



EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNDP TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will conduct a thematic evaluation of the contribution of UNDP to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). The frames of reference for the evaluation will be the UNDP Strategic Plan (2008 – 2013) and the Gender Equality Strategy (2008 – 2013). As the second Evaluation Office exercise dedicated to the theme, this evaluation will assess the overall performance of UNDP in mainstreaming gender and the organization's contribution to development and institutional change in gender equality and women's empowerment.

The mandate for this evaluation is found in decision 2010/15 of the UNDP Executive Board approving the Evaluation Plan for UNDP in June 2010 (DP/2010/19). The evaluation will be carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy with the following purposes:

1. To provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board;
2. To support greater UNDP accountability to global and national stakeholders and development partners;
3. To serve as a means of quality assurance for UNDP interventions globally;
4. To contribute to learning at corporate, regional and country levels.

BACKGROUND

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are recognized as integral to successful human development. They are major themes in the global commitments emerging from the world conferences of the 1990s and first decade of the 21st century, including the Fourth World Conference on Women and its follow-up, the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals and their reviews, Security Council Resolution 1325 and the UN World Summit of 2005. In line with these commitments, UNDP adopted gender mainstreaming in all its activities across the board and developed a Gender Equality Strategy¹ (GES) for the period 2008-2013 which aimed to: (a) develop capacities, in-country and in-house, to integrate gender concerns into all programmes and practice areas; (b) provide gender-responsive policy advisory services that promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the four focus areas of the Strategic Plan; and (c) support specific interventions that benefit women and scale up innovative models.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The primary objectives of the evaluation are to assess UNDP's contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment during the period 2008-2013; assess the extent to which the Gender Equality Strategy was used and successfully functioned as guidance to UNDP programming in the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and provide actionable recommendations with respect to UNDP's new Gender Equality Strategy (2014 – 2018), considering lessons learned and findings from the previous strategy.

The scope of the evaluation is aligned with the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan's vision of mainstreaming gender throughout the four UNDP focus areas of poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and energy and environment at the global, regional and country levels. It will cover two distinct but inter-linked results areas as framed in the GES namely: (1) development results and (2) institutional change, and will assess the extent to which the GES functioned as "an integrating dimension of UNDP's work"² in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. (It should be noted that this is not an evaluation of the content of the GES as a stand-alone document. Instead it is an inquiry of the extent to which the GES was effective in

1 The Gender Equality Strategy was developed largely in response to an independent evaluation conducted by IEO and published in 2005, entitled "Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UNDP" which had concluded that UNDP had not effectively engendered its development programmes.

2 UNDP, Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2013, p.2.

guiding the institutional and development contributions UNDP made to gender equality and women's empowerment during the implementation of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan).

EVALUATION CRITERIA & QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions below will be assessed using the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability:

1. To what extent has UNDP's work on GEWE contributed to UNDP's gender explicit development results³?
2. Has UNDP taken the necessary steps to bring about significant change in GEWE?
3. How has UNDP contributed to development results being gender responsive⁴ and transformative⁵?
4. How successful has UNDP been in promoting gender responsive change at the policy, technical and cultural levels?

The evaluation criteria that will be used include: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Some indicative questions follow:

Relevance

The evaluation will assess the overall relevance and effectiveness of UNDP's approach to GEWE, covering in broad terms, its entire programmatic and geographic scope.

- How relevant has UNDP's work on GEWE been in contributing to UNDP's development results?

Effectiveness

- How effective has UNDP been in contributing to UNDP's gender explicit development results?
- How effectively has UNDP contributed to development results being gender responsive and transformative?
- How effectively UNDP taken the necessary steps to bring about significant change in GEWE?
- How effectively has it been in promoting gender responsive change at the policy, technical and cultural levels, particularly within the organization?

Efficiency

Where appropriate, the evaluation will cover efficiency-related issues, particularly in order to understand management arrangements and the operational realities of implementing the GES and its linkages with UNDP programme implementation mechanisms and modalities at the regional and country levels.

- How efficiently has UNDP used its resources working on GEWE to contribute to UNDP's development results?
- How efficiently has UNDP used its resources in terms of promoting gender responsive programming and fostering institutional change?

APPROACH

The evaluation will analyze whether and how development and institutional results have delivered against the stated intent and results as articulated in the Strategic Plan and the GES. The evaluation will trace the logic (theory of change) of how the GES was envisaged to elaborate on the Strategic Plan and its influence on UNDP's contribution to GEWE. It will then examine the evidence of UNDP's contributions and whether they have been relevant, delivered efficiently and effectively, and are likely to be sustainable in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment results.

3 Table 1 of the GES document presents the gender explicit outcomes derived from the Strategic Plan (in red) and supplements these with indicative GES outcome indicators for each of the four thematic goals.

4 Gender responsiveness implies consciously creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of the lives of women or men within their social setting.

5 Making results gender transformative means considering not only symptoms of gender inequality but also how produce results that address the social norms, behaviors, and social systems that underlie them.

Given the complexity and wide scope of the subject of gender equality, the evaluation will employ a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative methods to generate a comprehensive picture by combining complementary kinds of data sources, collection and analysis methods. The evaluation will include organizational, programmatic and thematic studies. It will adopt a participatory approach to gather multiple perspectives to establish a fuller understanding of past performance. Evidence will be measured against a rigorous analytical framework that incorporates a gender-sensitive lens.

Both components on development results and institutional change will also assess progress and results in terms of UNDP's contributions to UN system coordination given the "special responsibilities" of UNDP as funder and manager of the UN Resident Coordinator system (GES, p. 14).

EVALUATION PROCESS AND TIMEFRAME

The evaluation will rely on multiple sources for data collection and mixed-methods for analysis, validation and triangulation of evidence against the evaluation questions to reach judgments. The evaluation will be informed by broad consultation with stakeholders including government, civil society and NGOs at the country level; UNDP staff at the headquarters, regional offices and country offices; UN agencies and other partners; and UNDP Executive Board members. Additional data collection and analysis methods will be set out in detail in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation.

The evaluation will be presented to the Executive Board in February 2015 and an informal session with the Board will be held before presentation. To allow UNDP management time to prepare the management response, the final evaluation report will be completed and shared by mid-February 2015. A draft report will be shared with UNDP Management and programme units by January 2015. The Terms of Reference, outlining the evaluation design, will be shared with the Organizational Performance Group (OPG) by the end of March 2014.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The *Independent Evaluation Office* will conduct the evaluation and has the overall responsibility for the conceptualization and design of the evaluation, managing the evaluation process and producing a high quality final evaluation report. The evaluation will be the responsibility of a core team consisting of 4 people: 2 IEO staff will function as Evaluation Manager (EM) and Associate Evaluation Manager (AEM). They will be supported by two short-term consultants - an evaluation methods consultant to guide and quality assure the data collection and synthesis aspects of the evaluation exercise, and a research consultant who will support the evaluation process, undertake discrete studies and provide knowledge management and communications support. This core team will work with a team of thematic experts in the areas of poverty, governance, crisis prevention, environment and institutional assessment, who will have specific expertise in gender evaluation and will be contracted through a firm.

An *External Advisory Panel* has been constituted in December 2013, consisting of two experts in the field of evaluation and development. The panel will play an important role in providing strategic, methodological and substantive inputs into the evaluation process as well as review the key outputs including the main evaluation report. The panel is directly accountable to the Director, IEO.

A *Technical Reference Group* has been constituted in February 2014, comprising representatives from UNDPs gender architecture across the Regional Bureaus, Policy Bureau, Regional Service Centres and external experts familiar with UN system gender issues. The Technical Reference Group will advise, facilitate access to sources of information, and comment on the evaluation products for factual corrections and errors of interpretation or omission.

The *Organizational Performance Group (OPG)* has the responsibility of reviewing the draft Terms of Reference and evaluation report, and providing the consolidated comments of programme and policy units. OPG will also receive the final report so that a management response can be prepared.