



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# Evaluation and Independence

Existing evaluation  
policies and  
new approaches

**EVALUATION AND INDEPENDENCE:  
EXISTING EVALUATION POLICIES AND NEW APPROACHES**

Copyright © UNDP 2016, all rights reserved.  
Manufactured in the United States of America.  
Printed on recycled paper.  
September 2016

The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme, its Executive Board or the United Nations Member States. This is an independent publication by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP.

# Evaluation and Independence

Existing evaluation policies  
and new approaches

**Report for the UNDP Independent  
Evaluation Office (IEO)**

Conducted by Prof. Fritz Sager and Lyn Pleger  
Center of Competence for Public Management  
at the University of Bern



# FOREWORD

As a function that aims to drive positive change evaluation is rooted in a number of principles that include independence, credibility and utility. Evaluation units responsible for making an impartial judgement on organizational performance and results must carefully balance these interrelated norms to most effectively contribute to development change.

The way in which principles such as independence are operationalized depends significantly on policy context and governance arrangements. Building on an external review in 2014 and following the revision of Norms and Standards for Evaluation in June 2016 by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Heads, in September 2016 the Executive Board of UNDP agreed on a new Evaluation Policy to reinforce the role of evaluation at UNDP and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)'s mandate. With the Executive Board as custodian of the policy, the UNDP Administrator continues to safeguard the integrity of the evaluation function. The Director of UNDP's IEO submits reports directly to the Executive Board and has a fixed-term appointment. In support of the governance of evaluation, UNDP has expanded the remit of its oversight advisory committee from exclusive focus on audit to now also include evaluation function (as well as ethics). Together, these institutional and policy changes are the foundations of the UNDP evaluation function's independence and ability to better support learning and accountability.

This paper was commissioned by IEO as an input to process of revising the UNDP Evaluation Policy. Its authors, Professor Fritz Sager and Lyn Pleger of the Center for Public Management, University of Bern. For their work on evaluation and independence they were recipients of the Swiss Evaluation Society's annual congress 'Prix Seval' in 2015. The current paper contributes to our understanding of independence in the context of evaluation in the UN community and beyond. Through its comparative analysis, it explore the complexities of this issue in its institutional, functional and behavioral dimensions. As a principle, the application of independence remains central to enhancing our work's credibility and use. At the same time, constructive engagement with stakeholders is not an option but a necessity of good quality evaluation.

I am confident that this paper will help UNDP and its partners continue to engage in a fruitful discussion regarding independence's central role in the conduct of evaluations.



Indran A. Naidoo  
Director  
Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP

# CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	5
2. KEY FINDINGS: REVIEW ON DIMENSIONS OF INDEPENDENCE FROM IEO AND UNDP EMPLOYEES .....	6
3. CORE CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES ON INDEPENDENCE .....	7
3.1 DEFINITION OF INDEPENDENCE IN EVALUATIONS .....	7
3.2 INDEPENDENCE AND INFLUENCE: BUSD-HEURISTIC MODEL OF INFLUENCE...	9
4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR UPHOLDING INDEPENDENCE IN EVALUATIONS .....	11
5. REFERENCES .....	15
ANNEX 1. SUMMARY REVIEW ON DIMENSIONS OF INDEPENDENCE REFLECTED IN SELECT EVALUATION POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF DESIGNATED UN SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS .....	16

# ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EVD	Operations Evaluation Department
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	Operations Evaluation Department
OEO	Operations Evaluation Office
OPEV	Operations Evaluation Department
OVE	Office of Evaluation and Oversight
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The present report aims to offer a new perspective on independence and evaluation from an external academic perspective. It is based on interviews and discussions with different members from the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and presents findings derived from a document review of different UN evaluation policies (Annex 1). This report consists of six sections and is structured as follows: After the introduction, the key findings regarding dimensions of evaluations derived from several interviews with IEO and UNDP members in March 2016 are summarized in section 2. Section 3 presents a theoretical definition of independence and an explanation of two different types of independence (3.1). Moreover, a heuristic model of influence (BUSD-model) is going to be discussed (3.2). Based on the findings of the interview and the document review, the present report concludes with section 4. In here, a code of conduct for upholding independence in evaluations is provided, consisting of nine red flags, which are also explained in this section.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS: REVIEW ON DIMENSIONS OF INDEPENDENCE FROM IEO AND UNDP EMPLOYEES

The interviews and document reviews have shown that IEO has made a great effort over the last years to establish and increase the accountability of evaluations within the organization.

### Key findings

- › Shift towards accountability evaluations in the last three years, ongoing process
- › Requirement for a uniform understanding of the term independence
- › Clear definition of independence in the evaluation policy needed
- › Two perspectives on independence coming out of the discussions which can be assigned to two dimensions that should be distinguished:
  - Formal independence
  - Substantial independence

The process towards an increase of the relevance of independence is still ongoing and not completed yet. During interviews with staff of the IEO, executive board members and former IEO staff, it became evident that different perspectives, views and understanding of the term independence exist. Similarly, different issues are regarded as being important in this context. These findings demonstrate the necessity for a uniform understanding of the term independence. A common understanding and clear definition might help to efficiently enhance specific aspects of the term independence which are not as clearly established as others. Interviews and discussions revealed that two different notions on independence of evaluation exist which require a precise semantic distinction. We propose a **definition of independence** consisting of a distinction between formal independence and substantial independence which is clarified in section 3.

## 3. CORE CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES ON INDEPENDENCE

### 3.1 Definition of independence in evaluations

Based on the interviews and discussions conducted, as well as definitions in different UN evaluation policies, independence is used in different contexts. For instance, independence is understood as the absence of “not managed and/or conducted by the activity manager” as per the ESCWA Evaluation Policy July 2014. Some evaluation policies use several synonyms for independence such as “impartiality” or “transparency”, as presented in the 2006 IOM evaluation guidelines of the Office of the Inspector General. The evaluation policy of UNDP includes a section covering “norms” in which “independence” is discussed as follows:

*“The evaluation function should be structurally independent from the operational management and decision-making functions in the organization so that it is free from undue influence, more objective, and has full authority to submit reports directly to appropriate levels of decision-making.”*

*(The evaluation policy of UNDP 2011, p. 3)*

The first part of the quote describing “structural independence” refers to formal independence similar to the ESCWA Evaluation Policy. The second part, in contrast, captures a different type of independence by claiming that evaluation function should be “free from undue influence.”

The structural or formal independence captures organizational requirements for independent evaluations while the absence of influence captures independence with respect to ethical challenges. In the revised UNDP evaluation policy of 2016, evaluation principles also focus on ethical independence by first stating that “Evaluations must be independent and impartial” and then claiming that “[i]mpartiality contributes to the credibility of evaluation and the avoidance of bias in findings, analyses and conclusions. Independence requires that those being evaluated should not seek to influence the results of an evaluation, other than to point out errors of fact and to ensure that evaluations conform to their terms of reference.” The UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation also cover ethical independence in the “obligations of evaluators” section:

*“Evaluation in the United Nations systems should be demonstrably free of bias. (...) Evaluators shall ensure that they are not unduly influenced by the views or statements of any party. Where the evaluator or the evaluation manager comes under pressure to adopt a particular position or to introduce bias into the evaluation findings, it is the responsibility of the evaluator to ensure that independence of judgement is maintained.”*

*(UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation 2008, p. 5)*

Due to a lack of a coherent definition of the independence which includes both dimensions, we propose a definition which is drawn from the findings of the discussions, interviews and document review as well as from the research area of evaluation ethics:

### Definition of Evaluation Independence

Independence is a twofold concept and refers to formal independence on the one hand and substantial independence on the other. Formal independence means structural freedom from control over the conduct and substantial independence can be described as the objective scientific assessment of a subject free from undue influence meant to distort or bias the conduct or findings of an evaluation.

It is important to distinguish these two fundamentally different understandings of the term ‘influence’ as they refer to completely different problems. A clear distinction is therefore required and shown in table 1. We propose the term **substantial independence** to the type of independence which is the purpose of the present report. In contrast, we propose the term **formal independence** for capturing the other understanding of the term independence.

**Table 1. Differences between substantial independence and formal independence**

Formal independence	Substantial independence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the formal relationship between commissioned individual and the person who hired her or him to conduct the evaluation</li> <li>• Captures organizational structures</li> <li>• Related concepts: responsibilities</li> <li>• Is automatically given in the case of external evaluations.</li> <li>• A means rather than a goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes informal processes which cannot be categorized by organizational structures but by ethical challenges</li> <li>• Captures evaluation standards/guiding principles</li> <li>• Related concepts: objectivity, integrity, impartiality</li> <li>• Is not automatically given in the case of external evaluations. Can be an issue for both types of evaluations, external and internal.</li> <li>• A goal rather than a means</li> </ul>

Formal independence can be understood as organizational and structural independence. With regard to the IEO, formal independence refers to the requirement to be an independent evaluation office even though it is a part of the UNDP. Another important aspect is the clarification of responsibilities and competencies (Director, Board, Administrator) or the budget allocation. The formal independence is already well represented in the revised UNDP evaluation policy and does not require further clarification.

Substantial independence is aimed to be assured by the introduction of guiding principles and evaluation standards as it can become an ethical challenge if it is not given. The related

concepts are ‘objectivity’ and ‘impartiality’. Substantial independence requires professionalization and scientific integrity of the evaluator and cannot be assured by organizational structures. Substantial independence is not fully represented in the UNDP evaluation policy yet. One reason might be the confusion with formal independence.

Within the UNDP evaluation policy of 2011, for instance, “impartiality” and “independence” “ethics” are treated as separate norms (The evaluation policy of UNDP 2011, p. 3-4). The UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System (2008, p. 2) and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2008, p.5) also treat independence and impartiality separately. The revised evaluation policy of UNDP of 2016, however, does include a connection between independence and impartiality and a consideration of substantial independence. The postulation that “[i]ndependence requires that those being evaluated should not seek to influence the results of an evaluation, other than to point out errors of fact and to ensure that evaluations conform to their terms of reference” (The revised UNDP evaluation policy 2016, p.3) displays a promising approach to independence in the context of substantial challenges.

When comparing substantial and formal independence, substantial independence refers to the final evaluation and its quality. It therefore serves as a goal rather than a means. Formal independence refers to the conditions that enable or hinder a good final evaluation. It therefore serves as a means rather than a goal. Absolute formal independence may support but can also be detrimental to substantial independence.

The reason why we chose the term ‘substantial independence’ is that in evaluation research, independence is often closely related to evaluation ethics and therefore describes a less tangible type of independence than formal independence (see for a detailed literature overview Morris 2015; see also Kitchener 1984; Stufflebeam 1994). In evaluation theory, the research on ethical challenges discovered that one main challenge for evaluators consists of being influenced or pressured by a stakeholder (Brown & Newman 1992; Morris & Cohn 1993; Pope & Vetter 1992). Over the last decade, evaluation research increasingly focused on specific types of ethical challenges by means of empirical studies. In the context of pressure on evaluators by the hiring person, the importance of independence as an essential aspect for conducting evaluation arose (Morris 1999, 2007; Pleger et al. 2016; The LSE GV314 Group 2013; Turner 2003).

## 3.2 Independence and influence: BUSD-heuristic model of influence

When dealing with substantial independence, the main problems result from the collaboration between individuals. As discussed above, evaluation research identified pressure on evaluators or attempts to influence them during their evaluation work as one of the main ethical challenges. Regarding the UNDP, findings from the UNDP evaluation policy review point in the same direction. The review states that “[o]ver 40% of decentralised evaluation consultants report some form of unacceptable measures by UNDP Managers affecting the independence of their evaluations” (UNDP evaluation policy review 2014, p. iv) and “[a]bout 38% of consultants who responded to a survey (...) reported some form of unacceptable interference by management” (UNDP evaluation policy review 2014, p. vi). The interviews with the IEO

staff also revealed that some evaluators have also experienced attempts by a stakeholder or colleague to misrepresent findings even though that was mainly the case during national and regional evaluations.

Nevertheless, there is a fine line between the influence of a stakeholder to misinterpret findings and to influence in a way which is intended to improve the evaluation quality. Given these two types of influence intention means there is a positive and a negative type of influence. We developed a two dimensional heuristic model of influence (BUSD-heuristic model of influence) which distinguishes four types of influence. The dimensions are direction of influence and explicitness of influence. The direction of influence can be divided into constructive and destructive influence which lead to two types of negative influence (distortion and restraint) and to two types of positive influence (support and betterment). Explicitness of influence, the second dimension, can be divided into explicit and implicit influence which captures the intensity of influence. The BUSD-heuristic model of influence can help evaluators to differentiate between positive and negative influence. At the same time, it is intended to draw attention to the fact that influence is not necessarily negative but can also be positive.

**Figure 1. BUSD-heuristic model of influence**

		Explicitness of influence	
		Explicit, direct	Implicit, indirect
Direction of influence	Destructive	<b>Distortion</b> Negative Pressure	<b>Undermining</b> Negative Persuasion/Counsel
	Constructive	<b>Betterment</b> Positive Pressure	<b>Support</b> Positive Persuasion/Counsel

Source: Pleger & Sager (2016a, b)

## 4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR UPHOLDING INDEPENDENCE IN EVALUATIONS

Based on the findings, we propose a code of conduct consisting of nine red flags for upholding independence in evaluations. They aim to illustrate and communicate the importance of and resolution to problems of evaluation independence.

**1**

### A consistent understanding of an independence concept is essential

The first requirement for establishing a consistent and coherent understanding of independence is a clear definition of this term. By doing so, guidelines and evaluation principles can be developed which target specific components of independence. A clear definition of independence also helps to establish a uniform understanding of the term among staff. A uniform understanding of terms helps to discover and communicate specific aspects of independence that might need to be promoted whilst others might be well developed already.

A clear definition of the term independence also prevents a confusion with different types of independence.

**2**

### Independence is a twofold concept consisting of formal and substantial independence

With regard to a clear definition of independence, we propose a distinction between two types of independence, formal independence and substantial independence. It is important to note that both types are equally important. Nevertheless, the two types refer to different aspects of independent evaluations. While formal independence has the organization in its focus and captures organizational structures, substantial independence, in contrast, concentrates on the evaluator and refers to evaluation standards or guiding principles.

**3**

### Independence is not *per se* positive

This is a crucial point which can be intensified in evaluation policies as soon as a common understanding of the term influence in the context of ethical challenges (in here called substantial influence) is established. The absence of influence by the management or other stakeholders does not imply automatically an increase in the evaluations' quality and independence. As the BUSD-model illustrates, besides the negative types of influence, positive types of influence also exist. A comprehensive evaluation policy should not only aim to hinder negative influence but also try to foster positive influence.

4

## Independence is a requirement for both internal and external evaluation types

For instance, within “Preparing and Conducting Evaluations ECLAC guidelines”, the adjective independent is only used in the context of external evaluations but not internal evaluations. Within the ESCAP evaluation guidelines, the following is stated: “Independence: Only external evaluations that are managed and conducted by organizations other than ESCAP can be considered truly independent” (ESCAP M&E System Monitoring & Evaluation System Overview and Evaluation Guidelines 2010, p. 39). Similarly, the reverse is not necessarily applicable, namely that independence is automatically guaranteed as soon as an evaluation is externally conducted: “All evaluations according to this Policy will be managed and/or coordinated by the ESCWA team responsible for evaluations and supported by external consultants whose independence from the evaluation subject is evident” (ESCWA Evaluation Policy July 2014 p. 3-4). Analogous to the previously mentioned red flags, a clear distinction between formal and substantial independence is required. Whilst external evaluations do meet the requirements for formal independence, substantial independence is not related to whether an evaluation is conducted externally or internally.

5

## It is not only about *who* conducts the evaluation but *how* the evaluation is conducted

Building on the previous point, independence is relevant for internal and external evaluations especially with regard to substantial independence where the evaluator is the center of attention. Evaluation principles and evaluation guidelines assist an evaluator in orientation for pursuing substantial independent evaluations. The IOM evaluation guidelines, for instance, do include an annex with questions related to evaluation criteria, and include independence under “unanticipated effects”: “Are these effects complementary to other results or are they completely independent? Did these unanticipated effects affect (positively or negatively) other results?” (Office of the inspector general IOM evaluation guidelines, January 2006, p. 33). Criteria, however, which allow to answer the question are missing. Guiding principles and evaluation policies should offer as precise as possible guidance to evaluators on what substantial independence requires.

6

## Independence is required at any stage of the evaluation process

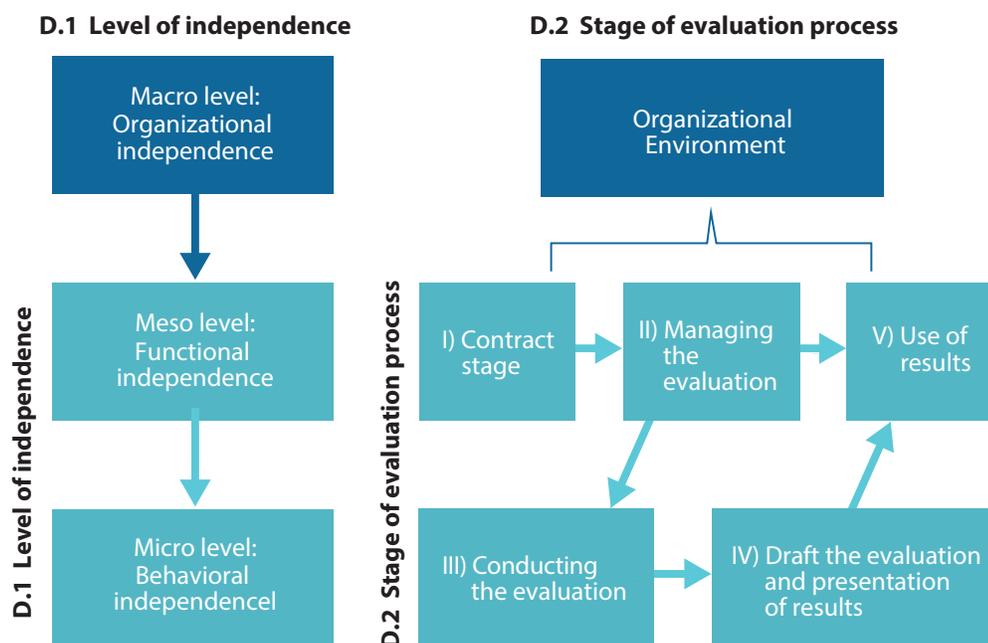
The requirement of independence can be applied to any stage of the evaluation process. Based on the definition of independence in the WHO evaluation policy, we developed a model which links the formal stages of the evaluation process to the levels of independence (figure 2). The WHO evaluation policy distinguishes three levels of independence: organizational, functional, and behavioural level, which are clarified as the following:

*“At the organizational level, the evaluation function must be separated from those responsible for the design and implementation of the programmes and operations being evaluated. At the functional level, there must be mechanisms that ensure independence*

*in the planning, funding, and reporting of evaluations. At the behavioural level, there must be a code of conduct that is ethics-based. This code of conduct will seek to prevent or appropriately manage conflicts of interest.”*

*(WHO evaluation policy 2012, p. 3–4)*

**Figure 2. Comprehensive two-dimensional model of independence in the context of organizations**



7

## Accountability and learning are not mutually exclusive but can foster each other

Accountability and learning are based on the same type of basic evaluative information. An evaluatee can only learn when the evaluation provides information about the quality of his or her work and Board can only judge the suitability/effectiveness of a programme if the same sort of information is provided. The assumption that evaluation is intended for learning fundamentally differs from evaluations meant for control therefore does not hold true. We see more importance in furthering awareness for the notion of evaluation as such, i.e. it is not a management but an assessment tool irrespective of its intention. This should be the dominant narrative on evaluations shared by both evaluated actors and the management.

8

## There is no fixed mechanism to guarantee independence

Ensuring independence is a continuous process. Establishing a uniform understanding of independence among staff and ensuring formal independence by corresponding organizational structures does not automatically mean that independence is guaranteed. The interviews with the staff, for instance, revealed that there is no uniform understanding of what independence

means. Regular training courses on independence and evaluations could help to promote a uniform understanding of independence. Courses could also help to identify potential weaknesses of the status quo for guaranteeing independence.

9

## Quality assurance mechanisms for decentralized evaluations are required

Quality assurance mechanisms are important for decentralized evaluations as independence needs to be assured for both types of evaluations, external and internal. Quality assurance mechanisms for decentralized evaluations could also consist of regular training courses or evaluation guidelines aimed in particular at external evaluators.

## 5. REFERENCES

*The references used for this report covered scientific publications and not UN documents.*

- Brown, Robert D & Newman, Dianna L (1992). Ethical Principles and Evaluation Standards Do They Match? *Evaluation Review*, 16(6), 650-663.
- Kitchener, Karen S. (1984). Intuition, critical evaluation and ethical principles: The foundation for ethical decisions in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 12(3), 43-55.
- Morris, Michael (1999). Research on evaluation ethics: What have we learned and why is it important? *New Directions for Evaluation*, 1999(82), 15-24.
- Morris, Michael (2007). Foundation officers, evaluation, and ethical problems: A pilot investigation. *Evaluation and program planning*, 30(4), 410-415.
- Morris, Michael (2015). Research on Evaluation Ethics: Reflections and an Agenda. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2015(148), 31-42.
- Morris, Michael & Cohn, Robin (1993). Program Evaluators and Ethical Challenges A National Survey. *Evaluation Review*, 17(6), 621-642.
- Pleger, Lyn & Sager, Fritz (2016a). Die Beeinflussung in der Evaluationstätigkeit in der Schweiz und was die SEVAL dagegen tun kann. *LeGes*, 2016(1), 33 – 49.
- Pleger, Lyn; Sager, Fritz; Morris, Michael; Meyer, Wolfgang and Stockmann, Reinhard. (2016). Are some countries more prone to pressure evaluators than others? Comparing findings from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and Switzerland. *American Journal of Evaluation*, early online, 1098214016662907.
- Pleger, Lyn & Sager, Fritz (2016b). Betterment, undermining, support and distortion: A heuristic model for the analysis of pressure on evaluators. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, early online, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2016.09.02>.
- Pope, Kenneth S & Vetter, Valerie A (1992). Ethical dilemmas encountered by members of the American Psychological Association: A national survey. *American Psychologist*, 47(3), 397.
- Stufflebeam, Daniel L (1994). Empowerment evaluation, objectivist evaluation, and evaluation standards: Where the future of evaluation should not go and where it needs to go. *Evaluation practice*, 15(3), 321-338.
- The LSE GV314 Group. (2013). Evaluation under contract: Government pressure and the production of policy research. *Public Administration*, 92, 224-239.
- Turner, David. (2003). Evaluation Ethics and Quality: Results of a Survey of Australasian Evaluation Society Members

# ANNEX 1.

**Table A.1 Summary review on dimensions of independence reflected in evaluation Policies and governance arrangements of designated UN system organizations**

Organizations' document	Year	Independence of Evaluation (quotations from the documents which refer to independence)
Independent Evaluation at Asian Development Bank	2012	In the Board paper establishing the organizational independence of Independent Evaluation Department (IED), internationally accepted criteria for assessing the independence of evaluation and audit functions were assumed. These include (i) organizational independence, (ii) behavioral independence, (iii) protection from outside influence, and (iv) avoidance of conflicts of interest.
ADB: Review of the Independence and Effectiveness of the Operations Evaluation Department	2008	<p>Within the development evaluation profession, a widely accepted definition of independence may be found in the Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management issued by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It specifies that an evaluation is independent when it is "carried out by entities and persons free of the control of those responsible for the design and implementation of the development intervention." The definition also indicates that independent evaluation presumes "freedom from political influence and organizational pressure", "full access to information", and "full autonomy in carrying out investigations and reporting findings".</p> <p>Building on this definition and drawing on the good practice standards of official audit and evaluation agencies, four dimensions of evaluation independence have been recognized by the ECG: (i) organizational independence, (ii) behavioral independence, (iii) protection from outside influence, and (iv) avoidance of conflicts of interest.</p> <p>Organizational independence requires the evaluation function to extend to all operations of the organization, and ensures that the evaluation unit and its staff are not under the control or influence of decision makers who have responsibility for the activities being evaluated. It also ensures that the evaluation unit and its staff have full access to the information they need to fulfill their mandate. Behavioral independence measures the extent to which the evaluation unit is able and willing to produce high-quality and uncompromising reports and to disclose its findings to the Board without Management-imposed restrictions. Protection from outside influence refers to the evaluation unit's ability to decide on the design, conduct, and content of evaluations without interference; its control over staff hiring, promotion and firing within a merit system; and its access to adequate resources to carry out the mandated responsibilities effectively. Avoidance of conflicts of interest guarantees that current, immediate future, or prior professional or personal relationships and considerations are not allowed to influence the evaluators' judgments or create the appearance of a lack of objectivity.</p>

**Table A.1 Summary review on dimensions of independence reflected in evaluation Policies and governance arrangements of designated UN system organizations**

Organizations' document	Year	Independence of Evaluation (quotations from the documents which refer to independence)
Enhancing the Independence and Effective-ness of the Operations Evaluation Department	2003	The credibility of evaluation depends on the quality and integrity of analysis, the degree of transparency of the evaluation process, and the independence of the evaluation unit. The independence of the evaluation unit is largely conditioned by the corporate culture and the internal organization framework. Such factors—particularly, those pertaining to the organization framework—have a critical bearing on the dimensions of independence, which is usually assessed in terms of four basic criteria: (i) behavioral autonomy, (ii) avoidance of conflicts of interest, (iii) insulation from external influence, and (iv) organizational independence.
Independent Evaluation of Policy and Strategy Making and Implementation - Summary report African Development Bank Group's (AfDB or the Bank)	2015	<i>Not directly related to evaluation independence.</i>
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Evaluation Policy	2010	<i>Not directly related to evaluation independence.</i>
Preparing and Conducting Evaluations ECLAC guidelines	<i>unknown</i>	Types of Evaluation in the UN Secretariat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External;</li> <li>• Ensure impartiality;</li> <li>• Help establish the merit and worth of programmes and the extent to which they have discharged their mandates and objectives and have had an impact;</li> <li>• Designed and conducted by independent, external evaluators who have had no involvement with the programme's activity;</li> <li>• Produce reports that are intended for use by intergovernmental bodies as well as by programme managers who are subject to the evaluation; and</li> <li>• Often help to identify 'best practices, and lessons learned.</li> </ul>

**Table A.1 Summary review on dimensions of independence reflected in evaluation Policies and governance arrangements of designated UN system organizations**

Organizations' document	Year	Independence of Evaluation (quotations from the documents which refer to independence)
<p>ESCAP M&amp;E System Monitoring &amp; Evaluation System Overview and Evaluation Guidelines</p>	<p>2010</p>	<p><b>Evaluation</b>                      The term “evaluation” is utilized for evaluations that are managed by the Evaluation Officers in the Programme Management Division (PMD). This requirement is introduced to strengthen the independence and impartiality of the evaluation process and its findings and recommendations. Evaluations have the purpose of supporting decision-making at the strategic management level and hold the secretariat accountable to member States and external stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Other:</i> Any other evaluative process for which it is deemed necessary that the process is managed by the Evaluation Officers of PMD to strengthen the independence of its findings. (S. 4-5)</p> <p><b>Step 5: Conduct the evaluation (...)</b>                      It is important that the evaluation manager ensures the independence of the evaluators by being prepared to accept the findings, also when they differ from the programme or evaluation manager’s perspective.</p> <p><b>Independence</b>                      Only external evaluations that are managed and conducted by organizations other than ESCAP can be considered truly independent. However, most evaluations of ESCAP’s work are managed by ESCAP staff. To maximize independence under these circumstances, evaluations that serve external accountability purposes are managed by the PMD Evaluation Officers and conducted by external consultants (evaluators). Evaluations (including evaluative reviews) that serve organizational learning purposes are, to the extent possible, conducted by external evaluators. Independence applies to evaluation managers as well as to evaluators: To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators must not have been responsible for the policysetting, design or management of the subject of evaluation, nor expect to be in the near future</p>
<p>ESCWA Evaluation Policy July 2014</p>	<p>2014</p>	<p>For the purposes of this policy, Evaluation shall refer to all activities included in the above definition provided that the evaluation process is independent, ie is not managed and/or conducted by the activity manager.</p> <p>Evaluation at ESCWA is intended as a strategic function, forward looking, methodologically rigorous, and analytically ambitious. It aims to assess as independently and logically as possible the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability of ESCWA’s work.</p> <p><b>Independence</b>                      The Evaluations Team at ESCWA reports directly to the Executive Secretary on evaluations and is institutionally independent from the programme planning and monitoring function. To ensure further independence, ESCWA staff do not participate as evaluators but limit their work to the planning and management of evaluations and the facilitation of evaluation follow up and the distillation of lessons learned. Evaluators are expected to conduct their work and present their findings independently.</p>

**Table A.1 Summary review on dimensions of independence reflected in evaluation Policies and governance arrangements of designated UN system organizations**

Organizations' document	Year	Independence of Evaluation (quotations from the documents which refer to independence)
Office of the inspector general IOM evaluation guidelines, January 2006	2006	<p>A third distinction is made according to the person(s) who conduct(s) the evaluation exercise, with two main categories: internal and external. The notions of independent, self-evaluation and joint evaluation are also discussed here. An internal evaluation is conducted by a unit and/or individuals belonging to the organization, government, department responsible for implementing the project or programme. It is an independent internal evaluation if conducted by somebody who did not directly participate to the implementation. It is an internal self-evaluation if done by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of the project or programme. In IOM for instance, OIG is conducting independent internal evaluations. An external evaluation is conducted by someone outside the donor and implementing organizations. External evaluations often require the recruitment of consultants and therefore are certainly the most expensive formula. They are independent evaluations.</p> <p>Two norms presented in the UNEG paper are often discussed when preparing, conducting or using evaluation, and deserve to be mentioned: Impartiality and Transparency. Impartiality is defined as "the absence of bias in due process, methodological rigour, consideration and presentation of achievements and challenges. It also implies that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account. [...] Impartiality provides legitimacy to evaluation and reduces the potential for conflict of interest". Impartiality is often discussed together with the notion of independence. If they are closely related, the possibility exists to have, however, a non-independent evaluation (for instance a self-evaluation) which would be fully impartial. Other notions such as neutrality or objectivity are also used to describe what can be recorded as elements of the intellectual rigour and professional integrity required for an evaluation of quality.</p> <p>There are other solutions available and one of them is to consult the donor(s) in the field if they would like to propose a consultant, which can be seen by the donor(s) as a guarantee of the independence and objectivity of the evaluation.</p>
WHO reform: draft formal evaluation policy	2012	<p>Independence as a principle: "Freedom from the control, or undue influence, of others (...)"</p> <p>"At the organizational level, the evaluation function must be separated from those responsible for the design and implementation of the programmes and operations being evaluated. At the functional level, there must be mechanisms that ensure independence in the planning, funding, and reporting of evaluations. At the behavioural level, there must be a code of conduct that is ethics-based. This code of conduct will seek to prevent or appropriately manage conflicts of interest".</p>







*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

United Nations Development Programme  
Independent Evaluation Office

220 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10017 USA  
Tel. +1(646) 781 4200, Fax. +1(646) 781 4213

Web: [www.undp.org/evaluation](http://www.undp.org/evaluation)

**Evaluation and Independence:**  
**Existing evaluation policies and new approaches**

 /UNDP\_Evaluation

 /ieoundp

 /evaluationoffice