**UN Volunteers Strategic Framework 2018 – 2021: Evaluation Plan**

1. Introduction

As a Programme administered by UNDP, UNV is required under UNDP’s Evaluation Policy to establish a ‘multi-year evaluation plan that is aligned with its strategic framework, and costed programme of work for evaluation concurrent with its overall evaluation budget’.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This document describes the broader objectives that the evaluation function in UNV is expected to meet over this period as well as the main approaches that will be followed to achieve these objectives.

It also describes UNV’s plans for continuing its partnership with UNDP’s Independent Evaluation Office, the continued participation of its Results-Based Management Unit in the United Nations Evaluation Group and other international initiatives in development evaluation, as well as collaboration where possible with its key development partners in the design and implementation of its evaluations.

It concludes with a proposed indicative Evaluation Plan for the period 2018 - 2021.[[2]](#footnote-2)

2. Evaluation in the Strategic Framework 2018 - 2021

Under the current Strategic Framework 2018 - 2021, UNV intends to continue to conduct external independent evaluation of selected key projects at the end-points of implementation. It also commits to working with partners to undertake thematic and impact evaluations that consider UNV’s contribution to partners’ results.

The Strategic Framework and its accompanying Integrated Results and Resources Matrix (IRRM) and Theory of Change establish a very clear framework for evaluation in UNV, setting out a series of key expected results at the impact, outcome and output levels and a series of impact pathways that UNV intends to follow – working closely with its partners - to achieve those results.

Taken together, this constitutes a rich and dynamic set of expected results, partnerships and broader assumptions that are fertile ground for any evaluation plan that seeks to validate and explore further the results, as well as the relevance and appropriateness of UNV’s strategic focus more generally.

3. Types of evaluation proposed

The Evaluation Plan below includes nine evaluations: Four project evaluations, two impact evaluations, and three thematic evaluations to be conducted by UNV during the course of the next Strategic Framework.

*Project evaluations*

These four evaluations are for projects remaining from the previous Strategic Framework. The total project portfolio of so called Legacy Projects is 27 projects, with 16 ending in 2018, 9 ending in 2019 and two ending in 2020. All are implemented by a UN Partner, with UNV being a co-funder and technical advisor on volunteerism and volunteer infrastructure. UNV is the evaluation lead for 4 projects.

For the 23 project evaluations conducted by the respective UN Partners, UNV will be part of the Evaluation Steering Committee and will provide inputs to all stages of the evaluation, in particular where UNV Special Voluntary Fund resources have been allocated for project implementation.

With the closure of the remaining Legacy Projects, UNV will no longer engage in direct project implementation, and hence will no longer conduct associated project evaluations. Should UNV contribute financially or technically to projects implemented by for example UNDP, UNV will ensure participation in project evaluations of these projects.

In proposing the evaluations included below, UNV applied a number of lenses. First, it carefully reviewed existing commitments to evaluation contained within project documents agreed with UNV’s partners and funders. Second, UNV sought to ensure that evaluations would support strategic reflection on progress in implementing its Strategic Framework, and that the evaluations would capture the results of a representative cross-section of projects implemented directly by UNV. Finally, as noted above, the choice of evaluation was also made based on whether UNV’s project implementation partners would carry out evaluations of the projects.

Methodologically speaking, the evaluations proposed combine elements of both outcome and process evaluation. These are intended not only to validate and further explore results at the level of UNV’s direct partner organisations, but also to assess project contributions to system development in as it relates to volunteerism and development in which UNV intervened.[[3]](#footnote-3)

*Strategic Framework evaluation*

This new UNV Strategic Framework is very different from the previous one, focusing almost exclusively on Volunteer Infrastructure and Volunteers Mobilization for the UN System, whereas the previous Strategic Framework had a number of traditional development objectives, which resulted in a large portfolio of more or less traditional development projects, with substantial funding from UNV’s Special Voluntary Fund. The so-called legacy projects are now being phased out, with remaining project evaluations being conducted either by UNV itself (4 projects) or by UNDP/UN Partners (23 projects),

With UNV’s comprehensive transformation process implemented alongside the launch of the new Strategic Framework, there is a need to combine a traditional Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Framework with an assessment of whether the organizational transformation process has made UNV more fit for purpose and better able to deliver on the Strategic Framework. This will take place in 2019 and will also provide inputs to the 2020 Report to the Executive Board. An independent Impact Evaluation of the Strategic Framework in late 2020 or early 2021 will provide inputs into the development of the next Strategic Framework (2022 – 2025).

*Impact Evaluations of UN Partnerships*

Part of UNV’s dual mandate is to provide is to provide highly skilled volunteers for UN agencies in areas of peace and development. Through the deployment of volunteers, UNV in essence contributes to the results and achievements of our partner UN agencies, funds and programmes (AFP) as well as UN Missions. In 2011, UNV and the UN Department of Field Support conducted an evaluation of the collaboration between them and the contribution United Nations Volunteers make to UN peacekeeping operations.

In the current SF, UNV proposes to conduct at least one evaluation in collaboration with a key AFP on the contribution of UNV and volunteers to the achievement of results in that AFP. Among potential partners are UNHCR and UNICEF, with whom discussions are ongoing.

The objective of such a joint evaluation would be 1) to provide an independent analysis of the coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, outcomes and impact of UNV-AFP collaboration, 2) to identify UNV’s comparative advantage and value added of UN Volunteers to the results of the AFP, and 3) to make recommendations for the future of the UNV-AFP partnership.

4. Evaluation and Research

In addition to the evaluation activities proposed in this Plan, UNV will continue over the period of this Strategic Framework to maintain its focus on research activities as a way to generate additional information on the results and impacts of its work. This will be complementary to the evaluation results being generated under this Evaluation Plan.

An example of such initiatives is the development of UNV’s flagship report, State of the World’s Volunteerism Report, due for release in 2021.

More generally, UNV will continue to actively track and remain informed by the results of key research and evaluation from its broader network of Volunteer Involving Organizations, particularly focusing on volunteerism’s contribution to development and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the associated Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Collaboration with UNDP’s Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) and other external partners

In line with the UNDP Evaluation Policy, to which UNV is a party, UNV greatly appreciates its partnership with the Independent Evaluation Office from which it receives support and guidance on evaluation quality and approaches, as well as – where relevant -  additional evaluation coverage in areas where UNDP and UNV are working closely together.  To this end, and as a complement to the findings emanating from its own evaluation function, UNV will continue to seek - wherever appropriate – inclusion of its joint work with UNDP in the IEO’s Independent Country Programme Evaluations, as well as IEO thematic evaluations that touch on areas of UNV specialization.

All evaluations undertaken by UNV will be quality assessed independently by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP. Comments and suggestions as well as ratings through the quality assessment system will further strengthen future evaluations as well as UNVs accountability, transparency and learning from evaluations.

With a view to ensuring the transparency of UNV’s evaluation results, UNV will continue in line with its commitments under the Evaluation Policy to present the key evaluation results and activities of its evaluation function in the IEO’s Annual Report on Evaluation to the Executive Board. This report will also include the results of the systematic external assessment by IEO of every completed UNV evaluation before its publication on UNDP’s Evaluation Resource Center in line with UN norms and standards for evaluation. Finally, the IEO will support the final evaluation of UNV’s Strategic Framework 2018-2021 which will inform the drafting of UNV’s subsequent planning framework.

6. Proposed evaluation plan 2018 – 2021

The table below presents the indicative evaluation plan for the period 2018 – 2021 which was drawn up on the basis of the process described above.

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| **Year** | **Project Title** | **Country / Region** | **Project Duration** | **Type of Evaluation** | **Start Date** | **End Date** | **Budget** |
| 2018 | UNV Support to enhancing capacity of United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience in South and East Asia and Pacific | ROAP | 2014-2017 | Project | June 2018 | October 2018 | $20,500 |
| 2018 | Appui á la mise en place du programme national de volontariat en Cote D’Ivoire | Cote d’Ivoire/ ROWCA | 2016-2019 | Project | July 2018 | Sept 2018 | $20,000 |
| 2019 | Evaluation of the collaboration between UNV and UNICEF\* and volunteers’ contribution towards achieving results in UNICEF. | Global | Ongoing partnership | Impact | TBC | TBC | $50,000 |
| 2019 | Poverty Reduction among youth in Cambodia – Development of youth volunteers’ skill sets for increased employability | Cambodia/ROAP | 2018-2019 | Project | Q3 | Q4 | $10,000 |
| 2019 | UNV’s Support to UN Peacebuilding Fund’s Gender Promotion Initiative | Global | 2015-2019 | Project | TBC | TBC | $26,500 |
| 2019 | Assessment of UNV’s transformation process in relation to delivering on the Strategic Framework 2018-2021 | Global | 2018-2021 | Assessment | Q2 | Q4 | $50,000 |
| 2020 | Evaluation of the UNV Online Volunteering service’s new cost recovery model | Global | 2019-2020 | Formative | Q1 | Q2 | $30,000 |
| 2020 | Evaluation of UNV’s Disability Inclusion project | Global | 2017-2020 | Project | Q2 | Q2 | $11,000 |
| 2020 | Evaluation of the collaboration between UNV and UNHCR\* and volunteers’ contribution towards achieving results in UNHCR. | Global | Ongoing partnership | Impact | TBC | TBC | $50,000 |
| 2021 | Final Strategic Framework Evaluation | Global | 2018-2021 | Final Evaluation | Q1 | Q2 | $150,000 |

\*Tentatively UNICEF, UNHCR and UNDP will be approached with a proposal to do a joint evaluation. Final partner list may change.

1. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml>, Point 55 (c) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It should be noted that in line with the requirements of the Evaluation Policy, the first two years of the Plan are costed. Depending on the size of UNV’s portfolio and its success in raising resources to implement the broader objectives of the Strategic Framework, however, the content and focus of the Plan may change. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Such evaluations are designed using theory – based techniques which require evaluation consultants or firms commissioned by UNV to validate or reconstruct project theories of change and then hone in through targeted evaluation questions on specific expected results and the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ these results are being achieved (or not) during the evaluations themselves. Evaluation teams are expected to fully respect good practice in the conduct of international development evaluation, including the need for transparent, triangulated data collection and systematic assessment of the project’s performance in supporting gender equality and the promotion of volunteerism. In recent external assessments, the appropriateness of the design and conduct of these evaluations has been validated with scores of either ‘satisfactory’ or ‘highly satisfactory’ by UNDP’s Independent Evaluation Office. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)