



## **2014-2017 Evaluation Strategic Plan**

Independent Evaluation Office  
February 2014

## Executive Summary

The purpose of the 2014-2017 Evaluation Strategic Plan is to provide a results-based framework to strengthen the evaluation function at UN Women in the context of the Evaluation Policy and UN Women 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

While the Evaluation Strategic Plan will be led by the Independent Evaluation Office, it is a comprehensive framework that guides the entire organization, at global, regional and country level, and covers both the capability of managers to demand and use evaluation, as well as the capability of evaluation specialists to provide high-quality evaluative evidence.

The Evaluation Strategic Plan is guided by a Theory of Change (ToC) based on a system-approach to strengthen the institutional capability to better perform and deliver expected results as by Evaluation Policy. The ToC aims to strengthen the capability to demand and use evaluation by senior managers, as well as the capability to deliver high-quality evaluations by evaluation specialists.

Based on the Evaluation Policy, the evaluation function at UN Women focuses on the following four major Key results areas:

- *Area 1:* Effective Corporate Evaluation Systems implemented
- *Area 2:* Effective Decentralized Evaluation systems implemented
- *Area 3:* UN coordination on gender responsive evaluation promoted
- *Area 4:* National Evaluation Capacities for gender responsive M&E systems strengthened

The synergic approach of these 4 key results areas, complemented with the system-approach described in the ToC, will ensure that UN Women meets the requirement of the Evaluation Policy as well as the output 2.3 of Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework (OEEF) of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

To implement the Evaluation Strategic Plan, Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) will develop annual workplans at the beginning of each year, specifying the processes and results to achieve each year in relation to the 4 key results areas. To monitor the implementation of the strategic plan against the M&E framework (annex 2), IEO will gather information from field offices and HQ sections on an annual basis. In addition, IEO will undertake meta-evaluations of evaluations undertaken in the organization to assess their quality on an annual basis. Based on that information, the IEO will prepare an Annual Evaluation Report, to be presented to the Executive Director and to the Executive Board of UN Women.

By early 2016, a mid-term review of the Evaluation Strategic Plan will be undertaken, including by taking into consideration the results of the UNEG peer review and JIU external assessment to be conducted by 2015, and necessary adjustments done.

## 1. Introduction

UN Women was created by the General Assembly by its resolution 64/289 “to provide, through its normative support functions and operational activities, guidance and technical support to all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions, at their request, on gender equality, the empowerment and rights of women and gender mainstreaming”. The role of UN Women is also one of leading, coordinating and promoting accountability with respect to gender equality and women’s empowerment in the United Nations system with a view to more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming.

In January 2013, the [Evaluation Policy](#) endorsed by UN Women Executive Board entered into force. The policy governs UN Women’s evaluation function, by establishing a framework for ensuring an independent evaluation function that provides credible evidence with respect to the performance of UN Women in terms of results achieved in the pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It also establishes the role of UN Women in system-wide evaluation and in promoting evaluations responsive to gender equality and women’s rights in the United Nations system, as well as in strengthening national capacities for gender-responsive evaluation systems.

The recently endorsed [2014-2017 Strategic Plan](#) and related [Development Results Framework \(DRF\)](#) and [Organisational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework](#) (OEEF) set the organizational priorities for UN Women, including by positioning evaluation as core function.

Being a newly established UN organization (2011), and having a recently endorsed Evaluation Policy (2013), this Evaluation Strategic Plan aims at developing corporate systems to implement the Evaluation Policy within 2014-2017, the UN Women Strategic Plan timeframe. This document presents the overview of the evaluation function at UN Women; the purpose and scope of the Evaluation Strategic Plan; its governance mechanisms; the ToC to strengthen UN Women evaluation function; the four key results areas; how the Plan will be implemented, monitored and evaluated based on the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework.

## 2. Overview of the Evaluation function at UN Women

The Evaluation Policy states that in UN Women, evaluation is conducted for three main and equally important purposes that together support the overall delivery of results. First, it is a means to demonstrate accountability to stakeholders, including women who are rights holders and duty bearers, in managing for results. Secondly, it provides credible and reliable evidence for decision-making in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women in order to improve results. Thirdly, it contributes important lessons learned about normative, operational and coordination work in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women to the existing knowledge base.

According to the Evaluation Policy, the key principles that guide the evaluation function in UN Women include: *national ownership and leadership; UN coordination; Innovation; Fair power relationships and inclusion; independence and impartiality; transparency; quality and credibility; Intentionality and use of evaluation; and ethics*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Annex 1 for additional information

### **3. Purpose of the Evaluation Strategic Plan**

The purpose of the 2014-2017 Evaluation Strategic Plan is to provide a results-based framework to strengthen the evaluation function at UN Women in the context of the Evaluation Policy and UN Women 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

The eventual goal is to support UN Women's mission and help the organization better serve gender equality and women empowerment.

### **4. Scope of the Evaluation Strategic Plan**

The Evaluation Strategic Plan is a comprehensive framework that guides the entire organization, at global, regional and country level. Therefore, the Evaluation Strategic Plan is not targeting solely the Independent Evaluation Office or Evaluation Specialists, but the entire organization, including senior managers and programme specialists at HQ and field level, including Regional Offices (RO) and Country Offices (COs).

### **5. Governance of the Evaluation Strategic Plan**

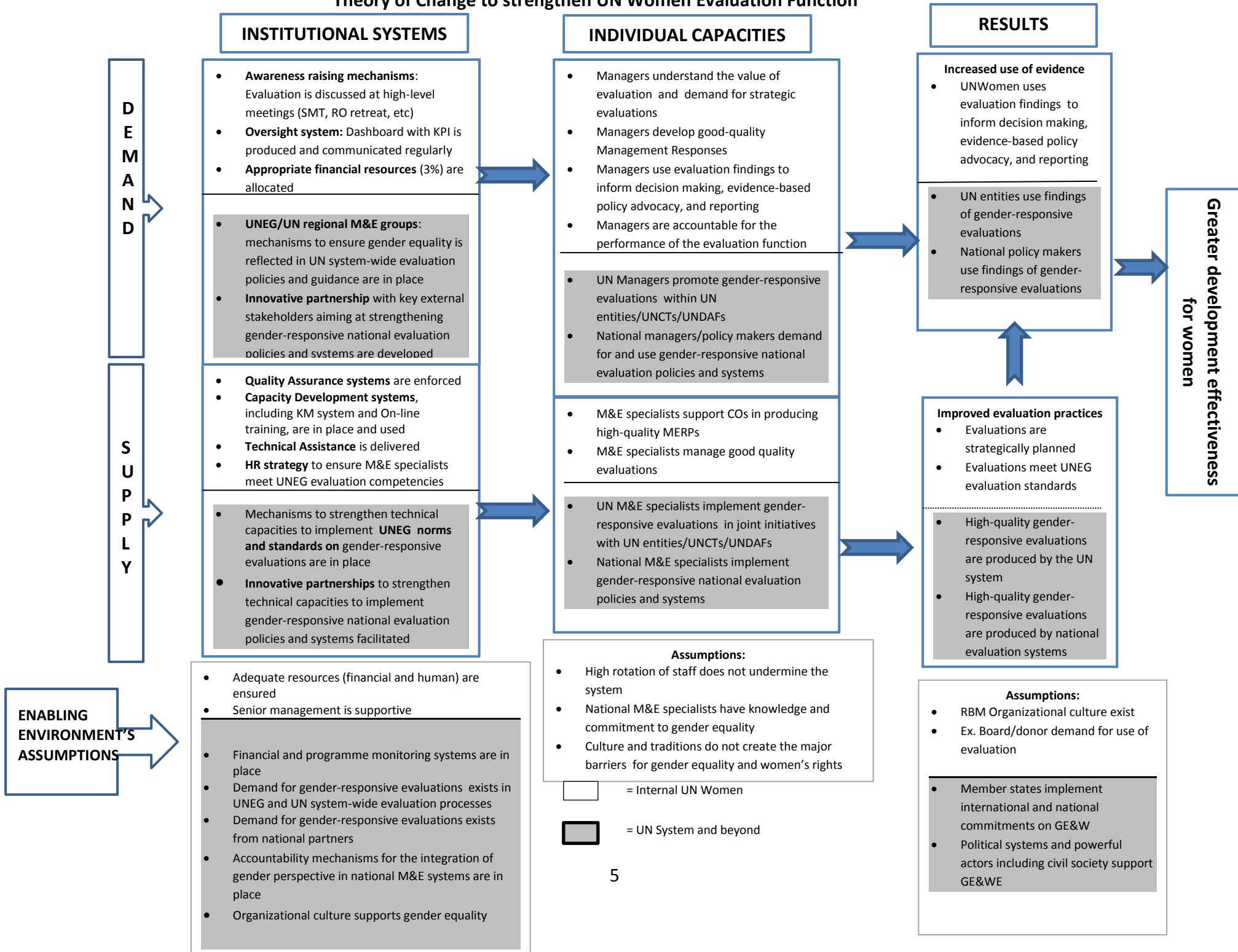
IEO prepares a draft Evaluation Strategic Plan for consideration of the Global Evaluation Committee, the Senior Management Team and Regional Directors. IEO finalizes the Evaluation Strategic Plan taking into account comments as appropriate, and submits it for approval to the Executive Director. The approved Evaluation Strategic Plan (and reporting on its implementation) is shared with the Executive Board through the Annual Report on Evaluation Function.

IEO leads the implementation of the Evaluation Strategic Plan, in cooperation with Senior Management Team and Regional Directors.

### **6. Theory of Change to strengthen UN Women evaluation function**

The Theory of Change (ToC) to strengthen UN Women evaluation function is based on a system-approach to strengthen the institutional capability to better perform and deliver expected results as by Evaluation Policy. The ToC aims to strengthen the capability of managers to demand and use evaluation, as well as the capability of evaluation specialists to supply high-quality evaluative evidence. It takes into account the UN Women's role in promoting and advocating for gender responsive evaluation to achieve more effective development for women and girls.

# Theory of Change to strengthen UN Women Evaluation Function



As described by the diagram above, the ToC aims at developing and strengthening institutional systems (output level) that will enable individual capacities to change their knowledge, attitude and practices towards evaluation (outcome level). To enhance the capacities of UN Women’s managers to demand for and use evaluation (the so called “demand side”), UN Women will strengthen the following systems and mechanisms:

- a) Awareness raising mechanisms that will strengthen the understanding and commitment of managers to demand and use evaluation for decision making, accountability and improvements;
- b) Evaluation Oversight System that will monitor, through a transparent mechanism, the performance of the evaluation function at global and regional level, increasing the level of management attention to the function;
- c) Budgeting mechanisms that will enable the organization to meet the target of investing 3% of available funds to evaluation.

To enhance the capacities of UN Women’s M&E specialists and focal points, as well as programme staff, to manage good quality evaluations (the so called “supply side”), UN Women will strengthen the following systems and mechanisms:

- d) Quality Assurance systems to ensure strategic planning of evaluations; high-quality evaluation reports; and use of evaluation findings and recommendations;
- e) Internal Capacity Development systems, including Knowledge Management systems in support of the evaluation function as well as e-learning, to strengthen the capacities of M&E specialists and UN Women staff;
- f) Technical Assistance mechanisms, mainly led by RO, to ensure timely and high-quality support is provided to Country Offices;
- g) Human Resources mechanisms, to ensure UN Women offices have M&E specialists or M&E focal points in all offices, and Job Descriptions of M&E specialists are aligned to UNEG evaluation competencies.

The above institutional systems and mechanisms are expected to change the knowledge, attitude and practices towards evaluation of UN Women managers (demand side) as well as UN Women M&E specialists (supply side). UN Women managers will better understand the value of and will demand for strategic evaluations; will develop good-quality management responses; will use evaluation findings to inform decision-making, evidence-based policy advocacy and reporting; and will be accountable for the performance of the evaluation function in their own offices/regions. M&E specialists will better support Country Offices in producing high-quality Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plans (MERPs) and managing high-quality evaluations.

The same ToC applies for strengthening the capabilities of UN agencies as well as national governments and civil society organizations. To strengthen the demand for gender-responsive evaluations within the UN system, UN Women will work with UNEG at global level, UN Evaluation Regional groups at regional level and UNCTs at country level to put in place mechanisms to ensure gender equality is reflected in UN system-wide evaluation policies, guidance and practices. To strengthen the demand for gender-responsive evaluations within national governments and civil society organizations, UN Women will develop innovative partnerships aiming at strengthening gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems.

To strengthen the capability to supply high-quality gender-responsive evaluations within the UN system, UN Women will facilitate mechanisms to strengthen technical capacities to implement United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards on gender-responsive evaluations. To strengthen the capability to supply high-quality gender-responsive evaluations within national governments and civil society organizations, UN Women will facilitate innovative partnerships to strengthen technical capacities to implement gender-responsive national evaluation policies and systems.

The above institutional systems and mechanisms are expected to change the knowledge, attitude and practices towards gender-responsive evaluation of UN managers, policy makers and leaders of civil society organizations (demand side) as well as M&E specialists working in UN entities, in governments and civil society organizations (supply side).

As a result, the supply of and use of high-quality gender-responsive evaluations will improve within UN Women, UN entities and national policy making, conducing to greater development effectiveness for gender equality and women empowerment.

The ToC makes a number of assumptions about the needed pre-conditions to achieve the proposed results such as support to and demand for gender responsive evaluations by UN Women, UN system and by national partners; capacities and knowledge to undertake gender responsive evaluations of UN Women staff, UN entities and national partners; and cultural barriers and deep rooted believes about gender roles that may impede the achievement of wanted change. Given the complexity of social change and transformation of gender relations as well as varied national contexts, this ToC should not be viewed as a linear model but as a complex system where change happens through feedback loops, reversals and sometimes even backlashes (particularly taking into account that gender responsive evaluation challenges the traditional power).

## **7. Evaluation function's Key results areas<sup>2</sup>**

Applying the abovementioned ToC to the UN Women Evaluation Policy, the following four Key results areas have been identifies. The systemic approach described in the ToC, as well as the three levels of interventions (institutional systems, individual behavior and enabling environment) will guide the overall UN Women Evaluation Strategic Plan, as well as each result areas as described below.

The synergic approach of these 4 key results areas, complemented with the system-approach described in the abovementioned ToC, will ensure that UN Women meets the requirement of the Evaluation Policy as well as the output 2.3 of Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017 that relates directly to evaluation: "A clear evidence base generated from high quality evaluations of Strategic Plan implementation for learning, decision-making and accountability".

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<sup>2</sup> For additional details, please refer to the M&E framework presented in Annex 2.

## **Area 1: Effective Corporate Evaluation Systems implemented**

The evaluation policy sets the elements of a clear governance system of the evaluation function. The Executive Director is the main champion of evaluation within the Entity. She provides the political will and enabling environment for enhancing the evaluation culture. She is responsible for safeguarding the independence of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) by ensuring that the Office is adequately staffed and resourced to fulfil its role. The Director of Evaluation reports directly to the Executive Director to safeguard the independence of the evaluation office from management, thus enabling it to conduct its work with impartiality.

To further ensure the independence and quality of the evaluation function and promote the use of UN-Women evaluations, an Evaluation Advisory Committee will be established. The evaluation advisory committee will be composed of external independent evaluators representing different geographical areas and institutional backgrounds; senior evaluation experts from sister UN agencies and Bretton Woods institutions; and UN-Women senior management at HQ and Regional level. The committee will provide advice to the Executive Director and the IEO on the overall evaluation function as stated by the Evaluation Policy.

An external assessment to be led by JIU and a UNEG peer review will be implemented in 2014/2015 to inform the revision of the Evaluation Policy in 2016.

IEO will draft and implement the 2014-2017 Corporate Evaluation Plan. The purpose of the 2014-2017 Corporate Evaluation Plan (CEP) is to provide a coherent framework within which useful evaluation evidence is generated systematically on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and, as far as possible, impact and sustainability, of work under the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017. A rolling approach is proposed which will allow scoping of proposed evaluations for a given year and preparation of an appropriate annual workplan, within the broader framework of the overall Corporate Evaluation Plan. IEO will be responsible to implement the plan, and report on its implementation to the Executive Board within the annual report of the evaluation function.

With the aim of increasing senior management attention and accountability to the evaluation function, a transparent and sound system to monitor the performance of the evaluation function (Global Evaluation Oversight System (GEOS) will be established. The system will include a dashboard presenting, in a user-friendly manner, key performance indicators (KPIs) for the evaluation function. The KPI will be shared with senior management at global and decentralized level on a quarterly basis, and with the Executive Board within the annual report of the evaluation function.

Last but not least, IEO will consolidate a robust evaluation function with a strong and well-staffed IEO, composed of one Director (D1), one Deputy (P5), three evaluation specialists at P4 level and four at P3 level at HQ level, and six P4 Regional Evaluations Specialists at Regional Level.

## **Area 2: Effective Decentralized Evaluation systems implemented**

90 per cent of UN Women supported evaluations are managed by field offices, reflecting the decentralized nature of the organization. This ensures that the evaluation function generates contextually relevant evidence which is most likely to be used by policy makers to inform national



policies for gender equality and women's empowerment. However, it also poses a managerial challenge to ensure evaluations meet internationally agreed evaluation standards, such as the ones endorsed by UNEG.

To face this challenge, UN Women will implement a systemic approach to enhance the evaluation function. The Independent Evaluation Office, programme division and regional offices will work jointly to strengthen the evaluation function in a number of areas: enhancing strategic planning of evaluations; promoting and supporting the quality of evaluations; improving the use of evaluations and management responses; and strengthening internal evaluation capacity.

IEO will design and implement the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) with the aim of improving the quality and use of decentralized evaluations. The GERASS will use UNEG evaluation reports standards as a basis for review and assessment while ensuring specific standards relevant to UN Women. The system will provide an independent assessment of the quality of and usefulness of evaluation reports, synthesis of evaluation findings and individual feedback to commissioning offices. In doing so, the system will: i) provide senior managers with a clear, concise and independent assessment of the quality and usefulness of individual evaluation reports; ii) strengthen internal evaluation capacity by providing offices commissioning evaluations with feedback and practical recommendations on how to improve future evaluations; iii) contribute to corporate knowledge management and organizational learning, by identifying evaluation reports of good quality to be used in meta-analysis to be shared within the organization, as well as facilitating internal and external sharing of good evaluations reports; and, iv) facilitate reporting to the Executive Board on the quality of evaluation reports.

To support management accountability and transparency in evaluation, IEO will continue maintaining its publicly accessible online system of evaluations known as the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE).

IEO, mainly through its regional evaluation specialists, will provide support and technical assistance to field offices to strengthen evaluation culture and assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in line with the Evaluation Policy. These supports, among others, will cover areas such as preparation of costed decentralized evaluation plans, review of draft evaluation terms of reference and evaluation reports, dissemination and use of the GATE system.

IEO will contribute to strengthening internal evaluation capacities through the updating the Programme and Operation Manual; consolidation and update of several existing guidance; development of internal e-learning courses on gender responsive evaluation; and, delivery of face-to-face training.

### **Area 3: UN coordination on gender responsive evaluation promoted**

The General Assembly established UN-Women to strengthen United Nations system efforts in respect of gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN-Women plays a leading role in system-wide coordination and accountability in this area of work. In its resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the Assembly called upon UN-Women to strengthen its role, specifically through evaluation. UN Women will

support System wide coordination on evaluation on gender equality and the empowerment of women mainly through the four areas presented below.

#### **A. Promoting gender-responsive evaluations through the United Nations Evaluation group**

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) is a voluntary network that brings together units responsible for evaluation in the UN system. UNEG helps advance the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the UN system's work by promoting and strengthening evaluation. The group's central role has been to develop and advocate for common norms and standards for all UN evaluations. The UNEG Norms and Standards underpin professionalization of UN evaluation functions that enables UN organizations to continuously learn and improve organizational effectiveness and responsiveness.

Acknowledging the rapidly evolving global landscape, in 2013 UNEG commissioned an independent assessment of UNEG. The assessment recommended UNEG to increase its partnerships with other professional evaluation networks and organizations, revise its governance and decision-making structures, and define a strategy.

As result, UNEG developed a new strategy covering 2014-2019. This Strategy set the course for UNEG's future work, building on its past achievements. UNEG's role and priorities have evolved to acquire enhanced relevance and provide support for UN reform, by ensuring that: a) evaluation functions and products of UN entities meet UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation; b) UN entities and partners use evaluation in support of accountability and programme learning; c) Evaluation informs UN system-wide initiatives and emerging demands; and d) UNEG benefits from and contributes to an enhanced global evaluation profession.

IEO will leverage the fact it's leading UNEG agenda on partnership by creating synergies among Un Women, UNEG, EvalPartners and EvalNet priorities, especially on gender responsive evaluations. In addition, it will also strategically contribute to the other areas of work to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in the key UNEG initiatives.

#### **B. United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment– systematizing and harmonizing reporting on evaluation**

The UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator ultimate goal is that all UN system entities meet the requirements in terms of integrating gender equality and empowerment of women in their respective evaluations. In 2013, during its Annual General Meeting, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) endorsed for piloting the UN SWAP Evaluation performance Indicator Technical Note and Scorecard, which purpose is to support a more systematic and harmonized reporting through the use of a common tool that also allows for improved comparability across UN entities.

IEO will continue leading UNEG in this area of work, including by piloting the guidance and scorecard, and established a SWAP help-desk function, to ensure that UN entities comply and meet the expected requirements.

### **C. System-wide Evaluation Policy**

GA resolution 67/226 requests the Secretary-General to establish an interim coordination mechanism for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and to develop a policy for independent system-wide evaluation. The purpose of the system wide evaluation policy is to establish a common and coherent UN system-wide institutional framework for carrying out independent system-wide evaluations of United Nations operational activities for development. IEO will contribute to the consultations leading to the development of the system wide evaluation policy through the United Nations Evaluation Group, specifically emphasizing the inclusion of gender equality in the norms and standards for system wide-evaluation.

### **D. Strengthening regional UN evaluation groups**

IEO will actively contribute to regional UN Evaluation Groups to enhance evaluation capacities and skills, including gender responsive evaluation, at regional level, including the Nairobi UN inter-agency evaluation network (NIEN); the Latin America UN inter-agency working group on M&E; the UN Evaluation Group in Asia and Pacific (UNEDAP). Participation in such regional platforms will help to promote UN coherence on evaluation and integration of gender equality perspectives at decentralized level.

#### **Area 4: National Evaluation Capacities for gender responsive M&E systems strengthened**

In 2013, UN Women replaced UNICEF in representing UN agencies in EvalPartners, the global partnership initiative to strengthen national and regional capacities for equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation systems. EvalPartners, co-led by UN Women and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) – the world federation representing 150 Volunteer Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) – is a network of 55 organizations coming together to leverage synergies based on the value added of each organization, which include, among others: all regional VOPEs; UN entities, i.e. UNEG, UNDP, UNWomen, UNICEF and UNV; Governments from the South (i.e. Mexico and Sri Lanka) and from the North (i.e. OECD/DAC Evalnet; Finland, USA, Spain and Switzerland); Multilateral Banks, i.e. African Development Bank; Private foundations, i.e. the Rockefeller and MasterCard Foundations; and other major stakeholders<sup>3</sup>.

EvalPartners is working toward a world where there is a more equitable sharing of resources, and where national and international policies and programmes serve those who have fewer opportunities in societies, including women. The overall goal of the EvalPartners Initiative is to contribute to the enhancement of the capacities of Civil Society Organizations, notably VOPEs, to influence policy-makers and work together with Governments and other key stakeholders so that public policies are evidence-informed and support gender equality and social equity.

Based on the conceptual framework on National Evaluation Capacity Development<sup>4</sup>, developed by leaders from UNEG, the World Bank, OECD-DAC and IOCE under the EvalPartners' initiative, EvalPartners' seeks to strengthen a) an enabling environment for evaluation; b) institutional capacities to

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<sup>3</sup> Please visit <http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners> for additional information

<sup>4</sup> Published in the book available at [http://www.mymande.org/Evaluation\\_and\\_Civil\\_Society](http://www.mymande.org/Evaluation_and_Civil_Society)

demand, manage and use evaluations; c) individual capacities of evaluators in the global south to conduct credible and useful gender-responsive evaluations.

### **Strengthening an enabling environment for evaluation**

This wide and diverse partnership works together to advocate for environments that enable good quality and gender-responsive evaluations at international, regional and national level. In 2013, senior leaders from VOPEs, developing and developed countries and UN agencies met to develop a strategy for an evaluation enabling environment.

The strategy tries to strengthen the demand and use of good quality gender-responsive evaluation to inform public policies, at global and national level. To do so, EvalPartners declared 2015 as the international year of evaluation<sup>5</sup> at the International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in October 2013. The 160 participants from 63 countries committed themselves to strengthen the demand and use of evaluation in their own countries and organizations, including by declaring 2015 as international year of evaluation in their own countries. So far, the declaration happened in 15 countries. At global level, UNEG also endorsed it at its 2013 General Assembly, and the UN Secretary General spoke about the strategic importance of evaluation at the UN Evaluation Week organized by UNEG at the UN Headquarter, highlighting that “evaluation is essential. The current constrained budgetary climate makes it more important than ever. All of us share a responsibility to strengthen this important function”.

Declaring 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation is intended to contribute to high-level debates, at international and national level, on the role of evaluation in good governance for equitable human development. It will enable the positioning of evaluation in the policy arena, including by raising awareness of the importance of embedding evaluation in the processes associated with the implementation of the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals at international and national level.

IEO will continue co-leading the EvalPartners Task Force on Enabling Environment, as well as the one on Gender, to ensure that EvalPartners’ initiatives to strengthen an enabling environment for evaluation are engendered.

### **Strengthening institutional capacities to demand, manage and use evaluations**

In 2013, EvalPartners carried out an international mapping of regional and national VOPEs. The mapping found 155 VOPEs in 110 countries with a total cumulative 34,000 members, and several case studies were produced, published and disseminated<sup>6</sup>.

To take advantage and build on existing capacities in the global south, EvalPartners launched the Peer to Peer (P2P) mutual support programme. The programme enabled 32 national and 6 regional VOPE to support each other, by sharing context-relevant experiences facilitating peer mentoring. Building on the success of the P2P programme, and based on the principle of crowdsourcing, EvalPartners also launched an Innovation Challenge to stimulate ideas to strengthening the capacities to demand and use evaluation in policy making. One of the 5 winning idea was instrumental to the creation of the South Asia

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<sup>5</sup> Please visit <http://www.mymande.org/evalyear>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.mymande.org/voluntary\\_organizations\\_for\\_professional\\_evaluation](http://www.mymande.org/voluntary_organizations_for_professional_evaluation)

Parliamentarian Forum for development evaluation, whose objective is to demand for the development of national evaluation policies and effective national evaluation systems in South Asian countries.

IEO will continue to influence both the P2P as well as the Innovation challenges to ensure that gender-responsiveness is mainstreamed.

### **Strengthening individual capacities of evaluators in the global south to conduct credible and useful gender-responsive evaluations**

EvalPartners also facilitated global learning on evaluation, mainly by enhancing MyM&E<sup>7</sup>, a user-friendly knowledge management system to strengthen national evaluation capacity. In addition to being a learning resource, MyM&E facilitates the strengthening of a global evaluation community, while identifying good practices and lessons learned. MyM&E quickly became the global hub for national evaluation capacities.

Since the launch of MyM&E, EvalPartners organized 44 live webinars with a cumulative total of 3.300 participants. Based on the feedback received by participants, EvalPartners decided to launch a new innovative strategy to reach out thousands of evaluators in developing countries in a cost-efficient manner: a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)<sup>8</sup> on Development evaluation.

As of end 2013, the MOOC reached a cumulative total of 18,000 registered participants from 178 countries. The e-learning proved to be very cost-effective. The total cost for participants is about 5 USD. However, this cost includes the front-up cost for the development of the e-learning. The annual cost to run the entire programme, excluding the up-front cost, is 3 USD/participants.

IEO will continue co-leading the entire MOOC platform, to ensure that gender is both mainstreamed in existing and future e-learning courses, as well as to enhance and develop stand-alone courses on gender responsive evaluations.

### **Direct partnership with Regional organizations**

IEO will continue forging strategic partnership with national and regional evaluation networks, with a particular attention to AfrEA/AGDEN, ReLAC, IPEN, CoE, EvalMENA.

## **8. Budgeting, implementation, M&E and reporting**

To implement the Evaluation Strategic Plan, IEO will develop costed annual workplans at the beginning of each year, specifying the financial and human resources needed to achieve annual expected results which contribute to the achievements of the 4-years results stated in this plan. To monitor the implementation of the strategic plan against the M&E framework (annex 2), the IEO will gather information from field offices and HQ sections on an annual basis. In addition, IEO will undertake meta-evaluations of the evaluations undertaken in the organization to assess their quality on an annual basis. Based on that information, the Evaluation Office will prepare an Annual Evaluation Report, to be presented to the Executive Director and to the Executive Board of UN Women.

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<sup>7</sup> Please visit [www.mymande.org](http://www.mymande.org) for additional information

<sup>8</sup> <http://mymande.org/elearning>

By early 2016, a mid-term review of the Evaluation Strategic Plan will be undertaken, including by taking into consideration the results of the UNEG peer review and JIU external assessment to be conducted by 2015, and necessary adjustments done.

## Annex 1: Guiding evaluation principles and standards

A number of principles guide evaluation planning, conduct and follow-up, which, when taken together, ensure that all evaluation processes reflect (a) the overall normative, operational and coordination mandates of UN Women as an entity within the United Nations system, (b) the commitment of UN Women to evaluation that is responsive to gender equality and women's rights, and (c) alignment with the UNEG norms and standards, the UNEG ethical guidelines and the handbook Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation: Towards UNEG Guidance. Evaluation conducted in UN Women should adhere to the following principles:

(a) **National ownership and leadership.** Evaluation should be country-driven. It should be planned and conducted to ensure national ownership and leadership of evaluation processes by both rights holders and duty bearers. To this end, it should support the development of capacity to conduct evaluations that are responsive to gender equality and women's rights;

(b) **United Nations system coordination and coherence with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women.** Evaluations should be conducted systemwide and jointly with United Nations sister agencies, whenever possible, as a means to promote coordination and coherence regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women. Evaluations should systematically assess how to improve coordination and coherence in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly with regard to normative and operational work in those areas;

(c) **Innovation.** Evaluations should seek to identify and illuminate innovations in the work of UN Women with respect to gender equality and the empowerment of women. They should also apply innovative evaluation approaches and methods that have potential to more fully capture the complex and long-term nature of achieving results in those areas;

(d) **Fair power relations and empowerment.** Evaluations should be conducted with an understanding of contextual power and gender relations. The process should seek to empower women and disadvantaged groups;

(e) **Participation and inclusion.** Evaluation processes should ensure stakeholder participation that is both relevant and inclusive, given the evaluation subject at hand. In particular, stakeholder analysis should be conducted and planned to take into account the additional time and resources needed to allow for the participation of all relevant stakeholder groups, especially women who face barriers to participation;

(f) **Independence and impartiality.** The evaluation function is to be carried out independently of other management functions in order to ensure that it is credible and free from undue influence and that it results in unbiased and transparent reports. Evaluators should demonstrate impartiality and be free from any conflict of interest or bias. They should have full access to information regarding the subjects that they are evaluating and the freedom to express their opinions;

(g) **Transparency.** Evaluations should be conducted in transparent and consultative manner with key stakeholders. Evaluation plans, terms of reference and reports should be made publicly available in order to enhance the transparency of UN Women with regard to efficiency and commitment to managing for results;

(h) **Quality and credibility.** Evaluations should be conducted in a systematic manner, applying sound approaches and methods to ensure the quality and credibility of findings, recommendations and lessons generated. Reports should be in accordance with the UNEG norms and standards, the UN Women evaluation guidelines, the UNEG code of conduct and applicable ethical standards for research. A quality assurance mechanism will support evaluators and evaluation managers in this regard;

(i) **Intentionality and use of evaluation.** Planning for evaluations demonstrates a clear intent regarding the purpose and use of findings to improve the work of UN Women or the United Nations system in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women, contributes to knowledge about gender equality and the empowerment of women, and/or contributes to broader United Nations system processes. This requires the proper timing of evaluations, as well as evaluation dissemination plans, management responses and action plans that reflect original intent;

(j) **Ethics.** Evaluators should have personal and professional integrity and abide by the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation and the UNEG code of conduct for evaluation in the United Nations system, to ensure that the rights of individuals involved in an evaluation are respected. Evaluators must act with cultural sensitivity and pay particular attention to protocols, codes and recommendations that may be relevant to their interactions with women.



## Annex 2: Evaluation Strategic Plan's M&E framework

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	INDICATORS/TARGETS
<b>Area 1: Effective Corporate Evaluation Systems are implemented</b>		
1.1 Management attention to the global evaluation function is heightened	1.1.1: Global Evaluation Governance system implemented 1.1.2: UN Women Evaluation Policy reviewed and updated	<i>EO budget fully covered annually</i> <i>Peer review and external assessment of the Evaluation Policy conducted by 2015, and Evaluation Policy updated by 2016</i>
1.2 Corporate evaluations of strategic relevance are used in support of accountability, decision-making and programme learning	1.2.1 2014-2017 Corporate evaluation plan drafted, approved and implemented	<i>At least 2 high quality corporate evaluations conducted annually</i> <i>100% of corporate evaluations have management response</i>
1.3 Capacities of Evaluation Office strengthened	1.3.1: Evaluation staffing consolidated	<i>1 D1, 1 P5, 3 P4 and 4 P3 at HQ level, and 6 P4 at Regional Level</i>
<b>Area 2: Effective decentralized evaluation systems implemented</b>		
2.1 Management attention to decentralized evaluation function is heightened	2.1.1: Decentralized evaluation function is compliant with evaluation policy 2.1.2 Regional evaluation strategies developed and implemented	<i>3% of programme budget earmarked for decentralized evaluation system</i> <i>80% of decentralized evaluations of satisfactory quality and above</i> <i>All COs have M&amp;E specialists/focal points</i>
2.2 Internal evaluation capacities enhanced to manage and use evaluations	2.2.1: Evaluation guidance enhanced and training delivered	<i>80% of M&amp;E specialists/focal points trained</i>
2.3 Evaluation knowledge management strengthened	2.3.1: KM system in support of evaluation strengthened 2.3.2: Evaluation evidence inform organizational KM system	<i>80% of M&amp;E specialists are members of the internal M&amp;E Community of Practice</i> <i># unique visitors to intranet and public website</i>
2.4 Decentralized evaluations of strategic relevance are used in support of accountability, decision-making and programme learning	2.4.1 Decentralized MERPS (evaluation section) implemented 2.4.2 Evaluation systems are implemented (GATE, Repository, Roster)	<i>At least 80% of decentralized evaluations planned in MERPS are conducted</i> <i>100% of decentralized evaluations have management response</i> <i>3 evaluation systems are updated and maintained</i>

<b>Area 3: UN coordination on gender responsive evaluation promoted</b>		
3.1 Policy environment for gender responsive evaluations strengthened in UN system	3.1.1: Gender equality perspective integrated in system-wide evaluation processes and UNEG norms and standards, guidance and strategies	Evidence of gender perspective being integrated in key system-wide policy documents and practices
3.2 Capacities of UNEG members and UN regional evaluation groups to undertake gender responsive evaluation enhanced	3.2.1: Inter-agency evaluation capacity development, including regional level networks and groups supported	# of UN staff trained
3.3 Accountability for gender equality in UN system promoted through evaluation	3.3.1 UN agencies supported in reporting on the UN SWAP evaluation indicator  3.3.2 Gender equality integrated in UNDAF and joint evaluations	<i>% of UN entities supported in reporting on SWAP evaluation indicators</i>
<b>Area 4: National evaluation capacities for gender responsive M&amp;E systems strengthened</b>		
4.1 UN Women is positioned as leading entity on gender responsive evaluation in the global evaluation community	4.1.1.: EvalPartners is co-led by UN Women  4.1.2 Task forces on equity focused and gender responsive evaluation led/co-chaired	<i>At least 80% of EvalPartners budget and workplan is implemented</i>  <i># and quality of initiatives to promote gender responsive evaluations supported by UN Women.</i>
4.2 Enabling environment for evaluation strengthened, including the demand for gender responsive evaluation	4.2.1 Support to engender national M&E systems and policies provided  4.2.2 2015 International Year of Evaluation engendered	<i># of engendered M&amp;E systems and policies supported by UN Women</i>
4.3 VOPEs institutional capacities strengthened, including the integration of gender perspectives in their governance structures, policies and practices	4.3.1 Peer support and South-South cooperation among VOPEs facilitated, including on gender responsive evaluation	<i># of VOPEs successfully involved in Peer support and South/South cooperation initiatives</i>
4.4 Evaluators' individual capacities strengthened through cost-effective systems, including in gender-responsive evaluations	4.4.1 EvalPartners e-learning is maintained, and enhanced with the development of new e-learning courses  4.4.2. EvalPartners knowledge Management system (MyM&E) is maintained and enhanced	# of people registered in EvalPartners e-learning courses  # of hits to MyM&E platform