

Evaluation: annual report

INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Board at its 131st session approved a formal evaluation policy for WHO.¹ The policy states that evaluation is an essential function at WHO, carried out at all levels of the Organization. It also states that evaluation ensures accountability and oversight for performance and results, and reinforces organizational learning in order to inform policy for decision-makers and support individual learning.
2. The policy requires the Office of Internal Oversight Services to issue periodic status reports on progress in the implementation of evaluation recommendations to senior management and to report annually to the Executive Board through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. Pending full operationalization of the policy in the biennium 2014–2015 and detailed reporting of the implementation of recommendations, the present document provides information on the progress made by the Secretariat in implementing the evaluation policy.

PROGRESS UPDATE

3. The policy stipulates that WHO will develop a biennial, Organization-wide evaluation workplan as part of the Organization's planning and budgeting cycle. The consolidated transitional evaluation workplan for 2013 was submitted to the Board for approval, through the Programme Budget and Administration Committee, at the Board's 132nd session in January 2013.²
4. In the course of 2012, as part of the WHO reform process, the Office of Internal Oversight Services assisted the evaluation team that conducted the stage-one evaluation of WHO reform. The Office is also supporting the evaluation management group in outlining the approach for stage two of the evaluation, including preparing the terms of reference and managing the request for proposals process.
5. In order to foster a culture of evaluation and its active use across the Organization, WHO has established the Global Network on Evaluation. The Network is composed of representatives from the three levels of the Organization as well as from related global functions (for example, representatives from Planning, Monitoring, Assessment and Quality Assurance, Knowledge Management and Sharing, and Gender, Equity and Human Rights). The first meeting of the Network was held on 4–5 April 2013. Topics discussed included the approach to be taken and methodologies used in relation to: (a) the criteria for including items in the biennial Organization-wide evaluation workplan; (b) the establishment of a quality assurance system, and the quality control of evaluation products; (c) the development of a comprehensive evaluation reporting framework; (d) lessons learnt, use, and

¹ Decision EB131(1).

² Document EB132/30.

dissemination of evaluation findings; (e) the management of the evaluation inventory; and (f) the strengthening of evaluation capacity across WHO. In addition, the Office has prepared an evaluation practice handbook as a complement to the WHO evaluation policy. The handbook clarifies the roles and responsibilities for evaluation and documents the main procedures, tools and methods to assist staff in conducting evaluations in accordance with the policy.

6. In response to questions raised by Member States on the system of quality control for evaluation products, the Network has established mechanisms and checklists to ensure that controls are in place to verify that evaluations conducted across the Organization comply with: (a) professional quality standards, such as those established by the United Nations Evaluation Group, while meeting the information needs of their intended users; and (b) WHO's evaluation policy. It is envisaged that the Network will ensure that quality reviews are performed to assess compliance of individual evaluations with WHO's evaluation policy and adherence to relevant policies on gender and human rights.

7. The Network has further discussed an assurance system with a view to ensuring that the evaluation policy is implemented effectively and efficiently across the Organization. This system would include peer reviews of the evaluation material and products, meta-evaluations, and training on specific aspects that should be used uniformly across WHO to ensure the validity of the evaluation products and of the evaluation function.

8. To enhance the management of the evaluation inventory, the Office is assessing the compliance of reported evaluations against the requirements for conformity with the evaluation policy, using the above-mentioned quality control checklists. These checklists will be used to validate the suitability of the existing evaluation inventory reports prior to including them in the dedicated evaluation web site.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

9. The Executive Board is invited to note the report.

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