

Evaluation: annual report

1. The Executive Board approved the amended WHO evaluation policy at its 143rd session in 2018.¹ The policy requires the Secretariat to report annually to the Executive Board on progress in the implementation of evaluation activities. The present annual report provides information on the progress made in implementing the WHO evaluation policy, including the Organization-wide evaluation workplans for 2018–2019² and 2020–2021.³

PROGRESS MADE BY THE SECRETARIAT IN IMPLEMENTING THE EVALUATION POLICY

Strengthening the capacity to implement the corporate⁴ evaluation function

2. The Evaluation Office continues to implement the framework for strengthening evaluation and organizational learning in WHO⁵ presented to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its twenty-first meeting in January 2015.⁶ The framework has six key action areas: (i) establishing an enabling environment and governance; (ii) evaluation capacity and resources; (iii) evaluation workplan, scope and modalities; (iv) evaluation recommendations and management response; (v) organizational learning; and (vi) communicating evaluation work.

3. Regarding establishing an enabling environment and governance, the independent Evaluation Office is actively engaged in both corporate evaluations and providing support to decentralized evaluations. With regard to evaluation capacity and resources, the office is currently staffed by a director, a chief evaluation officer/coordinator, a senior evaluation officer, an evaluation officer, a programme officer, an assistant and supported by two United Nations Volunteers. An additional position of senior evaluation officer was approved by the Director-General during the recent transformation exercise. Furthermore, the engagement of regional and cluster focal points of the Global Network on Evaluation in ongoing corporate and decentralized evaluations has enabled greater coordination of

¹ Decision EB143(9) (2018).

² 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).

³ Document EB146/38, Annex, approved by the Executive Board at its 146th session (see the summary records of the third meeting, section 3).

⁴ Corporate or centralized evaluations are evaluations that are commissioned or conducted by the WHO Evaluation Office.

⁵ 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 24 March 2020).

⁶ Document EB136/38, noted by the Executive Board at its 136th session (see document EB136/2015/REC/2, summary records of the fourteenth meeting, section 4).

evaluation activities at the three levels of the Organization. Both corporate and decentralized evaluations are supported by external expertise, including from a roster of prequalified evaluation experts. The budget¹ for the Evaluation Office, based on the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2020–2021 approved by the Executive Board, is US\$ 3.8 million for staff and US\$ 2.35 million to cover activity costs to implement corporate evaluations and the work of the Evaluation Office.

4. With regard to the workplan, scope and modalities, the workplan for 2018–2019, which incorporates both the corporate and decentralized planned evaluations, was shared with senior management, discussed with the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, and reviewed and approved by the Executive Board at its 142nd session.²

5. As for the action areas on evaluation recommendations and management response and organizational learning, the findings and recommendations of completed corporate and decentralized evaluations are continuously being tracked³ in order to improve performance and inform key decision-making and planning processes. WHO has also established a process to firmly anchor organizational learning in its work, taking into consideration the consolidated findings and recommendations identified during audits, evaluations and reviews. In this process, the directors of the accountability functions identify a shortlist of recurring, systemic cross-cutting issues arising from findings and recommendations from various sources, and potential root causes, and establish a list of issues to embed within ongoing workstreams with key business owners, including the transformation team.

6. For communicating evaluation work, the webpage of the Evaluation Office⁴ is regularly updated and includes evaluation reports and management responses as soon as they become available. In addition, a regular newsletter, *Evaluation matters*, is issued. Furthermore, the Evaluation Office provides regular briefings on ongoing and completed evaluations to Member States and internal stakeholders. It also organizes webinars for the regional and cluster focal points of the Global Network on Evaluation to share findings of corporate evaluations. Regular briefings on the evaluation function are provided, including induction courses for senior management, heads of WHO country offices, and other staff.

7. The Evaluation Office is currently facilitating 11 reviews by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations, namely: (i) progress made in the United Nations system organizations towards strengthening the investigation function; (ii) contemporary practices in the external outsourcing of services to commercial service providers by United Nations system organizations; (iii) staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations; (iv) multilingualism in the United Nations system; (v) policies, programmes and platforms in support of learning: towards more coordination, coherence and convergence; (vi) United Nations common premises; (vii) enterprise risk management: approaches and uses in United Nations system organizations; (viii) environmentally sustainable policies and practices across the organizations of the United Nations system; (ix) use of blockchain applications in the United Nations system: a critical S.W.O.T. analysis; (x) cybersecurity in

¹ The ongoing best-in-class study of WHO accountability/business integrity functions is expected to provide further guidance on the budget and resourcing for the Evaluation Office.

² Please see footnote 3 of paragraph 1 of document EB143/6.

³ A report on corporate and decentralized evaluations: findings, recommendations, actions and learning, May 2020. (to be made available in English only on the webpage of the WHO Evaluation Office).

⁴ The Evaluation Office webpage is available at <http://www.who.int/evaluation> (accessed 24 March 2020).

the United Nations system organizations: a review of policies and practices; and (xi) current state of the ethics function in the United Nations system.

8. The Director-General's report to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its thirty-second meeting in May 2020 on the Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit¹ provides further details of the implementation of recommendations related to Joint Inspection Unit reviews.

9. 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,² which promotes collective accountability for results in humanitarian settings by ensuring that the lessons generated from evaluations of humanitarian action are captured and used.

10. 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 which also cosponsor the UNAIDS Framework (UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF), the Evaluation Office serves on the evaluation management group for this important midpoint assessment.

11. 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. That evaluation 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. 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. The report of this evaluation is expected to be delivered during the second quarter of 2020.

12. In 2019, the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (SDG3 GAP) was agreed by 12 global organizations engaged in health, development and humanitarian response that are working to advance the targets of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals as well as other health-related targets in the 2030 Agenda. The Global Action Plan is intended as an opportunity to leverage the 12 agencies' individual mandates, comparative advantages and capacity for enhanced collective results more effectively. A joint evaluability assessment of the Global Action Plan is being conducted to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the present state of evaluability of the Global Action Plan and to suggest concrete ways to improve its evaluability moving forward. The

¹ Document EBPBAC32/5.

² 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.

main purpose of the evaluability assessment is to foster early learning among the signatory agencies, and thus help improve coordination, collaboration and overall management toward results in the partnership. In this way, the ultimate aim of the exercise is to help the signatory agencies maximize the likelihood of the partnership's success in supporting countries to achieve the ambitious objectives of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal 3. The exercise is being overseen by a steering group comprised of the heads of evaluation (or a designated representative) of the signatory agencies, with WHO acting as lead agency. The steering group will be assisted by a team of external evaluability experts. The report of this evaluability assessment is due in June 2020.

ORGANIZATION-WIDE EVALUATION WORKPLAN AND OTHER ONGOING WORK

13. The approved evaluation workplans for 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 provide the basis for current activities. The Annex to this report provides an overview of the status as at March 2020 of the corporate and decentralized evaluations included in the evaluation workplan for 2018–2019 and other ad hoc corporate evaluations that the Evaluation Office was requested to conduct during the biennium. Unless otherwise stated, all completed corporate evaluation reports are available on the webpage of the Evaluation Office.¹

Corporate evaluations

14. One corporate evaluation included in the workplan for 2018–2019 was postponed to 2020–2021 (corporate evaluation of WHO's results-based management framework), 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.

15. The following corporate evaluations/assessments on the approved evaluation workplan for 2018–2019 were completed and the outcomes reported to the Executive Board at its 143rd session in May 2018 (a–b),² its 145th session in May 2019 (c–g)³ or its 146th session in February 2020 (h–n):⁴

- (a) evaluation of the process for the election of the Director-General;
- (b) preliminary evaluation of the WHO global coordination mechanism on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;
- (c) summative evaluation of the WHO Rapid Access Expansion Programme;
- (d) summative evaluation of the implementation of the WHO geographical mobility policy during its voluntary phase;
- (e) evaluation of the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean's Regional Centre for Environmental Health Action;

¹ The Evaluation Office webpage is available at <http://who.int/evaluation> (accessed 24 March 2020).

² See document EB143/6.

³ See document EB145/6.

⁴ See document EB146/38.

- (f) Rwanda country office evaluation;
- (g) Romania country office evaluation;
- (h) evaluation of the neglected tropical diseases programme, with a special focus on the current neglected tropical diseases road map for implementation;
- (i) evaluation of the utilization of national professional officers at country level;
- (j) review of 40 years of primary health care implementation at country level;¹
- (k) initial evaluation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors;²
- (l) India country office evaluation;
- (m) Senegal country office evaluation;
- (n) independent external evaluation of the International Agency for Research on Cancer.³

16. The following is an update, since the last report to the Executive Board at its 146th session in February 2020, on progress of evaluations that were ongoing at the end of 2019.

17. The Evaluation Office is 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 developments of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030. The report of this evaluation will be available during the first quarter of 2020.

18. As a follow-up to the corporate evaluation of WHO's normative functions in 2017, at its 142nd session, the Executive Board also requested that the Evaluation Office conduct a review of WHO's normative functions at country level.⁴ An inception phase for this evaluation has been completed and it is expected that the data collection will commence during the second quarter of 2020.

19. The report of the Kyrgyzstan country office evaluation was finalized in March 2020 and a country programme evaluation⁵ is ongoing in Myanmar, the report of which will be available during the second quarter of 2020.

¹ Document EB146/38 Add.1.

² Document EB146/38 Add.2.

³ The Evaluation Office supported this additional ad hoc evaluation at the request of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The evaluation report was reviewed by IARC's Scientific Council in January 2020 and will be submitted to the IARC Governing Council in May 2020.

⁴ See document EB142/2018/REC/2, summary records of the eleventh meeting, section 2.

⁵ Previously called country office evaluations – the title has been changed in order to reflect more accurately the fact that this is an evaluation of the inputs of the three levels of the Organization in-country.

20. A formative evaluation of WHO's work with collaborating centres was also initiated by the Evaluation Office at the request of the Chief Scientist, 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 management to use in future policy and decision-making. The evaluation report will be available during the first quarter of 2020.

21. The purpose of the mid-point formative evaluation of the global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2030 is to assess the accomplishments of the six objectives of the global action plan, as well as the lessons learned throughout the implementation of the global action plan in Member States, by international partners and at the three levels of the Organization. The evaluation will: document successes, challenges and gaps in the implementation of the global action plan since 2013; provide lessons learned and strategic recommendations to improve the implementation of the global action plan until 2030; and provide inputs for the next WHO global status report on noncommunicable diseases and other relevant reports. The report of this evaluation is expected to be delivered by the last quarter of 2020 and will be presented to the 148th session of the Executive Board in January 2021.

22. In order to align the objectives of the WHO Centre for Health Development (WHO Kobe Centre) with the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 and related transformation processes, a review of the Centre is being undertaken by an external task force, supported by the Evaluation Office. Since its establishment in 1995, the WHO Kobe Centre has been supported by the Kobe Group¹ through a Memorandum of Understanding. The review covers the time frame since the start of the third Memorandum of Understanding with the Kobe Group (2016–2026) and the related WHO Programme budgets 2016–2017 and 2018–2019. The report and recommendations of the task force will be submitted to the Director-General during the second quarter of 2020.

23. The WHO–Thailand Country Cooperation Strategy 2017–2021 sets out the collaboration between the Ministry of Public Health of the Royal Thai Government and WHO. This Strategy is an evolving approach to country-level collaboration with WHO, whereby 70% of its US\$ 17 million budget is pledged by the health ministry and the participating partner autonomous public health agencies. At the request of the WHO country office in Thailand, the Evaluation Office is conducting an independent mid-term evaluation of the Strategy to identify achievements, challenges and gaps, and document best practices at that stage of its implementation. The report of this evaluation is expected to be delivered during the first quarter of 2020.

Decentralized evaluations

24. The Evaluation Office has also been providing technical backstopping and quality assurance for decentralized evaluations, including through its participation in the evaluation management groups, as appropriate.

¹ The Kobe Group is composed of the Hyogo Prefecture, the City of Kobe, the Kobe Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Kobe Steel, Ltd.

25. The following decentralized evaluations/assessments on the approved evaluation workplan for 2018–2019 were completed and the outcomes reported to the Executive Board at its 145th session in May 2019:¹ (i) external review of WHO online language training; (ii) external evaluation of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (2013–2017).

26. WHO operates a fleet of more than 3000 vehicles in more than 115 countries at an estimated annual cost of US\$ 40–50 million. Since 2018, WHO has been piloting an initiative called WHO Fleet Services in six countries (Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Jordan, Nigeria and Pakistan). This initiative aims to provide WHO offices with appropriate, cleaner, cost-effective and safer vehicles to support optimum programme delivery through provision of various tools, expertise and systems to manage WHO's transport requirements more efficiently. An external, independent evaluation of the fleet management activities funded by WHO and supported by WHO Fleet Services for the period 2018–2019 was conducted to document progress, including achievements and challenges, and make recommendations on the way forward in order to inform and guide the future management of activities around fleet management and road safety. The evaluation report was presented to the Assistant Director-General for Business Operations in February 2020.

27. In the African Region, since the last evaluation annual report, the formative evaluation of the project funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, in South Sudan is under way and expected to be completed in September 2020.

28. In the Region of the Americas, the Office of Internal Oversight and Evaluation Services provided support with evaluation planning, by assisting with the preparation of terms of reference and advising on evaluation standards, methodologies, and approaches. Specific assignments for which advice was provided in 2019 include evaluations of: the Regional Immunization Program, the subregional level of Technical Cooperation-Subregional Program Coordination in the Caribbean, and the Integrated Health Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean Project. In late 2019, the regional evaluation function also prepared terms of reference and began planning for the evaluations of the Research Function at PAHO, and Human Resources for Health. As of 1 March 2020, the evaluation function is transferred to the Planning and Budget Unit where, it is envisioned, it shall be integrated more closely with the planning cycle. The regional evaluation function also facilitated WHO corporate evaluations in the Regional Office for the Americas. In 2019, this included the evaluations of: the neglected tropical diseases programme; the utilization of national professional officers at country level; the WHO Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (2016–2020); and the review of 40 years of primary health care implementation at country level.

29. The South-East Asia Region continued to implement its regional evaluation workplan for 2018–2019² as submitted to the seventieth session of the Regional Committee for South-East Asia in September 2017. To date, of the 16 evaluations in this workplan, the Region has already completed six evaluations, including the evaluation of 10 years of implementation of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund. A further four evaluations are ongoing in the Region, including the evaluation of the adaptation and use of WHO guidelines on reproductive, maternal and newborn health in the WHO

¹ See document EB145/6.

² Document SEA/RC70/6-INF.DOC.2 subsequently updated to include 3 additional evaluations under family health, gender and life course.

South-East Asia Region,¹ which is scheduled to be completed in the second quarter of 2020. Finally, in addition to the evaluations included on the regional evaluation workplan for 2018–2019, the evaluation of tobacco control through MPOWER measures in the South-East Asia Region was completed in 2018 and, in 2019, the Regional Office launched an evaluation of its eight regional flagship programmes, which is scheduled to be completed in the third quarter of 2020.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

30. The Board is invited to note the report.

¹ Evaluation title changed from 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 due to change in focus of the evaluation.

ANNEX

STATUS OF EVALUATIONS ON THE APPROVED ORGANIZATION-WIDE EVALUATION WORKPLAN FOR 2018–2019, AS AT MARCH 2020

		2018				2019			
	Start date ^a	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
CORPORATE/CENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS IN APPROVED ORGANIZATION-WIDE EVALUATION WORKPLAN 2018–2019									
Evaluation of the process for the election of the Director-General	July 2017	Completed							
Preliminary evaluation of the global coordination mechanism on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases	July 2017	Completed							
Summative evaluation of the WHO Rapid Access Expansion Programme	July 2017	Completed							
Third annual evaluation of the implementation of the geographical mobility policy during its voluntary phase				Completed					
Country office evaluations			Rwanda	Romania	India	Senegal	Kyrgyzstan		
Country office evaluations								Myanmar	
Evaluation of the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean's Regional Centre for Environmental Health Action				Completed					
Evaluation of the neglected tropical diseases programme, with a special focus on the current neglected tropical diseases road map for implementation				Completed					
Evaluation of the utilization of national professional officers at the country level				Completed					
Review of 40 years of primary health care implementation at country level ^b					Proposal to EB	Completed			
Framework of engagement with non-State actors – initial evaluation in 2019						Completed			
Evaluation of one Grade 3 emergency – Inter-agency humanitarian evaluation of the response to cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique								Ongoing	
Evaluation of the global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (2016–2020)								Ongoing	
Evaluation of WHO's normative function at country level ^b								Inception phase	
Corporate evaluation of WHO's results-based management framework									

		2018				2019			
	Start date ^a	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
ADDITIONAL CORPORATE EVALUATIONS									
External evaluation of the International Agency for Research on Cancer								Completed	
Evaluation of WHO’s work with collaborating centres								Ongoing	
Mid-point evaluation of the WHO global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020								Ongoing	
Review of the alignment of the work of the WHO Centre for Health Development to the WHO transformation objectives									Ongoing
Mid-term evaluation of the WHO-Thailand Country Cooperation Strategy 2017–2021									Ongoing

DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS IN APPROVED ORGANIZATION-WIDE EVALUATION WORKPLAN 2018–2019

Completed

Evaluation of online language training.

External evaluation of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (2013–2017).

Evaluation of tobacco control through MPOWER measures in the South-East Asia Region.

Evaluation of 10 years of implementation of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund.

Ongoing

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.

Not yet started

Evaluation of the measles and rubella elimination programme in the European Region.

Postponed due to ongoing regional transformation plans

Mid-term review of the Roadmap of WHO's work for the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2017–2021).^c

Q: quarter.

^a The start date is included for evaluations that were carried over from the workplan for 2016–2017 and therefore started during the previous biennium. No start date for evaluations that started in 2018–2019.

The order in which the evaluations appear is the order in which the evaluations commenced.

^b Additional evaluations requested by the Executive Board in January 2018.

^c See document EB145/6, paragraph 28.