

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

EVALUATION PLAN 2018-2021

Introduction

In line with the United Nations Norms and Standards for Evaluation developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), OHCHR has established an evaluation function, based on UNEG's Norms and Standards. This function is guided by an evaluation policy and plan that follow OHCHR's (currently four-year) programming cycle. The long term goal is to increase the impact of OHCHR's interventions, to make them more relevant, efficient, effective, and sustainable.

In the mid-term, OHCHR seeks three outcome-level results:

1. The evaluation function is a well-developed and well-used component of the results based management approach that OHCHR has adopted. OHCHR conducts a number of evaluations, reviews and lesson learning exercises, ensuring that key stakeholders both participate in these and receive evaluation results for learning and accountability purposes.
2. OHCHR's senior management systematically takes and reviews decisions on current and planned interventions, and on OHCHR's structures and processes, on the basis of evidence provided by evaluations. OHCHR ensures that evaluation recommendations are followed up and implemented, and that evaluation results are used in strategic decision-making and programming.
3. OHCHR strategically applies the evaluation resources of the UN system to improve its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. OHCHR supports and uses the results of evaluations conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and participates in UNEG, particularly its efforts to integrate human rights and gender equality in evaluations.

Between 2018 and 2021, OHCHR will undertake on an annual basis one strategic thematic evaluation and between two and four evaluations of particular areas of work (programmes or entities). The following preliminary list of issues to be evaluated was developed on the basis of proposals by individual Divisions (including feedback and suggestions from the network of evaluation focal points) as well as issues which came out from Policy Advisory Group (PAG), Senior Management Team (SMT) or Programme and Budget Review Board (PBRB) discussions and donor requirements. Suggestions for additional issues will be taken into account through the programming cycle based on respective needs.

Selection criteria

- Has there been a request to conduct an evaluation on this issue/field programme (by donors, by senior management, by the entity that would be evaluated, etc.)?
- What is the evaluability of the proposed issue (Can it be evaluated (i.e. do we have enough data to conduct an evaluation on this issue, have we worked on the issue for long enough, etc.)?)
- Is the proposed topic of strategic importance for the Office (including in terms of resources invested so far, of the cross-divisional nature of the issue, etc.)?
- Would the evaluation of this issue/field programme potentially generate knowledge of immediate use to the Office?

Types of assessments included in the evaluation plan

Three types of assessments are considered in the present evaluation plan. Based on the guidance of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), these are defined as follows:

Evaluation:

Assessment conducted by independent external consultants (external evaluation) or OHCHR evaluation officers (internal evaluation), as systematically and impartially as possible, of a programme, project, strategy, topic, theme or operational area. It analyses the level of achievement of results using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. External evaluations are published on OHCHR's internet and internal evaluation are made available on the OHCHR portal (intranet).

Review: Assessment conducted by external experts or by OHCHR staff members, as impartially as possible, of a programme, project, strategy, topic, theme or operational area. It is an ad hoc, often rapid assessment of an undertaking's performance that does not apply the due process of an evaluation. Reviews tend to emphasize operational aspects and are mainly intended for internal use. In the case where OHCHR staff members are conducting the review, those staff members are expected to be independent, i.e. they should not have been involved in any way in the decision making or implementation of the item under review. The reports resulting from the reviews are circulated to all main stakeholders.

Lessons Learned Exercises: Lessons learned are defined as "knowledge derived from the reflection, analysis and conceptualisation of experience that has the potential to improve future action; a change in personal or operational behaviour as a result of experience." A lessons learned exercise provides an opportunity for reflection after the initiative has been completed. It is useful to reflect on what worked well and what could be improved upon. Both advantageous and adverse consequences within a project can result in lessons learned and those that are particularly positive may be communicated and promoted as a best practice. The knowledge gained from such exercise can be applicable and useful in other similar contexts. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.

The following evaluations and reviews were submitted to the SMT for endorsement before final approval by the High Commissioner of the assessments to be conducted during 2018 to 2021:

Strategic Thematic Evaluations:

Evaluation of Results Based Management in OHCHR

This evaluation was suggested first in 2014 by the evaluation focal points network, however, after discussion, Focal Points suggested that it was premature to evaluate RBM in OHCHR – it was recommended to wait until the entire Office will have used the Performance Monitoring System for a number of years. Further, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) conducted in 2017 a review of the implementation of RBM UN system-wide. During the preparation of the evaluation plan 2016-2017, Focal Points again suggested that an RBM evaluation should be carried out, a suggestion which was re-iterated during the preparation of the present plan.

This would be an overall evaluation of the implementation of Results Based Management during the programming cycle 2014-2017 for which RBM standards and procedures were used and for which monitoring data in the PMS is available; such an evaluation would also attempt to identify lessons learned from the planning process for the OMP 2018-2021. The learnings from this assessment will be useful for the implementation of the 2018-2021 programme and for planning, monitoring and evaluation processes across the Office.

Evaluation of transitions from one modality of field presence to another

During the past OMP there were a number of cases where the modality of OHCHR's presence in a country changed. Examples include the closing of a peace mission and the opening of an OHCHR country office (e.g. Burundi, Liberia), the transition of a HRA to a full country office e.g. Honduras, or the closing of a field presence in a country to be supported in the future from a regional office or Headquarters. The PBRB and the SMT agreed that these experiences should be evaluated and taken into account to inform such future decisions. (PBRB minutes of 21 September 2017 in the case of Liberia and SMT minutes of 16 September 2014 in the case of Burundi).

Given that transitions between different forms of engagement are a continuing reality, there is value in carrying out this evaluation in order to extract lessons learned to be used as inputs for future transition processes including those related to exit/transition strategies; identification of programmatic priorities and opportunities; handover procedures; and managerial and human resources issues.. Additionally, Senior Management requested this information for the effective implementation of the Office's field deployment strategy, and there is sufficient data to conduct such assessment based on recent experiences.

Evaluation of design and implementation of technical cooperation programmes

The Senior Management Team has recently discussed policy elements for the OHCHR field deployment strategy, including possible models of presences which could be lighter, more flexible and shorter in time duration. As a result of this discussion, the SMT (minutes of 14 May 2018) requested the identification of parameters for technical cooperation programmes, including principles, conditions and criteria for the use of such types of presences. According to the SMT, this should be based on a risk analysis and due diligence, including an evaluation of current technical cooperation projects (e.g. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc.). The lessons learned from this evaluation will contribute to the planning and implementation of more relevant, effective and efficient future interventions under similar contexts.

Evaluation of impact orientation of the Treaty Body Capacity Building Programme

The Treaty Bodies constitute a fundamental pillar of the international human rights protection system. Several initiatives have been taken by the UN to enhance the effectiveness of the treaty body system, including the Treaty Body Capacity Building Programme, created as one of the outcomes of the treaty body strengthening process.

Recognizing that many States have difficulties in living up to their multiple reporting obligations, GA resolution 68/268 designed a significant capacity building programme to "support States parties in building their capacity to implement their treaty obligations". The Programme was established at the outset of 2015 with a team operating across OHCHR headquarters and the field. It would be useful for the Office to assess the contribution of these capacity building activities to a broader and long-term

impact on the enjoyment of rights. The results of this evaluation could be also valuable for other capacity building activities conducted by OHCHR in different areas of intervention.

Review of the Dignity@work network

The High Commissioner approved a new Dignity@work policy in 2017, reaffirming the Office's commitment to ensuring that all staff enjoy, and actively support, diversity and dignity at work. HRMS, the Staff Committee and UNOG Staff Coordinating Council have the formal responsibility to advise staff who have experienced prohibited conducts. In order to complement this formal system, the policy foresees a network of colleagues to act as first points of contact.

The Dignity@work network has been piloted with an initial group of volunteers for a preliminary period of six months starting in March 2018. It was agreed that impact and suitability of the network and working methods would be assessed after six months (August 2018) through the modality of an internal review carried out by PPMES. Based on the results of the assessment, options to extend its coverage (to all Divisions, NYO, and field presences) will be explored. This review was suggested by EDM and preparations for it have started in June 2018.

Evaluations of specific programmes:

Evaluations of country or regional programmes or specific HQ entities can be carried out as full, independent evaluations or as reviews, which do not apply the full evaluation methodology, focus on operational aspects and are mainly intended for internal use. Reviews are often, but not necessarily always, carried out internally which brings with it the advantages of cost-effectiveness, ensuring that knowledge available within the Office is taken into account and that the evaluation capacity of staff is built up.