UN-Habitat Biennial Report on Evaluation 2012-2013

Presentation to CPR Sub-committee on the Programme of Work

4 June 2014
Context

• Evaluation is a core activity of the United Nations and many UN resolutions have called for strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings in programme designs, implementation and policy directives.

• Through Resolution 67/226, General Assembly emphasized the importance for the organizations of the UN system of having independent, credible and useful evaluation functions, with sufficient resources, and promoting a culture of evaluation that ensures the active use of evaluation findings and recommendations in policy development and improving the functioning of the organizations.

• The UN-Habitat Biennial Report on Evaluation, 2012-2013, assesses the status and performance of the evaluation function.
Mandate and Purpose of the Report

• In accordance with the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy (paragraph 69) the Evaluation Unit is required to report to UN-Habitat management and CPR. The policy implementation requirements further specifies that the Evaluation Unit should regularly report on the implementation of its evaluation plan to the UN-Habitat Board and the CPR (paragraph 12).

• The purpose of the report is to provide an evaluative assessment that will enhance knowledge about and use of evaluations in the organization. It is intended to help and its governing bodies and other stakeholders to reflect on performance of the evaluation function and support efforts towards further strengthening the evaluation function.

• The report assesses: (a) the status of the evaluation function in terms of independence, credibility and utility of evaluations, (b) provides and overview of the current evaluation capacity and practice, (c) assesses the implementation of the 2012-2013 evaluation plan; (d) provides a synthesis of lessons learned, and (e) presents key challenges and next steps for 2014-2015.
Assessment Methodology

- Assessment of the UN-Habitat evaluation function against the UNEG norms of independence, credibility and utility.
- Analysis of evaluation reports conducted during the biennium 2012-2013.
- Review of Management sheets and Evaluation Recommendations Tracking system.
- Interviews and discussions with relevant staff in UN-Habitat.
Main Findings

Status of the Evaluation Function

- On-going reform process reflect commitment to strengthen the evaluation function: An Evaluation Unit established in January 2012, with new TOR, and UN-Habitat’s Evaluation Policy was approved by the UN-Habitat Board in January 2013.

- There are limited resources devoted to evaluation: The Evaluation Unit costs of two professionals, at P-5 and P-3 levels, one General Staff at G-6 level, and one volunteer.

- The allocated budget was 70% of the planned and approved budget for the evaluation function; and 0.7% of the total programme budget.

- Extra budgetary earmarked funding relied on two donors – the Government of Norway and Sida.
# Independence, Credibility and Utility of the Evaluation Function

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<th>Independent</th>
<th>Credible</th>
<th>Utility</th>
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<td>• Evaluation function is located in the OED and is independent from substantive operational Branches and Regional offices</td>
<td>• From other assessments (OIOS and UNEG) evaluations are perceived credible, balanced and of satisfactory quality.</td>
<td>• UN-Habitat evaluations are perceived useful</td>
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<td>• Reporting is delegated to the DED and therefore the evaluation function not independent from management function</td>
<td>• The quality of assurance system is in place. Evaluation reports are quality assured using the UNEG quality checklist for evaluation reports.</td>
<td>• Evaluations findings feed in new projects designs and implementation of on-going projects.</td>
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<td>• Evaluation budget is not under the Evaluation function control</td>
<td>• Gender and Human rights are not systematically mainstreamed in evaluations.</td>
<td>• The management response system is in place and there is a systematic follow-up to implementation of evaluation recommendations.</td>
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<td>• Evaluations are conducted transparently without interference of management and are seen as independent.</td>
<td>• Stakeholder consultations could be improved.</td>
<td>• Implementation of recommendations is reported to management but this reporting could be improved.</td>
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<td>• Consultants and recruited transparently reporting processes are independent</td>
<td>• Scope and coverage of evaluations is limited.</td>
<td>• All evaluation are accessible to the public through the website <a href="http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluation">www.unhabitat.org/evaluation</a></td>
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<td>• To avoid conflict of interest, evaluation code of conduct is in place that provides a framework for independence of consultants.</td>
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Overall Assessment of Independence, Credibility and Utility

- The evaluation function is not fully independent.

- Evaluations are conducted in a credible manner in accordance with UNEG Norms and Standards.

- Evaluations are perceived useful in feeding into new project designs and management. However, evaluation has not become a fully comprehensive functions of the whole programme cycle.

- Utility in terms of providing evaluative evidence used for organizational learning and policy formulation is still limited.
Status of Implementation of the Evaluation Plan 2012-2013

- Twenty evaluations were planned, out of which 16 conducted and four postponed to 2014-2015 biennium.

- Evaluations were representative of UN-Habitat’s work in normative, operational and humanitarian areas of intervention.

- 33 UN-Habitat staff were trained to strengthen their capacity in evaluation.

- On-line evaluation recommendation tracking system was developed and is integrated with PAAS. As of December 2013, 113 (63%) of recommendations were implemented; 64 (36%) were in progress and 1 (1%) had not started.

- Evaluation Brief system was established to improve uptake of evaluations.

- An evaluation communication strategy was developed.

- Mandatory self-evaluation of all closing projects was introduced piloted on four projects that closed in 2012-2013

- Evaluation external website www.unhabitat.org/evaluation was redesigned.
Enhancing Self-Evaluations

• Self-evaluation at project and programme level is an evaluation policy requirement. All closing projects must have a self-evaluation report.

• A template was developed and tested on four projects:
  ✓ 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 Systemization of Housing Recuperation Experience in 3 Provinces in Cuba.

  ✓ Support to Living with Floods in Chikwawa District Lower Shire Valley, Malawi.
Lessons from Self-Evaluation Pilot Exercise

- The Results-Based Self-evaluation template proved to be a useful tool to be used for self-evaluation projects.
- Project delivery issues vary, both systematically and circumstantial for each project.
- Programme Theory is a useful tool for planning.
- Clarity on goals and objective and their results chain vary.
- Not all projects have SMART indicators to measure success.
- Self-evaluations would help to promote the culture of evaluations.
- Need for support and guidance to self-evaluations led by project managers.
- Staff skills for self-evaluations need improvement.
Key Lessons from Evaluations Reviewed

Organizational arrangements

• Appropriate resource mobilization strategies should be developed and ensure that funds are allocated strategically and in line with the organization’s priorities.
• Building networks require appropriate management mechanisms and adequate technical staff.

Planning

• Theory of change is a useful tool for planning.
• Enhancing mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues within UN-Habitat’s interventions should be a priority.
• Project costs could be effectively reduced by working with several UN-Habitat Partners and wide range of players.
• Monitoring and evaluation framework should be included in the planning documents.
Lessons Contn.

Implementation

• Delivery of the right activities and outputs to achieve programme objectives.
• Efficient collaboration with partners.
• Regional and country cohesion and coordination very essential.
• Scale-up and replicate.

Monitoring and evaluation

• Establishing clear roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation.
• Various data collection, monitoring, and reporting tools are disconnected.
• Capacity development programmes in monitoring and evaluation are very essential.
• Outcomes of UN-Habitat support at country and regional level are not captured at Headquarter.

Communication and reporting

• Sharing of experiences could improve.
• Enhance communication towards beneficiaries and external stakeholders.
Key Challenges

• Need for strong buy-in and ownership of evaluation by the stakeholders.

• Inadequacy of resources for the evaluation function: Existing capacity for evaluation is inadequate (two professions, one General staff and one volunteer in the Evaluation Unit).

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

• Knowledge management and evaluation communication and dissemination need to improve. Need to ensure that key issues, overall assessment, lessons learnt, follow-up actions and recommendations reach wider range of potential users.

• Few evaluations conducted.
• Programme theory (logic) model to be used in evaluations.
• Evaluation culture is still emerging.
Next steps: Priorities for 2014-2015

- An aggressive approach to promoting demand and use of evaluation findings, including systematic follow-up to implementation of evaluation recommendations will be deployed.

- Evaluations will based on a program theory (logic) Model. A program theory (logic) model is a good way to identify key questions and hypotheses the evaluation should address.

- Evaluability of new formulated projects.
- Innovative was of sharing evaluations and creating ownership of evaluations.
- Maintaining the website: [www.unhabitat.org/evaluation](http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluation) that contains the evaluation briefs, reports, guidance documents etc.,

- Establishing evaluation focal points and training them in evaluations.
- Active involvement in UNEG and OIOS activities.
Conclusion

• Some progress was made in the biennium 2012-2013 to strengthen UN-Habitat evaluation function. However, evaluation resources still remain insufficient; evaluation culture is still growing; evaluation capacity needs enhancement; evaluation coverage is still limited, follow-up and use of evaluations needs improvement.

• The Committee of Permanent Representatives may wish to take note of the biennial report and UN-Habitat welcomes recommendations and suggestions of how to further strengthen the evaluation.

Thank You for your Attention.