



Notes from the fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) to strengthen the PCB's monitoring and evaluation role on zero tolerance against harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and abuse of power at UNAIDS

DATE: 16 April 2019

VENUE: "Virtual" meeting and Conference Room 4, UNAIDS Headquarters, Geneva

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The Chair opened the meeting and introduced the topic, restating the task of the working group relating to evaluation, namely: *“The Working Group should also consider and discuss the role and importance of an independent evaluation function in efforts to strengthen organisational change, accountability and transparency more broadly. The views of the Working Group will be reflected in UNAIDS revised evaluation policy to be presented at the 44th PCB.”* The Chair clarified that the purpose of the meeting was to ensure a common understanding of the status of the UNAIDS Evaluation Strategy and to define how the Working Group could best add value.

2. PRESENTATION BY UNAIDS SECRETARIAT DIRECTOR OF EVALUATION

2. UNAIDS Secretariat Director of Evaluation presented an overview of the history leading to the establishment of an independent evaluation function at UNAIDS, as outlined in the draft Evaluation Policy. He highlighted steps taken to date to strengthen evaluation, roles and responsibilities and presented the “evaluation architecture” or relationships between the various entities involved. These include: the PCB, an Expert Advisory Committee, the Co-sponsor Evaluation Group (a sub-set of the UN system-wide UN Evaluation Group) and the UNAIDS Secretariat Evaluation Office).
3. In relation to the role of the Working Group, the Director of Evaluation proposed that the working group could focus on three aspects outlined in the draft policy, these being: the institutional architecture of the evaluation function; the composition of the expert advisory committee; and the annual budget to be allocated to evaluation.
4. Working group members offered a series of questions and comments to which the Director of Evaluation responded, summarized below. Working group members appreciated the significant collaborative work reflected in the current Evaluation Policy draft.
 - a. Q: Paragraph 47 of the draft policy indicates that the Director of Evaluation may serve for a maximum of 5 years and then cannot be re-employed by UNAIDS Secretariat in any other capacity. Is this standard across the UN system?
 - i. A: Indeed, this is based on the experience of and good practice in other UN system organizations and is the current standard for Directors of evaluation in order to ensure and reaffirm the independence of the position and its functions.
 - b. Q: Paragraphs 53 and 54 refer to the membership of the proposed Expert Advisory Committee. To clarify, the Director of Evaluation is not a member of this advisory committee – is that correct?
 - i. A: That is correct. The Evaluation Office serves as a Secretariat to the Expert Advisory Committee.
 - c. Q: Any comments on the proposal to allocate 1% of UNAIDS Secretariat annual expenditures to Evaluation (within the range of 0.5% to 3% of annual organizational expenditures, recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit).
 - i. A: The proposed 1%, amounting to about \$2 million per year, to cover the staff costs, evaluation costs and activities to build an evaluation culture, is deemed to be both feasible in the current climate and useful, as a starting point, which can be assessed and adjusted based on experience over time.

- d. Q: What is the evolution of investment in evaluation at the UNAIDS Secretariat over time?
 - i. A: Given that 2018-2019 is the first biennium that evaluation expenditures are accounted separately from expenditures related to performance monitoring, there is not yet an established pattern to report over time.

- e. Q: Is the proposed architecture sufficiently independent to investigate anything needed, including culture change with relation to harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, with which this working group is tasked?
 - i. A: The Director of Evaluation reports directly to the PCB and has significant independence from the UNAIDS Secretariat, including to evaluate culture change over time. The selected evaluations should include a mix of those related to the UNAIDS Secretariat itself and then others which cover the Joint Programme.

- f. Q: Are the proposed resources and staffing sufficient?
 - i. A: As a starting place, this is a significant increase in investment on evaluation and a good starting point, to be reassessed over time. In addition, co-sponsoring organizations intend to make their own evaluation staff capacity available to support UNAIDS-related evaluations.

- g. On the composition of the advisory committee, we note the proposal to include only 3 Member States and 1 Co-sponsor. Is this still open for discussion? Would the 3 Member States be the same as from the PCB Bureau? Would the NGO member have to be from those formally appointed to the PCB, who are not selected for having evaluation expertise?
 - i. Overall, this recommendation is based on the experience of both UNAIDS and other co-sponsoring organizations to keep the Expert Advisory Committee small. All Expert Advisory Committee members are intended to bring significant evaluation expertise.
 - ii. On the question of Member States, the period of service on the Expert Advisory Committee is 2 years, so there will be an opportunity to rotate membership across regions over time.
 - iii. On the question about co-sponsoring organizations, all Co-sponsors are already included in the Co-Sponsor Evaluation Group, which is a part of the proposed UNAIDS evaluation architecture. So the intention was not to duplicate that structure, but to create a mechanism for the Co-Sponsor Evaluation Group to be represented in the Expert Advisory Committee.
 - iv. On the NGO question, the intention is that NGO delegations identify someone from civil society with the required evaluation expertise to represent them, but that the person need not be an existing formally appointed NGO delegate to the PCB. This can be clarified in communication about the Expert Advisory Committee membership.

- h. How does communication happen between the independent Evaluation Office and the UNAIDS Secretariat?
 - i. The Evaluation Office communicates with staff of UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors in several ways. This includes seeking feedback on the evaluation policy, biennial evaluation plan and evaluations that directly concern them. UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsor staff (as relevant) are required to respond to evaluation recommendations and

prepare a management response. The Evaluation Office also engages with the Secretariat and Cosponsors to promote the use of evaluations and build evaluation capacity as well as awareness.

5. Summarizing the meeting overall, the Chair indicated that the group had met the goals of the meeting, having established a common understanding of the UNAIDS Evaluation Policy draft, and having identified a role of value, in developing a common Working Group position and preparing this for presentation at the 44th session of the PCB. In doing so the intention is for the Working Group's presentation to support the understanding of the PCB about this well-developed Evaluation Policy, and to encourage its adoption, as a good and important step in strengthening UNAIDS evaluation function, to be continuously reviewed and updated over time.
6. The Chair further stated that the issue of evaluation would be included on the agenda of the upcoming face-to-face meeting, for conclusion.

3. FUTURE WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

7. The Chair confirmed that the Working Group would meet again remotely on Tuesday, 23 April for a first discussion related to Item 4 of its scope of work, that is: "Recommend options for enhanced reporting on strategic human resources management issues to the Programme Coordinating Board including through strengthening the coherence of existing reporting systems (UBRAF performance and financial reporting and the update on strategic human resources management issues as well as internal and external auditor reports."
8. The Chair also confirmed that the Working Group will meet in person at UNAIDS in Geneva from 9am to 5pm on Thursday 25 April 2019. The Chair thanked those members who had been able to move prior commitments in order to make this a feasible meeting date.
9. The Chair closed the meeting.

