Evaluation at UNDP

At UNDP, evaluation is critical to help advance human development. By generating objective evidence, evaluation helps UNDP achieve greater accountability and improved learning from experience. Evaluation at UNDP contributes to informed decision-making by the Executive Board and the organization.

The evaluations conducted by UNDP fall into two categories: independent evaluations conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office, and decentralized evaluations managed by programme units in country offices, regional bureaux and practice and policy bureaux.

The core function of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) is to conduct two types of independent evaluations: thematic and programmatic. The IEO also prepares the Annual Report on Evaluation, sets standards and guidelines on evaluation, monitors compliance on evaluation and shares lessons for improved programming. The IEO actively participates in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) to strengthen coherence, quality and innovation of evaluation across the UN system. Evaluation in UNDP is governed by the organization’s Evaluation Policy, which sets out the purpose and principles of evaluation. The IEO Director is responsible for ensuring the independence of the Office and upholding the impartiality and credibility of its work. He reports directly to the UNDP Executive Board and to the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC), a group of high level external specialists that advise the UNDP Administrator and oversees the implementation of the IEO’s workplan.

Thematic Evaluations

The IEO conducts thematic evaluations to assess UNDP performance in areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contributions to development results. To this end, these evaluations may cover UNDP policies, focus areas, partnerships, programmatic approaches, cooperation modalities, business models and operational areas in the context of emerging development issues and changing priorities at global and regional levels. All thematic evaluations carried out by the IEO are formally considered by the UNDP Executive Board.

Programmatic Evaluations

The IEO conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to support the development of UNDP country programme documents. They aim to strengthen UNDP’s accountability to national stakeholders and the Executive Board, and to promote learning. ICPEs capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP’s strategies in facilitating and leveraging national efforts to advance development. Since 2002 more than 105 ICPEs have been conducted by the IEO, serving as an important tool for learning and accountability.
Annual Report on Evaluation

The Annual Report on Evaluation assesses the performance of the evaluation function throughout UNDP and in the associated funds and programmes, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV). The report provides information on evaluation coverage, compliance, quality, institutional arrangements and the way evaluations are utilized. It also presents key findings and lessons learned from the independent evaluations conducted during the reporting period.

Evaluation Resource Centre

The Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) is an online information management system, which facilitates UNDP’s effort to maintain transparency and effectively use evaluations for accountability and knowledge management. The ERC stores all UNDP decentralized and independent evaluations, management responses and evaluation plans. It is accessible at http://erc.undp.org.

Engaging Partners and Stakeholders in Evaluation

When conducting evaluations, the IEO puts a high priority on engaging programme country partners and stakeholders to generate buy-in and facilitate use of the evaluation. Consultations and discussions help bring critical perspectives from governments, civil society, donors and other international organizations on the design and progress of an evaluation. The participation of partners and stakeholders increases the credibility of evaluation results without compromising independence and enhances the use of the recommendations in subsequent programming cycles.

National Evaluation Capacity

The IEO is committed to using national evaluation systems to strengthen national ownership of development processes and is engaged in promoting national evaluation capacities (NEC) among partner countries, by sharing its experiences and supporting national evaluation initiatives. In partnership with governments, the IEO organizes NEC conferences bi-annually to strengthen evaluation capacities and support the exchange of knowledge between peers and experts from around the world. To date the NEC conferences have engaged over 150 countries and their governments. IEO’s efforts in this area have also led to the development of an online evaluation capacity diagnostic tool.

Evaluation Advisory Panel

The Director of the IEO has appointed an Evaluation Advisory Panel which provides periodic advice and assessment of the Office strategies, plans, methodologies and deliverables. It consists of eminent evaluation experts and scholars from around the world.

Our Leadership

Indran A. Naidoo (South Africa) joined the IEO as director in 2012 and Arild Hauge (Norway) joined the IEO as Deputy Director in 2015.