INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

United Nations Secretariat Evaluation Dashboard 2014-2015

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INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

FUNCTION

"The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organisation. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organisation;" (General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B).

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

1.   The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is pleased to present the 2014-2015 Evaluation Dashboard) – previously known as the Evaluation Scorecards - for the 2014-2015 biennium.

2.   This is the third in a series of reports that accompanies the OIOS biennial report on "Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives" (A/72/72) ('Biennial Report'). The fifteenth Biennial Report was completed in March 2017 and will be presented to the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in June 2017. As before, while the Biennial Report presents an aggregate assessment of evaluation capacity and practice covering Secretariat and other UN entities subject to evaluation by OIOS-IED (see Annex 1 for the list of entities covered), the Dashboard provides the same assessment at the entity level.[1] The data and analytical methodology employed in the preparation of the Dashboard, as well as the limitations, thus correspond with those of the Biennial Report.

3.   OIOS is grateful to the entities for providing feedback on the visualisation and indicators included in the Dashboard through a series of informal consultations. Where appropriate, these comments have been taken on board. Entities were also invited to provide information on the extent to which the function had engaged in those evaluation activities during the 2014-2015 biennium that did not result in evaluation reports as well as areas of improvement in their evaluation function since then. Finally, Heads of Departments and Offices included in the report were invited to provide comments on the formal draft of the Dashboard. These comments are appended at the end of the report.

About the Dashboard
4.   The purpose of the Evaluation Dashboard is to provide an assessment of evaluation – including framework, resources, reports and their quality – for each of the Secretariat entities included in the Biennial Report (see Annex 1 for a list of entities). The goal is to support the strengthening of the evaluation function across the Secretariat, by providing the data that management need to determine which aspects of the evaluation function are operating well, and where there is room for improvement, while giving due consideration to their evaluation resources both in absolute terms as well as in proportion to the total programme budget. Evaluation professionals may use the Dashboard to highlight the context within which they operate, and the quality and quantity of outputs they produce. The Dashboard should be considered in its entirety with the indicators assessed in conjunction with each other. For example, fewer outputs could be viewed in the context of low resources assigned to evaluation, or gaps in the evaluation framework may, over time, be addressed to eventually result in improved report quality.

5.   The Dashboard presents data on 16 indicators, classified across four categories: evaluation framework, resources, evaluation reports and quality of reports. A more detailed explanation is provided in Annex 2.

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[1] As per PPBME regulations (ST/SGB/2016/6, article VII, rule 107.2b), all entities must undertake self-evaluation. The evaluation system of the United Nations includes evaluation undertaken by the entity itself, as well as in-depth evaluation undertaken at the request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

1. Type of function: The structure of evaluation function within the entity, if any
2. Reporting line: The extent to which the evaluation function reporting line is independent
3. Level of senior most evaluation professional in the centralised/corporate evaluation office of an entity
4. Policy score: Number of criteria met, out of 19 criteria
5. Procedures in use: Number of procedures in use, out of 6 procedures recommended by OIOS (in A/70/72)
6. Plan score: Number of criteria met, out of 8 criteria
7a. Monitoring and evaluation budget (US$, million)
7b. Monitoring and evaluation budget as a proportion of total budget (percent)
8a. Expenditure on evaluation reports (US$, million)
8b. Expenditure on evaluation reports as a proportion of total budget (percent)
9. Evaluation reports (#): Number of evaluation reports screened by OIOS
10. Number of subprogrammes referenced by evaluation reports (of the total number of subprogrammes in the entity)
11. Report quality: Percent sampled reports ranked 'good' or 'excellent' in the quality assessment
12. Recommendations in reports: Percent of sampled reports which were ranked 'good' or 'excellent' for their recommendations in the quality assessment
13. Gender in reports: Percent of sampled reports which had some or strong evidence of gender considerations in report methodology and/or findings.
14. Human rights in reports: Percent of sampled reports which had some or strong evidence of human rights considerations in report methodology and/or findings.

6. The development of these indicators was guided by the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation, developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and supported by Member States in General Assembly resolution 67/226. The indicators also respond to the comments and feedback obtained from entities during consultations for the current and prior rounds of Scorecards/Dashboard.

7. The Dashboard report is presented in two parts. Part 1 provides the Evaluation Dashboard for the Secretariat. Part 2 presents individual entity Dashboards. This includes a description of the status of the indicators for that entity, as well as a four part cover sheet, which consists of entity objectives and key features of evaluation function in 2014-2015, as assessed by OIOS, as well as self-reported information by the entity on those evaluation activities which did not result in evaluation reports undertaken during the biennium and key enhancements to the evaluation function, introduced since then.

Changes
8. The purpose of the Scorecards was to support the strengthening of the evaluation function across the Secretariat. It is the objective of OIOS to do so through a strategy which acknowledges differences across Secretariat entities, and at the same time reinforces certain minimum established standards. To do this even more effectively, and in response to the consultations and feedback from the entities, the Dashboard has evolved since the previous biennium. Some of the changes to the report are documented below:

   a. In light of the progress made by several evaluation functions, indicators for the 'Framework' category (formerly split across 'Structure' and 'Practice') have been consolidated into a key set, deemed to be fundamental in establishing a strong evaluation function.

b. Resources are now presented in absolute terms, as well as in proportion to programme size.

c. Data from a survey of screened reports, which was undertaken for the first time as a part of the current Biennial report, was used to provide additional information and populate four indicators on evaluation repots, drawing on data that has not been available to OIOS until now.

d. Overall, there is a shift toward the use of documentary evidence or data assessed by OIOS, instead of self-reported measures.

e. Where possible, indicators are presented in their 'raw' or 'source' form to maintain transparency, instead of being scaled or processed further.

f. Secretariat averages, and a JIU recommendation, have been included as appropriate as benchmarks.

g. The RAG colour coding system (red, amber, green) has been introduced for the following: indicator 2, which examines the extent of independence of the evaluation function; indicators 4 and 5, which measure the completeness of policy and procedures; indicators 6, 11 and 12, which assess adherence to standards set by OIOS (based on UNEG norms and standards); and indicators 13 and 14, which assess the extent of evidence found in reports on incorporation of gender and human rights. Within the context of each indicator, the colours indicate high, medium and low achievement. Colours have not been used for the sections on 'Resources' or 'Evaluation reports'. Grey bars are used to depict indicator status while arrows represent the direction of change since the previous biennium.

h. Entities continue to be categorized based on their substantive functional role. Within each category, they are placed in decreasing order of budget allocation for Monitoring and Evaluation.

9. Data on monitoring and evaluation were obtained from OPPBA using Form 12, which comprises part of the budget submission made by entities on staffing allocation to monitoring and evaluation activities. However, the accuracy of these data, and reliability as measures of actual resources assigned to or spent on monitoring and evaluation are of concern. In some cases, evaluation allocations are for activities that are more reflective of monitoring. Some resources for evaluation, such as those from support accounts or extra-budgetary project funding, are not reported to OPPBA, and not published in the budget fascicles. Therefore the monitoring and evaluation budget data presented in indicators 7a and 7b for entities heavily funded through non-regular budget sources such as DPKO-DFS, UN-Women and ITC does not accurately reflect actual resources spent on evaluation. In such cases, available data for expenditure on evaluation have been footnoted beneath the entity Dashboard. Moreover, allocations are sometimes based on historic submissions rather than actual evaluation work plans. In the longer term, OIOS and DM have attempted to improve the quality of reporting in Form 12 by issuing revised guidelines for the 2018-2019 biennium. OIOS has also issued a Secretariat wide recommendation as part of the current Biennial Report, for entities to align their evaluation plans, budgetary allocations, and evaluation outputs (reports). Limitations of the data are further elaborated in the Biennial Report.[2]

10. In the short term, with the purpose of obtaining better data for 2014-2015, OIOS undertook a survey of screened reports, which asked focal points to report on expenditures on all reports screened by OIOS – work-month allocations of staff, consultancy costs, and other costs - for all screened reports. This source of data reflects a more accurate picture of resources assigned to evaluation across the Secretariat, and comprises the basis for indicators 8a through 10. It should be noted that the indicators on the number of reports and their quality include those evaluation reports produced by

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[2] A/72/72.

the decentralized evaluation functions; while the framework indicators refer only to the centralized evaluation function.[3]

11. Finally, a few entities expressed concerns around the limited ability of the quality assessment tool to capture the substantive nuances across a broad range of reports. The quality assessment is of a general nature and aims to capture fairly generic elements of quality across the sampled reports. Therefore, indicators 11 through 14 are presented notwithstanding the diversity or specificity that is implicit across the 100 reports assessed.[4]

Follow up to Biennial Report

12. The Biennial Report noted some strengthening of evaluation functions in 2014-2015, with respect to the adoption of evaluation policies and plans. It also noted that while the number of evaluation reports fell, their quality remained the same and reported outcomes improved. Senior management support once again emerged as a determining factor for a strong evaluation function. The report also noted, however, that the budgeted allocations for evaluation far exceeded the reported expenses on evaluation reports for several entities, suggesting inaccuracies in reporting evaluation budgets. OIOS made one recommendation to address this shortcoming:

Budgeting of evaluation resources should be better aligned with evaluation plans, and evaluation outputs should be better reflected in such plans and budgets.

13. In its June 2015 session, the CPC endorsed recommendations from the Biennial Report for 2012-2013 (A/70/72). In addition, the CPC emphasized the critical nature of a strong evaluation function across the Organization, and the need for Secretariat entities to allocate appropriate resources to evaluation activity, ensuring that staff working on evaluation possessed the necessary competencies. It further recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to:

a. Intensify his efforts to develop a more robust culture for evaluation throughout the Organization by strengthening senior management support and staff buy-in.
b. Take further, concrete measures to develop capacity for evaluation within the Secretariat programmes, with support provided by OIOS and external oversight bodies in terms of guidance and methodological advice.
c. Continue to ensure that Senior managers' compacts presented adequate programme objectives and performance measures in order to fulfil given mandates in accordance with relevant rules and regulations and that the evaluation function received due consideration in the performance appraisal of senior managers.