Chapter 4. Institutional Framework and Planning for HR & GE Responsive Evaluations

87. Ensuring a systematic and coherent application of HR & GE responsive evaluation practice begins with integrating these key principles into the institutional evaluation framework of an organization. Establishing a comprehensive, HR & GE responsive, evaluation framework is instrumental for strengthening accountability, learning and decision-making on HR & GE at all levels of an organization.

88. For UN entities, this evaluation framework is normally comprised of one or all of the following:
   - Evaluation policy
   - Evaluation strategy
   - Evaluation guidance and tools
   - Evaluation quality assurance systems
   - Evaluation plans

89. The overall evaluation framework should be formulated in accordance with:
   - Organizational mandates and policies on HR & GE (as they exist);
   - UNEG Norms, Standards and Guidelines related to integration of HR & GE;\(^{83}\)
   - The UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator;
   - Broader UN agency mandates for integrating HR & GE in the work of the UN.\(^{84}\)

4.1. HR & GE evaluation policy

90. Integrating HR & GE in the evaluation policy is the critical first step towards establishing the strategic framework necessary to ensure HR & GE responsive evaluation is operationalized in practice.

91. An HR & GE responsive evaluation policy is an institutional statement that provides clarity to staff, partners and stakeholders on the practice of integrating HR & GE principles. It contributes to institutional transparency and accountability in meeting HR & GE mandates and evaluation norms and standards set forth for the UN system.

\(^{83}\) Outlined in Chapter 3.

\(^{84}\) Refer to Chapter 2 for a detailed overview of the UN normative framework regarding HRBA and gender equality mainstreaming.
92. UNEG Evaluation Norm 3 and Standard 1.2\textsuperscript{85} (outlined in Chapter 3) indicate that each UN entity should establish and regularly update an explicit policy statement on evaluation that ‘takes into account’ all the UNEG Norms and Standards. This requires the mainstreaming of HR & GE within evaluation policies. The Norms and Standards that focus specifically on the integration of HR & GE into evaluation processes are outlined in Chapter 2. These should be integrated and referenced in UN agency evaluation policies.

93. While there is no set template for designing an evaluation policy within the UN system, the following provides some guidance on how to reflect HR & GE in the common elements of an evaluation policy:

- **Concept and role of evaluation:** The way in which the evaluation process itself is undertaken has the potential to empower the stakeholders involved and the policy should explicitly call for evaluations to be responsive to gender equality and human rights. The UN Women Evaluation Policy provides an example, stipulating that assessments should include whether interventions:
  - Have been guided by the relevant international (national and regional) normative frameworks for human rights and gender equality, United Nations system-wide mandates and organizational objectives;
  - Have analysed and addressed the structures that contribute to inequalities experienced by women and individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against, especially those experiencing multiple forms of exclusion;

### Box 9. Tips: Evaluation Policy Communication & Dissemination

To promote knowledge and use:
- Translate into the six official languages of the UN
- Adapt the Evaluation Policy to a user-friendly design and disseminate widely. Key actions include:
  - Executive Director message to all staff communicating what the Evaluation Policy means for the organization and elements of the plan for implementation, including HR & GE strategies;
  - Target communications and dissemination to reach all stakeholder groups/beneficiaries identified in the stakeholder map;
  - Dissemination and communication of the policy to internal and external stakeholders, highlighting HR & GE elements, via:
    - Global/regional webinars with organization staff;
    - User-friendly design;
    - Dissemination to organization offices and partners, e.g. UNEG, OECD-DAC, evaluation networks;
    - Share with informants of the evaluation.

\textsuperscript{85} See UNEG Norm 3 and UNEG Standard 1.2.
Have maximized participation and inclusiveness (with respect to rights holders and duty bearers) in their planning, design, implementation and decision-making processes;

Sought out opportunities to build sustainable results through the empowerment and capacity-building of women and groups of rights holders and duty bearers;

Have contributed to short-, medium- and long-term objectives (or the lack thereof) through the examination of results chains, processes, contextual factors and causality using gender- and rights-based analysis.\(^{86}\)

- **Guiding principles of evaluation:** The evaluation policy provides the opportunity to articulate the principles that guide evaluation within a UN entity. Explicitly including HR & GE as one of the guiding principles in the policy document will help guide the organization’s work in line with HR & GE values, including adherence to universally shared standards of equality, justice, gender equality and respect for diversity. An example can be found in the UNEP Evaluation Policy.\(^{87}\) The policy should also reference UN resolutions, including the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (Resolution 2007/33, Resolution 67/226)\(^{88}\) in which the General Assembly required the systematic integration of HR & GE in evaluation in the UN system’s operational activities.

- **Evaluation guidance and quality assurance system:** The foundations for a quality assurance system should be established in the policy that will support evaluators and evaluation managers in applying sound HR & GE responsive approaches and methods. Key elements of a HR & GE responsive quality assurance mechanism will be discussed in more detail in the following section on implementing the evaluation policy. Meta-evaluation processes that include criteria on HR and GE integration of evaluation in assessing the overall quality of reports, quality checklists and the use of the UN SWAP scorecard are some ways in which to do this. An example of this is presented in Box 10.\(^{89}\)

- **Prioritization and planning of evaluations:** Guidelines and triggers regarding the timing of evaluations can instruct planners to consider internal and external events and processes in a way that would help to maximize effective utilization of the HR & GE findings and recommendations.

- **Roles and responsibilities:** The roles and responsibilities for senior managers, evaluation officers and staff stipulated in the evaluation policy lay the groundwork for the overarching plan to ensure that information, capacities and resources are leveraged for building a cred-

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88 ECOSOC Resolution 2007/33 ‘Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system’; and General Assembly resolution 67/226 ‘Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system’.

89 Integration of UNEG guidance to specific agency guidance more tailored to the evaluation context is also an important aspect. ILO provides one example.
A capable evaluation function that integrates HR & GE. Within this context, accountable parties – including the Executive Board, the Evaluation Office, senior management, decentralized evaluators, independent evaluation consultants, etc. – should be identified for ensuring the integration of HR & GE principles throughout the evaluation process, with reference to specific, actionable responsibilities. One such mechanism for enhancing accountability of roles and responsibilities is to stipulate in the policy that HR & GE principles are to be integral in performance appraisal indicators for senior managers, evaluation focal points, and other staff with evaluation roles and responsibilities.

- **Organizing, management and budgeting of evaluation:** The evaluation management protocols outlined in a policy could explicitly incorporate HR & GE principles in the conduct of evaluability assessments, the analysis of stakeholders, the development of ToR and evaluation team selection, and in ensuring overall stakeholder participation throughout the process. One such mechanism is the requirement in ToRs/contract of internal evaluation staff and external evaluation consultants to sign the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators in the UN System. In addition, budget allocation should seek to ensure adequate resources for conducting HR & GE responsive methodologies and dissemination plans that aim to ensure information reaches a wide range of stakeholders.

**Box 10. Management Resources**

The following publications provide tools and guidance for the management of all phases of the evaluation process:

- **UN-Women:** [A Manager’s Guide to Gender Equality and Human Rights Responsive Evaluation](#)
- **ILO:** [Policy Guidelines for Results-based Evaluations: Principles, Rationale, Planning and Managing for Evaluation](#)
- **IFAD:** [Evaluation Manual: Methodology and Process](#)

- **Follow-up to evaluations:** As a tool to enhance institutional accountability on HR & GE, an evaluation policy should incorporate mechanisms to track and follow up on application and use of HR & GE findings, recommendations and lessons. Also, bi/annual evaluation reporting requirements as stipulated in the policy could require explicit reporting on HR & GE mainstreaming in the evaluation function.

- **Disclosure and dissemination:** Targeted coordination of the publishing of evaluation findings and recommendations with bi/annual reporting, the QCPR, HR & GE forums, funding cycles, etc., could provide opportunities to amplify the voice of beneficiaries and stakeholders and enhance collaboration across the UN system and with implementing partners.
4.2. Evaluation policy implementation

Evaluation strategy

94. In addition to an evaluation policy, central evaluation offices may also develop strategies for strengthening the evaluation function within their organization based on its specific context. Such strategy documents should also take into account the need for integrating human rights and gender equality in the evaluations of the organization and plan for the development of tailored corporate guidelines, tools and support to adopt the HR & GE UNEG Norms, Standards and Guidance.

Quality assurance mechanisms

95. One critical challenge in implementing an evaluation policy is to ensure that policy statements are followed through in practice. This requires a particular level of commitment from the agency not only to guarantee that evaluations are conducted on a regular basis, but also to review the quality of the evaluations undertaken. There are several tools used by UN entities for that purpose, including reviews of the evaluation policy and evaluation function, meta-evaluations, or peer-reviews of evaluation practice. Other tools included the UN SWAP Indicator and the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation ToR and Inception Reports. All of these tools can be used to identify whether existing evaluations adequately address HR & GE, for example, through the systematic use of disaggregated data, by analysing changes in gender relations and enjoyment of rights, or by including stakeholders in the overall evaluation process, and most importantly assessing contributions to the realization of HR & GE.

Institutional evaluation plans

96. The preparation of corporate and decentralized evaluation plans serves to strengthen the practice of evaluation and is defined by criteria outlined in an agency’s evaluation policy that determine the mandatory and optional triggers for evaluations. Various UN entities mandate a mix of global, regional, country, and thematic evaluations and, sometimes, decentralized evaluations in their evaluation policies, all of which should adopt a HR & GE responsive approach. Therefore, when selecting the evaluations to include in an evaluation plan (from all offices within an organization) the HR & GE issues regarding information, accountability and learning needs, risk mitigation, etc., needs to be taken into consideration in making the selection to ensure coverage of HR & GE in the evaluative evidence generated. Agencies may opt to develop a comprehensive and strategic HR & GE responsive evaluation plan that includes a mix of outcome-level, project and thematic evaluations, including joint evaluations.

97. Evaluation plans also reflect the priorities of the organization, the need for accountability, the demand for decision-making information, institutional learning, partnership protocols and the

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need for lessons and ideas for future interventions. Inclusion of HR & GE principles in the development of the evaluation plan is a critical step in ensuring that the normative principles outlined in the evaluation policy are systematically considered in practice. As a key RBM tool, the evaluation plan is an opportunity to integrate HR & GE considerations when establishing the timing of specific evaluations, resource allocation, roles and responsibilities for managing the overall process and how the subsequent evaluations will inform the reporting each UN agency is required to perform. The following table highlights important aspects that need to be considered when developing an HR & GE responsive evaluation plan. Where applicable, particular considerations are indicated that need to be taken at the field level (decentralized evaluation).

Table 3. Integrating HR & GE Principles into Evaluation Plans

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of developing an evaluation plan</th>
<th>Integrating human rights and gender equality</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Uses, purposes and timing of evaluation:</strong> Evaluations should be proposed only when commissioning programme units and stakeholders are clear at the outset about why the various evaluations in the plan are being conducted (the purpose), what the information needs are (demand for information), who will use the information, and how the information will be used.</td>
<td>Identifying the purpose, demand and intended use of evaluations included in an institutional plan involves understanding the different stakeholders of each intervention (including duty bearers and rights holders) and their particular interests in the evaluation, paying special attention to gaps, needs and interests demonstrated by women and men at all levels, including from groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against. The findings on HR &amp; GE will be generated and fed into processes at the country, regional, institutional or global level to enhance the realization of HR &amp; GE, e.g. Commission on the Status of Women, International Human Rights Conferences, Post-2015 Development Agenda, UN SWAP reporting, UNDAF, national planning and policy processes, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resources invested:</strong> An area in which the agency has invested significant resources may be subject to an evaluation as there may be greater accountability requirements.</td>
<td>It is important to observe that interventions with significant resources invested in sectors addressed by the UN are likely to have an impact on HR &amp; GE and this should be taken into consideration when preparing an institutional plan. Part of planning is also allocating budget for evaluations at that time. This requires thinking through any additional costs or timing implications, capacity for implementing HR &amp; GE methodologies, dissemination strategies, etc.</td>
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98. In summary, when an agency’s evaluation policy and/or strategy, plans, guidance and quality assurance mechanisms incorporate HR & GE principles, it sets up a clear framework for conducting evaluation and accountability for integrating HR & GE. This sets the stage for better ensuring that evaluation in the organization (and the UN system) is carried out in accordance with established HR & GE values and results in high-quality and credible evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned.

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<th>Table 3. Integrating HR &amp; GE Principles into Evaluation Plans  (continued)</th>
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<td><strong>Risk management:</strong> Evaluation plans can help prevent problems and provide an independent perspective on existing problems.</td>
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<td><strong>Need for lessons learned:</strong> The evaluation plan should consider what kinds of lessons are needed to help guide interventions in a given country, region or thematic area.</td>
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