



UNIFEM Evaluation Strategy 2008-2011

Learning and generating knowledge for greater impact on gender equality and women's empowerment

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1. BACKGROUND

1. The current international agenda has a strong orientation towards measuring development results, as reflected in the Millennium Development Goals, and more recently in the Paris Declaration, which establishes process principles for improving Aid Effectiveness on the ground. The UN Reform also addresses this orientation with an effort to have a more unified response to poverty challenges and meeting human development goals. In this context, a great demand is expressed at the highest level in the UN system for greater evaluation capacity, accountability and management for results.

2. The 2007 TCPR Report acknowledges improvements towards strengthening the evaluation function across the UN in the last three years as well as the challenges that remain to be addressed. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) was instrumental in developing a set of evaluation norms and standards in 2005 that members are encouraged to promote in their respective agencies. On the request of the CEB, UNEG made a proposal on

how to strengthen the UN system wide evaluation function. In the meantime, while an independent, system-wide evaluation mechanism is yet to be established, UNEG will collectively be involved in system-wide evaluations, including of the eight pilot One UN country programmes.

3. UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (SP) 2008-2011 and the Results-based Budgeting (RBB) approach used in UNIFEM's Biennial Support Budget (BSB) 2008-09 respond to this context in its framework for strengthening UNIFEM capacity for a more results based system. Both define evaluation as the cornerstone of UNIFEM capacity to support continuous improvement and substantive effective strategies to achieve gender equality.

4. The SP commits UNIFEM to strengthen and sharpen the focus of its evaluation policy and to provide methodological guidance on UNEG's evaluation activities to support UN evaluation processes that are gender responsive, rights-based and results oriented. It also commits UNIFEM to establish systems and processes that are consistent with those of UNEG and that will facilitate a) independent, high quality evaluations; b) management responses to evaluations recommendations; and c) effective learning from evaluations.

5. As the SP states, to strengthen the evaluation function and ensure its independence and quality, UNIFEM will create an independent unit, reporting directly to the Executive Director, with a small team of professional staff and a central fund dedicated to strategic, thematic and joint evaluations of corporate significance. The unit will provide high quality support and technical backstopping to enhance UNIFEM evaluation activities. UNIFEM will also strengthen the capacities of its headquarters and field office staff and external partners (including UN organizations, government and non-governmental partners at all levels) for planning and managing evaluations from a gender and human rights perspective.

6. In its Management Results Framework, the SP also commits the conduction of a series of evaluations and evaluation related activities including specific targets to be attained by the end of its implementation in 2011 (*See Annex 2: SP Evaluation Commitments*).

7. In order to be able to achieve these commitments, UNIFEM has elaborated the following strategy, directed towards the enhancement of the organization's evaluation capacity and use of evaluation results in the four-year period of its Strategic Plan.

8. The Evaluation Strategy is divided in six sections. Section one and two elaborates the background, justification and rationale for its development in the current internal and external contexts where UNIFEM is positioned. The third section establishes the objectives and expected results of the strategy in alignment with the Strategic Plan. The fourth chapter fully develops the evaluation strategy, setting the specific actions that UNIFEM will be promoting in order to achieve expected results. Finally, section five deals with the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the strategy. The annexes provide also relevant information on the conceptual framework of evaluation and its relationship with other core functions in the organization, such as monitoring, knowledge management and audit. The present should be read as a live document that will be systematically reviewed and updated in its lifecycle of 4 years in order for it to be a useful route map for the establishment of a credible, effective, useful and relevant evaluation function for UNIFEM.

2. JUSTIFICATION AND RATIONALE

9. The evaluation of the Multi-Year Funding Framework 2004-2007 (MYFF), as an independent overall assessment of the progress made by UNIFEM in that planning period, analyzed UNIFEM developmental effectiveness with regards to the progress toward the outcomes and strategic goals set in the MYFF, UNIFEM organizational effectiveness regarding the progress towards performance goals and UNIFEM's role as a catalyst; as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the MYFF system itself. Among its main findings, it emphasized

the need for UNIFEM to further strengthen its approach to addressing and tracking mid-term effects of its work and to further improve its monitoring, reporting and evaluation practice in the context of its global commitment to Managing for Development Results.

10. Moreover, UNIFEM's growth of resources (from 23million USD in 2004 to 44 million USD in 2007 in core resources) and its projected total growth for the upcoming 4 years, from US\$175 million in the period 2004-2007 to an estimation of US\$405 million in total funds over 2008-2011, a near doubling of resources from the previous four-year plan, provides an enormous opportunity for greater impact on gender equality and women's empowerment, and it also poses a challenge to demonstrate results. Therefore, investing in evaluation is seen as an essential element to further improve UNIFEM's accountability, management for results and knowledge generation based on evidence.

11. Finally, the already mentioned external context of greater demand for development results and knowledge generation on gender equality and women's empowerment generate an incredible opportunity and enabling environment to fulfill UNIFEM commitment to development results and to produce evidence of what works and what doesn't for gender equality and women's empowerment.

12. Through a strengthened evaluation function UNIFEM will contribute to its mandate to "increase options and opportunities for the empowerment of women in developing countries, especially those living in poverty, so that they can more effectively contribute to and benefit from the development of their communities and countries"¹, as well as to the specific objectives of the Strategic Plan.

13. Strengthening the evaluation function requires investment in the evaluation capacities of UNIFEM staff and partners for the conduction and use evaluation as a highly relevant input for the improvement of the quality of actions to support women's empowerment and gender equality. This means: strengthening UNIFEM's internal systems and standards for designing and managing good quality relevant evaluations; improving the use of evaluation findings; effectively linking monitoring with evaluation; and, ultimately, feeding into improved policy and programming for greater effectiveness of UNIFEMs work and to enhance its catalytic role. UNIFEM's strengthened evaluation function will enable it to improve its promotion of and support to gender equality and women's empowerment programming and policies at all levels.

14. The evaluation strategy is linked to two main areas of focus from the SP.

- *Strengthening UNIFEM's role as a catalyst:* UNIFEM's role as an innovator and catalyst are the central element of its mandate (GA resolution 39/125). The SP defines a catalyst as (a) Enabling changes and change processes that would otherwise not take place; or (b) Influencing the speed or quality of change processes, for example by facilitating the process through support to involved players and assistance in structuring the process. The SP commits UNIFEM to more systematically identify, document and disseminate lessons from its catalytic actions to inspire greater interest in replication and upscaling. A stronger evaluation function is central to this effort. The use of the results of evaluations for informing policy and programme planning, the analysis of evaluation results for knowledge generation, the support to wider research on evaluation, and the use of evaluation findings for up-scaling or replicating successful approaches, are actions that can greatly enhance UNIFEM's catalytic role.
- *Strengthening UNIFEM's support for holistic strategies of UN Country Teams in support of gender equality and women's rights:* UNIFEM's participation in the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) has already yielded some initial benefits for gender equality.

¹UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan (DP/1997/18).

For instance, in the designation of UNIFEM to take the lead in devising guidance for UNEG members on undertaking rights-based, gender responsive evaluations and in UNIFEM's advocacy to secure attention to gender equality in the evaluation of the One UN pilots. Important initiatives are taking place regarding the harmonization of evaluation practices among UN agencies. The active participation of UNIFEM in the UNEG is of great importance, both for the contribution it can make from the gender equality perspective to evaluation, and for the feedback UNIFEM will get from the experience of other agencies with stronger evaluation functions. It also provides an opportunity to advocate for more joint and peer evaluations in the UN system on different dimensions of gender equality and women's human rights, as is consistent with the UNIFEM SP, as well as with the Paris Declaration principles.

15. Based on the above, the evaluation strategy aims at establishing an evaluation function that can contribute to the enhancement of UNIFEM work at the different levels, as well as setting the basis for its sustainability. Therefore, the actions presented follow a phasing approach to be implemented in a period of 4 years from 2008 to 2011, in the framework of the Strategic Plan.

3. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION STRATEGY

16. The objectives and expected results of the evaluation strategy in its 4 year period of implementation are aligned with the stated commitments of the SP. The strategy supports the goal that drives UNIFEM's Strategic Plan: *National commitments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment are implemented in stable and fragile states*².

17. The expected outcome of the strategy is that key UNIFEM stakeholders (national and regional governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental partners; UN organizations; bilateral donors; women's networks; UNIFEM programmes and staff) use learning and knowledge generated from UNIFEM-supported evaluation findings to improve and upscale their work on gender equality and women's human rights.

18. In particular, the evaluation strategy will be contributing to those outputs in the Management for Results Framework³ that relates directly to evaluation:

- Internal and partner capacity enhanced to undertake gender-responsive, results-based, rights-based evaluations that generate knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- UNIFEM makes available adequate documentation and evaluation to stimulate interest in upscaling or replicating the catalytic initiatives on gender equality and women's human rights that it spearheads or supports.
- Systems are in place to track how UNIFEM's supported advocacy strategies and technical expertise / advice contribute to changes in policies and practices on women's empowerment and gender equality at national, regional and global levels.⁴

² Since all the outcomes will contribute to achieving the goal of implementation at national level in all the three thematic areas, in keeping with RBM principles and in the interest of avoiding duplication the goal statement supports all the thematic areas.

³ Management for Results Framework, Policy advice and catalytic programming, Outputs 1.4, 1.5 and 1.1, UNIFEM Strategic Plan 2008-2011.

⁴ The Evaluation Strategy will contribute to this output by promoting evaluations on advocacy strategies and technical expertise undertaken by UNIFEM. Other corporate functions in UNIFEM related to monitoring and reporting will contribute to the actual establishment of the tracking systems.

Based on these commitments, the objectives of this strategy are the following:

- A) To ensure that implementation of UNIFEM's Strategic Plan generates a critical mass of high quality, credible evaluations that identify what works to advance gender equality and that can be replicated and scaled up
- B) To strengthen and enhance the evaluation function and evaluation capacities of UNIFEM and partners;
- C) To substantially engage and contribute to broader UN evaluation processes from a gender equality perspective; and
- D) To establish a process for the evaluation of UNIFEM Strategic Plan 2008-2011.

4. COMPONENTS OF THE EVALUATION STRATEGY

19. To achieve the stated objectives set in section three, the evaluation strategy will implement the following actions throughout the 4 years period of the Strategic Plan.

4.1 To ensure that implementation of UNIFEM's Strategic Plan generates a critical mass of high quality, credible evaluations that identify what works to advance gender equality and that can be replicated and scaled up;

20. In order to ensure that UNIFEM generates knowledge and learning based on evaluative evidence that is used for better catalytic programming, UNIFEM will support the conduction of different types of evaluations: corporate evaluations of strategic nature and decentralized evaluations at project/programme and cluster/thematic level. The different evaluations will be strengthened through quality assurance mechanisms, and their results will be carefully followed up for extracting knowledge and obtaining a management response with agreed actions for improvement and learning.

21. An important precondition for the conduction and use of UNIFEM evaluations in the SP period will be the **review and improvement of parameters for programme design** in order to ensure the integration of evaluability factors that will enable programmes to be fully evaluated in terms of their achievement of results. This implies developing better (SMART) indicators and feasible baselines, analyzing the internal and external coherence of intended results, setting an adequate monitoring and evaluation framework and putting in place useful information systems. To this aim, evaluability parameters will be developed for programme managers and they will be reflected in "UNIFEM Programme and Operations Manual".

4.1.1 UNDERTAKING A RELEVANT NUMBER OF QUALITY STRATEGIC CORPORATE EVALUATIONS

22. **Corporate evaluations** are independent assessments that analyze UNIFEM performance and **contribution** to critical areas for greater effectiveness on gender equality and women's empowerment. These evaluations may also assess UNIFEM **attribution** in the achievement of the corporate outputs to which UNIFEM is accountable. These evaluations are considered of strategic nature as they provide knowledge on policy issues, programmatic approaches, cooperation modalities etc. They may cover thematic areas of UNIFEM work implemented in different geographic areas, strategies followed for catalytic programming, or specific programmes of relevant coverage and strategic significance from the country to the

regional and corporate levels. The corporate strategic evaluations may also include joint efforts with UNIFEM partners to evaluate shared areas of work.⁵

23. Their results are used for decision making at the corporate level, and also for influencing broader UN processes. These will focus on the achievement of the corporate outputs in their contribution to the 8 outcome results defined in the SP in the 3 main themes of UNIFEM work:

- a) enhancement of women's economic security and rights,
- b) reduce the prevalence of violence against women and HIV/AIDS, and
- c) advance gender justice in democratic governance, and ultimately in how they contribute to the goal of "national commitments on gender equality implemented".

⁵ A template for the selection and development of the annual corporate evaluation plan is available on the UNIFEM Intranet.

UNIFEM CONTRIBUTION		UNIFEM CONTRIBUTION	
GOAL	THEMATIC AREAS ⁶	OUTCOMES	CORPORATE OUTPUTS
National commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment implemented in stable and fragile states	To enhance women's economic security and rights	Outcome 1: Increased number of national development strategies that incorporate gender equality in line with national commitments to women's empowerment and human rights.	(To be consulted in UNIFEM SP)
	To reduce the prevalence of violence against women	Outcome 2: Increase in the number of Constitutions, legal frameworks and policies that promote and protect women's human rights Outcome 3: Greater numbers of formal and informal justice systems promote and protect women's human rights at national and local levels.	
	To reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS	Outcome 4: Increase in the number of budget processes that fully incorporate gender equality. Outcome 5: Gender equality experts, advocates and their organizations or networks effectively demand the implementation of gender equality dimensions in national laws, policies and strategies.	
	To advance gender justice in democratic governance	Outcome 6: Women who are subject to exclusion and/or discrimination are able to effectively advocate for having their priorities incorporated in relevant policies, programmes, budgets, and processes. Outcome 7: Key policy, service delivery and media institutions create enabling institutional environments to promote and protect women's human rights in line with global, regional and national agreements. Outcome 8: Increased number of relevant and effective models of community-level initiatives for advancing women's human rights and eliminating gender inequality.	

Figure 1. UNIFEM strategic results – SP 2008-2011

24. Corporate evaluations **will be managed by the Evaluation Unit (EU)**, in close consultation with Thematic and Geographic sections in HQ. The EU will be responsible for developing an **Evaluation Plan on an annual basis** which will establish the reas/programmes to be evaluated each year, the reasons for the decision, the main partners in the evaluation and the intended use of the evaluation results. The development of the plan will follow a consultative process, and will ultimately be approved by the Executive Director and presented to UNIFEM's Consultative Committee. This plan will be updated annually.

⁶ A differentiation is created between reducing prevalence of VAW and reducing HIV/AIDS, recognizing the linkage the two areas have but also their specificity in order to develop more focused evaluations throughout the SP period

25. The Evaluation Unit will ensure that the evaluations provide strategic and representative coverage of UNIFEM programmes and results, thematically and geographically. By the end of the SP, UNIFEM should have covered the evaluation of its main areas of work.

The **key criteria for the selection of the corporate strategic evaluations** are as follows:

- **Relevance** to the corporate Strategic Plan, in respect to:
 - Development Results Framework (DRF): The evaluation deals with any of the three themes and eight outcomes, including the set of corporate outputs that UNIFEM tracks
 - Managing for Results Framework (MRF): The evaluation will fulfill evaluation commitments made under this framework
- **Strategic importance** of programme/strategies for the organization: cross-thematic, global/cross-regional
- **Size of investment and coverage** in the programmatic area: share of budget allocated to the interventions to be evaluated
- **Demonstrated demand from key UNIFEM stakeholders** (e.g., Consultative Committee, Donors, Partner countries, UN)
- **Potential for generation of knowledge, broad learning and accountability on gender equality** – joint evaluations to ensure assessment of the gender dimension (e.g. ONE UN, UNDAF, Joint programmes)
- **Evaluability** – extent to which the selected area is prepared to be meaningfully evaluated

Target: at least two corporate evaluations will be undertaken every year of the SP; At least 8 corporate evaluations will have been completed by the end of the SP.

4.1.2 UNDERTAKING A RELEVANT NUMBER OF QUALITY DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

26. **Decentralized evaluations** are those undertaken (managed and/or conducted) by UNIFEM SROs, Geographic Sections and/or Thematic Units at HQ. These evaluations represent the core of UNIFEM evaluation function as they provide evidence on the processes and results of UNIFEM's work at the country and regional levels regarding the programmatic frameworks for which they are responsible. Therefore, these evaluations should be integral components of UNIFEM's programming processes, both at strategic and project levels.⁷

27. UNIFEM, as the administrator of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, will also be involved in the implementation of its Evaluation Strategy, which includes a global evaluation of its 2005 – 2008 strategy and evaluation capacity development for grantees. UNIFEM's Evaluation Unit will provide technical advice as needed.⁸

28. Decentralized evaluations may have different scopes, i.e. areas to be covered. Following UNDP's evaluation rationale⁹, these evaluations can be classified in two types: cluster/thematic evaluations and project/ programme evaluations.

A) **Cluster / thematic evaluations** address the short-term, medium-term and long-term results of a cluster of related UNIFEM projects in a given strategic thematic area or outcome in a

⁷ Guidance and templates for the selection, process and development of regional and sub-regional evaluation plans are available on the UNIFEM Intranet.

⁸ UN Trust Fund End Violence Against Women Evaluation Strategy: Building the Knowledge and Evidence Base to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2008 – 2012.

⁹ UNDP Evaluation Policy, DP/2005/28, May 2006.

region or within a country.¹⁰ They include an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and relevance of the programme against their own objectives, their combined contribution, and the contribution of external factors and actors. Cluster/thematic evaluations also examine non intended effects of the programmes or projects. Included in this type of evaluations can be the assessment UNIFEM strategy for the country, the sub-region and/or the region. Their findings are used for strategic policy and programmatic decisions at the sub-regional and regional levels, as well as corporate decisions.

When planning for cluster/thematic evaluations, a combination of the following parameters should be considered for the selection:

- **Relevance** to the SP, to the Sub-Regional Strategic Plan / Regional Strategic Plan: the cluster of projects/programmes relate directly to the strategic goal, outcomes and outputs in the SP / Regional and Subregional SP.
- **Size of investment** or financial coverage: The cluster of projects/programmes represents a significant share of total resources globally, and for the Sub-Regional/Regional SP
- **Knowledge:** Potential for generation of knowledge, broad learning and accountability on gender equality of a particular programmatic area
- **Need for evidence base for decision making:** a mid term or final evaluation of the Regional SP or an evaluation towards the end as a basis for making strategic adjustments
- **Potential for upscaling and replication of innovative or catalytic approaches**
- **Flagship programme / strategy**
- **Evaluability** - extent to which the selected cluster has all the elements to be meaningfully evaluated

Target: At least **one cluster/thematic evaluation should be undertaken in each region every year**. It is recommended that this type of evaluation is undertaken at the end of the each year comprising the SP in order to have enough evidence for strategic decision making for next planning cycles. At least 16 cluster/thematic decentralized evaluations will have been completed by the end of the SP.

B) **Project / Programme evaluations**¹¹ assess the efficiency and effectiveness of an intervention or set of interventions in achieving the intended results. They also assess the relevance and sustainability of outputs as contributions to medium-term and longer-term outcomes. Project/programme evaluation can be invaluable for managing for results, and serves to reinforce the accountability of project/programme managers. Additionally, project/programme evaluation provides a basis for the evaluation of outcomes and programmes, and for distilling lessons from experience for learning and sharing knowledge. Project/programme evaluations should be planned at the design stage.

When **selecting what programmes/ projects** are to be evaluated, a combination of the following **parameters** should be considered:

- **Relevance** to the corporate SP, to the Sub-Regional Strategic Plan / Regional Strategic Plan: the project/programme relate directly to the strategic goal, outcomes and outputs in the SP / Regional and Subregional SP.

¹⁰ A cluster evaluation can act as the equivalent of a country programme evaluation by assessing the outputs, outcomes or impact of all UNIFEM projects/programmes within a country collectively.

¹¹ According to UNIFEM Programme and Operations Reference Manual (Dec. 2007), a **Programme** is “an integrated set of activities designed to produce a number of interconnected outputs and outcomes that contribute to the achievement of the goals and outcomes articulated in UNIFEM SP, implemented over a longer-term period”. A **Project** consist of a “limited set of activities designed to achieve one or two outputs that contribute to the achievement of a single outcome within UNIFEM SP, implemented over a shorter-term period”.

- **Size of investment** – the budget of the project/programme is significant with regards the portfolio of programmes in the region (in the current policy being updated, above USD1 million a final evaluation is mandatory; above USD 3 million a mid term and a final evaluation are mandatory)
- **Existence of commitment to evaluate** – Commitment to evaluate in response partnership agreement, joint implementation, etc.
- **Knowledge:** Potential for generation of knowledge, broad learning and accountability on gender equality
- **Decision making:** Need for evidence base for decision making on the strategy or programme modification/follow-up
- **Decision making:** Need for evidence base for decision making on the project or programme modification/follow-up
- **Potential for upscaling/replication of innovative and/or catalytic initiatives**
- **Flagship programme**
- **Programme duration** – for a mid-term, final or ex-post evaluation, a minimum of 2 years of implementation is needed
- **Geographic scope** – the programme has a broad coverage and is implemented in more than one country
- **Evaluability** - extent to which the programme has all the elements to be meaningfully evaluated

Target: At least 2 programme/project evaluations should be undertaken by each Sub-Region every year of the SP. At least 130 project/programme evaluations will be completed by the end of the SP.

Both cluster/thematic and project/programme evaluations may be conducted jointly with partners.

29. Apart from the above, SROs may also plan for the conduction of **mid-term reviews** of specific projects or their overall work. These reviews may be conducted internally with external support, and will follow rapid assessment techniques. Moreover, UNIFEM may plan to participate in a **joint evaluation with UN partners in the context of the UNDAF and / or ONE UN programmes.**

30. The decentralized evaluations provide the basis for strategic and programmatic evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Unit as described above.

31. UNIFEM will also identify relevant programmatic areas to invest in the conduction of **impact evaluations.** This will imply the strategic selection of cohorts of projects/programmes, their design following an impact evaluation approach and the conduction of the evaluations in the period needed to demonstrate results. The impact evaluation initiatives will be undertaken in collaboration with relevant partners and they will be used to provide stronger evidence and information on what works and what does not for gender equality and women's empowerment.¹²

32. Either in corporate, cluster/thematic, project/program or impact evaluations, UNIFEM will follow varied approaches to evaluation depending on the context, on the audiences and on the intended purposes. Responding to the need to integrate a gender perspective in evaluation, UNIFEM should be flexible enough to integrate different approaches and adapt to particular circumstances to address them. Regardless of the approach followed, quality standards will be introduced in every evaluation process to ensure that the evaluation function

¹² This includes the Results-Based Initiative (RBI) with the World Bank and could include partnering with academic institutions.

is reliable and credible in its findings, and participation of key stakeholders will be fostered at all times.¹³

Specific criteria for setting the evaluation plans of UNIFEM Thematic Units / Global programmes will be developed during 2008.

4.1.3 DEVELOPING QUALITY STANDARDS AND MECHANISMS TO ASSURE THE QUALITY OF EVALUATIONS

33. Following UNEG evaluation norms and standards, systems for quality assure the evaluations undertaken in UNIFEM will be available in the second year of this strategy. This will imply the development of evaluation guidelines and tools to be used for the preparation, conduction and follow up of evaluations, the development of UNIFEM specific standards and the enhancement of institutional structures to provide support. These standards and systems will abide to the following parameters:

- Internationally recognized parameters of good quality evaluations (DAC/OECD, UNEG)
- Respect to the evaluation principles defined in UNIFEM Evaluation policy
- Adaptation and response to a gender equality and human rights approach to evaluation

34. The Evaluation Unit will play a key role, as part of its mandate, in providing support and advice to UNIFEM staff in the conduction of evaluation processes.

Target: By the end of the SP, evaluation quality assurance standards will have been developed and 80% of UNIFEM evaluations will have applied them.

4.1.4 FOLLOWING-UP EVALUATIONS: USE EVALUATION FINDINGS FOR LEARNING WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION AND BEYOND, MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO EVALUATION AND TRACKING IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED ACTIONS

35. The **use of evaluation findings** for shared learning and improvement of UNIFEM programming constitutes an essential element of this evaluation strategy and of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011. Using evaluation implies that evaluation processes are intentionally directed to be applied in the programmes and used for decision making at all levels. Therefore, all UNIFEM evaluation processes will promote specific actions to promote learning, the generation of knowledge and the application of evaluation findings for improvement in the specific programmatic area concerned.

36. In order to achieve this, **UNIFEM will put in place a system for management response of evaluation findings and for tracking the agreed actions over time.** This system will be based on the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) developed by UNDP Evaluation Office in order to contribute to coherence and alignment with current practice.¹⁴

37. The Evaluation Unit will also undertake **meta-evaluations** of evaluation processes and results and share knowledge for feedback to wider UNIFEM awareness processes and programmes. This involves a systematic conduction of meta evaluations on particular themes of performance issues – bringing in other organizations' evaluation findings as well – to stimulate debate and greater knowledge on specific thematic areas of concern to UNIFEM's work. It will make these available in a variety of formats.

¹³ The update for UNIFEM Evaluation Policy underway will further develop the principles to be applied in all evaluation.

¹⁴ The ERC is an on-line based Information Management System, which facilitates UNDP's effort to strategically plan and effectively use evaluations for accountability, management for results, and knowledge management. It is located on the UNDP website: <http://erc.undp.org/index.aspx?module=Intra>

Target: By the end of the SP, 80% of evaluations undertaken by UNIFEM will have been followed up, used and analyzed.

4.2 Strengthen and enhance the evaluation function and evaluation capacities of UNIFEM and partners;

38. Based on the need of UNIFEM to enhance its evaluation function and capacities, and following the strong commitments made in the SP for this aim, the current strategy places a great focus on the implementation of specific actions to have established, by the end of the SP cycle, a credible, useful and relevant evaluation function across the organization, including the enhancement of evaluation capacities of UNIFEM staff at its different levels.

39. The achievement of this result depends greatly on two conditions: on one hand, the investment in evaluation capacities of UNIFEM staff for the conduction and use evaluation as a relevant input for improving the quality of interventions to support women’s empowerment and gender equality; on the other, the development of an evaluation culture that is integral to other functions in the organization where evaluation is seen as useful for learning and improving.

4.2.1 SETTING AN INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE FOR EVALUATION

40. The creation of the **Evaluation Unit** as an independent structure, with specific budget and reporting directly to the Executive Director, constitutes the first step to strengthening UNIFEM evaluation function following UNEG norms and standards. Based on the SP commitments, as part of this strategy an investment will be made in order to establish the Evaluation Unit with a) an annual stable fund for the conduction of corporate strategic evaluations and b) a small team of professional staff to undertake evaluations and support decentralized evaluations. The central fund will also support the roll out of an evaluation training programme and other evaluation related functions.

41. At the regional level, UNIFEM will make an effort to invest in **evaluation expertise** by creating Evaluation Officer’s posts to provide direct support to the SROs in the implementation of their evaluation agenda. These professionals will report directly to the Evaluation Unit. Moreover, as a sustained effort to assure a relevant coverage of programmes evaluated, UNIFEM Units at HQ and the field will reserve adequate programme budget for the conduction of evaluations, following the indications established in the updated Evaluation Policy.

42. Based on common practice in the DAC/OECD Evaluation Network members and UNEG, the following are parameters for estimating evaluation budgets. This estimation may include the conduction of ex-ante, mid term or final evaluations; **it does not include monitoring activities.**

Size of programme	Suggested % for evaluation
1 million USD	10% / total programme budget
2 million USD	6% /total programme budget
3 million USD	5% / total programme budget
4 million USD	4 – 5 % / total programme budget
5 million USD or above	4% / total programme budget

Target: by end 2008, UNIFEM Evaluation Unit is established and adequately staffed.

4.2.2 UPDATING AND APPLYING UNIFEM EVALUATION POLICY

43. The Monitoring and Evaluation policies and guidelines contained in “UNIFEM Programme & Operations Reference Manual” will be reviewed and updated in line with the

requirements of the current SP as well as the current UN context. One of the first steps of this strategy will be **the development of a specific UNIFEM Evaluation Policy**, following UNEG agreed principles and adapting them to UNIFEM reality and a gender equality approach to evaluation. The evaluation policy will abide to: alignment with and respect to UNEG Norms and Standards; response to the principles of Results Based Management; integration of basic gender equality and human rights principles to evaluation

The **Evaluation Policy** will include the following elements:

- Establishment of UNIFEM evaluation guiding principles
- Definition of key evaluation concepts and norms
- Definition of evaluation roles and responsibilities within the organization
- Definition of what constitutes mandatory evaluations at the corporate and decentralized levels
- Indications of the use of evaluation findings and recommendations

44. All UNIFEM evaluations will respect and abide to the evaluation policy requirements and principles. The policy will be updated every two years to respond to UNIFEM needs and realities.

Target: By mid 2009, UNIFEM will have developed and applied a specific evaluation policy.

4.2.3 DEVELOPING EVALUATION GUIDANCE AND TOOLS

45. Based on the policy, **evaluation guidelines** will be developed for UNIFEM staff in order to undertake evaluations that respond to the highest professional standards and that integrate gender equality and human rights principles. The guidelines will be primarily directed to programme staff for the management of a good quality evaluation process. These guidelines and tools will ensure that evaluations are conducted in an objective, impartial, open and participatory manner, based on empirically verified evidence that is valid and reliable, with results being made available, and ensuring that evaluations are carried out with due respect and regard to those being evaluated.

Target: By end 2009, UNIFEM staff will have accessible guidelines and tools to undertake gender responsive good quality evaluations.

4.2.4 ROLLING OUT AN EVALUATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

46. As part of the capacity building objective of this strategy, an evaluation training programme will be rolled-out from the first year of implementation of the strategy. This programme will promote the application of UNIFEM Evaluation policy and the use of the evaluation guidelines in all evaluation processes. The training programme will adapt to new developments and changing needs within and outside the organization.

Target: By the end of 2008, a training programme will have been designed and piloted in 2 regions. By the end of the SP, the full evaluation training programme will have been rolled out in the 4 regions.

4.2.5 PARTNERSHIPS WITH EVALUATION ASSOCIATIONS AND APPLIED RESEARCH

47. In order to enhance evaluation capacities of UNIFEM partners at the country and regional levels, UNIFEM will actively involve and support regional evaluation associations. These organizations bring a variety of civil society, academia and government actors who work on evaluation and strive to strengthen evaluation capacities and greater accountability of public policies in the countries. UNIFEM will support this fora to promote the work and knowledge generation about gender equality and women's empowerment policies and programmes.

48. UNIFEM will also become involved with relevant academic institutions with proven experience in applied research and evaluation from which UNIFEM can benefit through relevant exchange. This will closely involve all UNIFEM geographic sections and thematic advisors.

Target: By the end of the SP, UNIFEM will have partnered with at least 4 evaluation networks and associations.

4.3 Engage and contribute to UN evaluation processes from a gender equality perspective;

49. In accordance with UNIFEM's mandate to "play an innovative and catalytic role in relation to the UN overall system of development cooperation", this strategy will foster an active involvement of the organization in key UN evaluation processes. The actions foreseen in this respect relate both to a contribution to the United Nations Evaluation Group as the professional network of evaluation in the UN system, as well as contributing to joint evaluations from a gender equality perspective.

4.3.1 JOINT AND PEER EVALUATIONS/ CONTRIBUTION TO UNEG INITIATIVES

50. Joint and peer evaluations – UNIFEM will be actively participating in joint evaluations with UN sister organizations and other partners in the period of the SP. These evaluations will be focusing on joint initiatives at the country level – ONE UN pilots, Joint Programmes – as well as different programmes that will pay particular attention to the response to gender equality and women's empowerment.

51. As a professional network of evaluation in the UN System, the UNEG constitutes a highly relevant space for the exchange and definition of evaluation practice in the UN, as well as for the identification of key processes of accountability in which gender equality needs to be addressed. UNIFEM will continue participating in different Task Forces of the Group, and update its involvement every year according to the priorities of the organization and the value added that the processes can bring.

52. UNIFEM will review its priorities for participation in areas of work every year at the UNEG Annual General Meeting. The Task Forces where UNIFEM will be actively involved in 2008-2009 are the following four:

- Guidance on incorporating human rights and gender equality perspectives in UN evaluations. UNIFEM will continue co-chairing this Task Force in order to fully develop evaluation guidance for the UN system that is gender and rights based and is used for greater accountability on gender equality by the UN.

- Evaluation of Delivering as One UN pilots. As the main process to assess jointly the coherence of the UN system in Delivering as One, UNIFEM will be actively involved in this evaluation process from 2008 to 2010. This will require the completion of the Evaluability study, the contribution to the process evaluation, and the conduction of the independent evaluation of results. Through its participation in UNEG, UNIFEM will influence the evaluation process to analyze the response of the UN system to gender equality on the ground.

- **UN Evaluation Training.** UNIFEM will actively collaborate with the roll out of the UNEG Evaluation Training in the forthcoming years. This will imply the development of a module on gender equality, and the participation in the respective Task Force to quality assure the contents on gender equality.

- **Impact Evaluation.** As part of this Task Force, UNIFEM will explore jointly with other UN agencies the ways in which impact evaluations will be adapted and undertaken in the UN system and applied to the different programmatic areas of work, such as gender equality.

4.4 Establish a process for the evaluation of UNIFEM Strategic Plan 2008-2011

53. UNIFEM Strategic Plan, with the goal, thematic priorities, outcomes and outputs established in its Development and Management for Results frameworks, constitutes the overall strategic and programmatic framework of the organization at its different levels. As such, **an evaluation process needs to be put in place** in order to learn from its implementation, and to be accountable for the progress towards its expected results, particularly at the output level.

54. The information generated systematically by the corporate results tracking system will be the first source of information for this evaluation process, as well as other primary and secondary information sources.

55. The process envisioned for the evaluation of the Strategic plan is described below:

- a. **Conduction of an evaluability assessment** – The SP will be analyzed in terms of certain parameters to assure its evaluability and prepare for the evaluation. The assessment will provide recommendations for improving the plan for its evaluation, and for the definition of the scope of mid-term review and final evaluation. This assessment will be conducted by the Evaluation Unit with external support, and will be completed in the 1st quarter of 2009
- b. **Mid term review** – a mid term review will be conducted following the recommendations of the evaluability assessment, including the definition of the scope of the evaluation. The review will pay particular attention at the progress to corporate outputs and will include the review of a sample of Sub-regions to review progress at the sub-regional level, as well as to identify lessons learned. This review will be coordinated by the Evaluation Unit with high participation of HQ sections and selected SROs and will include external support, and will be completed in the 1st quarter of 2010.
- c. **Final Evaluation** – towards the end of the SP, a final independent evaluation will be undertaken. This evaluation will build its TOR and scope on the lessons learned from the evaluability assessment and the mid term review. It will also strongly rely on the findings of the evaluations conducted throughout the SP period. It will follow a formative and participatory approach, but will have a summative component to express clear recommendations for UNIFEM strategic plan 2012-2015.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF UNIFEM EVALUATION STRATEGY

56. The Evaluation Unit will manage the actions foreseen in UNIFEM's Evaluation Strategy. It will involve continuous consultation with the Deputy Director for Programmes and the Deputy Director for Operations, and close collaboration with the Geographic Sections, the Sub-regional offices, and Thematic Advisors. Final decisions on evaluation plans, evaluation

findings and reporting on results will be directed to the UNIFEM Executive Director to guarantee the independence of the evaluation function.

57. The Evaluation Unit will develop an annual work plan at the beginning of each year, in coherence with the indicators established in the BSB and the MRF of the SP; it will specify the processes and results to achieve each year in relation with the objectives of this strategy. For monitoring the implementation of the strategy, the Evaluation Unit will gather information from SROs and HQ sections on an annual basis on the progress of the evaluations planned each year. Based on that information, an annual brief monitoring report will be elaborated by the Evaluation Unit – in line with UNIFEM's annual reporting guidelines. This report will feed into the UNIFEM corporate Annual Report process, and will be accompanied by a brief review of the evaluations conducted each year. The report will be presented to the Consultative Committee; it will also be forwarded to UNDP Evaluation Office as inputs to its Evaluation Annual Report to the Executive Board.

58. At the end of 2009, a **mid term internal/external rapid assessment** review will be conducted based on the Management for Results Framework in the SP and the results/indicators/target framework in the BSB. This will analyze progress and effectiveness of the strategy, and the quality and use of evaluations, and will make recommendations for improvement. The assessment will analyze the annual monitoring reports, evaluation reports and will gather information from different stakeholders, such as UNEG members. At the end of 2011, an **external independent review** will be conducted, to analyze the relevance, quality, credibility and usefulness of UNIFEM evaluation function and evaluations in the framework of the SP 2008-2011. It will include a meta evaluation of evaluation processes and results. The UNEG Peer Review mechanism of the UN evaluation function will also be applied to UNIFEM at the end of the SP period in order to have an external assessment for improving the evaluation function. The results of the evaluation and of this review will provide UNIFEM with evidence for integrating evaluation in the following SP 2011-2014 and for the design of the evaluation strategy in that context

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. LOGFRAME FOR EVALUATION STRATEGY

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
<p>Goal: Evaluation function contributes to the SP 08-11 goal: National commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment are implemented in stable and fragile states</p>	<p>1.1 % of management response to evaluation recommendations implemented towards improving policies, strategies and programmes on gender equality and women’s empowerment</p> <p>1.2 % increase in number of programmes demonstrating evidence of application of lessons from evaluations in their design, including joint programmes</p>	<p>1.1 Tracking system for management responses to evaluations established</p> <p>1.2 Project documents approved</p>	<p>1.1 A strong management commitment is required to ensure the implementation of management responses to evaluations.</p> <p>1.2 Greater quality assurance is needed in the design and appraisal of projects for approval, including joint programmes</p>
<p>Outcome Key UNIFEM stakeholders (national and regional governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental partners; UN organizations; bilateral donors; women’s networks; UNIFEM programmes and staff) use learning and knowledge generated from UNIFEM-supported evaluation findings to improve and upscale their work on gender equality and women’s human rights</p>	<p>1.1 Number of UNIFEM-supported knowledge products used by key stakeholders</p> <p>1.2 Number of learning events undertaken by UNIFEM and partners that draw on lessons from evaluations</p> <p>1.3 Number of applied evaluation research initiatives on gender equality and women’s empowerment supported by</p>	<p>1.1 Annual reports of Evaluation Office/unit and other sections/units; donor reports</p> <p>1.2 Annual reports of Evaluation Office/unit and other sections/units; donor reports</p> <p>1.3 Annual reports of Evaluation Office/unit and other sections/units; donor reports</p>	<p>1.1 Learning from evaluations needs to be promoted as part of the organization’s culture and has to be addressed by UNIFEM’s evaluation policy, knowledge management and capacity building strategies.</p>

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
	<p>UNIFEM that generate new knowledge</p> <p>1.4 Number of government, civil society and UN partners that take steps to replicate or scale up UNIFEM supported initiatives</p>	<p>1.4 Replication or scaling up of initiatives following evaluation</p>	
<p>Outputs</p> <p>1. Support the implementation of the SP through the generation of a critical mass of high quality credible evaluations that provide useful evidence on successful programming approaches for replicability and scaling up, and on less successful approaches for learning and improvement</p>	<p>1.1 At least two strategic corporate evaluations conducted each year during the SP period</p> <p>1.2 At least one cluster/thematic evaluation undertaken in each region annually during the SP period</p> <p>1.3 At least two project/ programme evaluation conducted by each SRO annually during the SP period.</p> <p>1.4 At least one global and regional evaluation conducted on South-South exchange.</p>	<p>1.1 Evaluation reports, annual reports of Evaluation Unit; corporate evaluation plan</p> <p>1.2 Evaluation reports, annual reports of regional units; regional evaluation plans</p> <p>1.3 Evaluation reports, annual reports of SRO and regional units; sub-regional and regional evaluation plans</p> <p>1.4 Evaluation reports, annual reports, evaluation plans</p>	<p>1.1 Review and improvement of parameters for programme design to integrate evaluability factors</p> <p>1.2 Evaluation skills and capacities of evaluation teams need to be of high quality in order to be able to meaningfully analyze programmes that may be considered for upscaling or replication.</p>

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
	<p>1.5 Development of evaluation quality assurance standards that are applied in 80% of evaluations</p> <p>1.6 System for management response to evaluation findings and tracking agreed actions</p> <p>1.7 Use of evaluation findings to replicate or scale up successful programme approaches by UNIFEM staff and partners</p> <p>1.8 Use of evaluation findings to improve programming approaches by UNIFEM staff and partners</p>	<p>1.5 Actual quality assurance standards; meta-evaluation/peer review of evaluations</p> <p>1.6 Actual tracking system in place; management response to evaluations; corporate annual report</p> <p>1.7 Annual reports of regional, thematic units and SROs; documented feedback from staff and partners</p> <p>1.8 Annual reports of regional/thematic units and SROs; documented feedback from staff and partners; guidance/tipsheets updated based on evaluation findings</p>	

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
<p>Key Activities</p> <p>1.1 Conduction of high quality corporate evaluations of a strategic nature systematically every year. Develop an annual evaluation plan for the Evaluation Unit</p> <p>1.2 Review decentralized evaluation plans for coherence and develop evaluation quality assurance standards</p> <p>1.3 Devise system for management response to evaluation findings and tracking of agreed action over time. System to be based on Evaluation Resource Centre</p> <p>1.4 Conduction of meta-analysis of evaluation results and share knowledge for feedback to wider awareness processes and programmes</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	
<p>2 Strengthen and enhance the evaluation function and evaluation capacities of UNIFEM and partners</p>	<p>2.1 Evaluation Unit established with adequate staff and funding to carry out the corporate evaluation function by the end of 2008, including regional Evaluation Officers.</p> <p>2.2 Evaluation policy developed from a human rights and gender equality perspective and consistent with UNEG principles that guide evaluation within UNIFEM by mid-2009.</p> <p>2.3 Evaluation guidelines/tool</p>	<p>2.1 Budget for the Evaluation Unit for staff and evaluation activities; recruitment of evaluation staff</p> <p>2.2 Actual evaluation policy adopted/issued</p> <p>2.3 Actual evaluation guideline/</p>	<p>2.1 Investment in evaluation capacity of UNIFEM staff and strengthening of evaluation function; adequate programme budget will be available for conduction of evaluations.</p> <p>2.2 Development of an evaluation culture within UNIFEM in which evaluation is integrated with other functions and is seen as useful learning and improvement.</p>

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
	<p>sdeveloped that integrate human rights and gender equality perspectives by 2009;</p> <p>2.4 10% increase in positive feedback received from staff and partners on guidance and technical support provided on gender-responsive evaluation each year during the period of the SP</p> <p>2.5 Evaluation training programme designed and piloted in two regions by the end of 2008; roll out in four regions by the end of SP period.</p> <p>2.6 Partnerships with four regional evaluation associations by the end of the SP period and relevant academic institutions with experience in applied research</p> <p>2.7 Number of UNIFEM staff and partners (grantees of the UN Trust Fund on Eliminating Violence against Women, regional evaluation networks,</p>	<p>tool implemented and included in Programme and Operations Manual; documented use by UNIFEM staff</p> <p>2.4 Documented feedback on use of guidance by UNIEFM staff and partners</p> <p>2.5 Annual reports of sections and units on training received in evaluation; Annual reports of the Evaluation Unit and other sections/units</p> <p>2.6 Annual reports of the Evaluation Unit; partnership agreements; reports on regional evaluation networks supported by UNIFEM</p> <p>2.7 Documented feedback from UNIFEM staff and partners; decentralized evaluation reports; annual report of the UN Trust Fund</p>	

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
	etc) able to undertake gender responsive and rights based evaluation		

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
<p>Key Activities</p> <p>2.1 Establish UNIFEM Evaluation Unit</p> <p>2.2 Finalize UNIFEM evaluation policy from a gender equality and human rights perspective using a consultative process and implement it across the organization: a) align UNIFEM evaluation policy with UNEG evaluation norms and standards; b) produce and update evaluation policy every two years and guidelines as needed.</p> <p>2.3 Develop evaluation guidelines/tools from a gender equality and human rights perspective and implement them across the organization. Update guidelines based on feedback.</p> <p>2.4 Develop evaluation training programme on evaluation for UNIFEM staff and partners. Pilot and roll out the training programme, adapting it as needed.</p> <p>2.5 Engage in partnerships with four regional evaluation associations/networks and establish alliances with academic institutions for collaboration on applied research on evaluation of gender equality and women's empowerment.</p> <p>2.6 Provide guidance and quality assurance support to UNIFEM staff and partners on evaluation: a) support Evaluation Analysts positions to advise at the SRO level; c) providing continuing advice to UNIFEM offices/sections in planning and managing decentralized evaluations including review of decentralized evaluation plans; d)</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
support partners, including grantees of the TF on Eliminating VAW for quality evaluations and knowledge sharing			
3. Substantially engage and contribute to broader UN evaluation processes from a gender equality perspective	<p>3.1 At least two high quality joint/peer evaluations conducted by the end of the SP period.</p> <p>3.2 Active membership in UNEG taskforces</p> <p>3.3 One review undertaken annually of the effectiveness of a joint programming arrangement</p>	<p>3.1 Evaluation reports; evaluation plans; annual reports of Evaluation Unit.</p> <p>3.2 Annual reports of Evaluation Unit; attendance at Taskforce meetings and AGM reports; documented feedback from UNEG agencies on UNIFEM contribution to UNEG work (e.g., ; UNEG guidance document on gender responsive and rights based evaluation, UNEG evaluation training design and assessment reports, etc.)</p> <p>3.3 Reviews conducted and findings reported.</p>	
<p>Key Activities</p> <p>3.1 Contribute to UNEG task forces and UN joint evaluations from a gender equality perspective: a) finalize work on developing UNEG guidance on evaluations from a gender equality and human rights perspective; b) evaluation of One UN pilots c) contributions to UNEG wide evaluation consultant roster d) contributions to UNEG evaluation training</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable	

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
<p>programme including development of module on gender equality e) contributions to work on impact evaluations</p> <p>3.2 Update priorities for participation in UNEG annually.</p> <p>3.3 Undertake a review of joint programming arrangements</p>			
<p>4. Establish a process for the evaluation of UNIFEM Strategic Plan 2008-2011</p>	<p>4.1 Conduction of an evaluability study of the SP by the first quarter of 2009</p> <p>4.2 Conduction of a mid-term review of the SP by the first quarter of 2010</p> <p>4.3 Conduct of a final evaluation of the SP by the end of 2011.</p>	<p>4.1 Evaluability report; annual report of Evaluation Unit; corporate evaluation plan</p> <p>4.2 Mid-term review report; annual report of the Evaluation Unit; corporate evaluation plan</p> <p>4.3 Evaluation report; annual report of the Evaluation Unit; corporate evaluation plan</p>	<p>4.1 Establishment of a corporate results tracking system that will provide relevant information for the evaluability study, mid-term review and final evaluation.</p>
<p>Key Activities</p> <p>4.1 Evaluation unit to undertake an evaluability study of the SP with external support that will provide recommendations for improving the evaluation process of the SP and assist in defining the scope of the mid-term review and final evaluation.</p> <p>4.2 Evaluation unit to coordinate mid-term review of the SP that focuses on corporate outputs, including progress at sub-regional</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	

Results	Indicators	Means of Verification/Sources of Information	Assumptions/Risks
<p>level and identifies lessons learned.</p> <p>4.3 Preparation for the final evaluation of the SP. TOR to build upon lessons learned from evaluability assessment, mid-term review and evaluations conducted during the SP period. Findings and lessons to inform the SP 2012 – 2015</p>			

ANNEX 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following text defines the evaluation concepts in which this strategy is built in the framework of the UN evaluation principles and UNIFEM context.

What is evaluation and how does it relate to other assessment functions?

According to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards¹⁵, **evaluation is** “an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the UN system. An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of the organizations of the UN system and its members”.

Evaluation may have different purposes in an organization, such as understanding why and the extent to which intended and unintended results are achieved, and their impact on stakeholders; evaluation is an important source of evidence of the achievement of results and institutional performance; it contributes to organizational learning – to draw lessons from successes and failures, on what works and what does not, and in this sense, contribute to knowledge building; it helps to serve as a basis for improved decision-making, strategic positioning of the organization, and programming; evaluation is an important agent of change and plays a critical role to ensure accountability to constituency and partners by tracking and assessing results, relevance, and institutional capacity to deliver.¹⁶

Furthermore, evaluation feeds into management and decision making processes, and makes an essential contribution to managing for results. Evaluation informs the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting cycle. It aims at improving the institutional relevance and the achievement of results, optimizing the use of resources, providing client satisfaction and maximizing the impact of the contribution of the UN system.

From a gender equality perspective, evaluation refers to the recognition of the different roles of women and men in policy and programme development, their asymmetrical access to and control of resources as well as varying practical gender needs and interests. This implies that evaluation has to be designed and undertaken using analytical tools to identify the different resources and constraints facing women and men in the areas of economic and social development, and to examine the implications of women’s multiple roles, as well as focusing on the practical and strategic needs and constraints of women, and the access and control of different resources. It further implies the analysis of the differential impacts of program and

¹⁵ Norms for Evaluation in the UN System; Standards for Evaluation in the UN System. Towards a UN system better serving the peoples of the world; overcoming weaknesses and building on strengths from a strong evidence base UNEG. April 2005.

¹⁶ Ibid.

policy interventions on men and women and changing gender relations through gender sensitive indicators and methods of data collection and analysis.¹⁷ The **human rights based approach to evaluation** further implies the integration of international human rights standards for the progressive realization of human rights by assessing the construction of capacities of duty bearers to meet their obligations and rights holders to claim their rights, placing a strong emphasis on the rights of groups that are subject to discrimination, and marginalization, such as women, and racial and ethnic minorities and gives attention to both the outcomes and processes of programming. Finally, **results-based evaluation** implies moving beyond assessing inputs and outputs to provide information on the achievement of outcomes and impacts of interventions, important in light of assessing achievement of common development goals such as the MDGs.¹⁸

Evaluation is distinctive with regards to other assessment functions in UNIFEM, but is closely linked to them. Most importantly, monitoring, review, audit, research and knowledge management.

- a. **Monitoring** is a continuous management function that aims primarily at providing programme managers and key stakeholders with regular feedback and early indications of progress or lack thereof in the achievement of intended results. Monitoring tracks the actual performance against what was planned or expected according to pre-determined standards. It generally involves the continuous collection and analysis of data on programme processes and results and recommending corrective measures, asking the question of “Is the programme or project doing things right?”
- b. **Review** is the periodic or ad hoc and often rapid assessment of the performance of an intervention that does not apply the due process of evaluation. Reviews tend to emphasize operational issues, and may gather summative information on perceived results.
- c. **Audit** is an assessment of the adequacy of management controls to ensure the economical and efficient use of resources; the safeguarding of assets; the reliability of financial and other information; the compliance with regulations, rules and established policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organizational structures, systems and processes.
- d. **Research** is a systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge. Social research is about measuring, describing, explaining and predicting social and economic phenomena. Social research explores: social and economic structures; social attitudes; values and behaviours; and the factors, which motivate and constrain individuals and groups in society.
- e. **Knowledge management** is a systematic and integrated process of creating, analyzing, storing and disseminating knowledge resources (intangible assets, intellectual capital, structured databases and textual information). It also includes tacit knowledge and expertise that reside in

¹⁷ Bamberguer M., Podems D. (2002), “Feminist evaluation in the International Development Context” in “Feminist Evaluation. Explorations and Experiences”, Siegart and Bisolaro, New Directions for Evaluation, American Evaluation Association.

¹⁸ Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System, World Bank

the heads of people. Knowledge is applied to achieve a number of objectives i.e., problem solving and learning, forming judgments and opinions; decision making, forecasting and strategic planning; identifying feasible options for actions to achieve desired results. KM is more than automation of processes and the use of information and communication technology.

Evaluation constitutes an integral part of UNIFEM's programming cycle and not an end phase of it. At the *early stage of programme formulation*, certain basic requirements have to be fulfilled, e.g the design of a programme should build on lessons drawn from evaluations of similar initiatives; the programme should introduce evaluability factors and have a clear results framework, good indicators and baselines, and a monitoring and evaluation plan that defines how information is to be collected and analyzed to assess results. Furthermore, *throughout programme implementation* evaluations may be undertaken to analyze in depth the progress towards results and the contextual factors that may be contributing or constraining the achievement of results, which findings should strongly influence and feed the consequent implementation of the programme. *At the end of the programme* or any time after its implementation, a final or ex post evaluation may be undertaken to assess the achievement of results and possibly impacts on stakeholders, contributing to accountability and knowledge generation on what has worked and hasn't for gender equality and women's empowerment.

As a learning process, evaluation constitutes a cycle in itself, divided into 3 main phases from the identification of information needs and key stakeholders, to the conduction of the evaluation study in a participatory manner and the sharing of lessons learned and use of evaluation findings. It is directed towards its use for improved programming and knowledge generation, thus completing the cycle.

Overview of the evaluation process

There are three stages or phases in the evaluation process:

I. Preparation – An evaluation process initiates with the motivation to evaluate, the consultation with stakeholders and the selection of the intervention/s to be evaluated. This selection is included in an evaluation plan. Following a consultative process with key stakeholders, the purpose, scope and key evaluation questions are defined and reflected in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the conduction of the evaluation, as well as the suggested methodology for data collection and analysis, the tentative work plan, the composition and qualifications of the evaluation team, the management arrangement, and the required budget. The most qualified evaluation team is selected and hired on the basis of the quality of the evaluation proposal and the qualifications of the evaluation team.

II. Conduction of the evaluation – The evaluation study starts with a review of the work plan and reaching an agreement between the evaluation team and the unit managing the evaluation on the evaluation design and timeframe. Once agreement is reached, data collection and analysis takes place. Preliminary findings are presented to the unit that commissioned the evaluation and to other evaluation stakeholders. A full report is drafted and finalized taking into account feedback from the stakeholders. The evaluation findings may be supported by other means, such as video, photographs, etc. Quality assurance is particularly important throughout the conduction of the evaluation, making sure that the report fully satisfies the TOR and the information needs of the different stakeholders.

III. Follow-up – This involves the dissemination of evaluation results to immediate stakeholders and a broader audience through different means or platforms like printed documentation, learning workshops,

etc. Lessons are extracted and captured in formats tailored to specific audiences. Another important aspect is the management response to the evaluation where management reviews the evaluation recommendations and takes a decision on their appropriateness, relevance, and feasibility. For recommendations that are accepted, the responsible units are identified. Implementation of agreed upon actions are tracked by putting mechanisms in place. This is one way of making evaluation ensure accountability.

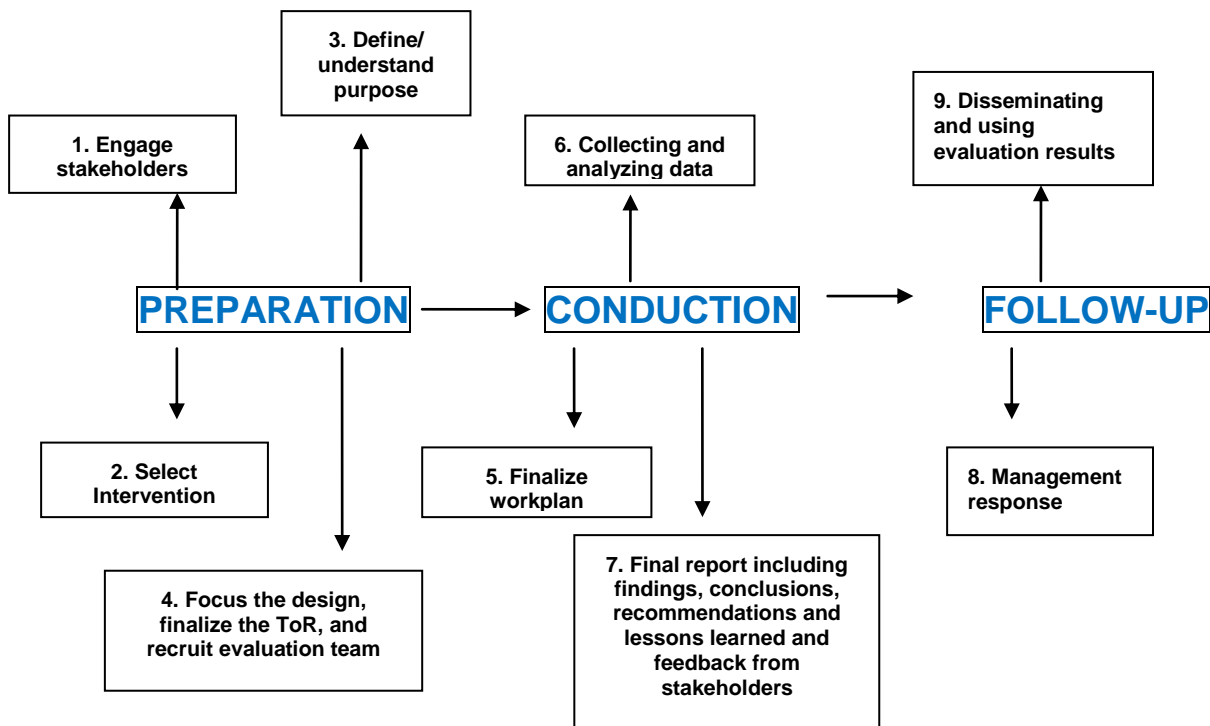


Figure 1. Evaluation Cycle

UNIFEM embraces the **evaluation principles** of UNEG regarding intentionality, impartiality, independence, quality, transparency, participation and ethics. To highlight some of them:

- i. **Useful and intentional:** there must be a clear intent to use evaluation findings.
- ii. **Credible and participatory:** evaluations should foster the participation of the key stakeholders at different stages of the evaluation process to ensure the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can also facilitate consensus building and ownership of the evaluation findings and recommendations by the stakeholders. From a human rights and gender equality perspective, they should ensure that women’s voices and those who are subject to discrimination are heard.
- iii. **Transparent, independent and impartial:** evaluations should be absent of bias in due process, methodological rigorous, and consider and present achievements and challenges. It also implies that the views of all stakeholders are taken into

account. They should be free from undue influence so that unbiased and transparent reporting is ensured. Evaluators need to have full discretion in submitting reports directly for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making pertaining to the subject of evaluation.

- iv. **Quality** – The design, planning and actual conduction of evaluations must ensure the high quality of the evaluation. There must be a sufficient evidence base for the findings and conclusions in order to have a credible basis for making recommendations useful to improve programming and decision-making, such as those that will inform up scaling and replication of initiatives.
- v. **Ethical:** Evaluators must have personal and professional integrity and must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators must take care that those involved in evaluations have a chance to examine the statements attributed to them. Evaluators must be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environments in which they work. In light of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality.

Types of evaluations

Evaluations may be classified in different categories.

According to the scope of analysis

Within the results-based management framework, there are three levels of results, i.e., outputs, outcomes, and impact.

Output evaluation assess goods and services that are the result of the inputs of a development intervention. These include process evaluations, which provide accountability for the outputs of interventions by assessing the dynamics of their implementation, delivery of services and management practices.¹⁹

Outcome evaluation assess a set of related projects, programmes and strategies intended to achieve a specific outcome, to gauge the extent of success in achieving the outcome; assess the underlying reasons for achievement or non-achievement; validate the contributions of a specific organization to the outcome; and identify key lessons learned and recommendations to improve performance.²⁰ Outcome evaluation analyzes information on the results or effects achieved by the programme i.e. the effectiveness of the intervention in generating change. It aims at addressing questions such as:

- Did the programme achieve its results?

¹⁹ OECD-DAC Glossary of Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management

²⁰ Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results and Guidelines for Outcome Evaluators, UNDP Evaluation Office.

- Did the programme generate unintended results?
- Did the program make a difference?

Outcome evaluation therefore addresses the programme's **contribution** to change in beneficiaries.

Impact evaluation involve the “systematic identification of the effects - positive or negative, intended or not - on individual households, institutions, and the environment caused by a given development activity such as a program or project.”²¹ It is an instrument that provides information, with scientific rigor, of the effects of development interventions on beneficiaries and also allows for the establishment of causality between the intervention and its effects. Impact evaluation addresses the counterfactual: what would have happened without the program? For doing it that it follows a scientific approach that includes the development of baselines and the identification of comparison groups of individuals, of similar characteristics as those who will benefit from the programme, who will not benefit from the intervention in order to compare them with the beneficiaries. It addresses questions such as:

- What is the effect of program on outcomes?
- How much better off are beneficiaries because of the intervention?
- How would outcomes change under alternative program designs?
- Who have benefited and who have not?
- Does the program impact people differently (e.g. women, men, poor, minorities)

An impact evaluation thereby increases certainty in public decision making for selecting the optimum type of intervention in the face of various options and alternatives. In contrast with outcome evaluation, impact evaluation uses techniques that analyzes the specific change in beneficiaries **attributed** to the programme.

For any of the above evaluations, the first and necessary step at the programme design phase is to develop **baselines** of the situation before the implementation, and to build a **monitoring system** that will be systematically capturing data on implementation and progress towards results over time.

According to who conducts or manages the evaluation

Evaluations can be internal or external, can be managed by programmatic sections or by the evaluation unit, and can be undertaken by an individual organization or jointly.

Internal or self-evaluations are evaluations undertaken by the programmatic unit/programme being evaluated, without the support from external specialists. They provide the opportunity for the organization and staff to assess critically and learn

²¹ World Bank Independent Evaluation Group.

about the achievements of the intervention and constraints in its implementation, and has the value added of bringing the participant's knowledge of the programme and context to better understand the intervention. **External evaluations** are those conducted by external specialists, independent from the programme being evaluated. They are recommended for providing an external and more objective analysis of the intervention and therefore increasing the credibility of the findings. **Peer evaluations** are conducted by teams composed by external evaluators and programme staff; these are a useful approach for undertaking formative evaluations as they combine internal understanding with external expertise and view, and provide effective institutional learning.

In UNIFEM, depending on the **Organizational unit responsible** for evaluation planning and management and the scope to be covered, there are **corporate evaluations**, i.e independent evaluations that are the responsibility of UNIFEM's Evaluation Unit, and **decentralized evaluations**, i.e. within the responsibility of other units such as the sub-regional offices, country programme offices, and units at headquarters.

Individual evaluations are evaluations conducted or managed by only one organization, i.e. the main institution responsible for the implementation of the programme.

Joint evaluations are those undertaken by a number of partner organizations who participate together along the evaluation process. In the context of aid effectiveness, joint evaluations play a key role in the efforts to foster broader harmonization among development and country partners, understanding that development objectives have a greater impact if worked in partnership. The design and conduction of joint evaluations is more costly and complex than the individual evaluations, but generate broader effects such as mutual learning and accountability, reduce in the transaction costs associated to numerous individual evaluations, promotes participation and capacity building and increases the ownership of evaluation findings. To decide whether to undertake a joint evaluation, it is important to consider some aspects, such as:

- Is the object of evaluation a joint programme?
- Will this provide an opportunity to better harmonize our work in a particular area with different partners?
- Is the purpose of the evaluation to assess contribution by different partners to shared development objectives rather than attribution?
- Is there a potential to bring more knowledge on shared areas of work if undertaken jointly?

According to when is the evaluation conducted

Evaluations can be undertaken before programme implementation to assess its design and intended impact (**ex-ante evaluation**), during the time of implementation (**mid-term evaluation**), at the end of implementation (**final evaluation**), or after a period of time after the project has ended (ex-post evaluation). It can also be divided in **summative** evaluation - a method of judging the worth of a program at the end of the program activities, usually places a strong focus on the outcomes; and **formative**

evaluation - a method of judging the worth of a program while the program activities are forming or happening, usually places a strong focus on processes, but also on outcomes. In reality this classification does not refer to a different typology of evaluations, but rather on when the evaluation is undertaken.

According to the unit of analysis

A **project or programme** evaluation analyzes the outputs, outcomes and/or impact of particular interventions according to specific criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, relevance and impact. A **thematic evaluation** evaluates a specific theme and encompasses a group of projects or programmes that support that particular theme. A **policy, strategy or plan** evaluation analyses the design, coherence and long term impact of a set of programmes within a particular framework.

Metaevaluation

The other type of assessment related to evaluation is metaevaluation, i.e. the “evaluation of evaluations”. This is an analysis of the technical and methodological quality of the evaluation process, its usefulness and credibility, in order to improve the effectiveness of evaluations for the organization. This type of analysis also serves the purpose of generating a body of knowledge about different interventions evaluated and thus it can be an important contribution to knowledge management.

ANNEX 3. CORPORATE EVALUATION PLAN FOR 2008-2009²²

LIST OF SELECTED EVALUATIONS	CRITERIA USED FOR THE SELECTION	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED	POTENTIAL EVALUABILITY Extent to which the selected cluster / Programme / Project has all the elements to be meaningfully evaluated	INTENDED USE OF EVALUATION FINDINGS
Evaluations in 2008				
1. UNIFEM support to regional organizations	Demand by Consultative Committee			
2. Regional Programme on CEDAW implementation in South East Asia	Strategic Importance, demand	CIDA		
3. Global programme on gender responsive budgeting	Relevance, potential for generating knowledge	UNCDF, UNDP, UNFPA, <i>Belgium/Spain/Finland</i>		
4. Joint evaluation of conflict prevention and peace building strategies and programmes in DRC	Relevance	Netherlands OECD-DAC Belgium		
Evaluations in 2009				
1. Global evaluation on South-South cooperation	Relevance			

²² This evaluation plan will be updated as needed.

<p>2. Evaluation of a sample of SRSs programmes at country level</p>	<p>Potential for generating knowledge/</p>			
<p>3. Joint evaluation with UNDP</p>	<p>Relevance</p>	<p>UNDP</p>		
<p>4. Evaluation of UNIFEM's support to women's political participation</p>	<p>Strategic importance</p>			
<p>5. Evaluability assessment of the Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Relevance</p>			