The Evaluation Policy governs the organization's evaluation function and provides a comprehensive framework for all evaluation activities undertaken by UNICEF. It sets out the purpose and use of evaluation at UNICEF, provides definitions, principles and standards, and outlines accountabilities and performance standards for the evaluation function. It addresses not only the conduct of evaluations and the use of evaluation results, but also the development of the evaluation function within UNICEF, and its role in strengthening evaluation capacity among national partners.

UNICEF's evaluation policy expresses the organization's commitment to demonstrate results, transparency and accountability through an independent and credible evaluation system, and supports the mission, mandate and strategic priorities of UNICEF. The Policy, which is aligned with the norms and standards defined by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), was approved in 2013 by the Executive Board.

Strategic context
Various factors are raising demands with regard to evaluation standards and performance, in the field of development cooperation. These include:
- Rising expectations regarding the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of development processes and the efficient use of resources;
- Increased attention in UNICEF to innovation, efficiency, results and a renewed focus on equity in achieving results for children, and the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan;
- Increased demand for formative evaluation to inform ongoing policy, strategy and programme development, as well as calls for more impact evaluation to gauge results;
- Growing interest in strengthening the evaluation capacity of national partners.

Purpose and intended use of evaluation
Evaluation aims to help UNICEF continually to improve its performance and results, by supporting organizational learning and accountability. It serves to support planning and decision-making, and to provide a basis for informed advocacy for children everywhere. The evaluation function is carried out at all levels of the organization, and it is applicable in all contexts from humanitarian to development.

Evaluation asks: Is the right thing being done? Is it being done well? Are there better ways of doing it? It also asks how and why results are as they are. It seeks to: understand how a given result has been achieved; document good practices and successful results; and learn from any shortcomings.

Given the organization's focus on equitable development, it is critical to know how disadvantaged children are affected. In this light, evaluation needs to ask not just "What works?" but much more specifically "What works for whom; in what circumstances and in what respects; and how?"

Evaluation is distinct: (i) from other functions in the oversight spectrum, although it draws from and informs the products of the other oversight functions (i.e. audit); (ii) from monitoring, as it attends much more widely to issues of relevance, context, causality and eventual impact and sustainability; and (iii) from research.

Evaluations should be useful. Utility and intentionality are key standards to be addressed in any evaluation activity, and the intended use of an evaluation should determine the choice of evaluation approach and methodology. In UNICEF, evaluation has a range of uses, at various levels of the organization: global, regional, and country levels.

Guiding principles and standards for evaluation at UNICEF
- Evaluation is to help UNICEF to fulfil its commitment to equity and gender equality.
- National ownership and leadership. UNICEF seeks to help countries to evaluate their own programmes and to contribute to strengthening national evaluation capacities.
- Innovation. Evaluation in UNICEF should give particular attention to the identification, analysis and illumination of innovations in the work of the organization, and to developing, adapting and adopting innovative evaluation approaches.

For the revised evaluation policy, visit http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/2013-14-Revised_evaluation_policy-ODS-English.pdf
UNICEF subscribes to and implements UNEG evaluation norms and standards. In particular, UNICEF adheres to the UNEG standards of intentionality and utility; quality and credibility; impartiality and independence; transparency; and ethical practice.

**Key accountabilities**
Meeting the accountabilities for the evaluation function across UNICEF requires the cooperation of professional staff at various levels.

**Accountabilities at global and headquarters level**
- *The Executive Board* exercises oversight of the evaluation function in UNICEF.
- *The Executive Director* safeguards the integrity of the evaluation function and its independence.
- *The Global Evaluation Committee* advises the Executive Director on evaluation matters.
- *The Evaluation Office and its Director* provide global leadership of the evaluation function and have accountabilities in the areas of Governance and accountability, Conducting evaluations, Partnerships for evaluation, Knowledge management for evaluation, and Development and professionalization of the evaluation function.
- *The Division directors* are responsible for evaluations at the global policies and initiatives for which they are accountable, and for responding to relevant evaluation lessons and recommendations.

**Accountabilities at regional and country levels**
UNICEF evaluation activities are, to a large degree, undertaken at the regional and country levels. Meeting the accountabilities at these levels requires action from all professional staff.
- *Regional offices* provide regional leadership of the evaluation function in the following areas: Governance and accountability, Guidance and quality assurance, Conducting evaluations, Partnerships for evaluation, Development and professionalization of the UNICEF evaluation function, and National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD).
- *Country offices*, where approximately 90 per cent of UNICEF evaluations occur, are accountable for: Governance and accountability, Planning and resource allocation, Conducting evaluations, Partnerships for evaluation, and NECD.

**Performance Standards**
In keeping with the organization’s commitment to managing for results, UNICEF offices are expected to work to achieve agreed performance standards.
- **Leadership and management**: In UNICEF offices, management is expected to provide leadership for the evaluation function and direct management attention to planning, managing and using evaluations.
- **Evaluation planning and coverage**: Evaluation plans, at any level in UNICEF, must be relevant, realistic, and provided with the necessary resources.
- **Conduct of evaluations**: High-quality evaluation are designed and managed in line with relevant UNEG standards and, more specifically, with the standards set out in the Evaluation Policy. Evaluations should be well resourced and undertaken by technically excellent teams of evaluators.
- **Utilization, dissemination and disclosure**: Evaluations should be used to improve programming, organizational learning and policy advocacy. A formal management response is mandatory for all evaluations. All evaluations must be published on the UNICEF website.

**Resource requirements**
High-quality evaluations cannot be successfully undertaken and generate useful insights without adequate investment of human and financial resources.
- **Human resources**: The accountabilities presented in the policy require adequately skilled human resources i.e. in-house staff, and external consultants. Evaluation also requires sound technical and management skills.
- **Financial resources**: High-quality evaluations require the necessary investment of financial resources. UNICEF is called to allocate a minimum of 1 per cent of its overall programme expenditure to evaluation.

**Evaluation partnerships**
UNICEF maintains active partnerships at all levels with a wide range of institutions, including United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, Governments, evaluation associations, non-governmental organizations, foundations and academic institutions. UNICEF contributes to the work of UNEG in support of partnerships for evaluation.

---

**Evaluation Definition**

Evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. 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 United Nations 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 United Nations system and its members.