

# Plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025

Robert McCouch  
Director of Evaluation

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Item 8: Plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025

# PURPOSE

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The plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025

- Identifies the highest-priority **corporate evaluations** foreseen for 2022–2025
- Is anchored in foundational sources of **normative guidance** (i.e., the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, and principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Decade of Action)
- Emphasizes **impact-level results** and the role of evaluation in advancing results at this higher level



# PURPOSE

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The plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025 aims to ensure optimal **learning** and **accountability** across the full breadth of UNICEF work by pre-identifying evaluations foreseen for the coming quadrennium:

- **Institutional effectiveness portfolio** focusing on change strategies, enablers and all other aspects of the organization's internal operations that affect the achievement of results
- **Humanitarian evaluation portfolio** on Level 3 crises, as well as thematic evaluations (e.g., localization, preparedness, risk-informed programming, accountability to affected populations) and inter-agency humanitarian evaluations
- **All five Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025**, encompassing two evaluation portfolios and focusing on achievements and shortfalls in the realization of the rights of the most vulnerable children
- **Joint, inter-agency and system-wide evaluations** and evaluation partnerships within the United Nations system and the wider evaluation community



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- **Quality, credibility, timeliness, utility and use**, guided by United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards and UNEG evaluation criteria
- **Consultation** at all levels of the organization and with United Nations partners to maximize substantive collaboration – and efficiency
- **Urgency of the Decade of Action**, particularly in view of the impact of COVID-19 on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, strategically focusing on helping UNICEF and its partners succeed in achieving the ambitious goals of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 through strengthened learning and accountability
- **Integration** across levels of the evaluation function (broader linkages between global and decentralized levels, synchronization with costed evaluation plans); Goal Areas (in reflection of holistic nature of the Sustainable Development Goals); cross-cutting themes and organizational priorities (incorporation of a humanitarian lens, mainstreaming of *leave no child behind*, gender, disability and vulnerability and exclusion)
- **Managed coordination and collaboration** with the other distinct but complementary knowledge functions (audit, monitoring, data analytics, research and knowledge management)
- **Creativity and innovation** at all stages of the evaluation process, from design through to dissemination.

# STRATEGY

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The strategy for implementing this plan for global evaluations focuses on **leveraging evaluative evidence where, when and how it will matter most to help UNICEF and its partners make the greatest difference in the Decade of Action:**

- **Identifying evaluation topics that will add the greatest value** to organizational learning and accountability, including through impact measurement, where appropriate and feasible
- **Pursuing a genuinely whole-of-evaluation-function** approach between global and decentralized level through regular consultation
- **Strengthening partnerships** with United Nations counterparts and others, increasing joint and inter-agency evaluations and strengthening system-wide evaluation
- **Placing greater emphasis on national evaluation capacity development**
- **Scaling up creative, innovative and agile approaches** to increase timeliness and efficiency as well as credibility and use of evaluations






# TWO SETS OF CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF EVALUATION TOPICS

## CONTEXTUAL CRITERIA

-  **Relevance** – critically important topic to the achievement of the Strategic Plan and the agency's commitment to the 2030 Agenda
-  **Utilization** – timing and design of the evaluation are explicitly linked to a major UNICEF or inter-agency decision, action and/or event
-  **Regional /sectoral coverage** – top priority in several regions and/or headquarters on strategic areas not evaluated in recent years
-  **Investment** – area has received substantial and quantifiable UNICEF investment
-  **Evaluation history** – topic not previously evaluated at the global level within a defined period relevant to the issue(s) at hand
-  **Humanitarian relevance** – topic is of particular importance for humanitarian settings

## FEASIBILITY CRITERIA

-  **Causality, attribution, contribution** – it is possible to measure UNICEF contributions to outcomes
-  **Impact** – topic offers opportunity to trace programme logic through to effectiveness and impact
-  **Evaluability** – topic can be evaluated both in “principle” and in “practice”



# PLANNED EVALUATIONS

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This plan for global evaluations comprises 31 thematic evaluations:

- summative evaluations
- formative evaluations



depending on stage of programme implementation

Other evaluative exercises beyond full-scale evaluations include:

- 7 evaluability assessments (one rolled over from the previous plan)
- 3 evaluation reviews and syntheses

The plan for global evaluations also includes five new **joint evaluations** and many other **joint evaluative exercises**.

*This number will likely increase as United Nations agencies finalize their evaluation plans.*



# DISTRIBUTION OF EVALUATION TOPICS

Distribution of evaluation topics  
(excluding evaluations rolled over from 2021)

| UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 component | Number of evaluation products |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Goal Area 1                                | 4                             |
| Goal Area 2                                | 4                             |
| Goal Area 3                                | 5                             |
| Goal Area 4                                | 3                             |
| Goal Area 5                                | 5                             |
| Humanitarian action                        | 3                             |
| Institutional effectiveness                | 7                             |

## Worth noting:

- Currently excluded from the **humanitarian action portfolio** are Level 3 and inter-agency/joint humanitarian evaluations.
- **Humanitarian action** will be mainstreamed in most evaluations, mirroring the commitment of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025.
- **Equity** will be mainstreamed in all evaluations, also mirroring the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 (and UNEG normative guidance).



# OTHER KEY PRIORITIES

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- **Strengthening evaluation of country programme results:** grounding evaluations in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, jointly enhancing support to country-focused evaluation with partners
- **Joint and inter-agency evaluations:** in keeping with the interconnectedness of the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations system reform
- **Enhancing strategic evaluation partnerships:** focusing on partnerships maximizing the contribution of evaluation to the Sustainable Development Goals and children's rights
- **Supporting national evaluation capacity:** to establish/improve national systems for evaluating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and for being well-equipped consumers of evaluative evidence
- **Expanding innovations, new methods and (where appropriate) impact evaluations:** using evaluation methods adapted to diverse programme contexts
- **Learning and knowledge exchange:** on emerging evaluative evidence, partnering with academic institutions to promote learning for the humanitarian-development sector as a whole
- **Enhancing evaluation quality and oversight:** through facilitation, guidance, tools, training and improved systems, enhancing evaluation skills and competencies among staff and national partners.

# RESOURCE FRAMEWORK

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The resource framework is intended to be a **general guide**, with flexibility required to meet ad hoc demands and to allow for participation in joint evaluations.

The UNICEF integrated budget 2022-2025 includes **\$13.6 million** (excluding staff costs) for global evaluations and for other key evaluation-related priorities, e.g.:

- supporting **quality assurance**
- providing **technical guidance**
- continuing to enhance **professionalization of the evaluation function** across the organization
- participating in **partnerships**, networks and inter-agency initiatives to strengthen and harmonize evaluation within the United Nations system and to develop national evaluation capacity



# RISKS

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- **Shortfalls in reaching resource mobilization targets for evaluation**, not least of all in relation to resourcing of the Evaluation Pooled Fund, which is vital to complement the effort made by UNICEF to fund capacities at decentralized level
- **Lack of commitment to fulfilling the Executive Board decision to set aside 1 per cent** of the programme budget for evaluation, as a unique source of independent evidence on organizational performance
- **Lack of understanding of the difference between evaluation and other functions**, and its distinct mandate and role
- **Delays in the execution of evaluations**, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic or to other external constraints
- **Low implementation and/or delays in management responses** that are consistently timely, well targeted and meaningful

These and other emerging risks and challenges will be regularly monitored and addressed through active (and adaptive) management.

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Thank you.

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