



TERMS of REFERENCE

Evaluability Assessment of the UNIFEM Strategic Plan (2008-2013)

1. Background

In late 2009, UNIFEM initiated an Evaluability Assessment of the UNIFEM Strategic Plan (2008-2013) and Baseline Studies. The Strategic Plan (SP) acts as the corporate programmatic framework for UNIFEM for the period 2008-2013 and is aligned with the UNDP and UNFPA Strategic Plans approved by the Executive Board (Decision 2009/13).¹ The SP is intended to provide strategic policy and management direction for UNIFEM to increase its development effectiveness, strengthen strategic partnerships and mobilize resources during its 6 year period. It builds on achievements and lessons learned from the previous programmatic framework – the Multi Year Funding Framework (MYFF) 2004-2007. It highlights, on one hand, the importance of UNIFEM’s work within the United Nations system as a catalyst and innovator that promotes gender equality in line with national priorities; on the other hand, it emphasizes the opportunities to mainstream gender equality in the context of United Nations reform and national level coordination mechanisms.²

The Evaluability Assessment was envisioned as the first of a three-part process outlined in the UNIFEM Evaluation Strategy for a final evaluation of the SP during its last year of implementation (2013) in order to analyze the processes implemented by the organization and the results achieved, as well as to identify lessons learned for the subsequent corporate programmatic framework. Baseline Studies were also to be commissioned to act as a basis for assessment during the final evaluation. The conduct of the study began in April 2010.

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the historic Resolution A/RES/64/289 that created the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), which calls for *“consolidating and transferring to the Entity the existing mandates and functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat, as well as those of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, to function as a secretariat and also to carry out operational activities at the country level”* and for the dissolution of UNIFEM at the same moment. With this resolution, the four entities (DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM) have entered a transition phase to becoming UN WOMEN that will end on 31 December 2010.

These events necessitate a reorientation of the Evaluability Assessment to increase its relevance and utility in the new transitional context to UN WOMEN and the expected development of a new SP in 2011. While still providing valuable information on the evaluability of the SP, there will also be a stronger focus on taking stock and capturing lessons learned from the design and use of the current SP as an overall framework for programming and the associated Results Frameworks (RFs) and reporting

¹ The implementation of UNIFEM Strategic Plan was extended till 2013 by the Executive Board.

² UNIFEM Strategic Plan 2008-2011. DP/2007/45.

systems. Furthermore, the study will also explore UN coordination issues, the link between the normative and operational work within UNIFEM and have a more in-depth review of the country-level perspective given the expected field presence of UN WOMEN. The Evaluability Assessment will also be cognizant of other ongoing and planned assessments by UNIFEM and the UN WOMEN Transition Team to enhance complementarities and synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. The Baseline Studies portion of the original study is no longer relevant and will not be undertaken.

The present document delineates the revised purpose and intended use of the Evaluability Assessment of the UNIFEM SP, the context of the study, the subject of analysis, the approach to the study and key areas for assessment, and its expected products.

2. Purpose and Use

The Evaluability Assessment of the UNIFEM SP is a qualitative analysis of the SP's basic parameters and its monitoring and reporting systems. It will be a formative and forward looking exercise aimed at capturing best practices, challenges and lessons learned from the UNIFEM SP experience to date for reflection and learning, so that UN WOMEN can build on this body of knowledge in its own forthcoming processes to maximize the evaluability of the new corporate SP to be developed in 2011. It may also provide information that is useful for sister UN agencies.

More specifically, by analyzing the current SP in its results and operational areas, the objectives of the study are to:

1. To assess the Strategic Plan Theory of Change and its Results Frameworks (RFs) and identify strengths, weaknesses, challenges and lessons learned in regards to formulation of results and indicators and provide recommendations for strengthening it.
2. To assess the utility of the SP as a guiding framework for the development of thematic, regional, sub-regional, country strategies and programmes and provide recommendations for enhanced utility.
3. To assess the data collection and information systems for tracking SP results in terms of their relevance, effectiveness and coherence and the ability to aggregate results from country to corporate level and over time and provide recommendation on how they can be improved.
4. To assess the extent to which the results and indicators in the SP and its RFs contribute to enhanced monitoring, reporting and learning about UN system-wide coordination and accountability for results on gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly at the country level and through MRF Output 2, and provide recommendations on how to strengthen this aspect
5. To assess the SP and its RFs in terms of how it enhances and clarifies linkages between normative and operational areas of work and provide recommendations on how to improve this aspect.
6. To assess the extent to which the SP would allow for meaningful final evaluation that would provide useful information in terms of the achievement of results or lack thereof, as well as the processes that have led to the achievement/ non-achievement of results; provide recommendations on how to strengthen the SPs evaluability.

7. To assess how learning to date on the SP and its RFs, data collection and information systems can contribute to future UN WOMEN strategic planning processes and provide recommendations to this effect.

The findings of the assessment will contribute to learning and knowledge on strategic planning for gender equality and women's empowerment agencies in particular and for UN agencies in general by providing information on what worked well and what were the key gaps and challenges that affect evaluability and recommendations for strengthening this aspect. More specifically, the findings will provide robust information for strengthening UNIFEM's SP and for any future strategic planning processes under UN WOMEN.

The key users of the study are UNIFEM's Directorate, Institutional Development Team, and the Evaluation Unit. Secondary users are other UNIFEM staff in Geographic Sections, Sub-Regional Offices, Country Offices and Thematic Units, as well as the Under Secretary General (USG) of UN WOMEN, members of the UN WOMEN Transition Team (OSAGI, DAW, INSTRAW), the UN WOMEN Executive Board and sister UN agencies.³

1. Subject of Analysis: UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (SP)

a) Context of the Strategic Plan

The UNIFEM Strategic Plan was developed in 2008 and following a strategic planning process and was approved by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. Originally a four year plan, the SP was extended by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board to 2013 to align the strategic planning cycles of UN agencies.

Implementation of UNIFEM Strategic Plan has been unfolding in the context of discussion on the consolidation of the four entities focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment within the UN. A 2009 General Assembly resolution on system-wide coherence (A/RES/63/311) expressed strong support for consolidating the four UN gender-specific entities — UNIFEM, OSAGI, the Division for the Advancement of Women and INSTRAW — into one entity. This was followed by the 2010 General Assembly resolution A/RES/64/289 that created UN Women and constituting a transition phase from July 2010 to the end of the year. During this period SP implementation will continue as planned until a new plan is formulated by UN WOMEN in 2011.

b) Description of the SP

UNIFEM has developed a strategic plan that enables it to move forward in implementing its core business: supporting countries to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in line with their national priorities. The plan responds to the opportunities and challenges of the United Nations reform agenda, and to guidance from recent intergovernmental processes, including the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration and the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations

³ The UN WOMEN Executive Board have been appointed.

development system (TCPR)1 resolution A/RES/59/250. The strategic plan is built on the following five starting points:⁴

1. UNIFEM’s dual mandate to (i) provide innovative and catalytic programming and financial support to countries to achieve gender equality in line with national priorities, and (ii) mainstream gender equality across United Nations system.
2. The plan is developed based on feedback from Member States, UN organizations and other key partners; findings from the evaluation of the UNIFEM MYFF, 2004 -2007; and gender equality analysis in different countries and regions.
3. It is formulated on the premise that UNIFEM is positioned to enhance its catalytic role on inspiring the implementation of national commitments to gender equality, and to do this it needs (i) increased capacity and investment to identify, document and disseminate “what works”; (ii) strategic partnerships, presence and coverage at regional and country levels; (iii) clear designation of dedicated resources to be a driver to enhance United Nations system work on gender equality on the ground.
4. The plan is premised on strengthened partnerships and coordination with United Nations system.
5. The plan is based on a scenario of doubling total income and expenditures, making a case for the doubling to be rooted in increased core contributions. Non-core resources also continue to be an integral part of the UNIFEM portfolio.

The SP is composed of a **three main frameworks** that constitute the basis for UNIFEM programming, reporting and accountability to the Executive Board. Each of these frameworks is intended to be both internally coherent and complementary to each other in order to guide UNIFEM strategically and operationally.

- **Development Results Framework (DRF)**

The DRF identifies the results and indicators to which UNIFEM contributes to. The outcomes in this framework must be wholly owned by countries for their successful attainment. In line with the overarching principle of national ownership, UNIFEM work is driven by a single goal: *National Commitments to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment are implemented in stable and fragile states*. In support of that goal, UNIFEM works in four thematic areas and contributes to 8 outcomes. Table 1 represents the one goal, four thematic areas and 8 specific outcomes that comprises the DRF (*please see SP Annex 1 for outcome indicators and outputs*).

Table 1: UNIFEM Strategic Results – SP 2008-2013

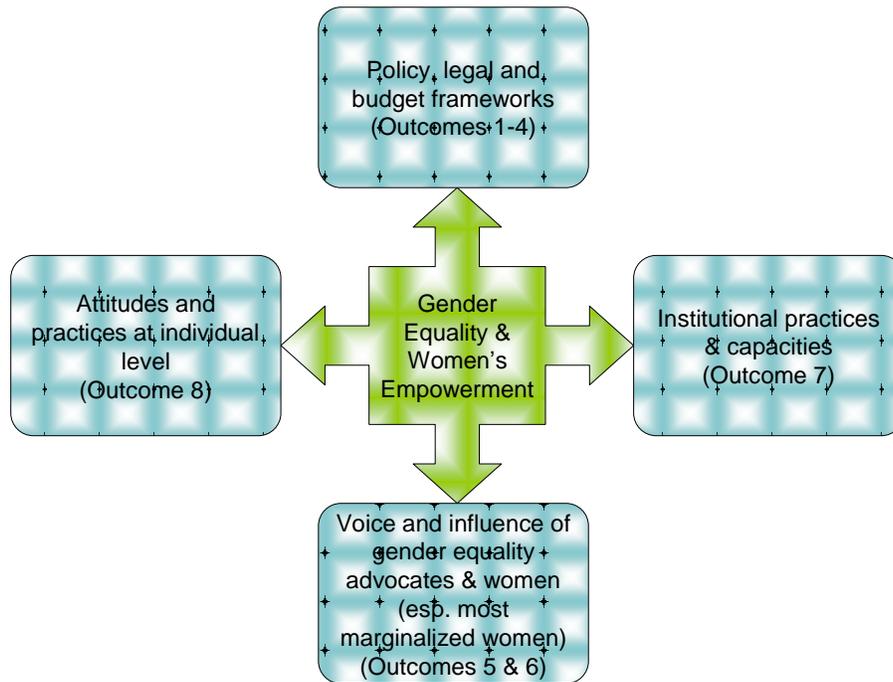
GOAL	THEMATIC AREAS	OUTCOMES
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⁴ UNIFEM SP 2009-2011, p3.

<p>National commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment implemented in stable and fragile states</p>	<p>To enhance women's economic security and rights</p>	<p>Outcome 1: Increased number of national development strategies that incorporate gender equality in line with national commitments to women's empowerment and human rights.</p>
	<p>To reduce the prevalence of violence against women</p>	<p>Outcome 2: Increase in the number of Constitutions, legal frameworks and policies that promote and protect women's human rights</p> <p>Outcome 3: Greater numbers of formal and informal justice systems promote and protect women's human rights at national and local levels.</p>
	<p>To reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS</p>	<p>Outcome 4: Increase in the number of budget processes that fully incorporate gender equality.</p> <p>Outcome 5: Gender equality experts, advocates and their organisations or networks effectively demand the implementation of gender equality dimensions in national laws, policies and strategies.</p>
	<p>To advance gender justice in democratic governance</p>	<p>Outcome 6: Women who are subject to exclusion and/or discrimination are able to effectively advocate for having their priorities incorporated in relevant policies, programmes, budgets, and processes.</p> <p>Outcome 7: Key policy, service delivery and media institutions create enabling institutional environments to promote and protect women's human rights in line with global, regional and national agreements.</p> <p>Outcome 8: Increased number of relevant and effective models of community-level initiatives for advancing women's human rights and eliminating gender inequality.</p>

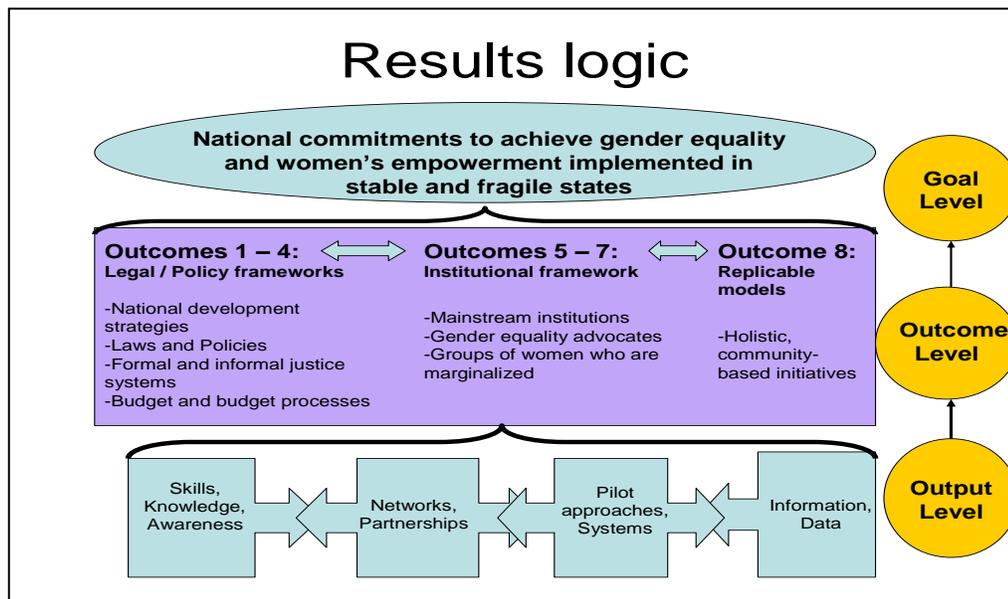
UNIFEM explicit theory of change (Figure 1), according to the Strategic Plan, is based on the understanding that a holistic approach to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment requires supporting change at macro, meso and micro levels. In other words, that the normative environment, the laws and policies need to be gender responsive, the mainstream institutions responsible for delivering according to laws and policies need to be gender responsive, the gender equality advocates need to have the capacity and knowledge to call for action and accountability, and that there needs to be ample information and credible evidence of what works at the micro level to inspire replication and up scaling. Please see *Figure 1* below.

Figure 1: SP Theory of Change



UNIFEM's results framework (please see *Figure 2*) is accordingly premised on interventions in three sets of areas, namely: influencing legal and policy frameworks (national development strategies, laws and policies, formal and informal justice systems, budget processes) in order for them to address gender equality (outcomes 1-4); strengthening capacities of institutions and groups from Governments and non Governmental organizations (mainstream institutions, gender equality advocates, groups of women who are marginalized) for implementation of the commitments (outcomes 5-7); and promoting community level initiatives targeted to specific women's human rights at the local level (outcome 8), the organization will contribute to the goal of implementation of national commitments to gender equality.

Figure 2: Representation of the Strategic Plan Intervention Logic

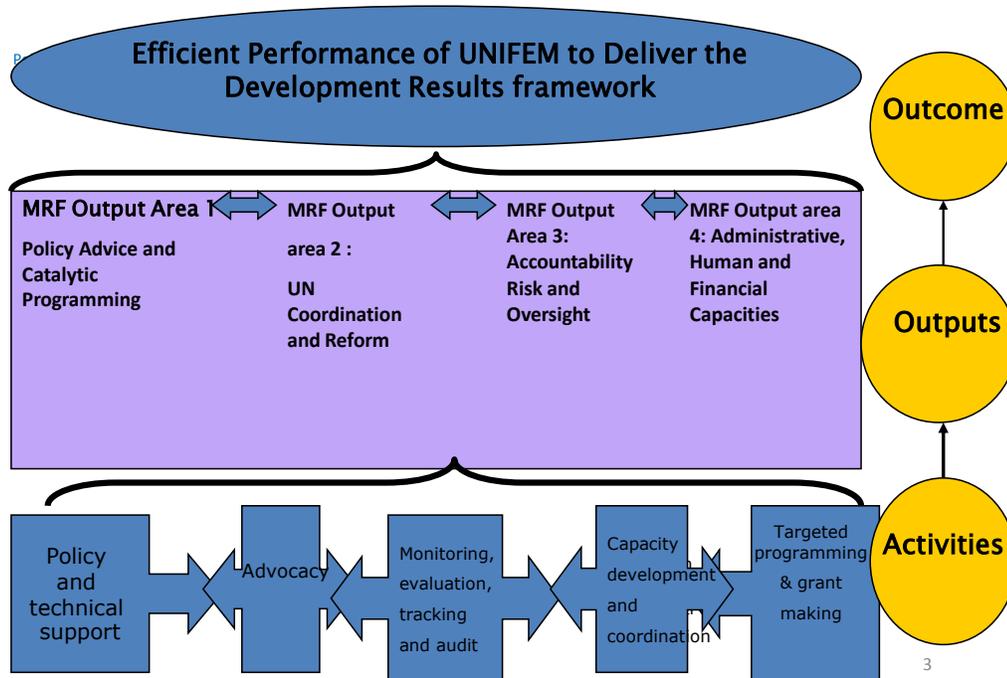


- **Management Results Framework (MRF)**

The MRF assists UNIFEM to assess the extent to which its performance enables it to deliver its overall mandate and the results identified in the DRF. Unlike the DRF (which contains outcome level results to which UNIFEM contributes to as well as output-level results), the MRF is comprised of only output level results for which UNIFEM is wholly responsible. It consists of four key areas: policy advice and catalytic programming role; United Nations coordination and reform; accountability risk and oversight; and administrative, human and financial capacities. It consists of 17 outputs and 58 indicators against which UNIFEM tracks progress. Please see SP Annex 2 for results indicators and targets and Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Representation of the Management For Results Logic

Management Results Logic



For the purposes of monitoring and results tracking the SP lists close to 100 indicators. For each of these indicators the 2008 values are to constitute the baseline against which future values will be compared to assess performance against the respective targets which the SP sets for each indicator.

- **Integrated Resource Framework (IRF)**

The IRF predicts the resource requirements and anticipated expenditures needed to implement the Strategic Plan. For further details please see the SP Annex 3.

c) Implementation of SP

UNIFEM implements the SP through Regional, Sub-Regional, Country and Thematic Strategies.⁵ These strategies constitute both the localized programme frameworks as well as programme documents for core funds at regional, sub regional, country and thematic levels. In addition, thematic strategies are also meant to guide work across regions, sub-regions and countries. UNIFEM has issued 7 guidance notes/programme circulars⁶ to facilitate the strategic planning process. More recently, guidance on the development of country strategies in priority countries in each region have been developed.

⁵ Country Strategies were developed in 2009/2010 for priority countries of each sub-region.

⁶ FEM/PRO/08/01 Guidance No. 1 Transition from MYFF to SP (January-June 2008); FEM/PRO/08/02 Guidance Note No. 2 Development of Preliminary Regional and Sub-Regional Strategies and Implementation Plans; FEM/PRO/08/04 Guidance Note No. 3 Outline of Thematic Strategies; FEM/PRO/08/05 Guidance Note No. 4 Preparing for the Programme Appraisal

For non-core funds, separate programme documents are developed in line with the criteria laid down in the UNIFEM Programme and Operations Manual.

2. Scope of the study

An Evaluability Assessment is a qualitative analysis of a project, programme or plan to determine whether it meets the preconditions for its evaluation and, if so, how the evaluation should be designed to ensure maximum utility.⁷ It analyzes the key parameters that will make it possible to fully evaluate at a later stage both the results and as the processes that lead to these results. Its ultimate purpose is to prepare the project, programme or plan for being meaningfully evaluated.

In order to be evaluable, the programmes or plans should meet the following conditions: **have a clear and articulated programme theory** – the goals, objectives and important side effects are well defined, clearly articulated and plausible;⁸ **have relevant performance** data (information on progress towards results) that can be obtained; and **the intended users of evaluation results** have agreed on how they will use the information.

The Evaluability Assessment of the UNIFEM SP will be undertaken during the period April 2010 – January 2011. As described above, the study has been reoriented to maximize relevance and utility given the current transitional context to UN WOMEN. The focus of the study will be to take stock of the SP's evaluability and capture the best practices, challenges, gaps and lessons learned from the design of the SP, the effectiveness of its monitoring and reporting systems, and its implementation and use, particularly at the country level. The assessment will focus on the following questions:

1. To what extent is the SP's Theory of Change and overall design conceptually valid and clearly articulated?

- a) Are the objectives and how they will be attained realistic (feasible and plausible)?
- b) Does it reflect how UNIFEM programmes are viewed by stakeholders (internal and external)?
- c) Does it have adequate institutional buy-in?
- d) Does it enable comprehensive results-based reporting?
- e) How does the SP influence regional, sub-regional, country and thematic strategies and how does it resonate at the regional, sub-regional and country-levels in relation to implementation, reporting and evaluation (e.g. linkages with RS, SRSs, CS and Thematic Strategies)?
- f) Is the MRF adequately formulated for achieving the SP goals? Are adequate resources provided for implementation of SRSs?
- g) How can the SP design be strengthened for greater utility?

Committee (PAC) Meeting to Approve the Regional and Sub-Regional Strategies; Guidance Note No. 5 SRS Review Feedback and Insights; FEM/PRO/08/06 Guidance Note No. 6; Guidance Note No. 7 Selection of Priority Countries for UNIFEM Programming and Presence.

⁷ Rossi et. al. (2004). Detailed description of the evaluability assessment process will be provided in the corresponding section.

⁸ Internally (regarding a logical relationship between different levels of results) and externally (regarding the response to the social needs being addressed);, including a clear 'impact theory' i.e. the assumptions about the causal changes on the social conditions due to the programme intervention, and a clear 'process theory' i.e. the transactions put in place by the programme in order to bring about the intended effects.

2. **To what extent are the SP Results Frameworks and associated data collection and reporting systems providing adequately comprehensive and robust mechanisms for reporting on SP results?**
 - Are there adequate and clear indicators to measure progress and results?
 - Is there baseline data available in the key result and process areas of the SP?
 - Is there performance/monitoring information available on the key result and process areas of the SP?
 - Is it possible to capture adequate information on aggregate results from country to corporate level and over time? What modifications would allow for better aggregation of results?
 - Is there available research and/or evaluation evidence on the change processes outlined in the SP?
 - How can the SP RFs and associated data collection and reporting systems be improved?
3. **To what extent does the SP and its RFs facilitate UNIFEM’s leadership and role in UN Coordination efforts on gender equality and women’s empowerment? What modifications would allow for expanding and strengthening this role, particularly at the country level, and enhance monitoring, reporting and learning on this issue?**
4. **To what extent do the SP and its RFs enhance and clarify linkages between the normative and operational areas of work on gender equality and women’s empowerment? Are data collection and reporting systems capturing this information and how could this aspect be strengthened?**
5. **To what extent would an evaluation of the SP have been able to provide useful information on the achievement (or non-achievement) of results and the processes that have led to these results?**
 - a) What areas of the SP would best lend themselves to meaningful future evaluation? What are the key factors that increased evaluability?
 - b) What areas of the SP would prove challenging to meaningfully evaluate? How could evaluability of these areas be improved?
 - c) What areas are in need of substantive baseline data for future evaluation?

Based on the above five questions outlined above, the study will provide findings, conclusions and recommendations on the organizational learning that has taken place to date around the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the SP as an input to strengthen UNIFEM systems and as a contribution to future UN WOMEN strategic planning.

a) Steps for conducting the evaluability assessment

The following work has already been undertaken as part of the first phase of the Evaluability Assessment of the SP from **April – August 2010**:

1. An **Inception Mission** that resulted in a body of information and views on the SP, its Theory of Change, and systems developed to monitor and report on its Results Frameworks gathered through an Inception Workshop, Initial Document Review, Phone and In-Person Interviews and presented in an Inception Report.
2. The development of **2 analytical frameworks** to guide the Evaluability Assessment, one an overarching framework for the study, and the other a tool for the analysis of documentation).

3. An **assessment and analysis of the SP's Theory of Change** and a **technical appraisal of the SP and its Results Frameworks**.
4. A **sampling approach and sample base for the selection of regional, sub-regional and country offices** for study at three different levels/intensity of analysis; a list of UNIFEM programmes was also developed for sampling.
5. An **initial document analysis** covering guidance material (SP); results tracking guidance; evaluation policy, strategy and reporting; selected thematic strategies and reports.

During the period **September 2010 – January 2011**, the assessment will move forward with the outlined reorientation of purpose and use given the transitional context to UN WOMEN. The following are the key steps remaining to complete the study:

1. **In depth review of key documents** related to the study, including (but not limited to) a selected sample of programme documents, evaluation reports, geographic strategies, and selected SRSs and existing Country Strategies (to be analyzed at three different levels of intensity). *(Sept-Oct 2010)*
2. A **briefing note** outlining key issues for exploration and proposed data gathering for site visits. *(end Oct 2010)*
3. **Site visits to 2 SROs and 2 COs** (one under each SRO) selected according to agreed upon criteria as the third (and most in-depth) level of analysis of the implementation of the SP in the field, with specific focus on the country level perspective. Site visit selection will focus on offices that will allow best opportunities for learning on how to strengthen the SP and its RFs. *(Nov 2010)*
4. Report/PPT on emerging findings from the data collection and analysis undertaken. *(Dec 2010)*
5. **Draft and final report** of the Evaluability Assessment that provides findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned for UNIFEM. *(Jan 2011)*
6. A **Validation Meeting** on the final report with UNIFEM stakeholders, including UN WOMEN entities (DAW, OSAGI, INSTRAW). *(Date TBD)*

7. Evaluation Team

An Evaluation Team from International Organisation Development was recruited through an open competitive process conducted by the UNIFEM Evaluation Unit and began to conduct the study in April 2010. The team composition reflects substantive relevant experience for this study including a strong combination of gender-related monitoring and evaluation experience, combined with particular (and current) expertise in Results Based Management. Between them, the team have worked in over 30 countries.

Cathy Gaynor, serves as Team Leader for this assignment, has 30 years experience as a researcher, trainer, planner, consultant and facilitator in the areas of social policy, social assessment, gender planning, results based management and the interface between aid effectiveness and cross cutting social policy issues. Cathy has provided analytical and practical support on gender and development effectiveness (especially results and performance indicators) for a number of donor agencies (Denmark, Ireland, Netherlands, Finland and UK) and for the OECD-DAC. Recent consultancy work has focused on strengthening results based approaches in design, implementation and review of country assistance strategies; and in institutional policy, planning, appraisal and effectiveness. Work for UN agencies has included UNDESA (social assessment); ILO (strengthening gender equality results in ILO Programming and development of a Results-focused Gender Action Plan); OIOS (support for thematic evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the UN Secretariat); UNDP (Gender Capacity Building East and Central Europe); and contribution to the 2007 UN-DAW Expert Group Meeting on Financing for Gender Equality.

Cathy will be supported by **Dr Julia Betts** and **Joseph Barnes** in the study. **Julia** is a former UK Department of International Development social development adviser, with specific expertise in gender. She has over 15 years' experience working with donor agencies, the academic community and INGOs advising on social policy reform, social assessment and the integration of social components, including gender, into performance assessment mechanisms. Recent work has included work with the WTO, advising on the development of a comprehensive M&E system for the 50-country Enhanced Integrated Framework programme, and advising UNICEF on the quality assurance of its evaluation reports / Gender Assessments. Julia and Cathy recently worked together on DFID's global Social Exclusion policy stocktake.

Joseph Barnes is an M&E specialist with a strong grounding in results based management and international development policy and project cycle management. He is experienced in developing and using analytical tools and frameworks for the M&E of development interventions in order to improve or to increase delivery efficiency and effectiveness. Recent work has included work with UNICEF on their global Evaluations Helpdesk, and developing analytical tools for Plan International's Global Effectiveness Report. Joe also works with donor agencies such as DFID to deliver training on the use of logframes in development planning. He will bring strong quantitative expertise to the study as well as good knowledge of UN systems and processes, having been previously employed by UNICEF and the WFP in M&E roles.

The team also benefits from the advice and support of **Julian Gayfer**, who has over 25 years' experience of development practice covering all aspects of the design, implementation and evaluation of development programmes. Julian's consulting work in recent years has focused on strengthening the performance assessment and management functions of development agencies and international organisations and their partnerships. The development and application of results based monitoring and evaluation frameworks tailored to the specific needs of operational managers and the strategic requirements of organisations has been a key feature of his work.

Annexes

UNIFEM Strategic Plan and Annexes 1-6:

http://www.unifem.org/materials/item_detail.php?ProductID=100