

Terms of Reference

Independent Review of the UNDP Evaluation Policy

Background

This Terms of Reference is developed for the purpose of carrying out a review of the UNDP Evaluation Policy. The first UNDP Evaluation Policy was approved by the UNDP Executive Board in 2006, and subsequently revised in 2011. Following an independent review of the Policy in 2014, the next and current iteration of the UNDP Evaluation Policy was approved by the Board in September 2016. In its decision approving the 2016 Policy, the Board requested that the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP commission a review of the policy in 2019.

The UNDP evaluation policy sets out the purpose and basic principles of evaluation for UNDP and its associated funds and programmes.¹ The Policy defines the institutional architecture and clarifies the roles and responsibilities within the UNDP institutional framework, providing a policy foundation for safeguarding the independence of evaluations. The Policy covers all evaluations conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, as well as those commissioned by programme and policy units, and by the associated funds and programmes. The policy harmonizes the UNDP oversight functions under an expanded Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC). The Evaluation Policy establishes financial benchmarks for the UNDP evaluation function, stipulating that 1% of core and non-core resources are to be set aside for the evaluation function annually, within which 0.2% is for the work of the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP.

Purpose, Scope and Objectives

The review will cover the period from September 2016 to January 2019, taking into consideration contextual and organizational changes since the approval of the 2016 Evaluation Policy. The review will encompass a select set of key aspects of the evaluation policy. This review will:

- assess the progress made in implementing the revised evaluation policy of 2016, noting strengths and weaknesses
- review the evaluation architecture
- identify any constraints inhibiting the effective implementation of the policy and areas that may require policy change or management decision to improve the evaluation function.

The findings and recommendations will be presented to the UNDP Executive Board and UNDP management during the annual session of the Executive Board in June 2019.

Review Questions

The following questions are established for the team to address through the review.

a) Implementation of the Evaluation Policy

Has the 2016 policy influenced the systems and practices of UNDP, as well as UNV and UNCDF?

- To what extent is the evaluation policy known?

¹ UN Volunteers (UNV), and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

- Is there evidence of improvement in the independence, credibility and use of evaluation at UNDP and the associated funds and programmes as a result of the revised policy?
- Is there adequate institutional capacity to meet the evaluation policy requirements at UNDP and the associated funds and programmes, at country, regional and HQ levels ?
- Have the financial benchmarks set in the policy been met? Are the evaluation plans for UNDP and the associated funds fully costed ?
- Are UNDP and the associated funds and programmes taking action in response to evaluation recommendations?

b) Evaluation Policy content

Based on the review analysis, taking into account answers to the above questions, and changes in the context in which UNDP and the associated funds and programmes operate, are there clarifications and improvements that should be made to the existing policy text under its respective headings: Principles, Procedures, Architecture?

Approach and Methodology

The review will not be a full-fledged evaluation, however the review team is expected to take into account UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation. The Review should include:

- Desk Review of selected reports
- Individual and group interviews (in person and phone)
- One-week visit in New York in February 2019 for interviews with key informants and stakeholders.

Expected Deliverables

- Draft and final reports (no more than 30 pages excluding annexes), submitted by the end of April, 2019. The main report will cover the methodology, main findings, conclusions and actionable recommendations.
- Summary paper (up to 8000 words) submitted by the end of April, 2019, for distribution to the Executive Board.
- Participation in an informal presentation of the review results to the Executive Board in May/ June, 2019

Team Composition and Responsibilities

The Review Team includes three individuals: Team Leader, Senior Advisor, and Senior Consultant.

The Team Leader, Osvaldo Feinstein, is a member of the UNDP/IEO Evaluation Advisory Panel. Osvaldo (10 days) will coordinate the effort, finalize the approach and methods, lead the fact finding mission to UNDP HQ in New York , and lead the review findings presentation to the Executive Board.

The Senior Advisor is Per Øyvind Bastøe, Director of Evaluation at the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Chairman of the OECD/DAC Evalnet. Per (10 days) will support the effort in an unpaid capacity, participate in the fact finding mission, help to develop the draft review report and participate in the presentation to the Executive Board.

The Senior Consultant is Patty Chang, Adjunct Associate Professor at NYU Center for Global Affairs. Patty (20 days), will contribute to the design of the review, conduct background documentation analysis,

participate in the fact finding mission, and support the Team Leader in drafting and then presenting the review.

Implementation Arrangements

The Independent Evaluation Office will support the review, including assisting the review team by facilitating interviews, tracking down background documentation; and arranging for the publication and dissemination of the review report. The IEO Chief of Corporate Evaluation, Alan Fox, will take responsibility for internal IEO management aspects, supported by IEO professional and operational staff for research, contract management and travel facilitation.

UNDP management will identify a focal point to liaise with the team during the review, in particular as relates to decentralised evaluation aspects. Likewise, a focal point for this exercise will be identified at UNCDF and UNV. Management of UNDP, UNV and UNCDF will have an opportunity to comment on the draft final report prior to completion. Management will ensure that the review team receives needed support for data collection and that factual comments on the draft review report are received in a timely manner.

Timeframe

The review will commence 15 December 2018, with a draft report submitted by 5 April, 2019. Following review and revision, the final report is due by 26 April 2019.

A visit to New York for the Evaluators is scheduled for the 1st week in February 2019, for briefings and interviews with UNDP senior management and other HQ stakeholders. A second visit is envisaged, in May/June for the team to participate in a UNDP Executive Board informal where this matter will be taken up.