

MANAGEMENT REPOSE TO THE ANNUAL REPORT ON EVALUATION

Additional documents for this item: Annual report on evaluation: UNAIDS/PCB (51)/22.34

Action required at this meeting—the Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

See draft decision points in the paragraphs below.

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19. *Recall* decision points 7.3 and 7.4 of the 49th session Programme Coordinating Board, which *inter alia*
 - a. welcomed continued progress in the implementation of the Evaluation Policy and,
 - b. taking into account the financial situation of the organization, reiterated decision point 9.3 of the 47th session of the Board requesting the Executive Director to ensure that the evaluation function remains adequately resourced and staffed in accordance with the Evaluation Policy approved by the Board in decision 6.6 of its 44th session,
 - c. approved the 2022–2023 Evaluation Plan (UNAIDS/PCB (49)/21.28) and looked forward to the annual report on evaluation to be presented to the Programme Coordinating Board in 2022;
20. *Welcome* progress in implementing the Evaluation Plan notwithstanding constraints faced due to UNAIDS's financial situation;
21. Take note of the management response UNAIDS /PCB (51)/22.35;
22. Take note that the Executive Director has considered options to resource the Evaluation Office in the current context of UNAIDS funding situation; and
23. *Look forward* to the next annual report on evaluation and UNAIDS next Evaluation Plan to be presented to the Programme Coordinating Board in 2023.

Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions: *none*

Summary

1. UNAIDS management expresses its appreciation to the Evaluation Office for its work in implementing the 2022–2023 Evaluation Plan and acknowledges its sustained efforts to produce high-quality and relevant evaluation evidence, even in the current constrained resource environment. The Evaluation Office, together with the Cosponsor Evaluation Group and supported by the Expert Advisory Committee, has increasingly played an important role in shaping UNAIDS's understanding of key issues and the role it can play in advancing global progress in the HIV response.
2. UNAIDS management remains committed to sustaining the investment in the evaluation function, taking into account the overall financial situation of the Joint Programme. It will work with the Evaluation office to find innovative ways to increase efficiency of investments and explore avenues for raising additional resources and achieving increased cost-sharing with relevant stakeholders.
3. UNAIDS management has actively applied evaluation findings and recommendations in the work of the Joint Programme. It has worked with the Evaluation Office in developing recommendations and ensuring that the recommendations are acted upon. Detailed actions are developed for each of the actions and a timeline is agreed. These actions are also incorporated in the workplans of the various departments and entities.
4. The Joint Programme will work closely with the Evaluation Office in developing the new UNAIDS Evaluation Plan for 2024–2025, as well as in the independent review of UNAIDS's Evaluation Policy.

2022 completed evaluations

5. Five evaluations were completed and presented to UNAIDS in 2022. Four of these focused on the work of the Joint Programme and one on the work of the UNAIDS Secretariat. The table below summarizes the findings from these evaluations and the actions being taken by UNAIDS management to address the recommendations.

Summary of findings	Management response
Work of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS with and for key populations	
<p>The Joint Programme is recognized for supporting key population responses. However, advocacy to defend the human rights needs to increase and programming needs to prioritize inequalities and pockets of high incidence. Inclusive planning processes are needed to enhance the relevance of Joint Programme activities, along with a stronger monitoring and reporting system. To ensure financial sustainability, there is a need for more investments for key populations, as well as integration of HIV services and making universal health coverage work for different key populations.</p>	<p>Key populations are critically important in all countries, major gaps exist in most low- and middle-income countries, and global targets are relevant in all countries. Hence, there is need for a mix of actions for all countries and intensified support to some. Management accepts all the recommendations. Details of actions planned as follow-up are outlined in the detailed management response, together with implementation timeline.</p> <p>https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2022_management-response_joint-key-populations-evaluation_en.pdf</p>
Work of the Joint United Nations on efficient and sustainable financing	

Summary of findings	Management response
<p>The evaluation found that the Joint Programme has made important contributions to improving allocative and technical efficiency in the HIV response, and this should continue to be a priority for the Joint Programme. The evaluation recommends improved coordination and integration of HIV financing into universal health coverage and the health financing agenda more broadly. More need to be done to strengthen the capacity of civil society, community-based organizations and key populations to engage in the financing agenda.</p>	<p>Sustainable financing is a key priority for UNAIDS. The Secretariat has established a practice area focused on sustainable financing as part of its realignment. A management response to the findings of the evaluation is being finalized in collaboration with Cosponsors and the Evaluation Office.</p>
Work of the Joint Programme in Mali	
<p>The evaluation confirmed the strong alignment of the Joint Programme's strategic directions with national priorities and overarching strategic frameworks. Progress has been made in coordination. However, more needs to be done regarding geographic and population targeting, and to fully communicate the contribution of the Joint Programme. It has implemented innovative and high-impact catalytic actions, but many activities do not yet have a sustainability strategy. Gender and human rights aspects are generally considered. Partnerships with civil society remain a priority for reducing vulnerabilities.</p>	<p>This evaluation is expected to help optimize the support of the Joint Programme to the national HIV response. A theory of change for the Joint Programme's work in Mali was developed as part of the evaluation process.</p>
Evaluation of the Joint Programme in Lesotho	
	<p>The evaluation recommendations have been discussed by the Joint UN Team on AIDS and are informing the development of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in Lesotho. The country envelope for Lesotho has been adjusted based on the recommendations of the evaluation.</p>
Evaluation of UNAIDS Secretariat data hubs	
	<p>The management response will be developed in the first half of 2023 after receipt of the report.</p>

6. UNAIDS management appreciates the quality, country focus and inclusive methodologies used to implement the evaluations. It is also significant that the completed evaluations are being externally assessed using the tool developed in collaboration with the UNAIDS Expert Advisory Committee on Evaluation and drawing on UN and global best practices and standards to ensure its quality and enhance the credibility of the evaluations.

Evaluation reports expected in 2023

7. UNAIDS looks forward to the completion of the ongoing evaluations on country envelopes and on HIV and social protection. The evaluation on country envelopes will provide valuable insights into effective allocation of resources to support UN Country Teams on AIDS and in shaping the programme of work and UN Development Assistance Frameworks. The evaluation report on UNAIDS Secretariat data hubs is expected soon and follow-up actions will be agreed on in 2023. The evaluation report on Social Protection will guide UNAIDS work in ending inequalities among the most marginalized.

Upcoming evaluations

8. With regards to planned evaluations in 2022–2023, UNAIDS management is grateful for the focus on the priorities of the Global AIDS Strategy and overall areas of comparative strategic advantage of the Joint Programme. UNAIDS looks forward to the evaluation of the policy influence of the UNAIDS Secretariat and the report will help shape the work of the newly created department of influence and partnerships at the Secretariat. Equally important will be the evaluation of the partnership between the Global Fund and the UNAIDS Secretariat. With countries preparing for a new round of funding from the Global Fund, the role of UNAIDS in supporting countries in shaping their proposals will be key. UNAIDS will also play an important role in articulating the value proposition of the Joint Programme for resource mobilization.
9. The Joint Programme plays a key role in promoting human rights especially of key populations, adolescents, women and girls, and children. The evaluation of the Joint Programme's work on human rights will help strengthen the Programme supports for countries to realize the 10–10–10 targets agreed in the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS adopted by Member States in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. UNAIDS is also looking to learn from the evaluation on the integration of HIV into primary health care to ensure that HIV services are sustainable and reach the first level of health care. The involvement in these evaluations of Cosponsor evaluation experts and technical staff together with civil society is welcomed.

Enhancing coherence in the UN system evaluation function

10. UNAIDS management notes with appreciation the Evaluation Office's engagement with and support to broader UN system evaluation processes. This engagement has highlighted the role and contribution of the Joint Programme in the implementation of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks at country level, supporting achievement of HIV-specific objectives, enhancing the quality of joint programming, and, from a process perspective, bringing civil society to the table, among other contributions. Lessons from these evaluations will enable UNAIDS to maximize its contribution to the strength and relevance of UN joint programming and support to countries reaching their Agenda 2030 goals and targets, including ending the AIDS epidemic.
11. UNAIDS management is grateful that the Evaluation Office plans to remain an active member of the UN Evaluation Group, contributing to various task forces (particularly in relation to joint and system-wide evaluations) and COVID-19 evaluations.

Resourcing the evaluation function

12. UNAIDS commits to continue ensuring that the evaluation function in UNAIDS and its effective performance is sustained. To ensure that the evaluation function is adequately resourced financially and has enough human resources, UNAIDS will work with the Evaluation Office to find innovative ways to increase efficiency of investments and explore avenues for raising additional resources and increased cost-sharing with relevant stakeholders.
13. UNAIDS is facing an unprecedented acute financial situation. As a consequence, the budget for evaluation has to be calibrated in line with the resources available with the organization. Current projections of UNAIDS resources for 2023 are projected to be significantly under the lower threshold for the core UBRAF of US\$ 187 million. While resource mobilization efforts are being ramped up, initial 2023 planning is on the basis of current projection. While there have been significant cuts in UNAIDS staff across all levels, the staff strength in the Evaluation Office has been maintained at current levels. While management is committed to a strong and independent Evaluation function in UNAIDS, there should be flexibility in the use of staff resources to support the Joint Programme in light of the reduced staffing levels across the organization
14. As part of the realignment process at UNAIDS, "global centres" have been established in Bangkok, Bonn, Johannesburg and Nairobi, and a large number of global functions have been decentralized. The Evaluation Office will be based in Bonn. This move will not impact on the quality or functioning of the evaluation function. UNAIDS commits to continue ensuring that the staff have adequate resources to travel and meet with different stakeholders as necessary, besides having state-of-the-art facilities for holding meetings and connecting with partners. The Evaluation Office will also have access to adequate administrative support to support its functioning.

Supporting the review of the UNAIDS evaluation policy and development of the evaluation plan for 2024–2025

15. UNAIDS management expresses appreciation to the Evaluation Office for its work in implementing the 2022–2023 Evaluation Plan and acknowledges its sustained efforts to produce high-quality and relevant evaluation evidence, even in the current constrained resource environment. The Evaluation Office, together with the Cosponsor Evaluation Group, and supported by the Expert Advisory Committee, has increasingly played an important role in shaping UNAIDS's understanding of key issues and the role it can play in advancing global progress in the HIV response.
16. UNAIDS has developed a knowledge management strategy, which incorporates in its framework a system for learning from evaluations and for implementing lessons learned. A culture of learning and evaluations will be mainstreamed within the planning and implementation work of the Joint Programme.
17. UNAIDS Management looks forward to working closely with the Evaluation Office in the review of the current Evaluation Policy and the development of the Evaluation Plan for 2024–2025. The review should include lessons learned and recommendations made by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network in its assessment of the evaluation function of UNAIDS. It is critical that all relevant stakeholders, especially civil society and community groups, are part of the review process.

Conclusion

18. UNAIDS management welcomes the continued work to operationalize and mature the evaluation function, based on the Evaluation Policy adopted by the PCB in 2019, and it reaffirms its commitment to realize ever-greater accountability, transparency, evidence-based decision-making and organizational learning across the Joint Programme. Management is committed to sustaining the investment in the evaluation function and ensuring that the findings and recommendations of the evaluations it commissions have maximum positive impact on the performance of the Joint Programme. It looks forward to the review of the 2019 Evaluation Policy and the development of the 2024–2025 Evaluation Plan next year.

Proposed decision points

The Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

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