



# 2017 Evaluation Annual Report

UN Women Independent Evaluation Service

# 2017

# Evaluation Annual Report

Report on the evaluation function of  
the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women



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@ EvalUNWomen 

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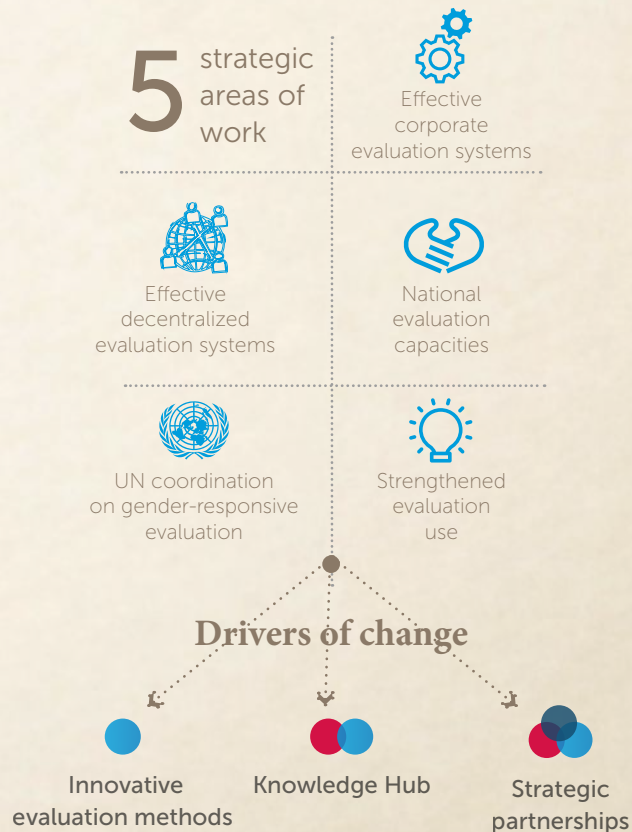
## Evaluation for gender equality



We must ensure the Sustainable Development Goals help transform the lives of people around the world. Words must be turned into impactful action. This will not happen without accountability, evaluation and learning.”

Amina Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General

### Global evaluation strategy 2018-2021



## PART I

### Transforming women's and girls' lives through evaluation

#### Global Evaluation Strategy 2018-2021

In 2017, the UN Women Executive Board endorsed UN Women's new Strategic Plan 2018-2021. To contribute to its successful implementation, the UN Women's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) developed its new Global Evaluation Strategy for 2018-2021.

The Global Evaluation Strategy 2018-2021 articulates the strategic direction of UN Women's evaluation function and its objectives to support the Entity's efforts to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls. It outlines how UN Women will leverage its evaluation function to provide evaluative evidence for greater impact on the lives of the women and girls it serves. The strategy sets out five strategic areas of work:

- (i) implementing effective corporate evaluation systems;
- (ii) implementing effective decentralized evaluation systems;
- (iii) promoting United Nations coordination on gender-responsive evaluation;
- (iv) strengthening national evaluation capacities for gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation systems; and

- (v) strengthening evaluation use.

Meanwhile, the Corporate Evaluation Plan provides a time-bound framework within which useful evaluation evidence is generated systematically on work performance under the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

The Evaluation Strategy emphasizes the following key priorities:

- (i) improving use of gender-responsive evaluation by UN Women and its partners for learning and strategic decision-making;
- (ii) providing timely and relevant evaluative evidence on UN Women's contribution to development and organizational effectiveness and efficiency results; and
- (iii) increasing demand and conduct of gender-responsive evaluations to support accountability for gender-equality commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and beyond.

The strategy identifies innovation, knowledge hub, and forming and sustaining partnerships and networks as key drivers of change for promoting gender-responsive evaluation.

## Key milestones 2012-2017

**2012**

Created an evaluation policy

**2013**

Conducted the first evaluation of UN Women strategic plan

**2014**

Created an evaluation strategy 2014-2017

**2015**

Launched EvalGender+ with external partners

Published the UN Women Handbook on Gender Responsive Evaluation

**2016**

Lead efforts to update UNEG norms and standards, including new norms on gender equality and human rights

**2017**

Created new evaluation strategy 2018-2021

### Governance of the evaluation function

#### Co-location of the independent evaluation and internal audit functions

The Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) was established in January 2018. This followed the Executive Board's decision in August 2017 to approve appropriation for the institutional budget, including the budget for the IEAS and their co-location under one oversight service umbrella. A new charter was developed that outlines the mandate, scope of work and roles and responsibilities of the new office.

Under one oversight service umbrella, the independent evaluation and internal audit functions shall work together to contribute to providing oversight and assurance of UN Women's work and organizational learning. While using different work methodologies, both functions share complementarities and can effectively leverage synergies, such as in planning, execution and reporting. Within this architecture, the evaluation function will remain organizationally and functionally independent. It will continue to be governed by UN Women Evaluation Policy, which is implemented through the Evaluation Strategy 2018-2021 and Corporate Evaluation Plan 2018-2021.

The Global Evaluation Advisory Committee (GEAC) continued to serve as a corporate advisory mecha-

nism to the Executive Director and the IEO on the independence and quality of the evaluation function. In 2017, the GEAC met to assess the performance of the evaluation function for the period 2014 to 2017. The Committee appreciated IEO for demonstrating impressive performance in evaluation and recognizing management engagement with the evaluation function, particularly the extensive use of evaluative evidence to inform the Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

The Committee advised UN Women management to work closely with IEO and relevant divisions to realize the full potential of the evaluation function to capture stories of change and impact of UN Women. Considering, the co-location of the independent evaluation and internal audit functions, the Committee stressed the need to ensure adequate balance, synchronization and functional integrity of both functions. In congruence with the priorities of the Strategic Plan, the Committee recommended IEO to work in closer partnerships with other entities and find creative ways to encourage learning through evaluation functions; facilitate use of evaluation findings; and continue its leadership in United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) task forces and EvalGender+ for influencing system-wide practice and gender-responsive national evaluation capacity development.



## Corporate evaluations during the strategic plan 2014-2017




### 3 Corporate evaluations presented in 2017



- UN Women's regional architecture
- UN Women's strategic partnerships for gender equality and the empowerment of women
- Meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016

## Corporate evaluation plan 2018-2021

- Conduct 10 corporate evaluations
- Provide technical assistance for 12 HQ-led evaluations
- Provide technical assistance to 100% of country office led evaluations
- Conduct a joint evaluation of Gender Equality Results 

## PART II

### Implementing effective corporate evaluation

At the corporate level, UN Women IEO ensured coverage of the key result areas of UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017 by providing a comprehensive assessment of its normative, United Nations system coordination and operational work. This included seven corporate evaluations of the integrated mandate and the Strategic Plan's thematic areas; four meta-analyses of all evaluations managed by UN Women; and two joint reviews on gender policies and practices in the United Nations system and beyond.

In 2017, IEO presented three evaluation reports to the Executive Board:

- (i) corporate evaluation of UN Women's regional architecture;
- (ii) corporate evaluation of UN Women's strategic partnerships for gender equality and the empowerment of women; and
- (iii) meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016.

These reports were accompanied by a management response. As per the 2017-2018 work programme of the Corporate Evaluation Plan, two corporate thematic evaluations have been initiated and will be presented to the Executive Board in 2018 and

2019. However, the evaluation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which was planned in 2017, has been cancelled to avoid duplication. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system, as part of its system-wide mandate, has included the UN-SWAP evaluation in its programme of work in 2018 for submission to the General Assembly, as requested in resolution 67/226.<sup>1</sup>

### New corporate evaluation plan 2018-2021

To provide a coherent framework for evaluating the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021, IES has developed a Corporate Evaluation Plan 2018-2021. The plan includes ten corporate evaluations, co-management of 100 per cent of regional and country portfolio evaluations, technical assistance of up to 12 headquarter-led evaluations, and 100 per cent of country-level evaluations. The plan was approved by the Executive Director and presented to UN Women's Executive Board in September 2017. Two corporate evaluation topics are still to be decided; implementation is contingent on funding availability. Responding to the Member States request to conduct a joint evaluation of the Common Chapter of Strategic Plan with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA,

1. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2012 : <http://un-docs.org/A/RES/67/226>

## Improving evaluation approaches



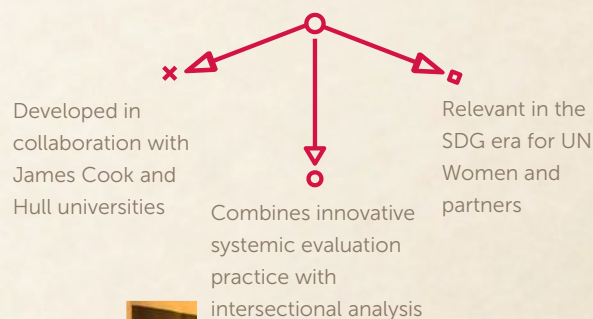
### Big Data & Evaluation

Feasibility study on how UN Women can use Big Data to improve evaluation



### ISE4GEMS

Development of an evaluation approach entitled Inclusive System Evaluation for Gender Equalities, Environments and Marginalized Voices



UN Women will update its Corporate Evaluation Plan in 2018.

### Methodological development

In 2017, IEO undertook two important activities for improving evaluation approaches and methodologies. The first was commissioning the development of an evaluation approach entitled Inclusive System Evaluation for Gender Equalities, Environments and Marginalized Voices (ISE4GEMS) in collaboration with James Cook University (Australia) and the University of Hull (the United Kingdom). The approach combines innovative systemic evaluation practice with intersectional analysis and is especially relevant in the SDG era for UN Women and partners. The second was the completion of a feasibility study on how UN Women can use big data to improve evaluation. It aims to fully understand opportunities that big data methods can provide for improving the quality, credibility and scope of evaluations.

### Corporate evaluations as an agent of change

UN Women has continued to use evaluation findings and recommendations of major corporate evaluations to inform changes and improve policies, strategies and programming practices.

### A. Corporate Evaluation of UN-Women Regional Architecture

The UN Women Regional Architecture evaluation, which was completed in 2016 and presented to the Executive Board (UNW/2017/CPR. 2) in 2017, helped UN Women to review organizational design and inform ongoing change management processes. The evaluation led to the enhancement of the programme management and strategic planning functions through reconfiguration of the role of the Regional Programme Management Team. In addition, UN Women initiated a process to update the functional analysis of headquarters (HQ) functions to improve synergies and analytical and programmatic support to the field, and to respond to growing demand in disaster risk management, humanitarian response and resilience. The Internal Control Framework and Delegation of Authority was also updated to reflect these shifts, with a greater emphasis on decentralization and empowerment of the field.

In response to the evaluation, UN Women has developed an internal tool, which sets out objectives to help inform considerations for UN Women's country presence typology. As part of efficiency measures, the evaluation led to the conversion from a multi-country to country-office model in Europe and Central Asia. Similar changes are underway or under review for other multi-country offices. The exception is the multi-country office model in the Caribbean and the Pacific, where small-island geography makes it more applicable, as per evaluation recommendations.

## Corporate evaluations as an agent of change



### Corporate evaluation of UN Women regional architecture

38%  
completed

8  
recommendations  
and actions

62%  
ongoing

#### The evaluation led to:

- > Reconfiguration of the role of the Regional Programme Management Team
- > Establishment of an internal knowledge management group
- > Updated Internal Control Framework and Delegation of Authority with emphasis on decentralization
- > Process to update the functional analysis of HQ functions

### Corporate evaluation of the contribution of UN Women to United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women.



Finally, the evaluation noted a significant gap in knowledge management that undermines the capacity of the organization to be joined up and present itself as a credible authority on gender equality with partners at country and regional levels. UN Women responded by establishing an internal knowledge management group led by the Directors of Policy and Programme as well as the development of a new knowledge management strategy.

As of December 2017, out of the eight actions taken to respond to the eight recommendations contained in the evaluation, three (38 per cent) have been completed, and five (62 per cent) are ongoing and expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

### B. Corporate evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women

The response of UN Women to the Corporate Evaluation of the contribution of UN Women to United

tation of its coordination mandate. The process involved broad participation by divisions across the entity. This fostered greater ownership and investment in, as well as visibility and recognition of, this crucial portfolio of the entity's work. In response to the evaluation, staff involved in coordination functions and mechanisms throughout the entity were able to clarify and strengthen their role.

Furthermore, the new Strategic Plan 2018-2021 clarifies how the composite mandate of UN Women is indivisible and will be leveraged in a fully integrated fashion, including through the Strategic Plan. In this context, the upgrade of the Results Management System to better capture results of coordination functions has resulted in the development of a project module that will gradually capture joint programmes implemented on the ground.

As of December 2017, out of the 31 actions formulated to respond to the eight recommendations contained in the evaluation, 26 (84 per cent) have

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