



**Executive Board of the
United Nations Entity for
Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women**

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Evaluation

**What can we learn from UN-Women evaluations?
A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in
2017**

Summary

This report constitutes the last meta-analysis covering the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 cycle. The analysis captured the key insights from 39 evaluation reports – rated satisfactory or above – according to UN-Women evaluation quality standards. It builds on similar analyses undertaken in previous years.

Looking through the lens of the OECD-DAC methods and specified rubrics (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability), this meta-analysis reviewed and aggregated insights and lessons against selected development and organizational effectiveness and efficiency results identified in the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The analysis also examined and provided insights on the contributions made by UN-Women to humanitarian response.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN-Women Executive Board and UN-Women senior management and staff at the global, regional and country levels.

I. Purpose and Scope

1. As part of its continuous effort to promote learning and accountability, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) Independent Evaluation Service undertakes an annual meta-analysis to ensure that the body of evidence produced by corporate and decentralized evaluations are synthesized and used to inform corporate-level and decentralized policies and strategies.

2. This analysis included 39 corporate and decentralized evaluation reports produced by UN-Women in 2017, covering 34 countries. In 2017, more strategic evaluations were included in the meta-analysis, notably: four global, four regional and 11 evaluations that were either country portfolio evaluations or covered an entire thematic area of a country's Strategic Note. In addition, five countries with a programme presence were included in evaluations in 2017 that were not covered previously.

II. Methodology

3. The meta-analysis used a process of realist synthesis that builds on similar analyses undertaken in previous years. In addition to qualitative analysis of evaluation findings, the meta-analysis applies a quantitative assessment based on widely accepted OECD-DAC methods for evaluating development effectiveness of multilateral organizations.

4. Looking through the lens of the UNEG/OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability), this meta-analysis responded to selected development and organizational effectiveness and efficiency results identified in the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and also examined contributions made by UN-Women to humanitarian response.

5. Only documented/evidence-based findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons presented in the evaluation reports were considered. Insights from the evaluation process that were not documented were outside the scope of this analysis.

III. Limitations

6. The qualitative analysis process applied a structured approach by classifying all individual statements from reports. Nevertheless, the process, by its nature, required judgements to be made on: 1) what the main findings were in a report, 2) how to interpret these findings and their implications, and 3) what combinations of findings from different reports represent a reliable and valid pattern. In recognition of these judgements, the report transparently presented the prevalence of particular issues, and identified where there was a higher or lower degree of certainty in the findings.

7. While the methods described by OECD-DAC require analysis of the whole evaluation portfolio, the weakness of this approach is that the constitution of the evaluation portfolio (i.e. the proportion of corporate, global, regional and country level evaluations) differs from year to year. Furthermore, varying numbers of reports on certain areas may mask differences in the business models and performance across

regions and thematic areas. This has implications in terms of overall performance trends, since there are often regional patterns in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Thus, while trends are suggested in this report, the reliability of this comparison has limitations, and should only be considered as illustrative.

IV. Main Findings

8. The following overarching findings and insights have been developed by independent analysis of the evaluation reports based on OECD-DAC criteria for assessing development effectiveness and a qualitative synthesis of organizational effectiveness and efficiency results of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

A. Development Effectiveness

Overarching conclusion: Evaluations conclude that UN-Women interventions are overall relevant, efficient, and effective, with most achieving the expected results (across all thematic areas). Nonetheless, securing multi-year funding, scaling up of high impact, innovative approaches and strengthening RBM systems that go beyond capturing immediate outputs to tracking outcomes need to be further expanded and improved.

9. UN-Women comparative strengths are most pronounced in alliance and network-building, leveraging the integrated mandate, and convening partners. UN-Women used these approaches to overcome predominantly-hindering external environments, including reliance on short-term non-core resources that are often poorly suited to gender-transformative programming. Despite limited evidence of explicit exit-planning in UN-Women interventions, many findings on sustainability indicate the benefits of interventions are likely to continue due to development of national and local institutional capacity.

10. Although improved results-based management (RBM) systems are in place, theories of change and monitoring indicators emphasized activities and outputs, relative to outcomes. UN-Women's reliance on non-core funds with a relatively short time-span also adversely impacts the ability to measure and capture changes at outcome or impact level. Funding constraints also manifested in insufficient numbers of key staff positions (country-level senior staff, monitoring experts, and gender-mainstreaming advisors in humanitarian settings) to fully deliver on the strategic plan and country Strategic Notes.

11. Notwithstanding the limitations for making comparisons between the percentage of satisfactory ratings each year and without forestalling the possibility of further improvement, the overall trend does indicate positive improvements across all development effectiveness criteria (see Table 1).

Table 1: Coverage and performance of development effectiveness criteria

Criteria	n ¹	Coverage Level‡	Satisfactory Ratings (%) †
1. Relevance	37	Strong	97%
2. Effectiveness	36	Strong	86%
3. Sustainability	31	Strong	74%
4. Efficiency	33	Strong	81%
5. Culture of results	32	Strong	75%

Relevance: Evaluations find UN-Women interventions highly relevant to normative frameworks, successful at meeting the needs of women at the national level and demonstrated good adaptive capacity. Although UN-Women projects are well designed, most evaluations found the need for more intensive situation analyses.

12. Most evaluations provide clear evidence that UN-Women interventions firmly align with intergovernmental global and regional norms on gender, and national gender policies, strategies and programmes. For the first time, several evaluations in 2017 assessed the alignment of UN-Women programming at the country level with the UN-Women Flagship Programme Initiatives, and all found efforts to operationalize the flagship programmes.

13. There was mixed evidence in the prevalence of situation assessments and surveys of needs, with regional differences in performance. There was more evidence of assessments being conducted at global, regional and national levels than at the community level. An issue covered by some evaluations in 2017 is the added value of ‘global’ or ‘regional’ programmes being implemented in several countries. Aside from resources and limited numbers of learning exchanges, these evaluations found limited value is being added by ‘multi-country’ programme structures beyond the learning and exchange that is already supported by the day-to-day work of regional advisors. They recommend that future global and regional programmes can do more to support shared approaches, knowledge management systems, and an enabling environment rather than replacing or duplicating country-level project administration functions.

Table 2: Performance of UN-Women interventions in terms of relevance

Criteria and Sub-Criteria	n*	Coverage 2017‡	Satisfactory Ratings (%) †
1.Relevance	37	Strong	97%
1.1 Programmes and projects are suited to the needs and/or priorities of the target group.	37	Strong	97%
1.2 Projects and programmes align with national development goals.	36	Strong	94%
1.3 Effective partnerships with governments, bilateral and multilateral development and	34	Strong	100%

¹ n = number of evaluations addressing the given criterion or sub-criterion.

‡ Strong: n = 31–39; Moderate: n = 15–30; Weak: n = <15.

† The percentage of satisfactory rating is based on positive findings about UN-Women’s performance.

humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations for planning, coordination and implementation of support to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.			
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***Effectiveness:* UN-Women evaluations found that interventions at all levels have been effective, with most achieving the expected results (across all thematic areas) with limited resources. Strategic partnerships, UN joint programming and openness to innovation have contributed to some of the most effective interventions.**

14. Many evaluations found UN-Women programming demonstrated good adaptive capacity and enhanced participation of women in development. Evaluations showed many examples of UN-Women interventions successfully contributing to strengthening capacities of actors, formulating gender-sensitive policies and addressing multiple levels (e.g. policy, institutional, community).

15. Thematically, evaluations observed that policy implementation remains a challenge for political representation of women. A few evaluations noted gender-responsive budgeting was successfully supported, but evidence that this led to changes in expenditure, accountability and impact was limited. Regarding women's economic empowerment, several evaluations concluded that UN-Women's contribution to results was effective. There was a range in how holistic economic empowerment programming was and a few evaluations recommended more integrated approaches.

16. Several evaluations identified the use of service-provision models for access to social welfare, justice expertise, or business development support by country offices. These models had good reach, but mixed success in scalability within national systems and structures. Overall, evaluations concluded that violence against women is one of the hardest outcomes to measure the contribution of interventions, but integrated service provision (safe spaces, one stop shops) offered firm evidence of effectiveness. Knowledge products generated by UN-Women are considered key inputs for national and state counterparts to accelerate the harmonization of state legal frameworks with the international and national standards on ending violence against women.

17. Several evaluations concluded that UN-Women programming helped prioritize the commitment to intergovernmental gender equality norms at the country level and helped extend the reach of UN-system programming to marginalized groups. They also observed that the focus on women's participation was as beneficiaries of programming, rather than as decision-makers within programmatic structures.

18. Overall there was a strong performance by evaluations on effectiveness, with the most positive performance being concrete benefits to members of targeted groups.

Table 3: Performance of UN-Women interventions in terms of effectiveness

Criteria and Sub-Criteria	n*	Coverage 2017‡	Satisfactory Ratings (%) †
2. Achieving development objectives and expected results (effectiveness)	36	Strong	86%
2.1 Programmes and projects achieve their stated objectives and attain expected results.	36	Strong	83%
2.2 Programmes and projects have resulted in positive benefits for target group members.	36	Strong	94%
2.3 Programmes and projects made differences for a substantive number of beneficiaries and, where appropriate, contributed to national development goals.	32	Strong	81%
2.4 Programmes contributed to changes in development policies and programmes (including for disaster preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation) (policy impacts) and/or to needed system reforms.	27	Moderate	85%

Efficiency: Evaluations found solid positive performance in terms of the efficiency of implementation, management arrangements, and financial planning. However, integration of monitoring, financial and reporting systems could be improved to fully support real-time programme management and effective partnership governance.

19. Evaluations concluded that UN-Women interventions are, overall, balanced, cost-effective, and deliver on most of the intended objectives. Several evaluations noted recent improvements in UN-Women business processes such as calls for proposals, contracting processes, and partnership durations. Other evaluations noted increased transparency in operations, efficiency in recruitment, and manageability of business systems and management overheads. Overall, evaluations found that UN-Women offices manage limited financial and human resources responsively.

20. Evaluations also concluded that resources are generally insufficient to scale or sustain interventions beyond the project timeframe. Compressed project timescales was also a concern in evaluations. This links to the observation in a few evaluations that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to risk analysis and management in UN-Women programming.

21. Many evaluations noted that country offices are increasing local fundraising efforts, driven by HQ-set goals. This is experiencing mixed success, but a few evaluations found that securing multi-year donor funds to the country Strategic Note (rather than to individual projects) made a significant contribution to both management and programmatic efficiency.

Table 4: Performance of UN-Women interventions in terms of efficiency

Criteria and Sub-Criteria	n*	Coverage 2017‡	Satisfactory Ratings (%) †
4. Efficiency	33	Strong	81%
4.1 Programme activities are evaluated as cost/resource efficient.	33	Strong	82%
4.2 Implementation and objectives achieved on time (given the context).	32	Strong	88%
4.3 Systems and procedures for project/programme implementation and follow up are efficient.	31	Strong	74%

Culture of results: Most evaluations found that results-based management systems are in place, and have improved, but require continuous investment and further strengthening.

22. Evaluations found continual improvement in Results Based Management (RBM) systems over the course of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. In 2017, 75 percent of evaluations concluded that systems for managing, monitoring and reporting on results were in place and functioning, the highest level achieved to date. At the same time, this provides only a partial picture with the qualitative analysis of evaluation findings revealing limitations in RBM that require organization-wide attention. This improvement should be viewed in more nuanced terms – to avoid a tendency for compliance-based implementation of RBM and to better support the examination of outcomes.

23. There is a measurement challenge to assessing impact on gender equality that does not fit well with the way (level and timeframe) that UN-Women is funded. A dissonance between large-scale problems and small-scale projects means that the impact of UN-Women programming is gradual and difficult to reliably detect without consistent long-term tracking. Constraints on monitoring and reporting specialists at the country level and capacity of partners to report on outcomes and impact results is an area of concern reflected in several evaluations.

Table 5: Performance of UN-Women interventions in terms of culture of results

Criteria and Sub-Criteria	n*	Coverage 2017‡	Satisfactory Ratings (%) †
5. Culture of results	32	Strong	75%
5.1 Systems and processes for monitoring and reporting on programme results are effective.	32	Strong	75%
5.2 Results based management systems are effective.	32	Strong	75%

Sustainability: Despite limited evidence of explicit exit-planning in UN-Women interventions, many findings on sustainability indicate that the benefits of interventions are likely to continue due to consistent development of national and local institutional capacity.

24. Many evaluations found capacity development of the national gender equality mechanisms (especially women’s ministries) is a common and useful part of UN-Women programmes. An institutional approach was associated with good results for the management and monitoring capacities of ministries of women but had mixed results regarding outcomes of national coordination mechanisms for gender equality. Although legal and policy frameworks are often used to support sustainability, many evaluations found a gap in measuring national capacity (normally of the gender equality mechanism) to implement the normative framework.

25. Training was a common approach to capacity development, although it has low levels of sustainability without continuous follow-up, including coaching. A few evaluations concluded that institutional gender audits or efforts to increase the representation of women in leadership positions were more sustainable approaches to capacity.

26. A few evaluations observed that ‘scaling’ models were included in project design as a pathway to sustainability, but that no evidence was available to suggest that this was a feasible objective or likely outcome. The main strategy for sustainability was programmes working through national structures and institutions. Many evaluations rated this approach highly. Although capacity development adds significant value, a more coherent corporate framework for the UN-Women approach to capacity development is needed.

Table 6: Performance of UN-Women interventions in terms of sustainability

Criteria and Sub-Criteria	n*	Coverage 2017‡	Satisfactor y Ratings (%) †
3. Sustainability of Results/Benefits	31	Strong	74%
3.1 Benefits continuing or likely to continue after project or programme completion	31	Strong	74%
3.2 Projects and programmes are reported as sustainable in terms of institutional and/or community capacity.	30	Strong	73%

B. Insights on organizational effectiveness and efficiency

27. **UN coordination and joint programmes:** Many evaluations found that the most significant external driver of performance was the integration of UN-Women interventions with the UN system, especially at country level. A few evaluations found that country-level UN Joint Programmes can help to address some of the resource gaps faced by UN-Women, concluding that the Joint Programme structure created an ‘enabling environment’ for gender equality and women’s empowerment. Joint programming with the UN system was generally good, but joint implementation was weak.

28. Where joint implementation was achieved, programmes were more efficient because they leveraged UN structures. To enhance this further, evaluations of humanitarian action found that economic empowerment is a potential niche for UN-Women, and link this to wider UN programming under the cluster system.

29. Joint UN work made powerful contributions to cross-border and interdisciplinary programming, upstream sensitization, and securing women's legal rights within larger policy frameworks. Three main challenges were identified with fully leveraging UN coordination as a positive driver of change:

- Shifting from 'planning-as-one' to implementation-level 'delivery-as-one'.
- Establishing shared UN-macro frameworks/narratives to support interventions.
- Addressing the disconnect across the humanitarian-development continuum.

30. **Strategic partnerships and gender mainstreaming:** Most evaluations found that partnerships enabled significant results for gender equality at the global, regional and country level. In particular, partnerships enabled multisector work and the network of civil society organizations. Evaluations at the country level highlighted the importance of convening power; while global evaluations highlighted the importance of the integrated mandate held by UN-Women.

31. UN-Women needs to better develop strategic entry points due to highly constrained resource availability. The Strategic Plan 2014-2017 was a period of exploration and consolidation of different partnership approaches; the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 is an opportunity to bring these evolving approaches together.

32. Several evaluations found partnerships to be the key determinant of engagement levels with youth, especially when working with young men as partners for change. The structural engagement of youth to support behaviour change relied on a combination of innovation in UN-Women programming with reach, operational capacity, and partner sustainability. Overall partnership effectiveness improved when sufficient time was allocated to inception phases for partners to learn how to work jointly in practice.

33. Partnerships at the national and local levels were a key strategy for most projects and programmes. Most evaluations concluded that local capacities for implementation contributed to sustainability. A key attribute of sustainability was supporting the development of informal networks. This was especially the case for women's economic empowerment where community income generation led to financial independence of women and development of joint-venture companies.

C. Performance and adaptation in humanitarian and security situations

34. For 2017, eleven (28 percent) evaluations covered humanitarian action, including country portfolio evaluations, country-level project evaluations, and a regional evaluation on humanitarian action in Arab States. Findings on humanitarian action are framed by the context that UN-Women is not yet a member of the International Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which governs the humanitarian cluster system (while UNHCR governs refugee response).

35. UN-Women's efforts to become a member of IASC have so far been unsuccessful, which limits opportunities to leverage its mandate through the IASC clusters. Addressing the varying degrees of in-country technical expertise is also important for UN-Women to enhance its position as an influencer in humanitarian infrastructure.

36. Within the current context, partnerships have been a key driver of UN-Women contributions to humanitarian outcomes and peacebuilding. UN-Women has been able to effectively contribute to gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian response in countries such as Malawi and Cameroon. Several evaluations recommended that UN-Women focus on supporting the uptake of the IASC gender markers across all humanitarian projects.

37. The LEAP (Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Crisis Response) flagship has been a useful framework for supporting UN-Women's effectiveness, but there is a gap in terms of a more holistic overall global framework for gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action to which UN-Women could contribute in the future.

38. Women's economic empowerment was found to be the strongest humanitarian programming area regarding quality, reach, contextual adaptations and results. UN-Women's strength in economic empowerment and legal assistance for survivors of violence as part of a holistic set of response services (with clinical and psychosocial response led by UNFPA, and protection by UNHCR) is a potential area for scaling-up. This entire integrated response needs to be linked to advocacy – an area where UN-Women has established strengths and can most effectively draw on its broader integrated mandate.

39. UN-Women has been successful in operating in rural and insecure conditions, despite high costs and low-level donor presence (to validate and finance projects) associated with these operations. The short timeframe of humanitarian projects (up to one year) were universally found to be a barrier to humanitarian performance, and a few evaluations recommended UN-Women more strongly engage with donors and partners to secure multi-year resource commitments, especially in protracted crises.

40. The four priority issues to improve the management of humanitarian action identified in evaluations are:

- Ensuring that focus on humanitarian delivery and effectiveness does not adversely affect the performance of other longer-term development programming, especially in countries such as Sudan where the emergency is restricted to a specific area of the country.
- The need for more staff with competencies in humanitarian response and coordination, to complement technical expertise in gender.
- Addressing the gap in multi-stakeholder learning exchanges at the regional level to support better responses to unique regional patterns in emergencies.
- Shifting humanitarian project monitoring away from a strong focus on project activities, to capture changes at output and outcome levels across multiple project cycles.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

41. The following conclusions and recommendations were developed by independent analysis of the findings, based on cross-referencing the findings, lessons, and insights.

Development Effectiveness

Conclusion 1: Despite constrained human and financial resources, evaluations found that UN-Women's interventions at all levels have been effective, with most

achieving the expected results. Nonetheless, UN-Women should continue to improve its efforts in achieving resource targets and refine methods and systems to track and capture outcomes and impacts.

42. Strong levels of evaluation evidence affirm the continuing improvement in UN-Women's overall development effectiveness. Despite reliance on short-term non-core resources, UN-Women interventions are effective overall. The combination of UN-Women convening power, partnerships and the integrated mandate contributes to achieving positive outcomes, but current monitoring systems have limitations in capturing these pathways to outcomes.

43. While there was a substantial improvement in the roll-out of Results Based Management systems during the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, evaluations noted scope for improvements particularly in relation to systematic methods and tools for tracking and verifying indicators of progress at outcome and impact level. Gaps were also found in the capacity to use evidence and data to provide timely feedback or analysis for decision-making and learning.

44. The outcomes of UN-Women programming are gradual and hard to reliably detect without consistent long-term tracking. Increasing reliance on non-core funds (with low levels of predictability) affects the extent to which the entity can engage in the long-term programming, partnerships, and outcome monitoring that are needed to deliver results.

45. Lack of predictable funds also manifests in insufficient numbers of key staff positions to fully deliver on the strategic plan and country Strategic Notes, especially country-level senior staff, monitoring experts, and gender-mainstreaming advisors in humanitarian settings. Despite short programmes and limited evidence of explicit exit-planning in UN-Women interventions, many findings on sustainability indicate the benefits of interventions are likely to continue due to consistent development of national and local institutional capacity.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen RBM systems to support adaptive programme management with information on the progress of interventions along the pathways to outcomes that have been articulated in theories of change. Use evidence of progress towards outcomes to advocate for longer-term and more stable core resources to scale and accelerate successful interventions.

46. Continue to improve RBM systems, but with a stronger focus on monitoring and reporting contributions to outcomes (instead of compliance with activity plans); and, where feasible, link this results data with financial data to help managers and partners track which interventions and partnerships are translating resources into outcomes most effectively. *Achieve this by:*

- Enabling managers in the field to more easily cross-query corporate results tracking systems with corporate finance systems to identify projects and partnerships that are most cost-effective or are underdelivering.
- Linking all partners into common reporting systems to enable quicker aggregation and comparison of monitoring data.
- Reducing the number of data points collected on implementation of activities and redirecting this effort to tracking evidenced-based key performance indicators along the theory of change to outcome-level changes.

Conclusion 2: Knowledge management is reliant on the role of regional offices to connect country-level practitioners and ensure knowledge is translated into results.

47. The extent to which global evidence and programming approaches are ‘adapted’ to a specific region was found to be an important internal driver of UN-Women’s performance. ‘Regionality’ contributes best when it is manifested in regionalized approaches, knowledge exchange and creating an ‘enabling environment’; rather than replacing or duplicating country-level project administration functions. Support to technical exchanges between people from different countries or communities was found to be especially valued where professionals could learn from neighbouring countries, or places they felt share similar attributes to their own situations.

Recommendation 2: Reduce duplication of country-level programme management functions within regional programmes, directing this capacity to support the enabling environment for participating countries. In particular, strengthen the knowledge exchange function of regional offices, including with human capital for translation of knowledge resources into regional languages.

48. Attempt to avoid regional (and global) programmes that require separate programme management functions to the capacities already available within participating country and multi-country offices. In doing so, progressively make the case for shared resources in regional programmes to be made available to support knowledge exchange and inter-country learning. *Achieve this by:*

- Minimizing additional reporting requirements (logframe indicators) of regional and global programmes beyond those already collected and reported by countries.
- Including within the budget for global and regional programmes resources for dedicated knowledge management positions, meaningful levels of knowledge exchange activities between participating countries, and systematic translation of knowledge materials to accessible languages.

Operational effectiveness and efficiency

Conclusion 3: Effective UN coordination and joint programmes have been a strong driver of effective programming at the global and country levels.

49. Country-level UN Joint Programmes helped address some gaps faced by UN-Women resource challenges and create an ‘enabling environment’ for gender equality and women’s empowerment. They have enabled UN-Women to maximize comparative strengths and mitigate weaknesses, have made powerful contributions to cross-border and interdisciplinary programming, and secured the legal rights of women within larger policy frameworks. However, Joint Programmes are often ‘joint’ in planning more than they are in implementation.

Recommendation 3: Realizing the potential of UN reform to support gender equality and women’s empowerment requires building from ‘planning-as-one’ to implementation-level ‘delivery-as-one’.

50. In some cases, such as economic empowerment and gender responsive budgeting, supporting implementation-as-one requires shared UN-macro frameworks/narratives to support interventions and counteract regressive discourse. In many cases, shared frameworks already exist, and UN-Women can leverage the integrated mandate to work hand-in-hand with other entities.

Conclusion 4: Strategic partnerships have delivered substantive normative and operational results for UN-Women, and are the heart of programme sustainability.

51. Partnerships have been a significant enabler of results for gender equality; at global, regional and country levels. In particular, partnerships have supported multisector working, and the network of civil society organizations that UN-Women has access to is considered to be a firm comparative strength. Many lessons have been learned about improving the governance of UN-Women partnerships, which need to be implemented more broadly and more consistently.

52. Key lessons to guide the improvement of partnership governance include: initiating working governance arrangements during the design stage of partnerships to ‘hit-the-ground-running’ and stress-test assumptions about working together; using inception phases to develop consensus around key issues between representatives from each partner; and focusing monitoring and reporting systems on the performance of the partnership towards catalysing results, rather than compliance ‘to the letter’ of the original plan.

Recommendation 4: Institutionalize a range of responsive (fit-for-purpose) governance practices for working with different sizes and types of partners.

53. Use UN-Women strengths in partnership, network-building, and UN coordination as three powerful drivers of change to counter challenging external contexts and reliance on short-term non-core funding. Promulgate throughout UN-Women lessons learned about effectively working in partnership: improving governance arrangements and practices for strategic partnerships, joint programmes, and formal alliances. This should include mechanisms for scaling governance and compliance requirements to better fit the size and risk of different partners and partnerships. *Achieve this by:*

- Establishing a new mechanism of ‘small-scale funding agreement’ with lower levels of compliance requirements for partnering with small and low-risk women’s civil society organizations.
- For strategic partnerships, instigating working governance mechanisms at the (pre-funding) design stage to build familiarity between organizational representatives and refine working modalities.
- In all partnerships, establishing the practice of ‘inception phases’ of sufficient length to build consensus and publish joint analyses.
- Seeking ways to strengthen joint implementation of UN Joint Programmes, building on successful experiences in joint planning.

Conclusion 5: UN-Women is overcoming barriers to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment through building alliances and networks of partners.

54. UN-Women comparative strengths are most pronounced in alliance and network building, leveraging the integrated mandate, and working with partners. Network-building is a key driver of UN-Women contributions to impact – especially when linked to strategic partnerships and formal collaboration. Using such approaches, UN-Women is overcoming barriers to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment, despite reliance on short-term non-core resources poorly suited to gender-transformative programming. Given the short timeframe of many

interventions, utilizing local capacities for implementation and supporting the development of informal networks contributed to better sustainability.

Recommendation 5: Focus country-level partnerships and programming to overcome barriers for gender equality and women’s empowerment by leveraging positive external drivers of change.

55. External factors identified by evaluations as influencing UN-Women outcomes were found to have effects varying from positive to neutral to negative. This suggests that scope exists to influence the ‘balance’ of external drivers in favour of UN-Women outcomes. While not all such drivers can be influenced by UN-Women (such as the level of broader aid-system presence, or the political environment, including level of crises), scope does exist to leverage others. These include:

- The level of participation of civil society in national processes
- The wider information environment
- The legal and policy framework and level of gender mainstreaming
- Multisector coordination across state entities
- Level of grassroots focus and meeting wider community needs beyond gender relations.

Humanitarian action

Conclusion 6: UN-Women is uniquely positioned to address the provision of economic empowerment and access to justice for women and girl survivors of gender-based violence in humanitarian response.

56. While the absence of positions within the IASC structure limits opportunities for UN-Women to assume a clear leadership role, UN-Women has been able to uniquely address the provision of economic empowerment and access to justice for women and girl survivors of gender-based violence. This complements the work of the humanitarian cluster system in providing safe spaces, psychosocial support and the minimum initial service package; and is a promising entry point for UN-Women to work in partnership with other UN agencies. Building a case for UN-Women making a wider contribution to humanitarian coordination requires the deployment of sufficient in-country technical expertise in emergencies.

57. While most of the evidence on humanitarian action focuses on UN-Women’s contribution to, and positioning in, the response, there is a secondary set of evidence that indicates the gendered nature of most disaster risk-reduction and disaster preparedness institutions. Given the implications for determining the effectiveness and focus of humanitarian responses, supporting gender mainstreaming in national disaster planning institutions could also be an important entry point for UN-Women.

Recommendation 6: Build experience and demand for UN-Women work in humanitarian action through delivering concrete results with partners in economic empowerment, access to justice, and disaster preparedness.

58. Grow demand in the humanitarian systems for UN-Women to contribute a wider gender coordination role by consistently and collaboratively delivering results in the areas of: women’s economic empowerment and access to justice for survivors of violence; gender mainstreaming and advocacy in humanitarian response; and gender mainstreaming in disaster risk reduction and preparedness. Develop these by working in close and supportive partnership with OCHA, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF.

- Prioritizing the availability of gender technical staff in emergencies to support gender mainstreaming in partnership with OCHA and/or UNHCR.
- Prioritizing programmatic activities and fundraising around the provision of economic empowerment and access to justice to survivors of gender-based violence in close partnership with relevant agencies.
- Focusing UN-Women leadership contributions around the humanitarian-development continuum, including integrating peacebuilding experiences and mainstreaming gender in national disaster preparedness.
- Leveraging the consistent provision of these concrete contributions to support the case for UN-Women membership of the Inter Agency Standing Committee.

ANNEX I

Coverage and summary of results for each sub-criterion²

Criteria and Sub-Criteria	n*	Coverage 2016‡	Comparability ³	Satisfactory Ratings (%) †			
				2013	2014/5	2016	2017
1.Relevance	37	Strong	Strong	80%	87%	95%	97%
1.1 Programmes and projects are suited to the needs and/or priorities of the target group.	37	Strong	Yes	86%	92%	97%	97%
1.2 Projects and programmes align with national development goals.	36	Strong	Yes	100%	97%	94%	94%
1.3 Effective partnerships with governments, bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations for planning, coordination and implementation of support to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women	34	Strong	Yes	55%	72%	94%	100%
2. Achieving development objective and expected results (effectiveness)	36	Strong	Moderate	88%	67%	97%	86%
2.1 Programmes and projects achieve their stated objectives and attain expected results.	36	Strong	Yes	90%	90%	97%	83%
2.2 Programmes and projects have resulted in positive benefits for target group members	36	Strong	Yes	89%	69%	97%	94%
2.3 Programmes and projects made differences for a substantial number of beneficiaries and where appropriate contributed to national development goals.	32	Strong	No	75%	37%	-	81%
2.4 Programmes contributed to significant changes in development policies and programmes (including for disaster preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation) (policy impacts) and/or to needed system reforms.	27	Moderate	No	100%	70%	97%	85%
3. Sustainability of results/benefits	31	Strong	Low	28%	65%	56%	74%
3.1 Benefits continuing or likely to continue after project or programme completion.	31	Strong	No	-	64%	59%	74%
3.2 Projects and programmes are reported as sustainable in terms of institutional and/or community capacity.	30	Strong	No	28%	66%	53%	73%
4. Efficiency	33	Strong	Low	63%	52%	64%	81%
4.1 Programme activities are evaluated as cost/resource efficient.	33	Strong	No	71%	53%	88%	82%
4.2 Implementation and objectives achieved on time (given the context).	32	Strong	Yes	-	44%	57%	88%
4.3 Systems and procedures for project/programme implementation and follow up are efficient (including managing its operations and programme, financial resource issues, human resource issues, risk management, coordination,	31	Strong	No	55%	61%	46%	74%

² While trends are suggested, the reliability of this comparison has limitations, and should only be considered as illustrative.

³ Please read the chapter on limitations regarding comparability of indicators over time.

oversight/governance, project/programme design, coordination, logistical arrangements etc.).							
5. Culture of results	32	Strong	Low	25%	33%	76%	75%
5.1 Systems and processes for monitoring and reporting on programme results are effective.	32	Strong	No	33%	32%	79%	75%
5.2 Results based management systems are effective.	32	Strong	No	16%	33%	74%	75%
* n = number of evaluations addressing the given sub-criterion ‡ Strong: n=31–36; Moderate: n=15–30; Weak: n=<15. † The percentage of satisfactory rating is based on positive findings about UN-Women’s performance							

ANNEX II

Region	Office/division	Title of evaluation	Quality rating	
West and Central Africa	Cameroon	Mainstreaming Gender into Humanitarian Response	Good	
	Cameroon	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good	
	Cote d'Ivoire	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good	
	Cote d'Ivoire	Anticipating and Preventing Women and Young Girls' Vulnerability to Terrorism through Their Empowerment, Community Dialogue and Education in the Northern Part of Côte d'Ivoire	Good	
	Democratic Republic of Congo	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good	
East and Southern Africa	Regional Office for West and Central Africa (Senegal)	Action Humanitaire Sensible au Genre et Aide aux Femmes et Filles Touchées par le Terrorisme de Boko Haram à Diffa - Niger	Good	
	Ethiopia	Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	Good	
	Kenya	Midterm Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good	
		Engaging Women in Preventing and Countering Extremist Violence	Good	
		Integrating Gender in Peace Support Operations	Good	
	Malawi	Gender-based Governance	Good	
	Regional Office for East and Southern Africa (Kenya)	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good	
		Regional Evaluation on Capacity Development initiatives during Strategic Note period	Good	
		Sudan	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
		Tanzania	Wanawake-Wanaweza Project on Women's Leadership and Political Participation	Satisfactory
Rwanda	The National Scale Up of the ISANGE One Stop Centre Model	Satisfactory		
Asia and the Pacific	China	Promote Efforts for National Legislation on Domestic Violence and Upscale the Multi-sector Model in China	Good	
	Papua New Guinea	Equality for Progress and Planim Save Kamap Strongpela (Plant Knowledge, Grow Strong)	Good	
	Timor Leste	Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	Good	

	Vietnam	Strengthening Women's Capacity in Disaster Risk Reduction to Cope with Climate Change	Very Good
Arab States	Afghanistan	Ending Violence Against Women	Good
	Jordan	Promoting Rural Women's Food Security	Very Good
	Regional Office for Arab States (Egypt)	Thematic Evaluation of UN-Women's Humanitarian Action in the Arab States Region	Very Good
		Syrian Women Economic Empowerment Regional Project	Good
	Palestine	One Stop Shop for Sustainable Development Joint Programme	Good
		Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
	Morocco	Evaluation du Degré d'intégration du Genre dans Les Plans Communaux de Développement	Good
Projet "Appui aux Femmes Semencières pour un Développement Egalitaire, Solidaire et Durable au Maroc"		Good	
Egypt (Country office)	Securing Rights and Improving Livelihoods of Women Programme	Good	
	Thematic Evaluation of UN-Women's Contribution to Women's Leadership and Political Participation	Very Good	
Europe and Central Asia	Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (Turkey)	UN-Women's Contribution to Gender- Responsive Budgeting in Europe and Central Asia Region	Very Good
	Kyrgyzstan	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
	Moldova	Enhancing Women's Political Representation Through Improved Capacity and Enhanced Support	Very Good
Corporate	Moldova	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good
	IEO	UN-Women Strategic Partnerships on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	Very Good
HQ Divisions	Policy Division	Preventing and Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania, Mexico and Timor Leste	Very Good
		Women's Economic Empowerment and Integration into the Value Chain of the Coca-Cola Company in Brazil, Egypt and South Africa	Good
	Programme Division	Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers' Labour and Human Rights: Engaging with International, National Human Rights Mechanisms to Enhance Accountability	Good

ANNEX III

Guide to classify evaluation findings

The following classifications guide is based on the OECD-DAC development effectiveness review methods⁴ with indicators adapted to UN-Women. The approach and methodology has been used to synthesize evaluative evidence and insights from evaluation reports rated satisfactory and above.

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
1. Relevance				
1.1 UN-Women supported programmes and projects are suited to the needs and/or priorities of the target group.	Substantial elements of programme or project activities and outputs were unsuited to the needs and priorities of the target group.	No systematic analysis of target group needs and priorities took place during the design phase of developmental or relief and rehabilitation programming or there is some evident mismatch between programme and project activities and outputs and the needs and priorities of the target group.	UN-Women supported activity, programme or project is designed taking into account the needs of the target group as identified through a process of situation or problem analysis (including needs assessment for relief operations) and the resulting activities are designed to meet the needs of the target group.	UN-Women supported programmes and projects are suited to the needs and/or priorities of the target group.
1.2 UN-Women supported development projects and programmes align with national development goals.	Significant elements of UN-Women supported development programme and project activity run counter to national development priorities with a resulting loss of effectiveness.	<u>Significant portion</u> (1/4 or more) of the UN-Women programmes and projects are not aligned with national plans and priorities, but there is no evidence that they run counter to those priorities.	<u>Most</u> UN-Women supported development programmes and projects are aligned with national plans and priorities as expressed in national poverty eradication and sector plans and priorities.	UN-Women supported development projects and programmes are fully aligned with national development goals.
1.3 UN-Women has developed an effective partnership with governments,	UN-Women experiences significant divergence in	UN-Women has experienced significant difficulties in	UN-Women has improved the effectiveness of its partnership	UN-Women has developed an effective partnership with governments,

⁴ The approach and methodology were developed under the guidance of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee Network on Development Evaluation (DAC-EVALNET).

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian organizations and NGOs for planning, coordination and implementation of support to development and/or emergency preparedness, humanitarian relief and rehabilitation efforts.	priorities from those of its (government, UN Agencies, NGO or donor) partners and lacks a strategy or plan which will credibly address the divergence and which should result in strengthened partnership over time.	developing an effective relationship with partners and that there has been significant divergence in the priorities of the UN-Women and its partners.	relationship with partners over time during the evaluation period and that this partnership was effective at the time of the evaluation or was demonstrably improved.	UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian organizations and NGOs for planning, coordination and implementation of support to development and/or emergency preparedness, and humanitarian relief.
2. Effectiveness				
2.1 UN-Women supported programmes and projects achieve their stated development objectives and attain expected results.	Less than half of stated output and outcome objectives have been achieved including one or more very important output and/or outcome level objectives.	Half or less than half of stated output and outcome level objectives are achieved.	UN-Women supported programmes and projects either achieve at least a majority of stated output and outcome objectives (more than 50% if stated) or that the most important of stated output and outcome objectives are achieved.	UN-Women supported programmes and projects achieve all or almost all significant development and/or humanitarian objectives at the output and outcome level.
2.2 UN-Women supported programmes and projects have resulted in positive benefits for target group members.	Problems in the design or delivery of UN-Women supported activities mean that expected positive benefits for target group members have not occurred or are unlikely to occur.	UN-Women supported projects and programmes result in no or very few positive changes experienced by target group members. These benefits may include the avoidance or reduction of negative effects of a sudden onset or	UN-Women supported projects and programmes have resulted in positive changes experienced by target group members (at the individual, household or community level). These benefits may include the avoidance or reduction of negative effects of a	UN-Women supported projects and programmes have resulted in widespread and significant positive changes experienced by target group members as measured using either quantitative or qualitative methods. These benefits may include the avoidance

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
		protracted emergency.	sudden onset or protracted emergency.	or reduction of negative effects of a sudden onset or protracted emergency.
2.3 UN-Women programmes and projects made differences for a substantial number of beneficiaries and where appropriate contributed to national development goals.	UN-Women supported projects and programmes have not contributed to positive changes in the lives of beneficiaries as measured quantitatively or qualitatively.	UN-Women supported projects and programmes have contributed to positive changes in the lives of only a small number of beneficiaries (when compared to project or programme targets and local or national goals if established).	UN-Women supported projects and programmes have contributed to positive changes in the lives of substantial numbers of beneficiaries as measured quantitatively or qualitatively.	UN-Women supported projects and programmes have contributed to positive changes in the lives of substantial numbers of beneficiaries. Further, they have contributed to the achievement of specific national development goals or have contributed to meeting development and humanitarian relief objectives agreed to with the national government and/or national and international development and relief organizations.
2.4 UN-Women activities contributed to significant changes in national development policies and programmes (including for disaster preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation) (policy impacts) and/or to needed system reforms.	National policies and programmes in a given sector or area of development (including disaster preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation) were deficient and required strengthening but UN-Women activities have not addressed these deficiencies.	UN-Women activities have not made a significant contribution to the development of national policies and programmes in a given sector or area of development, disaster preparedness, emergency response or rehabilitation.	UN-Women activities have made a substantial contribution to either re-orienting or sustaining effective national policies or programmes in a given sector or area of development, disaster preparedness, emergency response or rehabilitation.	UN-Women activities have made a substantial contribution to either re-orienting or sustaining effective national policies or programmes in a given sector or area of development, disaster preparedness, emergency response or rehabilitation. Further, the supported policies

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
				and programme implementation modalities are expected to result in improved positive impacts for target group members.
3. Sustainability				
3.1 Benefits continuing or likely to continue after project or programme completion or there are effective measures to link the humanitarian to longer-term developmental results.	There is a very low probability that the programme/project will result in continued intended benefits for the target group after project completion.	There is a low probability that the programme/project will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion.	Likely that the programme or project will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion.	Highly likely that the programme or project will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion. Further, they are likely to succeed in securing continuing benefits for target group members.
3.2 Extent UN-Women supported projects and programmes are reported as sustainable in terms of institutional and/or community capacity.	The design of UN-Women supported programmes and projects failed to address the need to strengthen institutional and/or community capacity as required. In the case of humanitarian operations, the design of programmes and projects failed to take account of identified needs to strengthen local capacities for delivery of relief operations and/or for managing the transition to rehabilitation and/or development.	UN-Women programmes and projects may have failed to contribute to strengthening institutional and/or community capacity or, where appropriate, to strengthen local capacities for delivery of relief operations and/or for managing the transition to rehabilitation and/or development.	UN-Women programmes and projects may have contributed to strengthening institutional and/or community capacity but with limited success.	Either UN-Women programmes or projects have contributed to significantly strengthen institutional and/or community capacity as required or institutional partners and communities already had the required capacity to sustain programme results.

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
4. Efficiency				
4.1 Programme activities are evaluated as cost/resource efficient.	Credible information indicating that UN-Women supported programmes and projects are not cost/resource efficient.	UN-Women supported programmes and projects under evaluation do not have credible, reliable information on the costs of activities and inputs and therefore the evaluation is not able to report on cost/resource efficiency. Or UN-Women supported programmes and projects under evaluation present mixed findings on the cost/resource efficiency of the inputs.	Level of programme outputs achieved when compared to the cost of programme activities and inputs are appropriate even when the programme design process did not directly consider alternative programme delivery methods and their associated costs.	UN-Women supported programmes and projects are designed to include activities and inputs that produce outputs in the most cost/resource efficient manner available at the time.
4.2 Evaluation indicates implementation and objectives achieved on time (given the context, in the case of humanitarian programming).	Less than half of stated output and outcome level objectives of UN-Women supported programmes and projects are achieved on time, there is no credible plan or legitimate explanation found by the evaluation which would suggest significant improvement in on-time objectives achievement in the future.	Less than half of stated output and outcome level objectives of UN-Women supported programmes and projects are achieved on time but the programme or project design has been adjusted to take account of difficulties encountered and can be expected to improve the pace of objectives achievement in the future. In the case of humanitarian programming, there	More than half of stated output and outcome level objectives of UN-Women supported programmes and projects are achieved on time and this level is appropriate to the context faced by the programme during implementation, particularly for humanitarian programming.	Nearly all stated output and outcome level objectives of UN-Women supported programmes and projects are achieved on time or, in the case of humanitarian programming, a legitimate explanation for delays in the achievement of some outputs/outcomes is provided.

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
		was a legitimate explanation for the delays.		
4.3 Evaluation indicates that UN-Women systems and procedures for project/programme implementation and follow up are efficient (including systems for engaging staff, procuring project inputs, disbursing payment, logistical arrangements etc.).	Serious deficiencies in UN-Women systems and procedures for project/programme implementation that result in significant delays in project start-up, implementation or completion and/or significant cost increases.	Some deficiencies in UN-Women systems and procedures for project/programme implementation but does not indicate that these have contributed to delays in achieving project/programme objectives.	UN-Women systems and procedures for project implementation are reasonably efficient and have not resulted in significant delays or increased costs.	Efficiency of agency systems and procedures for project implementation represent an important organizational strength in the implementation of the programme under evaluation.
5. Culture of Results to Improve Development Effectiveness				
5.1 Systems and processes for monitoring and reporting on programme results are effective.	Absence of monitoring and reporting systems programming. This would include the absence of adequate monitoring of outputs during the implementation programmes including in a humanitarian setting.	While monitoring and reporting systems for programming exist, either they do not report on a regular basis or they are inadequate in frequency, coverage or reliability.	Monitoring and reporting systems for programming as appropriate are well established and report regularly.	Monitoring and reporting systems for the programme are well established and report regularly. The quality of regular reports is rated highly by the evaluation and results are reportedly used in the management of the programme.
5.2 Results Based Management (RBM) systems are effective.	No evidence of the existence of an RBM system for the programme and no system is being developed.	While an RBM system is in place, or being developed, it is unreliable and does not produce regular reports on programme performance.	RBM system is in place and produces regular reports on programme performance.	RBM system is in place for the programme and there is evidence noted in the evaluation that the system is used to make changes in the programme to improve effectiveness.