

# Draft revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

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Director of Evaluation

Informal briefing in advance of the annual session of the  
Executive Board 2023

18 May 2023 | 10:00am-1:00pm EDT

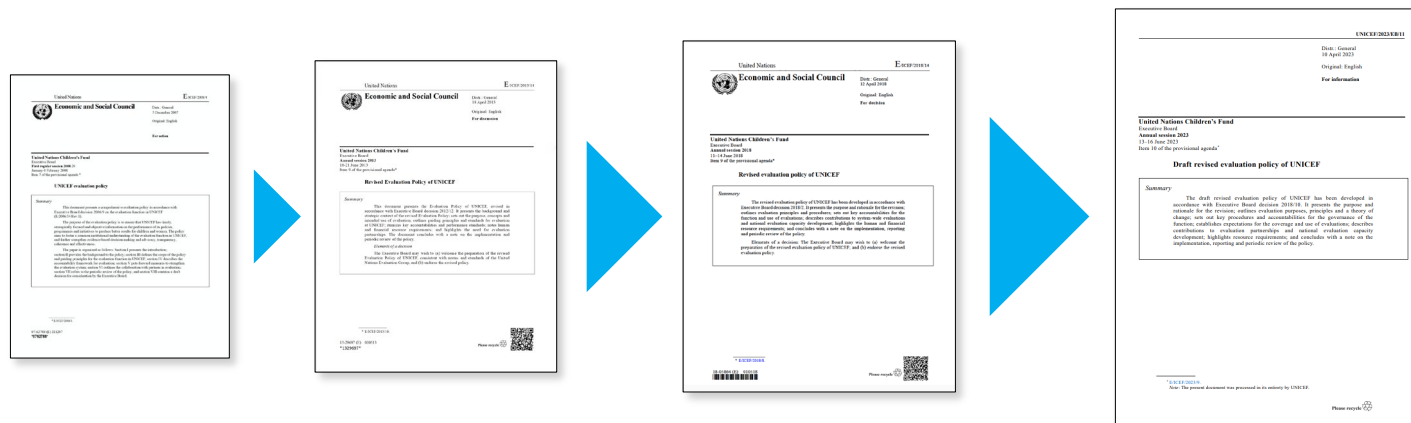
Item 10: Draft revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

Reference document: UNICEF/2023/EB/11

# Background

Fixed function, evolving alongside its context

Evaluation function remains constant, but evolves with the organization and its operating context



2008

2013

2018

2022

Commits to a 2022 independent review and subsequent review and revision of the 2018 UNICEF evaluation policy (Para 68)

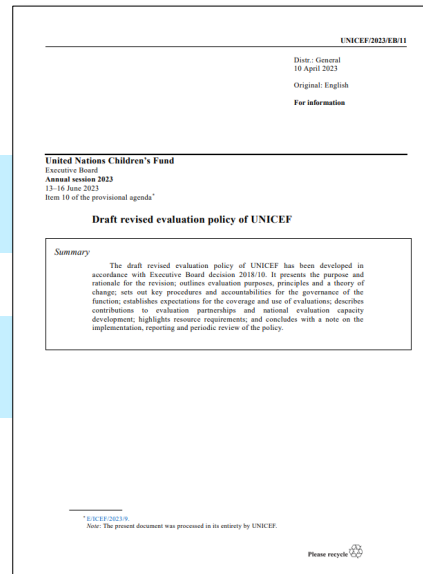
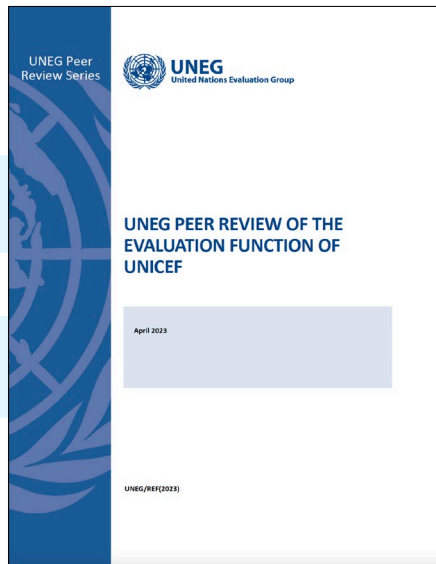
## Main purposes of a UNICEF evaluation policy

1. Reassure all stakeholders that we are following established international norms and standards and thus can be regarded as being **well positioned to fulfil our organizational learning and accountability role** through relevant, credible and useful independent evaluations
2. Demonstrate how we will apply these established norms and standards within our **specific organizational context**
3. Ensure **consistently high adherence to established international norms and standards**, with the highly decentralized structure and culture of UNICEF
4. Maximize **clarity of expectations and roles and responsibilities** for the function and for the implementation of the policy

# Background

Processes completed on schedule, in line with Executive Board expectations

- Executive Board updated on Independent Peer Review and policy review and revision process in February 2023



Two exercises  
conducted in  
parallel

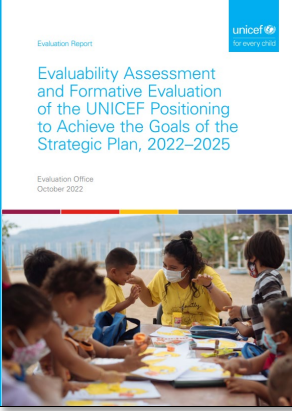
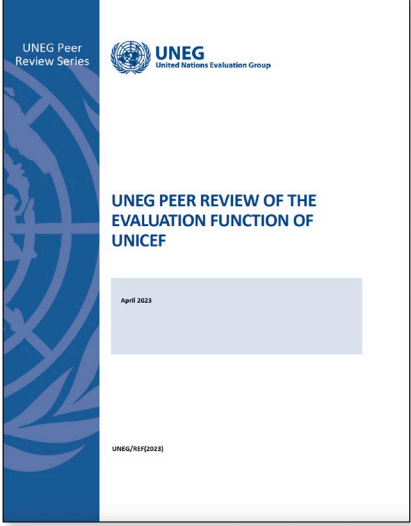
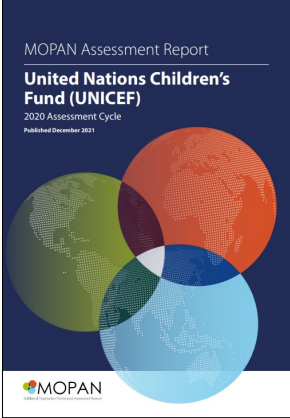
Both exercises  
completed on time

- [Independent Peer Review](https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/documents/united-nations-evaluation-group-uneq-peer-review-evaluation-function-unicef-2023) draft report completed February 2023, finalized April 2023; publicly available at: <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/documents/united-nations-evaluation-group-uneq-peer-review-evaluation-function-unicef-2023>.
- Zero-draft revised policy shared for internal comment (3 Feb-20 Mar); feedback incorporated into current draft

# Overall approach

Extensive and Inclusive

## Evaluations/ Reviews/ Assessments

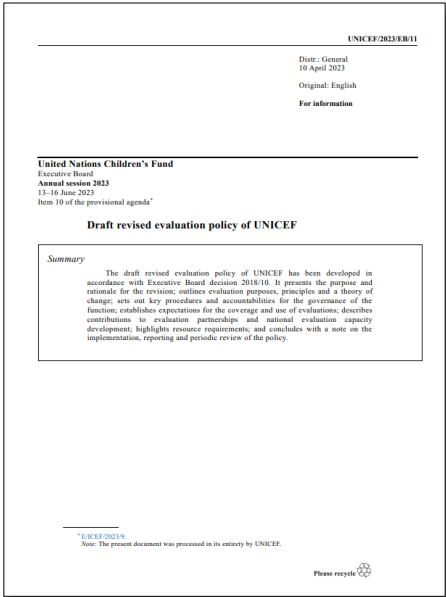


**Desk review of other documents**  
Discussions and decisions of the Executive Board  
Annual Reports of the UNICEF Evaluation Function  
Relevant Joint Inspection Unit reports

**Analysis of existing data**  
Administrative, monitoring, external quality assurance

**Comparative analysis**  
5 United Nations organizations  
1 international financial institution  
2 governmental agencies

**Surveys**  
UNICEF evaluation staff  
UNICEF evaluation users  
Executive Board members



**Internal consultations**  
Global Evaluation Committee members and teams  
Evaluation staff at all levels  
Briefings/Q&A sessions with both groups

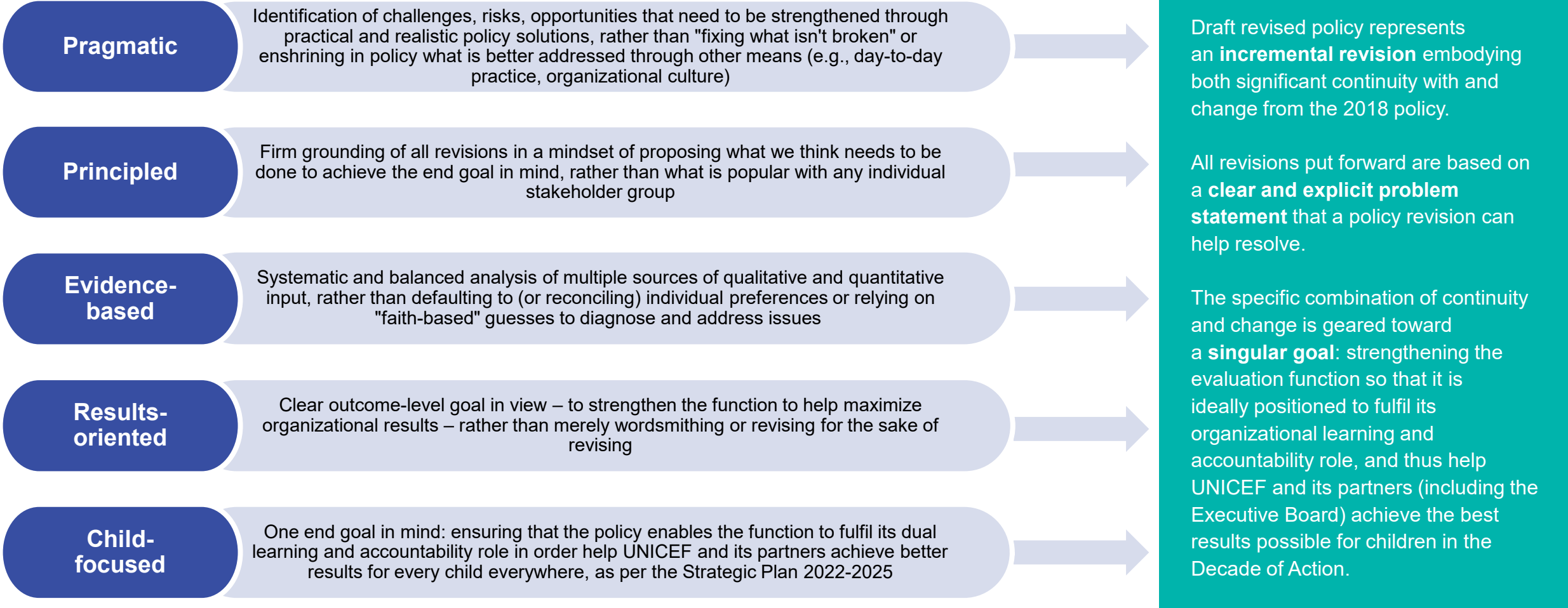
**Executive Board consultations**  
Separate focus group discussions with each of 5 regional groups

**Audit Advisory Committee advice**  
Feedback provided to Executive Director

**Identified good practice**  
Examples culled from evaluation staff and users across the organization

# Overall approach

## Focused and Methodical



# Overall approach

## Independent Peer Review of the UNICEF evaluation function – Key findings, recommendations and status

### Independence

- Policy and guidance documents give high visibility.
- Stakeholders strongly support the independence principle.
- Global independence has improved and should continue.
- Risks to independence found at the decentralized level.

### Credibility

- Geros data suggests strong quality and geographic coverage.
- Evaluations are seen as credible.
- Investments in resources have boosted credibility.
- To boost credibility, prioritize strategic goals and evidence gaps, and secure predictable funding for timely evaluations

### Utility

- Utility relies on demand (interest and ability to use evaluations) and supply (communication of relevant evidence and recommendations).
- Barriers to optimal utility include availability of evaluation consultants.
- To enhance the usefulness of evaluations, collaborate on scoping and produce attractive, accessible evaluation products.
- Management responses to evaluations are nearly always produced.

### Recommendations

1. UNICEF management should ensure the **sufficient and predictable funding of the evaluation function**. The 1% target should be clarified including and how it is calculated and what is included.
2. The evaluation function should build on its added value by identifying, together with **other knowledge functions in the organization**, specific and focused ways to work more together.
3. UNICEF should maintain and further strengthen the improvements that have been achieved in its evaluation **human resources and leadership capacities**.
4. UNICEF should use its unique mandate and visibility to work with and influence the external evaluation environment of UN agencies, academics, voluntary evaluation organizations and foundations to **promote national evaluation capacities and mobilize evaluative action in support of UNICEF’s mission**.

### Roles and Responsibilities

- Current roles do not guarantee evaluation function’s independence.
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms for evaluations.

### Follow up on evaluation use

- High compliance with management response process.
- Engage more with users and stakeholders to understand values and suggestions.
- Potential for more user-friendly evaluation evidence repository.

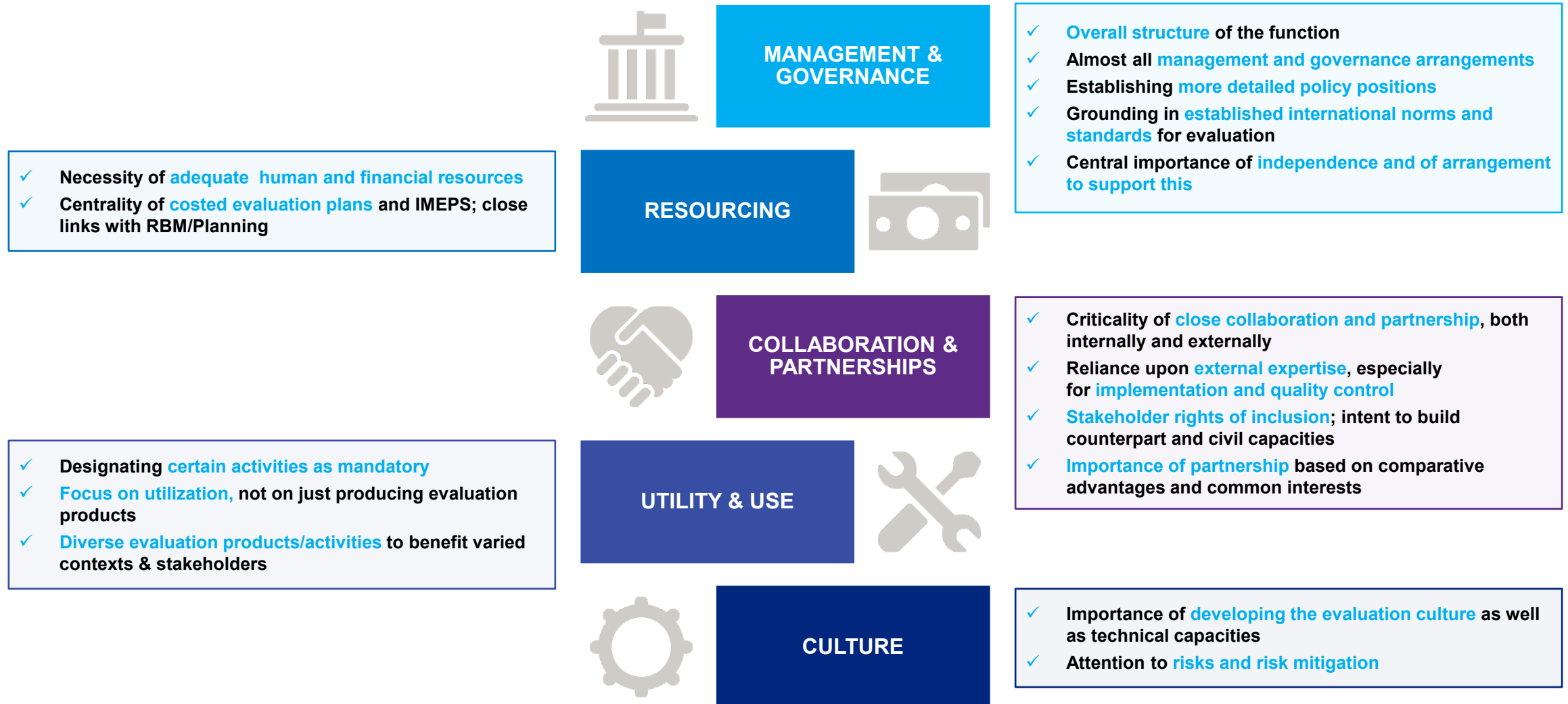
### Enabling environment for evaluation

- Funding modalities do not support effective evaluation planning and implementation.
- Clarify confusion around the 1% evaluation target.
- Opportunity to strengthen evaluation culture outside of the function.
- Improve collaboration with other oversight, evidence, and learning functions.



Management response to be completed in 3Q23

# Areas of continuity with 2018 policy



# Areas of change from 2018 policy

## ***Problem statement 1***

The evaluation function is not well understood throughout the organization due to the dry and overly technical language used in the current policy. It reads like standard operating procedures instead of being rooted in core principles that are important to the organization and its stakeholders. This misses an opportunity to raise awareness of the function and strengthen the evaluation culture.

### **1. Greater precision surrounding the purposes of evaluation**

- Promoting development effectiveness
- Facilitating oversight and accountability
- Fostering learning
- Contributing to empowerment, including and especially at country level

### **2. Explicit explanation of the key principles underlying the evaluation function and the specific provisions contained in the policy**

- Independence, Credibility and Utility
- Leadership & Shared Accountability
- Efficiency & Prioritization
- Decentralization & Coherence
- Local Ownership (Stakeholder engagement & Capacity-building)
- Ethics & Transparency

## ***Problem statement 2***

The standard definition of evaluation is not suitable for UNICEF's context, which now includes a broader range of evaluative exercises. Current coverage targets are inflexible and do not allow these exercises to contribute to the organization's evaluation commitment.

### **1. Contextualization of the core UNEG definition within UNICEF**

- Overlooked elements are added: Independence; rigour, basis in completed work; stakeholder rights of inclusion
- More types of evaluative activities are covered

### **2. Refinement of coverage targets to reflect new realities**

- Newly added evaluation types: Impact, institutional effectiveness, and more refined thematic evaluations
- Revised mandatory coverage targets
- Increased flexibility, including counting global case studies towards the country offices' needs



# Areas of change from 2018 policy

## ***Problem statement 3***

Since 2018, more focus has been put on meeting quantitative key performance indicators, but it is unclear if evaluations are effectively contributing to organizational results.

### **1. Improved guidance on evaluation planning methods**

- Formal review of Country Evaluation Plan (CEP) or Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) with approval at higher levels
- Prioritizing strategically targeted evaluations over quantity
- Coordination of plans across evidence functions is encouraged

### **2. Clearer and more expanded role of evaluation managers in evaluations**

- Evaluations can now be performed by UNICEF staff or external consultants
- The evaluation manager is solely empowered to accept the product

### **3. Measures to enhance evaluation use**

- Management responses need updating and can be validated by the Evaluation Office
- Major evaluations can be reviewed for their effects 2-5 years after completion

## ***Problem statement 4***

The current policy lacks specific guidance on how the evaluation function can maintain independence for credibility while staying connected to management for relevance and utility, especially within the organization's decentralized structure.

### **1. Adjustment of senior management roles to the evolving context**

- Executive Board and Director are co-guarantors of function independence
- Regional Directors have expanded roles
- Regional management teams create a regional evaluation strategy
- Evaluation lead must have direct access to head of office, even if reporting to someone else

### **2. Adaptation of evaluation function roles to the evolving context**

- Director can modify performance standards for emergencies/special contexts
- Regional advisors' roles are streamlined for RD/Director oversight
- Country specialists/leads assist in defining priorities and managing partnerships
- Matrix management links REAs-RDs-Director and CES-Rep-REA

# Areas of change from 2018 policy

## ***Problem statement 5***

UNICEF's evidence functions are not fully leveraging their common interests and comparative strengths.

### **1. Demarcation between evaluation and other evidence functions and a commitment to coordination**

- Management can request evidence plans aligned with program strategies or outcome targets
- Potential for shared resources and common structures in field offices

## ***Problem statement 6***

External partnerships, particularly in relation to national evaluation capacity development, have been underemphasized in the policy.

### **1. More explicit commitment to partnering with governments, academia, and the private sector, in addition to traditional partners**

### **2. More explicit commitment to national evaluation capacity development**

- The capacities UNICEF seeks to help develop are now fully specified
- The approach and concerns around country-led evaluations is fully defined
- UNICEF's effort is directly noted as contingent on partner co-investments

## ***Problem statement 7***

Human resource investments in evaluation are vaguely defined in the policy, and financial investments are inconsistently applied across the organization over time.

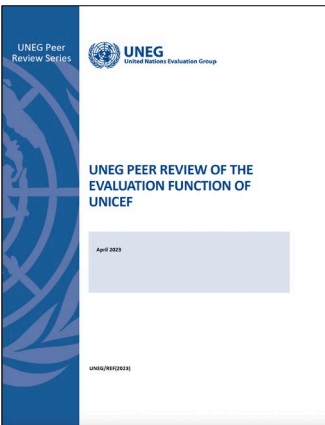
### **1. Clearer expectation-setting around human resources targets**

- Large COs must establish a post as mandated.
- Enhanced technical support needed after self-assessment survey.
- Divisions can establish their evaluation capacity if matrixed with Evaluation Office.
- Focus on skills development, career growth, and equitable recruitment.

### **2. Clearer expectation-setting around financial resources**

- The 1% is now based on "Spending" instead of "Allocation"
- Discretionary exceptions to the 1% requirement for evaluation are possible in emergency situations
- Non-eval spending excluded from 1%, but common interests benefit from evidence function cooperation
- Accountabilities/strategies are highlighted to achieve funding predictability

# Next steps



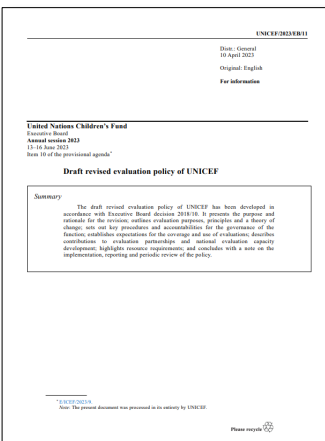
**February**  
Peer Review Panel presents draft report to UNICEF Global Evaluation Committee for feedback

**February-March**  
Peer Review Panel incorporates UNICEF feedback into draft report

**April**  
Peer Review Panel issues final report to UNICEF

**May-June**  
UNICEF prepares management response to report, posts document alongside peer review report on UNICEF and United Nations Evaluation Group websites

**September**  
UNICEF (evaluation function and management) implement management response



**February**  
Director of Evaluation presents draft revised evaluation policy to Global Evaluation Committee and others for feedback

**February-March**  
Evaluation Office incorporates internal feedback into draft revised policy, submits document to Executive Board and Audit Advisory Committee for comment

**May-June**  
Director of Evaluation presents revised evaluation policy to Executive Board for discussion and feedback

**June**  
Evaluation Office incorporates additional feedback from Executive Board, Audit Advisory Committee, Executive Director, and others solicited and incorporated into draft document

**July**  
Evaluation Office finishes incorporating additional feedback, submits final revised policy to Executive Board and Audit Advisory Committee for comment

**September**  
Director of Evaluation presents final revised evaluation policy for approval

**October-December**  
Evaluation Office drafts and issues internal guidance document to support implementation of the revised policy



Thank you.