
- UNEG welcomes the study and agrees with the main findings related to the context for Independent System-Wide Evaluation (ISWE) in the United Nations system, the existence of different understandings and mechanisms for system-wide evaluation, and that demand for such evaluation is diverse but increasing, including at global level linked to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development (QCPR). UNEG also agrees with the findings referring to the lack of an adequate conceptualization for a system-wide evaluation function, an inadequate institutional framework and insufficient capacities for ISWE, especially at the country level.

- UNEG has in the past responded to existing demand for system-wide evaluation through the establishment of ad-hoc arrangements to undertake evaluations of systemic nature, such as the evaluability assessment of Delivering as One country pilots. UNEG has learned from these experiences and gained understanding about the challenges as well as its own strengths and weaknesses to support this type of evaluation. As a professional association rather than a formal UN entity, UNEG is not in a position to conduct or commission system-wide evaluations itself directly but will continue to provide advice and support.

- UNEG agrees with the ten characteristics of good ISWE identified by the study on the basis of the UNEG Norms and Standards. Concurring with points 8 and 9, UNEG believes that good ISWE needs to be flexible and adapting to the changing UN circumstances, understanding that ISWE is part of a larger system and that if strengthened, other components of the larger system need strengthening, including evaluation capacity of the UN system at the country level and national statistical systems. UNEG believes that strengthening ISWE should be approached in a pragmatic manner, building upon existing structures.

- With regard to the recommendations of the study, UNEG would like to highlight the following elements:

  On recommendations 1 and 2, UNEG considers it fundamental that Member States and UN higher levels of authority engage in the discussions on a future ISWE framework. The form of participation should be determined by the General Assembly with the involvement of the intergovernmental structures most relevant for this area including the ECOSOC. UNEG agrees with the proposal to enhance the role of JIU as the only existing ISWE mechanism at the present time, including its role in coordinating ISWES. However, in order to carry out this role, JIU’s capacity for managing evaluations must be strengthened and its mode of operation adapted. UNEG also agrees with recommendation 4 on the need to improve the QCPR. While the QCPR is not an evaluation, the evidence base of its analysis should be strengthened. Finally, subject to further clarification on the ISWE function by Member States and senior authorities within the
UN, UNEG accepts recommendation 5 and will work on the development of standards, guidance and competencies for system-wide evaluation, including for joint evaluation. On recommendation 6, UNEG could offer support to the Secretary-General in preparing an updated evaluation guideline.

Furthermore, UNEG will undertake a number of initiatives to continue systemic strengthening of the evaluation function in the UN system. It will continue promoting the use of the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, including the consideration of system-wide issues in their next revision. In addition, UNEG will continue serving as a network to promote and facilitate joint evaluation work, lesson-sharing and identification of topics or areas amenable to system-wide evaluation. Thirdly, UNEG will contribute to fostering country level evaluation capacities. Finally, it will strengthen the information base regarding the evaluation structures and capacity of its members, and will continue promoting the quality, credibility and use of evaluation in the UN system.