



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

Distr.: General  
4 August 2016

Original: English

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**Second regular session of 2016**

1 and 2 September 2016

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Evaluation**

## **What can we learn from UN-Women evaluations? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2014 and 2015**

### *Summary*

In accordance with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) Corporate Evaluation Plan 2014-2017, the UN-Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook a meta-analysis of corporate and decentralized evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2014 and 2015.

The meta-analysis aggregated and synthesized information generated from 49 evaluations and transformed this evidence into accessible knowledge for future systematic strengthening of programming, organizational effectiveness and the evaluation function. The analysis will also help to inform the new UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and contribute to better understanding of the context in which ongoing and new initiatives will be implemented.

The meta-analysis considered insights according to United Nations Evaluation Group criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, culture of results and sustainability. The analysis also provided a brief synthesis of changes on some emergent insights captured in previous meta-analysis reports.

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

## **A. 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 Office 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. In 2015, UN-Women launched its Flagship Programmes Initiative, with an initial list of 12 flagship programmes that are intended to help build synergies across thematic areas, improve focus and scale of programmes, and support the realization of the UN-Women integrated mandate (normative, coordination and operational). Some flagships are new; others build on existing global programmes, such as Safe Cities. The evidence from 2015 evaluations is too early to provide direct insights into flagship programmes but can nevertheless contribute to better understanding the context in which they will be implemented.

3. The purpose of this meta-analysis is to capture the key insights from evaluation reports that met UN-Women quality standards. The findings will also be used to inform the new Strategic Plan of UN-Women (2018-2022) and feed into ongoing efforts to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. The scope of the meta-analysis includes corporate and decentralized evaluation reports produced by UN-Women in 2015 (28 evaluations) and 2014 (21 evaluations) that were rated as “satisfactory” or higher in the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System. For 2015, it includes three country portfolio evaluations for the first time. The analysis also provides a useful overview on a series of common patterns over time by making reference to previous meta-analyses. This provides useful insights and shows the extent to which progress has been made on some of the emergent insights identified in previous meta-analyses.

## **B. Methodology**

5. The meta-analysis applied a qualitative and quantitative structured analysis. The quantitative assessment analysed the frequency with which evaluation findings referred to positive or negative performance in relation to various aspects specified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee methodological guidance for assessing development effectiveness.

6. A qualitative analysis was undertaken of high-level drivers of UN-Women’s performance, areas of innovation and examples of positive practice. Only clearly stated 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.

## **C. Limitations**

7. The qualitative synthesis process applied structured analysis. Nevertheless, the process, by its nature, requires judgements to be made on: (a) what the main findings are in a report; (b) how to interpret these findings and their implications; and (c) what combinations of findings from different reports represent a reliable pattern. In recognition of these judgements, the report attempted to be transparent

about the prevalence of particular issues, and identified where there was a higher or lower degree of certainty in the findings.

## D. Main conclusions

The following conclusions and recommendations have been developed by independent analysis of the findings.

### Overall conclusion:

**UN-Women interventions are relevant and largely making positive contributions towards gender equality and women’s empowerment, but there is scope to improve results-based management systems, efficiency and sustainability at the country level.**

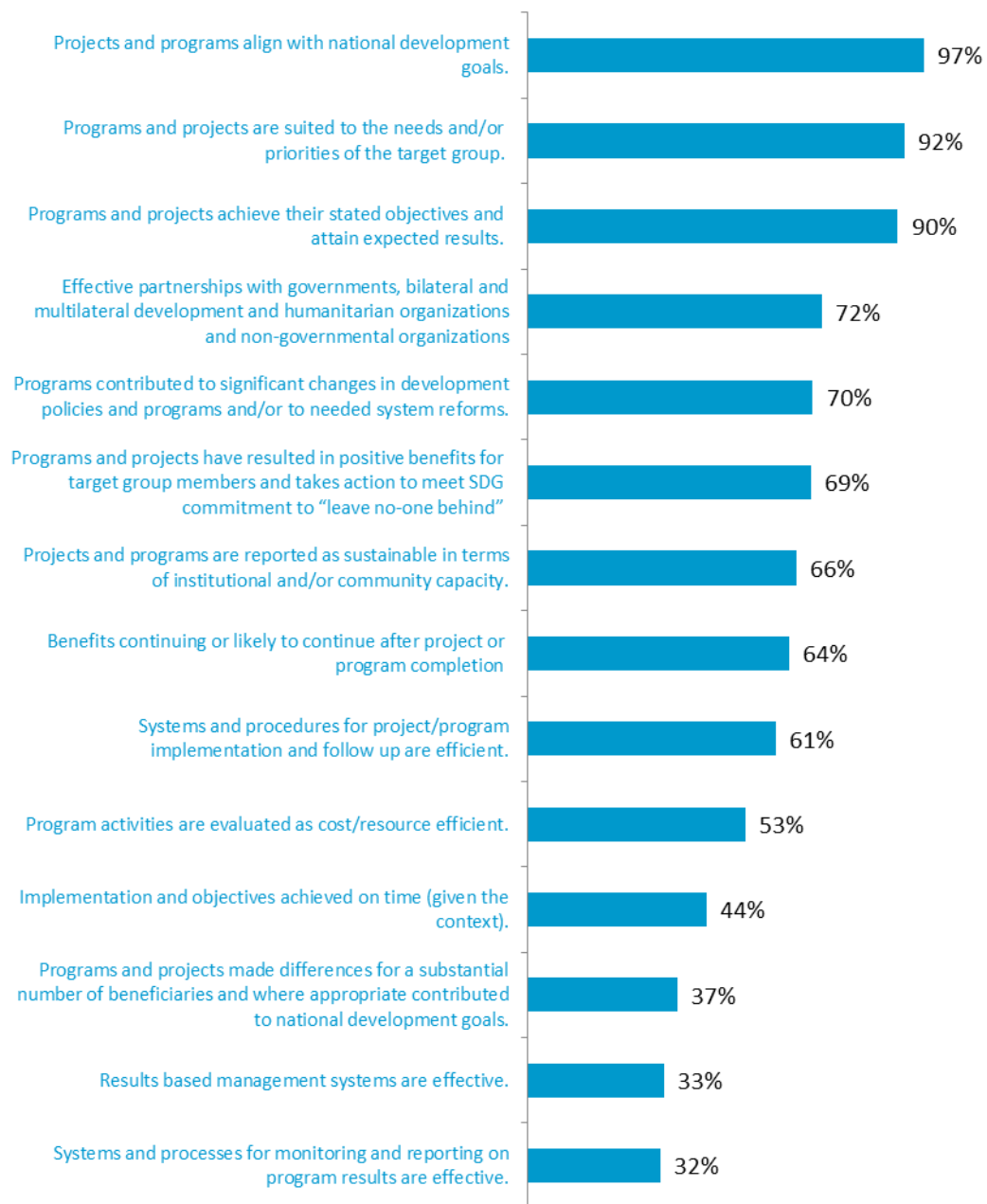
**Table 1. Coverage and performance of development effectiveness criteria**

Criteria	n*	Coverage level‡	Satisfactory ratings (%) †
1. Relevance	49	Strong	87%
2. Effectiveness	49	Strong	67%
3. Sustainability	47	Strong	61%
4. Efficiency	45	Strong	57%
5. Culture of results	41	Strong	33%

\* n = number of evaluations addressing the given sub-criterion.  
‡ Strong: n=31–49; moderate: n=15–30; weak: n=<15.  
† The percentage of satisfactory rating is based on positive findings about UN-Women’s performance.

8. UN-Women is strongest in terms of the relevance of its interventions to both national frameworks and the needs of women. UN-Women interventions are increasingly making positive contributions towards gender equality and women’s empowerment. However, challenges remained in terms of reaching substantial scale and reach. In addition, there is scope to improve results-based management systems, efficiency and sustainability at the country level.

**Figure 1: Percentage of 2014 and 2015 evaluations rating development effectiveness sub-criteria as “satisfactory” or “highly satisfactory”**



## Relevance

**Table 2. Coverage of evidence on relevance**

Sub-criteria	n*	Coverage level‡	Satisfactory ratings (%) †
1.1 Programmes and projects are suited to the needs and/or priorities of the target group.	38	Strong	92%
1.2 Projects and programmes align with national development goals.	33	Strong	97%
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.	32	Strong	72%
* n = number of evaluations addressing the given sub-criterion. ‡ Strong: n=31–49; moderate: n=15–30; weak: n=<15. † The percentage of satisfactory rating is based on positive findings about UN-Women’s performance.			

**Conclusion 1: The strongest aspect of UN-Women’s development effectiveness is the high level of relevance its interventions have to both the policy context and the assessed needs of women.**

9. Since 2013, UN-Women has been able to maintain high performance with regard to the relevance of its interventions to both policy frameworks (national and international) and the needs of women. In a few cases, evaluations questioned whether or not UN-Women’s selected approach was the most relevant or efficient to achieve its aims<sup>1</sup>, but the overall body of evaluations also noted that country offices were working within a wide range of external constraints.

10. While the relevance of intervention designs has remained high, the relevance of UN-Women’s choice of partners has increased. In combination, these aspects of relevance are correlated with evaluations finding strong levels of delivery for outputs— continuing the trend seen in previous years.

## Effectiveness

**Table 3. Coverage of evidence on effectiveness**

Sub-criteria	n*	Coverage level‡	Satisfactory ratings (%) †
2.1 Programmes and projects achieve their stated objectives and attain expected results.	42	Strong	90%
2.2 Programmes and projects have resulted in positive benefits for target group members.	39	Strong	69%
2.3 Programmes and projects made differences for a substantial number of beneficiaries and where appropriate contributed to national development goals.	30	Moderate	37%
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.	33	Strong	70%
* n = number of evaluations addressing the given sub-criterion. ‡ Strong: n=31–49; moderate: n=15–30; weak: n=<15. † The percentage of satisfactory rating is based on positive findings about UN-Women’s performance.			

<sup>1</sup> Were there other designs or options available that would have been more relevant than the one that was chosen and/or were there other issues that should have been addressed first?

**Conclusion 2: UN-Women achieves stated outputs. However, increasing levels of evidence on UN-Women’s contributions to outcomes highlights the need to expand the reach of interventions (to benefit more substantial numbers of people) and expand the timeframe of projects (to address root causes of marginalization and inequality).**

11. Evaluations continued to find that UN-Women is delivering strongly in terms of outputs. Unlike the 2013 meta-analysis, however, many evaluations have also started to report on evidence of outcomes. While UN-Women is found to be contributing to its intended outcomes, these often require more time, are localized (rather than large scale), and would often benefit from stronger monitoring of smarter indicators.

12. Many evaluations identified specific national policies that UN-Women has helped advocate for, advise upon and influence. This is a promising approach in terms of scale. At the same time, evidence on sustainability suggests that work to implement these policies is often unlikely to continue unless specific financial contributions are secured from governments. The three country portfolio evaluations undertaken for the first time in 2015 indicated that this is partly an issue of strategic focus and positioning of UN-Women at the country level—focusing capabilities where they can lead to transformational changes. It is also, however, a consequence of one-year projects that have insufficient time to connect programming, normative and coordination efforts because of a need to deliver planned activities.

**Conclusion 3: Major determinants of outcome performance are the design and length of interventions, fragmentation of thematic areas and mandates, and the positive relationships maintained by UN-Women staff members.**

13. Achieving outcomes was found to be subject to both internal and external factors that affect performance. Most external factors—according to evaluations—have a hindering effect on UN-Women’s performance. These include the low capacity of many civil society organizations and structural underfunding of the gender space, conflict, and cultural resistance to gender equality and women’s empowerment. Even the positive external factors—such as the UN brand, UN capacity and the women’s movement—only contribute where UN-Women actively marshals these drivers of change (for example, by making relevant partnerships).

14. Positive drivers of performance are thus primarily driven by internal factors to UN-Women. Some of these factors are prevalent—such as the rapport that UN-Women staff members hold with partners—and others are less so—such as early involvement of a wider range of stakeholders in programme design. Strategically, the main priorities identified by evaluations to enhance positive internal factors within UN-Women are: (a) addressing organizational structures that entrench fragmented approaches; (b) focusing thematic portfolios; (c) vetting and developing the capacity of partners; (d) engaging in longer term commitments to partners and issues; (e) focusing operational activities to build synergies; and (f) positioning UN-Women as a knowledge broker with knowledge management as a key strategy.

## Efficiency

### Table 4. Coverage of evidence on efficiency

Sub-criteria	n*	Coverage level‡	Satisfactory ratings (%) †
4.1 Programme activities are evaluated as cost/resource efficient.	32	Strong	53%
4.2 Implementation and objectives achieved on time (given the context).	16	Moderate	44%
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, oversight/governance, project/programme design, coordination, logistical arrangements etc.).	28	Moderate	61%
* n = number of evaluations addressing the given sub-criterion. ‡ Strong: n=31–49; moderate: n=15–30; weak: n=<15. † The percentage of satisfactory rating is based on positive findings about UN-Women's performance.			

**Conclusion 4: Evaluations recommended that organizational priorities to improve development effectiveness should be to shift towards a programmatic approach, better leverage the UN coordination mandate at the country level, and streamline systems of decision-making.**

15. The greatest scope for enhanced development effectiveness in UN-Women relates to efficiency and sustainability—issues where evaluations found that UN-Women can build on existing performance improvements in operations. These issues are also interconnected—more efficient approaches are easier to continue and are thus more likely to be maintained.

16. The body of evidence in evaluations points towards the need for UN-Women to consider some of the mechanisms adopted by other UN entities to address efficient and sustainable performance. These include: replacing the project-based approach with a programmatic approach that builds synergies between areas and levels of work, involving government in the development of joint programmes of work at the country level, and establishing a mechanism to make multi-year funding commitments. The Flagship Programmes Initiative speaks to some of these issues as it has the potential to substantively improve programmatic coherence.

17. At the same time, there are a number of strategic issues that are specific to UN-Women. One of which includes preserving the flexibility in project implementation that has proven to be a major contributor to effectiveness, while streamlining the multi-layered systems of decision-making and clearances that currently slow down this flexibility (without losing accountability). Entirely unique to UN-Women is the strategic question of how to support country offices to better leverage the UN coordination mandate as a means to enhance the synergies and efficiency of operational and normative work.

## Sustainability

**Table 5. Coverage of evidence on sustainability**

Sub-criteria	n*	Coverage level‡	Satisfactory ratings (%) †
3.1 Benefits continuing or likely to continue after project or programme completion.	36	Strong	64%
3.2 Projects and programmes are reported as sustainable in terms of institutional and/or community capacity.	35	Strong	66%
* n = number of evaluations addressing the given sub-criterion. ‡ Strong: n=31–49; moderate: n=15–30; weak: n=<15.			

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

**Conclusion 5: Sustainability across UN-Women's operational portfolio is mixed, although the level of evidence that achievements are likely to continue with longer programming cycles is increasing.**

18. By comparison with relevance and effectiveness, evidence on sustainability reveals a mixed performance, but suggests small but steady gains since 2013. In most cases, evaluations recommended that sustainability requires an extension of project implementation beyond the standard one-year duration of project cooperation agreements (a factor that also hinders efficiency). Some evaluations identified a need to link to government sources of finance to ensure that the results of interventions started by UN-Women are continued. The strongest level of sustainability was reported where there was the highest level of participation. Some evaluations reported that capacity development as a core focus of UN-Women strategies needs more attention placed on sustainability and follow-up in context of government turnover and low resources.

19. The major drivers of sustainability were found to be participatory design processes, high-level political support and securing national financial commitments.

### Culture of results

**Table 6. Coverage of evidence on culture of results**

Sub-criteria	n*	Coverage level‡	Satisfactory ratings (%) †
5.2 Systems and processes for monitoring and reporting on programme results are effective.	34	Strong	32%
5.3 Results-based management systems are effective.	21	Moderate	33%
* n = number of evaluations addressing the given sub-criterion.			
‡ Strong: n=31–49; moderate: n=15–30; weak: n=<15.			
† The percentage of satisfactory rating is based on positive findings about UN-Women's performance.			

**Conclusion 6: Improvements in the instigation of results-based management systems at the country level continue to be held back by severe resource constraints, low capacity for monitoring and the need to strengthen project results indicators.**

20. Evaluations identified the culture of results—in particular, the building of strong results-based management and monitoring systems at the country level—as a strategically important area requiring attention. Constraints on specialist knowledge in monitoring and reporting was a concern at the country level, leading to insufficient monitoring that was inadequate to either capture learning or report on the results that UN-Women is contributing to.

21. While evaluations found that country offices were establishing results-based management systems (linked to the global results-based management system), they also reported that these were rarely able to provide timely feedback or analysis for decision making, accountability and learning. UN-Women is mostly relying on the monitoring capacity of partners, but this remains a major capability gap in the civil society organizations that UN-Women needs to work with. Identifying alternative means to attaining good quality data for results-based management systems is therefore a critical issue.



## **E. 2013-2015 trends in development effectiveness**

### **Relevance**

**Conclusion 7: Relevance remains high, with noted improvement with regard to the selection of effective partnerships.**

22. The 2013 meta-analysis found that programmes and normative work were relevant to international policy frameworks and the needs of women but suffered from over-optimism about capacity and some design problems. While programmes integrated gender equality into the fabric of their design, challenges were found in translating norms into effective operational work.

23. Whereas previous meta-analyses revealed a need to engage more with men, some 2015 evaluations focused on a need for greater ownership of UN-Women interventions within ministries (both among high-level bureaucrats and ministers of state), as political will and prioritization by the government is necessary to advance the agenda of gender equality and women's empowerment. It was also suggested across some reports that being more inclusive at the design stage of UN-Women strategic notes allows the early formation of strategic alliances and ensures relevance of both interventions and the partnerships that support them.

24. In 2013, UN-Women was found to have established a track record of convening coalitions and initiating partnerships, however it was facing challenges with establishing coordination mechanisms at the country level. By 2015, some of the coordination challenges remained—especially with joint programmes taking time to begin working efficiently. However, effective partnerships were found to be central to UN-Women's overall ability to deliver results. This was caveated with the observation that working with partners capable of reaching marginalized groups implied working with their capacity gaps and constraints, which is an important consideration. The overall trend in the quantitative analysis suggests that UN-Women's partnerships are becoming more relevant.

### **Effectiveness**

**Conclusion 8: Evaluations are finding more evidence of UN-Women's contribution to outcomes, but the problem of scaling impact is still a challenge reported in many evaluations.**

25. Development effectiveness data for 2013 and 2014-15 is not directly comparable because the "story" of evaluations has changed with the improvement in the quality of the evaluation function. In 2013, the meta-analysis basically stated that evaluations were examining and finding evidence of activities and outputs, and UN-Women was delivering these despite concern about operations performance. It was noted at the time that progression from outputs to higher-level results was not measureable in UN-Women programmes due to gaps in data and absence of systems to capture impacts.

26. By 2015, the main message of evaluations was radically different. Evaluations have increased in quality and are examining a higher level of change (outcomes), for which some evidence in some interventions is starting to emerge. However, because the unit of change has moved from outputs to outcomes, evaluations have naturally become more critical in this time (even though outputs are still being achieved). Unlike 2013, many 2015 evaluations were able to identify contributions being made to outcomes, but most found that interventions are too short in duration to fully realize these.

## Efficiency

**Conclusion 9: Evaluation evidence indicates an improvement in the operations efficiency of UN-Women, although scope remains for enhancing both organizational and programmatic efficiency.**

27. Efficiency was found to be mixed in 2013, with some evaluations identifying fund disbursement delays, personnel appointment delays, and gaps in knowledge management systems. Weak knowledge management and financing constraints were found to be mitigated to some extent by the dedication of UN-Women staff and strong understanding of context. The 2014 meta-analysis found increasing levels of knowledge production but with a need to enhance knowledge transfers across organizational boundaries.

28. Within the body of 2015 evaluations, there is a higher level of evidence regarding whether or not objectives are being achieved on time, with this being the case in approximately half of the evaluations where the issue was analysed. Indeed, many evaluations found evidence of good implementation rates except where the context was challenging, with some evaluations reporting implementation rates between 80 per cent and 100 per cent. There were even a few examples of projects exceeding some of their key targets.<sup>2</sup> According to quantitative analysis, organizational operations and systems have improved since 2013. Most reports stated that they found evidence of good cost control and efficiency, but few provided clear details of how this was achieved. Despite these improvements, some evaluations found that project cooperation agreements continue to be associated with delays in disbursements.

## Sustainability

**Conclusion 10: Despite signs of improvement, substantive challenges to sustainability continued to be identified by most evaluations.**

29. The level of evidence on sustainability has increased since 2013 and suggests an overall slight improvement, notably in terms of national capacity development. As in 2013, most 2014 and 2015 evaluations recommended the continuation of interventions to provide an opportunity for sustainability. Interventions are, on the whole, not sustainable within the short timeframes that they are being programmed.

30. The 2013 meta-analysis noted examples of participatory processes contributing to strong local ownership. Overall, however, major threats to sustainability were identified in most evaluations, including political context, financial constraints and national capacity gaps. These factors remained unchanged in 2015.

## Culture of results

**Conclusion 11: A positive trend in the deployment of results-based management systems continues to be held-back by weak monitoring capacity.**

31. The 2013 meta-analysis found that results-based management was a systemic weakness at all levels—with a gap in terms of theories of change, measurable results frameworks and adequate monitoring systems. In 2014 and 2015, this was still the case with regard to monitoring, but the quantitative analysis suggested a positive trend (although still a long way to go, with 70 per cent of evaluations finding it to be less than satisfactory). Many evaluations found that results-based management systems were being put in place, but gaps were found in the capacity to feed, analyse and use data. Overall, in 2015, most

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<sup>2</sup> Not all evaluations report implementation rates

evaluations found that country-level monitoring systems were still weak, in need of being set up for some projects, or were under-resourced and relied too much on partners' data.

32. The organization recently completed the roll-out of its regional architecture and developed a strategy to strengthen results-based management in the organization, including roll-out of a corporate results-based management system to better manage country programs and ensure strong linkage between country and regional results to the Strategic Plan. The launch of the Flagship Programme Initiative in 2015 was a further important step to ensure focus and scale of programmes. However, it is still too early to assess the extent to which these measures will lead to more effective results-based management systems and more effective systems for monitoring and reporting.

## **F. Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been developed based on the conclusions and findings.

### **Recommendation 1: Address the fragmentation of thematic areas and mandates**

33. The most pressing need—given its negative impacts on both effectiveness and efficiency—is addressing the fragmentation of project work between different thematic areas and different aspects of the integrated mandate. According to evaluations, this is currently entrenched by a combination of organizational structures, capacities at the country level, and a need for more strategic prioritization of issues during programme design. The future strategic plan and the rollout of the Flagship Programmes Initiative should thus give particular attention to maximizing country and regional-level synergies in very practical ways.

### **Recommendation 2: Boost country-level UN coordination as a means to drive synergies and efficiency**

34. The evidence from evaluations suggests that UN coordination is relatively underexplored as a mechanism for realizing the synergies identified in Recommendation 1. It is considered relevant, therefore, to give particular attention to strengthening the UN coordination function of UN-Women at the country level as a means to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of its operation and normative work. The main space in which cross-links between thematic areas have been realized has been within joint programmes. However, even without joint programming, there is considerable scope for boosting political buy-in, access to relevant partners, and support to the implementation of gender norms at scale.

### **Recommendation 3: Examine the case for multi-year country programme modalities to address concerns with short project cooperation agreements and sustainability**

35. Many of the sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency issues now being faced by UN-Women, according to evaluations, have also affected other UN entities. Chief among these is the short duration and unreliability of funding to project cooperation agreements and the challenge of securing national ownership and building capacity. Evaluations specifically recommend shifting from a project to a programmatic approach, and to some extent, the flagship programmes have already begun to do this. However, given the opportunity of the development of a new strategic plan, it is recommended that the case is examined for adopting a

multi-year country programme jointly developed with governments or alternative approaches to addressing the underlying challenges.

**Recommendation 4: Expand and innovate the core value proposition of capacity development and technical assistance so as to include knowledge management and brokerage**

36. UN-Women’s country-level and global programme strategies are strongly focused on capacity development, which is found to be a largely relevant and necessary—but not sufficient—approach to ensuring development effectiveness. Given the demand and opportunity identified by evaluations, it is recommended that an explicit strategy is explored to complement the capacity development approach with a core organizational competency in knowledge management and brokerage. Furthermore, there is scope to innovate both the current approaches to capacity development and knowledge management as the core value propositions of UN-Women alongside technical excellence in gender.

**Recommendation 5: Adopt special measures to address results-based management and monitoring at the country level**

37. There is a clear gap in the availability and use of effective and appropriate monitoring systems at the country level, and this is affecting the ability of UN-Women to implement results-based management systems. Given the constraints on staffing at the country level and the unmet need for specialist capabilities, it is recommended that the new strategic plan be viewed as an opportunity to undertake an intensive corporate-level initiative designed to address the gap in monitoring systems, practices and experience.

**Recommendation 6: More high level and strategic country portfolio evaluations should be conducted**

38. The body of decentralized evaluations included in the 2015 and 2014 meta-analyses are informative, but only a relatively small number (including country portfolio evaluations and some multi-country programme evaluations) give a broader picture on UN-Women’s strategic positioning, operations and synergies. As a result, the evidence available on particular issues is somewhat limited. This includes aspects of whether or not: interventions have “added-up” to achieve substantial scale, efficiencies have been realized through synergies, corporate systems have contributed to development effectiveness, and the most relevant strategies have been applied. There is a level of consistency with the findings on coverage of evidence between the meta-analyses in 2013 and 2015, suggesting that more high level and strategic country portfolio evaluations should be conducted.

## **Annex I: List of meta-analysis findings**

### **Findings on relevance**

Finding 1: Programmes are relevant and largely meet their objectives, but results-based management systems and sustainability at the country-level remain issues of concern.

Finding 2: UN-Women interventions are highly relevant to the needs of women and the policy frameworks in the context that they are set, but they have scope to improve high-level political ownership.

Finding 3: UN-Women works with very relevant partners, and partnership is critical to achieving its mission. Many of these partners come with capacity gaps that need to be accommodated, especially those that work with rights holders.

Finding 4: Continuing to improve the relevance of UN-Women's work is dependent on increasing thematic integration, strengthening UN coordination, expanding the range of partners to non-traditional areas, and ensuring the mainstreaming of the human rights based approach to programming.

### **Findings on effectiveness**

Finding 5: UN-Women is continuing to deliver well on its planned outputs, with capacity development a core organizational strength and an increasing capability in awareness raising on a wide range of gender equality and women's empowerment issues.

Finding 6: Evaluations of UN-Women interventions are increasingly identifying positive contributions towards gender equality outcomes and policy changes, but challenges remain in terms of reaching sufficient scale to contribute to national development goals.

Finding 7: A range of internal and external factors drive effectiveness, with evidence that can be interpreted as supporting the direction being taken with the Flagship Programmes Initiative. Extending the duration of programmes and further decentralizing technical capacity would also further support effectiveness.

Finding 8: Reaching excluded groups means developing operations systems that can accommodate and work effectively with the capacity gaps prevalent among rights-holders' civil society organizations.

### **Findings on efficiency**

Finding 9: UN-Women is achieving good implementation rates, but this is highly reliant on timely fund disbursement due to short project cycles.

Finding 10: UN-Women is highly reliant on its organizational efficiency in regard to partnerships and coordination to achieve results.

### **Findings on sustainability**

Finding 11: While data on sustainability is improving, the evidence remains mixed on whether or not results will be continued after UN-Women withdraws its support.

Finding 12: In many cases, the frameworks necessary to sustain results for women exist, but the under-met need to secure national or international budget commitments to support these remains a challenge to sustainability.

### **Findings on culture of results**

Finding 13: Monitoring remains a critical gap in the operations capabilities of both UN-Women and key partners at the country level.

Finding 14: UN-Women's potential as a knowledge broker is linked to its decentralized capacity in a broader range of capabilities, especially monitoring and evaluation.

## Annex II: Lessons learned

**Lesson 1:** Flexibility in working with partners is a major comparative advantage for UN-Women when it is used to adapt and improve programmes that are already being implemented. It is necessary to have a strong theory of change and effective mechanism for dialogue between partners to ensure that this flexibility positively contributes to improving development effectiveness.

**Lesson 2:** Moving from delivering outputs to contributing to outcomes requires more complex interventions. These have worked best where there have been multi-disciplinary efforts—both within UN-Women and through multi-stakeholder coordination of external technical experts.

**Lesson 3:** Securing political support for UN-Women at the highest level of government enhances the achievement of results and also acts as an important attractor for other strategic partners.

**Lesson 4:** UN joint programmes work best when management arrangements and responsibilities promote horizontal (mutual) accountability between partners. Parallel funding arrangements maintain traditional vertical accountability for fundraising and fund management and entrench agency-specific interests.

**Lesson 5:** Programming in fragile contexts carries particularly high levels of political and socio-cultural risk. Programme interventions work best when they are designed to maximize inclusion based on a clear understanding of inter-group dynamics.

**Lesson 6:** Creating platforms for dialogue between women-led grassroots organizations and national decision makers is an effective tool for increasing the understanding and political will behind women's priorities in realizing their human rights.

**Lesson 7:** Engagement with civil society organizations is especially important in building broader responses to gender equality and women's empowerment. Civil society organizations often have direct links with influential policymakers and some civil society organizations are relatively important players in their areas of specialization. To be successful, programmes need to recognize and respond to capacity gaps experienced by the women's movement at the local level.

**Lesson 8:** UN-Women can play a crucial role in institutionalizing spaces for dialogue between stakeholders at all levels to facilitate the process of change and overcome resistance to gender equality and women's empowerment.

### Annex III: List of evaluations reports

#### Evaluations completed in 2015

Region	Office/division	Title of programme evaluated	Rating
Americas and the Caribbean	El Salvador	Programa Pais de ONU Mujeres en El Salvador	Good
	Ecuador	Clasificador de Orientación del Gasto en Políticas de Igualdad de Género	Good
Asia and the Pacific	Afghanistan	Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Special Fund 2008-14	Good
	India, Nepal, Sri Lanka	Empowerment of Widows and their Coalitions	Good
	Nepal	Strengthening Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda	Good
	Nepal	Gender-Responsive Recovery for Sustainable Peace (GRRSP) Project in Kavre, Ramechhap and Sindhuli Districts	Good
	India	Expanding the Scope of Gender-Responsive Budgeting	Satisfactory
Arab States	Jordan	Expanding Syrian Women Refugees' Access to Economic Recovery Opportunities and Meaningful Engagement in Community Life	Good
	Jordan	Achieving E-Quality in the ICT Sector	Good
	Morocco	Appui à une planification locale sensible au genre et intégrant la réduction des risques et désastres climatiques	Good
	Morocco	Accès aux services judiciaires pour des femmes et des enfants victimes de la traite humaine	Good
	Morocco	Observatoire genre et gouvernance démocratique	Good
	Palestine	Socially Responsible Women-Run School Canteens	Good
Europe and Central Asia	Kazakhstan Multi-Country Office	Multi-Country Office for Central Asia Strategic Note 2014-15	Good
	Georgia	Innovative Action for Gender Equality	Good
	Georgia	Women For Equality, Peace and Development	Very good
	Georgia	UN Joint Programme to Enhance Gender Equality	Satisfactory
	Serbia	National Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Promoting Gender Equality	Very good
Eastern and Southern Africa	Mozambique	Strategic Note of Mozambique 2012-15	Good
	Malawi	Gender and Agriculture Programme	Satisfactory
	Uganda	Joint Programme for Gender Equality	Very good
Western and Central Africa	Mali	Programme d'assistance aux femmes/filles affectées par le conflit et participation des femmes au processus de consolidation de la paix	Good
	Mali	Appui à l'autonomisation économique des femmes rurales dans le contexte de l'insécurité alimentaire et du changement climatique	Satisfactory

	Sierra Leone	National Action Plan Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) & 1820 (2008)	Satisfactory
	Cameroon	Plan Stratégique 2012-2013 du Bureau Pays ONU Femmes	Good
Headquarters Division	Policy Division	From Communities to Global Security Institutions (FC2GSI) Programme	Good
		Gender and Democratic Governance in Development: Delivering Services to Women Programme	Good

### Evaluations completed in 2014

Region	Office/division	Title of programme evaluated	Rating
Americas and the Caribbean	Country office for Brazil	National Implementation Support Plan in Policies for Women	Very good
	Regional office for Americas and the Caribbean (Panama)	Participación política de las mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe	Very good
Asia and the Pacific	Multi-country office for the Pacific (Fiji)	Pacific Regional Facility Fund for Ending Violence against Women	Very good
	Multi-country office for India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka	Empowering Women in Rural and Informal Settings through Capacity Development	Very good
	Multi-country office for India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka	UN-Women Anti-Human Trafficking Programme	Very good
	Regional office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Mid-term Review of the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) South-East Asia Programme II”	Satisfactory
	Regional office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Mechanisms Project to Protect the Human Rights of Women and Girls in South-East Asia 2010-2014	Satisfactory
Arab States	Country office for Jordan	Empowering Youth to Advocate for Women’s Human Rights Through Volunteerism	Good
	Multi-country office for the Maghreb (Morocco)	Action du Bureau Multi-pays d’ONU-Femmes Maghreb dans le domaine de la lutte contre les violences à l’égard des femmes et des filles	Satisfactory
Europe and Central Asia	Country office for Georgia	Mid-term Review of the UN-Women Project “Women for Equality, Peace and Development (WEPD) II”	Satisfactory
Eastern and Southern Africa	Country office for the Sudan	UN-Women Sudan Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Programme: “Consolidating Efforts that Contribute to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Sudan”	Very good
	Country office for the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Projet d’appui à la législation sensible au genre et promotion du leadership féminin à l’est de la République démocratique du Congo	Good
	Country office for Ethiopia	Joint UN-Women/UNFPA Programme on Ending Violence against Women	Good
	Country office for Kenya	Government of Kenya/United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	Good



Region	Office/division	Title of programme evaluated	Rating
	Multi-country office for Southern Africa (South Africa)	Pro poor Governance, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment from a Human Resources Perspective in Namibia	Satisfactory
	Multi-country office for Southern Africa (South Africa)	Women Entrepreneurs Project in South Africa	Satisfactory
Western and Central Africa	Country office for Côte d'Ivoire	Contribution de l'ONU-Femmes dans l'atteinte des résultats de développement de la Côte d'Ivoire	Good
Independent Evaluation Office	Independent Evaluation Office	UN-Women Contribution to Women's Economic Empowerment	Very good
Headquarters Division	Policy Division	European Commission/UN-Women "Supporting gender equality in the context of HIV/AIDS"	Very good
	Policy Division	Action to Promote the Legal Empowerment of Women in the Context of HIV and AIDS	Very good
	Programme Support Division	Mid-term Evaluation Report on "Strengthening Responses to Create Wealth and Reduce Poverty for Women in Cross-border Trade (WICBT) in Africa"	Good