

Support provided by the Evaluation Office for decentralized evaluation in WHO

November 2022

Evaluation supports the Organization to achieve its strategic objectives and contribute to the improvement of public health conditions of the world's population. It places an emphasis on results accountability – to examine evidence of WHO contributions in different countries and sectors; to assess their strategic relevance and effectiveness in addressing the public health challenges of the country or the sector; and to make suggestions for further improvements.

The [WHO evaluation policy \(2018\)](#) defines the overall framework for evaluation at WHO, fosters the culture and use of evaluation across the Organization and facilitates conformity of evaluation at WHO with best practices and with norms and standards for evaluation of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

Complementing the evaluation policy, the [Implementation framework of the WHO evaluation policy](#) presents mechanisms and support systems for the conduct of evaluation across the three levels of WHO. The Practical Guide on Evaluation for Programme Managers and Evaluation Staff will be issued to provide step-by-step operational guidance on the entire evaluation process, updating the WHO Evaluation Practice Handbook.

Objectives

The implementation framework has the following objectives:

- To establish **mechanisms** for the commissioning and management of evaluations across WHO
- To delineate **roles and responsibilities** for the commissioning and management of evaluations
- To enhance **coherence of planning and funding** of evaluations
- To maximize **consistent use of evaluations**
- To operationalize **support systems** available across WHO from the central evaluation function

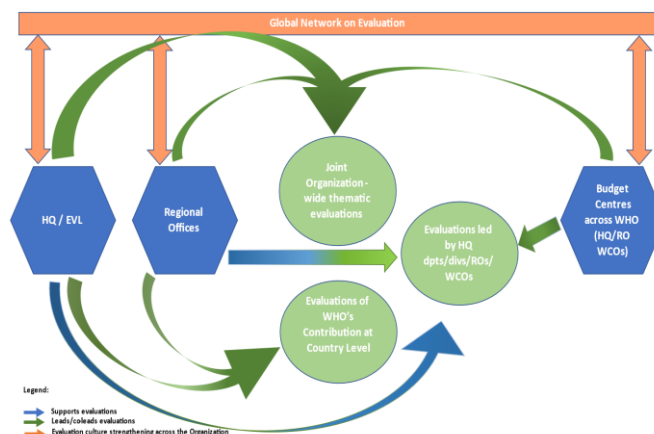
Types of evaluation

Three mechanisms to support the conduct of the different types of evaluation covered in the evaluation policy are defined in the framework (see Figure 1):

- **Decentralized evaluations** led by country offices, regional offices or headquarters departments/divisions. They cover a wide range of subjects, including programmes and projects with various funding sources.
- **Organization-wide thematic evaluations** led by the Evaluation Office which commissions and manages evaluations jointly with regional offices or headquarters departments/divisions. They look at WHO contributions and document learning in a particular health area (e.g. health emergencies, universal health coverage, etc.) or a thematic aspect or a global or regional programme.
- **Evaluations of WHO's contribution at country level** which are commissioned and managed jointly by respective regional offices and the Evaluation Office in close collaboration with the relevant country office and the Country Support Unit Network. They focus on outcomes/results achieved

at country level, assessing WHO contributions against public health needs of the country and the objectives formulated in WHO general programmes of work and key country-level strategic instruments, including Country Cooperation Strategies, biennial country office workplans and national health strategies. They also document good practices and gaps for learning. Conduct of these evaluations is guided by a separate detailed [framework](#).

Figure 1: Evaluations across the three levels of WHO and interconnections



Evaluation planning

The biennial [Organization-wide evaluation workplan](#), approved by the Executive Board, provides the basis for ongoing evaluation work and is intended to consolidate evaluation plans from across the Organization. The objectives of this Organization-wide planning process are to ensure synergies among evaluations conducted at the different levels of the Organization, avoid duplication of evaluation work at the different levels and ensure adequate coverage that reflects WHO's contributions and achievements in a balanced manner.

Funding evaluations

In principle, evaluations should be funded from the source fund of the programme/project being evaluated and the cost should be included in the programme/project budget from the outset as an activity rather than an overhead item.

While some donor agreements already include a clause on the conduct of evaluation, the Evaluation Office also encourages the inclusion of an evaluation clause, together with the requisite budget and necessary clarifications on responsibilities to conduct the evaluation, in all programme/project proposal documents.

Evaluation repository

In line with the evaluation principles of transparency and utility and in accordance with the WHO Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Office is preparing a publicly-accessible Organization-wide repository of evaluation plans and reports. The purpose of this repository is to enable cross-utilization of evaluations conducted at different levels of the Organization, thus minimizing duplication of research and contributing to collective learning.

Evaluation roster

To facilitate the timely identification of qualified evaluators, the Evaluation Office maintains a roster of pre-qualified evaluation experts which is regularly updated with a view to improving coverage of regions and sectors. This roster can be made available to evaluation managers wishing to recruit an individual evaluator or to form a small team of evaluators for a particular evaluation. Equally, the Evaluation Office has identified qualified firms or institutions to be contracted to undertake evaluations, some of which will enter into Long-Term Agreements with the Organization to undertake evaluations, thus facilitating the contractual process.

Quality assurance

Upon request from a country office, regional office or headquarters division/department, the Evaluation Office can assign a Quality Assurance Adviser to an evaluation, whose role is to assist the evaluation manager on technical aspects of a decentralized evaluation to ensure and validate the quality of evaluation products, given that the evaluation manager, while ultimately responsible for the quality of deliverables, does not always have the requisite professional knowledge and experience.

The Quality Assurance Adviser is an experienced evaluator (normally an external consultant), and conducts reviews of key products, such as the Terms of Reference, the inception report, and the first and final draft reports (see [Guidance Note](#)). The evaluation manager may also seek ad hoc advice from the Quality Assurance Adviser throughout the evaluation process.

Global Network on Evaluation

The Evaluation Office is revitalizing the Global Network on Evaluation, an informal internal network which brings together professionals working on evaluations across the Organization to exchange information, participate in learning and training on evaluation-related activities, support ongoing

evaluation and share best practices (see [Terms of Reference](#)).

Evaluation capacity building

Initially organized for members of the Global Network on Evaluation, but with the goal of gradually expanding its reach to all evaluation managers across the Organization, the Evaluation Office is developing a capacity-building programme to include:

- the development of technical notes and tools/guidelines for evaluation managers;
- the organization of webinars for evaluation professionals across the Organization on different evaluation approaches and methods;
- Sharing of information on, and facilitating participation in, external professional evaluation events and learning opportunities, including participation in meetings, webinars and working groups of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

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