

UN-Habitat Biennial Report on Evaluation 2012 - 2013



MAY 2014

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination (General Assembly)
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
ENOF	Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework
FA	Focal Areas
GA	General Assembly
GC	Governing Council
IMDIS	Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MTSIP	Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan
NIEN	Nairobi Interagency Evaluation Network
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PAAS	Project Accrual and Accountability System
RBM	Results-Based Management
RBSE	Results-Based Self Evaluation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TF	Trust Fund
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNCHS	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNS	United Nations System
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of organizational reforms, UN-Habitat has established an independent Evaluation Unit in January 2012. It has also adopted an evaluation policy in January 2013. The evaluation plan for 2012-2013 comprised of 20 planned evaluations and other activities aimed at strengthening the evaluation function to facilitate organizational learning, strengthen accountability and improve performance of UN-Habitat.

The purpose of the biennial report on evaluation is to assess the status and performance of the UN-Habitat evaluation function in the delivery of its work programme for 2012-2013. The report assesses the evaluation function in terms of adherence to norms of independence, credibility and utility and examines evaluation capacity, performance and key findings. It highlights key challenges and addresses ways to improve the evaluation function.

Main achievements during the reporting period include: a) the approval of the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy and its implementation requirements; b) a total of 16 external evaluations were conducted; c) mandatory self-evaluation of closing projects were introduced; d) and a standard template for self-evaluation of closing projects was developed to assist project managers assessing the projects that they supervise. The self-evaluation template was piloted on four randomly selected projects and proved to be a valuable tool for preparing credible and useful results-based self-evaluations.

An evaluation recommendation tracking system was developed as a mechanism to systematically follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. The system is integrated in PAAS. It is used to track implementation of accepted recommendations. As of December 2013, 113 (63%) of recommendations were implemented, 64 (36%) were in progress and 1(1%) had not started.

An evaluation communication strategy was developed to improve the communication of evaluation findings. The external website www.unhabitat.org/evaluation was also re-designed. It now includes evaluation reports, summary evaluation briefs, evaluation policy, tools and guidelines.

To improve capacity for staff experience and skills to implement evaluation policy requirements, 33 UN-Habitat staff from Headquarters, Regional and Country Offices were trained in evaluation.

All these efforts are positioning the UN-Habitat evaluation function aimed at improving its ability to assess organizational performance, supporting accountability and contributing to organizational learning. However, evaluation has yet to become a comprehensive function. The resources for evaluation are still insufficient. Staff expertise and skills to implement evaluation requirements at global, regional and country level have to improve. Evaluative information needs to increasingly inform how programmes are designed and implemented at all levels. There is also a need for more support and guidance to self-evaluations led by programme managers.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE BIENNIAL REPORT ON EVALUATION

1. This biennial report on evaluation intends to provide UN-Habitat management, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), the donors and the Evaluation Unit with an evaluative assessment of the performance of evaluation function and quality of its products in the 2012-2013 biennium. Its main purpose is to help UN-Habitat to reflect on its evaluation function performance and inform decisions to further strengthen the evaluation function. As such the report is meant to provide accountability for the evaluation function, promote learning from evaluations and to encourage improvement and overall performance of UN-Habitat. The report will also serve as an input to the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives.
2. United Nations General Assembly emphasizes the importance for organizations of the United Nations 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 of the organizations (A/RES/67/226, paragraph 173).
3. UN-Habitat is committed to strengthening the role of evaluation in the overall context of Results-Based Management (RBM) to improve efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency. In 2012, it established the independent Evaluation Unit as part of organizational restructuring. In January 2013, the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy was approved by the UN-Habitat Management Board. The policy provides the institutional framework for effective planning, managing, reporting and follow-up to UN-Habitat evaluations.
4. Following the establishment of the independent Evaluation Unit, the evaluation plan for the biennium 2012 -2013 was revised to ensure evaluation topics for the 2012-2013 biennium were representative of UN-Habitat's mandate and activities. The plan outlined 20 evaluation topics and other substantive core evaluation activities, including: (a) pilot self-evaluation mechanism for closing projects, (b) training courses in evaluations aiming at strengthening internal evaluation capacity, (c) development of an on-line web-based recommendation tracking system, (d) re-designing of a user friendly internal and external evaluation websites, and (e) activities related to UN System-wide collaboration on evaluation.
5. The report assesses the status and performance of UN-Habitat evaluation function in delivery of its work programme for 2012-2013. The assessment was conducted by the Evaluation Unit with support of external consultant, Mr. Libor Grosopic. It is the first report, in what will be a regular series of biennial evaluation reports to be produced by the Evaluation Unit.
6. It is intended to: (a) assess the status of the evaluation function of UN-Habitat against United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for conducting evaluations in the UN System, (b) examine current evaluation capacity and practice, (c) assess the performance of UN-Habitat's evaluation function based on the evaluation plan for 2012- 2013, (d) synthesize key findings, conclusions

and recommendations of external evaluations and self-evaluations conducted during 2012-2013; and (e) highlight corporate challenges and gaps in the evaluation function, and present next steps for 2014-2015.

1.2 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

7. Various methods and sources of data were used for the preparation of this report to address the key areas of assessment. The core question addressed by the assessment was: *whether UN-Habitat's evaluation function and its products were independent, credible, of good quality, and useful to measure results, promote organizational learning, and accountability during 2012-2013 biennium?*

8. The assessment made use of the following methods and sources, including:

- Review of UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System (UNEG, April 2005).
- Review of key documents and data systems, including UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy 2013, Programme of work 2012-2013, MTSIP 2008-2013, new strategic plan 2014-2019. In addition, data systems such as PAAS and IMDIS were also reviewed.
- Review of the Evaluation Plan for 2012-2013.
- Review and meta-analysis of evaluation reports prepared during 2012-2013: An in-depth assessment of 11 completed UN-Habitat evaluation reports was conducted to analyse the evaluation report attributes, quality and key results, lessons learned and recommendations.
- An assessment of a number of Terms of Reference of UN-Habitat evaluations.
- Management response sheets: In order to understand to what extent the evaluation recommendations are summarized, scrutinized and taken on board by UN-Habitat Management.
- Interviews and discussions with a range of UN-Habitat staff on subjects related to evaluations and management responses.
- Discussions with staff in the Evaluation Unit to review preliminary findings.

9. In assessing performance, a set of evaluation parameters were applied that are consistent with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) standards for evaluations. The evaluation parameters applied include but not limited to: Level of attainment of planned outputs and activities, extent of achievement of planned results, relevance, efficiency in planning and management, effectiveness of an intervention, sustainability of intervention outcomes, and impact. Other criteria, including involvement of stakeholders, cross-cutting issues in the areas of gender equality and the human rights-based approach were applied as appropriate.

10. Key limitations of this performance assessment are that some information for assessment such as evaluation management responses were not fully completed and available at the time of the review. Also some evaluation reports planned for 2012-2013 were yet to be finalized.

2 UN-HABITAT: AN OVERVIEW

11. UN-Habitat is the lead United Nations agency responsible for promoting sustainable urbanization. Its development is rooted in two landmark International Conferences on Human Settlements. The first, Habitat I, was held in Vancouver, Canada in 1976, which established the United Nations Centre on Human Settlements (UNCHS). The second Conference, Habitat II, took place in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996. At the Conference, the Member States adopted the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda and gave the UNCHS explicit normative mandate of supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In 2001, by resolution 56/206 the UN General Assembly (GA) elevated UNCHS from a centre to a full-fledged UN Secretariat programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). In 2002, governments attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) further mandated UN-Habitat to monitor and report on progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal targets on access to safe drinking water and halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation by 2015

12. The period 2001-2004 witnessed a growth in staff, activities and budget of UN-Habitat. An in-depth evaluation of UN-Habitat by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in 2004 commended the achievements of UN-Habitat but given the broad mandate and limited resources, it recommended sharpening of the UN-Habitat's focus in order to have greater impact. This led to the Governing Council of UN-Habitat at its twentieth session in 2005 to request UN-Habitat to develop the organization's six year Medium- Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) for 2008-2013. The intent of the MTSIP was to: (a) sharpen the focus of the work of UN-Habitat and broaden its funding base, (b) strengthen programme alignment and coherence, and (c) apply results-based management (RBM) to enhance value for money, transparency and accountability. The MTSIP emphasized the role of evaluation in effective application of RBM. The plan was implemented in phases that corresponded with the biennial work programme cycles 2008-2009, 2010-2011, and 2012-2013.

13. The 2012-2013 biennium was transformative for UN-Habitat. During the biennium, new organizational reforms, including organizational restructuring and a new approach to urbanization were introduced. It also presented a bridging biennium for UN-Habitat; as it was concluding the MTSIP 2008-2014 on the other hand, and at the same time the agency was busy formulating and implementing new reforms and developing the Strategic Plan for 2014-2019.

3 THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

14. Since the establishment of UN-Habitat, evaluation has been a core function at the organization. Until January 2012, the organization's monitoring and evaluation functions were coordinated and managed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. The Unit was created in 1997, following the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) recommendation that UNCHS (Habitat) establish a mechanism

for performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting, separate from the planning function. To give it independence from substantive divisions, the Unit was located in the Office of the Executive Director, with the mandate to report to the Governing bodies (Committee of Permanent Representatives and Governing Council) through the Executive Director.

15. The evaluation function is governed by the Regulation and Rules Governing Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of implementation and Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8)¹ as well as the professional guidelines set by UNEG's Norms and Standards². However, in the new organizational orientation, evaluation is considered a crucial factor in results-based management (RBM) and UN-Habitat efforts in strengthening evaluation are expected to enhance access by its stakeholders, including UN-Habitat management, governing bodies and donors, to objective and evidence-based information on which they can base their decisions related to the work of UN-Habitat. The evaluation function therefore, aims at:

- Facilitating organizational learning based on the information gained evaluation. In this regard, evaluation function places strong emphasis on the use of evaluation for improved programming and organization performance by establishing and maintaining system for development of management responses, their tracking, and for making evaluation reports available to public to strengthen accountability and evaluation use.
- Improving project management by using evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations to make decisions about how to design new projects and strategies to implement them; and how to improve performance and implementation processes of the on-going projects/programmes.
- Strengthening accountability both internal and external through reporting and providing feedback to UN-Habitat management and staff, Member States, donors and other UN-Habitat partners with information of relevance, effectiveness, effectiveness, sustainability of UN-Habitat's work.
- Promoting methodological innovation for strengthening measurement and communication of UN-Habitat results.

16. The reforms initiated by the Executive Director, Dr Joan Clos, over the last three years, reflect full commitment to the strengthening of UN-Habitat evaluation function. The efforts in strengthening the evaluation function are expected to enhance access of management, Member States, governing bodies, donors and other key stakeholders to objective and verifiable information pertaining to results of the work of UN-Habitat. Such information, provided in a transparent manner, helps to make better evidence-based decisions to enhance programme design and improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of the work programme

¹ ST/SGB/2000/8

² *The UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation in the UN System, 2005*

3.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EVALUATION UNIT

17. Evaluation is a shared responsibility in UN-Habitat. Programme offices and other stakeholders share distinct roles and responsibilities to ensure that evaluation informs decision making, supports accountability and contributes to learning. The Evaluation Unit is the custodian of the UN-Habitat evaluation function. It promotes the independence, quality and credibility, and use of evaluations to demonstrate the results achieved and organizational performance, supporting accountability, and acts as an agent of change. The Unit is located in the Office of Executive Director so that it is free from undue influence from other operational or management functions involved with project/programme development and implementation. Key functions of the Evaluation Unit include:

- Developing evaluation plans, policies, guidelines, methodology and training tools to support evaluation function and to ensure quality standards in evaluation are met; and providing guidance and support to programme managers and staff on matters related to evaluation.
- Planning, conducting, managing, reporting, maintaining a tracking system to follow-up implementation of evaluation recommendations, and ensuring effective dissemination of lessons learned from evaluations.
- Preparing reports on evaluation for submission to UN-Habitat management, donors and governing bodies, and regularly informing UN-Habitat senior management of emerging issues related to evaluations.
- Building awareness and promoting use of evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations in policy and programme formulation, implementation and reporting to improve accountability, learning and overall performance.
- Enhancing evaluation capacity through development of learning materials and provision of training programmes.
- Supporting project and programme managers undertaking project reviews, self-evaluations and follow-up on the implementation of all accepted evaluation recommendations.
- Maintaining and developing partnerships with the UN System organizations within the context of UNEG and with OECD-DAC on evaluation-related work to ensure that UN-Habitat is fully abreast of developments in the evaluation field and able to implement good and best practices in evaluation.

3.2 THE EVALUATION POLICY

18. Following the establishment of the Evaluation Unit in January 2012, the Unit has updated its evaluation plan for 2012-2013 to include the development of the evaluation policy. The UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy was developed in response to various recommendations by the OIOS and UNEG. A Peer Review of the Evaluation Function of UN-Habitat conducted by UNEG and DAC in 2012 also recommended that UN-Habitat should develop specific evaluation policy aligned to UNEG Norms and

Standards³. The UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy was approved by the UN-Habitat Management Board in January 2013.

19. The evaluation policy is an important step towards enhancing the evaluation function and ensuring independence, credibility and utility of evaluations. It describes the institutional framework for effective conduct and management of UN-Habitat's evaluations, including roles and responsibilities of various parties. It provides the purpose and scope of evaluation; principles for planning and conducting evaluations; and it describes how evaluations are prioritized, budgeted for, conducted, reported and followed up. It sets ambitious standards for independence, credibility, relevant, quality and transparent evaluations to demonstrate results, and generate evidence to inform decisions, promote learning and ensure accountability.

20. The UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy is an improvement from Monitoring and Evaluation Guide (2003) that was used prior to approval of the evaluation policy. The policy aims at ensuring that the majority of UN-Habitat's programmes/projects are subject to evaluations. It emphasises self-evaluations and impact evaluations. The policy also provides requirements and directives for budgeting of evaluations during the project design and appraisals. The policy anchors the evaluation function within UN-Habitat and efforts are on-going in implementing its requirements. It holds evaluators and evaluation managers accountable to uphold a set of United Nations system-wide Norms and Standards for evaluation. Those norms include the concepts of independence, transparency, and credibility, among others.

4 EVALUATION CAPACITY: HUMAN & FINANCIAL RESOURCES

21. The budget of the evaluation function is prepared on biennial basis and reported to the UN Secretariat.⁴ For the biennium 2012-2013, the General Assembly approved UN-Habitat's evaluation plan to be implemented using resources amounting to USD3,109,800 of which USD396,500 was funded from the regular budget and USD2,713,300 was to be funded from extra budgetary resources (A/66/6 (Sect. 15 Paragraph 17)). Table 1 indicates approved and actual allocated costs for the implementation of the evaluation plan 2012-2013.

22. Table 1 shows that the actual allocated funds (USD2, 200,750) as a percentage of the approved evaluation plan budget were 70%. In principle, the budget covers staff costs, consultant services, operational and travel costs. The actual allocation as a percentage of total programme budgets of UN-Habitat (USD312, 305,300) was 0.7%, which was less than the 1%, a benchmark set for the UN Secretariat entities.

³ *UNEG comprises evaluation professions in United Nations System entities; it adopted Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System in April 2005.*

⁴ *General Assembly Resolution 58/269 requests that resources for performance of the evaluation function, both financial and staffing resources, should clearly be identified in proposed programme budget. Each entity in the UN Secretariat submits budget Form 12 indicating resources needed to conduct mandatory self-assessments and discretionary evaluations.*

Table 1: Approved and actual allocated funds for implementation of the Evaluation Plan 2012 - 2013

Description	Approved costs by GA	Actual Allocation
Staff costs	43,800	843,800
Consultants	1,620,000	920,000
Capacity development/training	230,000	115,000
Official travel	106,365	56,000
Operating costs	309,635	265,950
Total	3,109,800	2,200,750

23. Overall, the evaluation resources in terms of financial and staffing resources were and are still inadequate to promote and facilitate a comprehensive evaluation function that provides critical and timely information to inform decision-making and strengthen accountability and results achieved.

24. For the biennium 2012-2013, the Unit had two professional staff at P-5 and P-3 levels, one General staff at G-6 level and one volunteer, all based at Headquarters. The Chief of the Evaluation Unit is funded by the regular budget, whereas all other costs are financed from two sources; project evaluations are financed from the budgets of the projects as evaluation is part of the project cycle, and thematic evaluations and institutional evaluations from extra budgetary resources, mainly funded by the Government of Norway and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Norway and Sida contributions for 2012-2013 evaluation plan amounted to USD439, 317.

5 ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION AGAINST THE NORMS OF INDEPENDENCE, CREDIBILITY AND UTILITY

5.1 INDEPENDENCE

25. The assessment of independence is based on the notion of evaluation being a shared responsibility. According to the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy "...***Independence is freedom from the control, or undue influence, of others. Independence provides legitimacy to evaluation and reduces the potential for conflicts of interest that could arise if policymakers and managers are solely responsible for the evaluation of their own activities. Evaluations should be conducted in an independent manner... Independence must be ensured at organizational structure, functional, and behavioural levels.***"⁵.

26. A distinction should be made between structural, functional and behaviour independence in evaluation. Structural Independence refers to the organizational setting of the evaluation function within the organization. Functional Independence refers to the degree of independence and impartiality in planning, conducting and reporting evaluations. Behaviour independence deals with ethical standards and personal integrity during evaluation process. Table 2 shows assessment of UN-Habitat evaluation function against some UN norms on independence.

⁵ UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy, January 2013, p.4 and p.5

Table 2: Assessment of UN-Habitat’s evaluation function based on UNEG norms

Levels of Independence	UNEG Norm Description	Assessment
<p>Structural Independence</p>	<p>Norm 2.2: The governance structures of evaluation vary. In some cases it rests with the Governing Bodies in others with the Head of the Organization. The Responsibility for evaluation should be specified in an evaluation policy.</p> <p>Norm 6.1: The evaluation function has to be located independently from other management functions so that it is free from undue influence and that unbiased and transparent reporting is ensured. It needs to have the independence to have full discretion in submitting directly its reports for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making pertaining to the subject of evaluation.</p>	<p>Structural independence was partially achieved. The UN-Habitat policy specifies the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation function. The Evaluation Unit is located in the Office of the Executive Office and is independent from substantive operational branches and Regional Offices and the Head of evaluation Unit reports to the Executive Director. In practice, however the reporting has been delegated to the Deputy Executive Director and the evaluation function is therefore not independent from executive’s line management function.</p>
<p>Functional Independence</p>	<p>Norm 2.3 Governing Bodies and Executive Director are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to enable the evaluation function to operate effectively and with due independence.</p> <p>Norm 6.2: The Head of the Evaluation Unit must have independence to supervise and report on evaluations as well as to track and follow-up management’s responses to evaluations without any effluence or clearance from the line management of programmes evaluated.</p>	<p>Financial independence is not met. Evaluation resources continue to be insufficient. The allocated funds for the Evaluation function for 2012-2013 70% of the approved evaluation budget and 0.7 % of the total programme budget. The new cost recovery policy is detrimental to independence of the evaluation function.</p> <p>Independence in evaluation plan preparation and selection of evaluation topics are not optimum and need improvement. While the Evaluation Unit has independence to suggest and negotiate evaluations to be conducted. It is dependent on donors give funds to specific evaluations. There is also room for improved consultations with stakeholders in evaluation work plan preparations.</p> <p>UN-Habitat has not compromised the independence of the reporting process. However, involvement of the Management Board could be enhanced to consistently give management responses to evaluation reports.</p>
<p>Behavioural independence</p>	<p>Norm 6.3: To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators need to be independent, implying that members of evaluation team must not have been directly involved in the policy-setting, design, or any other engagement in the work of the subject of evaluation, nor expected to be in the near future.</p> <p>Norm 6.4: Evaluators must have no vested interest and have full freedom to conduct impartially their evaluation work, without potential negative effects on their career development. They must be able to express their opinion in a free manner.</p>	<p>During the reporting period, all consultants were recruited following an open, transparent and competitive process. To avoid conflict of interest the Evaluation Code of Conduct guidance note, provides a framework independence of consultants. Vacancies are posted on websites and announced through evaluation networks.</p>

27. The assessment of independence clearly shows that the evaluation function at UN-Habitat is not fully independent. The evaluation programming processes lacks predictable resources, which are detrimental to ensuring evaluation coverage in line with strategic priorities and learning needs. In terms of process, a system is in place whereby the Evaluation Unit ensures the independence of evaluations by means of transparency in the conduct of evaluations and disclosure of evaluation reports.

5.2 CREDIBILITY

28. Credibility of the evaluation function was assessed by reviewing the processes through which evaluations are planned, managed and conducted and by assessing the quality of evaluation reports and the ways they are disclosed, based on some UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System.

Norm 3.1 Each organization should develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation. The policy should provide a clear explanation of the concept, role and use of evaluation within the organization, including the institutional framework and definition of roles and responsibilities; an explanation of how the evaluation function and evaluations are planned, managed and budgeted; and a clear statement on disclosure and dissemination.

29. The UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy provides clarity to UN-Habitat staff, partners, donors and other stakeholders about the organisation's evaluation practice and requirements.

30. The credibility of UN-Habitat's evaluation function is affected by the limited resources at its disposal resulting in low evaluation coverage of programmes and projects. Only about 20% of projects ending in the 2012-2013 biennium period are independently evaluated through the Evaluation Unit. It should be noted that some projects are evaluated at country level, initiated by national counterparts, donors or regional offices but the actual percentage of such evaluations is not known nor is the quality of these evaluations ensured by the Evaluation Unit.

Norm 4.2 The purpose, nature and scope of evaluation must be clear to evaluators and stakeholders. The plan for conducting each evaluation must ensure due process to ascertain the timely completion of the mandate, and consideration of the most cost-effective way to obtain and analyze the necessary information

31. Most of the evaluations are carried out by external consultants. The selection process of consultants is credible and transparent and takes place according to UN-Habitat recruitment and procurement rules and regulations. A system is in place to ensure impartiality and evaluators must abide by the UNEG Code of Conduct for evaluation.

32. The Evaluation Unit is responsible for a balanced and impartial evaluation design as laid down in the Terms of References for evaluations. The Evaluation Unit ensures there is stakeholder participation in the design of the evaluation. Stakeholders are consulted in formulating of the Terms of Reference which allows them to contribute to the design of the evaluations and raise important issues. The evaluation process, including the management and reporting is transparent and consultative. The main problem is usually the lack of adequate resources for field missions which limits data collection.

Norm 8.2 Evaluation reports must present in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations. They must be brief and to the point and easy to understand. They must explain the methodology followed, highlight the methodological limitations of the evaluation, key concerns and evidenced-based findings, dissident views and consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. They must have an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, and facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons.

33. The quality of evaluation reports were assessed by means of a checklist based on the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (2010). Evaluation reports were assessed to be of good quality. All 11 reports reviewed were easy to read and understand. They had executive summaries, methodology, key findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The Evaluation reports were also assessed positively by the United Nations Evaluation Group Professional Peer Review (March 2012) which found UN-Habitat evaluation reports to be credible, balanced, of good quality and useful. A high percentage of evaluation recommendations were accepted and implemented. The OIOS Evaluation Scorecard of UN-Habitat (December 2013) found the evaluation reports of UN-Habitat meeting the evaluation report criteria, and the inception report for the OIOS evaluation of UN-Habitat (September 2013) found UN-Habitat evaluation reports to be of good quality.

Norm 10.1 Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. This improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

34. The biennial evaluation plan 2012-2013 was developed by the Evaluation Unit after consultations with relevant branches, donors and other stakeholders. The intention of the plan was that evaluation should focus on those areas where the Governing Bodies and management had the greatest need for evidence-based information on organizational processes, institutional arrangements and achievement of results.

35. In order to achieve a balanced and progressive coverage of the organization's work, key factors in deciding on the proposed evaluation topics, were considered for the 2012-2013 plan, including size of the programme or area of work, perceived relevance and usefulness of the topic, etc. Due to limited resources for evaluation, the UN-Habitat Management Board could decide on priorities for evaluation from the list of possible proposed topics by the Branch Coordinators and Regional Offices.

36. Drafting and refining the evaluations' TORs were based on exchanges between the Evaluation Unit and concerned stakeholders (e.g. donors or relevant branches and offices of UN-Habitat). This applies also for commenting on draft evaluation reports. The Evaluation Unit commented on draft reports and had a system to track the responses.

37. The system of reference groups was gradually being introduced within the organisation. This process is still at its infancy. From the reviewed evaluations a reference group was established for the Evaluation of the UN-Habitats Role in Post-Disaster Recovery, Reconstruction and Development in Pakistan, 2005-2012.

38. Staff interviews for this assessment confirmed that the majority of staff (including the Evaluation Unit professionals) were positive towards the idea of institutionalised reference groups for all UN-Habitat evaluations. Nevertheless, opinions on potential compositions of reference groups differ: Some would prefer that reference groups composed of UN-Habitat's staff and relevant stakeholders (i.e. UN-Habitat evaluation professionals and technical staff related to the projects, donors, beneficiaries, etc.), while others would be open to an idea of inviting external members as, e.g., professional consultants providing their feedback (and being adequately remunerated for these technical inputs).

39. The Evaluation Unit has demonstrated that it considers ensuring the quality of the evaluation process and the evaluation reports an important aspect of its work. It assessed the quality of the evaluation process and evaluation reports by means of a checklist. A final report that did not score 60 per cent of the criteria specified in the checklist would not be accepted. All UN-Habitat evaluation reports are publicly available on the UN-Habitat's external website www.unhabitat.org/evaluation.

40. In terms of the evaluation process, credibility might be further enhanced if the Evaluation Unit was to improve its consultative process. The credibility of the evaluation process could also be improved in the way management deals with the findings of evaluations in terms of using them to improve and practice as well as to account for successes and failures.

5.3 UTILITY

41. The utility of UN-Habitat's evaluation function was assessed by reviewing the use of evaluations for decision-making at the policy, strategic and programme/project levels and the way evaluation promotes results based management. Reference points for the assessment are the UNEG Norms for Evaluation:

Norm 1.3 Evaluation feeds into management and decision making processes, and makes an essential contribution to managing for results. Evaluation informs the planning, programme, budgeting, implementation and reporting cycle. It aims at improving the institutional relevance and the achievement of results, optimizing the use of resources, providing client satisfaction and maximizing the impact of the contribution of the UN system.

42. UN-Habitat management has taken important steps towards fostering a culture of using evaluation results by engaging in the follow-up to evaluations. A system for following up to evaluations is in place. Interviews with staff and from the analysis of the content of management responses to the different evaluations, confirm that evaluations are used at a policy, programme and project levels. At programme or project levels evaluation findings often feed into the design of new phases of programmes/projects. For example, the Evaluation of the Implementation of UN-Habitat's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (2008-2013) (July 2012) is considered both strategic and useful. The evaluation provided valuable insights into thematic and cross-cutting issues, and provided relevant information to UN-Habitat's Senior Management. Engaging in this type of strategic evaluations provided an opportunity for reinforcing the role of the evaluation function and for enhancing its relevance and utility.

Norm 4.1 Proper application of the evaluation function implies that there is a clear intent to use evaluation findings. In the context of limited resources, the planning and selection of evaluation work has to be carefully done. Evaluations must be chosen and undertaken in a timely manner so that they can and do inform decision-making with relevant and timely information. Planning for evaluation must be an explicit part of planning and budgeting of the evaluation function and/or the organization as a whole. Annual or multi-year evaluation work programmes should be made public.

43. The Evaluation Unit has made commendable efforts to plan evaluation strategically. UN-Habitat management are proactively engaged in planning evaluation and staff involved in planning and management of projects are using evaluation results to feed into management and improvement of ongoing projects and in new project and programme designs. There is, however, still room for improvement, in particular, the potential of evaluations for assessing performance of the organization's work. The limited evaluation coverage means that the full potential of evaluation has not been tapped. Limited staff resources have also affected the Unit's ability to distill and disseminate lessons-learned that could inform decisions.

Norm 12.1 Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and management addressed by its recommendations. This may take the form of a management response, action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities.

44. There are several categories of potential users of evaluations in UN-Habitat, ranging from senior management to project staff, CPR and the donors. Project managers find that the evaluations conducted are useful in helping them take necessary and informed decisions in project formulation and implementation processes. Evaluations findings and management responses are discussed by UN-Habitat Management Board and sometimes in the CPR meetings.

45. The utility of the evaluation function could be enhanced by a more consultative evaluation planning process and a more cyclical or purposive selection of evaluation topics in order to cover entities and themes of strategic importance to the organization.

Norm 12.2 There should be a systematic follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management and/or the Governing Bodies.

46. An evaluation management response mechanism is in place and has led to enhanced corporate accountability by tracking management responses to evaluations. This allows for a strengthening of the use of evaluations, increasing stakeholder and management buy-in, and helps to facilitate dialogue about evaluation results and follow-up to influence the planning and implementation of strategies, programmes and projects.

47. The management response clearly indicates whether management accepts, partially accepts or rejects the recommendations. A high percentage of UN-Habitat evaluation recommendations were accepted which is a proof of the utility of evaluations. Follow-up action were monitored on a regular basis by the Evaluation Unit.

Norm 12.3 There should be a periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations. This report should be presented to the Governing Bodies and/ or the Head of the organization.

48. The electronic platform of PAAS was being used for tracking the actions taken in response to the evaluation recommendations. An effective on-line recommendation tracking system was developed during the reporting period to monitor the implementation of the evaluation recommendations. The data generated from the system is used to prepare periodic reports that are presented to the UN-Habitat Management Board. The status of implementation of the recommendations are important for ensuring that management are aware of the actions planned or taken to ensure compliance in the implementation of the recommendations.

Norm 13.2 Evaluation findings and lessons drawn from evaluations should be accessible to target audiences in a user-friendly way. A repository of evaluation could be used to distil lessons that contribute to peer learning and the development of structured briefing material for the training of staff. This should be done in a way that facilitates the sharing of learning among stakeholders, including the organizations of the UN system, through a clear dissemination policy and contribution to knowledge networks

49. Evaluation reports, evaluation briefs, and short summaries are tailored to different audiences to facilitate the use of information that is clear and easy to understand. In addition, workshops and meetings are arranged to facilitate the sharing of evaluation findings.

50. The Evaluation Unit has produced evaluation briefs of all evaluation reports in 2012-2013. The briefs are useful means to disseminate key information from the evaluations. The Evaluation Briefs have the potential to serve not only UN-Habitat's management but also the general public and other stakeholders who may have little interest in reading an overly detailed evaluation report. From interviews, it is believed that evaluation briefs were increasing the visibility of the evaluation function and contributing to knowledge sharing and learning from evaluations. All UN-Habitat products are published on the external website: www.unhabitat.org/evaluation.

6 PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR THE EVALUATION FUNCTION, 2012-2013

51. The Evaluation Unit's work for 2012-2013 focused on three expected accomplishments: (i) evaluation functions and its products meet the UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation; (ii) enhanced internal evaluation capacity through training programmes, tools and guidelines, (iii) improved use of evaluations in support of accountability, organizational learning, and improved performance.

52. Each expected accomplishment had a series of associated indicators of achievement, baselines and targets, outputs and activities presented in a logic frame work, which were described in detail in the project document for evaluation function. The project document was approved by the Programme Advisory Group.

53. The expected accomplishments were based on the main assumption that the real added value of evaluations is when evaluative information is used to inform decision-making processes, improve programme performance, accountability, and organizational learning was used to develop performance measures for the evaluation function as presented in table 3.

Table 3: Performance matrix for the evaluation function based on Biennial Evaluation Plan, 2012-2013

Expected accomplishment	Indicators of achievement	Performance measures
UN-Habitat evaluation function and its products meet the UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation in the UN system.	Number of quality evaluations (20) completed in 2012-2013 that meet standards set by UNEG for good quality evaluation reports.	Target 2012-2013: 100% of completed evaluations reports, managed by the Evaluation Unit meet standards of good quality report when assessed with UNEG check list for quality assurance.
Enhanced internal evaluation capacity through training programmes, tools and guidelines.	Number of staff trained in evaluation and support use of evaluation in programme planning, management and reporting.	Target 2012-2013: 60 staff trained at Headquarters, regional and country levels.
Improved use of evaluations in support of accountability, organizational learning, and improved performance.	Percentage of completed evaluations with management responses that have included interactive meetings with staff member involved in planning, implementation and reporting to discuss evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations.	Target 2012-2013: 80% of completed evaluations with management response and have involved staff in planning, implementation and reporting.

7 STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIENNIAL EVALUATION PLAN 2012-2013

54. The evaluation plan together with an overview of other activities carried out by the Evaluation Unit during the period 2012-2013 is outlined in the following table. It also includes status of implementation.

Table 4: Status of Implementation of Evaluation plan 2012 - 2013

	Evaluations Planned for 2012 - 2013	Type	Status
1	Professional Peer Review of the Evaluation Function UN-Habitat	Institutional	Completed
2	Evaluation of the Implementation of MTSIP Phase 2	Programme	Completed
3	Evaluation of the Establishment Process of the Rafik Hariri UN-Habitat Memorial Award	Project	Completed
4	Evaluation of the UN-Habitat Urban Programme in Iraq	Programme	Completed
5	Mid-term Evaluation of the Cities and Climate Change Initiatives (CCCI)	Programme	Completed
6	End of Project Evaluation of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme	Project	Completed
7	Evaluation of UN-Habitat Liaison Offices	Institutional	Completed
8	Evaluation of the Strengthened Programme Review Mechanism of UN-Habitat	Institutional	Completed
9	Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Capacity Building Activities supported by the UN-Habitat Water and Sanitation Trust Fund	Thematic	Complete

10	Evaluation of the UN-Habitats Role in post disaster recovery, reconstruction and development in Pakistan	Programme	Completed
11	Evaluation of the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum	Institutional	Completed
12	UN-Habitat Organizational Effectiveness Staff Survey	Institutional	Completed
13	Evaluation of UN-Habitat's flagship Reports	Institutional	Completed
14	Evaluation of UN-Habitat's Role in Joint Programming for the Delivery of MDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean	Programme	Completed
15	End of Project Evaluation of the Mekong Water and Sanitation Initiative	Programme	Completed
16	Evaluation of Values-based Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education Programme supported by the WSTF	Thematic	Completed
17	Mid-term Evaluation of Promoting Low-Emissions Development Strategies in Emerging Economy Countries (URBAN-LEDS)	Project	Postponed to 2014
18	Evaluation of UN-Habitat's Contribution to Post-conflict Housing and Land Development in Afghanistan	Programme	Postponed to 2014
19	Evaluation of the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA)	Project	Postponed to 2014
20	Evaluation of UN-Habitat by the OIOS	Institutional	on-going
Other tasks to be implemented by the Evaluation Unit in 2013			
21	Development of the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy		Complete
22	Implementation of Evaluation Recommendation Monitoring System (RIMS)		Completed
23	Institutionalizing self-evaluations		Pilot completed
24	Preparation of evaluation Briefs to distil Lessons Learned and Best Practices, Evaluation Communication Strategy, Evaluation web-site		Continuous
25	Management Responses and Evaluation Action Plans		Continuous
26	Biennial Evaluation Report		Completed
27	Evaluability Assessments of Strategic Projects and Programmes for improved delivery of Results		Continuous
28	Capacity Building and Training Programmes in Evaluation		Completed
29	Involvement in UNEG activities : (i) Strengthening National Capacities; (ii) Evaluation of Normative Work; (iii) Peer reviews, etc		Continuous

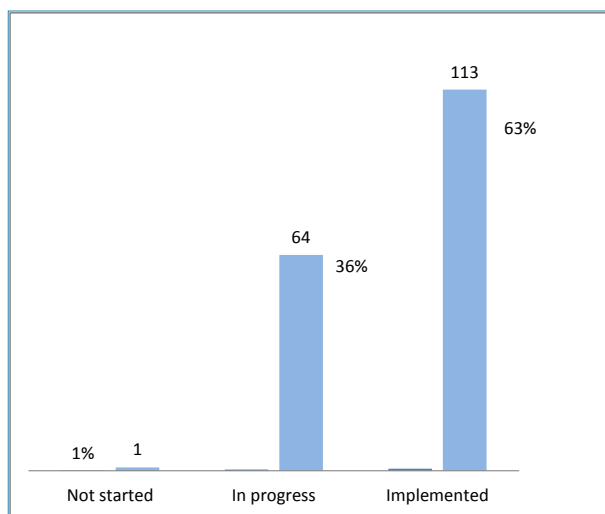
55. During the biennium 2012-2013, a total of 20 evaluations were planned that involved the Evaluation Unit. Of those, 16 were commissioned and completed and four evaluations postponed to 2014. The evaluations comprised a mixed of portfolio of institutional evaluations (7), programmatic evaluations (7), project evaluations (4), and evaluation of crosscutting issues (2). Among its programmatic evaluations UN-Habitat systematically assessed its full programme at the four-year point of MTSIP (2008-2013) implementation. The evaluations were also representative of the UN-Habitat's work in normative, humanitarian and operational areas. An independent quality assessment of the UN-Habitat evaluation reports, commissioned by Independent Evaluation Division of OIOS, on randomly selected reports⁶ found the reports to be of good quality.

⁶ N=2.

56. The evaluation capacity of UN-Habitat staff was strengthened through training activities, including a four-day training course for 33 staff members in evaluation, held in March 2012, in Nairobi to promote conduct and use of evaluations.

57. An on-line database system was developed to track implementation of evaluation recommendations. It was integrated with PAAS and became operational in August 2013. Figure 1 shows that the majority of recommendations have been implemented as of end of 2013.

Figure 1: Status of implementation of evaluation recommendations as of December 2013, in numbers and percentages



58. The Evaluation Unit established a system of Evaluation Briefs which is an effective system to disseminate key information from the evaluations. Each Evaluation Briefs is a short document of about four pages – providing comprehensive summary of evaluations’ background, methodology applied and main conclusions and recommendations. Thirteen evaluation briefs were developed during the reporting period and they are accessible on the UN-Habitat evaluation website.

59. Good communication is a key factor affecting the success of evaluation in many ways. In 2012, the Evaluation Unit developed an evaluation communication strategy. It aims at strengthening the utility of UN-Habitat evaluation reports and products. It describes means to enhance internal and external awareness about the evaluation functions and its products.

60. Evaluability assessment of strategic projects and programmes for improved delivery of results is ensured through the Programme Advisory Group, of which the Evaluation is advisory member. The advisory role ensures that before a project or programme documents is approved, it has the required evaluation frameworks and resources to implement them. During the reporting period, Evaluation Unit has been proactively involved in UNEG activities. Notable achievements include the development and approval of the UNEG’s strategy for 2014-2019, development and approval of reference docu-

ment on evaluation of normative work, a reference document on evaluation of UNDAF, and a guidance note on strengthening national evaluation capacities.

61. The substantive and collaboration through the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) at global level, does not necessarily translate into the regional and country level collaboration. A UN professional network of Nairobi based UN agencies was thought to have the potential to provide a forum for learning and knowledge sharing among monitoring and evaluation practitioners. In this context, the Evaluation Unit initiated and supported the creation of the Nairobi Inter-agency Evaluation Network (NIEN). The official launch event was held on 3 December 2013 with a good attendance of over 65 participants from UN agencies. The round table discussions during the launch focused on: Integrating cross-cutting issues in UN evaluations, the use of evaluation evidence in programming and policy formulations, evaluation in post-conflict states, and building national capacity for evaluation.

8 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

62. The Evaluation Policy prescribes that "...crosscutting themes (gender, youth, climate change and human rights) would be integrated in evaluation, focusing on broad-based linkages in UN-Habitat's work...".⁷ A number of the evaluations which were reviewed highlighted the fact that there is a gap between UN-Habitat's normative and operational work when it comes to mainstreaming cross-cutting issues. The Evaluation of the Implementation of MTSIP 2008-2013 described this issue (with a reference to gender) as a frequent "...disconnection between policy papers and operational work..."⁸ At the operational level gender mainstreaming seem to be very limited or at least not well documented. The Evaluation of the UN-Habitat Urban Programme in Iraq stated that "...the Iraq Programme needs to deal more directly with the cross-cutting issues"⁹.

63. The Evaluation of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme in Mavoko, Kenya stressed that "...since the project was not able to fully realize its four immediate outcome objectives, the issue of taking gender aspects into consideration does not apply... beneficiaries were loosely identified as 'slum dwellers', and gender data was gathered without setting a minimal number for females, youth, etc., which should have been done".¹⁰

64. Also, the Mid-Term Evaluation of UN-Habitat's Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) stated that a "...more efforts are needed on crosscutting issues and that "...the impact of CCCI on gender responsiveness and the inclusion of youth in decision-making processes is still limited"¹¹. From the review of the evaluation report for Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Capacity Building Activities supported by the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund it was apparent that despite the fact that gender equality was a part of the projects design it is not thoroughly addressed at the operational level. The Evaluation of UN-Habitat Liaison Offices and the Evaluation of the Establishment Process of the Rafik Hariri UN-Habitat Memorial Award virtually did not mention gender and other cross cutting is-

⁷ UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy, January 2013, p.9

⁸ Evaluation of the Implementation of MTSIP, p.65

⁹ Evaluation of the UN-Habitat Urban Programme in Iraq, p.47

¹⁰ Evaluation of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme in Mavoko, Kenya, p.34

¹¹ Mid-Term Evaluation of UN-Habitat's Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI), p. 34

sues. The above information indicates that mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting issues in programmes and projects has been limited. It should be borne that cross-cutting issues may have been mainstreamed but evaluation never assessed their integration.

65. The UN-Habitat used the UN System Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) evaluation performance indicator score card to assess the extent to which UN-Habitat has successfully integrated gender quality in evaluations conducted during 2012-2013. The assessment used 13 scoring criteria, including, whether gender aspects were considered in evaluation preparation, stakeholder analysis, selection of evaluation team, approach, criteria, questions, indicators, data collection methods and data analysis, as well as evaluation reporting, evaluation validation processes, management response, and evaluation dissemination. Overall assessment was that UN-Habitat needs to improve on mainstreaming gender equality throughout its evaluation processes.

66. In this context the Professional Peer Review of the UN-Habitat Evaluation Function makes an important observation: "Gender issues were not found to be systematically mainstreamed in evaluation TORs..."¹². The Evaluation Unit takes this lesson learned on board and will focus on including more explicit questions for assessing cross-cutting issues in future evaluations.

9 ENHANCING SELF-EVALUATIONS

67. In UN-Habitat self-evaluations have been done at three levels: (i) assessment of expected accomplishments, (ii) indicators of achievement, and (iii) status of implementation of outputs as articulated in the approved programme of work for the biennium. This type of self-assessment is conducted through the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS). However, IMDIS has two main challenges: (a) shortcomings in fully aligning the biennial Work programme to the MTSIP, and (b) Work programme indicators tend to focus on process/outputs rather than results.

68. Strengthening project and programme level self-evaluations was a direct response to the requirements of the new UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy. According to paragraph 41 (c) of the policy: "Every project will have a formal closing evaluation process. Such self evaluations will provide judgement on accomplishments objectives, actual results achieved, operation efficiency, including utilization of financial resources.". In addition, Requirements for the Implementation of the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy, paragraph 9: "All closing projects must have a self-evaluation report. There will be a gradual roll-out to ensure 100 per cent self evaluation compliance rate of closing projects by 2016... The self-evaluation report is the responsibility of the project leader."

69. With growing demand to measure the results of UN-Habitat work and limited resources at hand, it is not possible for UN-Habitat to externally evaluate all its interventions. Enhancing self-evaluations would therefore help to:

- Increase coverage and scope of UN-Habitat's evaluations;
- Provide relevant information on projects that can inform decision-making processes;

¹² Professional Peer Review of the Evaluation Function UN-Habitat, p.26

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of project delivery to achieve intended results and improve overall project management in UN-Habitat;
- Learn from self-evaluations to improve designs of new projects/programmes;
- Increase accountability and feed into reporting frameworks on UN-Habitat's work.

9.1 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY FOR PILOTING SELF-EVALUATION OF PROJECTS

70. A pilot for self-evaluation of closing projects was carried out in 2013. The focus of the pilot was to test a standardized format to assist project managers to self-evaluate their projects and ensure such evaluations follow the same format. A results-based self-evaluations template was developed, consulted in-house and tested on four randomly selected projects that closed during the 2012-2013 biennium.

71. The template was used to systematically determine projects relevance, design, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact outlook of projects; and assessing how the cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights, youth and environment were being integrated in projects.

72. A protocol for selection of closing projects to be piloted was created. Four projects that closed in 2012-2013 were randomly selected projects for the piloting exercise:

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

73. The self-evaluations were expected to build on performance measurements, and monitoring data on projects that was captured in PAAS.

9.2 MAIN FINDINGS

74. The Results-Based Self Evaluation (RBSE) template proved to be a useful tool that assisted project managers in self-evaluating their projects in the pilot. The RBSE design was viable and user friendly. The overall findings of the self-evaluations indicating the level of satisfaction are provided in Table 5. Given that a small project sample was used for testing, the results should be regarded just as examples rather than be used for generalised statements on the performance of UN-Habitat projects.

75. The RBSE pilot phase demonstrated that the system of self-evaluation of closing projects would be methodologically viable and capable of systematically assessing the project and programme performance, following a standard. Based on the results of the testing process it can be expected that

when then RBSE is fully functional and staff are trained it will form a solid contribution to UN-Habitat's framework for monitoring and evaluation.

76. Institutionalizing self-evaluations would also help to promote the culture of evaluations. The Results-Based Self Evaluation template is a useful tool to assess performance of projects. It can help project managers to better understand the performance of projects that they supervise and be a mean of promoting project and programme improvements.

77. The piloting exercise also confirmed that in order to increase credibility of self-assessment, it would be necessary to have the assessment prepared by the project managers reviewed by the Quality Assurance Unit and Evaluation Unit. The completed RBSE templates by project managers which were reviewed for the pilot indicated that the self-assessors tend to evaluate themselves (overly) positively.

9.3 KEY LESSONS

- Project delivery issues vary, both systematic and circumstantial, for each specific project.
- Clarity on goals and objectives vary.
- Logical frameworks to identify the linkages between programmatic activity, outputs , expected accomplishments were well established in PAAS but missing data, in fact two projects lacked logic frameworks.
- Indicators to measure success not SMART.
- Staff skills for self-evaluation need training/ improvement.

Table 5: Overview of results based self-evaluation of four pilot projects

	Overall finding	Municipal Spatial Planning Support Programme, KOSOVO K076 9	Enabling Access of Koshi Flood Affected People to Water and Sanitation Facilities in Bihar-India and Sunsari District – Nepal, W017	Contribution to the Systematization of Housing Recuperation Experience in Provinces in Cuba, F087 (Alain Grimard)	Support to Living with Floods in Chikwawa District, Lower Shire Valley, Malawi, C290
Relevance	“Partially Satisfactory” All projects linked to MTSIP Focus Areas; Two projects did not have a log frame; risk assessments were incomplete.	Partially Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Partially Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Efficiency	“Partially Satisfactory” Issues of project design, delayed disbursement of funds, low capacity of local authorities, low responsiveness of targeted community, difficult external conditions or socio political environment.	Partially Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Partially Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Effectiveness	“Satisfactory” Difficult to measure effectiveness of ‘soft’ deliverables such capacity building.	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Partially Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Sustainability Outlook	“Satisfactory” Sustainability in emergency post disaster relief programmes to be carefully considered.	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Partially Satisfactory	Partially Satisfactory
Cross-cutting issues	“Partially Satisfactory” Attention to empowerment of women and youth considered in most cases but not all during the design phase. Human rights were not addressed.	Partially Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Impact Outlook	“Satisfactory” Positive outlook established in terms of: Improved living conditions due to enhanced capacity of municipalities, positive long-term health effects due to water and sanitation measures.	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Overall project performance		3.5	4.2	3.3	3.1

Note: Scale 1-5 used 1=“highly unsatisfactory”, 2=“unsatisfactory”, 3=“partially satisfactory”, 4= “satisfactory and 5=“highly satisfactory”.

10 LESSONS LEARNED FROM REVIEWED EVALUATION REPORTS

Evaluations conducted 2012-2013	Key Lessons Learned
<p>Professional Peer Review of the Evaluation Function UN-Habitat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation function is not fully independent. Evaluations are conducted in credible manner in compliance with UNEG Norms and Standards. • Scope and coverage of evaluations is limited. • Evaluations have been influential in promoting organizational change. • The evaluation capacity of providing evaluative evidence for organizational learning has been limited. • Various-based data collection, reporting and monitoring tools are disconnected and it limits the availability of reliable data that can support evaluation function. • The commitment of senior management and governing bodies to strengthen the evaluation function is an asset on which UN-Habitat can rely.
<p>Evaluation of the Implementation of MTSIP 2008-2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of ‘sustainable cities’ is not well defined – and yet it is flexible to capture current and future urban development trends. • MTSIP policy and strategy papers of each focus area would have benefited from an overall policy that would have established a common framework. • A large part of UN-Habitat’s project portfolio is generated in regions and countries, which would warrant a more proactive engagement at country level. • Outcomes of UN-Habitat support at country level are not captured at Headquarters. • Implementation of a comprehensive plan would have benefitted from organizational amendments from the outset. • Information follow between management and staff at both Headquarters and regional/country is extremely important. • Inadequate resources (financial and human) are constraining the implementation of the MTSIP at all levels.

<p>Evaluation of the Establishment Process of the Rafik Hariri UN-Habitat Memorial Award</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The correct timing of the processes related to the Award is essential. • A Technical Review Committee to independently verify the nomination documents would be helpful. • The first cycle of the Award has shown that there could a number of management options for the award. The evaluation proposed the following four options: • Maintaining the current arrangement with UN-Habitat as the hub of the • Award secretariat based on a bilateral arrangement between the Foundation and UN-Habitat with UN-Habitat would be helpful; • Outsourcing of administrative function under a tripartite agreement between UN-Habitat, the Foundation and the service provider could assist; • Shifting responsibilities from UN-Habitat to the Foundation with the Foundation in charge of the Award secretariat and UN-Habitat playing a supporting role could be considered; • Moving the Award secretariat to the Foundation and with the Foundation responsible for outsourcing administrative functions could an option. • A Technical Review Committee to independently verify the nomination documents would be helpful.
<p>Evaluation of the UN-Habitat Urban Programme in Iraq</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the UN-Habitat Iraq programme developed its Habitat Country Programme Documents (HCPD) in a fluid and complex context, the process could have been more systematic and strategic. • The Iraq programme would need to be strategized on how to manage the multiple transitions and its mandate adapted to the evolving scenarios in Iraq. • With the experience of the Iraq programme, UN-Habitat senior management needs to reflect on how best to anticipate and prepare for opportunities with other MDT-Fs in the future in other country assistance scenarios. • It is necessary for UN-Habitat to invest in its Iraq office and help promote cost-effective, niche initiatives, which are visible, scalable and correlate to Iraq's priorities with strong partnerships. • UN agencies, including UN-Habitat, have not performed well in keeping project deadlines. All projects were given up to five no-cost extensions. UN-Habitat would have to consider how these delays could be avoided by better and more realistic project design.

<p>Mid-term Evaluation of the Cities and Climate Change Initiatives (CCCI)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output targets need to have realistic targets. • Modifications during implementation due to changing conditions have to be reflected in a formal project revision, including adjustments to the logical framework (logframe) matrix if found necessary. • A fast growing project such as CCCI requires an adequate communications strategy and information plans to improve lines of communication with partners, other key stakeholders. • Building effective networks requires appropriate management mechanisms and adequate technical staff to support the Project Management Unit of CCCI. Given the growing number of cities and partners in the Initiative, alternative models for participation and networking may have to be considered. • Participation of the private sector in CCCI has been very limited despite the acknowledged importance of the private sector for the formulation and implementation of local climate change action plans and their proposed remedies. • CCCI is fast on the way to potentially becoming a knowledge management hub, which could ultimately lead to it becoming a clearance house. • There are increasing calls by participants in major international meetings for disaster-reduction strategies and climate change adaptation. Responding to all of this may require shifts in the policy direction of CCCI and greater collaboration with the Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and others to elaborate joint strategies. • Work incorporating cross-cutting issues has been mostly normative.
<p>Evaluation of UN-Habitat Liaison Offices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There seems to be a disconnection between UN-Habitat headquarters and the liaison offices not only caused by time and space. • The Liaison offices feel isolated from much of the work of headquarters while many of the Nairobi staff are less than satisfied with the support provided by the offices to those of their activities which are outside the primary focus of the work of the offices. • There is a lack of a clear policy or guidelines for each of the liaison offices to deliver on their core responsibilities effectively and efficiently in view of many ad hoc and time consuming assignments from headquarters. • While the liaison offices have demonstrated a high degree of efficiency in the use of their limited human and financial resources, an increase in demands as a consequence of reorganization may overstretch their current capacity. • All four offices are structurally in the Office of the Executive Director. This has created a situation which is not optimal for cooperation between the offices and the rest of the agency.

<p>Evaluation of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking and linkages established. The formation of the Executive Committee in 2004 provided an opportunity for UN-Habitat to develop significant partnerships in both the public and the private sectors. • The project identified key players at university level for research. The new developments from April 2011 should build on the networking and linkages already made. • Projects termed 'experimental' should not be combined with development projects. • The research needed should be carried out first in a separate and/or parallel project and then the lessons learned can be applied to the development projects. • The complexity of land allocation, management and sub-division is usually best managed by several ministries. • Working with several ministries and a wide range of key players, would make it possible to implement the project with minimal risks.
<p>Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Capacity Building Activities supported by the UN-Habitat Water and Sanitation Trust Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building is a dynamic and interactive process of upgrading of the knowledge of the involved actors and beneficiaries. • The direct training and capacity building activities of WSTF have generated relevant and replicable skills, knowledge and practices that have contributed to effective citizen participation in water and sanitation during the project. • A weak enabling environment (legal, political, institutional and community/ownership related) that normally cannot be fixed quickly is a considerable risk factor that affect the results and sustainability of capacity building activities. • Empowering the poor is a long term process that needs be carefully embedded in the institutional web supported by training and capacity building activities. • UN-Habitat is considered well placed to assess the potential challenges and associated resource needs as part of the project planning process. • The approach of using WSTF training and capacity building funds to facilitate formation of strategic alliances with private institutions, social organizations, universities and authorities (national and local) contributed to the establishment of joint agendas and commitments on water and sanitation. • Channelling of training and capacity building through the schools and education governance systems has demonstrated encouraging results in terms of water and sanitation, waste disposal, and environmental awareness building and behavioural changes among young people with multiplying effects to families and society.

<p>Evaluation of the UN-Habitats Role in post disaster recovery, reconstruction and development in Pakistan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country offices are where UN-Habitat provides its technical expertise and its utility • UN-Habitat needs to rethink the projects it considers “early recovery” as they take almost two years. • Disaster risk reduction measures are costly. Hard decisions need to be made about which are better options- more shelters of more disaster risk reduction measures for better quality. • When designing disaster response programmes, UN-Habitat should advocate for better settlements planning not just solutions at the household level. • Strong monitoring and evaluation functions in country offices backed up by the Regional Office can help to identify training needs and address project weaknesses at a stage when problems can be remedied.
<p>UN-Habitat Organizational Effectiveness Staff Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency in the implementation of operational projects in the field can improve. • Transparency in the implementation of UN-Habitat work. • Accountability at all levels of the organization are positive. • Collaboration between HQ and the field can be strengthened. • Productivity in the normative work is still low. • Transparency in resource allocation can improve. • Collaboration with external partners is positive sign of UN-Habitat’s engagement. • Information and knowledge sharing within UN-Habitat can improve.

11 KEY CHALLENGES OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

- (i) **Need for strong buy-in from key stakeholders.** There is lack of use of evaluations, especially from management and project managers. Lack of understanding of the purpose and benefits of evaluations also affect their demand and utilization. It could be addressed through creating ownership of evaluations by emphasizing the role of evaluation in decision-making, learning, accountability, improvement and empowerment.
- (ii) **Inadequacy of staff resources in the Evaluation Unit.** Presently, two professional staff coordinate, plan, manage and conduct evaluations. Also financial resources allocated to the evaluation function are insufficient. It could be addressed by allocating adequate core staff for evaluation function; training staff and building skills of evaluation in other branches and offices as well as placing greater emphasis on allocation of adequate resources to conduct external evaluations.
- (iii) **Few evaluations conducted.** Inadequate or lack of allocation of funds for evaluation activities means that some programmes and projects may not be evaluated. Adequate resources

would help to increase the scope and coverage of evaluations conducted. Also introduction of the self-evaluations is intended to increase the overall evaluation coverage.

- (iv) Slow change of culture change towards using evaluations for performance improvement.** This could be addressed through an in depth-dialogue on evaluation results, follow-up on evaluation recommendations, and establishment of evaluation focal points in branches at Headquarters, regions and country levels.
- (v) Challenges of evaluation methods and processes, especially for impact evaluations.** This will be addressed through training and capacity building courses. Enhancement of in-depth of information available from end-of-project evaluations on the achievement of results using the evaluation on programme theory (logical) model to emphasize logical pathways from project inputs, outputs to achieved objectives and results as well as impacts.
- (vi) Problem of communicating evaluation findings to potential users in ways that they find useful and comprehensible.** To be addressed by identifying communication strategies for different users.
- (vii) Need to use programme theory (logic) model in evaluations.** Most programme/projects lack good logical frameworks to understand the problem the programme or project is addressing, what is its objectives, how they will be achieved and what criteria will be used in assessing results and success. Good programme theory (logic) model would a good practice to identify the key questions that an evaluation should address.

12 NEXT STEPS: PRIORITIES FOR 2014-2015

Effective implementation of the evaluation plan 2014-2015 (resources permitting). There is room for improvement in the quality of the evaluations and other evaluation products to be delivered during the 2014-2015 biennium. The review of evaluation reports conducted during 2012-2013 revealed weaknesses of mainstreaming cross-cutting issues of gender and human rights.

- (a) Promoting the use of evaluations including systematic follow-up to evaluations. Tracking of progress on implementation of evaluation recommendations and providing status of implementation to UN-Habitat Management for encouraging use will be a priority. Evaluation workshops targeting project managers to build their evaluation capacity and change attitudes from considering evaluation as a burden to see evaluation as a value-added activity.
- (b) Assessing of evaluability of all new formulated projects, including provision of time schedule and adequate budgets for project evaluations to ensure wide coverage. This will be emphasized through the Programme Advisory Group.
- (c) Sharing evaluation results is another critical component to increase the use of evaluations. Synthesizing evaluation findings and providing information regularly to the UN-Habitat Senior

Management Board for strategic decision-making; and to reach out to staff involved in planning and managing projects will increase the use of evaluations.

- (d) Maintaining the website at www.unhabitat.org/evaluation and keep it updated to improve online access to evaluation reports, guidelines and briefs.
- (e) Establishing evaluation focal points in every branch, regional and country offices to the promote demand and use of evaluations.

13 CONCLUSION

78. This assessment has demonstrated UN-Habitat's efforts in strengthening the evaluation function. While considerable progress was made during the biennium 2012-2013, UN-Habitat evaluation function should be further strengthened. There are multiple issues affecting the performance of the evaluation function. Among the key issues are that evaluation resources still remain insufficient, an evaluation culture is still lacking, and evaluation capacity needs to be enhanced. The overall evaluation coverage remains limited, and follow-up and use of evaluation need improvement.

79. The Committee of Permanent Representative may wish to take note of the biennial report and the UN-Habitat welcomes recommendations and suggestions of how strengthen this critical function of evaluation.

