



Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Distr.: General
17 April 2023

Original: English

Annual session 2023

19–21 June 2023

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Evaluation

Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2022

Summary

This report provides an overview of the performance of the UN-Women evaluation function at centralized and decentralized levels in 2022. It captures key insights from the independent corporate evaluations and strategic evaluations completed, reviews the evaluation's function key performance indicators, and highlights the advocacy undertaken to promote gender-responsive evaluation in the UN system and national evaluation capacity-building. The report also outlines the Independent Evaluation Service's (IES) programme of work and budget for 2023.

The Executive Board may wish to: (i) take note of the 2022 report on the evaluation function of UN-Women, the IES 2023 programme of work and budget; (ii) acknowledge that UN-Women maintains an independent, credible and valuable evaluation function, contributing to system-wide gender-responsive evaluation initiatives and national evaluation capacity development; and (iii) express continuing support for strengthening the evaluation function in UN-Women and the utilization of evaluations, in alignment with the global UN-Women Evaluation Strategy and the Corporate Evaluation Plan 2022–2025.



I. Introduction

1. In 2022, the global landscape was marked by significant challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, natural disasters, political instability and conflicts in several regions, all of which contributed to widespread social and economic crises. In response to these challenges, UN-Women utilized its gender expertise, and collaborated with the broader UN system. To further its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, UN-Women leveraged its evaluation function to promote evidence-based learning and continuous improvement. Playing a crucial role in leading UN-Women's evaluation function and evaluation initiatives, the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) supported implementation of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025 by generating insights to inform the Entity's strategic decision-making, promoting organizational learning and driving change through evaluative evidence.

2. UN-Women generates evidence related to the Entity's integrated mandate (normative, UN system coordination, operational) through independent corporate and decentralized evaluations. In 2022, IES increased its efforts to conduct independent strategic evaluations related to UN-Women's critical areas of work. In particular, IES-led corporate, regional, thematic and country portfolio evaluations offered insights and lessons beyond the evaluations conducted for individual programmes and projects. IES-led evaluations were designed to assess and understand the broader impact of the Entity's work and support the development of future planning and strategies.

3. The launch of a new Strategic Plan cycle in 2022 resulted in multiple corporate processes being reinvigorated with a strong evaluation culture and appreciation for evaluative evidence. At the same time, UN-Women's key performance indicators (KPIs) related to evaluation indicated a need for renewed commitment and support to meet the growing interest and demand for evidence-based learning and evaluation activities.

4. This report, presented in five parts, provides (i) key insights of the IES-led evidence gap analysis; (ii) overview of corporate evaluations; (iii) an outline of decentralized evaluations, including a summary of strategic evaluations completed in 2022, (iv) a review of the performance of UN-Women's evaluation function as captured through the Global Evaluation Oversight System, (v) highlights of advocacy efforts for gender-responsive evaluation in the UN system and national capacity-building; and (vi) a preview of the IES programme of work and budget for 2023.

II. Assessing evaluative evidence: identifying gaps and opportunities for organizational learning at UN-Women

Evidence gap mapping analysis

5. As part of continuing efforts to improve coverage, timeliness and the quality of UN-Women's evaluations, IES conducted an evidence gap mapping analysis that reviewed existing evaluative evidence and identified areas that are strategically important to UN-Women during implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. The analysis sample included 124 high-quality UN-Women evaluations conducted between 2018–2021 and was coded and analysed using qualitative analysis software against the framework of Strategic Plan.

6. The evidence gap mapping analysis concluded that UN-Women produced a comparable level of evaluation evidence across the Entity's key thematic areas; however, Thematic Area 4: Women, Peace and Security, and Humanitarian Action

and Disaster Risk Reduction was represented least often. Since much of the existing evaluative evidence was generated from thematic-specific or project-level work, a clear gap emerged around evidence related to UN-Women’s holistic interventions implemented through the Systemic Outcome areas. The analysis also highlighted the need for more forward-looking evaluations to inform UN-Women’s programming framework in emerging areas of work, such as the newly introduced and proposed Signature Initiatives (SIs) (e.g. the SI on transforming the care economy and SI on climate change and resilience to disaster). In contrast, ample evidence was found on UN-Women’s contribution to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, which presents as a good opportunity for synthesis. Lastly, the evidence gap mapping analysis uncovered the need to more rigorously examine integration of the leave no one behind principle and for better evaluation of UN-Women’s progress towards achieving a more effective, diverse and empowered workplace.

III. Corporate evaluations

7. In 2022, IES worked on seven corporate evaluations and studies to evaluate the Entity’s impact on promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. The following section showcases key insights and lessons derived from corporate evaluations and studies.

8. IES completed the following corporate evaluations:

- i. Corporate evaluation of UN-Women’s policy advocacy work.
- ii. Corporate evaluation of UN-Women’s work on capacity development.

9. Additionally, IES worked on the following corporate evaluations and one synthesis report:

- i. Corporate evaluation of UN-Women’s contribution to women’s economic empowerment by advancing gender-responsive laws, frameworks, policies and partnerships
- ii. Corporate formative evaluation of UN-Women’s work in the area of climate change
- iii. Corporate formative evaluation on UN-Women’s work on gender statistics and data
- iv. Joint system-wide evaluation synthesis of SDG 5 in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP

10. In addition, IES launched a corporate formative evaluation of UN-Women’s support to civil society that will focus on an in-depth assessment of a regional perspective of UN Women’s engagement with civil society.

Corporate evaluation on UN-Women’s policy advocacy work

11. UN-Women’s integrated mandate enables the Entity to play a role in policy advocacy by shaping and promoting government policies and legislation related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN-Women’s evidence-based and credible knowledge, and its partnerships are critical for ensuring a multiplier effect, leveraging resources and approaching policy advocacy work holistically. However, there are opportunities for UN-Women to create greater impact by defining policy advocacy; developing a coherent approach to planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting; and by clarifying the organizational architecture to better coordinate and communicate linkages between headquarters and Regional/Country Offices. The evaluation recommended that UN-Women leverage its Strategic Plan to determine

policy advocacy priorities; strengthen the Entity's policy advocacy architecture, data, knowledge generation and management systems; and strengthen its relationships with partners to support policy change/implementation. The evaluation offered six recommendations, five of which were accepted by management and one which was partially accepted.

Corporate evaluation on capacity development

12. Capacity development support to partners is a central intervention strategy for UN-Women and is widely used throughout the organization. The evaluation found that UN-Women employs a range of capacity development practices recognized by various stakeholders as both valuable and necessary. However, a clear organization-wide definition, framework and approach for UN-Women's support to capacity development could increase the Entity's potential to contribute to results. The evaluation also found that teams at UN-Women often engage in capacity development work independently, with limited synergies across thematic areas. UN-Women's overall efficiency in its capacity development support could be improved by strengthening internal coordination, coherence and knowledge sharing. Building ownership of capacity development is key to ensuring the sustainability of results; however, ownership has often been hampered by the short-term nature of initiatives and limited funding. The evaluation offered four recommendations, three of which were accepted by management, and one was partially accepted.

Corporate evaluations fostering change

13. In 2022, UN-Women management continued to use the findings and recommendations generated by corporate evaluations to enhance the Entity's policies, strategies and programming practices to foster change. Some examples from recent corporate evaluations are highlighted below.

Corporate evaluation of UN-Women's UN system coordination and broader convening role in Ending Violence Against Women

14. In line with management's response to the Corporate Evaluation of UN-Women's UN coordination and broader convening role in Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW), UN-Women led efforts to ensure technical coherence and comprehensive programming on EVAW through global joint initiatives, including the Spotlight Initiative, Essential Services, Safe Cities, Generation Equality and the Action Coalitions. UN-Women facilitated several collaborative actions to address key lessons and recommendations from this evaluation. These included the development of 16 inter-agency products where international standards and guidance on prevention, essential services and data collection on EVAW were shared. In addition, UN-Women has facilitated several coordination spaces in the UN system through an expert group meeting on Technology, and Phase III of the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services along with efforts by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination Task Force to end sexual harassment. UN-Women has leveraged its UN system coordination mandate to support the achievement and systematic monitoring and reporting of results on EVAW. In alignment with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), UN-Women has embedded a dedicated indicator to track the number of Common Country Analyses that include a dedicated section and analysis on EVAW across sectors covered by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). In 2022, UN-Women also designed new system-wide indicators for coordination to align with the United Nations Country Team-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard process.

Corporate evaluation of UN-Women’s approach to innovation

15. In response to the corporate evaluation of UN-Women’s approach to innovation, UN-Women focused on demonstrating its added value to the normative and coordination spaces related to technology and innovation. In preparation for the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” as its priority theme, UN-Women convened an Expert Group Meeting to discuss key trends, data availability and needs, best practices and gaps in policy responses. UN-Women used the session inputs to develop transformational, practical and action-oriented recommendations for the Report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme. With support from UN-Women, the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation issued a call to place gender equality at the heart of the Global Digital Compact at the General Assembly in September 2022, recommending that gender dimensions of digital inequality be addressed, embedding gender in digital technologies, building inclusive innovation ecosystems and making digital spaces safe.

Evaluation insights as key evidence to inform decisions

16. IES continues to promote UN-Women’s integration of evaluation findings into the Entity’s corporate planning and decision-making processes. IES maintains regular communication with UN-Women’s Senior Management team and Business Review Committees to inform the Entity’s strategic needs and priorities. IES also plays an active role in UN-Women’s technical review processes, providing inputs on the Strategic Note and to Project Appraisal Committees at both regional and global levels. For example, in 2022, IES collaborated with UN-Women’s Strategic Planning Unit to review and update the Strategic Note Development Package so that evaluations remain and are used as an integral part of the Entity’s multi-year Strategic Plan.

IV. Decentralized evaluations

17. A majority of UN-Women’s evaluations are decentralized, i.e. managed by relevant business units at the regional, country or headquarters level, and receive technical advisory and quality assurance support from IES. Regional thematic, programme and country portfolio evaluations can also be led and/or supported by IES. Findings from decentralized evaluations are used to complement corporate evaluations and include lessons on UN-Women’s results and performance at regional and country levels.

18. In 2022, eight country portfolio evaluations (Bolivia*, Brazil*, Egypt*, Malawi, Moldova*, Nepal*, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) were completed and five country portfolio evaluations (Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Ecuador*, Jordan* Multi-Country Office–Caribbean*, Niger*) were initiated.¹ In total, 10 of the 13 (77 per cent) country portfolio evaluations that were conducted/initiated in 2022 were led by IES. Five regional evaluations were also completed, and seven were ongoing at the time of writing this report; half (6 of 12) of which were led by IES. Overall, the total number of strategic evaluations, particularly IES-led evaluations, was higher in 2022 compared to previous years.

Internal evaluation capacity development and knowledge management

19. As the demand for evaluations at the decentralized level continues to rise, the importance of strengthening evaluation capacity within UN-Women has become

¹ The asterisk (*) indicates the country portfolio evaluations that were led by IES.

increasingly critical. IES has taken the lead in developing and maintaining several tools and training courses to improve the skills of UN-Women personnel and the Entity's implementing partners.

20. In 2022, IES made efforts to improve the quality and standardization of data analysis for IES-led evaluations, and developed multiple evaluation tools and guidelines to support multiple activities related to evaluation (e.g. country portfolio evaluation guide portfolio analysis, survey design, UN-Women Results Management System data analysis and contribution analysis).

21. At the regional level, Regional Evaluation Specialists trained more than 130 UN-Women personnel and key stakeholders. Country-level training was provided to enhance key stakeholders' understanding of monitoring and evaluation principles and UN-Women's evaluation practices. In the East and Southern Africa region, bi-monthly community of practice sessions were organized for monitoring and evaluation staff, resulting in more consistent approaches to engaging evaluation reference groups, higher-quality country portfolio evaluations and increased uptake of evaluations. In the Asia and Pacific and Europe and Central Asia regions, IES offered tailored coaching to evaluation managers to ensure a high-quality process and product. In the West and Central Africa and East Southern African regions, new personnel completed an online course entitled "How to Manage Gender Responsive Evaluations." IES also participated in hybrid training for UN-Women programme managers in the Americas and Caribbean region to enhance evaluation planning and use as part of overall project management practices.

Communication to facilitate use of evaluations

22. Throughout 2022, IES continued to invest in substantive knowledge-sharing and communication via user-friendly and accessible knowledge products, learning partnerships and initiatives, and online and social media platforms that encouraged UN-Women personnel and stakeholders to use evaluations. The Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE) system had over 28,700 page views in the calendar year, and UN-Women's evaluation pages had over 28,800 page views, similar to the previous year.

23. At the regional level, IES supported evaluation use by organizing webinars, presentations and producing evaluation briefs and synthesis reports. Evaluation briefs and synthesis reports were generated based on outcomes described in the regional evaluations and country portfolio evaluations (e.g. Moldova, Egypt, Nepal, Malawi, Bolivia, Brazil). Webinars were designed to aid the use and better contextualization of evaluation results. In the Arab States region, a webinar was developed to share the outcomes of regional and country-level evaluations. Additionally, three webinars, focusing on Women, Peace and Security, Violence Against Women and Girls and Innovation and UN-Women's role in crises were organized in the Asia and the Pacific region. In the Americas and Caribbean region, UN-Women conducted several webinars for the evaluation community, including on national evaluation capacity with a gender perspective at the gLOCAL 2022 Conference and ReLAC 2022 International Conference.

Synopsis of key strategic evaluations at the decentralized level

IES-led regional evaluation of UN-Women's crisis response in Asia and the Pacific
Asia and the Pacific Regional Office

24. In the Asia and the Pacific region, UN-Women responded to recent complex and compounded crises, such as the situations in Myanmar and Afghanistan. There is evidence that the integration of gender in crisis response is fundamental to ensuring more effective services that better serve the immediate and long-term needs of women

and girls and vulnerable groups experiencing crisis. This evaluation found that UN-Women made significant strides in responding to crises and addressed the priorities and needs of women and girls. Evidence of a combination of leadership of coordination mechanisms, technical assistance and knowledge generation, capacity-building efforts and inclusive approaches to enhance gender equality awareness of crisis responders was also found. While UN-Women's added value is its ability to stretch across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the Entity's operational efforts were not yet recognized as a comparative advantage. To enhance efficiency and internal coherence, the evaluation concluded that action is needed to finalize the draft crisis policy and strategy, and corporate protocols and tools to ensure a clear governance structure and adequate resources for crisis response. The evaluation presented three recommendations, which management accepted and action has already been taken to address them.

IES-led regional evaluation of UN-Women's contributions to women's economic empowerment through private sector engagement
Asia and the Pacific Regional Office

25. The evaluation confirmed that women's economic empowerment is a high priority in the Asia and the Pacific region, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a region that is vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. UN-Women has mobilized private sector actors using integrated approaches to implement measures for women's economic empowerment in the workplace and marketplace. While focus on the formal private sector is a critical and strategic priority within the region, the evaluation concluded that broader priorities for advancing women's economic empowerment across the region need to be better reflected in its regional strategy. The evaluation recommended that UN-Women prioritize how it will work with partners (particularly partners in the United Nations system) to advance women's economic empowerment. UN-Women's attempts to integrate an explicit approach to identifying and engaging marginalized groups in its women's economic empowerment efforts and in engaging partners to support social norms change in the Asia and the Pacific region have been inconsistent. Investment in ensuring adequate governance structures and staffing could help to enhance efficiency in the region. The evaluation proposed four recommendations, all of which were accepted by management.

Joint evaluation of the regional joint programme on EmPower – Gender equality, climate change and disaster risk reduction
Asia and the Pacific Regional Office

26. The EmPower regional project was carried out by UN-Women and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam. The evaluation found EmPower was highly relevant to the priorities and needs of the three countries and also relevant to the broader Asia and the Pacific region. By combining resources, technical expertise and access to partners in government and civil society, UN-Women and UNEP were able to further develop an area of work that is not well understood and garner commitment from key actors. As a cross-cutting joint regional project, EmPower required careful strategic planning, administration and a joint result monitoring framework at both regional and country levels that covered the entire nexus of gender equality, climate change, disaster risk reduction and the environment (renewable energy) to enhance effectiveness and organizational efficiency. The evaluation presented four recommendations, all of which were accepted by management.

Regional evaluation of the Men and Women for Gender Equality Empowerment (MWGE) -Phase II programme
Arab States Regional Office

27. Phases I and II of the Men and Women for Gender Equality Empowerment programme were implemented between 2015 and 2022 in six countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia). The programme aimed to better understand dominant social norms in the Middle East and North Africa region and transform social norms, so that they promote gender equality. The programme was mostly aligned with UN-Women's guidance on engaging men and boys; however, strategies for engaging feminist groups, transforming patriarchal masculinities and developing linkages with wider social and legal change were not fully realized. The programme team responded to various socio-political and economic crises in the implementing countries and was able to capitalize on favourable political developments. Despite multiple beneficiaries sharing examples of positive attitudes towards gender equality and empowerment of women in their households and communities, there was little change in empirical or normative expectations in the wider communities. The evaluation team made 10 recommendations, all of which management accepted.

Regional evaluation of the project Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa Through Climate-Smart Agriculture 2019–2021 [in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda]
East and Southern Africa Regional Office

28. The Climate-Smart Agriculture Project was funded by the Standard Bank Group and aimed to strengthen women's agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agricultural products while closing the gender gap in agricultural productivity and increasing women's access to resources and technology. The evaluation found the project was relevant and addressed the needs and requirements of women beneficiaries in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda, and also enhanced beneficiaries' capacities to effectively participate in climate-smart agriculture and in accessing financial services and markets for their products. Although attempts were made to develop a "Buy from Women" digital platform, women made minimal use of the platform to access markets and finance. The project built strategic partnerships that promoted efficiency and achievement of results in each of the four countries and project management structures and approaches were appropriate overall. The evaluation included five recommendations, all of which were accepted by management.

IES-led Country Portfolio Evaluation
Bolivia Country Office

29. The evaluation found that the portfolio of projects and initiatives developed by the UN-Women Country Office in Bolivia were relevant to the needs of the target population and the country context. With a high level of socio-political polarization, the Country Office remained an impartial actor and assumed a bridge-building role. The Country Office's management of alliances with UN Development System actors was also positively assessed, including its linkages through joint programme work. The evaluation team presented six recommendations, all of which management accepted.

IES-led Country Portfolio Evaluation
Brazil Country Office

30. The evaluation recognized the key role played by UN-Women in Brazil's national gender agenda. UN-Women made significant strides in systematizing the Entity's work modalities by establishing clear procedures and expected results and by adopting stronger accountability practices in the office. The Country Office effectively incorporated populations in situations of vulnerability into its work (e.g. leave no one behind principles), which helped to address deeper causes of inequality. The evaluation also found demand for expanded dialogue on COVID-19 and other issues, and potential for the Country Office to enhance coherence and consistency among its activities. Four recommendations were made, all of which were accepted by management.

IES-led Country Portfolio Evaluation
Nepal Country Office

31. Due to the persistence of societal structures, beliefs, values and harmful practices, the UN-Women Nepal Country Office adopted a framework and holistic strategies for addressing gender-based discrimination and social exclusion. The evaluation concluded that the Country Office has made a substantial contribution to gender equality and social inclusion in Nepal through its layered approach that focused both internally and externally, supporting partners in gender-responsive policy development and programming. The evaluation noted that the Country Office has built expertise in operationalizing intersectional approaches to programming through clear intentions in its strategies and investing in its personnel, and that its adaptive management approach had helped during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the future, more concerted efforts at provincial and local levels are required to maintain relevance within the context of federalization. The Country Office demonstrated how investments in coordination mechanisms and joint programmes can influence partners' advocacy and programming efforts for gender equality and women's empowerment. The evaluation presented seven recommendations, all of which management accepted.

IES-led Country Portfolio Evaluation
Moldova Country Office

32. This formative evaluation was conducted to support the Country Office and national stakeholders' learning and decision-making for the Strategic Note 2023 and offered a retrospective look at enhancing accountability for development, effectiveness and learning. The Country Office demonstrated agility and sustained relevance over the entire period of implementation (2018–2022), operationalizing its theory of change; taking a multistakeholder approach; seizing opportunities for action and engaging in continuous assessment of the relevance of its priorities; and adjusting its work as needed (e.g. to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine). UN-Women's broad coordination efforts, combined with strong expertise, were considered effective. Strategic engagement with SIDA and the EU provided a solid foundation for the internal sustainability of the office; however, the reliance mostly on two large development presents risk. The evaluation presented eight recommendations, all of which were accepted by management.

IES-led Country Portfolio Evaluation
Egypt Country Office

33. The evaluation found the Country Office had sustained its relevance over implementation of the Strategic Note 2018–2022; demonstrated agility by adjusting

its programmes to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic; and continued to deliver results despite frequent changes in leadership. However, the evaluation noted room to further consolidate the Country Office's portfolio; avoid potential mandate overlap in EVAW; secure funding; and aim for innovation. The Country Office was regarded as an expert partner in gender equality and women's empowerment by the government, UN Country Team partners, and private sector among other stakeholders; and played a convening role between government and civil society organizations. Nevertheless, a more holistic approach to activities to influence social norms; identifying and targeting the most vulnerable groups; and ensuring a monitoring and feedback system to track transformative changes would strengthen the Country Office's results. The evaluation offered six recommendations, of which management accepted four and partially accepted two.

Country Portfolio Evaluation
Tanzania Country Office

34. The evaluation concluded that the Country Office's positioning and programme was strategic, relevant and aligned with the government's existing and emerging international, regional and national commitments in furthering gender equality and women's leadership/political participation, women's economic empowerment, and gender issues across Tanzania. Implementation of the Strategic Note enabled the Country Office to explore areas of work within its corporate experience and expertise with women lawmakers and judges, the private sector, academic/research institutions, financial institutions, implementing partners and for skills development. While the Country Office effectively supported the integration of a gender perspective in several sectoral policies and in the review of the National Gender Development Policy (2000) in the Mainland, it needs a clear strategy for selecting priorities related to gender equality and women's empowerment work and processes to effectively support partners in achieving transformative and sustained impact. The evaluation proposed five recommendations, all of which were accepted by management.

Country Portfolio Evaluation
Malawi Country Office

35. During 2018–2021, the Country Office worked across four areas: gender-based governance; women's economic empowerment; EVAWG; and humanitarian action. The portfolio contributed to institutionalizing gender statistics in the government's strategic planning process; to women increasing their food security and economic independence; to the development and enactment of gender policies, such as the increase in the minimum marriage age. The evaluation concluded that the portfolio was relevant, and largely effective and coherent, though more could be done in the areas of women's political participation. Resources were spread too thinly across many implementing partners and short-term projects. The evaluation recommended that UN-Women streamline and consolidate its portfolio; undertake more strategic selection and stronger due diligence of its programme partners; maximize use of existing gender coordination platforms; and build a robust mechanism for greater participation of beneficiaries and local structures in intervention design, implementation and monitoring. The evaluation offered 16 recommendations, all of which were accepted by management.

Country Portfolio Evaluation
Zimbabwe Country Office

36. The Country Office used its mandate to strategically position itself as the institution of choice supporting the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, including by leveraging joint programmes to improve funding for

Zimbabwe’s country portfolio and leveraging the One UN approach where goals overlapped. While the Country Office strengthened its position in the country’s gender equality space, the evaluation concluded that more could be done to strengthen the gender machinery. For example, there were concerns that UN-Women programmes were too small to make national-level changes in the targeted areas and that other players expected UN-Women to take on fundraising for the gender sector in Zimbabwe. The evaluation also noted that inadequate funding has made it difficult for UN-Women to access the necessary skills, knowledge and capacities to deliver its portfolio in the country. The evaluation proposed eight recommendations, all of which were accepted by management.

V. Performance of the evaluation function in UN-Women

37. UN-Women uses performance monitoring systems to promote transparency and accountability of evaluations and to report on the performance of the evaluation function against KPIs. Table 1 shows the results for 2022 and the targets set for 2025. Further details and analysis on the indicators may be found in the relevant sub-section.

Table 1. Evaluation KPIs and target for UN-Women’s Strategic Plan 2022–2025

Key performance indicator	Description	2022	Target (by 2025)
Financial resources invested in evaluation function	Evaluation expenditure over UN-Women programme expenditure (%)	1.9	Between 2.0-3.0 ²
Human resources for monitoring and evaluation	Offices that appointed an M&E Focal Point or Officer (%)	98	100
Evaluation coverage	At least one evaluation per Strategic Note cycle (%)	93	100
Evaluation implementation rate	Percentage of evaluations being implemented (%)	92	100
Quality of evaluation reports	Percentage of evaluation reports rated “Good and above” (%)	86	100
Joint evaluations ³	Percentage of joint evaluations contributed by UN-Women (%)	29	25
Management response submission to GATE	Percentage of completed evaluation reports submitted with management response to GATE (%)	100	100
Implementation of management response	Percentage of management response key actions being implemented (%)	91	95
Use of evaluations	Percentage of offices that reported using evaluation (%)	87	95

² The revised Evaluation Policy (2020) recommends that UN-Women allocate between 2 and 3 per cent of its total programme expenditure to the evaluation function.

³ The evaluation KPI on joint evaluation tracks UN-Women’s contribution to all joint evaluations and initiatives, including independent, system-wide evaluation at the global level and UNSDCF evaluations.

Key performance indicator 1: Financial resources**Table 2. Evaluation Function Expenditure, 2019–2022 (US\$)**

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total UN-Women programme expenditure	326,069,512	341,366,277	431,794,597	441,317,504
Total expenditure on evaluation	6,359,651	6,388,787	7,961,194	8,224,073
IES/IEAS	3,433,020	3,441,396	3,619,149	3,800,044
Decentralized evaluations ^a	2,926,630	2,947,391	4,342,044	4,424,029
Total expenditure (%)	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.9

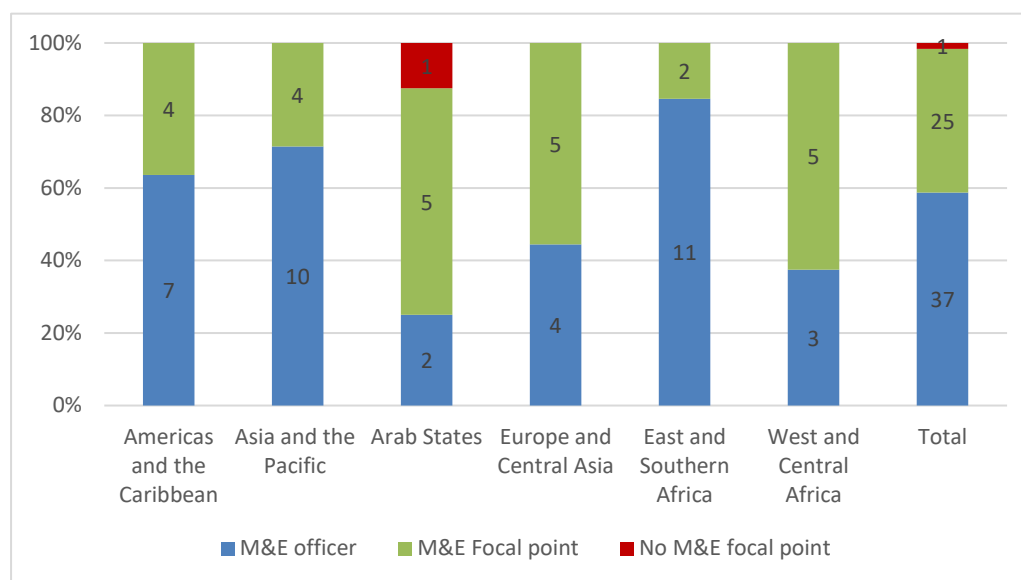
Source: “Total UN-Women programme expenditure” and “IES expenditure” values were generated from ATLAS by the Division of Management and Administration (DMA). Values for decentralized evaluations were calculated based on figures by DMA and supplemented by IES data.

38. In 2022, UN Women’s expenditure on evaluations was estimated at US\$8.22 million, based on the data provided by the Division of Management and Administration and reviewed by IES to the extent possible for completeness and consistency. This represents a 3% increase compared to UN-Women’s 2021 evaluation expenditures (2022: US\$8.22 million, 2021: US\$7.96 million) driven by the spending on evaluation at both corporate and decentralized levels, while UN-Women’s total programme expenditure increased by 2%, from US\$431.8 million in 2021 to US\$441.3 million in 2022. This may reflect a greater investment in IES-led strategic evaluations as well as the increased interest and conduct of the evaluations commissioned by the Country Offices at the decentralized level. As a result, the evaluation expenditure ratio to UN Women’s program expenditure has marginally increased to 1.9%, compared to 1.8% in 2021.

Key performance indicator 2: Human resources

39. In 2022, IES remained under the leadership of the Chief, Evaluation and the Director, IEAS. Evaluation activities were implemented by six Evaluation staff at headquarters and six Regional Evaluation Specialists based in UN-Women Regional Offices but reporting to the Chief, Evaluation. Evaluations were also supported by individual consultants and interns. In 2022, the Regional Evaluation Specialist for the East and Southern Africa region and an Evaluation Data Specialist joined the team.

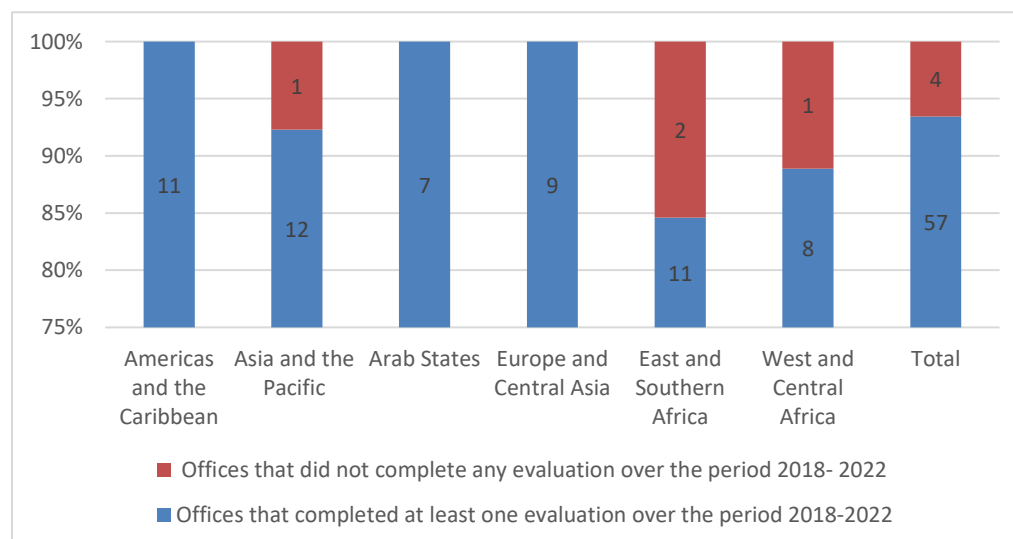
40. At the decentralized level, 98 per cent of UN-Women Country and Regional Offices had at least one Monitoring and Evaluation officer or focal point (compared to 98 per cent in 2021); one office in the Arab States region was the only exception, but it was in the process of appointing one at the time of writing this report (see Figure 1). Of the 63 offices, 59 per cent (37/63) had at least one Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, and 40 per cent (25/63) had at least one Monitoring and Evaluation focal point. To strengthen and continue building monitoring and evaluation capacity at the country level, IES recommends appointing Monitoring and Evaluation Officers as dedicated personnel to support evaluation activities in large and medium size offices, rather than temporarily assigning Monitoring and Evaluation focal points or managing with insufficient capacity.

Figure 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Officers/Focal Points by region in 2022

Source: Global Evaluation Oversight System

Key performance indicator 3: Evaluation coverage

41. The revised Evaluation Policy and evaluation coverage norms require adequate coverage of key UN-Women programmatic and operational areas through evaluation. Between 2018 and 2022, 93 per cent of Regional and Country Offices completed at least one evaluation (compared to 97 per cent in 2021) over their strategic note cycle. Four Country Offices had not completed evaluations within the prescribed period (see Figure 2). However, of these four offices, one Country Office has already completed an evaluation in Q1 of 2023 and two Country Offices have planned evaluations for 2023 with active involvement and support from IES, particularly through Country Portfolio Evaluations led by IES.

Figure 2. Evaluation coverage by region, by strategic note cycle, over the period 2018–2022

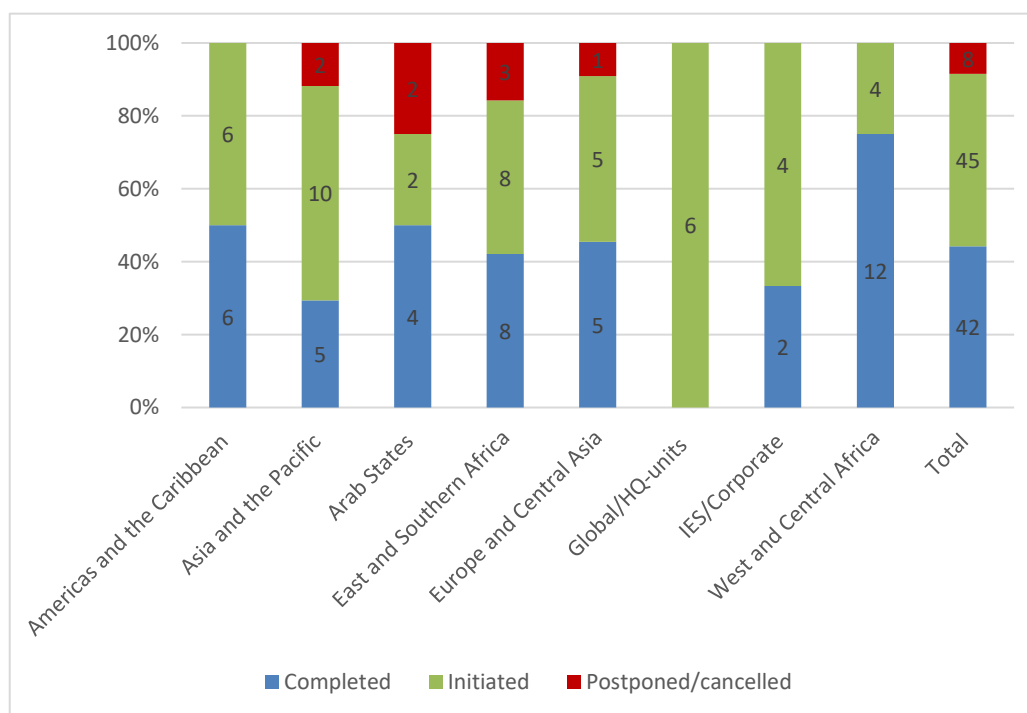
Source: Global Evaluation Oversight System

Key performance indicator 4: Implementation rate of planned evaluations

42. IES prepares an annual global evaluation plan to track and monitor the implementation status of planned evaluations based on the Monitoring, Research and Evaluation Plan developed by business units and the validation process led by the Regional Evaluation Specialists. IES also conducts a mid-year review of the global evaluation plan in close consultation with Country and Regional Offices to make necessary adjustments to the planned activities.

43. In 2022, of the 95 planned evaluations, 42 (44 per cent) were completed (compared to 45 per cent in 2021). An additional 45 (47 per cent) were initiated and were at varying stages of implementation (compared to 52 per cent in 2021). Eight evaluations (8 per cent) were postponed or cancelled (see Figure 3). Overall, the total number of evaluations conducted by UN-Women increased in 2022, continuing UN-Women's upwards trajectory since 2020. The most frequent reasons for evaluations being cancelled included merging individually planned evaluations into overarching thematic or strategic evaluations and determining whether a planned evaluation should be changed to another type of assessment. Some evaluations were postponed due to project extensions or external factors, such as security concerns.

Figure 3. Evaluation implementation rate for 2022



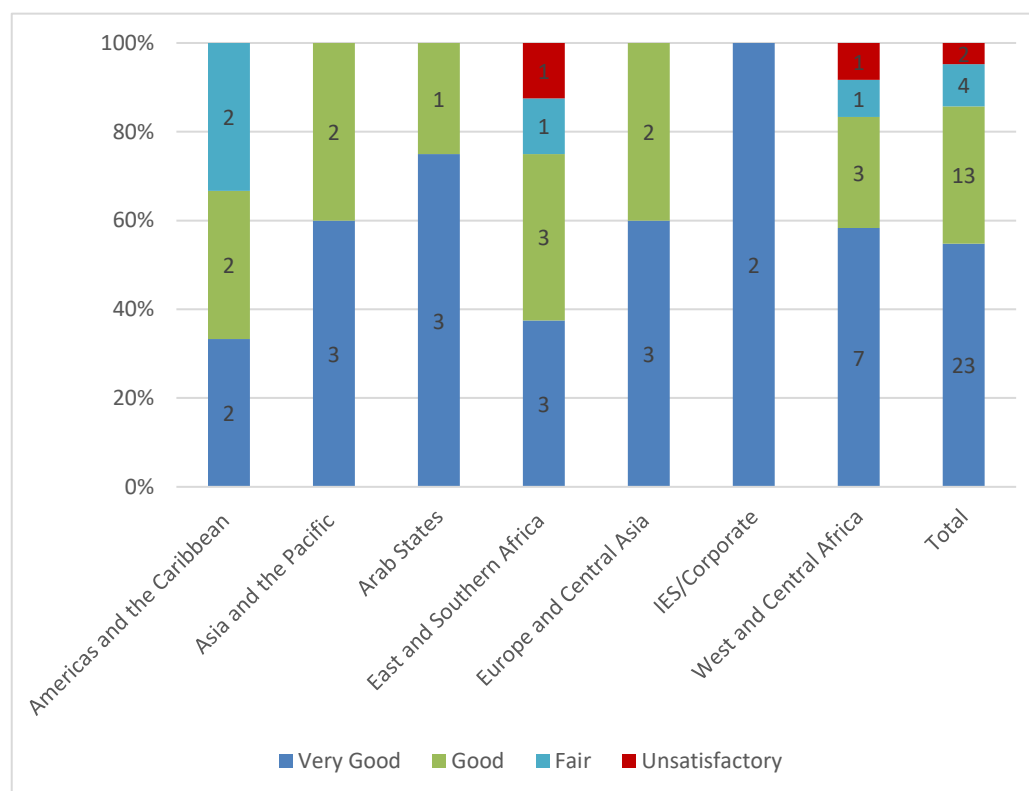
Source: Global Evaluation Oversight System

Key performance indicator 5: Quality of evaluation reports

44. Of the 42 UN-Women evaluations completed in 2022, 36 reports (86 per cent) received an external rating of 'Good and above' based on the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System standards (compared to 98 per cent in 2021), reflecting a slight drop in report quality of decentralized evaluations. All corporate and IES-led strategic evaluations conducted in 2022 were rated as 'Very Good.' While the number of decentralized evaluations commissioned by Country Offices is increasing, challenges related to high turnover among personnel and limited

capacity to manage good-quality evaluations persist. IES will continue providing technical support and internal capacity-building efforts by promoting the conduct of strategic evaluations based on organizational needs and advocating for limiting the number of donor-driven, small-scale evaluations which affect transaction costs.

Figure 4. Quality of evaluation reports, 2022



Source: Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System

Key performance indicator 6: Joint evaluations

45. The UN system is utilizing joint evaluations to enhance system-wide coherence and to direct and inform collaborative programming and initiatives. The degree of cooperation among entities involved in joint evaluations varies, but UN-Women has increasingly engaged in conducting joint evaluations in recent years. To better monitor UN-Women's progress in joint evaluations, a corporate-level Strategic Plan indicator aligned with the UN system-wide QCR indicator was included in the 2022–2025 UN-Women Strategic Plan Results Framework. In 2022, UN-Women was involved in 33 joint evaluation initiatives, approximately 29 per cent of the total evaluations undertaken throughout the year. Among these joint evaluations, seven were completed under the leadership or co-management of UN-Women; two were independent system-wide joint evaluations (including one that reached completion) at the global level; and eight were UNSDCF evaluations implemented across different regions. Section VI provides more information on UN-Women's participation in joint evaluation activities and key initiatives in 2022.

Key performance indicator 7: Management response submission to GATE

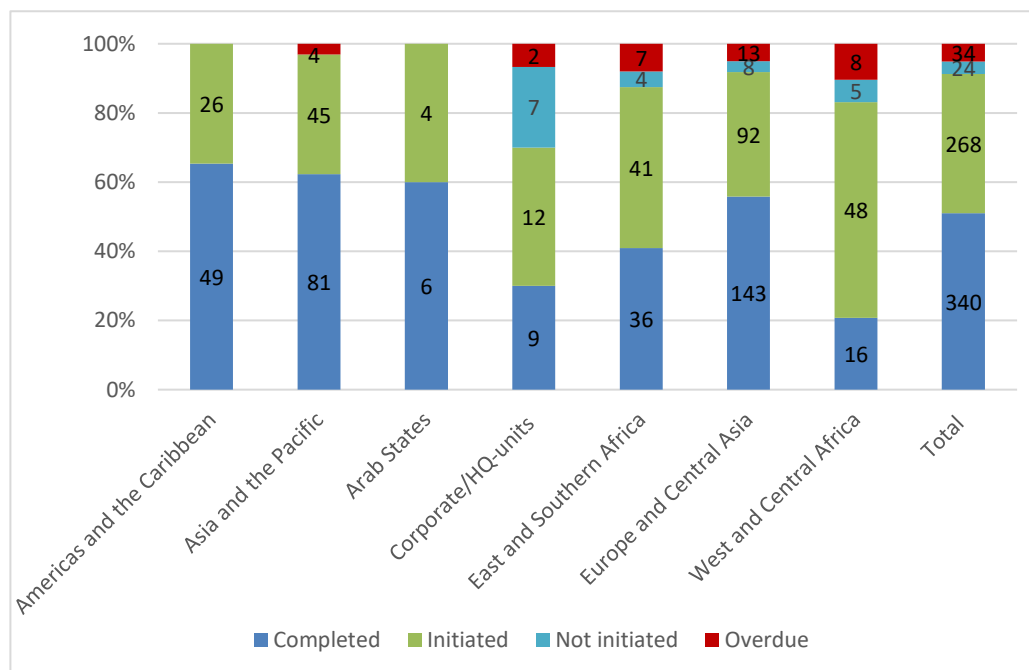
46. A management response for each evaluation is one of the key steps of the evaluation process. The management response helps to enhance accountability, transparency and learning by encouraging UN-Women to reflect on the evaluation

recommendations and identify areas for improvement. In this regard, UN-Women offices are expected to complete and upload management responses in the GATE system within six weeks of finalization of any evaluation report. Of the 42 completed evaluations in 2022, all of them had a management response at the time of this report, which is an improvement compared to 97 per cent in 2021. At the same time, IES noted challenges concerning management’s capacity to prepare and approve management responses in GATE in a timely manner. IES will continue monitoring the timeliness and completion of management responses with support from its Regional Evaluation Specialists who will follow up with Country Offices and Regional Directors regularly.

Key performance indicator 8: Implementation status of management response/key actions

47. In response to the 42 UN-Women evaluations completed in 2021, management committed to a total of 666 key actions.⁴ Of these 666 key actions, as of January 2023 340 (51 per cent) were reported as implemented, 268 (40 per cent) were in progress, 24 (4 per cent) had not been initiated, and 34 (5 per cent) were considered overdue (see Figure 5). The implementation rate increased compared to previous years overall (in 2021 the overall figure was 85 per cent), which reflects the organization’s uptake of evaluation recommendations and timely implementation. A closer analysis of the evaluations revealed that the Americas and the Caribbean and Arab States regions had the highest implementation rate, having completed or initiated all key commitments at the time of writing this report. The Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and East and Southern Africa regions followed in terms of implementation rate.

Figure 5: Management response implementation rate, as of January 2023



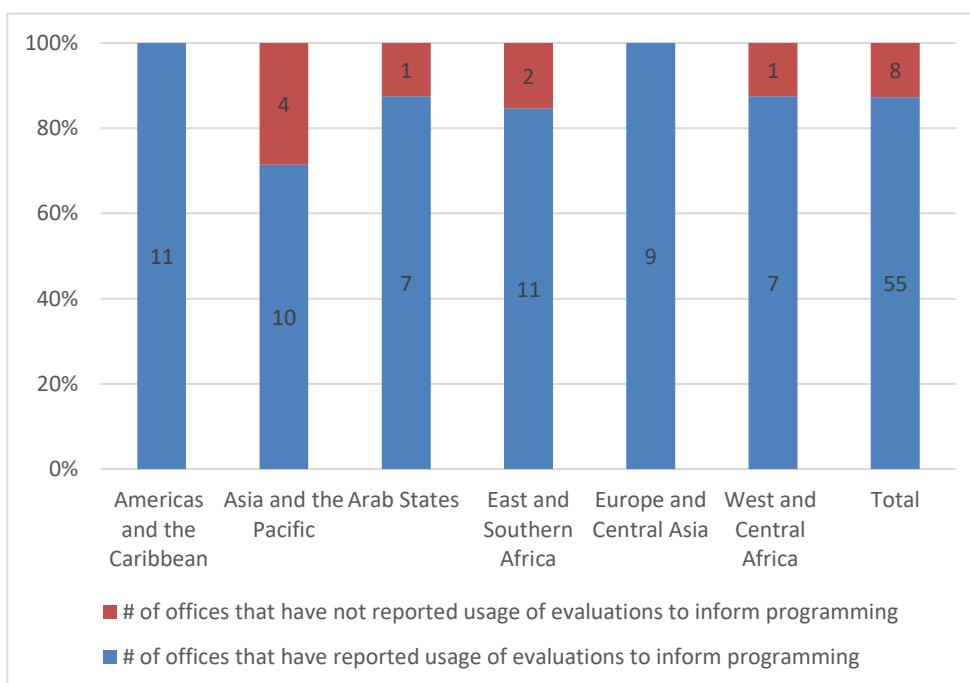
Source: Global Evaluation Oversight System

⁴ This does not include 28 key actions marked as ‘no longer applicable’.

Key performance indicator 9: Use of evaluation to inform programming

48. Based on the annual reporting data collected from UN-Women’s Results Management System, a majority of field offices (87 per cent) leveraged the evidence and lessons learned from recent evaluations to inform their programming and interventions (compared to 94 per cent in 2021).⁵ Notably, evaluations played a critical role in informing strategic planning processes at the country level, including in the development of Strategic Notes (e.g. Egypt, Nepal, Kenya, Moldova and Morocco and formulation of the subsequent UNSDCF’s (e.g. Albania, Brazil and Moldova). The insights drawn from evaluations also helped to strengthen UN-Women’s programming approach and identify emerging opportunities for some Country Offices (e.g. Bangladesh, Jordan, Mozambique and Ecuador). It was reported that evaluations have facilitated improved resource mobilization efforts in certain countries (e.g. Cameroon, Malawi, and Pakistan) and enhanced UN-Women’s policies and operational procedures in other countries and across regions.

Figure 6. Use of evaluation to inform programming, 2022



Source: UN Women Results Management System

VI. Working in partnership for gender-responsive evaluation

Strengthening gender-responsive evaluation within the UN system

49. In 2022, IES continued to serve as co-convenor of the Gender Equality, Disability and Human Rights working group of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). The working group contributes to developing and promoting common methodologies, guidance and approaches in UNEG norms and standards related to gender equality, disability inclusion and human rights. IES led the working group in implementing a workplan, which included the ongoing revision and update of the UNEG Gender Equality & Human Rights guidance. The working group also produced

⁵ The information is derived from the answer given to the open-ended questions in the 2022 UN-Women Annual Reporting process.

a guide for the integration of disability inclusion in evaluations and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy reporting in 2022, which was launched during a webinar in February 2022 and followed up with a session on implementation of the guidance in October 2022.

50. At the regional level, UN-Women led the UN Network for Evaluation in Sub-Saharan Africa working group responsible for providing technical support to UNSCDF evaluations. In the Asia and the Pacific region, UN-Women also contributed to the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP) training programme, “Unravelling the potential of evaluation”, focusing on managing high-quality evaluations. UN-Women continued to co-lead the UN Evaluation Network in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote quality coordination and technical support for UN evaluations across the region.

Joint evaluation initiatives for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women

51. IES continued to promote UN system coherence, coordination and accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women through its engagement with system-wide evaluations and joint evaluations. At the global level, UN-Women commenced an inter-agency synthesis of UN system evaluations related to SDG 5, which is being jointly conducted with the evaluation offices of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. The purpose of this exercise is to gather UN evaluative evidence and lessons to support learning and decision-making for future policy and programming on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

52. UN-Women provided technical inputs to several UNSDCF evaluations – Lesotho, Malawi, Gambia, Papua New Guinea, Bolivia and Brazil; advocated for the integration of gender into the UNSDCF evaluations; and supported inter-agency coordination between UNSDCF evaluations and agency independent country-portfolio evaluations. For instance, in Brazil, an evaluation found that the UN Inter-agency Gender, Race and Ethnicity Group constituted a strong practice for joint work, complemented by tools such as the UNCT-SWAP Gender and Race Equality scorecard.

UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Evaluation Performance Indicator (UN-SWAP EPI)

53. In its role as secretariat for the UN-SWAP EPI, UN-Women reviewed annual submissions and provided support on the application of technical guidance to all reporting entities. UN-Women also prepared an annual report on progress and best practices for improving gender mainstreaming in evaluations. Based on UN-SWAP EPI reporting in 2022, there was an increase in the proportion of reporting entities exceeding requirements. As in previous years, UN-Women carried out an external assessment for the UN-SWAP EPI based on 42 evaluations undertaken by UN-Women in 2022. Overall, UN-Women evaluations “exceeded the requirements” in terms of integrating gender equality and empowerment of women in evaluations. Of the 42 evaluations assessed, 36 evaluations (86 per cent) “met the requirements” and the remaining 6 evaluations (14 per cent) “approached the requirements,” with most parameters met. In addition, UN-Women conducted strategic gender evaluations that contributed to EPI rating as “exceeded the requirements”.

Leveraging partnership for National Evaluation Capacity Development

54. In 2022, UN-Women actively participated in the EvalPartners High Level Task Force supporting Member States in developing a new UN resolution on *Promoting Country-led Evaluation on the SDGs at the National Level*. Various meetings and

events were planned to advocate for the resolution, including a Voluntary National Review Lab during the 2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. All resources related to evaluation as a tool for voluntary national reviews are located in the [UN DESA database of tools](#) as a knowledge gateway for Member States.

55. UN-Women continued to co-chair EvalGender+ focusing on advocacy; production of knowledge products related to gender-responsive evaluation; support to small grants for innovation; and sharing best practices and experiences. UN-Women and EvalGender+ published an analysis of voluntary national reviews from an equity-focused and gender-responsive perspective which was presented at nine events throughout 2022 to advocate for increased use of gender-responsive evaluative evidence that can better inform country-led national policies, strategies and plans. In 2022, UN-Women signed a memorandum of understanding with the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) and joined this strategic alliance supporting gender-sensitive evaluation capacity development at a global level. Through this partnership, UN-Women aims to scale its national evaluation capacity development efforts together with UNDP and the World Bank as co-leads of GEI as well as other partners within this multi-stakeholder initiative.

56. UN-Women also supported gender-responsive evaluation policies and frameworks at the regional level throughout 2022. For example, in the East and Southern Africa region, UN-Women peer-reviewed South Africa's national gender-responsive evaluation guidance and the Africa Regional Evaluation Association's African Evaluation Principles to enhance their technical approach, applicability and usability. In the Asia and the Pacific region, UN-Women participated in an online session focused on equity, the SDGs and gender-responsive evaluation to promote the uptake of tools, methods and indicators that measure progress and enhance capabilities for gender-responsive evaluation. UN-Women also supported the integration of a gender perspective into the National Evaluation Capacity Index methodology, an ongoing multi-stakeholder initiative across the Americas and Caribbean region supported by partners such as the World Food Programme and DEval.

VII. 2023 IES Programme of Work

57. In 2023, IES will continue to work on the following five key areas, ensuring evaluations are adapted in response to any emerging priorities and changing contexts:

Strategic evaluations and activities at the corporate level

58. IES will complete two corporate evaluations to be presented to the Executive Board in its 2023–2024 sessions: (i) a corporate evaluation of UN-Women's support to women's economic empowerment by advancing gender-responsive laws, frameworks, policies and partnerships; and (ii) a corporate evaluation of UN-Women's work in the area of Governance and Participation in Public Life. Additionally, UN-Women will complete a joint system-wide synthesis of SDG 5 in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. It will initiate and conduct a meta-synthesis of evaluations on advocacy and communications and a corporate evaluation of UN-Women's support to women, peace and security and humanitarian action. IES will also finalize three formative evaluations on: (i) climate change; (ii) civil society; (iii) gender statistics and data; and will initiate an evaluation on financing for gender equality. These evaluations will be presented for the consideration of UN-Women management and partners and will be detailed in upcoming annual reports on the evaluation function.

Strategic evaluations and technical assistance at the decentralized level

59. The IES Regional Evaluation Specialists will conduct approximately 14 strategic regional evaluations and country portfolio evaluations in 2023. IES will also continue to strengthen decentralized systems by providing technical support to programme/project evaluations and joint evaluations led and owned by the respective country, regional and headquarters offices. IES will continue to maintain the Global Evaluation and Oversight System; track evaluation KPIs; organize the external assessment of the quality of decentralized evaluation reports; and develop staff capacity and a culture of evaluation through training and coaching.

Partnerships with UN system and national stakeholders to promote gender-responsive evaluations

60. IES will actively engage in UN system-wide evaluations to ensure that evaluations have a gender lens and will participate in multiple joint evaluation activities. IES will contribute to the Global Sustainable Development Goals Synthesis coalition and engage in an advisory capacity in the system-wide evaluation of the Spotlight Initiative.

61. IES will also contribute to UNEG initiatives and activities, regional evaluation groups and UNSDCF evaluations. It will participate in 10 UNEG working groups and play a leadership role by co-convening the UNEG Gender Equality, Disability and Human Rights working group. IES will continue to lead the report on the UN-SWAP EPI and serve as a 'gender desk' for UNEG.

62. IES will provide targeted national gender-responsive evaluation capacity development through EvalGender+ and the GEI. It will explore opportunities to provide technical support to country-led evaluations of gender strategies and actions plans.

Strengthening evaluation use and communication

63. IES will continue to provide evidence to support implementation of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025 by leveraging its participation in the Senior Management team, Business Review Committee and other strategic meetings. Communication materials, webinars on evaluation findings and social media platforms will also continue to serve as important means of disseminating evaluation findings and recommendations to UN-Women and broader audiences. To enhance the utility of IES-led strategic and decentralized evaluations further, IES will monitor the degree of evaluation use in key strategic planning documents and organizational processes.

Budget for the IES 2023 Programme of Work

64. As in previous years, the 2023 budget for IES is US\$ 3,431,000. The budget consists of institutional budget (US\$ 2,281,000) and core programmable resources (US\$ 1,150,000).

Annex 1 UN-Women evaluations completed in 2022

Region	Office/ Division	Evaluation	Report Quality Rating
West and Central Africa	Central African Republic	1. Communication et sensibilisation pour la cohésion sociale en RCA from Central African Republic	Very Good
		2. Final evaluation of project “Femmes, agriculture et changements climatiques pour la paix”	Very Good
	Guinea Bissau	3. Final evaluation of ‘Peace Building Fund Women’s and Youth Political Participation’	Very Good
	Liberia	4. Evaluation report of Advancing implementation of UN Security Council Resolution on Women Peace and Security	Good
	Mali	5. Initiatives transfrontalières de dialogue communautaire (Mali et Niger)	Very Good
		6. Mid-term evaluation of “Access of women to agriculture resilient to climate change”	Good
	Niger	7. Final evaluation of ‘Migration and Productive Capacities in Kantche/Zinder’	Fair
		8. Final evaluation of ‘Protecting the Rights of Migrant Women in the Tahoua Region’	Unsatisfactory
	Nigeria	9. End of project evaluation of the programme on Women, Peace and Security in Nigeria	Very Good
		10. Enhancing gender-responsive security operations and community dialogue	Good
		11. Preventing Forced Migration and Trafficking in Women and Girls in Nigeria	Very Good
	Senegal	12. Mid-term evaluation of ‘Sustainable Development in Agriculture (AGRIFED)’	Very Good
Europe and Central Asia	Albania	13. Joint evaluation of the Ending Violence Against Women Programme	Very Good
	Georgia	14. Evaluation of the Joint SDG Programme	Good
	Kyrgyzstan	15. Evaluation of the Joint UN Programme Empowering Women and Girls affected by migration for inclusive development and peace building	Good
	Moldova	16. IES-led Country portfolio evaluation	Very Good
	North Macedonia	17. Final Evaluation of the “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”	Very Good
East and Southern Africa	Regional Office for East and Southern Africa	18. Final evaluation of ‘Climate Smart Agriculture project funded by Standard Bank [in Uganda, Malawi, South Africa, Nigeria]’	Fair
	Malawi	19. Country portfolio evaluation	Good
	Somalia	20. End of program evaluation: Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) in Somalia	Good
	South Sudan	21. Promoting Resilience, Self-Reliance and Social Cohesion among Displaced Populations and Host Communities With Focus On Women And Girls In South Sudan and Mali	Unsatisfactory
	Tanzania	22. Evaluation of the Tanzania Country Office Strategic Note 2017–2021	Very Good

	Uganda	23. Final evaluation of SCR 1325 WPS project – “Women Lead and Benefit from Sustainable and Inclusive Peace and Security in Uganda”	Very Good
	Zimbabwe	24. Mid-term evaluation of the Engendering Governance to Promote Peace and Security in Zimbabwe	Good
		25. Country portfolio evaluation	Very Good
Asia and the Pacific	Multi-Country Office Fiji	26. End evaluation of the Gender Inequality of Risk	Good
	Nepal	27. IES-led Country portfolio evaluation	Very Good
	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	28. IES-led Regional evaluation on crisis response	Very Good
		29. Joint regional evaluation of the EmPower programme	Good
		30. IES-led Regional evaluation on Women’s Economic Empowerment	Very Good
Arab States	Egypt	31. IES-led country portfolio evaluation	Very Good
		32. End-term evaluation: Phase I Safe Cities programme	Very Good
	Lebanon	33. End-term Evaluation of the Protection Component of “Women’s Economic Empowerment” (WEE) Interventions	Good
	Regional Office for Arab States	34. Final evaluation of Men and Women for Gender Equality Empowerment (MWGE)-Phase II programme	Very Good
Americas and the Caribbean	Argentina	35. One Win Leads to Another	Fair
	Bolivia	36. IES-led Country portfolio evaluation	Very Good
	Brazil	37. IES-led Country portfolio evaluation	Very Good
	Colombia	38. USAID Project: End Gender-based violence	Good
		39. Safe cities (Medellín and other cities)	Good
	Guatemala	40. Creating new avenues of resilience to sustain peace: Kaqchiquel, Q’eqchi’ and mestizo women pathfinders for peace at the center	Fair
Corporate/ IES	Independent Evaluation Service (IES)	41. Corporate evaluation on UN-Women’s policy advocacy work	Very Good
		42. Corporate evaluation on capacity development	Very Good