

Brief on UN Women evaluation policy revision April 3, 2020

1. UN-Women's Evaluation Policy ([UNW/2012/12](#)) became effective in January 2013. The policy governs the independent evaluation function and applies to all initiatives supported, and funds administered, by the Entity. It aligns with the UNEG Norms and Standards and is tailored specifically to UN-Women's unique mandate to conduct evaluations that are responsive to gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. In accordance with the policy, the evaluation function underwent an external assessment by UNEG in 2014 and the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations in 2015. Building on these assessments, the UN-Women Global Evaluation Advisory Committee (GEAC) assessed UN-Women's evaluation function and policy in 2015. The three assessments concluded that UN-Women's Evaluation Policy provided a sound framework for the evaluation function. The UN-Women Executive Board subsequently requested that UN-Women carry out a review of the Evaluation Policy after three years.¹
3. These external reviews of UN-Women's evaluation function concluded that, generally, the UN-Women Evaluation Policy met UNEG Norms and Standards for independence, credibility and utility. Considering this conclusion, with the support of an external evaluation expert, IES undertook a light revision of the Evaluation Policy in 2019 based on a normative assessment of the document against recognized international standards; the needs of UN-Women stakeholders; and benchmarking with relevant policies of other UN agencies.
4. The revised Evaluation Policy document reflects three sets of changes: (i) contextual changes in UN-Women and the UN system that are relevant and applicable to the policy document such as UN reform and the establishment of IEAS; (ii) non-substantive changes to better reflect updated UNEG Norms and Standards, new evaluation practices and to improve readability; and (iii) the separation of evaluation management content to streamline the policy document.
5. Consistent with the recently updated evaluation policies of other UN agencies,² the revised policy recommends that the Entity-wide evaluation function's budget range from 1.5 to 3 per cent of UN-Women programme expenditure. This range provides flexibility to account for fluctuating programme budgets and time frames for implementation. The range is also helpful to inform the resource

¹ Decision 16/2.

² "Allocation of 1 per cent of combined programmatic (core and non-core) resources to the evaluation function; with no less than 0.3 per cent reserved for the work of IEO." (UNDP); "At least 1 per cent of its overall programme expenditure to evaluation, gathered via a pooled fund established by the Executive Director." (UNICEF); "Minimum of 1.4 per cent of its total programme expenditure to the evaluation function, up to a maximum of 3 per cent." (UNFPA).

allocation process as a frame of reference rather than as a “target” by emphasizing the allocation of resources to the evaluation function commensurate with the value it provides to the Entity and its rights holders. IES will continue to monitor that appropriate attention is paid to evaluation throughout the Entity, including, *inter alia*, by monitoring the average level of expenditure related to evaluation to provide a basis for assessing its appropriateness. Moreover, to ensure that appropriate attention is placed on evaluation to promote learning and accountability, IES will continue to monitor and advocate to ensure that the right evaluations take place at the right time particularly at decentralized levels.

6. Another noteworthy change is the update to the policy document on streamlining evaluation governance in UN-Women, in which the Advisory Committee on Oversight (ACO) has taken a greater role in overseeing the performance of the evaluation function in UN-Women and replaces the Global Evaluation Advisory Committee. In 2019, ACO terms of reference and membership were broadened to advise the Executive Director on: (i) UN-Women’s overall Evaluation Policy; (ii) the strategy, evaluation plan and Annual Work Plan that relate to the UN-Women Evaluation Policy; (iii) relevant issues arising from evaluation reports to increase management attention of areas of concern; (iv) the quality assurance system for the evaluation function, including internal and external assessments; and (v) the status of management implementation of evaluation recommendations. The ACO reports annually to the Executive Board and its terms of reference include provisions to help protect the independence of the UN-Women Independent Evaluation Service.
7. IES will organize an informal consultation with the Executive Board members specifically to update them on the revised policy in April 2020. The revised policy will also be discussed in the informal consultation on evaluation with the Executive Board on 8 June 2020. Finally, the proposed revisions will be put forward for the endorsement to the Executive Board in a context of their decision on the “Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women” in the annual Executive Board session in 22-24 June 2020.