

AGENDA ITEM IV.

Forward looking discussion

Room Document 4.

CONCEPT NOTE: PROMOTING THE EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND RELEVANCE OF ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT THROUGH BETTER AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF EVALUATION

RATIONALE: DECLARING 2015 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF EVALUATION

These documents have been submitted by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) for discussion at the 16th meeting of the DAC Evaluation Network.

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16th Meeting

12-13 February 2014

Promoting the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of activities for development through better awareness and utilization of evaluation

Importance of Evaluation

Evaluation asks the following questions:

- How do we know if we are doing the right things?
- How do we know we are doing these things right?
- Are we doing these things on a scale that is making a difference?

Evaluation helps Member States assess the results and impact of the work of the UN and of development work in general. It helps Member States and managers understand what works, what doesn't work and how to improve performance. As such it is an essential management tool for better results and accountability.

At the grassroots level, evaluation is increasingly promoted and used for enhanced decision-making.

EvalYear: a groundswell movement in favor of evaluation

The International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation and UN Women co-lead EvalPartners, an innovative multi-stakeholder partnership to enhance the capacities of civil society organizations to influence policy makers, public opinion and other key stakeholders so that public policies are based on evidence, and incorporate considerations of equity and effectiveness. EvalPartners represents 149 national Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs) and 23 regional and international VOPEs.

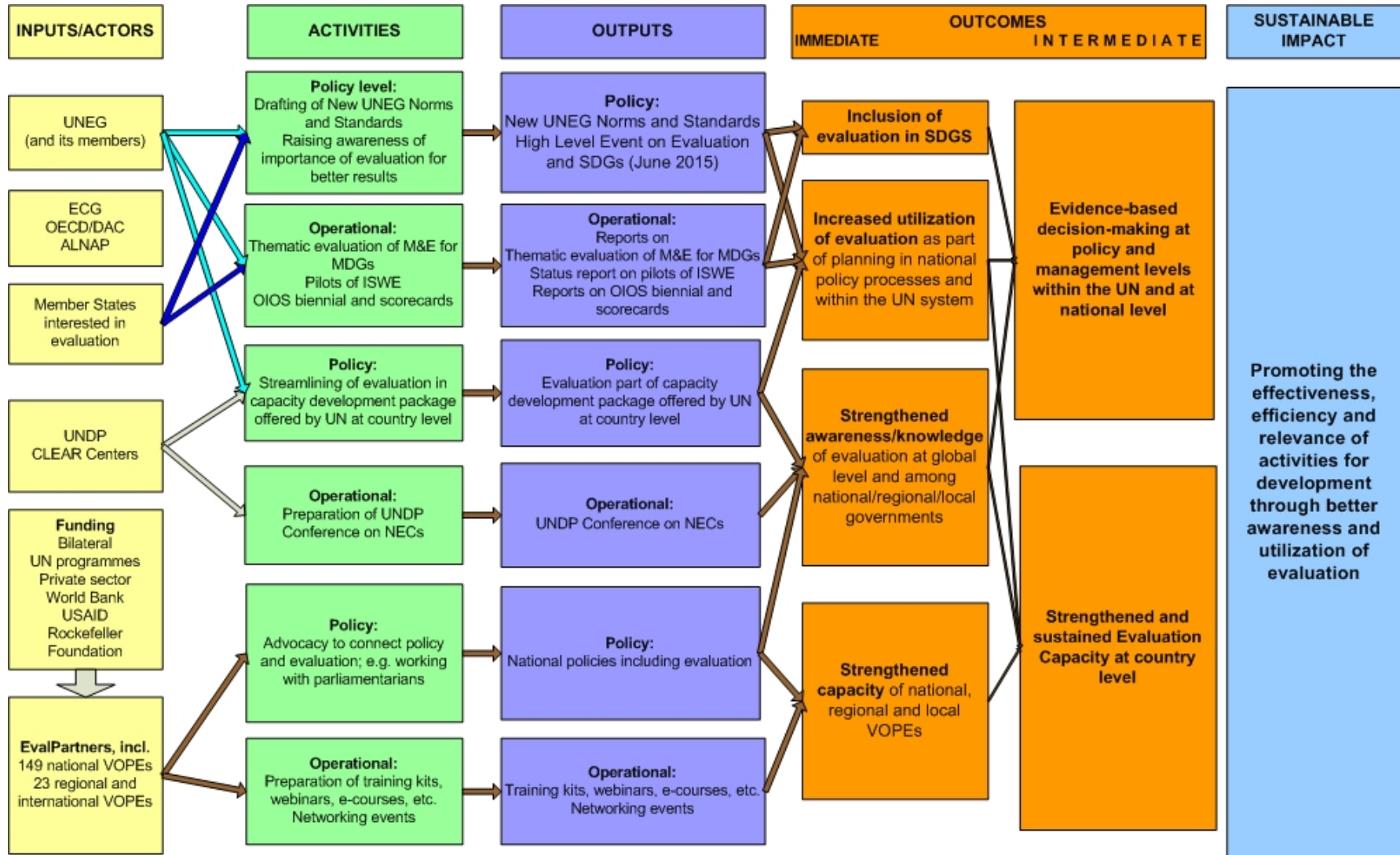
The movement to declare 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation was started by EvalPartners, which is facilitating a global dialogue among regional and national evaluation actors, evaluation offices of international organizations, including UN agencies, the World Bank and several other multilateral development banks, OECD/DAC and developing countries, private foundations and other key stakeholders. The UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) has also now endorsed 2015 as a key landmark year for concerted action.

This groundswell movement in favor of evaluation will:

- position evaluation in the policy arena;
- act as a catalyst for important conversations and thinking on the role of evaluation in good governance for equitable and sustainable human development; and
- advocate and promote evaluation and evidence-based policy making;

at international, regional, national, and local levels.

Promoting the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of activities for development through better use of evaluation



A United Nations resolution on “Promoting the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of activities for development through better awareness and utilization of evaluation” would:

1. Put the issue of national evaluation capacity development at the forefront of the global agenda;

The very act of negotiating the resolution will put evaluation on the radar of Member States, especially within the broader context of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. It will play a catalytic role and strengthen the demand for national evaluation policies and systems, stimulating synergies between different stakeholders (parliaments, governments, civil society actors, UN agencies, etc).

2. Show that Member States believe in the importance of evaluation for development;

Associations and networks of evaluators are so far at the forefront of this initiative and Member States are the missing part of the equation. Adopting a resolution aimed at promoting the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of activities for development shows their buy-in and encourages further thinking on the role of evaluation in good governance for equitable, gender-equality responsive and sustainable human development.

3. Empower civil society organizations to engage in collaborative initiatives at national level; and

National and local evaluation actors will be able to leverage the resolution to increase the impact of their activities at national and local level in order to promote evidence-based policy making that is equity-focused and gender-responsive

4. Act as a catalyst for evaluation within the UN system

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and its members will be able to refer back to this resolution to strengthen the function of evaluation in UN agencies, funds and programmes. The resolution would strengthen the use of evaluation for learning and accountability in decision-making, budgeting and programme improvement.

As outlined in the figure above, the **two main goals** of this resolution are:

- **Strengthened and sustained national evaluation capacities; and**
- **Evidence-based decision-making at policy and management level, at national level and especially within the UN.**



Declaring 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation

Evidence for the world we want

Using evaluation to improve people's lives
through better policy making

Importance of evaluation for development and growth

How is the UN doing? What is the UN good at? Is the UN effective? How do we know if the United Nations is doing the right things? And how do we know it is doing these things right? A strong evaluation function is the only way to answer the question of how the activities and outputs of the United Nations have resulted in real change in the lives of people. Evaluation looks at the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of development activities. It provides evidence for effective development leading to growth. It is a crucial tool for programme managers, but also for Member States who decide on the budget of the UN. To enhance its impact on the ground, the United Nations has been strengthening its evaluation function, notably by creating the United Nations Evaluation Group.

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) is a professional network that brings together the units responsible for evaluation in the UN system including the specialized agencies, funds, programmes and affiliated organizations. UNEG currently has 43 such members and 3 observers. UNEG aims to strengthen the objectivity, effectiveness and visibility of the evaluation function across the UN system and to advocate the importance of evaluation for learning, decision-making and accountability. UNEG provides a forum for members to establish common norms and standards for evaluation; develop methodologies addressing UN concerns; strengthen evaluation functions through peer review and information exchange and establish partnerships with the wider evaluation community.

In recent years, evaluation has become an increasingly important framework for policy and institutional issue throughout the UN system and beyond. The General Assembly recognized the role and importance of UNEG in several resolutions on the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In 2012, the General Assembly has emphasized the importance of "promoting a culture of evaluation (A/RES/67/226)" to enhance the functioning of the UN system and tasked UNEG, among others, to develop a policy for independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The Secretary-General himself considers evaluation as "an essential tool in strengthening the effectiveness of the UN". A grassroots movement of evaluators aiming to promote evaluation at the national level is now echoing this recognition of the importance of evaluation within the United Nations system.

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EvalPartners, a grassroots movement

EvalPartners is an innovative partnership between the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation and UNICEF to enhance the capacities of civil society organizations to influence policy makers, public opinion and other key stakeholders so that public policies are based on evidence, and incorporate considerations of equity and effectiveness. EvalPartners gathers:

- 149 national Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs); and
- 23 regional and international VOPEs.

UNEG and its members and EvalPartners have joined forces in order to declare 2015 the International Year of Evaluation. 2015 was identified as a strategic year in order to mainstream evaluation in the development and implementation of the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals, and all other critical local contextualized goals, at the international and national levels.

A United Nations resolution declaring 2015 the International Year of Evaluation would:

1. Give legitimacy to the activities of EvalPartners

VOPEs will be able to leverage the resolution to increase the impact of their activities at national and local level in order to promote evidence-based policy making.

2. Show that Member States believe in the importance of evaluation for development

Associations and networks of evaluators are so far at the forefront of this initiative and Member States are the missing part of the equation. Declaring 2015 the International Year of Evaluation shows their buy-in and encourages further thinking on the role of evaluation in good governance for equitable and sustainable human development.

3. Act as a catalyst for evaluation within the UN system

UNEG and its members will be able to refer back to this resolution to strengthen the function of evaluation in UN agencies, funds and programmes.

4. Put the issue of national evaluation capacity building at the forefront of the global agenda, beyond the United Nations

The very act of negotiating the resolution will put evaluation on the radar of Member States, especially within the broader context of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.