

## **UNIFEM Evaluation Policy**

### ***Executive Summary***

This policy is developed in response to commitments in UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008-2013) to strengthen its evaluation function and to ensure its utility, credibility and independence and alignment with United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Norms and Standards. It is specifically tailored to UNIFEM's mandate and context and is the operationalization of the UNDP evaluation policy (which continues to provide the overall framework for evaluation) in UNIFEM. It applies to all UNIFEM managed programmes and will be implemented through UNIFEM's Evaluation Strategy (2008-2011).

The purpose and role of evaluation in UNIFEM is to contribute to learning and knowledge on women's empowerment and gender equality, UNIFEM's internal and external accountability, and inform decision-making on policies, developmental and organizational effectiveness and efficiency and programme design. Evaluation in UNIFEM is guided by six key principles - *women's empowerment and gender equality, human rights, people-centered development, UN system coordination on gender equality, national ownership and managing for results on women's empowerment and gender equality*. It also abides by key evaluation standards: *participation and inclusiveness; utilization-focused and intentionality; transparency, independence and impartiality; quality and credibility; and ethical*.

Evaluation in UNIFEM is defined by the UNEG Norms for Evaluation. Moreover, in UNIFEM evaluation is gender equality and human rights responsive. UNIFEM undertakes two main types of evaluations: corporate evaluations managed by the Evaluation Unit and decentralized evaluations managed by all other UNIFEM offices/units/sections. Evaluation's are to be managed by the commissioning office/unit/section and should be carried out in three phases: preparation, conduct and utilization/follow-up.

Institutional evaluation planning and prioritization is systematized through the development of corporate and decentralized biannual evaluation plans. Selection of programmes for evaluation will be based on the criteria outlined in this policy, evaluability and the need to provide adequate evaluative coverage for the eight outcomes and four themes of the UNIFEM Strategic Plan (2008-2011). Evaluation is mandatory when: **1)** a commitment has been made to stakeholders, **2)** a final evaluation for programmes with a budget over US\$1 million, and **3)** a mid-term evaluation/review and final evaluation for programmes with a budget over \$3 million. Individual evaluation budgets must be adequate to conduct high quality evaluations, with a recommended 3 to 10% of total programme budget allocated to evaluation.

A management response is to be issued within six week of finalizing all independent evaluations and they will be disclosed and their results disseminated and made accessible to key partners. All UNIFEM staff members will play a role in strengthening the evaluation culture within UNIFEM. They will contribute to evaluation processes in their respective roles and make use of and disseminate the learning generated from evaluations.

This policy becomes effective in 2009. It will be reviewed periodically, the first review being in 2011.

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## Introduction

1. This document presents the evaluation policy for UNIFEM. It is developed in response to commitments within UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008-2013) and Evaluation Strategy (2008-2011), [United Nations Evaluation Group's \(UNEG\) Norms and Standards](#) for Evaluation in the UN System and General Assembly Resolution 62/208 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). It applies to all UNIFEM managed programmes<sup>1</sup> and programmatic activities, including joint programmes, irrespective of the funding source. It will be implemented through the Evaluation Strategy (2008-2011) and other guidelines, tools and methodologies and supported through the strengthening of organizational capacities.<sup>2</sup> The Executive Director will approve the policy, informing UNIFEM's Consultative Committee and the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA.
2. The purpose and role of evaluation in UNIFEM is to contribute to learning and knowledge on women's empowerment and gender equality, enhance UNIFEM's internal accountability and accountability to its key stakeholders, and inform decision-making on policies, developmental and organizational effectiveness and efficiency and programme design. By providing evidence-based information, evaluation contributes to UNIFEM's role as a catalyst and innovator, as established in GA resolution 39/125, by generating evidence on what works to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Additionally, the conduct of high quality evaluations that generate credible evidence will expand UN system-wide knowledge on gender equality and human rights.<sup>3</sup> Evaluation results should be validated, owned by, and a source of learning for UNIFEM's key stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, multilateral organizations and donors.
3. The evaluation policy is intended to ensure the utility, credibility and independence of UNIFEM evaluations in line with the UNEG. It provides guidance on how to utilize evaluation to strengthen the analytical basis for making strategic decisions, foster the replication and scaling up of catalytic and innovative initiatives, and build a body of evidence to support advocacy and the provision of policy advice and technical expertise on women's empowerment and gender equality.<sup>4</sup>
4. This policy is specifically tailored to UNIFEM's mandate and context and is aligned with UNIFEM guidelines, procedures and policies issued to date. It is the operationalization within UNIFEM of the evaluation policy of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>5</sup> which continues to provide the overall framework for evaluation in UNIFEM. It is aligned with the principles found in the evaluation policy of UNDP, as well as the UNEG Norms, Standards and Ethical Guidelines.<sup>6</sup>
5. This policy document covers 1) the key principles guiding gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation; 2) the key concepts and definitions for evaluation; 3) the different types of evaluations undertaken and their modalities; 4)

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<sup>1</sup> In this policy, the term 'programme' is used to refer to not only what is understood traditionally as a programme, but all the different types of interventions that UNIFEM undertakes to further women's empowerment, gender equality and women's human rights.

<sup>2</sup> The UNIFEM evaluation policy provides the overall framework for evaluation within UNIFEM and its parameters are considered mandatory. The UNIFEM evaluation strategy (although it preceded the policy) is the overall plan for complying with the policy. It provides more descriptive information and sets specific and detailed targets for evaluation within UNIFEM. It is further supplemented by various guidelines developed by the Evaluation Unit on specific aspects of the evaluation process that overall provide a quality assurance framework for UNIFEM evaluations.

<sup>3</sup> This policy contributes to the following system-wide mandates on gender equality and human rights: ECOSOC Resolution 1997/2, the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing) and the Beijing Platform for Action, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other core UN Human Rights Conventions, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the Millennium Summit (2000), the World Summit (2005), the UN Common Understanding of a Human Rights Based Approach, and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

<sup>4</sup> UNIFEM Strategic Plan (2008-2013)

<sup>5</sup> DP/2005/28

<sup>6</sup> The policy is also aligned with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning and the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8); General Assembly Resolution 62/208. The policy also draws on recent evaluation practice and experiences of sister agencies. UN agency policies reviewed to develop this policy include UNDP, UNICEF, UNIOIS, ILO, ITC, GEF, UNHCR, IAEA, IFAD, WFP and UNIDO.

institutional evaluation planning and prioritization; 5) the management of evaluation; 6) organizational roles and responsibilities; and 7) the disclosure and dissemination of evaluation findings.

### Key Principles and Standards Guiding Evaluation in UNIFEM

6. The **key principles** that guide evaluation in UNIFEM include:

- **Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality:** Evaluation is guided by the principles and goals of women's empowerment and gender equality, both central to the Millennium Development Goals. Women's empowerment is provided for in the Beijing Platform for Action which refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men and girls and boys. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.<sup>7</sup> This requires that evaluation assess programme contributions to women's empowerment and gender equality, as well as promote the same throughout the evaluation process.
- **Human Rights:** Evaluation is guided by the goal of realizing progress on women's human rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which has been ratified by over 90 percent of UN Member States. It also contributes to advancing the human rights enshrined in other UN conventions and treaties, including gender equality which is also a key human right. Human rights based approaches should be integrated in evaluation processes so that they not only assess programme contributions to the realization of women's human rights, but also directly contribute to their realization.
- **People-Centered Development:** Evaluation is guided by a people-centered development paradigm which places people, and in UNIFEM's context, women as active actors in the center of the development process. In this context, development is seen as a process of addressing gender needs and women's strategic interests by enlarging women's choices and opportunities to exercise their rights, to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have a decent standard of living.<sup>8</sup> This requires that evaluation pay particular attention to how programmes have contributed to women's full participation in development processes.
- **UN System Coordination on Gender Equality:** Evaluation draws on and contributes to UNIFEM's role within the UN system to improve effectiveness and efficiency in advancing women's empowerment, gender equality and women's human rights in line with UN reforms and national-level priorities and coordination mechanisms on gender equality. UNIFEM should promote collaboration on and promotion of gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation (including joint evaluations) in the UN through UNEG, the Resident Coordinator system (at the country-level), and by establishing partnerships with donors, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, evaluation associations and academic institutions.
- **National Ownership:** Evaluation in UNIFEM should be guided by national priorities and concerns on women's empowerment, gender equality and women's human rights. It should be inclusive and take into account diverse national interests and values. It should strengthen partnerships with and between governments and civil society organizations, particularly women's governmental and non-governmental organizations and networks. It should build the capacity of national institutions to take leadership in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies and foster national ownership of evaluation results and learning.
- **Managing for Results on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality–** Evaluation supports UNIFEM's ability to manage for results by assessing progress towards and achievement of women's empowerment, gender equality and the realization of women's rights to enable informed and evidence-based management and decision-making for strategic planning and programming.

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<sup>7</sup> Definition of Gender Equality from OSAGI.

<sup>8</sup> As defined by the HDR Report.

7. Evaluation in UNIFEM should abide to the following **evaluation standards**:

- **Participation and inclusiveness:** Evaluation should foster the participation of key stakeholder (including UNIFEM's key partners in government, civil society and the UN system) during the preparation, conduct and utilization/follow-up stages of the evaluation process to ensure the credibility, quality and use of the evaluations, including during the validation of the evaluation findings. It is particularly important to enable the participation of women and any group subject to discrimination. Doing so facilitates consensus building, ownership and use of evaluation findings and recommendations by stakeholders.
- **Utilization Focused and Intentionality:** Evaluation should be focused on the needs of key users and there should be a clear intent to use the findings for learning and knowledge generation, decision-making and programme improvement. They should be designed and completed in a timely manner to ensure their usefulness.
- **Transparency, Independence and Impartiality:** Evaluation should be free from undue influence to ensure unbiased and transparent due processes and reporting. It should take into consideration both achievements and challenges. Evaluators should have full discretion to submit reports directly for consideration at the appropriate decision-making level and should not be directly involved during any stage of the design, implementation or management of the subject evaluated.
- **Quality and Credibility:** The design, preparation and conduct of gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation should ensure the high quality of the evaluation and strive to make use of new and cutting edge mixed methods for evaluating women's empowerment, gender equality and women's human rights issues. Evaluation methodology should be rigorous enough to ensure a credible evidence base for findings and conclusions that will inform decisions to up scale or replicate programmes, while also remaining responsive to local contexts.
- **Ethical:** Evaluators should have personal and professional integrity and abide by the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation in the UN system and the Code of Conduct to respect the rights of individuals involved in an evaluation.<sup>9</sup> Evaluators must also pay particular attention to protocols, codes and recommendations that may be relevant for their interactions with women during the evaluation of UNIFEM interventions, e.g. the World Health Organization's (WHO) Putting Women First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence Against Women, WHO's Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Women, etc.

### Key Concepts and Definitions for Evaluation in UNIFEM

8. Evaluation in UNIFEM is defined by the UNEG Norms for Evaluation as *"an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the UN system. An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of the organizations of the UN system and its members."*
9. Moreover, in UNIFEM evaluation is gender equality and human rights responsive. Firstly, this requires an assessment of the extent to which a programme being evaluated has been guided by organizational and system-wide objectives on gender equality and human rights by 1) considering the structures that contribute to inequalities experienced by women, especially those women who also belong to groups subject to discrimination 2) challenging these structures by building the capacities of women to claim their rights and duty bearers to fulfill their obligations and 3) contributing to progress or results related to the realization of women's empowerment, gender equality and women's human rights. Secondly, it requires both the integration of gender equality and a human rights based approach in evaluation processes, approaches, methods and use.

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<sup>9</sup> Please see [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation in the UN System](#) and [UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators](#).

10. Evaluations focus on certain criteria as a basis for systematic, evidence based judgments that respond to the information needs of the stakeholders identified as key users. Evaluation criteria will be relevant to the evaluation subject and conducive to gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation. Evaluation criteria to be used include, but are not limited to, *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, inclusiveness, participation, equality, non-discrimination and social transformation*.
11. Evaluation is an integral part of each stage of the programming cycle (design, implementation and evaluation) and not only an end of programme activity. It is closely linked to, but distinguished from, the following five assessment functions:
  - **Monitoring** is a continuous management function that aims to provide regular information and early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of intended results. It is commonly equated with reporting as it is one of the main forms of collecting information. It is mainly concerned with if the programme is doing things right. While, evaluation is also concerned with if a programme is doing things right, it is also concerned if it is doing the right things, why and how the programme achieved its intended and unintended results, whether there are better ways of achieving the results and sustainability.
  - A **review** is the periodic or ad hoc rapid assessment of the performance of an intervention. It does not apply the due process of an evaluation, but is a source of information for evaluation.
  - **Audit** is concerned with assessing the adequacy of management controls to ensure the economical and efficient use of resources; the safeguarding of assets; the reliability of financial and other information; the compliance with regulations, rules and established policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organizational structures, systems and processes. The focus of audit is on compliance, while the focus of evaluation is on results and enhancing the understanding of what works, why and how. Audit provides evaluation with key information regarding the efficiency of programmes.
  - **Social Research** is a systematic and in depth analysis of social phenomena, designed to develop or contribute to knowledge. Evaluation makes use of traditional social science methods for data collection and analysis; however, while the purpose of social research is strictly the generation of empirical knowledge, the purpose of evaluation (usually of shorter duration) is mainly to support management through organizational learning, accountability and decision-making – although it may and often does also contribute to knowledge generation. Social research is a source of information on the status of social conditions that evaluation can use to better understand the context of a programme.
  - **Knowledge Management**, although not an assessment function, is connected to evaluation. It is the systematic and integrated process of creating, analyzing, storing and disseminating knowledge resources. Evaluation findings and lessons are inputs to organizational learning and, therefore, feed into knowledge management systems.

## Types of Evaluations

12. UNIFEM undertakes *two main types of evaluations*:
  - **Corporate Evaluations** are independent assessments managed by the Evaluation Unit. They analyze performance and contribution to critical areas for greater effectiveness on gender equality and women's empowerment and/or attribution in the achievement of corporate outputs. Priorities for corporate evaluations are decided by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Evaluation Unit and the Management Team.
  - **Decentralized Evaluations** are managed or conducted by Geographic Sections, Thematic Units, Sub-Regional Offices or Operational Units at HQ. They can be external, conducted by independent evaluators, or internal through a self-evaluation conducted by staff. They provide evidence of processes and results at the different programmatic levels, i.e. *institutional, thematic, regional, sub-regional or country-level*.

13. Evaluations are *further defined according to the following sub-types*, with the understanding that a single evaluation can be defined by one or more of the sub-types below:<sup>10</sup>
- **Scope of Analysis:** output evaluations, outcome evaluations or impact evaluations
  - **Timing:** ex-ante evaluations, mid-term evaluations<sup>11</sup>, final evaluations, ex-post evaluations, evaluability assessments, formative evaluation or summative evaluation
  - **Unit of Analysis:** institutional; policy, strategy or plan evaluations; cluster/thematic evaluations; project/programme evaluations; or meta-evaluation
14. Both corporate and decentralized evaluations are *further defined by modalities relating to who manages and who conducts the evaluation:*
- **Individual Evaluations** are conducted and managed by only one organization, i.e. UNIFEM.
  - **Joint Evaluations** are co-managed by a UNIFEM Section/Unit/Office and at least one other organization. This can be in the context of joint programmes, including the UNDAF and/or Delivering as One UN programmes.
  - **External Evaluations** are evaluations conducted by external specialists who are independent from the programme being evaluated. They provide a more objective analysis of the intervention and increase the credibility of the findings.
  - **Self Evaluations/Assessments** are learning tools that act as periodic progress reviews to critically assess the achievements and constraints in implementing programme/project interventions. They are conducted by those responsible for implementation without the support of external specialists and are more often used in conjunction with smaller projects and/or as the first step in a larger independent evaluation.
  - **Peer Evaluations** are conducted by teams composed of external evaluators and programme staff. Often formative, they combine internal understanding with external expertise.

### **Institutional Evaluation Planning and Prioritization**

15. Overall institutional evaluation planning and prioritization will be systematized through the development of corporate and decentralized evaluation plans aligned with UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008-2013) in order to maximize the timeliness and use of evaluative information. A two-year corporate evaluation plan will be developed and annexed to the Evaluation Strategy, while two-year regional, sub-regional and thematic decentralized evaluation plans will be developed as part of regional, sub-regional and thematic strategies.
16. Not all UNIFEM programmes merit evaluation. The selection of corporate and decentralized evaluations will be guided by 1) a combination of *at least five* of the selection criteria outlined below and 2) evaluability. Evaluation will be prioritized when it: addresses identified learning and decision-making needs; enhances accountability; and generates critical evidence about programmes that show promise for upscaling and replication. Selection of programmes for evaluation will take into account the need to generate adequate evaluative knowledge on all eight outcomes and four themes of UNIFEM's Strategic Plan (2008-2013).

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<sup>10</sup> Complete definitions of the following types of evaluations are provided in the UNIFEM Evaluation Strategy (2008-2011)

<sup>11</sup> This differs from a *mid-term review* that is conducted internally, with external support, using rapid assessment techniques.

<b><u>Evaluation Type</u></b>	<b><u>Selection Criteria</u></b>
<i>Corporate</i>	relevance; strategic importance; size of investment or coverage; demonstrated demand from stakeholders; potential for generation of knowledge, broad learning and accountability on gender equality and women's empowerment; and flagship programme or strategy.
<i>Decentralized</i>	<p><b><u>Cluster/Thematic:</u></b> relevance; size of investment; knowledge; need for evidence base for decision-making; potential for upscaling/replication of innovative and/or catalytic initiatives; flagship programme or strategy, cost-effectiveness</p> <p><b><u>Programme/Project:</u></b> relevance; size of investment; commitment to evaluate; knowledge; decision-making; potential for upscaling/replication of innovative and/or catalytic initiatives; flagship programme or strategy; programme duration; and geographic scope, cost-effectiveness</p>

17. Evaluation is **mandatory** when the *investment size* is substantial (given average investment size) as outlined in the table below. Evaluation may also be mandatory due to a commitment made to stakeholders to evaluate. Duration of programmes should also be a factor in selection for evaluation.

<b>Mandatory Evaluation</b>	<b>Investment<sup>12</sup></b>
<i>A final evaluation during programme life cycle</i>	Programmes with budgets over US\$1 million
<i>A mid-term and final evaluation during programme life cycle<sup>13</sup></i>	Programmes with budgets over US\$3 million

18. The identification of knowledge gaps during strategic planning or other organizational review processes may require going beyond mandatory evaluations to meet learning needs. This is strongly encouraged, especially the evaluation of networks, south – south exchanges and capacity development approaches.<sup>14</sup>
19. When establishing cost-sharing agreements, UNIFEM offices should abide by the principles and standards contained in this policy in agreements to undertake mid-term or final evaluations. This policy should be directly referenced in such agreements, which should indicate clearly the type of evaluation to be undertaken and how it will be managed. When the evaluation of UNIFEM programmes is to be conducted and managed directly by a partner, UNIFEM will ensure that the evaluation is consultative (including UNIFEM staff as part of the evaluation reference group) and participatory in line with this policy and UNEG Norms and Standards. Evaluation of cost-sharing programmes conducted/managed by partners will be considered by Units/Sections/Offices in their overall evaluation planning to avoid duplication.
20. An annual stable fund will be available to ensure the independence and functioning of the Evaluation Unit, primarily for the implementation of UNIFEM's Evaluation Strategy (2008 – 2011) and the corresponding core evaluation functions. The Evaluation Unit budget will be managed by the Head of the Evaluation Unit.
21. Allocation of financial resources for decentralized evaluations plans must be adequate to conduct high quality evaluations that meet UNEG Norms and Standards and is the responsibility of the Section/Unit/Office commissioning the evaluation. The recommended allocation for each evaluation is a range of between 3 and 10 percent of the programme budget depending on the total size of the programme.<sup>15</sup> The amount of resources allocated will also be directly related to the type

<sup>12</sup> According to current data available, mandatory evaluations in this category would cover approximately 28 percent of UNIFEM's programmes.

<sup>13</sup> If the duration of the programme is less than 3 years, the commissioning unit will assess the relevance of undertaking a mid-term full fledged evaluation or a mid-term review to inform the progress of programme and prepare for final evaluation.

<sup>14</sup> [UNIFEM's Evaluation Strategy \(2008-2011\)](#) outlines specific targets for evaluation during this period.

<sup>15</sup> If the programme to be evaluated constitutes an innovative approach with great potential for replication and scaling up, impact evaluation may be conducted, and thus the percentage to allocate to evaluation may increase above 10% of the programme budget. The programmes under this consideration should have



of evaluation to be conducted and the specificities of evaluating each programme. The budget for each evaluation should be discussed in advance with donors and national partners during the planning and design stage. Evaluation of clusters of UNIFEM programmes are encouraged when appropriate for cost-effectiveness.

### Management of Evaluation

22. The commissioning section/unit/office of an *independent evaluation* is responsible for the overall management of the evaluation processes: preparation, conduct, and utilization / follow-up.

#### *Preparation:*

23. Evaluation requires careful planning to ensure utility, feasibility, quality and credibility. Planning for evaluations will involve conducting stakeholder analysis, evaluability assessments if relevant and consultations with internal and external stakeholders in developing the Terms of Reference (TOR).
24. Evaluation TORs will include all information and sections as indicated in the UNEG Norms and Standards and [UNIFEM Guidelines](#). They will provide a justification for the type of evaluation selected and will be based on the results framework of the programme to be evaluated, as well as the UNIFEM Strategic Plan.
25. External evaluators/evaluation teams will be recruited to conduct independent evaluations using transparent and competitive processes in line with UNIFEM programming and procurement guidelines. They will have adequate skills and competencies in evaluation; knowledge of women's empowerment, gender equality, and women's human rights; and expertise related to the subject and geographic focus of the evaluation.

#### *Conduct of Evaluation:*

26. The section managing the evaluation will: be responsible for the quality of all evaluation deliverables and processes to ensure compliance with UNIFEM and UNEG standards; coordinate internal and external stakeholder consultations and participation at key points during evaluation processes; and drive the effort to ensure strategic dissemination and use of evaluation findings and lessons learned.
27. The section/unit/office undertaking a *self-evaluation* is responsible for the actual conduct of the evaluation: planning, data collection, analysis and development of the self-evaluation report. The assistance of an external facilitator may be utilized to help guide discussions.
28. To ensure quality, all independent evaluation reports will follow the standards and guidelines established by the Evaluation Unit, which are aligned with UNEG standards. A percentage of evaluation reports finalized will be the subject of quality assurance reviews and meta-evaluation annually.

#### *Utilization and Follow-up:*

29. Timely follow-up to evaluations through the implementation of recommendations is key for accountability and use. It is essential for ensuring that learning from evaluation is used to inform decision-making to enhance UNIFEM's developmental and organizational effectiveness through improved programming. Evaluation findings and lessons learned will contribute to the knowledge base for policy-making and programming on women's empowerment and gender equality by internal and external stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels.
30. Management responses are mandatory for all independent evaluations and will be developed within six weeks of their finalization. For corporate evaluations it is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team (Executive Director and Deputy Executive Directors) to prepare a management response to the evaluation, in consultation with the concerned heads

consistent stable implementation, mature monitoring systems and potential for broad dissemination. In those cases the use of experimental or quasi-experimental designs may be needed, under the parameters of the principles and standards of this policy.

of sections/units/offices. For decentralized evaluations the commissioning section/unit/office will prepare the management response. In the case of joint evaluations, a joint management response should be issued.<sup>16</sup> Heads of respective sections/units/offices are responsible for completing the management response in a consultative manner with feedback from individuals with different levels of responsibility for managing the respective programme (programme manager, programme specialist etc). The Deputy Director for Programmes (DDP) is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the completion of the management responses and inputs should be sought from all parties to whom specific evaluation recommendations are addressed, including partners (UN sister agencies, governments, NGOs and donors).

31. The commissioning unit/section/office will be responsible for periodically updating the status of implementation of management responses for decentralized evaluations. The status of follow-up to corporate evaluations will be reported by the Evaluation Unit to the Senior Management Team and included in UNIFEM's Annual Report to its Consultative Committee, to the UNDP-UNFPA Executive Board and to the General Assembly. The Evaluation Unit will develop and maintain a system to track management responses through UNDP's Evaluation Resource Center (ERC) and the Institutional Development Team will be responsible for overseeing the status of all management responses. and
32. Follow-up to self-evaluations will be the responsibility of managers, who will review and reflect on the report with relevant staff, and develop a plan of action to implement the recommendations and ensure the uptake of lessons learned.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

33. All UNIFEM staff members will play a role in strengthening the evaluation culture within UNIFEM. They will contribute to evaluation processes in their respective roles and make use of and disseminate the learning generated from evaluations.
34. The **Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA** will be informed of the evaluation policy and any updates, as well as receive an annual update on the findings from evaluations and on the evaluation function. They may also make recommendations regarding priorities for evaluation.
35. **UNIFEM's Consultative Committee** will be informed of the evaluation policy and any updates; receive an annual update on the evaluation function; review and provide feedback on evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned; and be informed of management responses to key UNIFEM evaluations. They may also make recommendations regarding priorities for evaluation.
36. The **Executive Director** will be responsible for ensuring the independence of UNIFEM's evaluation function, for approving the evaluation policy and reporting on evaluation to the UNDP-UNFPA Executive Board and UNIFEM's Consultative Committee.
37. The **Senior Management Team** (*Executive Director and Deputy Executive Directors*) will play an important role in strengthening evaluation culture and capacity by championing evaluation within UNIFEM. They ensure that evaluation contributes to accountability, supports decision-making, and contributes to learning on women's empowerment and gender equality internally and externally by promoting the dissemination and use of evaluative information generated by UNIFEM. They will also be responsible for approving the corporate evaluation plan and ensuring that the Evaluation Unit is adequately resourced and staffed.
38. The **Deputy Director of Programmes** (*in addition to her/his role in the Senior Management Team*) will be responsible for ensuring that management responses to evaluations are developed, disseminated, and followed-up in a timely manner.
39. The **Deputy Director of Organizational and Business Development Services** (*in addition to her/his role in the Senior Management Team*) will ensure that operational units provide the support necessary to ensure timely evaluation processes,

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<sup>16</sup> A joint management response is the ideal. However, if this is not possible the respective UNIFEM office/unit/section responsible for managing the joint initiative is still responsible for issuing an individual management response on behalf of UNIFEM to the joint evaluation.

the conduct of institutional evaluations and the development and implementation of management responses to operational issues.

40. The **Management Team** will play an important role in strengthening evaluation culture by championing evaluation within UNIFEM. They will review the Annual Report of the Evaluation Unit and are responsible for disseminating its findings and developing a corporate response to the report.
41. The **Institutional Development Team** will provide a quality control framework for programme design and results based management systems (including logical frameworks and monitoring frameworks); ensure that institutional processes are linked to evaluation; and play a role in capturing the knowledge generated from evaluations (especially of programmes with the potential for upscaling and replication) for UNIFEM's corporate knowledge management strategy. They will also play a role in monitoring management responses to evaluation.
42. The **Organization and Business Development Team (OBDT)** will make evaluation findings accessible through external dissemination.
43. **Thematic Units** will ensure compliance with the parameters and targets outlined for evaluation in this policy and the Strategic Plan (2008-2013). They will be responsible for the development and implementation of biannual thematic evaluation plans and the management responses and dissemination strategies for thematic evaluations undertaken. They will assign evaluation focal points and support selected evaluations focused on the thematic area of their expertise. Through their substantive inputs to PAC processes, they will play a role in ensuring evaluability by supporting quality programme design, monitoring frameworks and the uptake of evaluation findings and lessons learned in policy advice. They will act as repositories of evaluative information on thematic areas and play a role in managing this knowledge.
44. **Geographic Sections** will ensure compliance with the parameters and targets outlined for evaluation in this policy and the Strategic Plan (2008-2013). They will be responsible for the development and implementation of biannual regional evaluation plans and the management responses and dissemination strategies for regional evaluations undertaken. They will assign evaluation focal points and provide overall quality control and technical assistance on evaluation to the Sub-Regional Offices (SROs) under their purview, including by ensuring that sub-regional and country-based evaluations and evaluation plans produced by SROs are of high quality and are implemented according to plan. Directly, and through PAC processes, they will support evaluability by ensuring quality programme design, monitoring frameworks and the uptake of evaluation findings and lessons learned. They will act as repositories of evaluative information on the regions and play a role in managing this knowledge. They will disclose all evaluations conducted.<sup>17</sup>
45. **Sub-Regional Offices** will ensure compliance with the parameters and targets outlined for evaluation in this policy and the Strategic Plan (2008-2013). They will be responsible for the development of biannual sub-regional evaluation plans; the preparation and management/conduct of sub-regional decentralized evaluations and country-level decentralized evaluations in countries under their purview; and the development and implementation of management responses and dissemination strategies for sub-regional and country-level evaluations. They will ensure the uptake of evaluation findings and lessons learned in subsequent programme design and evaluability through quality programme design and monitoring frameworks. Each SRO will assign a focal point for evaluation and will receive the assistance of Regional Evaluation Specialists.
46. The **Programme Advisory Committee (PAC)** will ensure good programme design for the evaluability of programmes presented for its review and will approve biannual decentralized evaluation plans with the advice of the Evaluation Unit.
47. The **Evaluation Unit** is the custodian of the evaluation function. It reports directly to the Executive Director and will be independent and impartial in all its work. It will be responsible for the following:

*Evaluation at the Corporate Level:*

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<sup>17</sup> The policy regarding disclosure of evaluations is outlined from point 51 – 54.

- Developing and implementing UNIFEM's evaluation strategy and policy, developing an annual report on the evaluation function, and raising evaluation-related issues of corporate significance to inform institutional processes.
- Developing and implementing a corporate evaluation plan through the direct management/conduct of corporate evaluations; and
- Developing and maintaining a corporate system to track management responses to evaluations and a publicly accessible online repository of evaluation reports.
- Facilitating the use of corporate and decentralized evaluation findings and lessons for programme design through participation in PAC.

*Support to Decentralized Evaluations:*

- Making accessible a quality assurance reference framework (a constantly updated set of criteria, lessons learned and good practices for orienting UNIFEM evaluations), manuals, guidelines, tools and technical assistance for the preparation, conduct and follow-up for decentralized evaluations;
- Systemizing institutional evaluation planning by advising the PAC on the approval of regional, sub-regional and thematic evaluation plans;
- Building the evaluation capacity of UNIFEM and its partners to plan, manage, conduct and follow-up on gender equality and human rights responsive evaluations by developing and delivering evaluation training and providing information on external evaluation training opportunities;
- Maintaining up to date information on innovative evaluation methods and approaches that are relevant for programmes on gender equality and human rights;
- Providing direct support and technical assistance, mainly through Regional Evaluation Specialists, for selected decentralized evaluations based on agreed upon criteria, need and capacity;
- Developing and maintaining an accessible roster of experts with evaluation and gender/human rights experience
- Providing frameworks for evaluability to support rigorous programme design, in close collaboration with the Institutional Development Team and programme sections and through substantive inputs to PAC processes.

*Engaging with and contributing to broader UN processes and the work of UNEG:*

- Actively participating in the Taskforces and Working Groups of UNEG to 1) ensure UNIFEM's alignment with UN system policies and reforms regarding evaluation and 2) promote gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation in the UN system; and
- Promoting joint evaluation within the UN on gender equality.

48. UNIFEM's key **stakeholders** - i.e. regional inter-governmental organizations, governments, civil society organizations (in particular women's organizations) and other UN agencies – will play an important role in UNIFEM evaluations and should be involved through consultative, participatory and empowering evaluation processes as appropriate.

## **Disclosure and Dissemination**

49. All independent and self-evaluations conducted by UNIFEM will be disclosed by the commissioning unit/section/office to key partners: governments, civil society organizations and UN agencies. The evaluative information generated by UNIFEM will also be made accessible to the greater public for accountability and learning on women's empowerment and gender equality; thereby, increasing confidence in the work undertaken by UNIFEM.
50. Dissemination strategies will be developed for all independent evaluations and will include diverse, effective, creative and barrier-free methods for widely sharing evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned through internal and external entry points to ensure uptake and use. They will be presented in a concise and user-friendly manner that responds to the needs of internal and external stakeholders, in particular women and other groups subject to discrimination, so they can contribute to awareness raising and leveraging of support for women's empowerment and gender equality.
51. All independent evaluation reports and their management responses will be published and made available electronically through a publically accessible online repository of evaluations. The Executive Summaries and Management Responses of all corporate independent evaluations will be made available in the three working languages of UNIFEM: English, French and Spanish. The translation of full independent corporate and decentralized evaluation reports or key findings and

recommendations and their management responses into relevant languages is encouraged. Dissemination of findings from self-evaluations is at the discretion of managers.

52. The implementation of the present evaluation policy will be reviewed periodically to extract lessons and make improvements. The first such review will be undertaken in 2011.