



# UNEG Peer Review FAQs

January 2025

## **UNEG Annual General Meeting 2025 – 13-14 February 2025**

This information note has been prepared by the Peer Review Working Group. It answers some recurring questions asked concerning:

- Purpose and benefits of a UNEG Peer Review.
- Structure and participants of the peer review process.
- Funding modalities for UNEG Peer Reviews

It is a living document that will be updated on an ongoing basis (2025) and will be published after the AGM. As an information note it does not need to be approved at the AGM.

Questions or comments should be addressed to the Secretariat.

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## **What is a UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Peer Review and what are its purposes?**

A UNEG Peer Review provides an independent and professional assessment of an organization’s evaluation function. It aims to enhance adherence to UNEG Norms and Standards, while also fostering mutual learning and providing recommendations to strengthen evaluation capacity. Peer reviews help organizations identify their strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement. The UNEG proposes three different types of peer review modalities of evaluation functions. Peer reviews can be particularly helpful for smaller evaluation functions as it can trigger positive changes such as enhanced recognition and distinction of the function, resourcing and other aspects.

## **Where can I access more detailed information on UNEG Peer Reviews?**

Detailed information on UNEG Peer Reviews can be found in the [UNEG Guidelines for Professional Peer Reviews \(2023\)](#). The 2023 Guidelines revised the 2011 UNEG Framework for Professional Peer Reviews. The major change was the introduction of ‘lighter’ versions of the peer review for smaller organizations. There were also some refinements made to better clarify how peer review panels are convened and operate.

## **Can organizations that are not members of UNEG benefit from a UNEG Peer Review?**

Organizations that are not members of UNEG cannot participate in UNEG-managed peer reviews. However, these organizations can still benefit from UNEG’s publicly available resources and guidance on peer reviews. These resources, accessible on the UNEG website, include peer review frameworks, guidelines, checklists and best practices that can be used to strengthen evaluation capacities.

## **How can I request a Peer Review?**

UNEG Heads can initiate a peer review by formally submitting a request to the UNEG Secretariat. The Secretariat forwards this request to the coordinators of the Peer Review Working Group (PRWG), who then include it in the rolling work plan. Each year, at the UNEG Annual General Meeting, the coordinators of the PRWG present the work plan to UNEG Heads and gather requests for upcoming peer reviews. Up-to-date contact details for the UNEG Secretariat can be found on the UNEG website. After the formal submission, the PRWG coordinators and the UNEG Head will discuss the overall approach for the peer review: the most appropriate modality; a suitable timing; the organizational context and resource considerations.

## **What are the first steps involved in launching a Peer Review process?**

The Guidelines provide a detailed description of the steps for initiating a peer review across the three different modalities (Section 5: Stages of Review/ Assessment Modalities). The first step is to carry out a self-assessment using the [UNEG Self-Assessment Maturity Matrix](#). The second step is for the PRWG coordinators and the UNEG Head to enlist a Panel and a Panel Chair. The Panel Chair then leads the process, finalizing Terms of Reference (TOR) and identifying a consultant.

## **What financial responsibilities do organizations have when they initiate a peer review?**

Organizations seeking a peer review may decide to fund the entire exercise or seek co-funding from UNEG. The expenses for a peer review may include hiring an external consultant and covering mission travel expenses for the consultant, panel members, and the chair.

## **What are these three peer review modalities?**

Modality 1: UNEG Peer Validated Self-Assessment (PVSA). In this modality, the evaluation function being reviewed prepares the UNEG Self-Assessment Maturity Matrix. The self-assessment is then assessed, verified, and triangulated by a small team comprised of staff from UNEG Member agencies (no consultant).

Modality 2: UNEG Expert Validated Self-Assessment (EVSA). In this modality the evaluation function being reviewed prepares the UNEG Self-Assessment Maturity Matrix. The self-assessment is then assessed, verified, and triangulated by an Advisory Panel that selects and recruits a consultant.

Modality 3: Standard' UNEG Peer Review. In this modality the evaluation function prepares the Self-Assessment as a preliminary step and the peer review panel can then draw from this self-assessment. The peer review is then conducted by a panel of 3-5 members and an external consultant. Traditionally one of the panel members has come from the DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet)

## **Which modalities are better tailored for smaller evaluation functions?**

Standard Peer Reviews may not be an appropriate modality for small evaluation functions due to: i) The limited capacity of the evaluation function and the senior management to which it reports to host a team and engage meaningfully; and ii) The higher costs related with Modality 3. Smaller functions might want to consider Modality 1 (PVSA) or Modality 2 (EVSA).

## **How is the Modality 3: Standard' UNEG Peer Review peer review process structured?**

The peer review process is outlined in a TOR. The methodology might include a comprehensive review of key documents, stakeholder interviews, and, if necessary, field visits. The process concludes with a final report

that presents findings and recommendations. All steps are conducted in accordance with the UNEG Peer Review Guidelines, ensuring a structured approach and reporting.<sup>1</sup>

## **How is the confidentiality of the Peer Review process maintained?**

Confidentiality is upheld through strict adherence to UNEG's confidentiality protocols. Sensitive information shared by the reviewed organization or stakeholders is carefully protected, and any public communication about the review must be cleared by the panel Chair.

## **How does the UNEG Peer Review process ensure the absence of bias and external influence?**

The behavioral independence of the reviewers and protection from undue influence from stakeholders is ensured through a structured and transparent review process that includes triangulation among the panel, adherence to UNEG Ethical Guidelines, the selection of an independent and external consultant, and the diversity of the panel composition. The peers in the panel are evaluation professionals who subscribe to the UNEG Ethical Guidelines.

## **How long does the peer review process take?**

The peer review process generally takes between 6 to 12 months, depending on the modality used, the scope of the review, the size and complexity of the evaluation function and the organization, as well as the size of the panel. This includes preparation, field visits, report drafting, and dissemination of findings. For a more specific and indicative timeline of the various review modalities, please refer to the Guidelines (see paragraph 62).

## **What happens after the Peer Review report is delivered?**

After the report is delivered, the reviewed organization and its evaluation function develop an action plan to address the recommendations. Follow-up processes, such as workshops or status reports help ensure that the recommendations are implemented effectively. The peer review report is published on the UNEG website and UNEG periodically follows up on the peer reviews.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> However, some degree of variation in the structure of the report is contingent on the unique context of the peer reviewed evaluation functions and organisations, the style of the consultant writing, the approach that the panel takes to the peer review etc.

<sup>2</sup> For example, by conducting a stocktaking study on the peer review experience: <https://unevaluation.org/document/detail/3102>.

## **How many UNEG peer reviews have been conducted to date and where can I find the peer review reports?**

Since 2005, UNEG has completed three generations of peer reviews. As of 2024, 27 peer reviews of the evaluation functions of UN agencies have been conducted. All peer review reports can be found in the Evaluation Reports Database of UNEG.

## **What distinguishes UNEG peer reviews from external mechanisms like MOPAN?**

UNEG peer reviews focus on the core question of whether an organization's evaluation function and its products are independent, credible, and useful for learning and accountability. It uses the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation as a benchmark.<sup>3</sup> The MOPAN is tasked with reviewing the full spectrum of an organization's performance not just its evaluation function.

## **What is the UNEG Peer Review Working Group and what is its role?**

The UNEG Peer Review Working Group (PRWG) is a voluntary group of evaluators who coordinate, oversee and quality assure the planning, preparation, conduct and reporting of UNEG Peer Reviews. It:

- Encourages UNEG members to participate in peer reviews;
- Keeps track of requests for reviews from UNEG members and maintains a rolling work plan;
- Monitors the progress of ongoing peer reviews;
- Coordinates / assists the formation of panels for PRs and PVSAs;
- Helps identify evaluation consultants and establishes Advisory Panels for EVSAs;
- Provides feedback on draft review reports;
- Develops, and updates guidance material, tools and templates that support review processes;
- Liaises with OECD Evalnet and helps identify members for participation in panels; and
- Encourages participation across UNEG to undergo and contribute to peer review efforts.

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<sup>3</sup> MOPAN (Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network) is an independent network of 22 member states who work together – as responsible shareholders and funders – to improve the performance of the multilateral system through assessments of organizational effectiveness.

## **What can be expected in terms of the workload of a PRWG member?**

The workload of a PRWG member is variable and periodic. Members may meet regularly once a month for an hour to discuss progress on peer reviews, specific issues related to the peer review and/or the goals and projects that the PRWG has set for the given year as reflected in their annual work plan. Members are generally expected to provide their input and feedback and may be asked to lead certain tasks, as delegated by the coordinators of the PRWG.

## **What is the profile of the Peer Review Panel Chair?**

The Panel Chair should be a Senior evaluation Head, preferably at the Director level. He/she should have experience in managing evaluation functions and engaging with senior management and governing bodies. Ideally, the Chair should be from an evaluation function that has undergone a peer review.

## **What are the roles and responsibilities of the Peer Review Panel Chair?**

The Chair is responsible for leading the peer review process. This role encompasses overseeing the selection of the panel, drafting the terms of reference, and selecting a consultant if necessary. The Chair collaborates with senior management, provides guidance to the panel, supervises the consultant's analysis, and reports key findings to oversight boards and stakeholders.

## **What can be expected in terms of the workload of a Peer Review Panel Chair?**

The responsibilities of the Chair are substantial, and the workload is significant. However, the Chair may delegate tasks to other panel members and the consultant, with certain activities being shared across the panel. The extent of the workload is influenced by the scope of the peer review, the size of the evaluation function, and the expectations for communicating results to higher-level bodies upon completion.

## **How are Chairs selected? How can I express my interest to become a Peer Review Panel Chair?**

The PRWG coordinators, in consultation with the peer review commissioner, identify a Chair based on specified criteria. If a UNEG Head makes a valid request, the coordinators of the PRWG call for expressions of interest via the UNEG mailing list.

## **What is the profile of the Panel Members and the composition of the Panel?**

Peer review panels are made up of senior evaluation professionals from UNEG member organizations. These members bring their experience, analytical skills, and interpersonal abilities to the process. The panel aims for diversity in gender, geography, and organizational affiliation and encourages younger evaluators'



participation. External stakeholders, such as national counterparts or Member State representatives from networks like OECD-DAC, may also join the panel when appropriate.

## **What are the roles and responsibilities of the Panel Members?**

Panel members collaborate with the Chair to advance the peer review process. They contribute significantly to the process, including drafting and revising documents, participating in field missions, and engaging with stakeholders. The Guidelines provide further details on the role and responsibilities of Panel Members or the “Advisory Panel” for each review modality.

## **What can be expected in terms of the workload of a Panel Member?**

Panel members will attend meetings, review documents, conduct interviews, and contribute to the final report. The peak workload occurs during a field mission and around its timing. Members must be available for the field mission and dedicate time to the review process.

## **How can I express interest to become a Panel Member?**

The UNEG PRWG Co-convenors periodically send a call for expressions of interest through the UNEG mailing list, specifying upcoming peer reviews. Interested individuals can contact the UNEG Secretariat and the PRWG coordinators directly to express their interest.

## **What are the roles and responsibilities of the Peer Review Consultant?**

The peer review consultant assists the Peer Review Panel by conducting document reviews, interviews, and fieldwork. They advise on key issues during the review and, with input from the Panel, draft the report including findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **What is the profile of the Peer Review Consultant?**

An ideal peer review consultant should:

- Have extensive evaluation management experience.
- Knowledge of the UNEG Norms and Standards,
- Have a history of conducting evaluations in international organizations
- Be familiar with UNEG’s Ethical Guidelines
- Be committed to independence and impartiality.





Practical knowledge of UN evaluation functions is a plus. Experience in assessing complex international organization evaluation functions, including those with co-located oversight functions like audit, is beneficial but not essential.

## **What can be expected in terms of the workload of a Peer Review consultancy?**

The workload for the consultancy is contingent upon several factors, including the review modality, its scope, the size and capacity of the evaluation function under review, as well as the size and complexity of the organization. The estimated duration of the assignment ranges from 15 to 60 days, as outlined in paragraph 62 of the Guidelines.

## **How can I express my interest for a Peer Review consultancy?**

Calls for Peer Review consultants are typically circulated through UNEG member organizations or posted on UNEG's website. If you feel you have the appropriate profile, you may submit a CV and supporting letter to [uneg.contact@undp.org](mailto:uneg.contact@undp.org).