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UNFPA MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

to

**Developmental evaluation of
results-based management at UNFPA**

(DP/FPA/2019/CRP.2)

Agenda item 6: UNFPA – Evaluation

Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS
*First regular session 2020
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UNFPA MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION OF RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT AT UNFPA						
Evaluation report issue date 29/09/2019	Evaluation report tag Institutional evaluation	Additional attributes N/A	Business units involved in implementation PSD, DHR, ITSO, EO, OED/Change Management	Final approvers Ramiz Alakbarov Josephine Mbithi Luca Baldini Marco Segone Elizeu Chaves	Managing/coordinating focal point Charles Katende	Date of submission 16 December 2019

UNFPA is committed to continuous improvement of its results-based management (RBM) culture, practices and performance. In this endeavour, the RBM developmental evaluation was a timely step in the right direction. The evaluation unearthed key points of tension in UNFPA RBM system and recommended practical solutions, referred to in the report as *leverage points*, that can address these tensions and take RBM to the next, advanced level. Most of the *leverage points*, such as: transition to adaptive management, enhancement of systems and tools, behavioural transformations, were already on the radar of the Organization and some work in this respect had already started. UNFPA will build on the work that was already on-going and follow up on the leverage points, as detailed below.

EVALUATION LEVERAGE AND ENTRY POINTS				
Leverage point	1. Develop a shared conceptual framework to transition towards adaptive management and the United Nations system accountability			
Possible entry points	Set up a multilevel, interdivisional mechanism (e.g. an RBM action group or taskforce team) to articulate the organizational development process associated with the transition to the new stage RBM. This coordination mechanism would optimally include headquarters, regional and country offices and involve all UNFPA business units in different ways.			
Action point title	Action point text	Due date	Lead implementing unit	Additional units involved in implementation
Strengthen UNFPA Lusaka Group	Institutionalize the Lusaka Group. ¹ (a) formally define its membership and terms of reference; (b) prepare and implement two-year budgeted action plans, aligned to the strategic plan cycle; (c) monitor, evaluate and annually report to the Executive Committee the performance of the action plan; and (d) continuously learn from the implementation of the action plans, and, accordingly, adjust action plan strategies.	30/12/2020	Policy and Strategy Division	Regional offices and selected country offices

¹ Since its establishment in 2013, the interdivisional Lusaka Group has been voluntarily coordinating the strengthening of RBM in UNFPA. It draws actions plans and tracks progress on the action plans.

Leverage point	2. Enhance RBM system requirements, procedures and tools			
Possible entry points	<p>Business process reengineering. Rationalize current RBM tools and processes based on their purpose and value to the user (apply a lean and agile management approach). This process should focus on making reporting more efficient so that time is freed up to pause and reflect, which is one of the most important aspects of learning for adaptation.</p> <p>Test, pilot and experiment with adaptive tools. There is a wide array of adaptive tools already tested by other organizations that could be piloted in the context of UNFPA.</p> <p>Pilot pause and reflect on practices. Proper pause and reflect practices are at the core of learning for adaptation. Piloting pause and reflect practices would thus be of primary importance. In this regard it could be particularly interesting to take advantage of the recently launched RBM SEAL (a corporate initiative aimed at fostering a results culture at UNFPA) to identify adaptive pause and reflect practices across UNFPA.</p> <p>Establish collaborative, networking and institutional links with those exploring practical approaches and research on learning for adaptation.</p>			
Action point title	Action point text	Due date	Lead implementing unit	Additional units involved in implementation
Update, integrate and enhance existing UNFPA RBM systems	The functionalities of the existing UNFPA RBM systems (<i>myResults</i> and <i>Global Programming System</i>) will be integrated and incorporated into the new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. The functionalities will also be enhanced to include features that support learning and adaptive management.	31/12/2022	Information Technology and Solutions Office	Policy and Strategy Division and Division of Management Services
Continue with the RBM Seal initiative	Launched in March 2019 in 12 pilot country offices, the RBM Seal initiative will be rolled out, in phases, to cover all country offices by December 2023. The initiative will include a module on adaptive management, which entails <i>pausing</i> and <i>reflecting</i> .	30/12/2023	Policy and Strategy Division	Country offices that applied for the RBM Seal
Continue participation in the United Nations Strategic Planning Network	UNFPA will continue its membership and participation in the United Nations Strategic Planning Network (UNSPN) to network and harmonize approaches, share experiences, and explore innovative approaches for strengthening RBM.	Continuous	Policy and Strategy Division	–
Leverage point	3. Evaluation as an inquiring technique embedded into programmes			
Possible entry points	<p>Include corporate learning agendas. An option to foster an evaluative mindset geared towards organizational learning is the use of a corporate learning agenda and the ensuing inquiry frameworks. Expanding the tools for evidence base beyond country programme evaluations would also be conducive to foster an evaluative mindset. In this regard, the evidence gathered by country programme evaluations could be expanded with combined evidence from applied research, studies, reviews and ad-hoc assessments in order to build an evidence base at the service of organizational learning.</p>			

	<p>Explore targeted evaluation methods. Explore which evaluation methods are more appropriately able to capture the value of UNFPA business model, as well as capture its complexity. Some examples of these methods are outcome harvesting, process tracing, realist evaluation, and contribution analysis.</p> <p>Explore learning-focused design approaches. Similarly, it would be advisable to explore evaluation design approaches geared towards maximising organizational learning such as formative evaluations, developmental evaluations, participatory evaluations and joint evaluation designs, whereby users take part in the design of the evaluation as well.</p> <p>Work with the knowledge management team to incorporate a learning agenda into knowledge management action plans. It would be advisable to link the entry points to UNFPA Knowledge Management Strategy launched in December 2018. The strategy includes several elements very conducive to delivering thinking and adaptive programming.</p>			
Action point title	Action point text	Due date	Lead implementing unit	Additional units involved in implementation
Include corporate learning agendas	Include corporate learning agenda within knowledge management action plans.	12/31/2021	Policy and Strategy Division	All UNFPA units
Explore targeted evaluation methods	Identify the most relevant existing platform offering evaluation methods that are more appropriately able to capture the value and the complexity of UNFPA business model, and facilitate its use by UNFPA offices and partners.	12/31/2020	Evaluation Office	Policy and Strategy Division
Explore learning-focused design approaches	Accelerate the implementation of the UNFPA Evaluation Strategy 2018-2021, including the three strategic priorities: (a) enhanced use and utility of UNFPA evaluation; (b) diversification and innovation of evaluation processes and products; and (c) demand-driven evaluation processes and products in an attempt to better integrate accountability and learning.	12/31/2020	Evaluation Office	Policy and Strategy Division
Leverage point	4. Human resources			
Possible entry points	<p>Review existing human resources frameworks in light of the findings brought forward by the evaluation. Staff job descriptions, the competency framework, the human resources strategy, staff learning and career development and current managerial certification programmes.</p> <p>Operationalize the United Nations Leadership Framework by translating it into a specific leadership development strategy for UNFPA.</p> <p>Continue the RBM SEAL that offers good possibilities as a mechanism to map out and identify the competencies and skills that characterise ‘RBM champions’ in the transition towards adaptive programming and collective accountability.</p>			
Action point title	Action point text	Due date	Lead implementing unit	Additional units involved in implementation
Mainstream RBM in UNFPA human resources frameworks	Mainstream RBM in UNFPA human resources frameworks such as job descriptions, competency framework, human resources strategy, staff learning and career development and current managerial certification programs.	12/31/2021	Division for Human Resources	Policy and Strategy Division

Operationalize the United Nations System Leadership Framework	Operationalize the United Nations System Leadership Framework in the new UNFPA human resource strategy currently under development.	12/30/2020	Division for Human Resources	Policy and Strategy Division
Identify competencies and skills that characterise ‘RBM champions’	Implement RBM Seal and along the way conduct analyses to identify the competencies and skills that characterise RBM champions.	12/31/2020	Policy and Strategy Division	RBM Seal pilot countries, Regional offices through Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisers
	Use RBM Seal as a corporate platform to establish a network of ‘RBM champions’ who will in turn be able to provide peer support to fellow country office staff.	12/31/2021	Policy and Strategy Division	Country offices champions in RBM Seal and Change Management Secretariat
Leverage point	5. Behavioural transformation			
Possible entry points	<p>The organizational culture change initiative led by the Change Management Secretariat offers a very opportune and consistent entry point to begin tangible work on behavioural transformations.</p> <p>Pilot fully-fledged, adaptive management and programming in selected country offices. These pilots would include applying adaptive programming approaches from planning to evaluation.</p> <p>Use RBM Seal intentionally to identify <i>championing country offices</i> as well as to identify adaptive programming practices specific to UNFPA. In other words, practices that capture what adaptive programming means and implies in the context of UNFPA business model.</p> <p>Start implementing new ways of transferring practical RBM capacity beyond traditional training sessions. This includes learning by doing; reflection in action; peer to peer learning; coaching, mentoring and shadowing; and approaches that link the transfer of capacity to real RBM problem solving, ongoing RBM processes and actual RBM deliverables.</p> <p>Monitor and assess RBM principles and standards. The recently drafted RBM Principles and Standards to be applied to the RBM Seal delineate a range of behaviours and RBM practices whereby results information is used to inform learning. Monitoring and assessing (including through evaluations) these RBM principles could provide very useful information on the evolution of transformational behaviours towards the new stage RBM at UNFPA.</p>			
Action point title	Action point text	Due date	Lead implementing unit	Additional units involved in implementation
Include an initiative on strengthening the results culture within UNFPA culture initiative	Include an initiative for strengthening the results culture and learning from results under the umbrella of the overall UNFPA Culture Initiative, which aims to set up baselines and targets and chart a pathway towards achieving those targets.	12/31/2020	Change Management Secretariat	Policy and Strategy Division

Identify contexts and practices conducive to adaptive management	Build on the RBM Seal experience to identify the context and practices that are conducive to the evolution of transformational behaviours towards an RBM system that fully applies adaptive management.	12/31/2021	Policy and Strategy Division	Country offices champions in RBM
Leverage point	6. Dialogue with Executive Board Members			
Possible entry points	Engage in a dialogue around the nature of inquiries by Executive Board members.			
Action point title	Action point text	Due date	Lead implementing unit	Additional units involved in implementation
Mainstream RBM discussions in ongoing demand-driven dialogue with Executive Board	Mainstream RBM discussions in ongoing, demand-driven dialogue with Executive Board members.	Ongoing	Policy and Strategy Division	Executive Board Branch