



EVALUATION USE STRATEGY

# UN WOMEN'S STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN EVALUATION USE THROUGH COMMUNICATION, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SERVICE





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**UN Women Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services**

Independent Evaluation Service

New York, December 2025



## FOREWORD

At UN Women, our commitment to gender equality is anchored in values of accountability, transparency and learning. Evaluation plays a vital role in advancing these values, providing the evidence needed to understand what works, challenge assumptions and drive meaningful change for women and girls around the world.

However, the true power of evaluation lies not only in the process but also in using evaluation findings alongside our stakeholders—the Executive Board, donors, civil society, senior leaders, project managers, academics, think tanks—and many others who turn evidence into action.

This Evaluation Use Strategy comes at a pivotal time. As the organization enters the final year of its Strategic Plan (2022–2025) and prepares for the next planning cycle, the development landscape is marked by tightening resources and competing priorities. In this context, it is more important than ever to ensure that evaluation findings are not only published, but fully applied to improve programmes, inform decisions, guide policy and inspire innovation. With growing demands for accountability, value for money and transformative results, our evaluations must move beyond static reports to generate real-world influence and impact.

The strategy is grounded in deep reflection and evidence from self-assessments, consultations and lessons learned across all regions and levels of the organization. It sets out a clear vision, structured approach and practical pathways to ensure evaluation use becomes a consistent, strategic and measurable part of how UN Women operates.

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**Evaluation use is not the responsibility of one office. It is a shared commitment. This strategy calls on all of us – leaders, evaluators, planners, programme managers and partners – to bring evidence to the centre of our work. Together, let us use evaluations not only to assess our progress but to accelerate it.**

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This Evaluation Use Strategy was developed by UN Women’s Independent Evaluation Service (IES) as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen the use of evaluation for learning, accountability, and impact across the organization. The process was enriched by the collective contributions of many colleagues who played vital roles throughout its development.

We are especially grateful to the IES team for their collaborative review, thoughtful feedback, and strategic suggestions that shaped the direction and substance of this strategy. Sincere thanks also go to the colleagues who contributed to the initial situational analysis, helping to identify opportunities and barriers to evaluation use across UN Women. Appreciation is likewise extended to those who supported the preparatory work, including the development of the concept note, internal consultations, and early design of this document.

This strategy is the result of many rounds of reflection, collaboration, and shared commitment—and we thank everyone who contributed to making it a meaningful and actionable roadmap for strengthening evaluation use at UN Women.



**Inga Kaplan**

*Chief, Independent Evaluation Service*  
Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation  
Services (IEAIS)

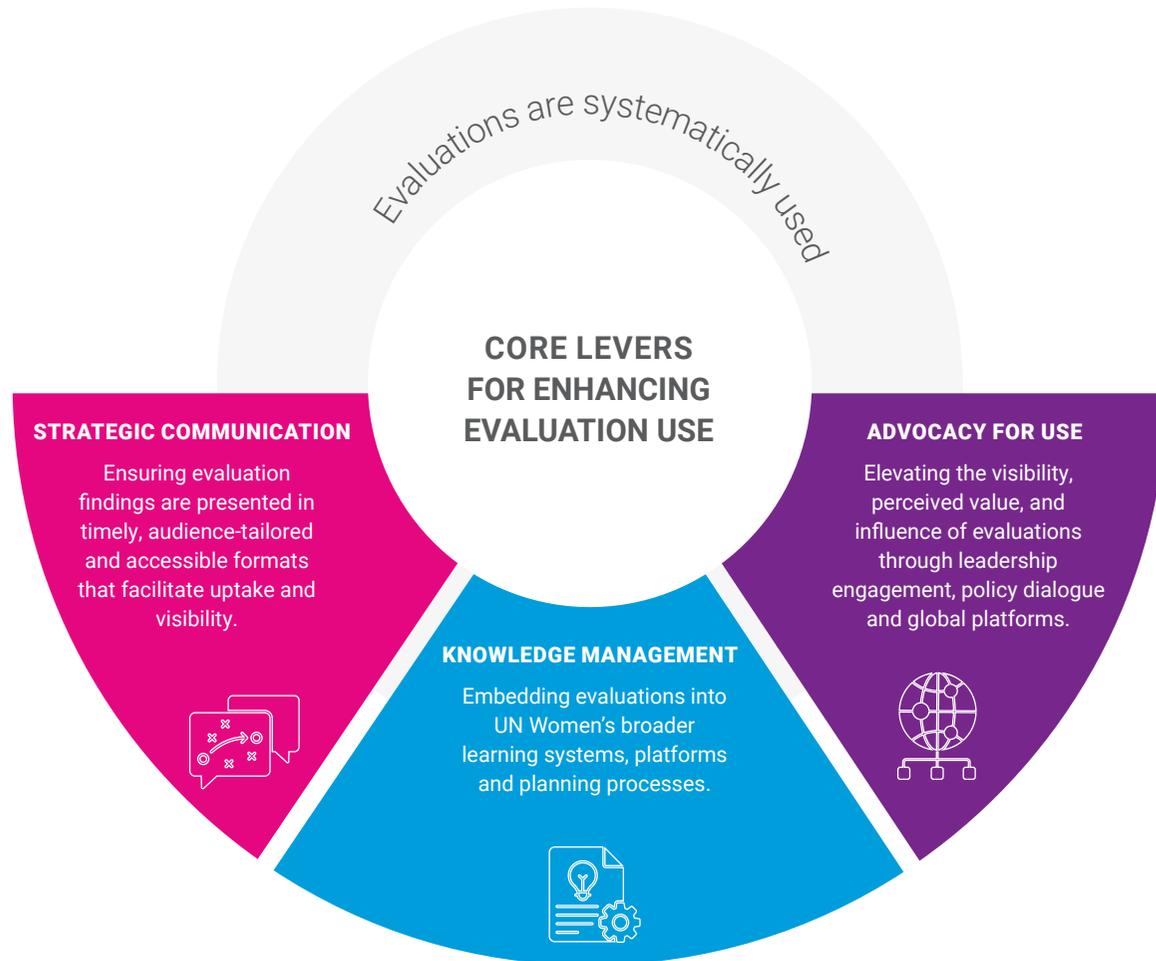
# STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

**Evaluation is a cornerstone of UN Women’s commitment to transparency, accountability and learning. It provides the evidence base to understand what works, identify what needs to change and accelerate progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Yet, the value of evaluation lies not only in its quality or credibility but in how it is used.**

The Evaluation Use Strategy sets out a bold, practical road map to ensure evaluations are actively and consistently used across the organization and beyond. It responds to persistent barriers such as uneven follow-up, fragmented communication, limited visibility and the lack of systematic monitoring of how evaluations shape decisions.

The strategy is grounded in inputs from the 2024 self-assessment of the evaluation function, global stakeholder consultations and lessons learned from across regions and levels of the organization. It is built around three core levers: Strategic Communication, Knowledge Management and Advocacy for Use.

## CORE LEVERS FOR ENHANCING EVALUATION USE

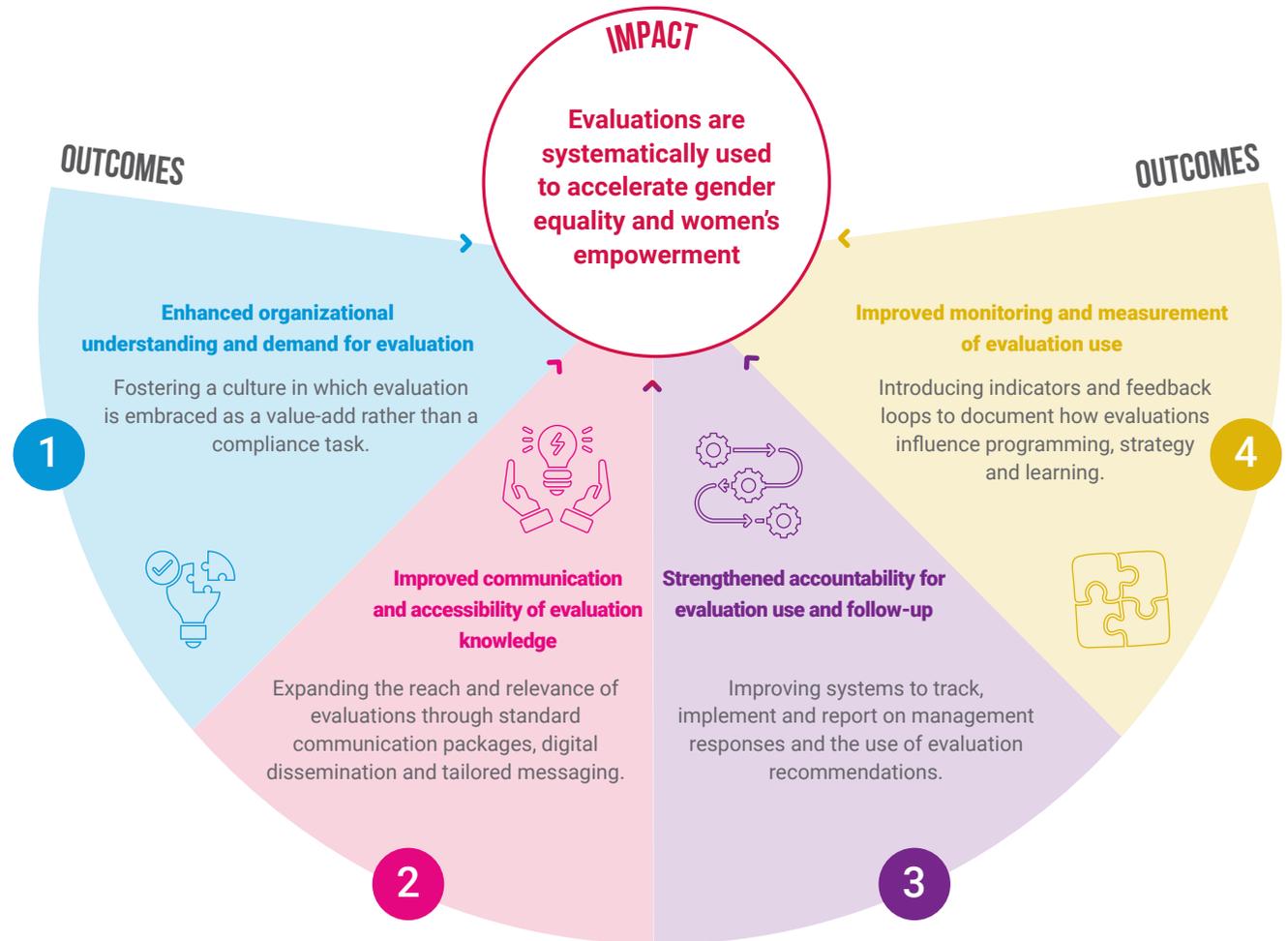


## The strategy's four interconnected outcomes define what success looks like.

Practical pathways for implementation include toolkits, templates, learning events, dashboards, synthesis products and collaboration mechanisms. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined between IES at headquarters, regional specialists, M&E focal points, programme and planning teams, and senior management – ensuring shared ownership and integrated action.

The strategy also includes a robust framework to measure success, with Key Performance Indicators that track organizational understanding, communication reach, accountability for follow-up and real-world influence. Annual reporting and reflection will ensure that evaluation findings move beyond reports to generate genuine learning, strategic influence and improved results for women and girls worldwide.

### STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR OPERATIONALIZING THE LEVERS FOR CHANGE



## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the UN Women Evaluation Use Strategy is to enhance the systematic use of evaluations across all dimensions of the organization's mandate – normative support, operational activities and coordination – by strengthening how evaluation findings and processes are communicated, managed and advocated for. Rooted in the recognition that evaluations are not ends in themselves but tools for learning, accountability and decision-making, the strategy aims to transform evaluative evidence into actionable insights that inform programming, policy-making and organizational development.

The strategy builds on the UN Women Evaluation Strategy 2022–2025 and addresses longstanding barriers to evaluation use, such as inadequate dissemination, fragmented communication, weak knowledge integration and limited follow-up mechanisms. “It also capitalizes on opportunities to amplify the value of evaluation findings through intentional, audience-focused approaches”.

This strategy focuses specifically on enhancing the use of findings, with attention to both instrumental (direct application) and conceptual (indirect learning) uses. While process use is addressed through UN Women's Evaluation Handbook and guidelines, this strategy focuses on making insights actionable and discouraging symbolic or token use of evaluation. It promotes purposeful engagement with evidence to drive improvement and results.

The scope encompasses three levels: Strategic Communication, Knowledge Management and Advocacy for Evaluation, and reinforces the Management Response system to translate findings into meaningful action.

The strategy applies to independent and decentralized evaluations alike and is relevant for IES staff, regional evaluation specialists, country-level M&E focal points, knowledge management officers, communications teams, programme managers and senior leaders. Its long-term vision spans two Strategic Plan cycles (2025–2030) and is grounded in UNEG frameworks, self-assessments and global good practices.



Photo: UN Women/Ruhani Kaur



**KEY PRINCIPLES ENSURE THIS STRATEGY ALIGNS WITH UN WOMEN'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY, RESULTS, LEARNING AND ETHICAL EVIDENCE USE.**



# SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

## FINDINGS FROM THE 2024 SELF-ASSESSMENT ON EVALUATION USE AT UN WOMEN

### CURRENT STATE OF EVALUATION USE

#### Strong evaluation architecture & quality

High credibility and independence ratings, supported by institutional frameworks and quality standards. Evaluation Handbook and methodologies are valued.

#### Improved value & engagement

Growing appreciation, especially when Regional Evaluation Specialists provide support; more proactive integration into planning and risk analysis.

#### Accessible platforms

GATE as a centralized platform; tools like Transform magazine and webinars help communicate findings.



### CHALLENGES, GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF EVALUATION USE

#### Uneven use

Findings not consistently influencing decisions. Fear of evaluations seems like a different issue than use.

#### Weak feedback loops

Follow-up and integration of recommendations not systematically tracked.

#### Capacity limits

Both internal and national partner technical capacity gaps.

#### Fragmented knowledge integration

Poor tagging, searchability, and systematic use in planning processes.

#### Ad hoc dissemination

Inconsistent, under-resourced, and often generic.



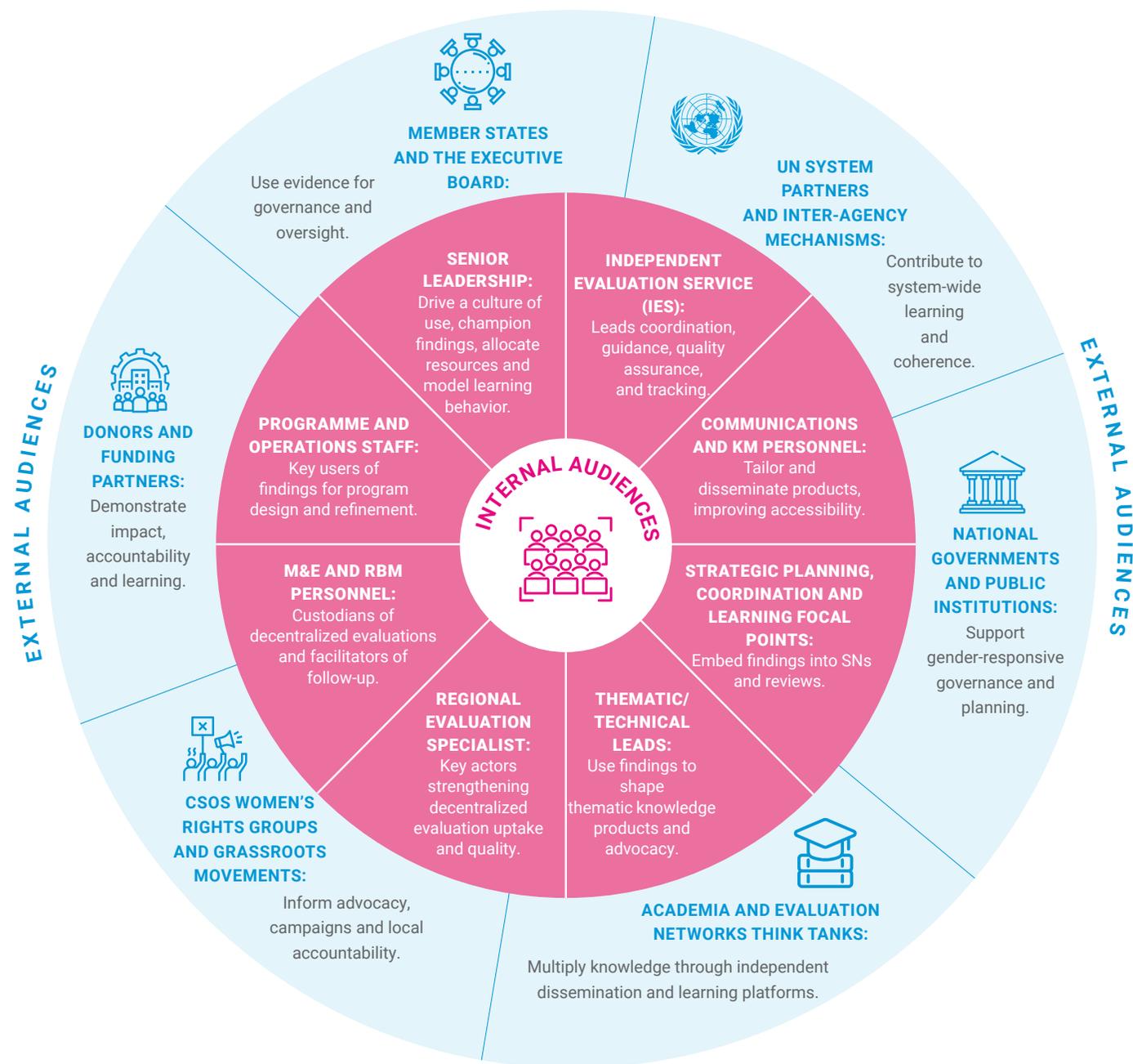
### STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase uptake through clear roles, follow-up, and accountability.
- Strengthen communication with tailored, audience-specific products.
- Embed evaluation in strategic planning and knowledge processes.
- Build trust by promoting evaluation as developmental and participatory.



# WHO THIS STRATEGY ENGAGES

THE STRATEGY ADOPTS A MULTI-AUDIENCE APPROACH, RECOGNIZING THE DIVERSE ROLES INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS PLAY.



## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

**The vision of the Evaluation Use Strategy is that evaluations are systematically used to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment by informing decisions, strengthening accountability and fostering institutional learning across all levels of UN Women and its partners.**

By 2030, UN Women envisions an organizational culture where:

- Evaluation is embedded in strategic and operational decision-making processes.
- Evaluation findings are routinely accessed, discussed and acted upon by internal and external stakeholders.
- Knowledge generated through evaluations contributes directly to programmatic improvements, policy innovation, donor engagement and normative positioning.
- The visibility and credibility of UN Women's evaluation function are enhanced across the UN system and development community.
- Evaluation is not only a tool for accountability but also a catalyst for learning, adaptation and transformative change in support of gender equality.

This vision aligns with UN Women's triple mandate by ensuring that credible evidence is not only generated but meaningfully applied.

The strategy is driven by four outcomes:

1. strengthening organizational understanding and demand for evaluation;
2. improving the communication and accessibility of evaluation knowledge;
3. reinforcing accountability for follow-up and use; and
4. systematically monitoring and measuring how evaluations are applied.

Together, these four outcomes provide the strategic backbone of the Evaluation Use Strategy. Each is supported by a set of outputs, actions and indicators detailed in the strategy framework, ensuring the transition from vision to operational reality.

The theory of change visual on the following page shows how stronger communication, engagement, follow-up and learning will lead to more systematic and impactful evaluation use. By investing in leadership, capacity, systems and collaboration, UN Women can turn evidence into action that advances gender equality.

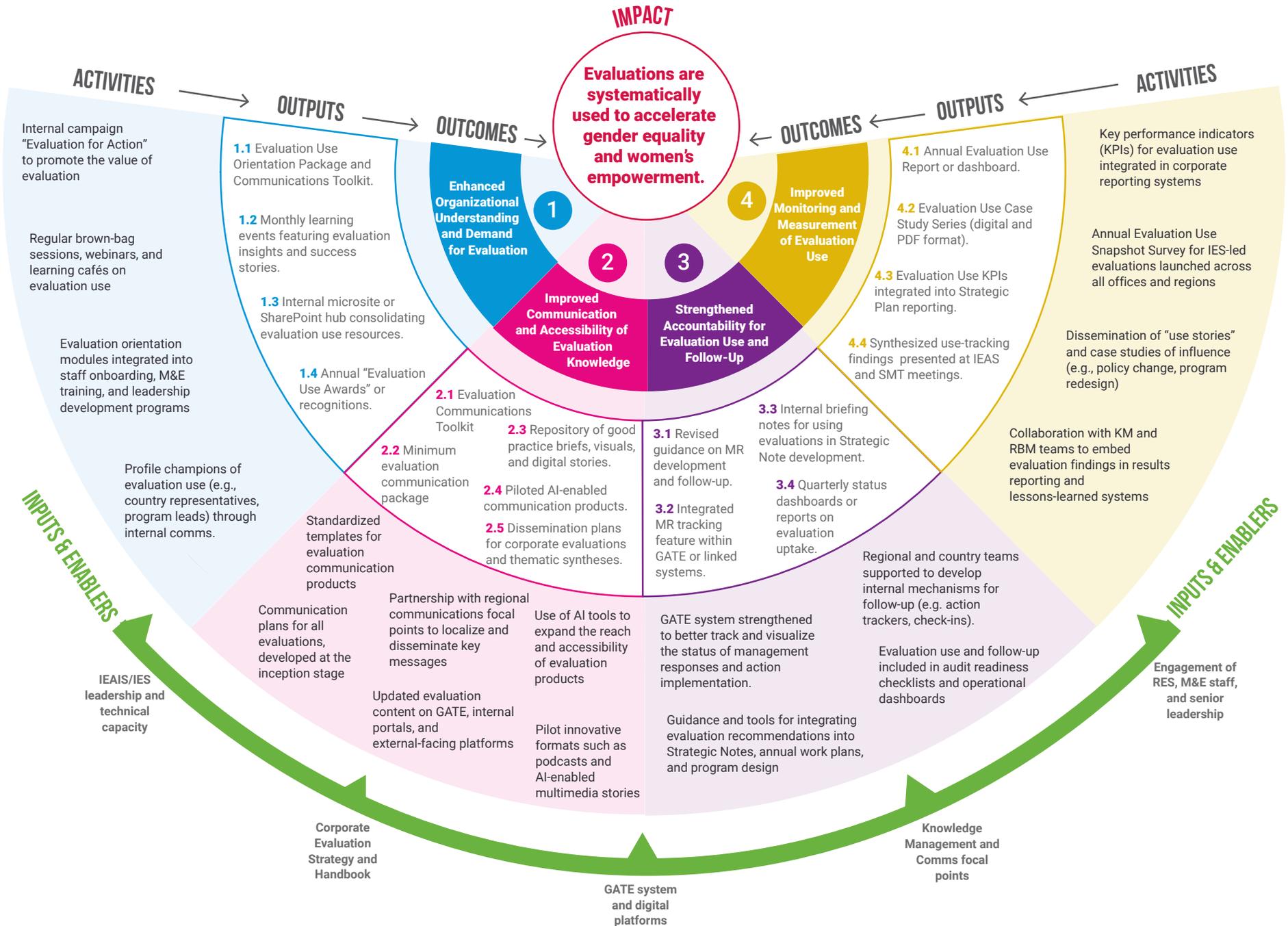


Photo: UN Women/Catianne Tijerina

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES FOR STRENGTHENING EVALUATION USE



**THEORY OF CHANGE – HOW THE EVALUATION USE STRATEGY DRIVES SYSTEMATIC AND INFLUENTIAL USE OF EVALUATIONS**



## MEASURING SUCCESS

A key part of this strategy is a practical framework for measuring success, with clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) linked to each of the four strategic outcomes. These KPIs ensure progress is tracked and lessons are used to strengthen evaluation influence across UN Women.

### → **Organizational understanding and demand:**

Tracks staff awareness and demand for evaluations. Indicators include the percentage of staff reporting they understand the value of evaluation; the number of internal events promoting use; and references to evaluation findings in Strategic Notes and workplans.

→ **Communication and accessibility:** Measures how well evaluation knowledge reaches target audiences. Indicators include the percentage of evaluations with complete communication packages (briefs, slides, social assets); downloads and views of products; and adaptation of briefs for non-technical or local use.

→ **Accountability and follow-up:** Monitors how recommendations are acted upon. Indicators include the percentage of evaluations with management responses submitted on time; percentage of follow-up actions completed; and the number of evaluations cited in proposals and donor reports.

→ **Monitoring and measurement of use:** Documents real-world influence and learning. Indicators include the number of published use stories or case studies; percentage of decentralized evaluations reporting follow-up actions; and integration of the use of KPIs into corporate reporting aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Progress on these KPIs will be reviewed annually through dashboards, surveys and reports, helping sustain accountability, reflection and continuous improvement.



Photo: UN Women/Satu Bumi Jaya

## KPIS FOR TRACKING EVALUATION USE PROGRESS

	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)	DATA SOURCE/FREQUENCY	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>OUTCOME 1</b> Enhanced understanding and demand for evaluation 	% of staff who report understanding the value of evaluation	Annual survey / Pulse check	IES KM focal point / Training
	# of internal events promoting evaluation use	IES Event Tracker / Quarterly	IES KM focal point
	% of staff who report understanding the value of evaluation	Desk review / Strategic planning	IES KM focal point + RES + Country and regional office M&E focal points
<b>OUTCOME 2</b> Improved strategic communication of evaluation knowledge 	% of evaluations with complete comms package (brief, slide, social asset)	GATE / Evaluation tracker	IES KM focal point + Evaluation managers + RES
	# of downloads / views of evaluation products	Web analytics / Quarterly	IES KM focal point
	% of strategic notes or workplans referencing evaluation findings	IES / Regional comms reports	IES KM focal point + Regional comms focal points + RES
<b>OUTCOME 3</b> Strengthened accountability for evaluation follow-up 	% of evaluations with management response submitted within 6 weeks	GATE / Quarterly	IES KM focal point + Evaluation managers + Country and regional office M&E focal point
	% of management response actions marked completed within 12 months	GATE / Management response tracker	IES KM focal point + RES + Country and regional office M&E focal points
	# of evaluations cited in proposals or donor reports	Programme reports / Annual	Country and regional office programme & Planning teams + IES KM focal point
<b>OUTCOME 4</b> Improved measurement of evaluation use 	# of use stories or case studies published annually	IES learning outputs	IES KM focal point + country and regional office M&E focal point
	% of country and regional office evaluations reporting follow-up actions	RES reporting / Annual	RES + Country and regional office M&E focal point + IES KM focal point
	Evaluation use KPI score integrated into strategic plan reporting	Corporate M&E system	IES KM focal point + Corporate planning / M&E unit

# FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION

The Evaluation Use Strategy will be implemented within existing resources and capacities, focusing on practical actions that embed evaluation use into daily work across all levels of UN Women. Implementation relies on three coordinated approaches:

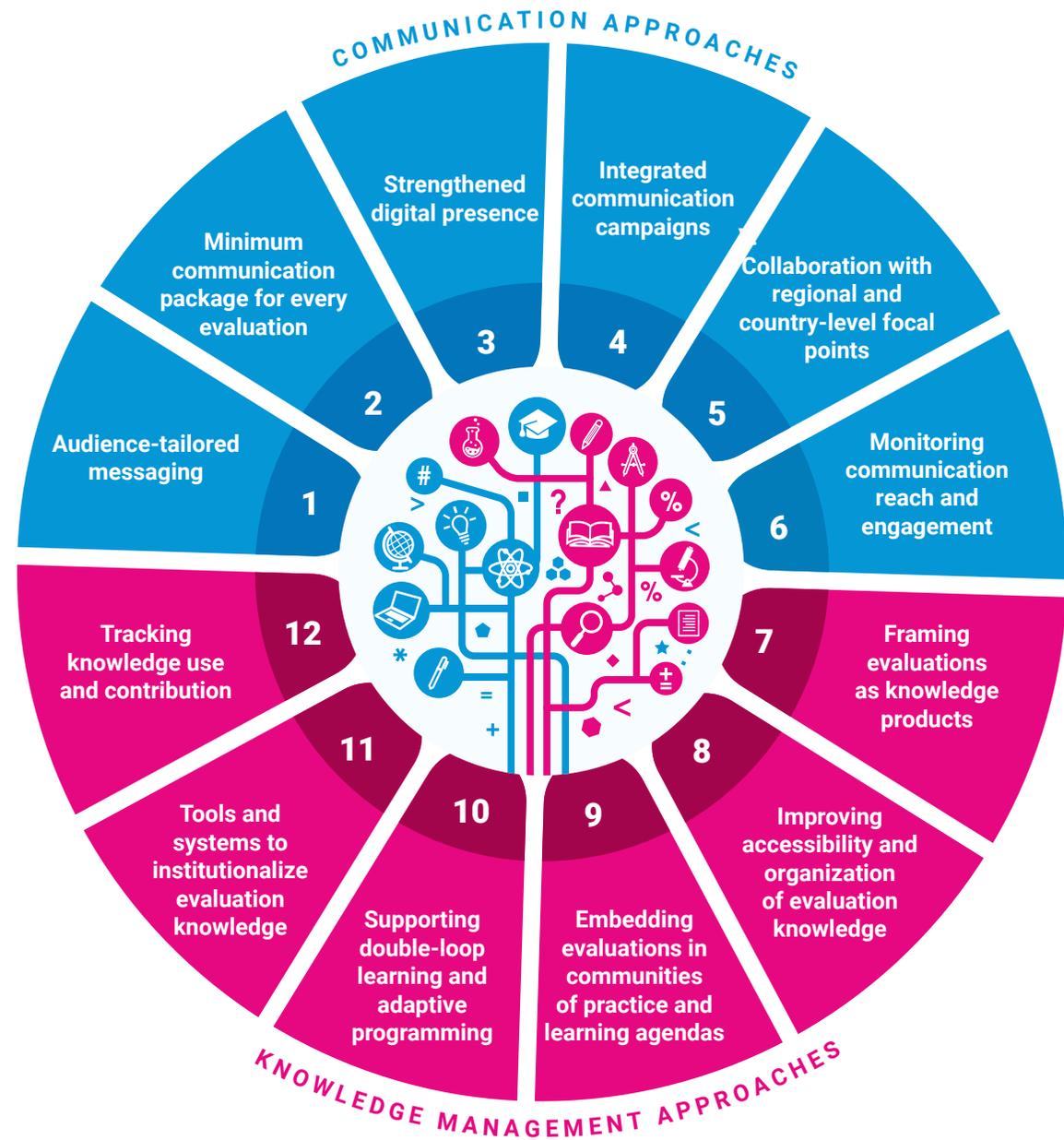
→ **Communication:** Use is supported through clear, audience-tailored messages and minimum communication packages (briefs, slides, infographics). Communication is integrated throughout the evaluation life cycle and aligned with major campaigns and platforms such as GATE, ensuring findings reach the right people at the right time.

→ **Knowledge Management:** Evaluations are treated as strategic knowledge assets. Findings are tagged, shared through communities of practice, learning agendas and Strategic Notes. Collaboration with knowledge management focal points ensures evidence is discoverable, relevant and used for design, analysis and policy dialogue.

→ **Advocacy:** Evaluation use is positioned as a strategic act to strengthen UN Women’s credibility and influence.

Leadership champions use evaluations by referencing findings in decisions and external advocacy. Partnerships with UNEG, EvalGender+ and networks expand the reach of gender-responsive evaluations, while good practices and policy influence stories and inspire wider uptake. A clear performance framework with KPIs will track communication reach, knowledge uptake, follow-up and influence, with annual reporting to drive accountability and learning.

## COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

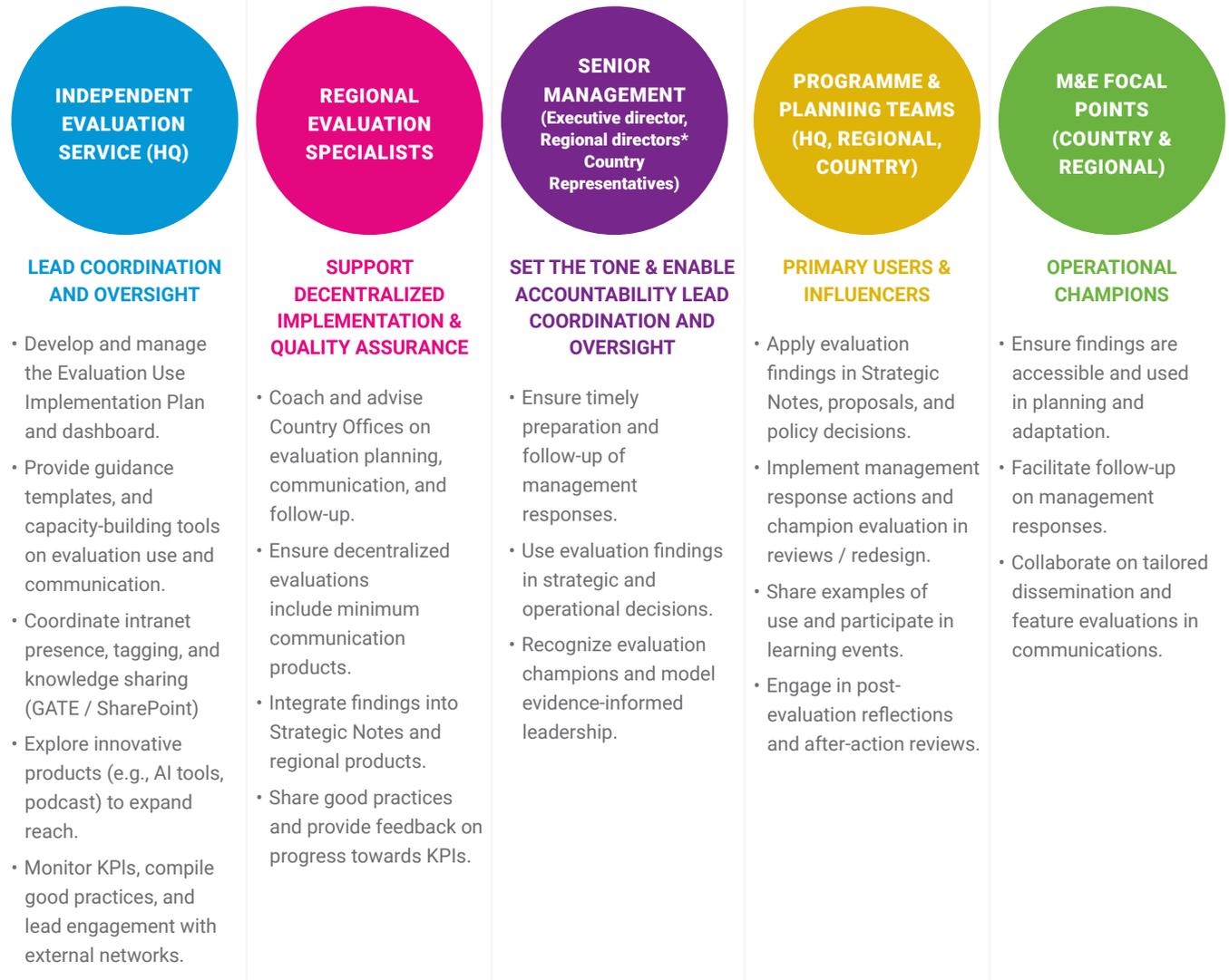


# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementing the Evaluation Use Strategy will rely on existing capacities within UN Women, particularly within IES and its close collaborators across divisions and offices. Rather than creating new structures, the strategy embeds use-promoting actions into ongoing responsibilities, encouraging collaborative and practical approaches that maximize current resources.

**Together, these roles ensure that evaluation use becomes a shared commitment that drives learning, accountability and impact across UN Women.**

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE EVALUATION USE STRATEGY



# UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

As the lead UN entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social behaviours and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations translate progress into lasting changes. We make strides forward for women and girls in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and women, peace and security as well as humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.



220 East 42nd Street  
New York, New York 10017, USA  
Tel: 212-906-6400  
Fax: 212-906-6705

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