

Evaluation Report: Evaluation of UNV Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for Organisational and Programming Effectiveness

Summary of Evaluation Report

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This evaluation report outlines the process, findings and recommendations of the gender evaluation commissioned by UNV in 2017. It situates UNV's performance in the broader context of the UN system - particularly in terms of the UN-SWAP - and highlights where UNV has performed well and made considerable achievements in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment; where gaps and challenges remain; and how UNV can move forward to bridge these gaps and harness opportunities to substantially contribute to the ultimate goal of gender equality. The evaluation is pertinent for understanding gender equality and women's empowerment in three areas – volunteer mobilisation and recruitment, institutional aspects and programmatic aspects.

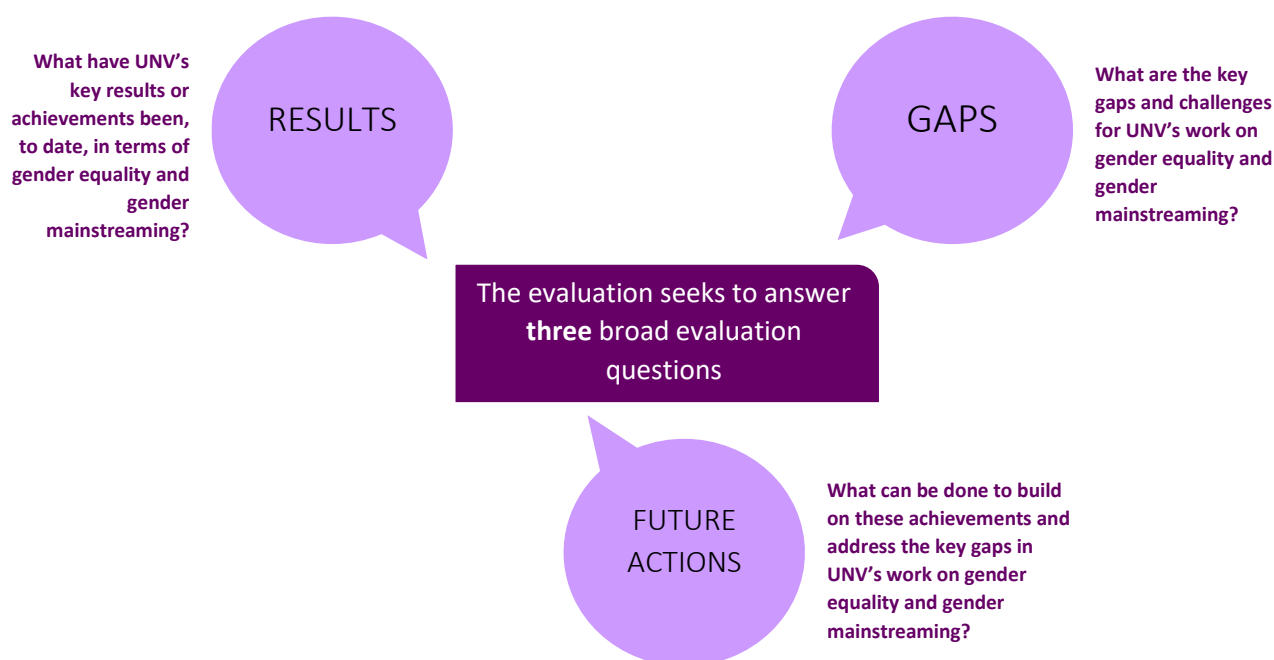
Background

The **primary objectives** of the evaluation were to:

1. Assess UNV's contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment as outlined in the UNV Strategic Framework 2014-2017;
2. Assess the extent to which the UNV Strategic Framework (SF) and subsequent initiatives, including the Gender Action Team (GAT) and the resource allocation plan, were successful in guiding UNV's GEWE work – including collaboration with the UNV SF evaluation team; and
3. Provide actionable, evidence-based recommendations and lessons learned to inform the future GEWE work of UNV.

In order to meet the stated objectives, three key evaluation questions were developed, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Primary Evaluation Questions



As a UN entity, UNV is bound to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The commonly recognised process for achieving this – both in the UN and more broadly – is gender mainstreaming. **For definitions of the terminology used in this report, please refer to the UN Women Training Centre Gender Equality Glossary.**²

Three main frameworks for UNV's duty to engage in gender mainstreaming can be highlighted:

- ✓ UNDP Gender Policy;
- ✓ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5; and
- ✓ UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

"[The UN] must be at the forefront of the global movement towards gender equality, an inalienable and indivisible feature of all human rights and fundamental freedoms: progressively moving from perceiving women and girls as a subject of protection to promoting their empowerment; from an isolated focus on women to gender mainstreaming." – Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations¹

Given these three frameworks, UNV has a strong normative basis for its gender mainstreaming efforts. Improving performance in gender equality and women's empowerment is not optional, and

¹ United Nations (2016) PHOTO FEATURE: António Guterres: An illustrious career serving others. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55781#.WNwf_FV97IU [29 March, 2017]

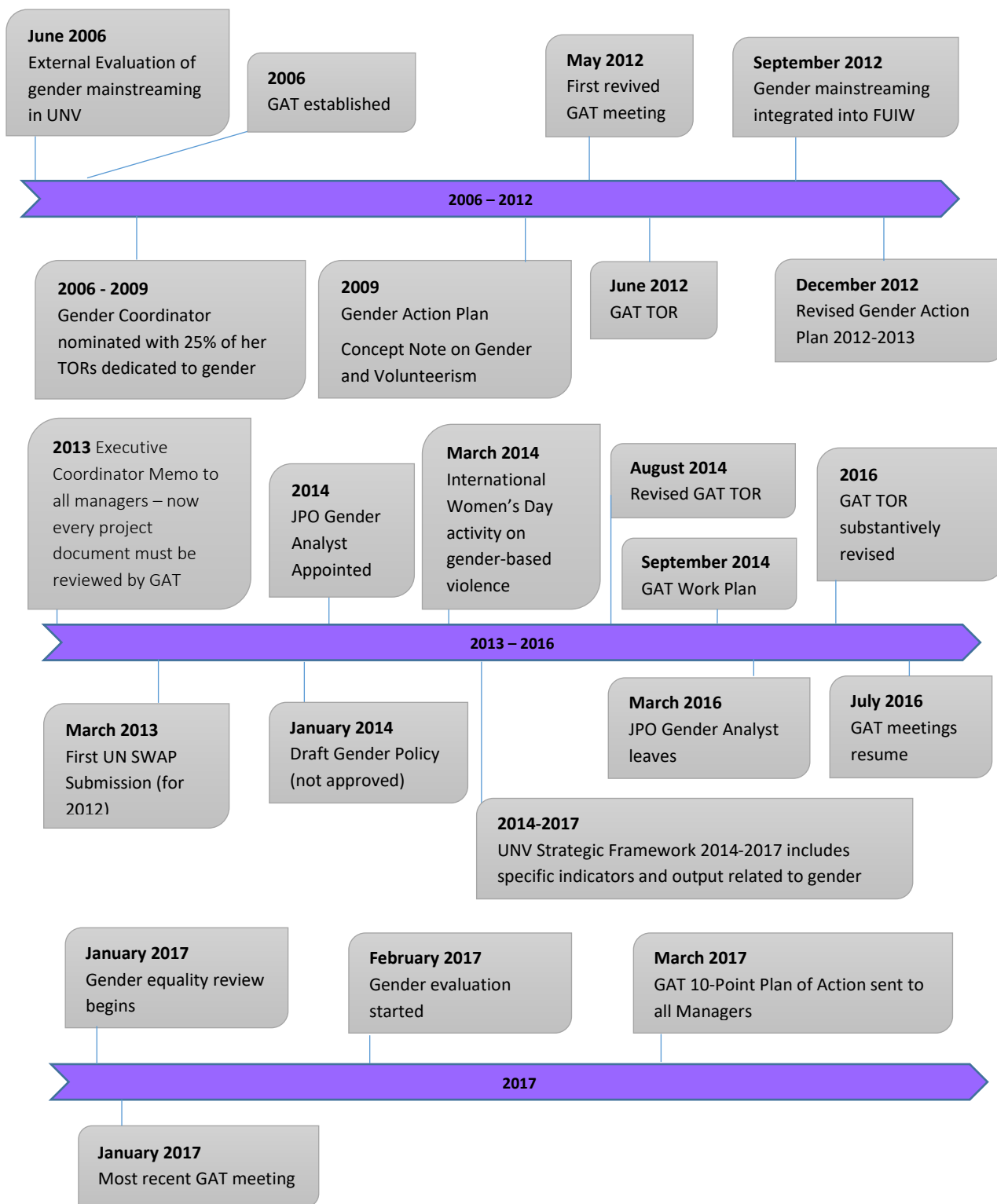
² <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=>

failure to address the issues raised in this report may be a cause for concern for the UNDP Executive Board and UNV donors.

In terms of UNV's comparative performance across the UN system, UNV is slightly behind. The UN system overall "meets" or "exceeds" requirements for 57% of the UN-SWAP's indicators, just 3% ahead of UNV. However, when compared to the aggregate performance of Funds and Programmes entities, UNV is "noticeably behind". UNV "meets" or "exceeds" 15% fewer indicators than Funds and Programmes as a whole. In addition, Funds and Programmes are "exceeding" requirements for 27% of the UN-SWAP's ratings, almost four times the 7% reported by UNV. The UN-SWAP analysis demonstrates that **UNV is under-performing compared to similar UN entities**. All UN entities are expected to meet compliance on all 15 Performance Indicators by the end of 2017.

This evaluation takes place at a time of strategic importance for UNV. As the organisation reviews its structures and processes and develops its new Strategic Framework for 2018-2021, UNV has an opportunity to be at the forefront of gender equality and the empowerment of women. By embarking on a systematic process of gender mainstreaming, UNV can be a leader amongst its peers – both in terms of other UN entities and volunteer-sending organisations.

A combination of primary and secondary data sources were consulted during the evaluation (130 documents, 6 statistical databases, 4 focus groups and 21 interviews) across Bonn Headquarters and the Regional Offices). Field Units and UNVs were not included in the stakeholder groups, due to the limited scope and specific focus of this evaluation. The data analysis was guided by gender analysis and the overarching gender-responsive evaluation approach outlined in detail in the report.



(Source: Author's own elaboration based on documentary review and interviews).

The table below depicts UNV's progressive advancement in achieving the UN-SWAP's 15 Performance Indicators over the years. It shows that little substantive progress was made between 2014 and 2015. As UN Women have not yet provided an evaluation of UNV's 2016 UN-SWAP submission, a thorough

external assessment was conducted as part of this evaluation and made available to UNV as an internal document. In 2016, improvement was made on three indicators – Policy/Plan, Performance Management and Monitoring/Reporting. However, progress also reversed in three indicators – Evaluation, Resource Tracking and Knowledge Generation/Communication. **The table demonstrates clearly the impact of an ad-hoc approach to gender mainstreaming: if gender equality is not institutionalised, progress will not be linear. Moreover, gains made can be easily lost.**

Indicator	2013	2014	2015	2016
Policy/Plan	Meets	Meets	Meets	Exceeds
Performance Management	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets
Strategic Planning	Approaches	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
Monitoring/Reporting	Approaches	Meets	Approaches	Meets
Evaluation	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	N/A
Audit	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets
Programme Review	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets
Resource Tracking	Missing	Approaches	Meets	Approaches
Resource Allocation	Missing	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
Gender Architecture/Parity	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
Organisational Culture	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
Capacity Assessment	Missing	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
Capacity Development	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
Knowledge Generation/ Communication	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Approaches
Coherence	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets

(Source: Author's own elaboration based on UNV annual SWAP reports).

Snapshot of the Evaluation Findings

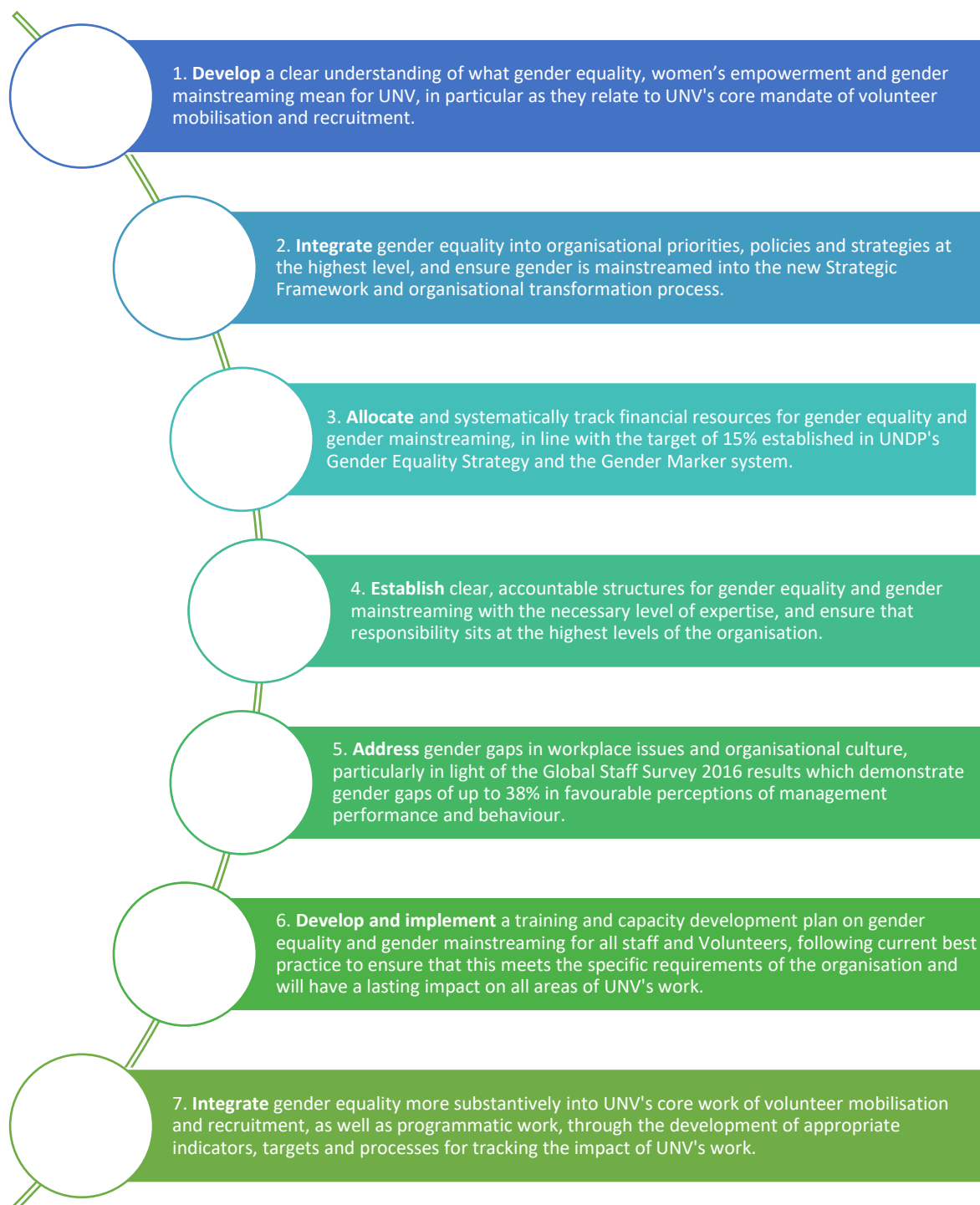
Results and Achievements

- Indicators in the 2014-2017 Strategic Framework - on the proportion of female volunteers and staff at all levels - and the integration of gender equality into all projects - and achievement of these targets
- A target on gender equality is included in all staff PMDs
- Gender Action Team at HQ and Gender Focal points in all ROs
- Strong commitment to gender equality from many staff and Volunteers
- Gender equality and women's empowerment are key lenses of the policy/evidence-based work of VKIS
- Many staff and UNVs promoting gender equality via programming work, specific gender projects, and mainstreaming gender across ROs' work

Gaps and Challenges

- Gender equality remains a "numbers game" or "tick box exercise"
- Lack of human and financial resources for gender equality, and lack of training, leading to low capacity
- No dedicated capacity or expertise for gender equality/mainstreaming at HQ
- No substantive structures or resources at an operational/institutional level
- Innovative Initiatives are not scaled-up or included in institutional memory
- Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are not institutionalised

Recommendations



The report offers a number of clear action points for each recommendation.

Concluding Comments

UNV has the opportunity to make a strong impact on gender equality and women's empowerment – under the umbrella of SDG5 – through its 6,500 Volunteers across the UN system. If properly trained and equipped with gender equality knowledge and skills, the multiplier effect is substantive – both within projects/programmes themselves, as well as in Volunteers' home countries and communities. Moreover, UNV's emerging partnerships with other agencies such as UN Women and UNICEF can be used to work together and promote coherence in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment across the UN system.

2017 marks a clear moment for UNV to move forward with its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. The findings and recommendations of this evaluation should feed into current change processes – the Transformational Plan and the new Strategic Framework – to ensure that the momentum and opportunities do not fall by the wayside. As reiterated throughout this report, gender equality and gender mainstreaming are not an optional focus for UNV. At the very minimum, substantive commitments and action are needed to ensure UNV meets its obligations in the following areas: compliance on all 15 UN SWAP indicators; demonstrable commitment to achieving SDG5; and consistent application of the Gender Marker System.