

UN-WOMEN EVALUATION STRATEGY 2012-2013

Building evidence to influence change: towards gender equality and the empowerment of women

INTRODUCTION

1. The mandate and functions of UN-Women as established by General Assembly resolution 64/289 of 2 July 2010 on system-wide coherence to assist Member States and the United Nations system to progress more effectively and efficiently toward the goal of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, call for the use of evaluation to promote organizational and UN system accountability on gender equality, strengthening evaluation capacities and learning from evaluation, and developing systems to measure the results and impact of UN-Women with its enhanced role at country, regional and global levels.

2. Being a newly established United Nations organization, evaluation plays a key role in providing evidence for informed decision making, enhancing accountability and contributing to learning on the best ways to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality. In order to build an effective evaluation function that is independent, credible and useful, UN-Women has developed this strategy as a road map for the organization. The strategy outlines the vision, result areas and targets of UN-Women evaluation within the timeline of its strategic plan.

3. The UN-Women Strategic Plan (SP) 2011-2013 establishes that the evaluation function is governed by the Evaluation Policy, which sets the types, mandatory nature, roles and responsibilities for evaluation within the organization. The independent Evaluation Office (EO) reports directly to the UN-Women Executive Director, and serves as the custodian of the evaluation function in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards. It deploys quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluate transformative changes in gender equality and women's human rights and UN-Women's contribution therein.

4. Responding to the key functions of UN-Women, this strategy puts strong emphasis on enhancing the quality of evaluation to generate credible evidence on what is most effective to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. It will promote the use of evaluation findings to strengthen linkages and interactions between the intergovernmental/normative, programmatic and UN coordination areas of work on gender equality. Moreover, as UN-

Women moves towards country programming, the strategy puts specific focus on establishing systems and identifying strategies for conducting country programme evaluations, and supporting UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and countries' capacities on gender responsive evaluation.

9. The evaluation strategy is divided into six sections. Section one describes the principles underpinning the strategy, while section two establishes the objectives and targets. The third section explains the result areas to achieve the objectives and broad targets. Working strategies deployed in enhancing evaluation systems in UN-Women are described in the section four. Section five describes the role of different UN-Women divisions in the implementation of the strategy and the Evaluation Office support to different divisions. Finally, section six deals with monitoring and evaluation of the strategy. This strategy will serve as the guiding framework for evaluation planning in UN-Women, and for the preparation of its annual evaluation report to the Executive Board.

I. PRINCIPLES OF THE EVALUATION STRATEGY

10. Responding to the opportunities of UN-Women's mandate, its Strategic Plan priorities and the challenges identified in the current international development context, **the evaluation strategy seeks to contribute to build evidence for influencing change towards gender equality and women's empowerment** in the different policy areas of the organization. The key principles of the strategy include: *independence, quality and credibility, accountability, use of evaluation, innovation, national ownership and stakeholder's participation, and UN coordination.*

Independence: In line with the UNEG norms and standards¹ and in order to strengthen evaluation, this strategy strives to ensure the independence of the UN-Women evaluation. With this aim, the evaluation function is located independently from management function to ensure unbiased and transparent reporting.

Quality and credibility: The design, preparation and conduct of UN Women evaluations strive for the highest quality and deploy rigorous evaluation methods, making the use of new and cutting edge mixed methods for evaluating women's empowerment, gender equality and women's human rights issues.

Use of evaluation: Evaluation is not an end in itself, but is conducted for learning, accountability and decision making. The evaluation strategy places a strong emphasis on the use of evaluation for improved programming and organizational performance by establishing and maintaining a system for the development of management responses and their tracking

¹ UNEG (2005), UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, UNEG, New York; UNEG (2005), UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, UNEG, New York.

and for making evaluation reports available to the public to strengthen accountability, organizational learning, and evaluation use for decision-making.

Accountability: Evaluation strategy supports UN-Women's ability to manage for results by assessing the adequate use of resources and the extent of progress towards and achievement of women's empowerment, gender equality and the realization of women's rights to enable informed, responsible and evidence-based management and decision-making for strategic planning and programming. The strategy aims to strengthen both internal and external accountability.

National ownership and stakeholder's participation: Evaluations conducted by UN-Women are anchored in the principle of ownership at the country level by promoting the participation of country partners in evaluations, the alignment with national evaluation systems and the support to national evaluation capacities. The participation of stakeholder's in evaluation processes is a means towards greater credibility and use the findings.

Innovation: Evaluation strategy promotes methodological innovation for strengthening measurement and communication of gender equality results. It does so by promoting alternative evaluation methods, leveraging existing knowledge and research on gender equality and women's rights, and forging partnerships with leading academic institutions, think tank organizations and evaluation networks.

UN System Coordination on Gender Equality: The evaluation strategy contributes to UN-Women's mandate within the UN system to promote coordination and accountability and improve the effectiveness and efficiency in advancing women's empowerment, gender equality and women's human rights in line with UN reform and national-level priorities and coordination mechanisms on gender equality.

II. OBJECTIVES, RESULT AREAS AND TARGETS

11. This evaluation strategy provides the framework for both the strengthening of the evaluation function and the promotion of UN accountability and knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment. It is expected that the implementation of this strategy will generate information and documentation that will feed into a review of the UN-Women Strategic Plan in 2013. In addition, by positioning evaluation as an integral part of results based management, it seeks to strengthen the overall strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) through the effective use of evaluation findings and ensuring the evaluability of UN-Women programming frameworks.

12. The evaluation strategy has four main objectives:

- A. Establish effective corporate evaluation systems for evidence based policy and effective evaluation use;
- B. Strengthen decentralized evaluation systems for greater accountability and improved programming;
- C. Lead UN coordination on gender responsive evaluation for the generation of knowledge and system-wide accountability on gender equality results;
- D. Promote innovation and knowledge generation on what works for gender equality through national evaluation capacity building.

13. The evaluation strategy is aligned with the UN-Women Strategic Plan and contributes to the output 2.3 of Management Results Framework (MRF) that relates directly to evaluation: "An evaluation function and culture that generates evidence on implementation of the Strategic Plan for learning, decision-making, and accountability".²

RESULT AREAS AND TARGETS

14. UN Women undertakes **two main types of evaluations** – corporate and decentralized evaluations – that are identified through a biannual evaluation planning system. *Corporate Evaluations* are independent assessments of strategic areas of UN Women's work, including global thematic priorities of the SP, coordination and intergovernmental-support results, institutional performance, programmatic approaches and country programmes. The corporate evaluation agenda deploys a cyclical approach to ensure coverage of the different SP focus areas and will be managed by the independent Evaluation Office. *Decentralized Evaluations* provide evidence of processes and results at the different programmatic levels, i.e. *institutional, thematic, regional,* and *country level*. They are managed by UN Women programmatic and geographic units. A quality assurance reference framework based on the UNEG Norms and Standards will guide the conduct of all UN Women evaluations to ensure quality reports that will be assessed through meta-evaluation.

15. The corporate and decentralized evaluation assess UN Women's **contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment development results** at global, regional and country levels. They provide credible and systematized information on the implementation of UN Women Strategic Plan in different thematic areas as well as organizational performance. Given UN Women mandate to lead normative, operational and coordination work on gender equality, the evaluations assess linkages between these different roles for better understanding of UN Women added value in UN system. UN Women also conducts joint evaluations and meta-evaluations to promote system-wide accountability for gender equality results. The findings of

² Output 2.3, Page 21, UN Women Strategic Plan 2011-2013.

evaluations are used for strategic policy and programmatic decisions, organizational learning, accountability at the country, regional and global levels, corporate decisions as well as for the generation of knowledge on what works and what doesn't to advance gender equality.

16. UN Women places a **strong emphasis on the use of evaluation** for improved programming and performance. It establishes and maintains a system for the development of management responses and their tracking and for making evaluation plans and reports available to the public to strengthen accountability, organizational learning, and promote evaluation use for decisionmaking. Management responses are produced and tracked for both corporate and decentralized evaluations through the online Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC).

17. UN Women promotes **coordination and accountability in the UN System through evaluation** in three main areas: (1) by fostering joint evaluations on gender equality and serving as a repository of evaluations in the UN system on gender equality and women's empowerment; (2) by actively contributing to UN system wide evaluation processes to generate evaluative information on UN system contribution to gender equality; and (3) actively contributing to the work of the UNEG for the inclusion of a gender perspective in UN evaluations through the development of guidelines and accountability frameworks.

18. UN Women strengthens **evaluation capacity development from a gender equality and human rights perspective** internally and among partners including regional and national counterparts. Internal capacities will be strengthened by enhancing support to the decentralized evaluation function through the presence of Regional Evaluation Specialists (RES), country M&E specialists, and an enhanced EO. UN Women will play a role in supporting national monitoring and evaluation capacities on gender equality through training, advice and support to national Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) systems and partnerships with evaluation associations and networks, regional economic commissions and other institutions.

19. To achieve the stated objectives, UN-Women will work in the following areas during the lifecycle of its Strategic Plan. Please refer to Annex 1 to review the targets for each result:

A. Establish effective corporate evaluation systems for evidence based policy and effective evaluation use

UN-Women will establish effective corporate evaluation systems for evidence based policy and programme and effective evaluation use. It will work on building evaluation systems for accountability and follow up on evaluation recommendations. It will establish a robust evaluation function with adequate evaluation staffing. By In 2012, the Evaluation Office will have conducted at least 6 corporate evaluations on strategic priorities of UN-Women, ensuring that these evaluations analyze linkages between normative and operational work and role on UN coordination in gender equality.

KEY RESULT AREAS

1. Building corporate evaluation systems

- Development of UN-Women Evaluation Policy.
- Annual Evaluation Report on the evaluation function to the Executive Board.
- Corporate accountability system to track management responses to evaluations and a publicly accessible online repository of evaluation reports created and maintained.
- 2. Conducting Corporate Evaluations of strategic relevance
- Corporate Evaluation Planning system for the conduct of independent strategic evaluations.
- Evaluation findings and lessons are used for decision making.

3. Ensuring linkages between normative and operational work in evaluation

- Corporate evaluations assess both normative and operational results.
- At least one evaluation of the quality and relevance of the analysis provided to intergovernmental processes conducted.
- Evaluation findings are used for generating exchange between these dimensions of the organization.
- Evaluation guidance is developed on how to evaluate normative work.
- 4. Establishing and maintaining a robust institutional evaluation function
- Financial resources for UN-Women evaluation function secured.
- Evaluation Office staffing processes in place.

B. Strengthen decentralized evaluation systems for greater accountability and improved programming

UN-Women will place a strong focus on strengthening decentralized evaluation systems for greater accountability and improved programming in the organization as well as for a stronger culture of results. The Evaluation Office will develop quality assurance frameworks, guidance and tools, as well as provide technical assistance to decentralized evaluations through Regional Evaluation Specialists based in regional hubs. The quality design of UN-Women interventions will be supported by integrating evaluation parameters in programming processes and ensuring targeted support of the programmes on evaluation that could be up-scaled and replicated. The internal evaluation capacities will be developed through a roll out of evaluation capacity building programme, creation of an evaluation roster of experts with gender and human rights expertise, and systemic information sharing on innovative evaluation methods that are relevant for the evaluations of gender equality programmes. It is expected that UN-Women country offices and HQ divisions will complete at minimum 15 evaluations a year.

RESULT AREAS

1. Enhancing decentralized evaluations

- Quality assurance frameworks, manuals, guidelines, tools and technical assistance for the preparation, conduct and follow-up of decentralized evaluations.
- Decentralized evaluation planning in the context of Annual Work Plans systematized promoting joint evaluation with UNCTs.
- Support, technical assistance and conduct when relevant, mainly through Regional Evaluation Specialists (RES)-, to selected decentralized evaluations.
- 2. Supporting the quality of design of UN-Women initiatives for increased impact
- Robust evaluation parameters integrated in UN-Women programming processes.
- Effective mechanisms for the inclusion of evaluation parameters in programme design and monitoring established to facilitate the upscaling and replication of programmes.

3. Developing evaluation capacities

- Build the evaluation capacity of UN-Women staff, and other partners to plan, manage, conduct and follow-up on gender equality and human rights responsive evaluations through the deployment of an innovative capacity building strategy.
- Up to date information on innovative evaluation methods and approaches that are relevant for programmes on gender equality and human rights is maintained and accessible.
- An evaluation roster of experts with evaluation and gender/human rights experience developed and accessible.

C. Lead UN coordination on gender responsive evaluation for the generation of knowledge and accountability on gender equality results

UN-Women will lead UN coordination on gender responsive evaluation for the generation of knowledge and promotion of system-wide accountability on gender equality results. The EO will provide leadership and contribution to the United Nations Evaluation Group. It will promote joint evaluation on gender equality with the UN system at the global, regional and country levels and build knowledge on gender equality by consolidating a global repository of evaluations on gender equality and promoting meta-evaluations on gender equality. UN Women will contribute to the implementation of the System Wide Action Plan on gender equality and contribute to oversee the performance on gender responsive evaluation.

KEY RESULT AREAS

- 1. Leading and contributing to the UNEG and to regional UN evaluation groups
- UN-Women ensures leadership, active participation and contribution to the Taskforces and Working Groups of UNEG to ensure UN-Women alignment with UN system policies and reforms regarding evaluation, and to ensure that gender equality and human rights are addressed across UNEG work.
- UN-Women field regional centers promote gender equality in system-wide evaluation processes (i.e. UNDAF, One UN).
- 2. Promoting joint evaluation initiatives on gender equality and system-wide accountability
- Leadership and promotion of joint evaluations on gender equality programming with the UN system at the global, regional and country levels.
- Inter-agency evaluation capacity development initiatives supported, including UNCT teams at country level.
- Contribution to the SWAP on gender equality by using evaluation as an element of accountability.
- 3. Building evidence based knowledge on gender equality through evaluations
- Develop a global repository of evaluations on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Undertake meta-evaluations and systemic reviews of methods and findings of evaluations on gender equality.

D. Promote innovation and knowledge generation on what works for gender equality through national evaluation capacity building

UN-Women will promote innovation and knowledge generation on what works for gender equality to support evidence-based policy making through national evaluation capacity building as a key area. The Evaluation Office will provide selected support to regional evaluations networks and associations in networking and knowledge exchange on gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation, as well as contributing to knowledge generation on gender-based evaluation methods. The Evaluation Office will provide leadership in developing partnerships with other UN organizations in this area.

KEY RESULT AREAS

- **1.** Supporting networking and knowledge exchange on gender equality and human rights responsive evaluations through partnerships
- Partnerships with relevant actors, including regional evaluation networks, evaluation associations and economic commissions established.
- South West East knowledge exchange and learning through celebration of conferences workshops, and online forums promoted.
- 2. Contributing to knowledge generation and research on gender responsive evaluation
- Alternative evaluation approaches and methodologies which investigate gender and human rights aspects in evaluation developed.
- Communities of practice on gender sensitive methods strengthened.
- Knowledge platforms on gender responsive evaluation updated/established.
- 3. Developing national evaluation capacities at country level
- Gender equality and human rights responsive national M&E systems supported at country level.
- Partnerships for accountability for gender commitments through evaluation among governments, women's NGOs, and UN agencies facilitated.

III. WORKING STRATEGIES

20. The UN-Women EO will deploy four key working strategies to achieve the objectives and targets stated in the evaluation strategy:

1) Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Accountability Systems

UN-Women will develop and update evaluation guidelines and tools to be used for the preparation, conduct, and follow up on UN-Women evaluations, including a management

response system. The update and implementation of the UN-Women Evaluation Policy is a pivotal part of this Strategy.

2) Knowledge Management and Learning

UN-Women will ensure that findings and lessons from evaluations are extracted and shared in the organization through user friendly knowledge products. A strong emphasis will be given to using UN-Women evaluations for organizational learning as well as the dissemination of evaluations within UN system and among UN-Women partners, including civil society organizations, research institutions, evaluation networks and governments.

3) Evaluation Capacity Building

UN-Women will develop an internal evaluation capacity building strategy to strengthen evaluation capacities and promote the application of UN-Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines in all evaluation processes. Evaluation trainings and courses will build on gender equality and human rights responsive approaches to evaluation. UN-Women will strive to support the development of external evaluation capacities through its work with evaluation associations and national M&E systems.

4) Support to Research in Evaluation

UN-Women will develop partnerships with evaluation associations and networks, regional economic commissions, civil society organizations and academia to promote knowledge generation on gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION STRATEGY

21. The Evaluation Office will collaborate closely with UN-Women divisions in the implementation of this evaluation strategy. It will be responsible for the completion of the key actions but other divisions will also play a significant role in its implementation (see the collaboration and interaction charts in the Annex 1).

22. The **Executive Director** will ensure the independence of evaluation function, approve evaluation policy, corporate evaluation plan and funding. The Executive Office will support the Executive Director in ensuring the evaluation function is operational. The Evaluation Office will support strategic planning and senior management on evaluation planning, providing analysis of evaluation results, periodically reporting to senior management on evaluation management response, preparing evaluation policy and the Annual Evaluation Report to the Executive Board. The Senior Management Team will play a significant role in ensuring that different divisions within UN-Women dedicate the resources and provide the institutional commitment needed for evaluation and ensure the use of its findings.

23. The Intergovernmental Support and Partnerships Bureau will provide monitoring data on national commitments to gender equality and will facilitate the Evaluation Office work with

respect to inter-agency coordination. Meanwhile, the Evaluation Office will support the division with evaluation capacity development, evaluation guidelines and tools, as well as specific activities such as the promotion of gender equality and human rights perspective in United Nation Evaluation Group and the establishment of the repository of gender evaluations in the United Nations.

24. The **Programme and Policy** Bureau will ensure that the institutional planning processes are linked to evaluations and will provide the quality control framework for programme planning and monitoring. It will make certain that UN-Women country offices comply with the parameters and targets established in the evaluation policy, including the completion of management responses to decentralized evaluations. The Evaluation Office will provide capacity development, evaluation guidelines and tools, and will support the planning of annual work plans and programmes to ensure their evaluability.

25. **Management and Administration** will ensure the operational support to evaluation processes by facilitating human resources, finance, procurement, information technology, and audit and oversight services. Apart, from evaluation capacity development and guidelines, the Evaluation Office will promote the use of evaluation findings for better planning of UN-Women operations.

26. In addition to technical support described above, the Evaluation Office will conduct corporate evaluations that cover results areas of different UN-Women divisions.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

27. The Evaluation Office will develop an annual work plan at the beginning of each year; it will specify the processes and results to achieve each year in relation to the objectives of this strategy. For monitoring the implementation of the strategy, the EO will gather information from field offices and HQ sections on an annual basis on various indicators such as progress of evaluations, evaluation management responses, evaluation capacity building initiatives, involvement of EO staff in evaluation processes. Based on that information, the Evaluation Office will prepare an Annual Evaluation Report. The report will be presented to the Executive Director and to the Executive Board of UN-Women.

28. The EO will undertake meta-evaluations of the evaluations undertaken in the organization to assess their quality on a continuous basis. By the end of 2013, a review of the components of the strategy will be undertaken to determine necessary adjustments towards the full fledge implementation of UN-Women SP 2017. In addition, in 2013 an external UNEG peer review of the evaluation function will be undertaken to analyze the independence, credibility and usefulness of UN-Women.

KEY RESULT AREAS	INDICATORS	TARGETS ³
 evaluation use Indicators: Extent of evaluation and accountability 		evidence based policy and effective ng used for decision making, learning men evaluations
→ Building corporate evaluation systems	 Evidence of quality assurance framework for gender responsive 	Evaluation policy approved by 2012
Systems	evaluation	Two annual reports presented to the ExBoard (2012, 2013).
	 Percentage of management responses, including those at corporate level, that are implemented 	Global oversight mechanism on management response to evaluation in place by 2013 100% of evaluations completed have a management response within 6
		weeks 80% of management responses' actions are implemented and reported annually
➔ Conducting Corporate Evaluations of	 Number and Quality of corporate evaluations completed at the end of SP 	Bi-annual evaluation plan approved by the ED and uploaded in the ERC.
strategic relevance		Six corporate evaluations are completed by 2013.
 Ensuring linkages between normative and operational work 	 Evidence of evaluations assessing linkages between normative and 	Guidance note on how to evaluate normative work of UN Women developed by 2013.

Annex I. Evaluation Strategy Targets by Result Area

³ These are indicative targets inspired by the targets established in the UN Women Strategic Plan 2011-2013. The targets for corporate and decentralized evaluations in the strategy were revised to reflect the current evaluation capacities in the organization.

	in evaluation	operational work	One evaluation of the quality and relevance of the analysis provided to intergovernmental processes conducted (2013).
			Two Meta-analyses of evaluations that investigate the extent to which evaluations assess linkages between operational and normative areas (2013).
→	Establishing and maintaining a robust institutional evaluation function	 Budget of Evaluation Office Number of EO staff 	The EO institutional structure is consolidated by 2013 at the global level (2 P4 and 2 P3, 1 D1 by 2013) and at the regional level (5 Regional Evaluation Specialists positions at Regional Hubs)
	-	lized evaluation systems for greate	
	and evaluation b	tion of the evaluation policy, guideli y UN Women staff dedicated to M&E in the field	nes, and tools in programme planning
→	Indicators: • Extent of applica and evaluation b • Number of staff of Enhancing decentralized	y UN Women staff dedicated to M&E in the field • Number and quality of decentralized	nes, and tools in programme planning At least 15 decentralized evaluations completed annually
•	 Indicators: Extent of applica and evaluation b Number of staff Enhancing 	y UN Women staff dedicated to M&E in the field • Number and quality of	At least 15 decentralized evaluations
•	Indicators: • Extent of applica and evaluation b • Number of staff of Enhancing decentralized	y UN Women staff dedicated to M&E in the field • Number and quality of decentralized	At least 15 decentralized evaluations completed annually 80% of evaluations conducted annually by UN-Women receive a
•	Indicators: • Extent of applica and evaluation b • Number of staff of Enhancing decentralized	y UN Women staff dedicated to M&E in the field	At least 15 decentralized evaluations completed annually80% of evaluations conducted annually by UN-Women receive a quality score of "good" or above.80% of decentralized evaluations receive support and guidance from

evaluation capacities	 Number and quality of evaluation capacity development initiatives 	Evaluation capacity building strategy developed At least 4 evaluation training conducted annually
C. Lead UN coordination on gei ystem-wide accountability on a	-	ne generation of knowledge and
processes supported by		ts in system-wide evaluation cesses supported by the Evaluation
Office → Leading and contributing to the UNEG and to regional UN evaluation groups	 Evidence of EO leadership and contribution to joint evaluations and regional UN evaluation groups 	Lead at least one joint evaluation on UN system contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment
	 Number of UNEG task forces where UN Women is leading and participating 	Lead at least 2 UNEG task forces
Promoting joint evaluation initiatives on gender equality and system-wide accountability	 Evidence of supporting system- wide initiatives to promote accountability on gender equality 	Conduct one meta-evaluation of UN evaluations on gender equality in the UN system.
 Building evidence based knowledge on gender equality through evaluations 	 Evidence of knowledge base on gender equality evaluations developed 	Develop a global repository of UN evaluations (and of other organizations) on gender equality and women's empowerment.
D. Promote innovation and national evaluation capacity Indicators:		works for gender equality through

responsive evaluation

Supporting networking and knowledge exchange on gender equality and human rights responsive evaluations through partnerships	 Number of evaluation partnerships Evidence of evaluation networks and partnerships deploying gender and human rights perspective 	A global partnership on evaluation capacity development implemented by 2013 At least four partnerships with regional evaluation networks and national associations
Contributing to knowledge generation and research on gender responsive evaluation	 Evidence of knowledge generation and research on gender responsive evaluation 	At least one partnership on generation of knowledge on gender responsive evaluation implemented by 2013
Developing national evaluation capacities at country level	 Evidence of support provided to national evaluation capacity development 	At least one pilot partnership to support country M&E system from gender perspective

ANNEX 2 Interaction of EO with UN Women function





