

Evaluation: update and proposed workplan for 2022–2023

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 151st session in May 2022, 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 2022–2023.

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 2020–2021⁴ provided the basis for ongoing evaluation work. Unless otherwise stated, all completed evaluation reports are available on the webpage of the Evaluation Office.⁵

Corporate evaluations

4. An **evaluation of the integration of gender, equity and human rights in the work of the Organization** was conducted with the overall objective of assessing the extent to which gender, equity and human rights considerations have been meaningfully integrated into the work of WHO at all levels of the Organization, how effective such integration has been in contributing to health outcomes at country level, and how optimally the Organization has operated (both internally and with key partners) towards the achievement of its objectives in this area. Toward this end, the evaluation documented

¹ Decision EB143(9) (2018).

² Document EB149/5.

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 12 November 2021).

⁴ Document EB146/38, Annex, approved by the Executive Board at its 146th session (see document EB146/2020/REC/2, summary records of the third meeting, section 3).

⁵ The Evaluation Office webpage is available at <http://who.int/evaluation> (accessed 12 November 2021).

successes, challenges and best practices, and provided lessons learned and recommendations for future use by management to inform relevant decision-making processes. The evaluation was primarily formative in nature: its ultimate purpose being to facilitate internal discussion and decision-making for WHO to most meaningfully integrate these critical areas into the work of the Organization moving forward. The evaluation report was delivered in September 2021.

5. A **comprehensive review of the WHO global action plan on antimicrobial resistance** was undertaken, the purpose of which was to enhance current work on antimicrobial resistance. Based on the five primary objectives of the global action plan, the review documented successes, challenges and best practices and provided lessons learned and recommendations for use by WHO and other stakeholders to guide future implementation of the global action plan and to inform decision-making on antimicrobial resistance. The review report was delivered in September 2021.

6. The main purpose of country programme evaluations is to identify key achievements, challenges and areas for improvement, and to document best practices and innovations of WHO's work in a given country. In the medium term, such evaluations are expected to generate a body of evidence that sheds light on systemic issues that require attention at the corporate level. In the case of country programme evaluations, the need for organizational learning has acquired particular emphasis in light of the Organization's explicit commitment to achieving impact at country level – and to harnessing evidence in helping achieve such impact – in the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023. It is within this context that the evaluation workplan for 2020–2021 included a **synthesis of country programme evaluations** conducted to date to generate lessons on key achievements as well as recurrent issues that could be used by WHO management to improve corporate processes and guidance. The synthesis report was delivered in October 2021.

7. At the request of the Executive Board, the Evaluation Office is conducting an **evaluation of the use of consultants and agreements for performance of work by WHO**, the overall objective of which is to assess why and how WHO has employed the consultant and used these contracting modalities towards the effective delivery of WHO's mandate. The evaluation will document successes, added value of using these contractual modalities, 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 is expected to be delivered during the last quarter of 2021.

8. A **mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the strategic action plan on polio transition** is ongoing with the objective of assessing the status and implementation of the strategic action plan on polio transition, and proposing any modifications needed to adapt to the changing context. Toward this end, the evaluation will: (a) document key achievements, best practices, challenges, gaps, and areas for improvement in the design and implementation of the strategic action plan; (b) identify the key contextual factors and changes in the global public health realm that have affected the development and implementation of the strategic action plan and the road map developed in 2018; and (c) make recommendations as appropriate on the way forward to enable the successful implementation of the plan. The evaluation report is expected to be delivered during the first quarter of 2022. An executive summary of the evaluation report will be presented as an annex to the annual evaluation report for consideration by the Executive Board, through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee at its meeting in May 2022.

Decentralized evaluations

9. The Evaluation Office continues to provide technical backstopping and quality assurance for decentralized evaluations, including through its participation in evaluation management groups, as

appropriate. Although defined as a decentralized evaluation, the Evaluation Office is managing the evaluation of the WHO response to COVID-19 in Ukraine, the report of which is expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2022.

10. The Evaluation Office also supported the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean by co-managing the independent evaluation of WHO's Whole of Syria response to provide a comprehensive, independent and robust assessment of WHO's emergency response in Syria. The evaluation report was delivered in June 2021. In addition, support was also provided by the Evaluation Office for the mid-term review and push forward in respect of the regional initiative, Vision 2023, undertaken by an independent review group established by the Regional Director. The results of this review were presented to the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean in October 2021.

11. 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 areas of shared substantive and strategic interest. In addition to contributing to both accountability and strategic learning across the system, these evaluations also represent an example of how WHO seeks to meet its organizational commitments in a cost-efficient, whole-of-system manner wherever such opportunities present themselves. In this regard, the Evaluation Office is currently actively engaged with other bodies in the evaluation of the broader COVID-19 response, including:

(a) the evaluation of the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, which the Evaluation Office is co-managing together with the United Nations Foundation, the main fiduciary partner to this significant resource mobilization effort in support of the COVID-19 response; the evaluation report is expected to be delivered by the end of 2021;

(b) the system-wide evaluation of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-partner Trust Fund being led by the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General and supported by members of the United Nations Evaluation Group;

(c) the evaluation of the inter-agency COVID-19 response, which has been commissioned by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and is being coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and co-managed by the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group, focusing on issues of inter-agency coordination in the health and socioeconomic response to COVID-19; and

(d) participation in the OECD-led COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition, which aims to encourage information-sharing and coordination among its members (that is, entities of the United Nations system, bilateral and multilateral donors, nongovernmental organizations and others) in their COVID-19-related evaluation work and thus minimize duplication and maximize complementarity of efforts.

12. Additional examples of collaboration with evaluation counterparts in other entities include:

(a) the participation of the Evaluation Office in the Evaluation Reference Group for the synthesis of United Nations system evaluations of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all), led by the UNICEF Evaluation Office, the purpose of which is to make evaluative evidence on Goal 6 available for learning and decision-making, and to contribute to the wider body of knowledge on progress towards the achievement of Goal 6 targets;

(b) the representation of the Evaluation Office on the evaluation management group of the independent evaluation of the UNAIDS Joint Programme's work with key populations at the country level, for which it has also provided financial support. In addition, the Director of the Evaluation Office is a member of the UNAIDS co-sponsor evaluation group, which collectively decides on joint evaluations to be conducted; and

(c) the support provided by the evaluation offices of WHO and FAO for the work of the Codex Secretariat to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the use and impact of Codex standards.

13. 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.

14. 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.

PROPOSED EVALUATION WORKPLAN 2022–2023

15. 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.

16. The proposed 2022–2023 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 reviewed by the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee in October 2021.

17. 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.

18. 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 divisions, 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

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.

adherence to guidance provided in the WHO Evaluation Practice Handbook¹ and through the Global Network on Evaluation.

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

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

20. The corporate/centralized evaluations planned for 2022–2023 are a combination of roll-over evaluations, carry-over evaluations from the 2020–2021 evaluation workplan and a set of new evaluations.

21. Roll-over evaluations cover those started in 2021 and due to continue into the biennium 2022–2023:

- mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the strategic action plan on polio transition;
- corporate evaluation of WHO's results-based management framework; and
- country programme evaluations.²

22. Carry-over evaluations from the 2020-2021 evaluation workplan include:

- evaluation of WHO's normative functions at country level;
- formative evaluation of the implementation of the Research and Development Blueprint for Action to Prevent Epidemics and its plan of action;
- evaluation of the work of two departments of the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean: Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, and Science and Information; and
- evaluation of the utilization of Special Service Agreements.

23. The following corporate evaluations are proposed for 2022–2023:

- preliminary evaluation of the Special Programme on Primary Health Care (to be conducted mid-2022);

¹ WHO Evaluation Practice Handbook. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2013 (http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/96311/1/9789241548687_eng.pdf, accessed 12 November 2021).

² Country programme 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 Bangladesh, China, Jordan, Mongolia, Morocco, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic and Timor-Leste, with others to be defined.

- evaluation of World Health Days;¹
- formative evaluation of the implementation of the WHO policy on disability (to be conducted in 2023);²
- mid-term evaluation of the global strategy to Eliminate Yellow fever Epidemics 2017–2026;³
- evaluation of the contribution of data and delivery to the implementation and impact of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 and WHO transformation;
- evaluation of WHO’s delegation of authority and online workflow processes and systems;
- evaluation of the WHO Tuberculosis Programme;
- joint evaluation of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (to be conducted in 2023);⁴
- Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHE) of Grade 3 emergencies; and
- evaluation of the functional reviews of WHO country offices in the African Region (to be conducted in 2023).

24. Following a recommendation from the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, the Executive Board⁵ also requested an evaluation of the COVID-19 response to be considered for the evaluation workplan. However, it is proposed to await any recommendations to this effect from the Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies to guide any future evaluation. Meanwhile, as described in paragraphs 9 and 11, the Evaluation Office has been engaged in a number of different COVID-19-related evaluative activities that also have implications for the Organization.

¹ Document A74/9 Add.2.

² WHO policy on disability. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021, para. 28. (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240020627>, accessed 12 November 2021).

³ A global strategy to Eliminate Yellow fever Epidemics (EYE) 2017-2026. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018, page 41 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272408/9789241513661-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, accessed 12 November 2021).

⁴ Stronger Collaboration, Better Health. Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019, page 44. (<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/327841/9789241516433-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, accessed 12 November 2021). This evaluation will be collectively commissioned by all 12 independent evaluation offices (or their equivalents) representing the signatory agencies.

⁵ Document EB147/2 (see also document EB147/2020/REC/1, summary records of the first meeting of the resumed session, section 3) and document EB149/2 (see also document EB149/2021/REC/1, summary record of the first meeting, section 5).

Decentralized evaluations¹ to be commissioned or managed by regional offices, country offices and headquarters departments

25. Carry-over decentralized evaluations include:
- evaluation of the Global Health Cluster;
 - evaluation of the emergency and review committees under the International Health Regulations (2005); and
 - evaluation of the health and security interface.
26. The following decentralized evaluations are proposed for 2022–2023:
- evaluation of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework Partnership Contribution (PC) Preparedness High-level Implementation Plan II 2018–2023;²
 - evaluation of progress on the Decade for health workforce strengthening in the South-East Asia Region, 2015–2024; and
 - evaluation of the adoption of people-centred noncommunicable disease service delivery within primary health care in countries of the South-East Asia Region.
27. Further information on these corporate and decentralized evaluations is provided in the Annex to this document.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

28. The Board is invited to note the report and approve the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2022–2023.

¹ 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. A provision has been made in the Programme budget 2022–2023 for five regional evaluation advisers situated in regional offices to support and enhance evaluative activities at regional level and it is expected that further evaluations will be identified upon the assumption of duties of the regional evaluation advisers.

² Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework Partnership Contribution (PC) Preparedness High-Level Implementation Plan II 2018–2023. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018, page 45. (<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/260538/WHO-WHE-IHM-PIP-2018.1-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, accessed 12 November 2021).

ANNEX

ORGANIZATION-WIDE EVALUATION WORKPLAN FOR 2022–2023

Evaluation type	Area of evaluation	Justification
Corporate/centralized evaluations		
Programmatic	Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the strategic action plan on polio transition (roll-over from 2021)	Requirement/utility
Thematic	Corporate evaluation of WHO's results-based management framework (roll-over from 2021)	Significance/utility
Office-specific	Country programme evaluations (roll-over from 2021)	Utility
Thematic	Evaluation of WHO's normative functions at country level	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	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
Thematic	Evaluation of the utilization of Special Service Agreements	Utility
Programmatic	Preliminary evaluation of the Special Programme on Primary Health Care (to be conducted mid-2022)	Significance/utility
Thematic	Evaluation of World Health Days	Requirement
Thematic	Formative evaluation of the implementation of the <i>WHO policy on disability</i> (to be conducted in 2023)	Requirement
Programmatic	Mid-term evaluation of the global strategy to Eliminate Yellow fever Epidemics 2017–2026	Requirement
Programmatic	Evaluation of the contribution of data and delivery to the implementation and impact of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 and WHO transformation	Utility
Thematic	Evaluation of WHO's delegation of authority and online workflow processes and systems	Utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the WHO Tuberculosis Programme	Significance/utility
Thematic	Joint evaluation of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (to be conducted in 2023)	Requirement
Thematic	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHE) of Grade 3 emergencies	Significance/utility
Thematic	Evaluation of the functional reviews of WHO country offices in the African Region (to be conducted in 2023)	Utility

Decentralized evaluations¹		
Programmatic	Evaluation of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework Partnership Contribution (PC) Preparedness High-level Implementation Plan II 2018–2023	Requirement
Thematic	Evaluation of progress on the Decade for health workforce strengthening in the South-East Asia Region, 2015–2024	Significance/utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the adoption of people-centred noncommunicable disease service delivery within primary health care in countries of the South-East Asia Region	Significance/utility
Programmatic	Evaluation of the Global Health Cluster	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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