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 covering the work of UNDP in strategic areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contributions to development results. These evaluations focus on UNDP activities in multiple countries or the entire organization and provide the UNDP Executive Board, management and other stakeholders with insights and recommendations covering UNDP policies, partnerships, approaches, and results.

Programmatic Evaluations

The IEO conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to assess UNDP’s performance at the country level. These evaluations support the formulation of a new UNDP country programme strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts to advance inclusive and sustainable development. They aim to strengthen UNDP’s accountability to national stakeholders and the Executive Board, and to promote learning. Since 2002 more than 105 ICPEs have been conducted by the IEO, serving as an important tool for learning and accountability.
Reflections are IEO’s knowledge products that look into past evaluations and capture lessons learned from UNDP’s work across its programmes and activities. They are rapid evaluation assessments that mobilize evaluative evidence for improved decision-making and better development results. To support the UNDP in its COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, the first edition of Reflections offers 61 lessons from evaluations of UNDP’s work in crisis settings.

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.

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 Development

The UNDP Evaluation Policy recognizes that improved national evaluation capacities promote progress towards the SDGs. The IEO has long supported the development of national evaluation capacities through the biennial NEC conferences – a platform for sharing knowledge about evaluation and national evaluation systems – as well as other tools. The IEO is now a proud partner of the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI), an inclusive global partnership committed to developing country-owned, sustainable monitoring and evaluation frameworks and capacities to promote the use of evidence in public decision-making, enhance accountability, and achieve better results.

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

Oscar A. Garcia (Bolivia) joined the IEO as director in 2020 and Alan Fox (United States) joined as Deputy Director in 2021.