



UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

# EVALUATION POLICY



March 2021

We need a culture of evaluation, independent and real-time evaluation with full transparency.

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**António Guterres**

Secretary-General of the United Nations



As Secretary-General, one of my main roles is to continuously improve the United Nations in order to deliver for the people we serve. That means knowing whether we are achieving what we set out to do, and if not, how to do better. Evaluation is thus critical for promoting accountability and for understanding what we are doing right and what we may be getting wrong. As Member States shape a new sustainable development agenda for the post-2015 period, evaluation will only grow in importance. Evaluation everywhere, and at every level, will play a key role in implementing the new development agenda.

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**Ban Ki-moon**

Former Secretary-General of the United Nations



The role of evaluations is the means by which UN organizations can acquire information and knowledge of how to become more effective, even prove their worth or ensure their assistance is most effective.

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**Peter Thomson**

President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly and  
Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN

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## ACRONYMS

<b>CT</b>	Counter-Terrorism
<b>CTED</b>	Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
<b>EPS</b>	External Partnership Section
<b>DMSPC</b>	Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance
<b>OIOS</b>	Office of Internal Oversight Services
<b>PKMCB</b>	Policy, Knowledge Management and Coordination Branch
<b>PMU</b>	Project Management Unit
<b>PPBME</b>	Secretary-General's bulletin, Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, ST/SGB/2018/3
<b>PRB</b>	Programme Review Board
<b>PVE</b>	Prevention of Violent Extremism
<b>PCVE</b>	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
<b>RB</b>	Regular Budget
<b>RBM</b>	Results-Based Management
<b>RMDRS</b>	Resource Mobilization and Donor Relations Section
<b>RMME WG</b>	Resource Mobilization, Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group
<b>SGB</b>	Secretary-General's Bulletin
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard operating procedures
<b>SPIB</b>	Special Projects and Innovation Branch
<b>SMT</b>	Senior Management Team
<b>TORs</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNGCTS</b>	United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy
<b>UNOCT</b>	United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
<b>XB</b>	Extra-Budgetary

## FOREWORD

*This Evaluation Policy signifies the commitment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism to achieve and measure the results of its programmatic work in support of the needs of its beneficiaries in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. The need to demonstrate impact is driven by the realization that simply reporting activities and other “deliverables” does not offer us perspectives on what we are doing right, what needs improvement, and how our interventions affect the end beneficiaries.*

*The Evaluation Policy is a part of systematic processes the Office is developing and implementing to enhance its results-focused culture. The Policy has also been developed in response to the demands of Member States for strengthened outcome monitoring and impact evaluation of UNOCT Programmes. It promotes accountability and transparency and supports our donor reporting.*

*The Policy also reinforces the Office’s role as a convener, catalyst, and innovator for international cooperation and multilateralism both within the UN system and in support of Member States.*

*Lastly, the Policy will help identify lessons learned that will inform management and programming decisions, just as the UNOCT-commissioned meta-synthesis of evaluations, will do for collective learning and reflection by Global Counter Terrorism Coordination Compact entities. I look forward to the effective implementation of this Policy to achieve a more coordinated approach to evaluations in UNOCT.*



**Vladimir Voronkov**  
Under-Secretary-General  
UNOCT

## I. CONTEXT

1. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) was established through General Assembly resolution 71/291 in June 2017 in order to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS). The role of the UNOCT was further outlined in the General Assembly resolution 72/284 following the sixth review of the Strategy. The five main functions of the Office are as follows:
  - providing leadership on the General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General;
  - enhancing coordination and coherence across the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities to ensure the balanced implementation of the four pillars of the Strategy;
  - strengthening the delivery of United Nations counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States;
  - improving visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts; and
  - ensuring that due priority is given to counter-terrorism across the United Nations system and that the important work on preventing violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism is firmly rooted in the Strategy.
2. UNOCT fulfills its capacity building mandate through its United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) and Special Projects and Innovation Branch (SPIB), which collaborate on technical assistance and capacity-building activities with entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, as well as other partners. The scope and volume of UNOCT programmes and projects have been steadily growing since its establishment. Under the direction of the Under-Secretary-General, most UNOCT technical assistance and capacity-building activities have transformed from individual projects with limited scope to multi-year global programmes. The expenditures have grown from \$11.7 million in 2017 to \$17 million in 2018 and reached over \$31 million in 2019. The voluntary contributions entrusted to UNOCT by Member States amounted to over \$245 million since the establishment of the Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism in 2009.
3. The application of an evaluation approach against programmatic activities is critical in order to ensure best value for money against the public funds received and achieve measurable, qualifiable and quantifiable impact of its engagements with Member States. The present evaluation policy has been prepared in line with the Norms and Standards for Evaluation adopted by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and in compliance with the Secretary-General's bulletin "Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation", (PPBME), ST/SGB/2018/3.
4. The need for meaningful evaluation has become even more evident with the adoption of the General Assembly's biennial resolution on counter-terrorism (A/RES/70/291) recommending

that Member States consider the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism. Preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) is a relatively new field marked by much trial and error in a variety of settings which places a premium on learning from both what works and what doesn't work.

5. In order to keep pace with rapid changes in the terrorist threats and be effective in PCVE, UNOCT needs to constantly adapt and learn by basing its technical assistance and engagements with Member States on empirical evidence and knowledge gained from evaluations of project and programme implementation.

## II. INTRODUCTION

6. The UNOCT Evaluation Policy provides the overall framework for the planning and undertaking of evaluations by the Office and seeks to support accountability, increase transparency, coherence, and efficiency in generating and using evaluative knowledge for organizational learning and effective management for results.
7. The present UNOCT Evaluation Policy sets out the purpose and principles of evaluation that guide its practice. The policy outlines clear roles and responsibilities with respect to evaluation at all levels of UNOCT. It presents the universally recognized evaluation criteria to be applied in UNOCT evaluations, and the process and parameters for selecting evaluations to ensure adequate evaluation coverage. Finally, the policy also offers direction on the prioritization, planning and budgeting for evaluations, guidance on different types of evaluations, the use of evaluation findings and preparation of management responses, the establishment of a quality assurance system, as well as the disclosure and dissemination protocol.
8. UNOCT upholds and promotes the evaluation practices, principles, and values to which the United Nations is committed. The UNOCT Evaluation Policy and the evaluation work in the Office are guided by [PPBME](#) and [UNEG Norms and Standards](#). Standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by UNOCT in 2019 will be updated, as needed, to reflect the latest policy updates.

### III. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

9. Evaluation is often confused with similar concepts such as audit, review, or monitoring. UNOCT applies the UNEG definition of evaluation:

“An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors, and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.”<sup>1</sup>

10. Evaluation work in UNOCT will apply to activities, projects and programmes that meet criteria outlined in section V of this policy entitled “Selection criteria of programmes, projects and activities for evaluation”. Evaluation work is an essential component of results-based management (RBM) in UNOCT and should be differentiated from monitoring, which continuously measures progress against a set of indicators. While monitoring is used to assess results achieved, evaluation will seek to provide analysis not readily available through a performance monitoring process by undertaking in-depth inquiries into the attribution, relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of activities, projects and programmes. Evaluation will also bring in elements of independent judgment to the performance system and provide recommendations for appropriate management action. Evaluation in UNOCT is conceived as a means of supporting both accountability and learning.

#### Accountability

11. The evaluation function will play a critical role to demonstrate and support accountability for the attainment of results, learning, and evidence-based decision making. In line with the UN Accountability system<sup>2</sup>, UNOCT is committed to the delivery of expected results and upholding of highest standards of integrity during evaluations. UNOCT is accountable to stakeholders, beneficiary and donor countries, and its partners to demonstrate and make impartial judgment on the effectiveness of ongoing and completed projects. UNOCT is accountable to beneficiaries of its capacity-building efforts to ensure that services offered align with the needs of the target groups. UNOCT is accountable to its donors to ensure that contributions are used for the purpose intended and produce expected results. Accountability will also be demonstrated through the use of evidence in policy and decision-making processes. Evaluations will provide sound and

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group: Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2017).

<sup>2</sup> Ninth progress report on accountability: strengthening accountability in the United Nations Secretariat, Report of the Secretary-General, A/74/658, 20 January 2020.



reliable findings and lessons that would inform further improvements of UNOCT programming and its capacity building efforts. Conversely, the quality and utility of evaluations will be further strengthened by project and programme results frameworks supported by logical frameworks of planned results and theories of change articulating how activities and outputs are expected to lead to desired outcomes and impact.

## Learning

12. Evaluation will serve as a tool to support the generation of important lessons for continuous learning. The counter-terrorism landscape keeps changing with new emerging threats requiring increased levels of sophistication to address the PVE and CT phenomenon. Consequently, capacity-building efforts to prevent and to counter terrorism can only be effective through a mechanism of quick learning and adaptation by adjusting interventions to respond rapidly to emerging issues in countering and prevention of terrorism. Accordingly, improved project/programme designs will arise from learning important lessons on what works and what does not work, leading to good practices being integrated in project and programme design and delivery.

## IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES, NORMS AND STANDARDS

13. The UNOCT Evaluation Policy is guided by the UNEG Norms and Standards. The Office will uphold and promote evaluation practices, principles, and values to which the United Nations is committed including PPBME (ST/SGB/2018/3). Specifically, the following norms shall apply to the conduct of evaluations in the Office:

### Utility

14. UNOCT will ensure that evaluations are planned and conducted with a clear intent to use the resulting analysis, conclusions, or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. The utility of evaluation is shown through its use in improving project/programme implementation, making judgements about the ultimate benefits of the project to beneficiaries and stakeholders, sustaining and/or expanding the project, documenting and publicizing the project's achievements and making relevant and timely contributions to UNOCT learning, informed decision-making processes, and accountability for results.

### Credibility

15. UNOCT will ensure that evaluations are credible and grounded on independence, impartiality, and a rigorous methodology. Key elements of credibility include transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders and robust quality assurance systems.

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## Independence

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16. Independence of evaluation is necessary for credibility. It influences the ways in which an evaluation is used and allows evaluators to be impartial and free from undue pressure throughout the evaluation process. The independence of the evaluation function comprises two key aspects – behavioral independence and organizational independence. Behavioral independence entails the ability to evaluate without undue influence by any party. Evaluators must have the full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially and must be able to freely express their assessment. Organizational independence requires that the central evaluation function is positioned independently from management functions, carries the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda and is provided with adequate resources to conduct its work.

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## Impartiality

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17. The key elements of impartiality are objectivity, professional integrity, and absence of bias. The requirement for impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process, including planning an evaluation, formulating the mandate and scope, selecting the evaluation team, providing access to stakeholders, conducting the evaluation and formulating findings and recommendations.

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## Ethics

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18. Evaluation must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners, and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the ‘do no harm’ principle. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive data is protected.

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## Transparency

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19. Transparency is an essential element of evaluation that establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership, and increases public accountability. Evaluation reports shall be timely and widely disseminated to all stakeholders in line with the disclosure and dissemination parameters established by the Office.

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## Human rights and gender equality

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20. The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality will be integrated into all stages of an evaluation to promote, among others, the commitment to the principle of ‘no-one left behind’. These values and principles are guaranteed by international human rights law, including treaties and customary international law. Evaluations in UNOCT will include a human-rights lens to continually assess that human rights are integrated in line with the norms and standards specified in the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations during all phases of the evaluation.

21. UNOCT adopted a Gender Marker to better track the gender-responsiveness of its projects and programmes. Evaluations therefore will be designed taking into account standards adopted through the Gender Marker, as well as the relevant normative framework for integrating gender perspectives into its CT and P/CVE work, as guided by relevant Security Council Resolutions, including resolution 2178 (2014), 2331 (2016), 2354 (2017), 2395 (2017) and 2396 (2017), the fifth and sixth review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy<sup>3</sup>, as well as relevant other General Assembly resolutions and the ten Security Council Resolutions which compose the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

## Professionalism

22. Evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. Professionalism should contribute towards the credibility of evaluators, evaluation managers and evaluation heads, as well as the evaluation function. Key aspects include access to knowledge; education and training; adherence to ethics and to the relevant evaluation policy documents; utilization of evaluation competencies; and recognition of knowledge, skills and experience. This should be supported by an enabling environment, institutional structures and adequate resources.

## V. SELECTION CRITERIA OF PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR EVALUATION

23. UNOCT implements programmes, projects and activities of varying scope, resources, complexity, and timeframes. Objectivity in the selection of programmes, projects and activities that should undergo an evaluation and consequently be included in the UNOCT Evaluation Plan<sup>4</sup> is a prerequisite for impartiality. As evaluations can also entail significant investment of staff time and resources, evaluability criteria must also take into consideration whether the evaluation regime is sustainable and whether or not it comes at the expense of the very activities it is meant to evaluate.
24. There are two types of evaluation that will be conducted by the Office: (1) self-evaluation, which is performed by the project management team and/or the UNOCT Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, and (2) ad-hoc in-depth evaluation. Ad-hoc in-depth evaluations will be performed by entities outside UNOCT or consultants hired by UNOCT. Both types of evaluations will be coordinated by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.
25. The following assessment criteria will trigger both internal and external evaluation and will apply to new and existing projects or programmes that had been completed in the last two years. All the criteria presented below have equal weight of 10 points with the exception of the criteria on

<sup>3</sup> A/RES/70/291; A/RES/72/284.

<sup>4</sup> UNOCT-wide plan that contains a list of projects/programmes that have been prequalified to undergo an evaluation. The document is reviewed after every two years.

significant investment and project duration which have a weight of 15 points each. Programmes, projects and activities that score between 80 percent and 100 percent of the selection criteria will be included in the UNOCT Evaluation Plan, with priority for evaluation given to those scoring the highest:

- (a) **Significant investment:** Projects with a total budget of \$1,315,291.38 and above will be subject to an evaluation upon completion of the project<sup>5</sup>.
- (b) **Risk associated with the subject:** Projects whose environment (political, economic, conflict or organizational factors) presents potential risks that are likely to impact the achievement of results will be evaluated. An assessment of risks based on the Project Risk Management Approach outlined in the relevant UNOCT SOPs<sup>6</sup> will determine the suitability of the programme/project to undergo an evaluation.
- (c) **Project Duration:** Notwithstanding other criteria, projects or programmes spanning a period of 36 months and beyond will be subject to a mid-term review and a post-project independent evaluation to assess the results of the project (output, outcomes, and impact). This criterion will also apply to projects that originally had a duration of less than 36 months but were prolonged to 36 months or beyond with subsequent extension(s).
- (d) **Utility and Strategic contribution to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy:** This criterion will be used to select projects for evaluation based on their strategic importance, following guidance from senior management.
- (e) **Complexity and Uncertainty factors of the project:** This criterion will look at the technical and management complexity of a project and uncertainty factors. The technical factors relate to the use and familiarity of technologies (known/unknown) while management factors relate to the number of implementing partners involved in the project, change-related issues, and political issues. Uncertainty factors relate to projects that may evolve in unpredictable ways due to their nature.
- (f) **Innovation, knowledge gap and organizational learning:** This criterion will seek to look beyond the obvious results of the project to focus on intrinsic value of the project related to organizational learning in terms of expanding the knowledge base of UNOCT, promoting innovation and providing new insights of information for future planning.
- (g) **Sustainability:** A programme/project may be selected for evaluation to capitalize on the evaluation results for future programming on the subject matter. This criterion will help to ensure the sustainability of the results achieved by the programme/project and support the incubation of other project ideas.
- (h) **Formal commitments to stakeholders:** This criterion will be used to select projects for evaluation based on terms and conditions of relevant donors and stakeholders. In the same

<sup>5</sup> To determine this financial criterion, a total number of 52 projects were assessed that were/are implemented between 2016 and 2020. During this period, the total amount as recommended by the UNOCT Programme Review Board (PRB) for the 52 projects was \$68,395,151.8 yielding an average PRB endorsed approximate amount of \$1,315,291.38 per project. Projects valued at greater than or equal to \$1,315,291.38 will be evaluated. Approximately 21 projects were found to be eligible. However, this criterion will be further refined and restricted to projects that had been completed in the last two years. In addition, selected projects will also be assessed using the other criteria listed in section V.

<sup>6</sup> SOPs 2, 4 and 13 outlined the Project Risk Management Approach which comprise the project risk register and the risk management matrix.

vein a representative sample of projects may be evaluated based on the source of financing for the projects.

- (i) **Request from Under-Secretary-General and Senior Management:** Notwithstanding any of the previous criteria, the Under-Secretary-General, including upon the recommendation of the Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General, the Programme Review Board (PRB) or the Senior Management Team (SMT), may direct a programme/project to undergo an evaluation as a result of emerging priorities, requests or concerns.

## VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EVALUATION

26. The roles and responsibilities surrounding evaluations in UNOCT have been structured to align and adhere to UNEG norms and standards and international best practices. Under the overall supervision of the Under-Secretary-General, UNOCT has a shared system of roles and responsibilities in performing monitoring and evaluation functions. The evaluation function including methodological guidance will be conducted by the UNOCT Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. The monitoring function will be conducted by the Project Management Unit (PMU) which reports to the Director of the UNCCT, and the Focal Points to be appointed in the Special Projects and Innovation Branch (SPIB) and in the Policy, Knowledge Management and Coordination Branch (PKMCB). The focal points appointed from the branches will also support the conduct of evaluations. It is intended that an Evaluation Unit will be established in the future, and these roles will be further defined.

### (a) The Under-Secretary-General

#### Approval of the Evaluation Policy

27. The UNEG norms and standards provide that the evaluation policy should be approved by the governing body and/ or the executive head to ensure it has a formally recognized status at the highest levels of the organization<sup>7</sup>. In line with this norm, the Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT is responsible for the approval of the UNOCT Evaluation Policy and its revisions on recommendation by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer undertook the necessary consultations with the SMT, PRB, UNOCT staff and stakeholders including partners in drafting the UNOCT Evaluation Policy.

#### Overall Leadership of the Evaluation Function

28. The Under-Secretary-General provides overall direction, leadership, and management of the Evaluation function in the Office. The Under-Secretary-General shall in collaboration with the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and in line with the selection criteria described in section V

<sup>7</sup> UNEG Norms and Standards: Norm 12.

identify projects and programmes, and request evaluations thereof. Evaluation can also be recommended by the UNOCT PRB for the Under-Secretary-General's consideration following performance review of programmes and projects. The Under-Secretary-General shall provide an enabling environment that includes an organizational culture that values evaluation as a basis for accountability, learning and evidence-based decision-making and recognition of evaluation as a key corporate function for achieving results and public accountability.

29. In approving the cost plan, the Under-Secretary-General will ensure that the evaluation function is accorded sufficient funds, facilities, equipment, services, software, and technical support.
30. The Under-Secretary General under the advice of senior management shall specify the conditions under which exception to disseminate particular evaluation findings will be enforced. Notwithstanding, UNOCT will uphold stakeholders' confidentiality and anonymity to protect informants and to avoid harmful effects related to the evaluation findings.
31. The Under-Secretary General and the delegated official(s) will oversee the process of preparing a formal management response to each evaluation.

## **(b) Monitoring and Evaluation Officer**

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32. The position of the UNOCT Monitoring and Evaluation Officer serves as a custodian of the evaluation function in UNOCT. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer is independent from the operational, management and decision-making functions in UNOCT, and shall be impartial, objective, and free from undue influence. In this role, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer has the authority to determine the scope, design, conduct and commissioning of evaluations in accordance with this policy, and to submit reports directly to the appropriate decision makers, including the Under-Secretary-General. The SMT and supervisors of programmes, projects and activities being evaluated will not impose restrictions on language or on the content of evaluation reports. In instances where the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer was directly involved in policy setting, design, implementation or management of the subject of the evaluation, the Officer will recuse himself/herself from being part of the Evaluation Team on the subject to ensure impartiality and objectivity. The evaluation function falls into two broad categories related to evaluation management, and evaluation planning and governance.

### **Management of Evaluations**

33. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer manages the whole process of the evaluation, presides over the reference groups, writes terms of reference for the recruitment of the evaluation teams including technical evaluation of bids as appropriate, clears the reports, defines the evaluation quality system, and carries out dissemination of the evaluation.

The specific responsibilities of the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer are outlined below:

- Maintains a repository of evaluation reports with a view to ensure transparency and facilitate the integration of lessons learned and best practices into the broader concept of knowledge management;
- Initiates evaluations and research, and promotes system-wide and joint evaluations;
- Sets evaluation standards and criteria and advises on methodological guidance, maintains evaluation quality-assurance mechanisms in order to continuously improve, enhance the quality and credibility of UNOCT evaluations and the overall evaluation function;
- Selects indicators, refines evaluation methodology, data collection and analysis as well as formulates judgements in response to the evaluation questions;
- Provides support and technical advice to project managers on evaluations;
- Presents evaluation results, actively disseminates and shares knowledge generated by evaluations;
- Engages in partnerships with professional evaluation networks, such as UNEG, and supports the harmonization of the evaluation function in the United Nations system;
- Assesses the quality of the work performed by evaluation experts and consultants, approves the terms of reference and pre-qualifies evaluators for evaluation and maintains a roster of qualified evaluation professionals;
- Promotes standards for evaluation and quality assurance in line with UNEG norms and standards, and guidelines;
- Promotes and supports stakeholders' buy-in, participation, and support from all levels by engaging representative panels and peer reviews to appraise evaluation plans and reports;
- Promotes an evaluation culture among UNOCT staff, senior managers and PRB members based on knowledge-sharing;
- Follows-up on recommendations presented in the evaluation reports.

### **Evaluation Planning and Governance**

- Prepares, reviews, and updates the UNOCT Evaluation Plan and makes recommendations to management on compliance with the Policy;
- Develops the UNOCT Evaluation Plan based on inputs from and in consultation with the Under-Secretary-General and the SMT;
- Reports directly to the Under-Secretary-General on the evaluation function in UNOCT;
- Prepares and submits an annual cost plan that proposes resources needed for the Evaluation Unit, and once approved by the Under-Secretary-General, is responsible for the management of resources, required for evaluations and the implementation of the Evaluation Unit work plan within authority delegated by the Under-Secretary-General;
- Responsible for the management of evaluation resources included in the approved budgets of programmes and projects, in close consultation with relevant programme managers;

- Commits to sharing best practices and lessons learned in the process of evaluations for the purpose of enhancing the quality of UNOCT programme/project delivery products and services;
- Selects the projects according to the selection criteria outlined in Section V;
- Prepares, maintains and monitors the implementation of the UNOCT Evaluation Plan based on scheduled evaluations;
- Regularly alerts senior management to emerging evaluation-related issues of corporate significance, and recommends a course of action for consideration of the Under-Secretary-General;
- Undertakes evaluability assessments<sup>8</sup> on projects where necessary to help determine if projects and programmes are designed well to be successfully implemented an evaluation;
- Raises any matters identified in the process of evaluations in progress to attention of the Programme Review Board in cases initiated by them;
- Informs the Resource Mobilization and Donor Relations Section (RMDRS), the Office of the Under-Secretary General (OUSG) and the External Partnership Section (EPS) under the Special Projects and Innovation Branch (SPIB) of the Office's evaluation requirements when preparing and negotiating project agreements and modalities for cooperation and ensure that monitoring and evaluation modalities are specified in project documents or related agreements.

### **(c) Project Management Unit, Focal Points of SPIB and the PKMCB**

34. In support of the evaluation function, the UNCCT Project Management Unit (PMU) and SPIB and PKMCB focal points will ensure adequate application of the logical frameworks/programme theory as a tool to manage for results. Project proposals will include logical frameworks and a theory of change articulating how activities and outputs are expected to lead to desired outcomes and impact including performance indicators appropriate to each level of the results chain, its means of verification, risks and assumptions specified for output and outcome level results.
35. Performance indicators should include baseline and target measures for expected results. In the event baseline information may not be available in the design phase or at the submission time of a project proposal, project managers should plan to obtain baseline or other relevant information within a reasonable period from project start-up (e.g., inception workshop) to support effective evaluability of results. The specific roles and responsibilities of the PMU, responsible Focal Points of PKMCB and SPIB are the following:
  - Ensure that every new project document/agreement incorporates the monitoring and evaluation provision and also provides a budget for it;
  - Undertakes monitoring and self-evaluation functions in accordance with the UNOCT Evaluation Policy including monitoring progress towards results, as well as planning and conducting self-evaluations;

<sup>8</sup> The extent to which an activity or project can be evaluated in reliable and credible manner.



- Budgets resources for planning and undertaking of self- and/or independent evaluations in line with the evaluability criteria established by the Office;
- In collaboration with the Evaluation Unit, incorporates evaluation and audit recommendations into annual work planning and scheduling of monitoring activities and self-evaluations;
- Submits copies of results or reports of self-evaluations undertaken to the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer upon completion;
- Follows-up on findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons-learned of independent evaluations in the form of a management response and updates on status of implementation;
- Oversees the implementation of recommendations of evaluations that are relevant and actionable, and indicates expected dates for completing implementation; and,
- Commits to sharing best practices and lessons learned for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the UNOCT products and services.

#### (d) The Role of Stakeholders

36. In line with UNEG Standards, stakeholders will be engaged as needed, and stakeholder groups (e.g. reference groups, learning groups, steering groups, and advisory groups) will be created on a case-by-case basis. The USG will decide on the scope of engagement for the stakeholder groups which may include, among others, consultation meetings on evaluation design and the terms of reference, validation workshops on preliminary findings and post-evaluation feedback sessions.

## VII. TYPES OF EVALUATION

37. Evaluations will address different elements of the results chain, from assessing needs or determining baseline conditions at programme, project and activity conception stage, to evaluating the impact and contribution to the UNGCTS upon project completion. Between these two points evaluations will include formative or other types of process-related assessments including evaluation of outputs, and summative evaluations focusing on different levels of outcomes.
38. As the coordinating arm of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, UNOCT will also work with other entities in the Compact in undertaking joint evaluations focused on shared objectives to support joint reflection and action. This will be achieved through participation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in the work of the Counter-Terrorism Compact including the Working Group on Resource Mobilization, Monitoring and Evaluation.

39. The types of evaluations that will be undertaken by the Office are guided by PPBME (ST/SGB/2018/3) and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 68/658<sup>9</sup> and selected for evaluation in accordance with criteria established in Section V. UNOCT may undertake the following types of evaluations to support its efforts to strengthen accountability, continuous learning and promote a results-oriented evaluation culture for better performance.

#### **(i) Self-Evaluation**

40. Self-evaluation shall be conducted periodically and internally by UNOCT programme managers utilizing all information collected during the project monitoring and evaluation process. In addition to the provisions of the ST/SGB/2018/3 and this evaluation policy, self-evaluations will adhere to the guidance provided by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in UNOCT, who is responsible for quality standards, methodology, and the adaptation and transfer of evaluation information and ad hoc studies. The focus of self-evaluation is to assess the quality and relevance of the outputs produced by the project/programme and their usefulness to the users. The self-evaluation will provide a comparative assessment with the situation existing at the start of implementation and evaluate progress or performance towards the achievement of the project's intended results. The Programme/Project Manager will specify the design and conduct of the self-evaluation procedure in consultation with the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. The self-evaluation in UNOCT may include baseline surveys to ascertain the situation at the beginning of the project or programme, mid-term reviews for projects beyond thirty-six months, and end of project reviews to confirm the extent of implementation of project/programme goals and outcomes.

#### **(ii) Ad-hoc In-depth Evaluation**

41. The UNOCT evaluation system may also include ad-hoc in-depth evaluation of selected projects and programme areas or topics beyond the criteria established in section V. Ad-hoc in-depth evaluations may be conducted internally or externally and will take the form of impact, thematic or joint evaluation. This type of evaluations will be conducted to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the projects. UNOCT will collaborate with entities in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact through the Working Group on Resource Mobilization, Monitoring and Evaluation to undertake or participate in joint evaluation efforts. Joint programming with other UN partners will be evaluated jointly especially in situations of joint financing or combined reporting.

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<sup>9</sup> Independent System-wide Evaluation of Operational Activities for Development, Policy Implementation: Progress, Lessons, Next Steps, July 2016.

## VIII. PRIORITISATION, PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR EVALUATIONS

42. The UNOCT Evaluation Policy will be operationalized through the Evaluation Plan and Evaluation Guidelines. The Evaluation Plan will be a rolling plan where new projects will be added each year while evaluations completed will be closed out from the Plan. The preparation of the Evaluation Plan will be coordinated by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and approved by the Under-Secretary-General on recommendation of the PRB as part of UNOCT Annual Cost Plan. The Evaluation Plan will be assessed every two years, and adjustments or changes will be made based on the review. The Evaluation Plan will indicate the projects, programmes, topics and themes for evaluation including estimated cost and time frame of each evaluation. Programmes and projects will be prioritized for an evaluation based on the selection criteria established in Section V in addition to projected capacity per year. Programmes/projects that score between 80 percent to 100 percent of the selection criteria will be included in the Evaluation Plan, with priority for evaluation given to those scoring the highest.
43. The cost of the evaluation will be determined based on the scope, objectives, and methodology of the evaluation to be undertaken. An objective criterion to arrive at the annual cost to undertake evaluations identified in the Evaluation Plan will be adopted. This will be informed by the following parameters: evaluation timeline; human and financial resources required; evaluation questions; and external factors. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will need to be accorded sufficient funds, facilities, equipment, services, software, and technical support. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, where necessary, and in line with the approved cost plan, will contract additional capacities and expertise as required to undertake field work, group process, interviews, measurement, statistics, surveys, cost analysis, values analysis, policy analysis, writing, editing, communications, gender, human rights, ethnic and other related competencies as needed.
44. While self-evaluations will be financed through project/programme specific funding, impact, thematic and joint evaluations will be financed, to the extent possible, using available UNOCT programme budget allocated for monitoring and evaluation activities. UNOCT will adhere to and apply UNEG and international standards to arrange for an allocation of adequate resources towards evaluation purposes. Notwithstanding the selection criteria, all projects should allocate adequate resources to support the monitoring and evaluation functions.

## IX. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

45. Evaluation methodologies will be chosen with a clear intent to provide credible answers to the evaluation questions. The methodology shall ensure that the information collected is valid, reliable, and sufficient to meet the evaluation objectives and that the analysis is logically coherent and complete and leads to a complete, fair, and unbiased assessment. The evaluation

of projects will begin by initiating the drafting of the terms of reference (TORs) at an appropriate time. The TORs for an evaluation will include detailed information on important elements of the evaluation.

## X. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ASSESSMENT

46. The Quality Assurance system for evaluations in UNOCT will take place throughout the evaluation process. Particular attention will be placed on the following: an assurance of adherence to UNEG norms and standards of commissioned evaluations throughout the evaluation process; approval of the Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Plan by the Under-Secretary-General on recommendation by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer; approval of the terms of reference by the Under-Secretary General upon recommendation by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer; peer review of evaluation reports through UNEG working groups to which UNOCT is a member; and quality assurance of evaluation reports by OIOS and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) where necessary.
47. Evaluation products will be subject to periodic quality assessment. In addition to safeguarding unbiased data collection, analysis and arriving at sound conclusions, evaluations must ensure the inclusion of relevant interests, values, and views to confirm that conclusions are unbiased and factual. UNOCT will ensure that evaluations meet the professional standards outlined in section V before undergoing evaluation; meet stakeholder needs and requirements; are of relevance and of realistic scope; follow appropriate methods; produce reliable, accurate and valid data; include appropriate and accurate analysis of results; present impartial conclusions and convey results clearly, in oral or written form, including stakeholder involvement, feedback and dissemination.
48. UNOCT shall also make use of stakeholder groups<sup>10</sup> who will provide different perspectives and knowledge on the subject of the evaluation.

## XI. USE OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

49. Evaluations should, by and large, be commissioned with a clear intent to use the resulting analysis, conclusions, or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. In order to ensure maximum utility, evaluations should be carefully planned and include adequate consultations with stakeholders. Each evaluation should conduct a stakeholder analysis to determine groups

<sup>10</sup> UNEG Norms and Standards; Standard 4.6 indicates that stakeholder groups include reference groups, learning groups, steering groups, and advisory groups.

that must be informed, consulted, actively involved, or those who are equal partners or key decision-makers. The final evaluation reports should be published alongside its formal management responses to enhance the uptake of results, learning from evaluations and the incorporation of findings into the overall programming cycle through an effective feedback system. Information will be disseminated and made available to all potential users in suitable formats to enhance its utilization. UNOCT will ensure that lessons are recorded and shared; evaluations are strategically planned to ensure that pertinent lessons are derived from the exercise; stakeholders are strategically involved; and knowledge is linked to users to demonstrate application of information and verified through monitoring processes.

## XII. MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

50. Responsible programme managers will be required to prepare a management response to evaluations undertaken under their portfolio which must be reviewed and cleared by the Director of UNCCT, the Chief of SPIB and the Chief of PKMCB, as applicable, prior to submission to the Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and final presentation of the evaluation results to the Under-Secretary-General for approval. The management response provides management views of the evaluation recommendations, including whether and why management agrees or disagrees with each recommendation. The management response should detail specific actions to implement those recommendations that are agreed to by management. These actions should be concrete, objectively verifiable, time-bound, and clear on the responsibilities for implementation.
51. The Chief of Substantive Unit/Section/Branch<sup>11</sup> in collaboration with PMU and section/branch evaluation focal points will oversee the implementation of the actions provided in management responses, such as follow-up reports or tracking systems. Ensuring follow-up is the responsibility of management. Therefore, follow-up will be overseen by the Programme Review Board as delegated by the Under-Secretary General.
52. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will provide oversight to ensure that management responses to evaluations are provided, that the actions contained in management responses are adequate to substantially address agreed recommendations, and that the recommendations are appropriately implemented.

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<sup>11</sup> Refers to Heads of Units, Sections and Divisions in UNOCT (e.g. management).

## **XIII. DISCLOSURE AND DISSEMINATION**

53. In fulfilling its accountability principle, UNOCT will ensure that stakeholders have easy access to evaluation reports. Depending on the nature of the evaluated work, some cases may require an exception to the disclosure rule. The Under-Secretary-General shall specify the conditions under which an exception to the general disclosure and dissemination provision can be granted. Notwithstanding, UNOCT will uphold stakeholders' confidentiality and anonymity to protect informants and to avoid unintended consequences related to the evaluation findings.