

**UNDP Management Commentaries on the**

**Annual Report on Evaluation, 2014**

**Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS**

**Annual Session, June 2015, New York**

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**Background**

1. The Independent Evaluation Office is the custodian of the evaluation function [UNDP Evaluation Policy, Section A, paragraph 19] and reports annually to the Executive Board on the function, compliance, coverage, quality, findings and follow-up to evaluations conducted by UNDP and its associated funds and programmes.
2. The Annual Report on Evaluation assesses the progress made by UNDP and its associated funds and programmes in fulfilling the evaluation function objectives outlined in the UNDP Evaluation Policy. It presents an assessment of UNDP’s evaluation capacity, provides key findings and lessons emerging from independent evaluations conducted in 2014, and sets out the programme of work of the Evaluation Office for 2015 and 2016.
3. The commentaries submitted herewith provide a UNDP management perspective on the results presented in the 2014 Annual Report on independent evaluation in UNDP (DP/2015/XX). Additionally, these commentaries also present a summary of the activity of decentralized evaluation and an update on the implementation status of related management responses.
4. The evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office and by UNDP programme units in 2014, and the related management responses, as well as the status updates on implementation of commitments made in those responses are available through the [Evaluation Resource Centre](http://erc.undp.org/index.html;jsessionid=2825BA456DA1408C7BC53F6267CDC59E) database (ERC).
5. **Evaluation coverage and quality - UNDP comments on IEO activities in 2014**

*IEO Support to decentralized evaluations*

1. As reiterated in the findings of the recently completed Review of the UNDP Evaluation Policy, the quality assessment of decentralized evaluations is a critical deliverable that provides relevant information to UNDP management, documenting the corrective measures required to improve organizational performance, and to the Executive Board in supporting its role on evaluation. In accordance with the UNDP Evaluation Policy, the IEO:
   1. Provides support to country offices in conducting decentralized evaluations in addition to maintaining the online Evaluation Resource Centre, and a roster of evaluation consultants;
   2. Strengthens the quality assessment system for decentralized evaluations;
   3. Assesses the quality of decentralized evaluations conducted during the year and include findings and conclusions in the respective Annual Report on Evaluation.

Management notes that the IEO did not conduct the regular quality assessment in 2014. Therefore the Annual Report on Evaluation does not include the quality rating for the UNDP decentralized evaluations completed during the reporting period.

*Status of planned independent evaluations for 2014*

1. A series of slight delays were recorded in the completion of planned independent evaluations for 2014 as outlined in the Medium-Term Evaluation Plan. More specifically, 6 thematic evaluations deadlines could not be met and have been rescheduled:
   * 1. The independent *review of the UNDP evaluation policy*, which was expected to be presented to the Board at its second regular session of 2014, was presented instead at the first regular session of 2015;
     2. The *Evaluation of the GEF/UNDP Small Grants Programme*, which was planned for the second regular session of 2014, is now scheduled to be presented at the second regular session of 2015;
     3. The *Evaluation of the impact of UNDP support to protected areas management* that was intended to be presented at the first regular session of 2015, is now scheduled to be presented at the second regular session of 2015;
     4. The *Evaluation of the contribution of UNDP Human Development Reports (HDRs),* which was supposed to be presented at the first regular session 2015, is now scheduled to be presented at the annual session of 2015;
     5. The *Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to gender equality* that was planned to be presented at the annual session of 2015, is now scheduled to be submitted at the second regular session of 2015;
     6. The *Evaluation of the impact of UNDP support to mine action* which was scheduled to be presented at the annual session 2015, is now scheduled to be submitted at the second regular session of 2016;
2. Similarly, delays were also encountered in the completion of Assessments of Development Results (ADR) planned for 2014, which may have been caused by a combination of factors, including planning constraints at the country office level. Of six ADRs planned for completion in 2014 (Armenia, Malaysia, Somalia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Zimbabwe), only one ADR for Armenia was completed. While ADRs are not formally submitted to the Executive Board, according to the recently adopted Programme Quality Assurance criteria, ADRs are mandatory inputs into the Country Programme Document (CPD) formulation and accompany CPDs to the Executive Board for endorsement.
3. Considering the need for CPDs to be adequately informed by findings and recommendations from the ADRs and other evaluations, UNDP rescheduled submissions to the Executive Board of CPDs for the countries concerned to ensure they are documented and formulated on an evidence base.

**Progress on the reform of ADRs**

1. With regard to independent assessments of development results, EB Decision 2014/4 “encourages the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP to further develop its methodology for efficiency analysis, in time for the Assessments for Development Results to be undertaken by the Office in 2015”. UNDP management encourages the IEO to implement the Board decision and proceed with the development of the methodology as soon as feasible, in order to support the ADR processes in 2015.
2. UNDP management stands ready to engage with the IEO on the ADR reform. While the 2014 Annual report on evaluation suggests that the “…latest revision of the ADR guidance and methods manual codifies recent process changes, and responds to concerns and suggestions from regional bureaus, country offices and other key stakeholders…”, UNDP management requests the IEO to finalize formulation of the ADR methodology to improve the quality of development results evaluations.

**Joint evaluations**

1. UNDP management notes with satisfaction that the IEO is conducting joint evaluations with key partners. Such evaluations are important instruments for assessing the effectiveness of joint approaches to achieving results, and should be continued to foster coherence and synergies among the Agencies, Funds and Programmes of the United Nations development system.

**Evaluation Advisory Panel**

1. UNDP management welcomes the initiative by the Evaluation Office in 2013 to establish an Evaluation Advisory Panel. The ongoing revision of the UNDP evaluation policy is a unique opportunity for UNDP to better define the mandate of the Advisory Panel and ensure the organization benefits from its advice on means to strengthen the quality of evaluations. To this end, UNDP management encourages the Independent Evaluation Office to share and discuss with UNDP the results of the panel’s work, particularly the reports and commentaries that directly relate to UNDP’s evaluations.

**Support to regional and national evaluation capacity**

1. In 2014, UNDP country offices continued to actively engage with national counterparts in a range of activities to support national capacity for results-based management, including national capacities to collect, collate and analyze evaluative evidence. UNDP management reiterates its commitment to engage with the IEO in supporting regional and national evaluation capacity. While the Annual report states that “…the IEO cooperates with UNDP programme units to assist countries on evaluation capacity development”, UNDP management expects the IEO to take more concrete steps towards improving evaluation capacity development on the ground, in addition to regularly convening biennial international conferences on national evaluation capacities.
2. **Decentralized evaluation**
3. The independent review in 2014 of the UNDP evaluation policy, carried out as part of preparations for the planned revision of the policy, was an opportunity to revisit implementation of the policy by both UNDP units and the IEO. The review report focused most of its attention on the efficacy of the decentralized evaluation function, and more specifically on ways of strengthening it through enhanced capacity at country level with more effective support from Headquarters. UNDP’s Management response to the review, while noting weaknesses in the review methodology, also reaffirmed the strong commitment of the Organization to build the capacity and strengthen the systems needed for effective and efficient management of the decentralized evaluation function as outlined in the evaluation policy.

**Focus on the quality of decentralized evaluations**

***Evaluation capacities of Country offices and Headquarters Units***

1. UNDP management notes that since 2012, there has been a consistent increase in both the number of country offices with at least one M&E specialist and the number of M&E specialists at the country office level. The 2014 Annual Report on Evaluation concluded that in 2014, 60 per cent of country offices reported the presence of at least one M&E specialist, compared to 42 per cent of countries in 2013, and to 23 per cent in 2012. Based on the data from the Results-Oriented Annual Report, there are 382 staff with M&E responsibilities at the country office level. Starting from 2014, decentralized evaluation capacities at country level are being further enhanced by dedicated results-based management advisors placed in UNDP regional service centers. Based on 2014 data, in 42 Country Offices staff were recruited to provide monitoring expertise. M&E training to staff project personnel and national counterparts was provided in 99 Country Offices. UNDP reaffirms its commitment to further strengthen the country office and Headquarters Bureau evaluation capacities through training, certification and additional human resources, financial availability allowing the latter.

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| **DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS: 2014** | | | | | | | |
|  | **Total Count** | **Project evaluations** | | **Outcome Evaluations** | | **GEF Evaluations** | |
| **Number** | **Percentage of Total** | **Number** | **Percentage of Total** | **Number** | **Percentage of Total** |
| **Total Count** | 228 | 207 | 90.8% | 21 | 9.2% | 103 | 45.2% |
| **Budget (USD)** | $5,904,756 | $5,171,305 | 87.6% | $733,451 | 12.4% | $2,362,242 | 40.0% |

**IEO Assessment of the Quality of decentralized evaluations**

1. UNDP management notes that the IEO suspended the quality assessment system for decentralized evaluations in 2014. As a result, the 2014 Annual Report of the Administrator does not include reference to changes in the quality of decentralized evaluations. The quality of decentralized evaluations has been increasing steadily since the quality ratings were first introduced in 2011. Annual reports on evaluation have consistently noted this positive trend in the quality of decentralized evaluations, with the analysis showing that 45 per cent of evaluations assessed in 2013 rated ‘satisfactory’ or better (compared to 32 per cent in 2012), 36 per cent ‘moderately satisfactory’ (compared to 43 per cent in 2012), and 19 per cent ‘moderately unsatisfactory’ or worse (compared to 25 per cent in 2012). The number of reports rated as moderately unsatisfactory has been cut in half since 2011, and the number of evaluations judged to be satisfactory has increased every year. UNDP management expects the IEO to resume the quality assessment system in order to strengthen the monitoring of UNDP’s efforts and commitments to continue the positive trend in the steady improvement of decentralized evaluations.
2. The measures and steps that UNDP has identified as critical for improving the quality of evaluations include the following: (a) a consistent management demand for and better use of evaluations; (b) better oversight and support by regional bureaus, resulting in improved adherence by country offices to evaluation plans, and improved evaluation management; and (c) leveraging accumulated experience in conducting evaluations. Through these steps, UNDP will continue to demonstrate its firm commitment to improve the quality of decentralized evaluations, as well as to strengthen their utility for organizational performance and the relevance of UNDP support.

**Quality of decentralized evaluations vs. total number of decentralized evaluations[[1]](#footnote-2)**

1. **Follow up on evaluation recommendations and management responses**
2. In September 2014, the Executive Board adopted decision 2014/14 on the Annual Report on Evaluation, 2013, urging UNDP to “address in a timely manner the findings and recommendations from the annual report on evaluation, with a view towards improving programme performance, effectiveness and efficiency”. The Board also recognized “the progress of UNDP in developing management responses for all evaluations carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, and requests UNDP to explain the level of completed actions in the future management commentaries on the annual report on evaluation”.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **STATUS OF DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS: 2014** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **No. of Evaluations** | **Mgmt. Response Status** | **No. of Key Actions** | **STATUS OF KEY ACTIONS** | | | | | |
| **Sum of Completed** | **Sum of Ongoing** | **Sum of Initiated** | **Sum of No Longer Applicable** | **Sum of Overdue** | **Sum of Not Initiated** |
| **Grand Total** | **228** | **180** | **1,379** | **305** | **192** | **264** | **16** | **403** | **199** |
| ***\*Data based on Evaluation Resource Centre Extractions as of March, 2015*** | | | | | | | | | |

1. UNDP reaffirms its commitment to address in a timely manner the findings and recommendations from the annual report on evaluation and to achieve full evaluation compliance across all units. UNDP management further commits to undertaking sustained efforts to tackle the implementation of management response key actions, in particular the overdue key management response actions.

1. The status of management response actions committed to within independent evaluations is briefly summarized below. Details of UNDP commitments to address issues identified in these evaluations can be found in the full management response reports available in the Evaluation Resource Center.

*Status of implementation of Management Response commitments for independent evaluations completed in 2012, 2013 and 2014:*

1. **The Evaluation of the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2013.** *(completed in 2012)* The UNDP strategic plan set a clear direction for UNDP and provided a stronger results framework against which to monitor and report UNDP results. UNDP built on the significant efforts to date with regard to key areas such as gender and capacity development, to ensure that lessons from mainstreaming and integrated programming, including for more sustainable results, are fully absorbed and factored into new programming. UNDP committed to implement 11 key actions, of which 9 (or 82%) had been completed as of end March 2015. UNDP ensured a smooth and effectively managed transition to the new Strategic Plan (2014-2017), and used the internal strategic planning processes – strengthened under the agenda for organizational change – to prioritize organizational effectiveness and efficiency, focusing on performance at the country level. UNDP’s approach explicitly recognized critical trade-offs related inter alia to being demand-driven, decentralized, and focused on national ownership, results and sustainability, and designed internal strategies to address those trade-offs. UNDP also uses the new integrated results and resources framework of the new Strategic Plan to underpin a more robust reflection on the relationship between results and resources.

**Thematic Evaluations**

*Status of Management Response commitments for thematic evaluations completed in 2012:*

1. The **Evaluation of UNDP support to strengthening electoral systems and processes** provided a comprehensive and positive review of UNDP’s role and achievements in electoral assistance. At the same time, the evaluation pointed to certain areas where UNDP needed to strengthen its impact. UNDP committed to implementing 26 key actions, of which 19 (or 73%) had been completed as of end March 2015. UNDP has taken several steps to address the recommendations, including measures to improve coordination and lessons learned between regional and country levels and across regional bureaux, ensure the availability of electoral policies and guidance, as well as provide induction courses that include sessions on electoral assistance and the role of the UN Department for Political Affairs. Two lessons learned studies were completed on the longer-term impact of UNDP electoral assistance and on gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance, along with encouraging South-South peer exchanges.
2. The **Evaluation of UNDP partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations** recognized that partnering with global funds is strategically important to UNDP in budgetary and substantive terms. It established that UNDP had demonstrated its ability to perform effectively, to meet the rigorous standards set by funds, and to develop innovative approaches to development and administrative challenges. In the management response, UNDP committed to taking action in the following general areas: i) supporting national development priorities; ii) consistent engagement to mainstream a human development perspective and develop national capacities; iii) greater information sharing and knowledge management; iv) development of a partnership strategy for engagement with philanthropic foundations; and v) finding solutions to operational and procedural bottlenecks. UNDP committed to implementing 17 key actions, of which 14 (or 82%) had been completed as of end March 2015. Following up on the action plan for the UNDP strategy for engagement with philanthropic organizations, the Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy (BERA) and BDP, initiated a strategic dialogue, in line with the evaluation’s recommendations, and in consultation with partners such as UN DESA, OECD, Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmakers Support (WINGS) and the Rockefeller Foundation.

*Status of Management Response commitments for thematic evaluations completed in 2013:*

1. In response to the 10 recommendations of the **Evaluation of UNDP support to conflict-affected countries in the context of United Nations peace operations**, UNDP committed to implementing 32 key actions, of which 26 (or 81%) had been completed as of end March 2015. UNDP has revised its conflict-related development analysis (CDA) tool and piloted its application in crisis-affected countries. UNDP undertook systematic conflict analysis in Myanmar, Yemen, Afghanistan, and established Early Warning/Early Action systems. UNDP reached out to UN agencies and partners to forge synergies between the CDA and other conflict analysis and assessment tools such as post-conflict needs assessments and the New Deal fragility assessments. Also, UNDP contributed to the revision of guidelines on the UN Integrated Mission Planning underlining UNDP’s central role in planning processes. Based on lessons learned in 15 countries, UNDP has developed guidance notes with practical suggestions for the design, planning and implementation of post-crisis recovery programmes. The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, in cooperation with the Peacebuilding Support Office, conducted a mapping exercise of the UN pooled/inter-agency financing mechanisms available in transition countries. The UN-wide policy on integrated mission transition was finalized in February 2013.
2. The **Evaluation of UNDP contribution to poverty reduction** found that UNDP took a pragmatic, flexible approach to poverty reduction. It found that, overall UNDP’s approach had advanced the poverty eradication agenda by being country-specific, and had influenced the poverty eradication agenda by introducing a multidimensional human development perspective. The evaluation cited evidence that, “when given the opportunity”, UNDP “effectively supported national efforts aimed at capacity development for evidence-based pro-poor policy making.” In response to 4 recommendations, UNDP committed to implementing 15 key actions, of which 13 (or 87%) had been completed as of end March 2015. Results-oriented Annual Reports increasingly captured partnerships with civil society and academia, for instance on the occasions of the rollout of the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) or in the context of the post-2015 development framework discussions, in particular in the national, thematic and global consultations and outreach efforts through the MyWorld initiative. According to the Strategic Plan (2014-2017) and the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF), UNDP committed itself to supporting through all its work global efforts deployed for simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction in inequality and exclusion.
3. **Evaluation of UNDP contribution to South-South and Triangular Cooperation**: UNDP management response to this evaluation provides substantial evidence of UNDP support to South-South and Triangular Cooperation at country, regional and global levels across all focus areas of the current strategic plan through partnerships, knowledge sharing, policy, programme and operational support. In response to 5 recommendations, UNDP committed to implementing 21 key actions, of which 18 (or 85%) had been completed as of end March 2015. The South-South and triangular cooperation was embedded in the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan as a core way of working, and integrated into the new approved global programme and five regional programmes. The new Strategic Plan Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) includes 4 output indicators and 1 organizational effectiveness indicator for measuring South-South and Triangular Cooperation. The Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR) has a distinct section on South-South and triangular cooperation asking reporting units to present initiatives and modalities in which SSC was used in programmes at global, regional and country levels. UNDP has ensured the mainstreaming of South-South and Triangular Cooperation into Country Project Document (CPD) guidelines. Newly developed CPDs in 2014 have consistently integrated South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives and approaches for programme implementation. Similarly, changes have been adopted to allow for multi-country South-South and triangular cooperation projects, common results framework, and cost-recovery mechanisms, A new cost-sharing template has been developed for South-South and triangular cooperation contributions to accommodate both financial and in-kind contributions.

**Evaluation of Global Programme**

1. **The Evaluation of the fourth UNDP Global Programme** *(completed in 2012)* acknowledges that the contribution of the programme was important for global policy debates and for shaping multilateral forums, using cross-country evidence and articulating proposals for the 2010 High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. The evaluation found that cross-practice work had improved in the key thematic areas, despite some limitations in systematically promoting and institutionalizing such work. As the evaluation noted, some activities lent more to cross-practice collaboration than others. The new Global Programme provides better and more integrated programme-focused policy advice to be more effective in helping countries respond to increasingly complex and interconnected development challenges. UNDP committed to implementing 24 key actions, of which 17 (or 70%) had been completed as of end March 2015.

**Evaluation of Regional Programmes**

*Status of Management Response commitments for evaluations of Regional Programmes completed in 2012:*

1. **The Evaluation of the regional programme for Asia and the Pacific** concluded that the programme was highly relevant, had addressed critical regional development challenges and had made important strides to incorporate gender mainstreaming into policy, programming and implementation. In line with the evaluation recommendations, the new regional programme is implemented through a more institutionalized cross-practice approach, drawing from opportunities such as South-South cooperation.
2. **The Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States** concluded that the programme had tangible results in the areas of climate change, social inclusion and local development. The new regional programme is more focused with a limited number of thematic areas, tailored to specific sub-regional and country needs. The programme has largely exceeded its resource mobilization targets, hence the recommendation related to funding gaps is regarded as partially relevant.

1. **The Evaluation of the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean** concluded the programme to be relevant and effective in terms of contributions made in the region, generation of knowledge, positioning for South-South cooperation and mobilization of resources for country offices. The new regional programme focuses on a limited number of strategic issues related to sustainable development and resilience, with the main emphasis on increasing policy and technical advice, capacity development, knowledge brokering and partnership building. The programme retains its support to differentiated needs of countries in the region, comprising a large number of middle-income countries.
2. **The** **Evaluation of the regional programme for Africa** concluded the programme to be relevant, effective, strategically positioned and responsive to emerging issues such as the food crisis. In line with evaluation recommendations, in the medium term, RBA has committed to developing innovative ways to support collaboration between regional and global advisory functions that are responsive to African priorities; giving more attention to African knowledge products during project formulation; designing a knowledge management and communication strategy to capture good practices in Africa; and using successful African pilot projects as the basis for scaling-up global initiatives.
3. The **Evaluation of the regional programme for the Arab States** acknowledged that the programme had been implemented during a challenging time in the region’s history, with UNDP being among the few aid organizations trying to promote good governance in the region. In line with evaluation recommendation to adapt to regional transformations, participatory approaches informed the 2014-2017 regional programme and built upon successfully established networks between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders (e.g. the Arab anti-corruption and integrity network). Resilience is a cross-cutting theme, and inclusion (targeting of youth and gender) is emphasized in all focus areas of the new regional programme.

**Assessments of Development Results (ADR)**

*Status of Management Response commitments for ADRs completed in 2012: (Egypt, Sri Lanka, Paraguay, DRC, UAE, Djibouti, Tunisia, Costa Rica, India, Moldova, Nepal, Pacific Islands)*

1. Details of how each country office has responded to the ADR recommendations can be found in their respective management responses, which are uploaded in the Evaluation Resource Center database. UNDP management is pleased to note that the ADRs affirm partner perceptions of UNDP as “a valued, respected and key development partner supporting government”, as well as the relevance of the work of the organization to national priorities and development challenges. UNDP notes in particular the positive findings related to UNDP’s contributions to the achievement of the MDGs, and the work of the organization to integrate gender and human rights in programming. With regard to weaknesses and challenges, UNDP management has taken concrete steps over the past three years to address these issues in line with partner government priorities.

*Status of Management Response commitments for ADRs completed in 2013: (Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Kenya, Algeria, Angola, Croatia, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger)*

1. Details of how each country office has responded to the ADR recommendations can be found in their respective management responses, which are uploaded in the Evaluation Resource Center database. UNDP management is pleased to note that the ADRs indicated that UNDP’s response to national priorities, in the four of those countries that recently witnessed political and social instability, was “strategic and relevant in the transition from post-conflict scenarios to national context, and from peace-building to development”. UNDP management notes in particular the positive findings related to the ability of the organization to “adapt to the recurrence of conflict by repositioning its support to align with immediate and emerging needs”. This confirms that efforts under the agenda for organizational change aimed at making UNDP more nimble and flexible are bearing fruits.

*Status of Management Response commitments for ADRs completed in 2014: (Armenia)*

1. As per the Annual Report on evaluation, only one independent evaluation was completed in 2014, namely the **Assessment for Development Results in Armenia**. UNDP management is pleased to note that the ADR has indicated that UNDP has made relevant contributions to national development outcomes in Armenia and worked well with national stakeholders. UNDP took note of the ADR recommendations to: i) hold further discussions with Government to redefine a more consultative relationship with regard to strategic prioritization of resources, selection of programme themes and beneficiaries; ii) define ways to ensure UNDP’s neutrality, efficiency and effectiveness is not compromised; and iii) to allow UNDP to have the flexibility needed to continue to foster innovation, to ensure value for money and to make timely and efficient contributions to sustainable development in Armenia. The country programme for Armenia is responding to the ADR recommendations.
2. **Evaluation activities of the United Nations Capital Development Fund**
3. UNCDF continued its commitment to evaluation in 2014 commissioning four independent project, programme and thematic evaluations across its portfolio of investments in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). In 2015, it will commission at least a further four evaluations assessing the preliminary results of innovative UNCDF interventions in the areas of local finance, clean energy and adaptation to climate change at the local level.
4. Management welcomed the findings of completed evaluations in 2014 highlighting concrete improvements in the local government planning and management system in Benin as well as the mixed results of investments supporting improved small-scale agricultural infrastructure at the local level. They noted the evaluators’ recommendation that such investments be better planned so that they are better linked into the agri-food system at the local level.
5. UNCDF also welcomed the results of several key external evaluations in 2014 including the thematic evaluation of UNDP’s contribution to the achievement of the MDGs that praised UNCDF’s approach to working through decentralized institutions and concluded that support to local level planning constituted ‘a pathway to impact in its own right.’ A mid-term evaluation of two joint UNDP-UNCDF local governance projects in Bangladesh praising UNCDF’s role in piloting an enhanced performance-based grant system, elements of which have been up-scaled into national policy through the regulatory framework for local government. The important and ongoing role that these projects have had on a much bigger World Bank-funded programme was also noted.
6. Throughout 2014, UNCDF participated in the UNDP Evaluation Policy Review and was encouraged by the reviewers’ conclusion that UNCDF evaluations are “credible”, “offer impartial analysis” and that they are of “appropriate quality” with the four evaluations sampled scoring either “satisfactory” or “highly satisfactory” ratings. UNCDF also welcomed the reviewers’ conclusion that the evaluation function has become an integral part of the management and planning system in recent years, thus validating recent efforts to strengthen the organization’s evaluation culture.
7. In 2015, as part of efforts to strengthen evaluation in line with commitments under its Strategic Framework and in anticipation of a revised evaluation policy, UNCDF will revise roles and responsibilities for evaluation, adjust the criteria for evaluation to ensure a more representative sample of UNCDF interventions and seek guidance from the IEO’s Evaluation Advisory Panel on how evaluation practice should evolve in an organization of UNCDF’s size and mandate. As part of this, and following the recommendations of the review, UNCDF has committed to a closer association with the IEO on quality assessment and assurance from 2015.
8. Regarding the organizational set up for evaluation going forward, UNCDF reaffirmed the place for a central evaluation function in its structural alignment exercise with three posts set aside: one core – funded Evaluation Specialist and two non-core-funded Evaluation Officers. Efforts are ongoing to secure funding for these posts. Taken together, this will help ensure that UNCDF can meet its commitments under the revised Policy as well as the target for evaluation in the Integrated Results and Resources Matrix of six external evaluations per year by 2017.
9. **Evaluation activities of the United Nations Volunteers**
10. UNV has made strengthening of the evaluation function a corporate priority for 2015, in order to implement the commitments reflected in its 2014-2017 Strategic Framework. To this effect, dedicated evaluation capacity will be situated in the new Results Management Support Section, as part of the Results Based Management initiative, which will see an overall strengthening of systems, tools and practices at all levels of the organization.
11. In order to enhance the use of evaluations for better accountability, UNV’s monitoring systems are being strengthened to improve systematic oversight of the implementation of evaluation recommendations, through the use of the Evaluation Resource Center platform. To enable greater use of evaluations for learning around the linkages between volunteerism and development results, a dissemination and communication strategy will be developed for major evaluations in close collaboration with the UNV’s Volunteer Knowledge and Innovation Section. Further, staff learning and training in the area of Results-Based Management, including monitoring and evaluation, will be carried out in 2015.
12. Capturing the contribution of volunteers and volunteerism to improved development results is indeed a challenge. In this regard, UNV is seeking to partner with the IEO in order to leverage quality technical expertise to assure the quality of UNV-commissioned evaluations. At the same time, UNV has initiated discussions with UNDP Programme units and other UN partners with whom decentralized evaluations of joint programmes can be undertaken more systematically within a defined evaluation plan. The latter will also take into account the Results and Resources Frameworks of UNV’s new Global Programmes to ensure a balanced mix of evaluations to improve the way we are able to measure results.

1. Source: Annual reports on evaluation 2011, 2012, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)