

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Independent Evaluation Service – led Evaluation of the Women’s Resilience to Disasters Programme (WRD)

1. Background

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) evaluates the work of UN Women to enhance organizational accountability, provide evidence-based information for decision-making and to contribute to learning on gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women IES is conducting the final evaluation of the Global Women’s Resilience to Disasters (WRD) Programme to conduct the evaluation more efficiently and ensure key lessons learned on Disaster Risk Reduction inform programming at both regional and global levels moving forward.

The Women’s Resilience to Disasters (WRD) Programme, with a budget of approximately 13.5 million AUD funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of the Government of Australia, was launched as UN Women’s sole DRR Gender Equality Accelerator, putting women and girls at the centre of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience. The program aims to strengthen women’s voice, agency, and leadership by securing gender-responsive decision-making, governance, and systems, enabling targeted action for building the resilience of women and girls to current and future disasters and threats. The key strategies of the programme include policy and technical support, capacity-building initiatives, and partnerships, aimed at ensuring that women, particularly those from marginalised communities, are actively involved in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

The WRD Programme is currently being implemented in four countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. In the Pacific, disaster risks converge with critical socio-economic vulnerabilities, environmental degradation, and climate change. The remoteness, socio-economic status, and fragile biodiversity of Pacific countries make them highly vulnerable to hazards and exacerbate existing development challenges in the region, affecting women and people with disabilities the most. This is complemented by regional and global components, which focus on supporting gender-transformative, disability-inclusive, and human-rights-based disaster and climate-resilient systems and governance. It was designed to be driven at the country level and supported by a regional Pacific and a streamlined global component. The WRD Programme supports two primary outcomes areas:

OUTCOME 1: BUILDING THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT. Prevention, preparedness, and recovery systems, plans, processes, and tools are gender-responsive.

OUTCOME 2: TARGETED ACTION. Women and girls are prepared to withstand multiple hazards, recover from disasters, and increase their resilience to future disasters and threats.

The programme was launched in the Pacific after an inception phase (2019-2021) for a period of 4 years, 2021-2025 (ending on 30th June 2025, with programme closure related efforts until December 2025). The programme Mid-Term Review was issued in February 2024 with the objectives to assess progress, identify challenges, refocus priorities, enhance accountability, and ensure the sustainability of the Programme.

The WRD Programme has a diverse array of stakeholders across Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and Kiribati, including governmental bodies, women’s organisations, civil society organisations (CSOs), women and girls, especially those with disabilities and those in the LGBTQI+ community.

There are two levels of project governance structures in place:

- **WRD Board:** The main purpose of the WRD Board is to provide strategic direction to the Programme at global, regional, and country levels. It also supports the positioning and visibility of the WRD. The Board

comprises the Government of Australia through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, UN Women, UNDRR, and civil society organisations.

- **National Programme Management Committee (NPMC) and Gender and Social Inclusion Technical Working Group (GSI TWG):** Acting as the primary coordination and technical body for the WRD Programme, the NPMCs and GSI TWG (regional) bring together key national agencies, development partners, women’s organisations, and CSOs to align programme activities with gender-sensitive DRR strategies.

At the global level, the Programme is headed by the Global Programme Manager, who leads a team of non-WRD funded DRR staff and consultants who generate co-benefits for the programme contributing to its workstreams, in addition to acting as matrix supervisor to the WRD Regional Programme Manager. In addition, a WRD Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant, alongside a WRD Communications Consultant, report to both the Global Programme Manager and the Regional Programme Manager.

At the regional level, the Programme is headed by the Programme Manager (Programme Specialist – vacant) with the support of the Deputy Programme Manager (Programme Analyst), the Regional Programme Finance and Budget (vacant), and the Regional Programme Associate.

At the country level, each of the four country teams is led by the National Project Coordinator with the support of a Programme Assistant (s).

Overview of the programme	
Project Title:	Women's Resilience to Disasters Programme
Geographical Coverage:	Global component Regional component Country component covering Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu
Project Duration:	06/07/2021 - 06/30/2025 (with a possible no-cost extension)
Donor(s)/Fund(s)	The Government of Australia through Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade AUD 13,366,337

2. Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The evaluation aims to assess UN Women’s overall performance in implementing the WRD Programme at a global, regional, and national level, foster accountability to its key stakeholders, and enhance learning within UN Women and among the Programme's key stakeholders. The findings, lessons learned, and good practices provided by this evaluation will contribute to the improvement of the UN Women’s similar project/programme in the future, particularly in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience.

The primary intended uses of this evaluation are:

- Accountability for the development effectiveness of the WRD Programme results in terms of UN Women’s contribution to gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- Learning on effective, promising and innovative strategies and practices with respect to gender responsive Disaster Resilience and Climate change.
- Capacity development and mobilization of national stakeholders to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Primary and Secondary Intended Users	Primary intended use			
	Learning and knowledge generation	Strategic decision making	Accountability	Capacity development and mobilizations
UN Women Fiji MCO personnel	x	x	x	x
UN Women HQ	x	x	x	x
UN Women RO personnel	X	X		x
UN Women IEAIS	x			
National government representatives in the Pacific region	x			
CSO representatives	x			
National stakeholders (private/public sector and CSOs)	x			
Donor and Multilateral partners	x	x	x	

Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation are to:

- I. Assess whether the WRD Programme responds to the needs and priorities of rights holders within the scope of the Programme and whether it had the appropriate design and strategies to achieve the intended results.
- II. Assess organizational efficiency, including whether resources are strategically allocated and efficiently used to deliver expected outputs and outcomes in a timely manner.
- III. Assess whether the expected results have been effectively achieved at all levels of the Programme and the Programme's contribution to achieving the UN Women Fiji MCO Strategic Note and UN Women Strategic Plan, global and regional frameworks and commitments, and DFAT priorities.
- IV. Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices, challenges, and innovations of efforts that support gender equality, human rights and women's resilience to disasters.
- V. Provide actionable recommendations for future programmatic actions in the area of disaster risks reduction and climate resilience.

Scope of the evaluation

The final evaluation will cover all aspects of the WRD Programme, including both technical and financial components over the entire programme duration from June 2021 to June 2025, analysing key milestones, strategic shifts, and WRD interventions across different levels.

The final evaluation will assess WRD's implementation in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, examining country-specific, regional (Pacific region) and global gender-responsive DRR and resilience-building as a result of the WRD interventions. The evaluation will give particular consideration to the review of WRD's influence on global DRR policies and coordination mechanisms as well as the building of a global knowledge based on the gender dimensions of disaster risk reduction, considering its contributions to global disaster resilience efforts.

Evaluation criteria and key questions

The final evaluation of the WRD Programme aims to assess the Programme's overall relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency, human rights and gender equality, and sustainability in strengthening gender-responsive disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience-building efforts across all programme components. The questions below are an initial set that the evaluation team will refine during the inception phase in consultation with the management and reference groups.

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions
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Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the WRD Programme design and strategies aligned with the specific needs, priorities, and vulnerabilities of women, girls, and marginalized groups in disaster-prone contexts across the Pacific, particularly in advancing gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and climate resilience?
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the WRD Programme achieved synergies or collaboration with other disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, and gender equality initiatives within UN Women? To what extent did WRD Programme ensure synergies with the UN system and other development partners to contribute to coherence?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the WRD Programme influenced the institutionalization and adoption of gender-responsive disaster prevention, preparedness, and recovery frameworks, systems, and tools in planning, implementation, and M&E among DRR and climate resilience counterparts at country, regional and global levels? How has the WRD Programme contributed to increased disaster and climate resilience among women and girls, including enhancing their ability to advocate for their rights, influence policies, and take leadership roles? To what extent have WRD-supported women’s businesses adopted climate and disaster-resilient strategies that enhance their economic security and sustainability?
Organizational Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have the financial resources, technical expertise, and other inputs of the WRD Programme been strategically allocated and utilized efficiently (including timeliness) to achieve the expected outputs and outcomes in disaster risk reduction and resilience-building? To what extent has the Programme’s management model, including its organisational structure, the Programme’s coordination mechanisms, information flow, and decision-making processes, and well as partnership with implementing partner CSOs, been efficient in supporting the delivery of the expected outputs and outcomes?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the results of the WRD Programme likely to be sustained, scaled up, and replicated by women, girls, communities, and development partners beyond the Programme’s lifecycle?
Gender equality and human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were the perspectives and needs of the most marginalized groups (e.g., women and girls with disabilities, ethnic minorities, LGBTIQ+ individuals) meaningfully integrated into WRD Programme design and implementation? How effectively did the WRD Programme embed a human rights-based and gender-responsive approach in its design, implementation, and monitoring, including participatory, transparent, and inclusive practices, address power dynamics and structural barriers (e.g., unequal access to resources, discriminatory policies, social norms)?

3. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation is employing a non-experimental, theory-based approach using mixed qualitative and quantitative methods. A re-constructed Theory of Change will be used as the basis for contribution analysis. Case studies will be

the primary source of information for the assessment of contributions to outcomes in the selected thematic or operational area. The possibility to employ participatory data collection methods will be explored during the inception stage. At least two of the four countries will be visited for data collection: Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Given the accessibility to remote locations and communities covered by the Programme, face-to-face primary data collection may be limited. The evaluators will consider using online data collection tools or other applicable tools to the extent possible to mitigate the risk of limited data access. The evaluation will engage the UN Women project team, government counterparts, implementing partners, direct rights holders (beneficiaries), and other stakeholders. The evaluation team will develop a purposive sampling frame for data collection. The evaluation will employ the following methods of analysis and data collection:

- A. **Interviews** with key informants identified through the stakeholder analysis (across all stakeholder groups).
- B. **Surveys** of UN Women personnel and external partners (UN partners and regional partners).
- C. **Observation** of meetings, facilities or specific project interventions during potential field visits.
- D. **Focus Group Discussions**. To the extent possible outcome harvesting or storytelling with key stakeholders and partners and potentially women and male rights holders that have participated in programming efforts of UN Women related to the selected case studies.
- E. **Case studies** may be identified for a more in-depth look into priority areas.

Key document analyses undertaken primarily during the inception phase will inform the evaluation approach and help to contextualize findings, conclusions and recommendations. The team may utilize different analytical frameworks such as from a diverse SOGIESC perspective, the building block framework to look at the integrated mandate, and gender at work framework. The following analyses will also inform the overall evaluation:

- I. **Evaluability assessment:** to help determine the evaluation approach and gaps in data, the quality of the programme logic (linkages between the outcomes, outputs and indicators) as articulated in the project results framework and organisational effectiveness and efficiency framework, the availability of baseline data, and the availability of documents necessary for the evaluation will be assessed.
- II. **Contextual analysis:** this will include an analysis of the key external influencing factors identified above and how they may affect realization of women's rights in the Pacific.

The methods will include a wide range of data sources (including documents, potential field visits and observation, institutional information systems, financial records, beneficiaries, staff, funders, experts, government officials, community groups, etc.). NVivo qualitative analysis software will be used to analyse interviews and focus group discussions. Multiple lines of evidence will inform the contribution analysis. Sources and methods of information will be triangulated to ensure robust findings that can be used with confidence. The inception report will provide more details on the selected approach and methods based on desk review and evaluability assessment, scoping interviews, and consultations with the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).

Data collection methods and processes should be gender-responsive¹⁰ and data should be systematically disaggregated by sex and, to the extent possible, disaggregated by age, geographical region, ethnicity, disability, migratory status and other contextually relevant markers of equity¹¹. Specific guidelines should be observed, namely the UNEG guidance on [Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations \(2024\)](#) and [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy Evaluation Accountability](#), 2019. The evaluation should adhere to and be guided by the [UNEG Norms and Standards](#) (2016) and the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#) (2020) at every stage of the evaluation process, observing the principles of integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence.

Stakeholder Participation

A human rights-based stakeholder mapping will be completed by the evaluation team during the inception phase. The evaluators are expected to discuss during the Inception Workshop how the process will ensure participation of a diverse range of stakeholders at all stages:

1. Design (inception workshop);
2. Consultation of stakeholders;
3. Interpretation;
4. Reporting and use.

The evaluators are expected to validate findings through engagement with stakeholders at stakeholder workshops, debriefings or other forms of engagement.

A reference group will be established representing UN Women key government, civil society, donor and UN system partners. The reference group will be asked to engage and provide input at every stage of the evaluation process, from design to preliminary results and final draft report. The reference group plays a critical role through remote and in-person meetings in ensuring a high quality, transparent process, providing insights on the key questions and approach, ensuring factual accuracy, ensuring gaps and misinterpretation of information is avoided. They will also be key informants. The reference group also plays a key role in the dissemination of the evaluation findings and recommendations and ensuring the use of the information by UN Women and key partners.

Limitations

The final evaluation may encounter several limitations. Variability in country-level reporting, monitoring systems, and access to disaggregated data may impact the depth of analysis; however, triangulation methods will be used to validate findings. Some personnel change may occur given the no-cost extension, which may present both logistical challenges and challenges with respect to institutional memory. Logistical challenges in reaching remote communities affected by disasters may restrict primary data collection, but virtual consultations will be conducted where necessary to ensure broad representation. In some countries, pre-existing gender and disaster risk reduction (DRR) data gaps may limit comparative assessments of WRD's effectiveness. To address this, the evaluation will incorporate qualitative evidence from stakeholder interviews and case studies. Additionally, some WRD-supported interventions may still be ongoing at the time of the final evaluation, making it difficult to fully assess their long-term sustainability. In such cases, the evaluators will document early progress and emerging trends while acknowledging areas that require further follow-up. Despite these challenges, the final evaluation will employ a rigorous approach to ensure a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of the WRD programme.

4. Evaluation Timeline

Deliverable	Indicative Time Frame for Submission ¹
<p>Inception Phase: Inception presentation and report The evaluation team will draft an inception report upon reviewing available documents and conducting initial discussions with the Evaluation Management Group (EMG). The team will present the inception report to the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). The inception report will outline the final evaluation questions and sub-questions, methodology, samples, data collection techniques, and tools. It will also include limitations of the chosen methodology and of the final evaluation. The report will align with UN Women's evaluation guidelines and be reviewed by the EMG and ERG and cleared by the Chief Independent Evaluation Service and Director Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigations Service.</p>	Mid- August 2025
<p>Data Collection Phase:</p>	Early September 2025

¹ This will be finalised during the inception phase given the ongoing discussion of the no-cost extension.

The evaluation team will undertake the data collection and provide a briefing for the WRD Programme team and Fiji MCO upon finalization of in-country data collection.	
Reporting Phase: Preliminary Findings presentation to the Evaluation Reference Group The evaluation team will prepare preliminary evaluation finding presentation and present them to key stakeholders for validation, ensuring alignment with Programme realities. WRD Programme team will provide administrative and logistical support for the workshop.	October 2025
Draft evaluation report The draft evaluation report will be prepared in accordance with UN Women’s evaluation guidelines, ensuring clarity in findings, conclusions, and recommendations. EMG and ERG will provide consolidated feedback using Evaluation product comment template provided, which the evaluators will incorporate into the revised report.	November 2025
Final evaluation report and brief The final report will integrate all feedback EMG and ERG and be formatted according to UN Women’s evaluation standards. It must generally include an executive summary, methodology, key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations. The evaluation report will be approved by UN Women IEAIS and disseminated to stakeholders on the GATE website.	Dec 2025

5. Management and quality assurance

All evaluation processes at UN Women establish mechanisms to ensure high quality evaluation processes and products as outlined in the [UN Women Evaluation Policy](#) and [Handbook](#). The Evaluation Report will adapt the approach outlined in the [UN Women Country Portfolio Evaluation Guidance](#) and should also follow the [United Nations Editorial Manual](#). The UN Women Evaluation Report Quality Assurance (GERAAS) criteria will be used to assure quality. All products are subject to quality assurance review by the peer reviewer, the ERG, and the evaluation management group.

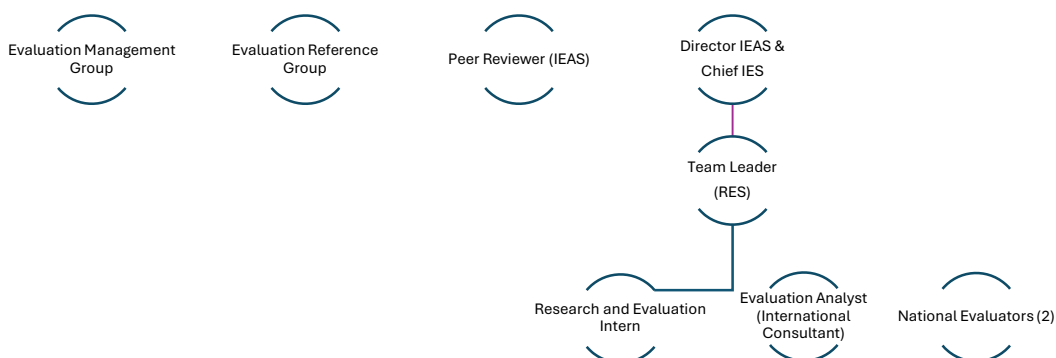
This evaluation will have the following structures (as seen in the figure below):

- Oversight:** The Director of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service oversees all activities, while the Chief of Independent Evaluation Service is responsible for the evaluation related activities; both will review the key products of the evaluation.
- Team Leader:** The Regional Evaluation Specialist of the Independent Evaluation Service will manage the coordination and day-to-day management, and serve as the team leader, leading methodological approach, collection of data, analysis and writing; as Team Leader, she will also be responsible for overseeing the work of the team members, managing the contracts and assuring quality of the work.
- Evaluation team:** The evaluation team will consist of a Regional evaluation analyst consultant with thematic expertise who will support the entire process and National evaluators or translators who will support data collection in the field in a sample of the WRD countries. The number of national evaluators or translators required will be determined during the inception phase.
- Evaluation Management Group** for administrative support and accountability: the Evaluation Specialist/Analyst, WRD Global Programme Manager, Pacific region-Regional Deputy Programme Manager, Fiji MCO Deputy Representative, Fiji MCO Programme Specialist (M&E), and National Programme Coordinators. The EMG will provide day to day support to the entire evaluation process and inputs to all evaluation products.
- Evaluation Reference Group** for substantive technical support: board members of the WRD, representing key stakeholders and various types of stakeholders (e.g., government partners, CSOs, donors) involved in the Programme. The ERG will be consulted throughout the evaluation process: they will provide inputs on the

inception report, preliminary findings, and draft report to ensure it is participatory and has the ownership of the key project stakeholders. The ERG will participate in the inception meeting and presentation of preliminary findings to provide feedback and validation.

6. **Peer Review** for methodological guidance and feedback: 1 IES staff will be engaged as peer reviewer of the evaluation.

Evaluation Governance Structure



6. Ethical code of conduct

UN Women has developed a [UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form](#) for evaluators that must be signed as part of the contracting process, which is based on the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#). These documents will be annexed to contracts. All data collected by the team members must be submitted to the evaluation manager in Word, PowerPoint or Excel formats and is the property of UN Women. Proper storage of data is essential for ensuring confidentiality. The UNEG guidelines note the importance of ethical conduct for the following reasons:

1. Responsible use of power: All those engaged in evaluation processes are responsible for upholding the proper conduct of the evaluation.
2. Ensuring credibility: With a fair, impartial and complete assessment, stakeholders are more likely to have faith in the results of an evaluation and to take note of the recommendations.
3. Responsible use of resources: Ethical conduct in evaluation increases the chances of acceptance by the parties to the evaluation and therefore the likelihood that the investment in the evaluation will result in improved outcomes.

The evaluation value added is its impartial and systematic assessment of the programme or intervention. As with the other stages of the evaluation, involvement of stakeholders should not interfere with the impartiality of the evaluation. The evaluation team has the final judgment on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report, and the team must be protected from pressures to change information in the report.

Annex 1 UN Women key evaluation resources and guidance

- [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (2016)
- [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations](#) (2020)
- [Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation](#) (2014)
- [UN Women Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System \(GERAAS\)](#) (2021)
- [UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form](#)
- [UN Women Evaluation Handbook](#) (2022)

Annex 2 Resources for data on gender equality and human rights

- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – Universal Human Rights Index: <http://uhri.ohchr.org/en>
- UN Statistics – Gender Statistics: <http://genderstats.org/>
- UNDP Human Development Report – Gender Inequality Index: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>
- World Bank – Gender Equality Data and Statistics: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index: <http://genderindex.org/>
- World Economic Forum – Global Gender Gap Report: <http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap>
- A listing of UN reports, databases and archives relating to gender equality and women's human rights can be found at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/statistics_and_indicators_60.htm

ANNEX 3 WRD THEORY OF CHANGE

Programme goal:	The lives and livelihoods of women and girls are resilient to disasters and climate change, contributing to sustainable, secure, and thriving communities.
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Programme objective:	WRD countries adopt gender-responsive decision-making and governance systems enabling targeted action for building the resilience of women and girls to current and future disasters and threats, including climate change and COVID-19.
Programme outcomes (EOPOs):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevention, preparedness, and recovery policy frameworks, systems, processes, and tools are gender-responsive and implemented as a result of local women’s and girls’ advocacy. 2. Women and girls have agency and voice to withstand multiple hazards, recover from disasters, and increase their resilience to current and future risks.
Implementation levels:	
<p>Global and regional component. These components will focus on <u>EOPO 1</u> and will include providing technical support and advocacy for policy and systems change, building a community of practice for women’s resilience, fostering strategic partnerships with and between responsible regional entities (e.g. with UN DRR, the Women’s International Network on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Pacific Resilience Partnership, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, and the Pacific Community), and consolidating and disseminating the knowledge base on the gender dimensions of disasters and gender-responsive disaster risk reduction.</p>	
<p>National component. This will advance <u>both</u> EOPOs by selecting the most relevant outputs and activities for each of the confirmed WRD countries Kiribati, Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu from a menu of options depending on the national context, policy priorities, capacities, and financial resources available. As agreed with the donor, additional WRD countries can be added upon mutual agreement by both parties.</p>	