summary versions for audiences that may not have the time to read full reports, opportunities are created to discuss findings with stakeholders, such as in exit conference/workshops. Also, an effort put into presenting findings by developing capacities for "professional presentations" – that includes graphic design, fewer words and an emphasis on key messaging – is underlined as generating positive feedback (WFP, GEF, FAO, UNESCO, and FAO).

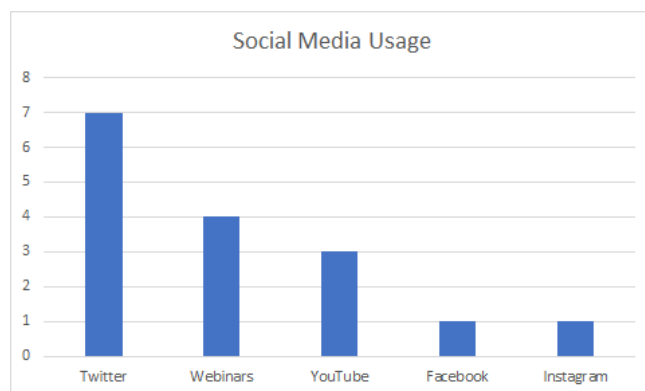
Websites are widely used for 'wider audiences' though the latter is rarely defined. Websites are the traditional entry point to evaluation material from any external user and stakeholder. They are the custodians of all the material produced, and members are keen on making them more attractive, user-friendly and ensure better access to data sources (FAO, UNICEF, UNFPA). As part of their website, most members provide an online database or repository for evaluation reports (FAO, IFAD, ILO, GEF, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, WIPO, WFP etc.).

Practice – The ILO Approach

ILO has developed an innovative evaluation Dashboard (i-eval Discovery) within its webpages that showcases planned and completed evaluations, in addition to their related lessons learned, good practices and recommendations.

Several offices prepare newsletters, shared by email regularly (usually three times per year) and on websites (UNESCO, GEF, WFP, ILO) to attract attention on evaluation to a broader public. UNESCO prepares a newsletter for every corporate evaluation as a summarized version with a highlight of findings in an easy to read format and WFP provide e-mailed 'news flashes' after every EB session.

Social media channels are also used to attract attention to the evaluation function, to inform evaluation partners about planned evaluation-related events, or to disseminate findings.



Twitter is the most commonly used social media platform, in particular, during conferences and workshops, to spread the information to a broader audience. It is also used to build relationships, promote the exchange of information with regional evaluation associations (GEF) and disseminate information on events, campaigns or international days.

Webinars are used (GEF, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN) to announce new / recently published content, to present results but also to enable the audience to interact with evaluation managers and ask questions about specific evaluations (GEF, UNICEF). YouTube is also used where members post their video library (UNWOMEN, FAO, GEF) and ILO experiences live Facebook events. The Instagram page recently created by the GEF IEO captures photos from evaluation fieldwork. For some, a social media package has become a minimum requirement for every evaluation (UNFPA, UNWOMEN). Still, some

agencies that dedicate attention and resources to communication (e.g. WFP) do not yet use social media. It is recognised that daily social media activity requires a lot of effort and resources.

ANNEX F: The role of evaluation results syntheses

Practice in Depth – The WFP Approach


WFP has invested into building a repository of evaluation evidence from which synthesis reports can be prepared (products either defined ex-ante or ex-post): it entails coding reports using a qualitative analysis software (Atlas.ti) and enables the production of reports on specific themes, and responding to demands from users, looking across reports already available. There is a demand at HQ-level, in particular, but also an emerging demand coming from Regional Bureaux.

This project had been a pilot over two years and with the use of a consultant to code reports. Coded information from Country Portfolio Evaluations in the Sahel was used to inform a synthesis report of WFP's actions in the Sahel, which will be presented to the Executive Board for consideration in June 2019. WFP is studying possible scenarios continuity building on the repository and using Atlas.ti.

Other agencies, for example, UNESCO do not repack evaluation knowledge due to the architecture of their organization and a lack of economies of scale with the exercise.

There is not yet a consolidated/precise understanding of the utility of each product, but some general tendencies emerge from practice, as to which products need to be kept. Staff in evaluation offices have general perceptions re the relative utility of some communication products, and some of these are that:

- Decision-makers or senior managers use brief/synthesis material they receive: "Short and just in time". (In WFP: Memo for ED, talking points for senior managers, presentations to the Board; in the GEF: briefs and professional presentations for various constituencies' members). These are considered useful for high-level take-up or evaluation messages. They meet a demand.
- The provision of tailored information at sectoral/political events, conference or meetings also meets interest: the capacity to repackage evaluation data into a product that adapts to a given theme of interest, and thus the capacity to extract data from reports, is critical. (Cf. WFP atlas, GEF, UNFPA).



Currently, UNWOMEN tweets daily and has about 5K followers mostly composed of the evaluation community in the UN System and CSOs. The twitter account has, on average, a 4% growth in following per month (about +200 followers per month). Each of the IES tweets has an average of 800 impressions (i.e. the number of times people have seen the tweets) and average engagement rate of 0.9%.

Process wise, GEF, ILO and WFP started analyzing some web-based product use based on traffic/clicks. Except for UNWOMEN and UNFPA, very little analysis is done on social media or returns beyond web-based communication activities or channels. There is no systematic knowledge at this point, related to the utility of different communication strategies or products, beyond the general perceptions of evaluation staff.

Across agencies, there is no evident intention to reach a broader audience beyond evaluation stakeholders, as research or press would do. And while the "wider audience" is often not (or only broadly) defined, no mention is made of reaching out to beneficiaries or local communities except for few exceptions at early stages (IFAD, FAO).

ANNEX G: Practices on measuring the impact of evaluations

While acknowledging shortcomings on this aspect, several Agencies have already **made efforts to measure the impact of evaluation** beyond recommendation implementation.

- FAO, for example, evaluates the evaluation function every 6 years. This exercise serves as an opportunity to measure uptake of evaluation knowledge.
- The ILO most recently underwent an independent evaluation of its evaluation function in 2016. UNICEF monitors countries on how well they have used evaluation evidence when formulating their new programme strategies. Its evaluation office also checks in regularly with regional offices for details on influential evaluations. This is based on feedback that is given by offices on how the evaluation was utilized beyond the management response.
- WFP conducted a one-off survey in 2017, which included a survey of staff on the use made of evaluation evidence.
- UNESCO recently introduced the practice of capturing findings in their annual Synthesis Reports.
- UN Women includes this information as part of their Strategic Note document within the section, Lessons Learned. Additionally, they generate feedback from users during the evaluation process and at the evaluation debriefing meeting.
- WFP is planning on introducing a new KPI as part of its annual corporate reporting related to the use of evaluation (Percentage of approved Country Strategic Plans and Interim Country Strategic Plans that receive a satisfactory or better score on the use of evaluation evidence). Similarly, one of UNWOMEN evaluation KPIs is the use of evaluations to inform programming.
- UNFPA also tracks 'Implementation of management response' and 'Use of evaluation in programme development' as part of nine evaluation key performance indicators. The later was added this year and looked at the percentage of new country programme documents whose design was informed by evaluation.

Practice in Depth – The GEF IEO Approach

GEF IEO goes through periodic independent peer reviews that assess the extent to which the evaluation function contributes to accountability and learning in the GEF. The previous peer views of the GEF IEO were completed in 2009 and 2014. A third peer view is planned for 2019. Besides, in 2015 GEF IEO produced a Knowledge Management Needs Assessment which included questions on the use of IEO evaluations, including lessons learned. The following are examples of the uses of evaluations tracked by the assessment:

1. Contribution to decision-making
2. Preparation and adjustment of projects and programs
3. Improved understanding of environmental issues, GEF projects, programs, and processes.

While most agencies strive to capture lessons learned, most organizations don't have a procedure in place to systematically track lessons learned. Still, there have been attempts. To some extent, the follow-up report from FAO management addresses this issue. Additionally, the FAO corporate project information system requires the capturing of relevant OED recommendations, but the extent to which this is done is unknown.

To address this challenge, WIPO is planning an evaluation in 2020 on the impact of learning generated by evaluations. UNICEF's current strategic plan measures how well the organization is doing with regards to the use of evaluations and lessons learned. Additionally, when offices develop their Country Programme Document, they are supposed to use evaluation evidence.