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**UNFPA – Evaluation**

**United Nations Population Fund**

**Annual report on the evaluation function, 2019**

**Report of the Director, Evaluation Office\***

*Summary*

This document provides information on the performance of the evaluation function at centralized and decentralized levels, and reports on the contribution of UNFPA to coherence among evaluation functions across the United Nations, as well as national evaluation capacity development. In addition, the report presents the 2020 programme of work and budget for the Evaluation Office.

*Elements of a decision*

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the present report on the evaluation function, and of the programme of work and budget of the Evaluation Office in 2020; (b) welcome the efforts made by UNFPA and the progress achieved in strengthening the evaluation function, in actively contributing to United Nations system-wide evaluation efforts, and in fostering national evaluation capacity development; (c) reaffirm the role played by the evaluation function and underscore the importance of high-quality, independent evaluative evidence in the context of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021, and its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

\* Reissued due to the COVID-19 impact on meetings.



## I. Introduction

### *Evaluation as an accelerator to deliver 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

1. In 2019, the convening of the landmark Nairobi Summit marked the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), facilitating more than 1,250 concrete commitments to ensure sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights for all by 2030. The year also witnessed the ambitious reform of the United Nations development system (UNDS) taking shape, with the United Nations Secretary-General issuing a global call for a Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, raising the scale and ambition of action.

2. A strong evaluation function is key to accelerating the delivery of the International Conference on Population and Development, United Nations reform and achievement of the SDGs by 2030. Evaluation provides evidence on what works and what does not, for whom, and under what circumstances, and why, in addition to validating good practices and lessons learned. For example, the Evaluation Office (EO) published, in time for the Nairobi Summit, *Getting to zero. Good practices on ending preventable maternal death, ending unmet need for family planning, ending gender-based violence and harmful practices*, a meta-synthesis distilling good practices and lessons learned from 57 UNFPA country programme evaluations.<sup>1</sup>

3. As part of the UNDS reform, there is a renewed emphasis on accountability for and learning from the results of United Nations support to countries. To this end, the UNDS is committed to increasing the number, quality, accessibility and use of system-wide evaluations. With the support of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), a new draft policy for system-wide evaluations has been developed and shared with the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. The draft policy articulates the roles and responsibilities with regard to system-wide evaluations at country, regional and global levels.

4. In 2019, the Evaluation Office remained fully committed to the UNDS reform agenda. Through its active participation in UNEG, the Office provided technical advice for the development of the United Nations funding compact, the revised guidance for the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), and the revised policy for system-wide evaluations. The Office also continued to actively engage with the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) steering group.

5. Additionally, UNFPA actively contributed to the achievement of the UNDS evaluation-related commitments as set out in the funding compact. In an effort to report transparently on UNFPA efforts to meet the funding compact key performance indicators relevant to evaluation, UNFPA will begin to report on its contribution to those indicators, starting this year and in the framework of the annual report on the evaluation function.

### A. Strategy to enhance evaluation use through communications and knowledge management, 2018-2021

6. In line with the 2018 review of the evaluation function, the Evaluation Policy and the evaluation strategy 2018-2021, the Evaluation Office launched a strategy to enhance evaluation use through communications and knowledge management in 2019.<sup>2</sup> The strategy provides a results-based framework to strengthen evaluation use at UNFPA and beyond through a strong focus on increased engagement with stakeholders, effective communication of evaluations and improved accessibility of evaluative knowledge. The strategy acknowledges that the availability of high-quality, relevant, timely and credible evaluations including a two-way dialogue with stakeholders, are key to enhance the use of evaluations. To this end, it focuses on providing targeted evaluative evidence to targeted decision-makers, in real-time/targeted time for decision-making and reporting.

7. In addition, this strategy focuses on (a) strategic planning for communication of evaluative knowledge; (b) user-focused communications approach, with relevant and diversified evaluation products, catering to the information needs of various audiences; (c) facilitating use of evaluations through timely access to targeted evaluative knowledge for decision-making, including through consultations with stakeholders and online communication channels; and (d) a results-based framework to measure success.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/getting-zero-good-practices-synthesis-unfpa-country-programme-evaluations>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/strategy-enhance-evaluation-use-through-communications-and-knowledge-management-2018>

8. Following the strategy, each centralized evaluation released was accompanied by a ‘minimum communications package’ that included diversified evaluation products targeting internal and external audiences. For example, to ensure wide dissemination of evaluation results, each centralized evaluation report was accompanied by an executive summary, an evaluation brief with infographics (translated into various languages), a presentation, a feature on the Evaluation Office website and community of practice, a newflash email announcement, and a social media package. For the first time in 2019, followed by the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, centralized evaluations were coupled with a short video that captured the key highlights of the evaluation,<sup>3</sup> making evaluation results more accessible to a vast audience. Altogether, 17 evaluation-focused videos were released in 2019.

9. To improve access to evaluative knowledge, the Evaluation Office revamped the existing evaluation database to improve user-friendliness. The new database, which will be rolled-out in 2020, will feature improved search capabilities and enhanced cataloguing of UNFPA evaluations.

10. In 2019, the Evaluation Office further amplified its use of social media to bring greater attention to the evaluation function and evaluation results. A social media pack, including visual communication assets, was prepared for each evaluation release and disseminated through its Twitter account. For the first time, the Office engaged innovative social media tools, such as a Twitter chat.

11. To facilitate use, the Evaluation Office provided targeted evaluative evidence to key stakeholders at strategic moments to inform decision-making. For example, the Office actively engaged in the UNFPA global consultation on ending unmet need for family planning, informing discussions and decisions by sharing dedicated evidence from its midterm evaluation of the UNFPA Supplies programme. Another example of facilitation of use of evaluation is the joint evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on the abandonment of female genital mutilation. To facilitate the use of the evaluation results, the Office facilitated working sessions with UNFPA and UNICEF staff at regional and country levels that led to the development of joint concrete actions to be implemented on the ground by both UNFPA and UNICEF in the 2020 workplan cycle.

12. The Evaluation Office also participated in the retreat of the Humanitarian Office, where it presented the results of the evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action. The findings and recommendations of the evaluation informed the discussions on the work plan and related priorities. Further, to inform corporate decisions on results-based management (RBM) at UNFPA, the Office provided real-time evidence and feedback to senior management during the developmental evaluation of results-based management at UNFPA.

13. Following the results framework accompanying the strategy, the Office is tracking the relevance, quality, facilitation of use and effectiveness of communication efforts. For example, given the diversification of evaluation products and enhanced outreach efforts, the total webpage views have doubled in 2019, also thanks to a 93 per cent increase in the total page views for new evaluations this year. Further, the number of followers on Twitter has doubled. In all, the tweets generated about 862,000 impressions,<sup>4</sup> a nearly three-fold increase since 2018.

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<sup>3</sup> The videos developed by UNFPA Evaluation Office are available on its YouTube channel, **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9xt-6qYVsKVLdQVow4glrw/videos>

<sup>4</sup> Impressions are the number of times a tweet appears in a user’s timeline or search results.

## B. Performance of the evaluation function

14. With the aim of ensuring transparency and clarity in reporting, key indicators capturing the performance of the evaluation function over time are presented below.

**Table 1**  
**Trends in key performance indicators, 2014-2019**

<i>Key performance indicator (%)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>Overall assessment</i>
<b>1. Financial resources invested in evaluation function*</b>	Budget for evaluation as a percentage of total UNFPA programme budget	<i>0.45</i>	<i>0.69</i>	<i>0.91</i>	<i>0.83</i>	<i>0.96</i>	<i>0.98</i>	Positive trend with room for improvement
<b>2. Human resources for monitoring and evaluation</b>	Percentage of country offices staffed with either a monitoring and evaluation focal point or officer	<i>100</i>	<i>95.9</i>	<i>99.2</i>	<i>96.7</i>	<i>96.6</i>	<i>96.1</i>	Almost achieved (nearly all offices staffed with monitoring and evaluation staff)
<b>3. Evaluation Coverage*</b>	Percentage of country offices that have conducted a country programme evaluation once every two cycles	-	-	-	<i>80.0</i>	<i>90.0</i>	<i>97.0</i>	Almost achieved
<b>4. Evaluation implementation rate</b>	Percentage of programme-level evaluations implemented as planned	-	-	<i>60.0</i>	<i>55.0</i>	<i>92.0</i>	<i>92.7</i>	Positive trend
<b>5. Quality of evaluations</b>	Percentage of programme-level evaluations rated 'good' or 'very good'	<i>50.0</i>	<i>77.0</i>	<i>92.0</i>	<i>95.0</i>	<i>80.0</i>	<i>100</i>	Achieved
<b>6. Evaluation reports posted on evaluation database</b>	Percentage of completed programme-level evaluation reports posted on evaluation database	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	Achieved
<b>7. Management response submission</b>	Percentage of completed programme-level evaluation reports with management response submitted	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	Achieved
<b>8. Implementation of management response</b>	Percentage of management response actions completed	<i>76.5</i>	<i>78.0</i>	<i>78.5</i>	<i>84.4</i>	<i>89.5</i>	<i>84.0</i>	Potentially negative trend
<b>9. Use of evaluation in programme development**</b>	Percentage of new country programme documents whose design was clearly informed by evaluation	-	-	-	-	<i>79.8</i>	<i>100</i>	Achieved

Source: Evaluation Office and the Policy and Strategy Division (PSD)

\* Captures an eight-year period (2012-2019) of completed, ongoing and planned evaluations. The key performance indicator will continue to capture subsequent eight-year intervals.

\*\* This is a new key performance indicator introduced and measured for the first time in 2018, with data generated from the Programme Review Committee indicator on evaluative evidence for programme development. Therefore, data for previous years do not exist.

15. The majority of key performance indicators continued to improve. The implementation rate of planned evaluations improved every year, with 93 per cent implemented in 2019, from a baseline of 60 per cent in 2016. The percentage of evaluation reports quality-assessed as ‘good’ or higher improved considerably, reaching the target of 100 per cent for the first time ever, suggesting that additional guidance rolled out in 2018-2019 was effective. The use of evaluation in programme development also registered considerable improvement, with 100 per cent of country programme documents submitted to the Executive Board in 2019 informed by evaluative evidence.

16. Evaluation coverage increased to 97 per cent. As in previous years, all evaluation reports were posted publicly on the evaluation database. The submission rate of management responses continued to be 100 per cent; however, the annual implementation rate of evaluation recommendations decreased slightly, to 84 per cent, and to 59 per cent in the case of centralized evaluations. According to the Policy and Strategy Division (PSD), this is due primarily to delays in reporting and unrealistic deadlines set by business units. Remedial actions proposed by PSD are discussed below.

17. The expenditure on evaluation jumped from 0.45 per cent of total UNFPA programme expenditure in 2014 to 0.98 per cent in 2019. Investment in human resources for evaluation remained strong: as in previous years, nearly all country offices were staffed with a monitoring and evaluation focal point or officer.

18. Significant progress has been made in most indicators; however, there is scope to further strengthen the coverage and implementation of decentralized programme-level evaluations, the implementation rate of management responses (especially for the centralized evaluations), and investment in the evaluation function.

#### ***Key performance indicator 1: financial resources***

19. Overall, the expenditure in 2019 for the evaluation function was \$9.13 million, with \$3.9 million spent at the central level (Evaluation Office) and \$5.23 million spent at the decentralized level, including both human and financial resources (see table 2). In absolute terms, investment in evaluation continued to increase at both decentralized and central levels, having more than doubled from 2014 to 2019. In relative terms, this represents 0.98 per cent of the total UNFPA programme expenditure for 2019.

**Table 2**  
**Budget invested in the evaluation function, 2014-2019**

	(in millions of \$)					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Total UNFPA programme budget expenditure*</b>	820.2	798.6	763.5	752.9	872.3	933.8
<b>Total expenditure of the evaluation function</b>	3.69	5.52	6.94	6.30	8.40	9.13
<i>Evaluation Office</i>	2.38	2.63	3.71	3.36	4.23	3.9
<i>Decentralized evaluation function</i>	1.31**	2.89	3.23	2.94	4.17***	5.23
<b>Total expenditure of the evaluation function as percentage of UNFPA programme budget expenditures</b>	0.45%	0.69%	0.91%	0.83%	0.96%	0.98%

\* Total UNFPA programme budget expenditure is generated from UNFPA statistical and financial reviews. The Evaluation Office budget is derived from the UNFPA financial system, while the budget for the decentralized function includes the budget for decentralized evaluations, internal and national evaluation capacity development activities, and staffing costs.

\*\* Decentralized staffing costs are not available for 2014; the figure (\$1.31 million) therefore reflects only the budget for evaluations.

\*\*\* The majority increase from \$2.94 million in 2017 to \$4.17 million in 2018 is mainly due to the enhancement in better capturing the totality of investment in decentralized evaluation.

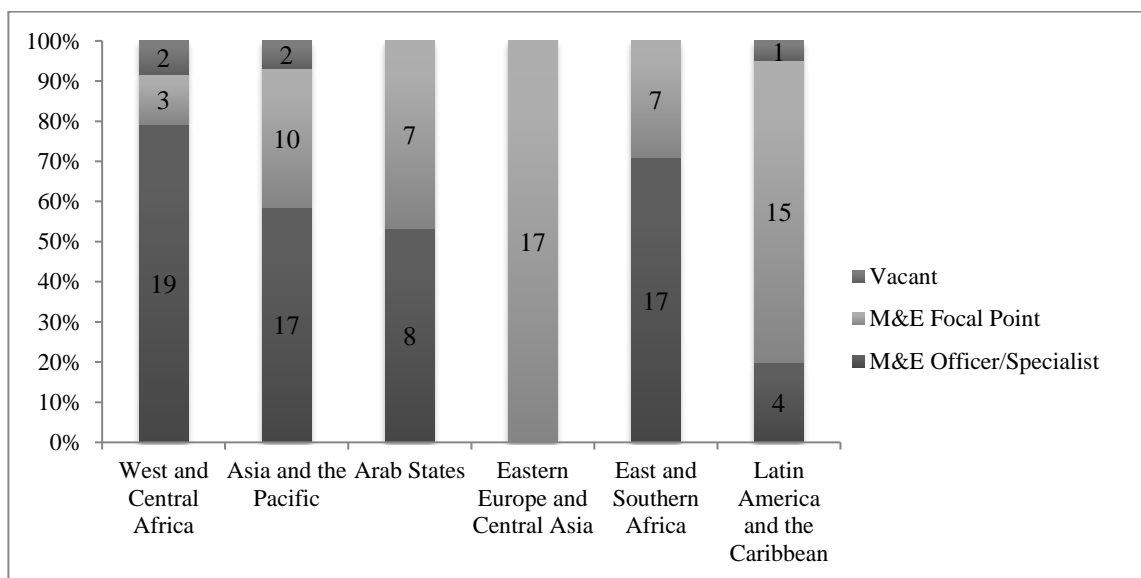
#### ***Key performance indicator 2: human resources***

20. In 2019, Evaluation Office had nine approved posts: one at general service level, seven at professional level and one at director level. In addition, an International Youth United Nations Volunteer joined the team.

21. At the decentralized level, the staffing profile remained roughly the same as in previous years. UNFPA has six regional monitoring and evaluation advisors at P5 level; all posts were filled, with Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean welcoming new regional monitoring and evaluation advisers.

22. On aggregate, almost 96 per cent of country offices<sup>5</sup> were staffed with either a monitoring and evaluation officer/specialist (52 per cent) or a monitoring and evaluation focal point (48 per cent). As in previous years, the regional spread of monitoring and evaluation profiles varied. Dedicated monitoring and evaluation officers continued to be concentrated in regions with larger country offices, while focal points were found primarily in regions where country offices had relatively smaller budgets.

**Figure 1**  
**Human resources for monitoring and evaluation, 2019, by region**



Source: Evaluation Office  
 Abbreviation: M&E: monitoring and evaluation

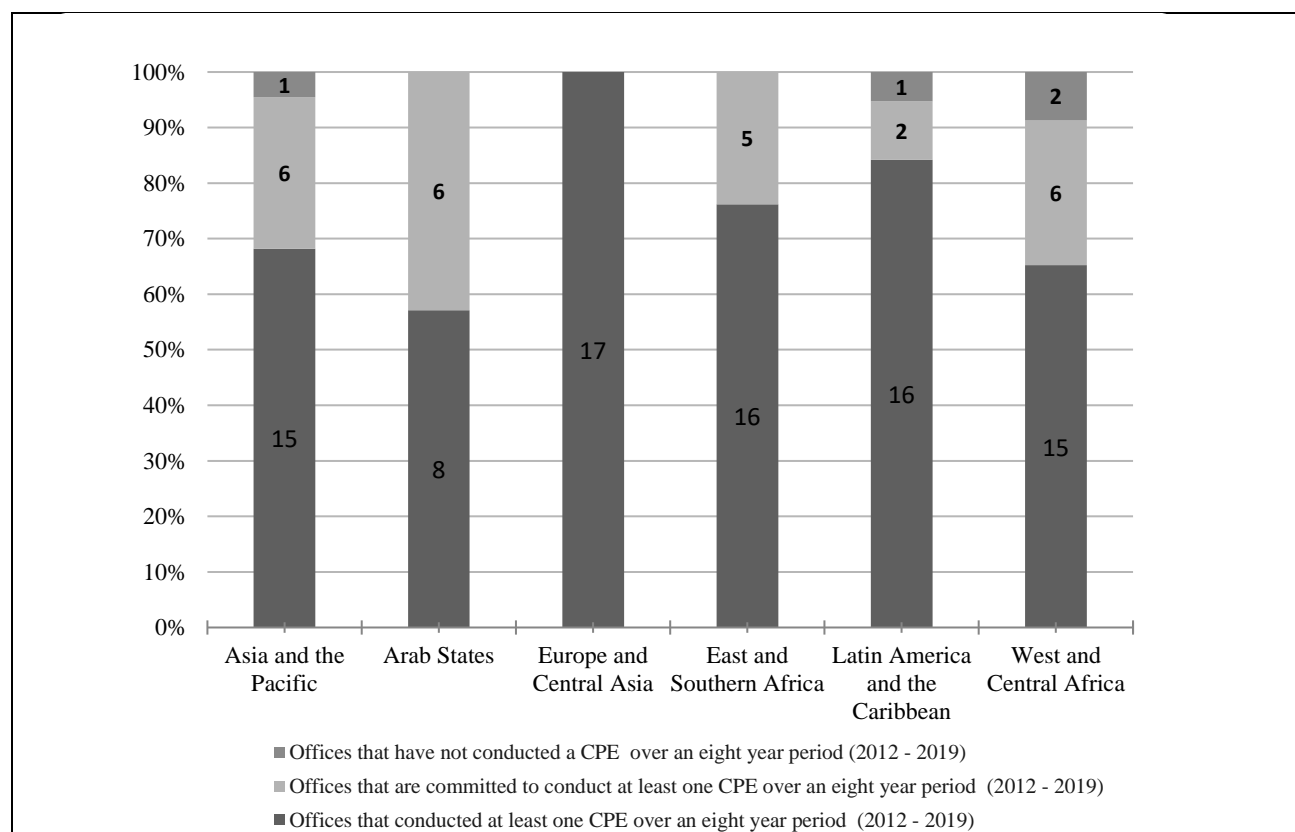
**Key performance indicator 3: coverage of decentralized programme level evaluations**

23. In order to ensure a robust base of evaluative evidence to inform programming, the Evaluation Policy calls for country offices to conduct a country programme evaluation at least once every two programme cycles.

24. In 2019, 97 per cent of country offices completed or are scheduled to complete at least one country programme evaluation over the last eight-year period (the typical length of two UNFPA programme cycles). Collective efforts by PSD and the Evaluation Office to improve compliance with the Evaluation Policy – including a joint communication sent to country offices planning a country programme evaluation, underscoring the importance of implementation and efforts to strengthen evaluation culture – continued to encourage improved coverage.

<sup>5</sup> Vacancies were registered in two country offices in West and Central Africa; in two offices in Asia and the Pacific and in one office in the Latin America and Caribbean region, with recruitment underway in all.

**Figure 2**  
**Evaluation coverage by region, 2012-2019 (\*)**



(\*) Note: Methodologically, the Evaluation Office assumed four years as the average length of a country programme. However, programme cycles vary in duration, and can be extended. As such, the Evaluation Office reached out to country offices that, following the initial analysis, appeared to not have conducted a country programme evaluation (CPE) once during two programme cycles, to confirm. Seven country programmes confirmed that, while outside this eight-year timeframe, they will conduct a CPE within two of their programme cycles (which were longer in length). These are captured in the 'committed to conduct' category.

**Key performance indicator 4: implementation rate of planned decentralized evaluations**

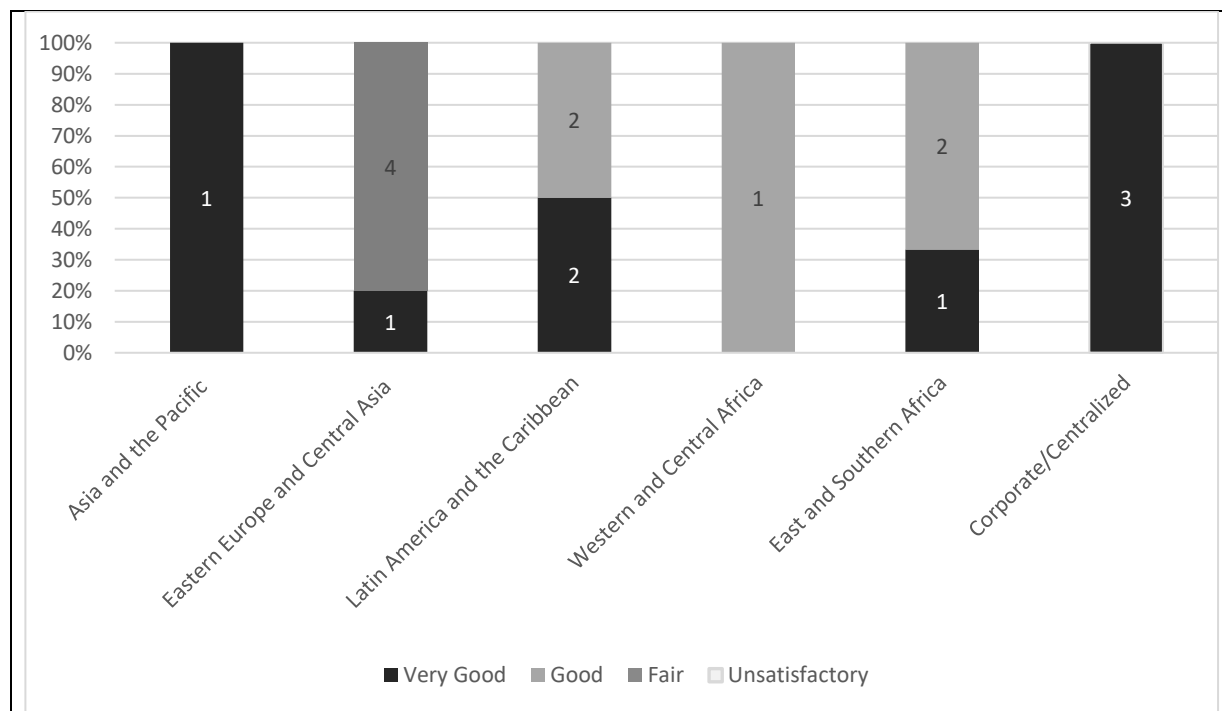
25. In 2019, 93 per cent of decentralized programme level evaluations were implemented as planned. Five country programme evaluations (CPE) were postponed to align with extensions of the country programme, and two regional thematic evaluations were postponed to allow for more programme implementation time (improving evaluability). Drawing on existing evidence generated by a recently completed centralized evaluation (leveraging existing data), one evaluation at the regional level was cancelled. However, three regional thematic evaluations were cancelled without a valid programmatic reason, due to budget constraints/financial challenges.

26. A financial ring-fencing mechanism (introduced in 2018 to provide additional funding to selected CPEs facing financial challenges), as well as a monitoring dashboard, managed jointly by the Evaluation Office and PSD, to capture the status of evaluation implementation, continued to support the improved implementation of programme level evaluations.

**Key performance indicator 5: quality of evaluation reports**

27. In 2019, 17 evaluation reports were quality-assessed. For the first time ever, in 2019, 100 per cent of reports assessed (17 out of 17) were rated ‘good’ or higher, reaching the desired target.

**Figure 3**  
**Quality of evaluations, by region, 2019**



Source: Quality assessment conducted by an external consulting firm (managed by UNFPA Evaluation Office)

**Key performance indicator 6: rate of completed evaluation reports posted on the UNFPA evaluation database**

28. In 2019, as in previous years, all completed centralized and decentralized programme level evaluations were made publicly available on the Evaluation Office database. Centralized evaluations are also featured on the Evaluation Office website and, to further facilitate use of results, shared in a communication message with all UNFPA staff and the wider evaluation community, including UNEG members.

**Key performance indicator 7: evaluations with management responses**

29. In compliance with the Evaluation Policy, all programme-level evaluations completed in 2019 were accompanied by management responses.

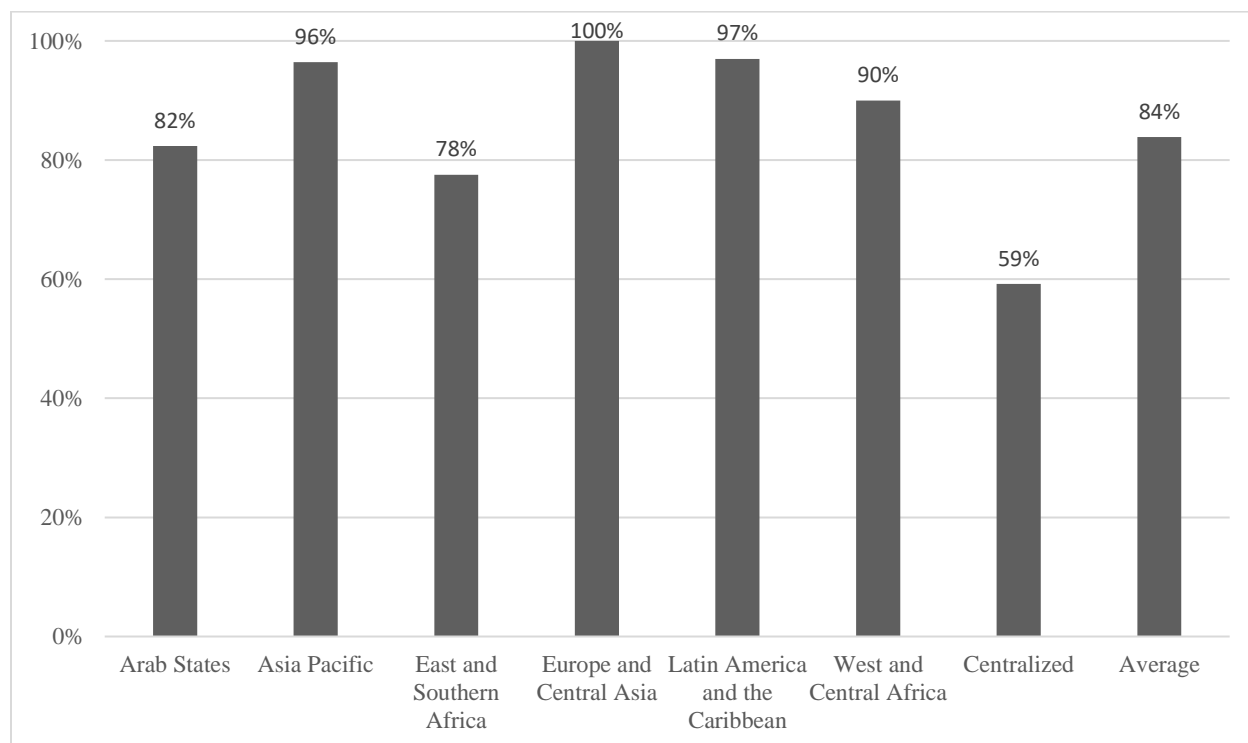
**Key performance indicator 8: implementation of management responses**

30. PSD monitors the implementation of evaluation recommendations for both centralized and decentralized evaluations. In 2019, the ‘percentage of accepted programme evaluation recommendations for which the actions due in the year have been completed’ was 84 per cent, a slight decrease from the year prior. PSD reported that, for decentralized evaluation recommendations, the decrease is likely due to delays in reporting by some implementing business units. For centralized evaluations, this issue was reported to be compounded by overly optimistic deadlines, given the nature and complexity of actions required to implement recommendations (recommendations often target policy change, strategy development, human and financial resources and strategic partnerships, which often take longer to implement).



31. To support units with monitoring and timely reporting, PSD plans to develop a performance indicator for the UNFPA corporate dashboard (myDashboard). The indicator will alert units/offices of upcoming implementation due dates and flag those that have passed. Additionally, the division plans to update the Guide on Development, Reporting and Tracking of Management Responses to Evaluations, to underscore the importance of establishing realistic implementation dates.

**Figure 4**  
**Implementation of evaluation management response/key actions, 2019**



Source: UNFPA management response tracking systems

***Key performance indicator 9: Use of evaluation in programme development***

32. The Evaluation Policy and the Evaluation Strategy, 2018-2021 emphasize the importance of ensuring that evaluative evidence is used to inform decision-making, including in programme and policy development. With the aim of capturing performance against this priority, the Evaluation Office in 2018 developed a new key performance indicator to monitor the extent to which country programme documents (CPDs) are informed by evaluative evidence.

33. As reported by the UNFPA Programme Review Committee secretariat, in 2019, 10 CPDs were submitted to the Executive Board for approval. All (100 per cent) were informed – at the level of quality required – by evaluative evidence – a significant improvement from 2018, when only 78.9 per cent (15 of 19) of CPDs met this requirement.

34. Ongoing collaboration between the Evaluation Office and PSD contributed, in part, to this achievement. Additional guidance on the type (category) of evaluative evidence that can be used for programme development helped to further clarify, and therefore support, the use of credible evidence. Country offices are increasingly engaging a wide range of evaluative evidence to inform programme design, signalling a positive shift in institutional evaluation culture.

## C. Centralized evaluations

35. To further strengthen centralized evaluations and their use, Evaluation Office continued to ensure that the evaluations (a) were responsive and relevant to users' demands and needs; (b) embraced innovation in approaches and practices to respond to a dynamic environment and (c) were implemented in a timely manner.

### *A responsive quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan*

36. The quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan (QBEP) provides a coherent framework to strategically guide the commissioning, management and use of evaluations, setting out the planned centralized and decentralized programme-level evaluations over a four-year period. In 2018-2019, Evaluation Office undertook a series of consultations with key stakeholders that led to the adjustments presented in the framework of the annual report on the evaluation function 2018 (DP/FPA/2019/5), presented and approved by the Executive Board at the annual session 2019 (DP/2019/25).

37. In 2019, additional consultations informed the development of a transitional QBEP 2020-2023 that, in addition to including adjustments approved by the Board for 2020-2021, also presented evaluations to be conducted during 2022-2023. The transitional QBEP revises and updates the original plan for 2018-2021, to ensure ongoing alignment with the midterm review of the strategic plan, 2018-2021 as well as the development of a comprehensive, forward-looking plan. The transitional plan should be viewed as a dynamic plan, responsive to the changing context in which UNFPA works. It will, as such, be revised as necessary to ensure its ongoing relevance to the organization and its goals.

38. To facilitate a balanced approach between strategic coverage and utility of evaluation, the transitional plan covers four years. Firm proposals are presented for 2020-2021, with indicative proposals for 2022-2023 to be validated as appropriate in 2021.

39. According to the transitional plan, over the span of four years, Evaluation Office will manage 26 centralized evaluations, with 14 (54 per cent) either joint or system-wide. At decentralized level, the plan foresees 56 country programme evaluations, and seven regional programme evaluations. The detailed transitional QBEP 2020-2023 is available in an annex on the [UNFPA website](#).

### *Innovation in evaluation approaches*

40. In response to rapidly changing contexts, the evaluation function is constantly adapting, experimenting and embracing new evaluation approaches and processes. For example, in 2019, the Evaluation Office conducted, for the first time ever, a developmental evaluation. It featured a high level of engagement throughout the organization and was considered fit for taking results-based management to the next level, by being forward looking and utilization-focused, involving continuous, real-time evaluative input for decision-making and learning. Further, the Office experimented with co-developing recommendations with key stakeholders. This ensures that recommendations are fully actionable, technically sound and, most importantly, fully owned by key stakeholders, while being grounded on solid evidence.

41. The Evaluation Office is currently conducting an evaluation of UNFPA support to gender equality and women's empowerment across development and humanitarian settings. This evaluation covers support to the dedicated outcome on gender equality, as well as, for the first time, gender mainstreaming across all outcomes in a comprehensive and systemic manner.

42. Further, in order to leverage evaluative evidence, Evaluation Office undertook a synthesis of findings from 57 CPEs to identify good practices and common challenges across the three transformative results. By aggregating existing learning on what works and what does not work, the synthesis aimed to enhance programming effectiveness, support the optimal use of resources, and maximize the impact and value added of UNFPA to current and future programming.

### *Full and timely implementation of centralized evaluations*

43. In accordance with the QBEP, 2018-2021, Evaluation Office undertook a wide range of evaluations relevant to UNFPA needs, ensuring that evaluation results are available to decision-makers in a timely manner.

44. As of December 2019, the implementation rate of centralized evaluations during 2019-2020 was 100 per cent, with all evaluations completed or on track per schedule (as presented in table 3 below).

**Table 3**  
**Implementation status of planned centralized evaluations and other evaluative studies, 2019-2020**

#	Title	Status	Management response issued	Presentation to Executive Board/ steering committees
1	Evaluation of UNFPA support to the prevention, response to and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices	Completed	Yes	Presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session 2019
2	Evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis	Completed	Yes	Presented to the Executive Board at the annual session 2019
3	<u>Joint evaluation</u> of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation	Completed	Yes	Presented to the Female Genital Mutilation Joint Steering Committee
4	<u>Joint evaluation</u> of UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to accelerate action to end child marriage	Completed	Yes	Presented to the Child Marriage Joint Steering Committee
5	Developmental evaluation of results-based management approaches	Completed	Yes	Presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session 2020
6	Meta-synthesis of lessons learned and good practices to accelerate achievements of the three transformative results	Completed	No*	Launched at the margin of the Nairobi Summit
7	Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity to respond to humanitarian crisis	Completed	Yes	To be presented to the Executive Board at the annual session 2020
8	<u>System-wide</u> Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of United Nations system response to the drought crisis in Ethiopia	Completed	To be available early 2020	Presented to IASC Operational Policy and Advocacy Group, and to Ethiopia Humanitarian Coordinator Team
9	Evaluation of UNFPA support to the HIV/AIDS response	Completed	Not yet	To be completed in 2020
10	Evaluation of UNFPA support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	On track	Not yet	To be completed in 2020
11	Evaluation of UNFPA support to South-South and Triangular Cooperation	On track	Not yet	To be completed in 2020
12	<u>Joint</u> UNFPA-UNDP-UNICEF-UN Women baseline study and evaluability assessment of the common chapter of strategic plans	On track	No*	To be jointly presented to the Executive Board at the annual session 2020
13	<u>System-wide</u> midterm evaluation of the UNAIDS 2016-2021 unified budget, results and accountability framework (UBRAF)	On track	Not yet	To be completed in 2020
14	<u>System-wide</u> Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of United Nations response to empowering women and girls in humanitarian crisis	On track	Not yet	To be completed in 2020
15	<u>System-wide</u> evaluation of UNAIDS programme's work on preventing and responding to gender-based violence	On track	Not yet	To be completed in 2021

\*Management responses are only issued for evaluations, and not meta-analyses and evaluability assessments

#### D. Use of centralized evaluations to foster change

45. This is the third year Evaluation Office is reporting on changes (or lack thereof) that centralized evaluations have stimulated in UNFPA strategies, policies, programmes or practices. This helps to measure the *functional quality* (or added value) of the evaluation function, going beyond the measurement of implementation rate of management responses.

##### *Midterm evaluation of the UNFPA Supplies programme (2013-2020)*

46. The evaluation examined the interventions carried out during 2013 through 2017 and covered all 46 focus countries where the programme takes place. Following the issuance of the report, the Technical Division

closely involved the Evaluation Office in its programming for 2019. In particular, the evaluation underpinned the regional planning meetings in Dakar and Johannesburg in late 2018. Based on the evaluation findings and recommendations, these meetings provided an opportunity for the country offices' focal points, regional advisers and headquarters staff to review the UNFPA Supplies programme results for 2018, highlight lessons learned, challenges and opportunities and identify what could potentially be scaled-up and improved on programme delivery. The evaluation was also instrumental in building an understanding of the vision of UNFPA Supplies for 2019 and beyond.

47. The evaluation also provided technical guidance and inputs to country work plans focused on evidence-informed interventions for UNFPA Supplies going forward. Furthermore, based on the evaluation's finding that highlighted a gap between UNFPA commitments and action regarding human rights-based approaches for family planning, Evaluation Office supported the Technical Division in its work to further explore and more systematically work on the factors that both enhance and inhibit the capacity of UNFPA country teams to operationalize a rights-based approach to family planning. The use of the evaluation results to strengthen UNFPA Supplies was also captured in a short video,<sup>6</sup> which was released on World Contraception Day (September 26), 2019 that marked the one-year anniversary of the evaluation.

#### *Formative evaluation of the UNFPA innovation initiative*

48. Informed by the evaluation, UNFPA developed a new innovation strategy and framework. Based on the evaluation's recommendation to shift the focus of innovation to impact solutions, the Innovation Fund has refocused on innovations that can address key programmatic bottlenecks and bring about solutions with transformative potential and impact. The Innovation Fund has also diversified the portfolio of initiatives by balancing big signature initiatives to create global goods and smaller ventures for testing and iterating new solutions and approaches. Based on a recommendation to develop a learning-for-impact framework, the Innovation Fund has also adopted a knowledge sharing mechanism, a framework for scaling up successfully tested solutions and is currently developing an innovation specific monitoring and evaluation system.

49. UNFPA has adjusted the innovation model towards an outward approach, by collaborating with other agencies and contributing expertise and experience to the wider United Nations innovation ecosystem.

### **E. Decentralized evaluation system**

50. In 2019, 74 per cent of evaluations were managed by country or regional offices. This ensures the right balance between centralized evaluations that inform global policies, strategies and initiatives, and decentralized evaluations managed by field offices that generate country-specific evidence relevant to both UNFPA country programme development, as well as upstream policies and strategies. However, this also underscores the challenge of ensuring the timely delivery of high-quality decentralized evaluations. To address this challenge, Evaluation Office and PSD continued to work together to implement systems to enhance decentralized evaluations, as explained below.

#### *Systems to improve the quality, credibility and use of decentralized evaluations*

51. In 2018, Evaluation Office, PSD and the Division of Management Services established a financial ring-fencing mechanism to support the implementation of CPEs. Specifically, funding is ring-fenced for country offices where a planned CPE is expected to exceed 3 per cent of programme resources, and a budget shortfall is identified. UNFPA agreed to set aside \$500,000 annually through the Resource Allocation System (RAS) to support the ring-fence mechanism. In 2019, 21 country offices benefitted from ring-fenced funds for a total of \$678,004, contributing to continued improvement in the implementation rate of decentralized programme-level evaluations, and their quality.

52. To ensure proper evaluation planning, costed evaluation plans in 2019 continued to be reviewed by Evaluation Office and were presented to the Programme Review Committee.

53. The evaluation quality assurance and assessment (EQAA) system continued to support the quality and credibility of decentralized and centralized evaluations. Using updated guidance, including the updated evaluation handbook on how to design and conduct CPEs, templates and the EQAA grid as an assurance tool,

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<sup>6</sup>The video on the use of mid-term evaluation of the supplies programme (2013-2020) is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqixpstyO8&feature=emb>

targeted feedback was provided to country offices to enhance the quality of decentralized evaluations. A regional training in East and Southern Africa was also conducted, and featured an emphasis on quality assurance processes.

#### ***Internal evaluation capacity development***

54. To support professionalization of evaluation at UNFPA and beyond, in 2019, Evaluation Office, with the financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, continued the development of an e-learning course on results-based management and evaluation in collaboration with PSD and the Division of Human Resources. This online learning will provide internal and external users with an interactive learning experience to develop practical skills in the design and conduct of decentralized evaluations and in results-based management. The course targets monitoring and evaluation staff and focal points, newly recruited staff, programme and communication personnel and external partners, as well as senior management. Further, an internal community of practice was launched in 2019, together with PSD, that continues to be cultivated as a go-to hub to network.

55. At decentralized levels, UNFPA regional offices continued to support the development of evaluation capacity among UNFPA colleagues. In 2019, the Arab States Regional Office held an annual technical meeting, where several sessions focused on evaluation capacity, including strengthening of gender responsive evaluation methodology. Several regional offices (Asia and Pacific, East and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa) held regional results-based management trainings, which featured sessions on evaluation. The West and Central Africa Regional Office also held regional workshops (one Francophone and one Anglophone) to exchange experiences on planning, monitoring and reporting during 2019, and introduced the revised evaluation handbook and evaluation policy. For country offices launching CPEs in the region, the regional monitoring and evaluation advisors provided targeted trainings on managing evaluations.

## **II. Enhancing coherence in the United Nations system's evaluation functions**

56. As part of its commitment to UNDS reform, the Evaluation Office is enhancing coherence among the evaluation functions across the United Nations system by actively engaging and collaborating with other agencies through joint and system-wide evaluations, and the UNEG network. Details are presented below.

### **A. Independent system-wide evaluation mechanisms**

57. The Evaluation Office continued to be fully committed and engaged in supporting independent system-wide evaluation mechanisms, as a member of the UNEG, and under the guidance and leadership of the Secretary-General. In particular, the Office worked collaboratively within UNEG to deliver technical advice to the United Nations Transition Team for the repositioning of the UNDS, advocating for the integration of evaluation in both the funding compact and the UNSDCF guidance. Within the UNEG working group on system-wide evaluation, the Office also contributed to the development of a new system-wide evaluation policy, which is at the draft stage.

58. The Director of Evaluation Office was elected by UNEG to represent the United Nations system in the UNAIDS Evaluation Expert Advisory Committee. The committee advises the Director of Evaluation and the Executive Director of UNAIDS on the implementation of UNAIDS evaluation policy and the development and implementation of UNAIDS evaluation plan to enhance the use of evaluations, organizational learning and alignment with UNAIDS strategy, the Unified Budget Results and Accountability Framework as well as UNEG norms and standards for evaluation. The committee has a critical role in providing guidance and advice on the evaluation function and ensuring its independence at UNAIDS.

59. Regarding the Funding Compact commitment to increase accessibility of centralized evaluations, the Evaluation Office fully met this commitment in 2019 by making 100 per cent of centralized evaluations available on the UNEG website. Regarding collaborating in at least one joint or system-wide evaluation, UNFPA significantly exceeded this commitment, as almost 50 per cent (7 out of 15) of centralized evaluations to be managed by the Office in 2019-2020 are either joint or system-wide, as presented above in table 3.

## **B. The United Nations Evaluation Group**

60. Evaluation Office is an active member of UNEG and has effectively contributed to the formulation and implementation of its workplan 2018-2019. The Office participated in the UNEG evaluation week, where it organized several sessions at the evaluation practice exchange event. The Office proposed the creation of an interest group on joint evaluations and subsequently volunteered to convene the group. As a co-convenor and member of the decentralized evaluation function interest group, since the onset of the group, the Evaluation Office has been leading UNEG work in this area. In addition, it is a member of several other groups across the four strategic objectives of UNEG strategy. The Office has been particularly active in the gender equality and Human Rights Working Group and in the use of evaluation results interest group.

## **C. United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**

61. In 2019, for the first time, UNFPA 'exceeded requirements' of the evaluation performance indicator (EPI), with a score of 10. On aggregate, the evaluation reports assessed this year 'met the requirements' of the EPI. In addition, the recent launch of the corporate evaluation of UNFPA support to gender equality and women's empowerment, placed the Office in the 'exceeded requirements' category.

## **D. Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation**

62. Evaluation Office continued to actively participate in the activities of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) steering group. In 2019, Evaluation Office took part in the management group of the system-wide IAHE of United Nations system response to the drought crisis in Ethiopia. The evaluation, which covered 2015-2018, is an independent assessment of the collective humanitarian response of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) member organizations. The evaluation report, finalized in October 2019, is being disseminated to various audiences, including with the support of the Evaluation Office. The Office is also a member of the management group of the first thematic IAHE, which aims at providing an independent assessment of the collective performance of IASC member organizations in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls since 2017. The final evaluation report is expected in late 2020.

63. As a member of the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), the Evaluation Office took part in the ALNAP annual meeting, which gathered a wide range of participants, representing United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, members of the Red Cross/Crescent movement, donors, consultants and academia. Focused on the topic of relevance in humanitarian action, the meeting provided an opportunity for learning from good practices and reflecting on common challenges in order to improve the response to current and future humanitarian crises.

## **E. Joint evaluations**

64. The Evaluation Office continues to be committed to enhanced coherence and collaboration with other United Nations entities through joint evaluations at global and decentralized levels. For example, the evaluation offices of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women, in response to a request from their respective Executive Boards, and building upon a concept note developed in 2018, have conducted the first phase of a joint evaluation of the common chapter of their strategic plans.

65. The evaluation offices of UNFPA and UNICEF released a jointly conducted evaluation of the joint programme on the abandonment of female genital mutilation, under the leadership of the UNFPA Evaluation Office. Findings have been shared with the joint programme steering group, in time to inform planning for 2020. A joint management response has been prepared by UNFPA and UNICEF. Further, the UNFPA and UNICEF evaluation offices finalized the evaluation of joint global programme to end child marriage, informing the design of the second phase of the programme.

66. Similar to the centralized level, UNFPA managed and contributed to several joint evaluations at the country level. For example, in Nepal, UNFPA and UNICEF conducted a joint evaluation of the joint programme on child marriage, and, in Colombia, the country office was a member of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard evaluation management group.

## F. United Nations regional evaluation groups and UNDAF evaluations

67. UNFPA actively supported United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluations providing technical and financial support in all regions. In addition, UNFPA co-led and/or actively contributed to the United Nations Regional Evaluation Group (IRENAS) in the Arab States region, the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP), and the Regional Inter-agency Working Group on monitoring and evaluation in Latin America and Caribbean. Within Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UNFPA contributed to an informal regional evaluation group comprising monitoring and evaluation advisors from UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women.

## III. Multi-stakeholder partnerships for national evaluation capacity development

68. In line with General Assembly resolutions 69/237 (building capacity for evaluation of development activities at country level), 70/1 (endorsing the 2030 Agenda) and 71/243 (quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system) as well as its Evaluation Policy (2019), UNFPA continued to partner with other major stakeholders, including United Nations entities, in order to support national evaluation capacities.

69. In 2019, the Evaluation Office became a member of the EvalPartners Executive Committee, representing the United Nations system, together with the World Food Programme (WFP). In addition, it continued to be member of the EvalGender+ Management Group, and provided support to EvalYouth and the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation.

### *Multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance meaningful participation of youth in evaluation*

70. In line with the commitments made in the Evaluation Policy to develop the capacity of young and emerging evaluators and to promote the participation of young people in evaluation, the Office further strengthened its partnership with EvalYouth – the global movement of young and emerging evaluators under the umbrella of EvalPartners that seeks to advance the professional development of young and emerging evaluators and advocate the inclusion of young people, particularly young women, in evaluation at all levels.

71. The Office supported the strategic priorities as identified by EvalYouth leadership as well as EvalYouth capacities to mobilize young evaluators. UNFPA continued to lead a coalition of United Nations entities (UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women, WFP, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Food and Agricultural Organization and United Nations Volunteers) committed to deploying young evaluation professionals as United Nations Youth Volunteers to contribute to the effective and efficient implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This inter-agency initiative aims to contribute to national evaluation capacity development by providing young evaluators an opportunity to develop skills and acquire knowledge through practical experience, amplify the voice of young people in evaluation, and enrich evaluation practice of United Nations evaluation offices by leveraging the creativity, energy and talents of young evaluation professionals.

72. The Office also supported the design and implementation of the EvalYouth Global Mentoring Programme, connecting 214 young evaluators with senior evaluators, to enhance their evaluation knowledge and skills and help them build a professional network. To raise awareness on the role of young people in evaluation, the Evaluation Office and EvalYouth jointly hosted a Twitter chat (#YEvalChat). The panellists included the Director of Evaluation Office and representatives of EvalYouth. The chat reached nearly 378,000 people, resulting in more than 2.7 million impressions.

73. The Office supported the organization of the fourth EvalYouth virtual conference on building skills and learning methods for conducting evaluation that brought together around 130 young evaluators from across the world. It also supported the organization of a webinar for EvalYouth regional networks to share lessons drawn from their involvement in the governance of regional evaluation networks and the Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs). In addition, the Office sponsored the participation of young and emerging evaluators in regional evaluation conferences, to support their capacity development and integration in the evaluation community.

74. In the Arab States region, UNFPA collaborated with the regional chapter of EvalYouth to organize a winter school for young evaluators from across the region. Young evaluators from 10 Arab-speaking countries

attended the winter school, which was the first-ever capacity-building workshop dedicated to young evaluators in the region. At the event, Arab States Regional Office signed a Memorandum of Understanding with EvalYouth Middle East and North Africa, to scale up its partnership with the regional chapter.

75. Similarly, the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, in partnership with EvalYouth Eastern and Central Asia, developed an educational programme to build the capacity of young and emerging evaluators. The programme included a summer school, three webinars, a mentorship programme and an internship to provide real-life experience in evaluation design and implementation. Young evaluators from nine countries in the region successfully completed the programme. Young evaluators were also active members of country programme evaluation reference groups, providing young peoples' perspectives in programme evaluation and learning. UNICEF recently joined the initiative, and, given its success, the Regional Office will continue the programme in future years.

***Multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance the demand for and use of country-led evaluation by national policy-makers***

76. Following up on EvalColombo2018, a global event organized by the Global Parliamentarian Forum for Evaluation (GPFE) and held at the Parliament of Sri Lanka that brought together parliamentarians and other key stakeholders from all over the world to discuss how to strengthen the demand for and capacity to use evaluation to inform national decision-making, the Office, in partnership with UNICEF, supported GPFE to follow up with the national Parliaments on the Colombo Declaration and related commitments. As a result, 19 parliaments started implementing and reporting on the Colombo Declaration commitments.

77. For example, the Parliament of Sri Lanka initiated a process to institutionalize evaluation within the parliament. The Parliament established a parliamentary committee on evaluation, with representatives from all political parties. As a result, the committee initiated drafting a national evaluation bill. This is complementary to the first National Evaluation Policy approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2018 for which the Sri Lanka Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation also advocated. At the time of writing, the drafted national evaluation bill was ready for adoption. The Parliament also strengthened the capacity – through 31 capacity-building sessions – of the Parliament Research Unit to synthesize evaluation results for use by parliamentarians.

78. As a follow up to the Eurasian regional commitments for the Colombo Declaration, the Evaluation Office, in partnership with UNICEF, supported the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, the National Evaluation Association of the Kyrgyz Republic, Eurasian Alliance of National Evaluation Associations and GPFE in establishing the Eurasian Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation. The Forum was held in Bishkek, with participation of parliamentarians from seven Eurasian countries together with government officials, VOPE leaders and development partners. The Forum also triggered the approval of the Kyrgyz Parliament's concept on using evaluation to carry out parliamentary oversight functions. A multi-party group of parliamentarians initiated the parliamentary resolution, which approved the concept. Parliamentarians together with local evaluation experts developed the document based on best international practice.

***Multi-stakeholder events to bring together demand and supply of country-led evaluations***

79. The Evaluation Office continued to partner with several United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks and other key partners, to support strategic evaluation events in order to share good practices and lessons learned on how to strengthen inclusive national evaluation systems.

80. At the global level, UNFPA partnered with the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank, UNICEF, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and WFP to support the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) global biannual conference in the Czech Republic, themed 'Evaluation for transformative change: bringing experience to the Global South to the Global North'. In partnership with GPFE and UNICEF, the Office chaired a special session where a steering committee member of GPFE, a member of Parliament from the Kyrgyz Republic and the President of the African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation shared their experience on the role of parliamentarians in national evaluation policies and systems and created a momentum to promote demand and use of evaluation by parliamentarians. UNFPA, in partnership with EvalYouth and the African Development Bank, was also instrumental in strengthening young evaluators and the professionalization of evaluation, by organizing two



sessions on ‘Young evaluators: taking stock and looking ahead’ and a ‘Roundtable on strengthening capacities: building a career’.

81. In partnership with the African Development Bank, Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR) initiative, Global Environment Facility, World Bank, UNICEF and UN-Women, UNFPA supported the national evaluation capacities conference organized by UNDP Independent Evaluation Office and the Government of Egypt. The Office delivered the lead presentation at the panel ‘Strengthening demand for and use of national evaluation systems to inform national development strategies’. It also chaired the plenary session on the architecture for evaluation effectiveness.

82. In Asia, in partnership with International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), CLEAR, European Investment Bank, FAO, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), IFAD, Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund, the World Bank and UNICEF, UNFPA supported the Asian Evaluation Week organized by the People’s Republic of China and the Asian Development Bank, themed ‘Quality evaluation for better results: local, national and regional perspectives’. UNFPA made the lead presentation at the panel ‘National evaluation capacities for evidence-based SDGs reporting in Asia: a multi-stakeholder approach’ and moderated the panel on ‘Responsible parliaments: embracing evaluation for Agenda 2030’, where parliamentarians from Sri Lanka and Tunisia and an official from the Senate of Philippines shared their experience on institutionalization of evaluation within Parliament.

83. In partnership with 3ie, Asian Development Bank, FAO, Global Environment Facility, UNICEF and UN-Women, the Office supported the Asia Pacific Evaluation Association Conference held in the Philippines, with the theme ‘Reducing poverty, enabling peace: evaluation for accountability, transparency, and sustainable development’. The event was instrumental in hosting a session on the implementation of the Colombo Declaration at the Senate of Philippines. The session brought together parliamentarians from various countries, VOPE leaders, government representatives and development partners where countries shared experience on strengthening national evaluation policies and systems. This was the first-ever evaluation event in a parliament in East Asia. The Office delivered a keynote speech on strengthening the evaluation communities for advancing peace, security and sustainable development, and chaired the session on multisectoral views, perspectives and experiences in evaluation for peace, security and sustainable development.

84. In Africa, the Office in partnership with, 3ie, African Development Bank, CLEAR, German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), UNDP, UNEG, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP supported the ninth Africa Evaluation Association Conference held in Cote d’Ivoire. The conference themed, ‘Accelerating Africa’s development: strengthening national evaluation ecosystems’, was attended by over 500 participants from all over Africa. This was a landmark event in the African evaluation sector and served as a foundation for promoting and advocating African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) ‘Made in Africa’ approach, supporting knowledge sharing, collaboration and networking among a wide range of international organizations and individuals in the evaluation sector. In partnership with UNICEF and UN-Women, UNFPA also supported the Réseau Francophone de l’Evaluation (RFE, the Francophone Network of Evaluation) during the Forum International Francophone de l’Evaluation (FIFE, Forum of the Francophone Network of Evaluation) in Burkina Faso to strengthen RFE capacity to develop an enabling environment, institutional and individual capacities for young evaluators in national and regional evaluation policies and systems.

#### **IV. The Evaluation Office programme of work in 2020**

85. In 2020, the Evaluation Office will continue its work in the following four key results areas.

##### **A. Centralized evaluations**

86. As detailed in the transitional QBEP, 2020-2023, the Office will manage six evaluations in 2020, with five to be completed in 2020 and one in 2021, as presented in table 3 above. Half of the centralized evaluations to be undertaken in 2020 are either joint or system-wide evaluations.

##### **B. Decentralized evaluation system**

87. The Evaluation Office will continue to support the strengthening of the decentralized evaluation system, by delivering technical support, managing the EQAA system and, together with regional offices, develop capacities in evaluation. The Office will roll-out the e-learning programme on evaluation. To strengthen the

knowledge management system, a new user-friendly evaluation database will be launched. The Office will also continue to strengthen the internal community of practice and will continue maintaining the roster of evaluation consultants.

**C. Enhancing coherence in the United Nations system evaluation functions**

88. The Office will continue to actively engage in UNDS reform, be an active participant in UNEG, the UN-SWAP, and other system-wide evaluation initiatives. It will also continue to engage with the IAHE steering group and ALNAP. UNFPA will continue to take part as active member in UNEG workstreams.

**D. Multi-stakeholder partnerships for national evaluation capacity development**

89. The Evaluation Office will continue its engagement in multi-stakeholder partnerships for national evaluation capacity development, including with EvalPartners and EvalYouth.

**E. Budget for the 2020 workplan**

90. The total Evaluation Office budget for 2020 is \$4,309,272. The budget comprises two funding categories: (a) institutional budget (\$3,934,768, based on the proposed midterm review of the integrated budget) and (b) non-core resources (\$374,504).

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