Evaluation in UN-Habitat

Meeting of the Sub-committee on the Programme of Work

13 November 2013
In General Assembly Resolution 67/226, Member States emphasized the importance of having independent, credible and useful evaluation functions, with sufficient resources, and a culture of evaluation that ensures the active use of evaluation findings and recommendations in policy development and improving the functioning of the UN organizations.

At a High-level Panel Event of UNEG, April 2013, Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations emphasized that evaluation is a critical and core function of the work of the United Nations as demanded by member states.

Link to the event at http://www.unevaluation.org/UNEG2013HLP
• 2015 to be declared International Year of Evaluation, seeks to advocate, promote and mainstream evaluation development and implementation of the forthcoming sustainable Development Goals and in evidence-base policy making.

• Series of UN reports and resolutions on “Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives”.

• Yet, overall capacity for evaluation is inadequate. Evaluation resources remain insufficient and culture to promote and facilitate evaluation that informs decision-making and strengthen accountability and results is lacking.
Evaluation at UN-Habitat before the reform

- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting functions managed by one Unit, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, with more time and resources dedicated to monitoring and reporting.

- UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy not in place, no clear roles and responsibilities for managing and conducting evaluations.

- Evaluation not in line with best UN evaluation practices, compromising independence, credibility and utility of evaluations.

- Few evaluations conducted, varied in quality, and not providing a full representation of UN-Habitat’s work.
Focus of evaluation in UN-Habitat’s New reform

• New reform with increased results-orientation and accountability expected to further strengthen evaluation function; and evaluation considered a critical factor in effective application of **RBM**.

• Desire for **quality**, relevant and **transparent** evaluations that would be used to generate evidence for decision-making, to promote **learning** and improve **accountability**, and **overall performance** of the organization.

• The evaluation function separated from monitoring function and an **Independent Evaluation Unit** established, with new TOR.

• **UN-Habitat evaluation policy** was developed and approved by the UN-Habitat Management Board in January 2013.
Using Evaluation Information for Accountability, Learning and Management uses

- Evaluation feeding into strategic planning and policy formulation;
- Evaluation informing decisions to improved design and implementation of projects and programmes;
- Evaluation findings used for accountability (reporting).
Types of evaluation conducted

Focus is mainly on 3 types of evaluations:

- **Corporate level evaluations**, focusing on strategic evaluations of organizational policies, strategies, and themes with a global perspective.

- **Project and programme evaluations**, Specific evaluations focusing on operational performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact and sustainability of UN-Habitat interventions.

- **Mandatory self-evaluation of all closing projects.**

- Crossing Cutting issues of **gender, human rights** mainstreamed in evaluation processes.
Self-evaluations to increase scope of evaluations

- Required by management and to be conducted by programme managers at global, regional and country levels.

- All closing projects will have a self-evaluation report.

- To ensure high quality few projects will be randomly selected and evaluated by the Evaluation Unit.

- A template for results-based self-evaluations developed and tested.
Pilot of self-evaluations

Four projects were randomly selected for the pilot:

- Municipal Spatial Planning Programme, Kosovo.

- Enabling Access of Koshi Flood Affected People to Water and Sanitation Facilities in Bihar-India and Sundari District – Nepal.

- Contribution to the Systematization of Housing Recuperation Experience in 3 Provinces in Cuba.

- Support to Living with Floods in Chikwawa District Lower Shire Valley, Malawi.

- Results for testing to be presented to the Management in December 2013
Roles and responsibilities

• The policy provides roles and responsibilities for improving involvement of the Governing Bodies (CPR) to exercise oversight role to ensure UN-Habitat’s accountability.

• Through the Board, **Senior Management** will endorse the annual evaluation plans, review management responses, and endorse evaluation performance reports.

• At branch, regional and country office levels, **evaluation focal points** will be established and trained. They will be responsible for coordinating and providing advice on evaluation requirements and processes.
The plan was originally approved along side the Programme of Work 2012-2013.

Estimated costs to implement the evaluation plan amounted to US$3.1 million.

Following the reforms, the evaluation plan was revised and updated on annual basis.

US$930,000 (30% of the estimated budget) was allocated to implement the plan.

The plan comprises a portfolio of evaluations indicating a balanced coverage of UN-Habitat’s work.

An independent quality assessment of UN-Habitat evaluation reports by OIOS in 2013 found the UN-Habitat reports to be of fair quality.
### Status of Evaluation Plan 2012-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Plan Status</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
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<td>47.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In progress</td>
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<td>Postponed to 2014</td>
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<td><strong>Total number of evaluations</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Common lessons and recommendations from evaluations

Common lessons and recommendations relate to institutional arrangements, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, communication and reporting.

**Structural and administrative issues**
- Improvement structural and governance issues
- Administrative procedures

**Planning**
- Focus of UN-Habitat’s interventions and enhancement of normative and operational frameworks.
- Improving programme planning.
- Defining programme priorities in strategic and work programme document.
- Linking Global, regional and country results and strategies.
Common lessons and recommendations from evaluations Contn.

- Develop appropriate resource mobilization strategies and ensure that funds are allocated strategically and in line with the organization’s priorities.
- Enhance mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues within UN-Habitat’s interventions.
- Work incorporating cross-cutting issues has been mostly normative.
- Project can be minimized by working with several UN-Habitat Partners and wide range of players.

**Implementation**

- Delivery of the right activities in order to achieve programme goals
- Efficient collaboration with partners
- Regional and country cohesion and coordination
- Scale and replicate
Common lessons and recommendations from evaluations Contn.

**Monitoring and evaluation**
- Establishing clear roles and responsibilities
- Developing monitoring and evaluation framework in the planning documents
- More feasibility studies, reviews and evaluations
- Monitor, evaluate and report.

**Communication and reporting**
- Sharing of experiences.
- Raising awareness.
- Enhance communication towards beneficiaries and external stakeholders.
Communicating evaluations

- Work is in progress on using different strategies to communicate evaluation findings, share lessons learned and best practices identified in the evaluation reports, as part of UN-Habitat Knowledge management system.

- External evaluation website www.unhabitat.org is being redesigned to include evaluation reports, evaluation briefs, guidelines and tools, and external links to other evaluation resources.
Follow-up of evaluation recommendations

Establishment of Recommendation implementation monitoring system

- **Total number of recommendations tracked:** 178
  - Accepted: 145 (81%)
  - Partially accepted: 33 (19%)
  - Not accepted: 0 (0%)

- **Implementation progress, as of September 2013:**
  - Not started: 1 (1%)
  - In progress: 64 (36%)
  - Implemented: 113 (63%)
Beyond UN-Habitat Evaluations

- Involvement in UNEG activities
- Focal points for JIU and OIOS
- National Evaluation Capacity Development
- Launch of Nairobi Based Inter-Agency Evaluation Network
Challenges

- **Lack of resources:** Existing capacity for evaluation is inadequate (two professions, one General staff and One volunteer in the Evaluation Unit)

- **Demand for evaluation experts is high and pay set by the UN Secretariat is not attractive.** Procumbent requirements for contracting external evaluators are time-consuming and at times finding specific evaluation expertise is programmatic.

- **Methodological issues** (i.e., evaluative questions, attribution problems, and evaluation methodology).

- **Knowledge management.** Need to ensure that key issues, over all assessment, lessons learnt, follow-up actions and recommendations reach wider range of potential users.

- **Evaluation culture is still emerging.**
CPR involvement in Evaluation

• Regular briefings to CPR working groups
  – Evaluation achievements and emerging issues in evaluation
  – Key lessons and recommendations from recent evaluation reports
  – Progress on implementation of evaluation recommendation

• Involvement in evaluations of processes of projects and programmes:
  - Consultations in planning evaluations
  – Interviews
  – Member of reference group

• CPR exercising oversight function
Recommendation to be implemented by the CPR

Review of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems in UN (JIU/REP/2012/8) has 4 specific recommendation.

Rec. 2: “Legislative/governing bodies of UN should exercise their monitoring and oversight role on their ERP projects on an ongoing basis, including implementation, maintenance and upgrade policy, cost-efficiency and achievements of the overall objectives of the projects”

How is CPR going to implement this recommendation?