

Evaluation: update and proposed workplan for 2020–2021

Report by the Secretariat

1. The Executive Board approved the WHO evaluation policy at its 143rd session.¹ The policy requires the Secretariat to report annually to the Board on progress in the implementation of evaluation activities. Whereas the annual report will be presented to the Board at its 147th session in May 2020, the present report provides a brief progress update since the last annual report to the Executive Board² and the proposed evaluation workplan for the biennium 2020–2021.

PROGRESS UPDATE

2. The Evaluation Office continues to implement the framework for strengthening evaluation and organizational learning in WHO³ presented to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its twenty-first meeting. The framework has six key action areas: establishing an enabling environment and governance; evaluation capacity and resources; evaluation workplan, scope and modalities; evaluation recommendations and management response; organizational learning; and communicating evaluation work.

3. The evaluation workplan for 2018–2019⁴ provided the basis for ongoing evaluation work. Unless otherwise stated, all completed evaluation reports are available on the webpage of the Evaluation Office.⁵

4. The evaluation of the Neglected Tropical Diseases Programme, with a special focus on the current neglected tropical diseases road map for implementation, was completed in July 2019. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the accomplishments of the Programme and the lessons learned through implementation at the three levels of the Organization. The evaluation documented the Programme's successes, challenges and gaps during the bienniums 2014–2015 and 2016–2017 and provided lessons learned and strategic recommendations for the design and operationalization of the next steps,

¹ Decision EB143(9) (2018).

² Document EB145/6.

³ A framework for strengthening evaluation and organizational learning in WHO. Geneva: World Health Organization (http://who.int/about/who_reform/documents/framework-strengthening-evaluation-organizational-learning.pdf?ua=1, accessed 30 October 2019).

⁴ Document EB142/27, Annex, approved by the Executive Board at its 142nd session (see document EB142/2018/REC/2, summary records of the eleventh meeting, section 2).

⁵ The Evaluation Office webpage is available at <http://who.int/evaluation> (accessed 30 October 2019).

addressing the remaining toll of neglected tropical diseases in the context of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023.

5. The evaluation of the utilization of National Professional Officers at country level was also completed in July 2019. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the role played by National Professional Officers in the effective delivery of WHO's mandate at country level in support of Member State efforts to achieve their national health targets. The evaluation specifically focused on the role National Professional Officers play and how WHO has been utilizing them, and explored ways in which their skills and competencies could be utilized more effectively in the future. The evaluation also documented successes, challenges and best practices, and provided lessons learned and recommendations for future use by management to inform policy and decision-making.

6. Country office evaluations were also completed in India and Senegal. Further country office evaluations are ongoing for Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar. These evaluations focus on the outcomes/results achieved by country offices, as well as contributions through global and regional inputs in the country, and aim to identify achievements, challenges and gaps and document best practices and innovations of WHO in-country.

7. At the request of the 142nd session of the Executive Board in January 2018, the Evaluation Office initiated a review of 40 years of primary health care implementation at country level. The purpose of the review is to: (a) document global progress towards primary health care implementation, identifying achievements and success stories, best practices and key challenges encountered; and (b) make recommendations on the way forward in order to accelerate national, regional and global health strategies and plans for universal health coverage/primary health care and the Sustainable Development Goals. The executive summary of the review report will be presented to the Executive Board at its 146th session in February 2020.¹

8. An initial evaluation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors was requested by the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly in resolution WHA69.10 (2016). The purpose of the initial evaluation is to assess the status of implementation of the Framework and its impact on the work of the Organization. The purpose of the evaluation is to: (a) document key achievements, best practices, challenges, gaps and areas for improvement in the implementation of the Framework since its adoption in May 2016; and (b) make recommendations as appropriate on the way forward to enable the full, coherent and consistent implementation of the Framework. The executive summary of the evaluation report will be presented to the Executive Board at its 146th session in February 2020, through its Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.²

9. As a follow-up to the corporate evaluation of WHO's normative functions in 2017, the 142nd session of the Executive Board also requested that the Evaluation Office conduct a review of WHO's normative functions at country level. An inception phase for this evaluation has commenced and it is expected that the final evaluation report will be available during the first quarter of 2020.

10. The Evaluation Office is also undertaking a formative evaluation of the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (2016–2020). The purpose of the evaluation is to draw lessons learned from implementation of the Global strategy and action plan in order to inform the WHO Secretariat on the

¹ Document EB146/38 Add.1.

² Document EB146/38 Add.2.

developments of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030. The report of this evaluation will be available early in 2020.

11. A formative evaluation of WHO's work with collaborating centres has also been initiated by the Evaluation Office, the purpose of which is to examine the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the programmatic contribution of collaborating centres to the achievement of WHO objectives and expected results. The evaluation will document successes, challenges and best practices and will provide lessons learned and recommendations for future use by management to inform policy and decision-making. The evaluation report will be available early in 2020.

12. In an exercise involving the three levels of the Organization, the Evaluation Office is supporting a mid-term evaluation of the Thailand Country Cooperation Strategy 2017–2021, which is intended to provide a model for future evaluations of country cooperation strategies. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify achievements, challenges and gaps, and document best practices in the implementation of the Country Cooperation Strategy at mid-term. The report of this evaluation is expected to be delivered early in 2020.

13. The Evaluation Office is supporting an independent external evaluation of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which was commissioned by its Governing Council and is being carried out by an ad hoc advisory group comprised of external experts, Governing Council and Scientific Council members. The evaluation will examine the alignment of IARC's activities with its mandate; the collaboration between IARC and other parts of WHO; the contribution of multidisciplinary research to IARC's strategy; the role and infrastructure for the biobank in IARC's research strategy; mechanisms to ensure the financial sustainability of IARC's research; and approaches to maximize the value and impact of IARC's work. The evaluation report will be submitted to the IARC Governing Council in May 2020, through its Scientific Council.

14. The WHO Evaluation Office is a member of the management group of the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of the response to cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique, which commenced in July 2019. In addition to co-managing the evaluation together with representatives from the evaluation offices of IOM, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF and WFP, WHO has provided financial support to this evaluation. Such evaluations contribute to both accountability and strategic learning across the humanitarian system, with the aim of improving aid effectiveness and better assisting populations affected by humanitarian emergencies. The Organization's active participation in, and contribution to, this inter-agency humanitarian evaluation covers a Grade 3 emergency evaluation, as set forth in the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2018–2019. As an inter-agency evaluation, and as an evaluation co-funded by several agencies, this evaluation represents an example of how WHO seeks to meet its organizational commitments in a cost-efficient, whole-of-system manner wherever such opportunities present themselves.

15. The Evaluation Office continues to provide technical backstopping and quality assurance for decentralized evaluations, including through its participation in evaluation management groups, as appropriate. Decentralized evaluations for which the Evaluation Office is currently providing assistance include the evaluation of the implementation of the global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020 and the evaluation of the implementation of regional flagship programmes in the WHO South-East Asia Region (2014–2018).

16. The Evaluation Office continues to facilitate reviews by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System, and this collaboration is reported separately in an annual report to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its May session.

17. WHO is an active member of the United Nations Evaluation Group and participates regularly in its meetings of heads of evaluation offices and its various task forces (in particular the working groups on human rights and gender equality, the Sustainable Development Goals, policy evaluation, and the interest group on humanitarian evaluation). WHO continues to participate in the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group,¹ which promotes collective accountability for results in humanitarian settings by ensuring that the lessons generated from evaluations of humanitarian action are captured and used. Finally, the head of the WHO Evaluation Office chaired the peer review panel for the United Nations Evaluation Group's peer review of the evaluation function of UNESCO, which took place during the second half of 2019.

18. Beyond its main workplan focusing on the evaluation of WHO's work, the Evaluation Office also partners with evaluation counterparts in other entities, participating in joint evaluations in select areas of shared substantive and strategic interest. The UNAIDS-commissioned mid-term evaluation of its 2016–2021 Strategy and Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework is one example of such collaboration. Together with representatives from the evaluation offices of other entities that also cosponsor the UNAIDS Framework (UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF), the Evaluation Office serves in the evaluation management group for this important midpoint assessment. The Evaluation Office is also represented on the peer review panel for the Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan (2017–2020) of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, an agency hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The review aims to assess the progress made by the Council during the first two years of the Strategic Plan's implementation and to provide recommendations for the remaining period and subsequent strategy periods.

19. The corporate evaluation of WHO's results-based management framework has been carried over to the biennium 2020–2021 in order to also consider lessons learned from the implementation of the redesigned planning process within the Organization, including the process for the development of the programme budget.

PROPOSED EVALUATION WORKPLAN 2020–2021

20. The evaluation policy requires that WHO should develop a biennial, Organization-wide evaluation workplan as part of its planning and budgeting cycle. The biennial workplan ensures accountability and oversight of performance and results, and reinforces organizational learning in a way that informs policy and operational decisions.

21. The proposed 2020–2021 biennial workplan incorporates both the corporate/centralized and decentralized evaluations planned, and was developed in consultation with senior WHO colleagues across the Organization, especially for decentralized evaluations. The workplan was also discussed with the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee during its meeting in October 2019.

¹ The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group is chaired by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and comprises the evaluation directors of FAO, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, with the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies and UNFPA as observers.

22. In this regard, the proposed corporate/centralized evaluations will be managed, commissioned or conducted by the Evaluation Office, and will include programme evaluations, thematic evaluations and office-specific evaluations.

23. The decentralized evaluations proposed in the biennial workplan will be managed, commissioned or conducted outside the central Evaluation Office, that is, they will be initiated by headquarters clusters, regional offices or country offices and mainly comprise programmatic and thematic evaluations. In this instance, the central Evaluation Office would provide quality assurance and technical backstopping. Coherence and harmonization across the Organization is achieved through adherence to guidance provided in the *WHO evaluation practice handbook*¹ and through the Global Network on Evaluation.

24. The evaluations proposed in the biennial workplan respond to one or more of the following selection criteria identified in the evaluation policy: organizational requirements, organizational significance and organizational utility.

Corporate evaluations to be commissioned, managed or conducted by the Evaluation Office

25. The corporate/centralized evaluations planned for 2020–2021 are a combination of roll-over evaluations, one carry-over evaluation from the 2018–2019 evaluation workplan and a set of new evaluations. Roll-over evaluations cover those started in 2019 and due to continue into the biennium 2020–2021:

- country programme evaluation in Myanmar;
- evaluation of a Grade 3 emergency (inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of the response to cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique);
- evaluation of the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (2016–2020);
- evaluation of WHO's normative functions at country level;
- initial evaluation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors; and
- review of 40 years of primary health care implementation at country level.

26. The following corporate evaluations are proposed for 2020–2021:

- comprehensive review of the implementation of the global action plan on antimicrobial resistance;²

¹ WHO evaluation practice handbook. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2013 (http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/96311/1/9789241548687_eng.pdf, accessed 31 October 2019).

² Resolution WHA72.5 (2019).

- corporate evaluation of WHO's results-based management framework;¹
- evaluation of one Grade 3 emergency;
- evaluation of the utilization of Special Service Agreements;²
- evaluation of the WHO transformation agenda;
- final evaluation of the WHO global coordination mechanism on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;³
- formative evaluation of the implementation of the Research and Development Blueprint for Action to Prevent Epidemics and its plan of action;
- mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the strategic action plan on polio transition;⁴
- country programme evaluations;⁵
- synthesis of country programme evaluations; and
- evaluation of the work of two departments of the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean: Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, and Science and Information.

Decentralized evaluations⁶ to be commissioned or managed by regional offices, country offices and headquarters departments

27. Roll-over decentralized evaluations include:

- evaluation of the implementation of the global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020;

¹ Carry-over from the 2018–2019 evaluation workplan to also consider lessons learned from the implementation of the redesigned planning process within the Organization, including the process for the development of the programme budget.

² This complements the recently completed evaluation of the utilization of National Professional Officers and looks at contributions in support of WHO's work at country level.

³ Document A67/14 Add.1, paragraph 19.

⁴ Document A72/10, p. 14.

⁵ Country programme evaluations (previously called country office evaluations) will focus on the outcomes/results achieved by the respective country office, as well as contributions through global and regional inputs in the country. In addition, the evaluations will aim to analyse the effectiveness of WHO programmes and initiatives in the country and assess their strategic relevance within the national context. Such evaluations will be organized in consultation with the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the relevant regional offices in order to avoid duplication of effort. Currently, country programme evaluations are planned in Afghanistan, China, Jordan, Morocco, Mongolia, Nigeria and Timor Leste with others to be defined.

⁶ This is a provisional list of decentralized evaluations, as further additions are likely to be made during the coming months. Future updates will be reported in forthcoming evaluation reports to the governing bodies.

- evaluation of the implementation of regional flagship programmes in the WHO South-East Asia Region (2014–2018); and
- evaluation of the use and perceived impact of WHO guidelines on reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health at the country level in the South-East Asia Region.

28. The following decentralized evaluations are proposed for 2020–2021:

- evaluation of the HIV/AIDS framework for action in the WHO African Region, 2016–2020;
- evaluation of the Global Health Cluster (to be conducted in 2021);
- evaluation of the emergency and review committees under the International Health Regulations (2005); and
- evaluation of the health and security interface.

29. Further information on these corporate and decentralized evaluations is provided in the annex to this document.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

30. The Board is invited to note the report and approve the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2020–2021.

ANNEX

ORGANIZATION-WIDE EVALUATION WORKPLAN FOR 2020–2021

Evaluation type	Area of evaluation	Justification
Corporate/centralized evaluations		
Office-specific	Country programme evaluation in Myanmar (roll-over from 2019)	Utility
Thematic	Evaluation of a Grade 3 emergency (roll-over from 2019)	Significance/utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (2016–2020) (roll-over from 2019)	Utility
Thematic	Evaluation of WHO's normative functions at country level (roll-over from 2019)	Utility
Thematic	Initial evaluation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors (roll-over from 2019)	Requirement/utility
Thematic	Review of 40 years of implementation of primary health care at country level (roll-over from 2019)	Utility
Programmatic	Comprehensive review of the implementation of the global action plan on antimicrobial resistance	Requirement/utility
Thematic	Corporate evaluation of WHO's results-based management framework	Significance/utility
Thematic	Evaluation of one Grade 3 emergency	Significance/utility
Thematic	Evaluation of the utilization of Special Service Agreements	Utility
Thematic	Evaluation of the WHO transformation agenda	Significance/utility
Programmatic	Formative evaluation of the implementation of the Research and Development Blueprint for Action to Prevent Epidemics and its plan of action	Utility
Programmatic	Final evaluation of the WHO global coordination mechanism on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases	Requirement/utility
Programmatic	Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the strategic action plan on polio transition	Requirement/utility
Office-specific	Country programme evaluations	Utility
Thematic	Synthesis of country programme evaluations	Utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the work of two departments of the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean: Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, and Science and Information.	Utility

Decentralized evaluations		
Programmatic	Evaluation of the implementation of the global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020 (roll-over from 2019)	Requirement/utility
Thematic	Evaluation of the evaluation of the implementation of regional flagship programmes in the WHO South-East Asia Region (2014–2018) (roll-over from 2019)	Significance/utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the use and perceived impact of WHO guidelines on reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health at the country level in the South-East Asia Region (roll-over from 2019)	Significance/utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the HIV/AIDS framework for action in the WHO African Region, 2016–2020	Utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the Global Health Cluster (to be conducted in 2021)	Significance/utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the emergency and review committees under the International Health Regulations (2005)	Utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the health and security interface	Utility

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