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Service

Management Response Systems to Evaluations: Benchmarking Review

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Table of Acronyms

| | |
|-------|---|
| ADR | Assessment of Development Results |
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| CIRAD | Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement |
| EAC | Evaluation Advisory Committee |
| EC | Evaluation Committee |
| EMRTS | Evaluation Management Response Tracking System |
| ERC | Evaluation Resource Center |
| EVAL | Evaluation Office |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| IAES | Independent Advisory and Evaluation Services |
| ICPEs | Country Programme Evaluations |
| IDEV | Independent Development Evaluation |

| | |
|--------|--|
| IDRC | International Development Research Centre |
| IEO | Independent Evaluation Office |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| IOS | Internal Oversight Services |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| KPIs | Key Performance Indicators |
| MAR | Management Action Record |
| MARS | Management Action Record System |
| MDBs | Multilateral Development Banks |
| MER | Management and Evaluation Response |
| MI | Micro indicator |
| MOPAN | Monitoring Performance Assessment Network |
| MR | Management Response |
| MRP | Management Response Plans |
| OAL | Objective Assessment of Learning |
| OED | Office of Evaluation |
| OEV | Office of Evaluation |
| PAHO | Pan American Health Organization |
| PPME | Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit |
| PPU | Portfolio Performance Unit |
| PRISMA | President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions |
| QAT | Quality Assurance Tool |
| R2 | Risk and Recommendation |
| ToC | theory of change |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNITAR | United Nations Institute for Training and Research |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

1 Background

The importance of a robust Management Response (MR) system for addressing evaluation recommendations is underscored by the [Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network \(MOPAN\)](#). MOPAN is a network of member countries that fund the multilateral system and share a common interest in enhancing its performance. Members use MOPAN assessments to meet accountability and due diligence requirements, inform strategic dialogue with assessed multilateral organizations, and contribute to broader learning to improve the workings of the multilateral system. MOPAN emphasizes MR systems are crucial for translating evaluation findings into tangible improvements and promoting organizational learning and accountability within multilateral organizations (MOPAN, 2011). Formalized MR systems are widely adopted among development cooperation organizations, with a 2016 Organization for Economic Cooperative Development (OECD) review indicating that 78% of surveyed organizations have MR systems in place (OECD, 2016). By systematically tracking, addressing, and implementing recommendations, these organizations demonstrate their commitment to utilizing evaluations for enhancing effectiveness and impact. A well-designed MR system ensures that recommendations are not merely noted, but actively considered in decision-making processes, leading to more informed and evidence-based actions (MOPAN, 2016). This in turn fosters a culture of continuous improvement and strengthens accountability to stakeholders by providing transparency on how evaluation findings are being used to drive organizational change (MOPAN, 2023).

Additionally, the [United Nations Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (NORM 14, Evaluation use and follow-up) stipulates that organizations should promote evaluation use and follow-up, using an interactive process involving all stakeholders. Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and/or management addressed by its recommendations that clearly states responsibilities and accountabilities. A MR is a formal mechanism which facilitates a common understanding of the evaluation recommendations by the involved stakeholders, promoting evaluation use (IOM, 2019; UNAIDS, 2019). Management should integrate evaluation results and recommendations into policies and programs (UNEG, 2016b).

UNEG Standard on MR & Follow-up

STANDARD 1.4 Management Response and Follow-up

The organization should ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to help management respond to evaluation recommendations. The mechanisms should outline concrete actions to be undertaken in the MR and in the follow-up to recommendation implementation.

- The organization's management is responsible for providing a formal MR to each evaluation. The MR provides management's views of the evaluation recommendations, including whether management agrees or disagrees with each recommendation, and why. The MR should detail specific actions to implement those recommendations that were agreed to by management. These actions should be concrete, objectively verifiable, time-bound and clear regarding responsibilities for implementation.
- The organization should have an oversight mechanism to ensure that there are MRs to evaluations, that the actions contained in MRs are adequate to substantially address agreed recommendations, and that the recommendations are appropriately implemented.

- The organization should have a mechanism to oversee the implementation of the actions provided in MRs, such as follow-up reports or tracking systems. Ensuring follow-up is the responsibility of the management. Follow-up should be overseen by the governing body or, for those actions to be undertaken by units within the organization, by management itself.

Source: *UNEG (2016b)*.

1.1 CGIAR Evaluation Practice

[CGIAR](#), a global research partnership for a food-secure future, is dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. Guided by [the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#), CGIAR operates across various regions worldwide, to tackle critical challenges in agriculture, food security, and natural resources through diverse research programs and initiatives. Conducted at the onset of a new evaluation arrangement, the 2019 [MOPAN](#) assessment of CGIAR highlighted several areas requiring improvement, particularly in accountability and the uptake of lessons learned.

The [IAES Evaluation Function](#)¹ leads conducts process and performance evaluations that inform strategic decisions and operational improvements. CGIAR evaluation practice encompasses all activities involved in conducting independent process and performance evaluations across CGIAR. CGIAR's evaluation practices are governed by a comprehensive [Evaluation Policy](#) and [Evaluation Framework](#) (2022) that underscore the importance of independent evaluations in enhancing the quality and impact of its research efforts. The evaluations adhere to the standards and principles outlined in the [CGIAR Evaluation Framework](#), regardless of who commissions or conducts them (CGIAR, 2022). The IAES Evaluation Function developed guidelines on [Management Engagement and Response \(MER\): Process and Performance Evaluations in CGIAR](#) (2023) (pre-read to SC19)², to strengthen use and engagement with evaluations in CGIAR and facilitate formal MRs and use of recommendations. Subsequently, the [CGIAR internal process note](#) was developed by PPU- for responsible System Organization business units), to help ensure that recommendations from independent evaluations are systematically tracked, addressed, and implemented, thus fostering accountability and organizational learning. The MR process within CGIAR is designed to ensure that recommendations from these evaluations are systematically tracked, addressed, and implemented, thus fostering accountability and organizational learning.

This benchmarking study draws lessons learned from other organizations on conducting a comprehensive review of the MR system, towards ensuring it meets the highest standards of effectiveness and efficiency. The findings from this study would contribute to developing a more robust MR system, inform the MR system review (see [ToR](#)), driving continuous improvement and better outcomes for CGIAR's programs.

A formal MR is required for any evaluation in which CGIAR has had partial or complete decision-making authority or when CGIAR has fully or partially funded the evaluation.

1.2 MOPAN Assessments

[MOPAN](#) is a network of member countries that fund the multilateral system and share a common interest in enhancing its performance. Members use MOPAN assessments to meet accountability and due

¹ Established in its current form in 2019. Previously Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IAE).

² CGIAR Evaluation Guidelines Management Engagement and Response: Process & Performance Evaluations CGIAR: https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2023/10/SC19-20b-Appendix2_Additional-MER-Guidelines-Consultation-Version.pdf.

diligence requirements, inform strategic dialogue with assessed multilateral organizations, and contribute to broader learning to improve the workings of the multilateral system.

[The generic MOPAN 3.1 indicator framework](#) is organized into five performance areas: Strategic, Operational, Relationship, Performance Management and Results, as well as 12 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), each with prescribed elements for assessment. The assessments draw upon several streams of evidence (documents, surveys, interviews) from internal and external sources to validate and triangulate findings against a standard MOPAN indicator framework. The framework is designed to assess organizational effectiveness and is aligned with MOPAN's theory of change (ToC), which sees a continuum between organizational effectiveness and development effectiveness. Notably, the framework values function over form, meaning it looks for application of systems, processes and practices more than their formal existence.

KPI 8, under Performance Management, is dedicated to assessing if the organization applies evidence-based planning and programming. It focuses on the evaluation function and its position within the organization's structure, attention to quality, accountability and putting learning into practice.

1.2.1 Findings from MOPAN Assessment of CGIAR

The [2019 MOPAN assessment of CGIAR](#) identified several weaknesses under KPI 8, where CGIAR received a 'highly unsatisfactory' rating:

- a. Accountability and follow-up: lack of a clear accountability system to ensure responses, follow-up, and utilization of evaluation recommendations.
- b. Uptake of lessons and best practices: lack of a formal mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons learned internally or externally. While some evidence suggests that lessons were applied, the lack of a tracking system hindered assessment uptake.

Recognizing the need to strengthen its MR system, CGIAR has undertaken several initiatives to address shortcomings identified in the MOPAN assessment. According to the [CGIAR Evaluation Policy \(2022\)](#), management is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are available to consider evaluation findings and recommendations proactively, prepare responses, and implement agreed actions³ promptly. The IAES's [Management and Evaluation Response \(MER\) Guidelines](#) support this policy by providing a formal structure for responding to evaluations and enhancing their utilization across CGIAR.

Since 2022, the CGIAR Portfolio Performance Unit (PPU) has been tasked with coordinating the MR process for independent evaluations conducted by IAES within the scope of CGIAR. The PPU tracks progress on implementing recommendations, reports on implementation to the CGIAR System Council, and participates in, or coordinates, CGIAR evaluations, including those by MOPAN. The PPU introduced a [MR Tracking Tool](#) in 2022 to monitor the status of MR implementation for IAES evaluations. As of July 2024, this tool is used to report on the progress of implementing recommendations.

³ The Evaluation policy also refers to a MR tracking system (Article 7.2, page 10) which would document MR and follow-up actions to evaluations covered under the scope and applicability of this policy (see section 2). It would provide a written record of what actions are planned in response to evaluations and, after a suitable interval, a record of the implementation of those actions.

1.3 Review of CGIAR's Management Response System

In preparation for the potential second MOPAN assessment, and considering recent internal changes, evaluation function under IAES of CGIAR is reviewing its MR system in Q3-Q4 of 2024. The current benchmarking study was requested to inform the design and implementation of the MR System Review as well as the analysis of the review results ([ToRs](#))-part of CGIAR's broader efforts to address the gaps identified in the 2019 MOPAN assessment. By examining how MR systems across various organizations were reviewed or assessed, this study will provide Insights and inform the development of a TORs and subsequently help frame learning towards a more effective MR system for CGIAR, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for its programs and initiatives. With the goal to enhance the role of CGIAR's MR system in ensuring accountability and promoting learning, the MR System review will focus on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the MR system, facilitating the implementation of evaluation recommendations, and supporting CGIAR evidence-based planning, programming, and decision-making. The four envisioned key questions of the MR system review were at the time of conducting this study:

1. How effectively and efficiently is the MR system contributing to organizational effectiveness, learning, and accountability?
2. To what extent does the MR system ensure responses and follow-up to, and use of, evaluation recommendations?
3. To what extent are other processes and mechanisms in place to ensure the uptake of lessons learned and best practices from evaluations?
4. What adjustments in the independent evaluative activities would improve CGIAR's effectiveness to inform evidence-based planning and decision-making based on best practices?

2 Purpose, Methodology and Selection Criteria

The benchmarking study was conducted from July to September 2024, and overlapped with the development of the terms of reference of MR system review ([ToRs](#)). The purpose of this benchmarking study is to provide a comprehensive mapping of the MR system and process reviews. By examining MR systems in similar organizations, especially those subject to MOPAN assessments, best practices, methodologies and challenges in conducting these reviews will be identified. These findings would inform the development of a customized and robust approach to review CGIAR's own MR system and processes.

2.1 Methodology

The selection of comparator organizations was based on purposeful sampling, targeting those with established MR systems, recent MOPAN assessments, and diversity. This benchmarking study primarily employed qualitative methods for data collection and analysis: document and literature review, and a comparative analysis of MR systems across different organizations.

- a) **Comprehensive document review of MR systems in selected organizations:** A thorough review of relevant documents, policies, and procedures related to MR systems in the selected comparator organizations was conducted. This included MOPAN assessments, evaluations/reviews of evaluation functions, evaluation policies and evaluation reports, and MR to evaluation recommendations (see

Annex 3 References). The document review identified existing practices, protocols, and areas for improvement in MR systems.

- b) **Interviews with key stakeholders from comparator organizations and CGIAR:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the comparator organizations (AfDB, UNITAR) and within CGIAR. These stakeholders included evaluation managers, MR coordinators, and other relevant personnel involved in the MR process. The interviews aimed to gather in-depth insights into the experiences, challenges, and best practices related to MR systems and their reviews.
- c) The benchmarking review team also drew insights from a [webinar](#) organized on 12 September 2024, by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), titled *The Role of Management Responses in Promoting Evaluation Use*. This webinar, attended by colleagues from various independent evaluation offices, featured the presentations of the following MR reviews:
- Evaluation use in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): insights from the MR system
 - Insights from a review of the quality of MRs to independent evaluations at United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

2.2 Selection of Comparator Organizations

The selection of comparator organizations was based on specific criteria to ensure the relevance and applicability of the findings to CGIAR (see Table 1). The criteria included the establishment of MR systems, recent MOPAN assessments, diversity in size, sector, and mandate, and accessibility of information.

- **Established MR systems:** Organizations with an established MR systems and a proven track record of responding to evaluation recommendations.
- **Recent MOPAN assessments and key findings on KPI 8:** Organizations that had undergone MOPAN assessments (over the last ten years) were included, with particular attention to their performance on KPI 8, which focuses on evidence-based planning and programming. The key findings from these assessments provided valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their MR systems.
- **Diversity in size, sector, and mandate:** A diverse group of organizations was selected to capture a wide range of contexts and approaches to MR systems. This diversity included variations in organizational size (in terms of operational scope, staff size, and evaluation office size), sector (e.g., agriculture, health, environment), and mandate (e.g., research institutions, development agencies).
- **Accessibility of information:** Organizations that were willing to share information and participate in interviews or whose information was publicly available were selected. This ensured that the study could access sufficient data to conduct a thorough analysis.

Table 1. List of sampled Comparator Organizations

| Organization | Independent evaluation office | Established MR system | Recent MOPAN assessment year | Type of MR review conducted | Mandate | Accessibility of information |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) | Yes | Yes | 2017-18 | Part of an organizational review | Agriculture development | Yes |

| Organization | Independent evaluation office | Established MR system | Recent MOPAN assessment year | Type of MR review conducted | Mandate | Accessibility of information |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) | Yes | Yes | 2023-24 | Part of an organizational review | Rural development | Yes |
| 3. World Food Programme (WFP) | Yes | Yes | 2024 (ongoing) | Part of an organizational review | Humanitarian aid | Yes |
| 4. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | Yes | Yes | 2020 | Standalone review | Global development | Yes |
| 5. International Labour Organization (ILO) | Yes | Yes | 2020 | Part of an organizational review | Labor rights | Yes |
| 6. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) | Yes | Yes | 2024 (ongoing) | Part of an organizational review | Education and culture | Yes |
| 7. United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) | Yes | Yes | Not available | Standalone review | Training and research | Yes |
| 8. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) | No | No | Not available | NA | Health | NA |
| 9. Global Environment Facility (GEF) | Yes | Yes | 2024 (ongoing) | Standalone review | Environmental projects | Yes |
| 10. African Development Bank (AfDB) | Yes | Yes | 2022-23 | Part of an organizational review | Development finance | Yes |

| Organization | Independent evaluation office | Established MR system | Recent MOPAN assessment year | Type of MR review conducted | Mandate | Accessibility of information |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 11. Green Climate Funds (GCF) | Yes | Yes | Not available | NA | Environmental projects | NA |
| 12. Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD) | No | No | Not available | NA | Research for development | NA |
| 13. International Development Research Centre (IDRC) | No | No | Not available | NA | Research for development | NA |

From the 13 organizations, eight were selected: the AfDB, FAO, GEF, IFAD, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, and WFP, based on the following criteria: robust MR systems, recent MOPAN assessments, and availability of relevant information. To strengthen the evidence base, given the scarcity of available reviews, UNITAR was later added to the study following receipt of their recent internal MR review.

The following considerations are important when reading the study:

- **Limited standalone review examples:** The available sample of publicly available and/or standalone MR system reviews was limited. Therefore, this study relied primarily on evaluations of MR processes for GEF, UNITAR, and UNDP.
- **Reliance on MOPAN assessments:** For reviews conducted as part of overall organizational assessments, the study primarily relied on MOPAN assessments as the main source of information.

3 Findings

This section of the benchmarking study analyzes two distinct approaches to reviewing MR systems. First, it examines dedicated reviews of MR systems conducted by GEF, UNDP, and UNITAR. Second, it analyzes MR System Reviews incorporated into broader organizational assessments, primarily those conducted by MOPAN. This second analysis includes the MR systems of AfDB, IFAD, ILO, UNESCO, WFP, and FAO.

3.1 Standalone Reviews of MR Systems

GEF and two UN agencies (UNDP and UNITAR), each conducted a comprehensive review of their MR processes. The 2023 [GEF review](#) aimed to understand the factors influencing the adoption and follow-up of recommendations from the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) evaluations, assess the sufficiency of MR

for tracking implementation progress, and learn from practices in other organizations to provide early feedback on the revised **management action record (MAR)** process. The 2022 UNDP review, conducted in 2022, sought to identify good practices and challenges in the use of evaluations for management decision-making, strengthen the oversight of MRs, and assess both the quality of MRs and the extent to which evaluations are being used in decision-making. The UNITAR review, conducted in 2024, focused on understanding how management responds to evaluation recommendations and explored ways to enhance the MR process itself, including identifying good practices and challenges in completing MRs and providing recommendations to improve the Quality Assurance Tool (QAT) and template.

The findings of these reviews (see below) provide insights into the effectiveness and challenges of the MR systems for GEF, UNDP, and UNITAR.

3.1.1 Overview of MR Systems and Processes of Peer Organizations

3.1.1.1 GEF

The GEF MR process is an integral part of the organization's accountability and learning mechanisms. It ensures that recommendations arising from IEO evaluations are actively addressed by its management. The process begins with the IEO conducting evaluations and developing recommendations. Following the IEO's presentation of its findings and recommendations to the GEF Council, the GEF Secretariat prepares a MR for each evaluation (GEF IEO, 2023).

The MR details the Secretariat's position on each recommendation, indicating whether they agree, partially agree, or reject it. If a recommendation is accepted fully or partially, the Secretariat also prepares an action plan that outlines the specific steps to be taken to address the recommendation, along with timelines for implementation. The GEF Council then reviews both the IEO evaluation and the MR, ultimately endorsing the proposed action plan (GEF IEO, 2023).

The Secretariat is then responsible for implementing the action plan, and the progress of this implementation is tracked and documented. The IEO plays a role in independently validating the progress made on the action plans. The GEF IEO annually updates the Management Action Record (MAR), which offers a detailed account of tracked recommendations, management's self-assessment of progress in implementing corresponding action plans, and the IEO's independent validation of this progress. The complete MAR report is published online, with a summary included in the GEF IEO's Annual Performance Report. It serves as a key tool for transparency, accountability, and learning within GEF.

A distinctive feature of the GEF MR System is its strong emphasis on action plans. Rather than simply acknowledging recommendations, the process prioritizes the development and implementation of concrete plans to address them. The Council's endorsement of these action plans further reinforces the commitment to their execution. The IEO's independent validation of progress adds another layer of accountability and ensures that the assessment of implementation is objective and transparent (GEF IEO, 2023).

The GEF IEO's validation process involves a review of the evidence provided by GEF management on the actions taken to implement the recommendations. The IEO then provides its own independent rating on the level of adoption of the recommendations. This two-tiered approach, with both self-assessment and independent validation, strengthens the accountability of GEF in implementing the recommendations and ensures that the assessment process is transparent and objective (GEF IEO, 2023).

The GEF IEO tracks each recommendation for up to five years or until substantial or full implementation of the related action plan is achieved. This approach allows for systematic and repeated reviews of progress,

if necessary, before retiring a recommendation from the MAR. It also ensures that the MAR remains focused on current and relevant concerns.

The GEF Secretariat also adopted a centralized approach to managing the development of MRs to IEO evaluations. The inclusion of timelines in action plans enables better tracking and reporting of progress (GEF IEO, 2023).

3.1.1.2 UNDP

The UNDP MR process begins with the IEO or decentralized evaluation units conducting evaluations and presenting their findings and recommendations.

In response, the responsible UNDP units prepare a MR for each evaluation (UNDP, 2022). The MR details the unit's position on each recommendation, indicating whether they agree, partially agree, or reject it. If a recommendation is accepted fully or partially, the unit also prepares an action plan that outlines the specific steps to be taken to address the recommendation, along with timelines for implementation. The action plans are then reviewed internally (UNDP, 2022). The responsible unit is then in charge of implementing the action plan, and the progress of this implementation is tracked and documented in the Evaluation Resource Center (ERC). Management provides updates to the Executive Board every six months on the progress of implementing thematic evaluation recommendations previously presented to the Board, in accordance with the requirements of the UNDP Executive Board.

A distinctive feature of the UNDP MR System is that the IEO plays a role in independently validating the progress made on the action plans specifically related to IEO evaluations. This independent validation adds another layer of accountability and transparency towards the assessment of implementation (UNDP, 2022).

The UNDP IEO's validation process involves a review of the evidence provided by UNDP management on the actions taken to implement the recommendations arising from IEO evaluations. The IEO then provides its own independent rating on the level of adoption of these recommendations (UNDP, 2022).

UNDP utilizes the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) as a central repository for tracking and documenting evaluations and their MRs. The inclusion of timelines in action plans enables tracking of progress and promotes implementation. The system also recognizes that unforeseen circumstances can arise, allowing for flexibility in adjusting timelines when necessary. However, this flexibility can sometimes lead to delays and challenges in implementation.

3.1.1.3 UNITAR

The UNITAR's MR process is a key component of their evaluation process, designed to ensure that recommendations from independent evaluations are actively addressed and lead to organizational learning and improvement (UNITAR, 2024).

The process begins with the Planning, Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit (PPME) conducting an evaluation and presenting its findings and recommendations. The responsible UNITAR unit then prepares a MR for each evaluation (UNITAR, 2024).

In the MR, the unit details its position on each recommendation, indicating whether they agree, partially agree, or reject it. For each accepted or partially accepted recommendation, the unit also prepares an action plan outlining the specific steps to be taken to address the recommendation (UNITAR, 2024).

Once the action plans are internally reviewed, the responsible unit implements them, and the progress is tracked and documented. The PPME follows up with management to review the status of implementation at six months intervals. Since 2022, this follow-up has been extended to include a one-year review in addition to the existing six-month review (UNITAR, 2024).

A unique aspect of the UNITAR's system is its focus on co-creation and collaboration. The report highlights the importance of involving multiple stakeholders in the MR development process, fostering a sense of co-ownership and shared responsibility for implementing recommendations. This collaborative approach aims to ensure that action plans are realistic, feasible, and aligned with the organization's goals and priorities (UNITAR, 2024).

3.1.2 Mechanisms for Implementing Recommendations

While the three agencies/entities all share a common foundation of structured action plans and oversight, the mechanisms for implementing recommendations vary slightly across the three:

- **GEF:** The primary mechanism for implementing recommendations is the development and execution of action plans by the GEF Secretariat. These plans are endorsed by the GEF Council. Annually, the GEF Secretariat provides its self-assessment on progress in implementation of the action plans. After the self-assessment has been provided by the management, the GEF IEO conducts an independent validation of the implementation progress.
- **UNDP:** This organization also relies on action plans as the core mechanism for implementation. These plans are developed by the responsible units and tracked in the ERC. Centralized coordination by UNDP management and internal oversight mechanisms ensure accountability. The IEO provides an additional layer of validation for recommendations stemming from IEO evaluations.
- **UNITAR:** This organization also utilizes action plans as the primary tool for implementing recommendations. The responsibility for implementing these plans lies with the relevant units, while the PPME conducts follow-up reviews at six-month and one-year intervals to monitor progress and ensure accountability.

3.1.3 Approaches and Tools to Evaluate MR

The three entities employ distinct approaches and tools to evaluate various facets of the MR process and the degree to which evaluation recommendations are embraced and implemented:

- The GEF utilizes a **four-point rating scale** to categorize the adoption level of recommendations, indicating the degree to which the recommendations were incorporated into policies, strategies, or operations:
 - **High:** The management action plan for the relevant recommendation has been fully implemented.
 - **Substantial:** The management action plan for the relevant recommendation has largely been implemented or most actions have been implemented, but some aspects/actions have not been fully implemented.
 - **Medium:** Some of the actions listed in the management's action plan have been implemented but not to a significant degree. While some of the specified actions have been implemented, there is only a limited progress in implementation of the key specified actions.

- **Negligible:** Specified actions have not yet been implemented or the progress made so far is negligible.
- UNDP does not assess the quality of action plans. Currently, IOE is following up on the initial development and subsequent implementation of these plans specifically related to IEO evaluations.
- UNITAR does not have an explicit rating scale for its MR reporting. Instead, it uses **QAT** to assess the quality of MRs based on criteria such as specificity, measurability, action-orientation, timeliness, and resource allocation. The QAT does not assign an overall numerical or qualitative rating but provides a detailed assessment of each criterion.

3.1.4 Challenges and Barriers

This section summarizes the challenges and barriers identified in reviews of the MR systems of GEF, UNDP, and UNITAR. These reviews look at how effectively recommendations from evaluations are addressed and implemented within these organizations. Below is a summary of the key findings, identified in the three reviews.

3.1.4.1 GEF

The review of the GEF MAR and subsequent engagements with GEF IEO identified several challenges and barriers that did or continue hindering effectiveness of the MR system, including:

- **Limited time for developing action plans:** IEO typically provides a relatively short timeframe for the GEF Secretariat to prepare its MR, which can make it challenging to develop detailed and comprehensive action plans, especially for complex evaluations.
- **Lack of clarity in MRs:** The MRs do not always explicitly state the level of agreement (agree, partially agree, or reject) for each recommendation, which can lead to ambiguity and hinder effective tracking of progress.
- **Inconsistent inclusion of timelines:** While the revised MAR process emphasizes the inclusion of timelines in action plans, these are not always consistently provided, making it difficult to monitor progress and ensure timely implementation.
- **Limited agency participation:** The GEF agencies are not always actively involved in the MAR process, even when recommendations directly pertain to their work. This can limit their ownership and engagement in implementing the recommendations.
- **Absence of a centralized platform:** The lack of a dedicated online platform for recording and tracking recommendations, responses, and action plans can create inefficiencies and hinder access to information for various stakeholders.

3.1.4.2 UNDP

The review of the UNDP MR System identifies several challenges and barriers that can hinder its effectiveness:

- **Inconsistent quality of decentralized evaluations, MRs, and the recommendations themselves:** The quality can vary across these areas, impacting the clarity and actionability of recommendations.

- **Limited resources and capacity at the country office level:** Country offices may face resource constraints and capacity limitations in effectively developing and implementing action plans, particularly for complex evaluations.
- **Difficulty tracking implementation by external partners:** When recommendations involve actions by external partners, tracking and ensuring their implementation can be challenging due to limited control and influence.
- **Limited organizational learning:** While the MR system effectively promotes accountability, it may not fully foster systematic organizational learning. Lessons learned from evaluations often remain within specific project or program units and do not permeate other levels of the organization.
- **Underreporting of evaluation use:** The ERC platform, while useful for tracking and compliance, may not capture the full extent of evaluation use, as some recommendations might be implemented organically or at a later stage without being formally documented.
- **Need for enhanced ERC features:** The ERC platform could benefit from additional features to facilitate data extraction, aggregation, and analysis, enabling more effective learning and knowledge sharing across the organization.

3.1.4.3 UNITAR

The review of the UNITAR MR process identifies several challenges and barriers that can hinder the effectiveness of the system:

- **Inconsistent quality of MRs:** The quality of MRs can vary, impacting the clarity and actionability of recommendations. The review found that while most MRs were well-structured and complete, there were inconsistencies in the specificity, measurability, and timeliness of the planned actions.
- **Limited organizational learning:** While the MR system effectively promotes accountability; it may not fully foster systematic organizational learning. The review highlighted instances where lessons learned from evaluations remained within specific project or program units and did not inform broader organizational practices.
- **Need for enhanced MR template and guidance:** The review identified a misalignment between the MR template and the QAT used to assess it. It also noted a lack of clear guidance on how to complete the MR, particularly regarding making actions measurable.
- **Need for improved buy-in from management:** While the non-acceptance rate for recommendations was low, there were instances where recommendations were rejected or only partially accepted without sufficient justification. This suggests a need for improved buy-in and ownership of the evaluation process from management.

3.1.5 Reviews Framework

This section provides an overview of the methodologies employed in reviews of the GEF, UNDP, and UNITAR MR systems. It details the processes followed, the scope and sampling techniques used, the stakeholders involved, and the protocols applied in each review.

3.1.5.1 GEF

The scope included **16 annual MAR reports (2006–21)**, encompassing 186 recommendations/decisions from 59 IEO evaluations. The GEF MR review sought to address the following questions:

- *What are the principal themes for recommendations in IEO evaluations, and what was the GEF's record in adoption and implementation?*
- *Do the MRs provide a sufficient basis for assessing the implementation progress of follow-up actions?*
- *What are some current practices across multilateral organizations in assessing progress in implementation of management action plans to address an evaluation's recommendations (GEF IEO, 2023)?*

The review employed a multi-pronged approach to data collection and analysis:

- **Portfolio review:** A database was created from the MAR reports to track recommendation duration, management self-assessments, and IEO validations.
- **Interviews:** Key stakeholders, including GEF management and agencies, were interviewed to gather their perspectives on the MAR process.
- **Benchmarking:** The MAR systems of nine multilateral organizations⁴ were reviewed and compared to identify good practices and potential gaps.
- **Categorization and assessment:** IEO recommendations were categorized based on theme and intended results. MRs were assessed for clarity, agreement level, and specificity of follow-up actions.
- **Sentiment analysis:** Sentiment analysis was used to understand and codify management's level of agreement with recommendations.
- **Comparison and synthesis:** The collected data and analysis were synthesized to identify factors associated with recommendation adoption, assess the quality of MRs and action plans, and draw lessons from peer organizations. The findings were then used to formulate conclusions and recommendations for improving the GEF MAR process.

The review involved the following stakeholders:

- **GEF Secretariat:** The main body responsible for implementing GEF's programs and projects, and thus the primary entity responsible for responding to IEO's evaluation recommendations.
- **GEF agencies:** The entities entrusted with implementing GEF projects and programs on the ground. While their direct involvement in the MAR process has been limited, their perspectives were sought through interviews or written responses.
- **GEF IEO:** The independent body responsible for conducting evaluations of GEF's performance and making recommendations for improvement. IEO led the review, and provided valuable insights, with recommendations and their implementation being the review's focus.

The review also drew upon the experiences of other multilateral organizations with independent evaluation functions, although these organizations were not directly involved in the GEF review process itself. Their MAR

⁴ ADB, AfDB, EBRD, GCF, IDB, IFAD, ILO, UNDP, and WBG.

systems were studied and compared to identify good practices and potential areas for improvement in the GEF's own system.

3.1.5.2 UNDP

The review covered **125 evaluations** conducted from 2016–20, encompassing a total of 925 recommendations. centralized evaluations; 20 Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs)/Assessment of Development Results (ADRs); and 5 IEO thematic evaluations. The review sought to address the following **questions**:

- *To what extent are recommendations emanating from evaluations being used to inform decisions and promote programmatic changes?*
- *To what extent are action plans designed to address recommendations adequate to meet the spirit of the recommendation and to address the underlying issues identified in the report?*
- *What are the key factors that facilitate/hinder the implementation of evaluation recommendations and key actions in MRs?*
- *How can UNDP better trace the quality of action plans and their implementation through a more systematic oversight system?*

The UNDP review employed a **mixed-methods approach**, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. The methodology was comprised of three main components:

- **Micro-level analysis:** A detailed examination of 125 MRs to decentralized and IEO evaluations. The analysis focused on assessing the endorsement status, implementation rates, and quality of recommendations. An Excel-based rating sheet was used to evaluate each recommendation based on criteria such as relevance, clarity, responsibility, timeliness, and implementation status.
- **Meso-level analysis:** An in-depth examination of ten specific evaluation cases drawn from the larger sample. It aimed to understand the evaluation processes and systems that contribute to the utilization of evaluation findings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key programming staff and managers at the country, regional, and headquarters levels to gain insights into their experiences and perspectives.
- **Macro-level analysis:** Focus on the broader context of organizational learning and performance measurement within UNDP. It involved interviews with key regional and country-level program staff and managers to explore how evaluations are used to inform decision-making and promote organizational learning.

The review involved the following stakeholders:

- **UNDP management:** Includes staff at the country office, regional bureau, and headquarter- levels who are responsible for developing and implementing MRs to evaluation recommendations. They are directly accountable for addressing the issues identified in evaluations and taking corrective actions. Their perspectives were sought to understand the practical challenges and opportunities related to the MR process.

- **IEO:** The independent body responsible for conducting evaluations of UNDP's performance and making recommendations for improvement. The IEO commissioned the review and played a crucial role in providing guidance and validating the findings.

3.1.5.3 UNITAR

UNITAR's scope included **31 evaluations conducted between January 2016 and May 2024**, encompassing 178 recommendations. The UNITAR review was guided by the following questions:

- *How does management respond to evaluation recommendations?*
- *What (good) practices or processes are in place for completing MRs?*

The review employed a descriptive approach, summarizing and categorizing data to assess the quality of MRs against the standards set by UNITAR and UNEG. It also qualitatively explored the processes and practices involved in completing MRs.

The UNITAR review was conducted by the **PPME**. The review primarily focused on analyzing the quality of MR documents themselves. It doesn't explicitly mention conducting interviews or consultations with external stakeholders, which the UNDP and GEF reviews did.

The quality of MRs was evaluated using a QAT developed by PPME. The tool was aligned with the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation. The assessment focused on three main categories:

1. MR matrix structure.
2. The MR itself (actions, budget, implementation status, acceptance status, comments).
3. Other aspects, such as the involvement of multiple units or joint MRs.

The descriptive results were further disaggregated by the type and nature of the evaluation. In addition to the quality assessment, the review also gathered information on the processes used to complete the MRs, including any collaborative efforts.

The results from the review were presented to Management through a brown bag event on 30 September 2024 entitled "Insights and Good Practices from a Review of Management Response to Independent Evaluations at UNITAR." The brown bag session provided a forum to share findings and good practices from the review of the quality of Management Responses (MRs) to Independent Evaluations. Participants also gained insights and takeaways from the experiences of two programme units that had already used the MR template.

3.1.6 Reviews Recommendations for Improving the MR System

Based on their findings, the reviews offer specific recommendations for improvement. These recommendations address various aspects of the MR process, aiming to enhance efficiency, accountability, and learning within each organization. The following sections delve into these recommendations in detail.

3.1.6.1 GEF

The review was able to pinpoint several specific gaps in the GEF's MAR system, mentioned above, and proposed concrete recommendations to address them, such as:

- a) Providing more time for developing action plans.
- b) Ensuring clarity in MRs.
- c) Consistently including timelines.
- d) Increasing agency participation.
- e) Developing a centralized platform.

The Secretariat agreed with the findings and expressed its commitment to implementing the suggested changes.

3.1.6.2 UNDP

The review was able to highlight several specific gaps in UNDP's MAR system, such as inconsistent quality of decentralized evaluations, their MRs, and the recommendations themselves; limited resources and capacity at the country office level; difficulty tracking implementation by external partners; limited organizational learning; underreporting of evaluation use; and the need for enhanced ERC features. It proposed concrete recommendations to address them, such as:

- a) Refining the design of the ERC platform.
- b) Providing additional guidance and training on developing action plans.
- c) Strengthening the quality assessment of decentralized evaluations.
- d) Enhancing the capacity of country offices and regional bureaus.

3.1.6.3 UNITAR

The UNITAR review proposed the following concrete recommendations to enhance the quality and effectiveness of its MR process:

- a) Revise and organize the QAT to align it with UNEG Standard 1.4, ensuring a more comprehensive and standardized assessment of MRs.
- b) Revise the MR template to align it with the QAT, incorporating fields for indicating the responsible person or unit for the planned action, timeframe, and means of verification. This would enhance the clarity and actionability of MRs.
- c) Develop a guidance document for project management on how to complete a MR, including suggestions on making actions measurable and providing a completed template as a sample. This would provide clear instructions and promote consistency in the preparation of MRs.
- d) Provide clear guidance on completing MRs for projects implemented by a consortium, ensuring clarity on responsibilities and accountability.
- e) Schedule meetings with management to fill in MRs and report on implementation, fostering collaboration and ensuring high-quality MRs.
- f) Improve buy-in of evaluation recommendations from management by presenting recommendations in draft mode to project management and formulating recommendations from

a forward-looking perspective, considering different scenarios like discontinuation or reformulation of the evaluand.

- g) Consider moving to a digital platform for completing MRs, potentially increasing the quality of responses and streamlining the process.
- h) Use behavioral insights to enhance MR completion processes, such as nudges to highlight the importance of completing the MR and clear communication about the commitment to implementing actions and follow-up.
- i) Discuss reporting MR acceptance and implementation status of recommendations to UNITAR's governing Board, promoting transparency and accountability.

3.1.7 Final Products and Knowledge Management of MR Reviews

The reviews are presented as **standalone reports**. They generally follow a standard structure for presenting evaluation findings, including an introduction, methodology, results, and recommendations. However, each report also incorporates unique elements that reflect the specific context and objectives of the review.

- For instance, the **GEF Report** includes a dedicated section on Lessons from Institutional Comparison,¹ where it benchmarks its MAR system against those of other multilateral institutions. This comparative analysis allows the GEF to identify good practices and potential areas for improvement in its own system.
- The **UNITAR report**, in contrast, features a Lessons Learned section² that emphasizes the importance of actionable evaluation recommendations and the role of implementers in ensuring their effectiveness. This highlights UNITAR's focus on translating evaluation findings into concrete improvements.

All three reports also include several annexes that provide additional details and supporting information, such as templates, assessment tools, and lists of interviewees or evaluations included in the sample. The reports conclude with lists of references.

3.2 Review of MR System as Part of MOPAN Assessments of Peer Organizations

In contrast to the standalone reviews of the MR process, several multilateral organizations incorporated the review of their MR systems into broader organizational assessments. This section examines the MR systems of the following organizations: AfDB, IFAD, ILO, UNESCO, and WFP. These integrated reviews provide insights into the effectiveness of their MR approaches and highlight unique features, common challenges, and best practices in fostering accountability and learning from independent evaluations.

3.2.1 Key Features of the MR Systems and Processes

3.2.1.1 AfDB

Evaluation office and key stakeholders: The Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) office at AfDB is charged with evaluating the bank's operations, policies, and strategies to enhance development effectiveness. IDEV operates with a high degree of independence and conducts various evaluations, including project cluster evaluations, country strategy evaluations, thematic evaluations, and impact assessments. The primary stakeholders in these evaluations include the AfDB's Board of Directors,

particularly the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness (CODE), which reviews and utilizes evaluation findings to guide strategic decisions (AfDB, 2023). Senior management within the bank, including regional and country offices, are also key stakeholders, as they are responsible for implementing evaluation recommendations. Donors and development partners, who fund AfDB's projects, are critical external stakeholders relying on evaluation results to ensure the impact of their contributions (MOPAN, 2023).

MR Process: The MR process at AfDB is structured around MARS, which is the central tool for tracking the implementation of evaluation recommendations. The AfDB's MAR process requires management to indicate their level of agreement with each recommendation (not agreed, partially agreed, or agreed). For recommendations that are fully or partially agreed upon, management prepares a MAR that includes action completion target dates, baselines, targets, and indicators. While the IDEV offers informal feedback on action plans upon management's request, the primary responsibility for implementing and updating the MAR lies with the implementing departments. The MAR system tracks the alignment, implementation, and adoption of action plans, using a four-level rating scale (high, substantial, moderate, low). The AfDB utilizes the MARS IT system to facilitate this process, and action implementation is tracked for up to two years after the target completion date. In this process, management prepares the MAR and reports on the implementation status of actions to the Board twice a year. The IDEV department plays a crucial role by independently assessing the level of adoption of recommendations and reporting its findings to the Board annually (MOPAN, 2023).

3.2.1.2 IFAD

Evaluation office and key stakeholders: The IOE at IFAD is responsible for conducting evaluations that assess the effectiveness of IFAD's agricultural and rural development projects. IOE operates independently to ensure that its evaluations are objective and provide actionable insights that can improve IFAD's operations (IFAD, 2021). Key stakeholders in the evaluation process include IFAD's management, which is responsible for responding to the recommendations and implementing the necessary actions. The Executive Board and the Governing Council, composed of representatives from IFAD's 178 member states, play a significant role in reviewing evaluation findings and ensuring that they inform strategic decisions and resource allocation. External stakeholders, including donors and partner organizations, also rely on the results of these evaluations to assess the impact of their contributions and to guide future collaborations (MOPAN, 2024).

MR process: The MR process at IFAD is facilitated through the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and Management Actions (PRISMA). After the IOE completes an evaluation, IFAD's management is required to prepare a detailed response that outlines how each recommendation will be addressed. This response includes an action plan with specific steps, timelines, and assigned responsibilities for implementation. PRISMA is then used to monitor and report on the progress of these action plans, ensuring that they are systematically followed up. The report is presented to the Executive Board, which reviews the progress and provides guidance on any necessary adjustments. PRISMA's systematic approach ensures that the evaluation recommendations are actively used to improve IFAD's projects and strategies (MOPAN, 2024).

3.2.1.3 ILO

Evaluation office and key stakeholders: The ILO's evaluation function is managed by the Evaluation Office (EVAL), which operates independently to assess the effectiveness and impact of ILO's programs and policies. EVAL conducts various types of evaluations, including project evaluations, high-level evaluations,

and thematic evaluations, aimed at improving the organization's overall effectiveness (ILO, 2018). The primary stakeholders involved in the evaluation process include the ILO's governing body, which reviews evaluation findings and ensures that they are used to inform policy decisions. The Director General and senior management are key players in the implementation of evaluation recommendations, as they are responsible for integrating these insights into the organization's strategic planning. The Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) provides oversight and strategic guidance to the evaluation function, while program managers and field offices are involved in implementing the recommendations and ensuring that evaluations are relevant to the ILO's diverse operational contexts. ILO's constituents, including member states, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations, also play a critical role in the evaluation process by providing feedback and ensuring that the evaluations address their needs and priorities (MOPAN, 2021).

MR process: The MR process at ILO involves the creation of detailed action plans following the completion of evaluations by EVAL. For each evaluation recommendation, ILO management prepares a response, including points of agreement/disagreement and an action plan with specific actions and timelines. The progress of these action plans is tracked through the Evaluation MR Tracking System (EMRTS), an online platform that allows for systematic monitoring and reporting. The EAC and the governing body regularly review the progress reports, ensuring that ILO's leadership is informed about the status of the implementation. This process ensures that the evaluation findings are not only acknowledged but are actively used to improve the organization's operations and strategic direction (MOPAN, 2021).

3.2.1.4 UNESCO

Evaluation office and key stakeholders: The Internal Oversight Service (IOS) evaluation office at UNESCO is tasked with evaluating the organization's programs and strategies to ensure they effectively contribute to its mandate. The IOS operates independently, conducting both corporate and decentralized evaluations that span a wide range of activities across UNESCO's sectors. The key stakeholders in UNESCO's evaluation process include: (i) The Executive Board, which reviews evaluation findings and uses them to inform policy decisions and strategic planning; (ii) Senior management, including the Director General and Assistant Director Generals, who are responsible for implementing evaluation recommendations and integrating them into the organization's operations; and (iii) Field offices and sectors, which manage decentralized evaluations and are responsible for incorporating evaluation findings into their programmatic work. The Oversight Advisory Committee advises on the adequacy and effectiveness of the evaluation function, ensuring its relevance and alignment with UNESCO's goals (UNESCO, 2022).

MR process: The MR process at UNESCO involves the preparation of detailed responses and action plans following the completion of evaluations by the IOS. These plans specify the actions that management will take to address each recommendation, along with assigned responsibilities and timelines for implementation. An evaluation manager from the evaluation office oversees the progress of these recommendations, ensuring updates and follow-through. This process is facilitated by Teammate+, an internal software shared with the audit office for tracking recommendations.

The progress of these action plans is regularly reported to the senior management, the Executive Board and the Evaluation Advisory Committee, ensuring that there is oversight and accountability in how evaluation findings are used.

3.2.1.5 WFP

Evaluation office and key stakeholders: The WFP's evaluation function is managed by the Office of Evaluation (OEV), which conducts evaluations to assess the impact and effectiveness of WFP's

interventions. OEV operates independently and conducts both centralized and decentralized evaluations, covering a wide range of activities from emergency responses to development projects (WFP, 2022). The primary stakeholders involved in WFP's evaluation process include the Executive Board, which reviews evaluation findings and uses them to guide strategic decisions and resource allocation. Senior management, including regional directors and country office managers, are responsible for implementing recommendations and ensuring that they are integrated into WFP's operations. Donors and partners, who fund and collaborate on WFP's projects, are also key stakeholders who rely on evaluation results to assess the effectiveness of their contributions (MOPAN, 2024).

MR process: The process begins with the creation of Management Response Plans (MRPs) following both centralized and decentralized evaluations. These MRPs outline specific actions, assign responsibilities to relevant units or offices, and set timelines for implementation. The MRPs are reviewed and approved by senior management to ensure alignment with WFP's strategic objectives and operational priorities.

Progress on the implementation of recommendations is monitored through WFP's corporate Risk and Recommendation (R2) platform. The R2 platform facilitates the tracking of recommendations by clearly indicating responsible offices and allowing for the inclusion of evidence such as documents and links. Directors can approve the closure of actions directly within the system. Regular updates and reports are provided to senior management and the Executive Board to ensure accountability and address any challenges in implementing the recommendations.

While WFP has a robust follow-up process, there is no automated or online tool for tracking MRs. Instead, progress is monitored through periodic reporting, which provides updates on the status of the implementation (MOPAN, 2024).

3.2.1.6 FAO

Evaluation office and key stakeholders: The Office of Evaluation (OED) at FAO is responsible for conducting independent evaluations of the organization's various activities, including projects, programs, and policies. The core function of the OED is to furnish evidence-based assessments that play a crucial role in fostering organizational learning, ensuring accountability, and facilitating informed decision-making within the FAO. The evaluation process at FAO involves a range of key stakeholders. The governing bodies, and particularly the Programme Committee, play a significant role by reviewing and approving the OED's evaluation work plan and receiving the subsequent reports. The findings from these evaluations are then utilized by FAO senior management, encompassing the Director General and technical departments, to shape policy formulation, strategic planning, and program implementation. FAO member countries also constitute a vital stakeholder group, depending on evaluations to gain insights into the effectiveness and impact of FAO's work, which in turn enables them to make well-informed decisions about their support and contributions. Lastly, the evaluation process actively engages implementation partners and beneficiaries through consultations, ensuring their perspectives are integrated into the assessment of the relevance and impact of FAO's interventions. The 2017-18 MOPAN assessment adds that the OED reports directly to both the Director-General and the governing bodies through the Programme Committee (MOPAN, 2019).

MR process: The MR process at FAO is overseen by the **Evaluation Committee (EC)**, with the OED serving as its Secretariat. The EC, which includes senior management representatives, ensures that evaluations are given due consideration at the highest decision-making levels. After an evaluation is completed, the relevant FAO units prepare MRs that outline the actions they will take to address the evaluation's findings and recommendations. These MRs include action plans with specific steps, timelines, and responsible parties. The EC reviews these MRs and provides feedback, and the OED monitors their implementation,

reporting progress to the Programme Committee. This process aims to ensure transparency and accountability in how FAO responds to evaluations (MOPAN, 2019).

The Evaluation of FAO's Evaluation Function Report (2016) points out that while the MR and follow-up process is generally useful, its effectiveness can vary depending on the time it takes to reach consensus among stakeholders. The report also raises concerns about the potential impact of the OED's dual role as both evaluator and Secretariat for the EC on its perceived independence. Additionally, there's room for improvement in involving technical staff in the MR process, which could enhance ownership and implementation of recommendations (FAO, 2016).

3.2.2 Findings from Reviews of MR Systems in MOPAN Assessments

Unlike the case for GEF, UNDP and UNITAR, these organizations do not have standalone reviews for their MR systems. However, the MOPAN assessments provide valuable insights into the MR processes as part of their broader evaluation of the organizations' performance management. The findings from the most recent MOPAN assessments for each of these organizations are documented below.

3.2.2.1 AfDB

- **Evaluation function:** The IDEV office is managing evaluations and the MR process. MARS is used to track the implementation of recommendations, providing a structured approach to MR.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness:** AfDB's MR process is both efficient and effective, with MARS playing a central role in ensuring that recommendations are followed up. However, the bank could further enhance the impact of evaluations by ensuring that MR outcomes are more consistently integrated into strategic planning and operations.
- **Tracking and knowledge management:** MARS was praised for its role in tracking MR implementation, offering real-time updates and ensuring that all actions are documented and monitored, recognizing this as a key strength of AfDB's approach.
- **Challenges and barriers:** Challenges were identified related to resource constraints and the need for better integration of MR outcomes into the broader strategic frameworks of the bank. Additionally, AfDB could improve the dissemination of evaluation findings to ensure that they are used more effectively across the organization.

3.2.2.2 IFAD

- **Evaluation function:** IFAD has a robust evaluation function, managed by the IOE. The MR process is well-structured, involving the President's report on PRISMA, which is a key tool for ensuring that recommendations are followed up.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness:** IFAD's MR process is efficient, with PRISMA providing a clear framework for tracking the implementation of evaluation recommendations. However, there could be more focus on ensuring that the MRs are fully integrated into operational improvements.
- **Tracking and knowledge management:** PRISMA is highlighted as a systematic tool for tracking MR progress, which contributes to transparency and accountability. This system is a strength of IFAD's approach to evaluations.

- **Challenges and barriers:** Resource limitations were identified, as well as the need for better integration of evaluation findings into broader strategic decisions as ongoing challenges for IFAD's MR process. There could be more emphasis on real-time tracking and reporting.

3.2.2.3 ILO

- **Evaluation function:** EVAL is central to the organization's evaluation and MR processes. The EMRTS is used to monitor the implementation of recommendations, providing a structured and transparent approach to MR.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness:** ILO's MR process is generally effective, with EMRTS ensuring that recommendations are systematically tracked and reported. However, the effectiveness of MR could be improved by enhancing the link between evaluation findings and strategic planning.
- **Tracking and knowledge management:** EMRTS was praised for its role in facilitating the tracking of MR implementation. The system allows for real-time updates and comprehensive reporting, which MOPAN identified as a best practice in the ILO's approach to evaluations.
- **Challenges and barriers:** Resource constraints and the decentralized nature of the ILO can sometimes slow down the MR process. There is a need for stronger alignment between evaluation recommendations and the organization's broader strategic goals.

3.2.2.4 UNESCO

- **Evaluation function:** UNESCO's IOS evaluation office plays a crucial role in the evaluation and MR processes. However, there were gaps in the consistency and timelines of MRs to evaluations.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness:** While UNESCO has a structured MR process, there are challenges in ensuring that recommendations are implemented effectively. The follow-up on MR could be more systematic, particularly in terms of integrating evaluation findings into programmatic decisions.
- **Tracking and knowledge management:** UNESCO's MR process relies on periodic reporting, but the lack of a dedicated online tracking system was identified as a limitation. MOPAN recommended the development of more robust mechanisms to monitor the implementation of recommendations in real-time.
- **Challenges and barriers:** Resource constraints was identified as a challenge, as well as the need for better coordination across UNESCO's decentralized structure. MOPAN also noted that the organization could improve its knowledge management systems to ensure that evaluation findings are effectively disseminated and used.

3.2.2.5 WFP

- **Evaluation function:** WFP has a well-established evaluation function managed by OEV. The MR process is structured, involving the creation of detailed action plans in response to evaluation recommendations. However, while the process is well-defined, there are challenges in the implementation phase, particularly concerning the monitoring and tracking of these action plans.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness:** WFP's MR system is generally efficient, with evaluations and subsequent MRs being developed in a timely manner. However, effectiveness is sometimes hindered by a lack of clear communication and alignment between senior leadership and field offices. There is a need for stronger mechanisms to ensure that evaluation findings lead to meaningful changes in practice.

- **Tracking and knowledge management:** WFP does not have a dedicated online platform for tracking the implementation of MRs, which was identified as a gap. The tracking of action plans is done through periodic reports, which are reviewed by the executive board. The lack of a centralized system for real-time tracking was seen as a potential barrier to accountability and efficiency.
- **Challenges and barriers:** Challenges identified were resource constraints, the complexity of operations, and the need for better integration of IT systems to support the tracking and implementation of action plans. Recent organizational restructuring and budget cuts could impact the effectiveness of the MR process.

3.2.2.6 FAO

- **Evaluation function:** FAO has a well-defined process for MRs to evaluations, overseen by the EC, with the OED acting as its secretariat. The EC, comprising senior management representatives, ensures that evaluations receive attention at the highest decision-making levels. The OED also plays a crucial role in monitoring the implementation of MRs and reporting on the progress to the Programme Committee, promoting transparency and accountability.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness:** FAO takes the MR process seriously, as evidenced by the publication of reports that track follow-up commitments for strategic evaluations. The process includes clear guidelines for preparing MRs, which outline the actions to be taken, timelines, responsible parties, and any additional funding required. MARS serves as a self-assessment tool for tracking the implementation of recommendations. However, a potential area for improvement is the limited involvement of technical staff in the MR process, which could impact ownership and implementation of recommendations. Additionally, concerns were raised about the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of reaching consensus among stakeholders during the MR process.
- **Tracking and knowledge management:** The MAR system is recognized for its role in documenting and monitoring the implementation of recommendations. However, there is room for enhancing the system's effectiveness by incorporating more qualitative assessments alongside the quantitative MAR scores. There is a need for a more systematic approach to capturing and disseminating lessons learned from evaluations beyond the formal evaluation framework. While the OED website and Programme Committee website serve as repositories for evaluation reports, a more proactive approach to knowledge management and sharing innovations across country offices could further enhance organizational learning.
- **Challenges and barriers:** The dual role of the OED as both evaluator and Secretariat for the EC raises concerns about the independence of the evaluation function. The MR process could be more inclusive, involving technical staff more actively. Furthermore, the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the process, particularly in achieving consensus among stakeholders, could be improved. FAO could enhance the dissemination of evaluation findings to ensure they are utilized more effectively across the organization.

3.2.3 Common MR Approaches

These organizations share a few key approaches in how they respond to management recommendations:

- **Detailed action plans:** Every organization emphasizes making thorough action plans after evaluations. These plans include specific steps, who is responsible, and timelines to put recommendations into action.
- **Progress tracking:** Most of these organizations systematically track the progress of their action plans using dedicated tools and platforms (EMRTS, MARS, PRISMA).

- **Regular reporting:** Organizations often report to leadership on a regular basis. This ensures senior staff are informed and can oversee progress.
- **Strategic integration:** There is a shared commitment to integrating evaluation results into broader strategic planning processes. For instance, country programme evaluations are often conducted during the final year of country programme strategies or frameworks. This timing allows for a comprehensive assessment of the program's performance, outcomes, and challenges just before the next phase of planning begins. The findings from these evaluations provide critical inputs for the design and development of subsequent strategies, helping to refine priorities, adjust approaches, and allocate resources more effectively.

3.2.4 Common Challenges and Barriers

- **Resource limitations:** Not having enough money or staff makes it difficult to fully implement recommendations, especially in spread-out or local offices.
- **Operational complexity:** The diverse and challenging environments make it tough to implement recommendations consistently across different areas and sectors.
- **Cultural resistance:** Creating a culture of accountability and learning in large, decentralized organizations is challenging. People resistant to change can undermine the process.
- **Data issues:** Obtaining good data for evaluations is difficult, particularly in remote or conflict zones.
- **Tracking gaps:** Not every organization has strong, real-time tracking systems. This can lead to missed recommendations and less accountability.
- **Strategic alignment:** The connection between evaluation recommendations and overall strategic goals needs to be stronger. This will help ensure evaluations lead to real improvements.

3.2.5 Review Process and Protocols

As mentioned in the background section in relation to MOPAN assessments, reviews of MR systems are included under the assessment of **Indicator 8: Evidence-based planning and programming**. More specifically under:

- (MI 8.6) Ensuring Accountability and Follow-up to Evaluation Recommendations, which assesses the organization's mechanisms for ensuring accountability and follow-up to evaluation recommendations. It examines if evaluation reports include MRs with action plans and timelines for implementation. The assessment also checks if an annual report on the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations is made public; and
- (MI 8.7) Uptake of Lessons Learned and Best Practices, which evaluates how effectively the organization learns from evaluations and applies lessons learned and best practices. It examines if a repository of evaluations and recommendations is available, if mechanisms exist to distil and disseminate lessons internally and externally, and if evidence shows that these lessons are being applied in practice.

The assessment of MI 8.6 and MI 8.7 involves the following steps:

MI 8.6: Clear accountability system ensures responses and follow-up to, and use of, evaluation recommendations

1. **MR to Evaluations (Element 8.6.1):** Verifies if evaluation reports include a MR or if one is attached or associated with the report. The presence of a MR indicates the organization's willingness to acknowledge and address the evaluation findings.

2. **Action Plan and Accountabilities (Element 8.6.2):** Examines if MRs contain an action plan or agreement that clearly outlines the responsibilities and accountabilities for implementing the evaluation recommendations. This step ensures that concrete steps are taken to address the identified areas for improvement.
3. **Timeline for Implementation (Element 8.6.3):** Checks if a timeline is proposed for implementing the key recommendations outlined in the evaluation report. The presence of a timeline demonstrates the organization's commitment to timely action and facilitates tracking progress.
4. **Public Reporting on Implementation (Element 8.6.4):** Verifies if an annual report on the status of use and implementation of evaluation recommendations is made public. Public reporting enhances transparency and allows stakeholders to monitor the organization's progress in addressing the evaluation findings.

MI 8.7: Uptake of Lessons Learned and Best Practices from Evaluations

1. **Evaluation Repository (Element 8.7.1):** Checks if a complete and up-to-date repository of evaluations and their recommendations is readily available for internal use within the organization. The accessibility of past evaluations facilitates learning and knowledge sharing.
2. **Internal Dissemination Mechanism (Element 8.7.2):** Examines if a mechanism exists within the organization to distil and disseminate lessons learned from evaluations internally. Effective internal dissemination ensures that staff across different levels and departments can access and apply these lessons in their work.
3. **External Dissemination Mechanism (Element 8.7.3):** Checks if a dissemination mechanism is available and utilized to share lessons learned and best practices with partners, peers, and other stakeholders outside the organization. External dissemination promotes transparency and contributes to broader learning and knowledge sharing within the development community.
4. **Evidence of Application (Element 8.7.4):** Verifies if evidence is available to demonstrate that lessons learned and best practices from evaluations are applied in the design and implementation of new interventions. This step confirms that the organization is actively learning from evaluations and using the insights to improve its work.

The stakeholders involved in assessing **MI 8.6** and **MI 8.7** primarily include the **IOE** and **senior management**.

- **The IOE** plays a central role in conducting evaluations and formulating recommendations. The assessment examines the IOE's independence, its evaluation processes, and the quality and coverage of its evaluations.
- **Senior management** is responsible for providing responses to the IOE's evaluation reports, including action plans for implementing the recommendations. The assessment evaluates the clarity, timeliness, and public availability of these MRs.

In addition to these primary stakeholders, the assessment also considers the role of the **Executive Boards** and the **Evaluation Committees** in overseeing the evaluation function and ensuring the uptake of lessons learned. The assessment may also indirectly involve **project teams** and **other staff** who are responsible for implementing the recommendations and applying the lessons learned from evaluations.

The assessment of these indicators relies on various sources of evidence, including:

- **Evaluation policy and manual:** Outline the principles and procedures for conducting evaluations and ensuring their quality and utilization.
- **IOE's annual evaluation plans and reports:** Provide information on the coverage and scope of evaluations conducted by the IOE.

- **MRs to evaluation reports:** Demonstrate the organization's accountability and commitment to addressing the evaluation findings.
- **Annual Reports on the Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations and MRs:** Track the implementation of evaluation recommendations.
- **Interviews with staff and management:** Provide insights into the organization's approach to evaluation, learning, and accountability.

Table 2 presents a comparison of the scores for the two KPIs across various organizations: Evidence-Based Planning and Programming (KPI 8) and Ensuring Accountability and Follow-up to Evaluation Recommendations (MI 8.6). The table includes the score and corresponding rating for each indicator.

Table 2: The score and corresponding rating for MOPAN indicators KPI 8 and MI 8.6

| Organization | Year of MOPAN assessment | Score of Indicator 8: Evidence-based planning and programming | Score of MI 8.6: Ensuring accountability and follow-up to evaluation recommendations |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| IFAD | 2024 | 3.38 (Satisfactory) | 3.00 (Satisfactory) |
| AfDB | 2022 | 3.58 (Highly satisfactory) | 4.00 (Highly satisfactory) |
| FAO | 2019 | 2.97 (Satisfactory) | 4.00 (Highly satisfactory) |
| ILO | 2020 | 3.41 (Satisfactory) | 3.75 (Highly satisfactory) |
| UNESCO | 2019 | 2.73 (Satisfactory) | 3.00 (Satisfactory) |
| WFP | 2024 | 2.92 (Satisfactory) | NA ⁵ |
| CGIAR | 2019 | 1.14 (Highly Unsatisfactory) | 1.00 (Highly Unsatisfactory) |

3.2.6 Mechanisms for Implementing MOPAN Recommendations

The MOPAN assessment process concludes with a written response from the organization's management. This response typically addresses the key findings and recommendations of the assessment, outlining the organization's perspective and any planned actions to address the identified areas for improvement. The MR serves as an initial step in acknowledging the assessment's findings and demonstrating a commitment to addressing them.

Organizations usually use the same tracking and reporting tools used to track the implementation of recommendations from various evaluations, to track those from MOPAN assessments. The reporting summarizes the progress made in addressing these recommendations and highlights any challenges or obstacles encountered.

⁵ The WFP MOPAN Assessment used an adapted framework for multilateral organizations working in crisis contexts. The MIs were adapted to better meet the needs of MOPAN members and multilateral organizations. As such, MI 8.6 was not used in this assessment.

3.2.7 MOPAN Final Products and Knowledge Management

The MOPAN assessments indicate that at the conclusion of a MOPAN assessment, **two primary types of reports** are to be produced:

1. **MOPAN Assessment Report:** which offers a diagnostic assessment and provides a snapshot of the organization's performance within its mandate. It encompasses the major findings and conclusions of the assessment, highlighting the organization's performance journey, strengths, and areas for improvement. The report aims to support member countries' decision-making regarding the organization and the broader multilateral system. The MOPAN Assessment Report includes two parts:
 - **Part I: Analysis Summary:** This part comprises four chapters that introduce the organization and its context, present a high-level overview of key findings, delve into a detailed examination of those findings, and provide information about the assessment methodology and process.
 - **Part II: Technical and Statistical Annex:** This part contains the detailed analysis underlying each score, the list of supporting evidence documents, and the summarized results of the external partner survey that contributed to the assessment.
2. **MR:** The organization under assessment provides a written response to the MOPAN Assessment Report. This response addresses the key findings and recommendations, outlining the organization's perspective and any planned actions to address the identified areas for improvement. The MR serves as a crucial mechanism for demonstrating accountability and commitment to learning from the assessment.

The reference to the MR system in the MOPAN assessment is primarily presented under the Performance Management area, specifically within KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming applied.

Within KPI 8, the assessment focuses on MI 8.6: Clear accountability system ensures responses and follow-up to and use of evaluation recommendations. This MI directly evaluates the mechanisms in place to ensure that management responds to, and follows up on, evaluation recommendations, promoting accountability and learning within the organization. The assessment examines aspects such as the inclusion of management responses in evaluation reports, the presence of action plans and timelines in these responses, and the public reporting on the implementation of recommendations.

The assessment also touches upon the MR system in other sections, such as in the discussion of the uptake of lessons learned and best practices from evaluations as well as the independent evaluation and its role in conducting evaluations and providing recommendations. The management's response to the evaluations and its commitment to implementing the recommendations are considered in assessing the organization's overall performance and accountability.

4 Conclusions

The benchmarking study reveals key findings about the MR systems of the examined organizations:

Approaches and methods

- **Varied approaches to MR reviews:** The organizations followed diverse approaches to reviewing MR systems. While GEF, UNITAR and UNDP conducted a standalone, in-depth review of their MR process, others integrated the review into broader organizational assessments, often as part of MOPAN evaluations. The focused approach allowed for a thorough examination of the MR system, leading

to targeted recommendations. In contrast, the integrated reviews provided a broader perspective but might have limited the depth of analysis on the MR process itself.

- **Sampling approaches:** The review of MR systems employed diverse sampling approaches, depending on the scope and objectives of the review. Comprehensive sampling was used in the GEF and UNITAR reviews to include all relevant data within the specified timeframe, providing a thorough assessment of the MR process. Stratified random sampling was employed in the UNDP review to ensure representation from different regions and evaluation types, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of a subset of evaluations. The choice of approach appears to be driven by the size of the evaluation portfolio, with comprehensive sampling favored for smaller portfolios, and stratified random sampling used for larger ones.
- **Analytical framework for assessing MRs:** while MOPAN 3.1 uses a generic indicator framework, the other reviews relied on various qualitative and quantitative methods, guided by key evaluation questions, to assess the quality and implementation of MRs.

Reviews results and outcomes

- **Common challenges:** Despite the varied approaches, the organizations face common challenges in their MR systems. These include resource constraints, operational complexities, cultural resistance to change, data limitations, and gaps in tracking and strategic alignment. These challenges highlight the difficulties in ensuring effective management responses, particularly in large, decentralized organizations operating in complex environments.
- **Importance of robust systems and processes:** The analysis underscores the importance of having well-defined systems and processes for managing responses to evaluation recommendations. The organizations with more established MR systems, such as the AfDB and IFAD, demonstrated greater effectiveness in tracking and implementing recommendations. The presence of dedicated tools and platforms, like the ILO's EMRTS and the AfDB's MARS, further facilitated the MR process and enhanced transparency and accountability.
- **Need for strategic integration and knowledge management:** The findings emphasize the need for stronger integration of evaluation findings and recommendations into strategic planning and decision-making processes. The organizations that effectively linked evaluations to strategic priorities demonstrated a greater impact on organizational learning and performance improvement (MOPAN, 2023). Additionally, robust knowledge management and dissemination mechanisms are crucial for ensuring that lessons learned from evaluations are shared and applied across the organization and beyond.

The findings from the benchmarking analysis suggest that CGIAR could benefit from adopting a standalone review of its MR system, drawing on the experiences of other organizations and tailoring its approach to its specific context and needs. A well-designed and executed review can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of CGIAR's MR system, fostering a culture of accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision-making.

5 Recommendations for Conducting an MR System Review at CGIAR

The benchmarking study has yielded valuable insights into the practices and approaches of various organizations in reviewing their MR systems. These insights can be leveraged to inform the development of comprehensive and effective ToRs for CGIAR's upcoming MR System Review. The following recommendations are proposed:

Specific objectives for the review

- **Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the current MR system:** The ToRs should clearly articulate the need to evaluate the system's ability to ensure timely and adequate follow-up on evaluation recommendations, facilitate their implementation, and contribute to evidence-based planning and programming. This aligns with the objective of assessing the MR system's contribution to organizational effectiveness, learning, and accountability (MOPAN KPI 8.4 and CGIAR's Evaluation Policy).
- **Identify strengths and weaknesses:** The ToRs should explicitly call for a comprehensive analysis of the MR system, encompassing its strengths, weaknesses, and areas where enhancements are needed. This includes examining factors such as clarity of roles and responsibilities, timeliness of responses, tracking mechanisms, and integration with strategic planning, as highlighted in the key questions.
- **Develop actionable recommendations:** The ToRs should clearly state the expectation for the review to provide concrete and actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of CGIAR's MR system. These recommendations should be evidence-based, focused, and tailored to CGIAR's specific context and needs, ensuring they support organizational learning, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.

Scope of the review

- **MR development process:** The ToRs should outline the need to evaluate the clarity, timeliness, and adequacy of management responses to evaluation recommendations. This includes assessing the involvement of relevant stakeholders, the quality of action plans, and the clarity of assigned responsibilities and timelines.
- **MR tracking tool:** The ToRs should include the assessment of the MR Tracking Tool's functionality, user-friendliness, and effectiveness in monitoring the implementation of recommendations. This aligns with the focus on the MR tracking system's ability to provide a basis for assessing and reporting implementation progress.
- **Integration with strategic planning and decision-making:** The ToRs should explicitly state the need to examine how evaluation findings and recommendations are incorporated into CGIAR's strategic planning and decision-making processes at both the system and center levels. This reflects the emphasis on evidence-based planning and programming.
- **Coherence with other assurance mechanisms:** The ToRs should also include an assessment of how the MR system aligns with other assurance mechanisms in CGIAR, such as internal audit.

Detailed methodology incorporating best practices

Data Collection Methods

- **Document review and analysis** of MR documents, the MR Tracker, and relevant evaluation reports. The review should analyze timeframes for MR development and implementation, the clarity and specificity of action plans, and evidence of organizational improvements linked to the MR. The team should review external literature on the MR system, best practices, and methodologies for reviewing MR processes, including [UNEG Norms and Standards](#) and the [MOPAN Methodology Manual](#).
- **Semi-structured interviews and focus groups**, with key stakeholders involved in the MR process, including management, evaluators, and program staff across different levels, departments, centers, regions, and platforms within CGIAR.⁶ These interviews and focus groups will explore perceptions of the MR system's effectiveness, efficiency, and contribution to organizational learning and accountability. They will also identify barriers and enablers to effective MR development and implementation, as well as explore existing processes and mechanisms for promoting learning and improvement. Additionally, they will assess the organizational culture and attitudes towards learning from evaluations.
- **Surveys** can use the information collected from the launched survey⁷ on evaluation management models in independent evaluation offices and CGIAR, on current evaluation practices and their perceived utility.⁸

Data Analysis

- **Scoring of sample recommendations** by the review team should design a tool to assess a sample of recommendations, applying a scoring method as done per other organizations in similar reviews. This would involve developing a clear and objective scoring rubric to assess the level of adoption and implementation of recommendations, providing quantitative data to complement the qualitative findings.
- **Quantitative analysis** using descriptive statistics on quality, implementation and use/adoption of recommendations, timeframes for MR development and implementation of recommendations (e.g., average time taken, progress over time).
- **Content analysis** determines clarity, specificity, and evidence of organizational improvements.
- **Thematic analysis** of interviews to understand how the accountability system functions in practice, identify strengths and weaknesses, and pinpoint areas for improvement.
- **Comparative analysis** to use the findings of the benchmarking study of the MR system to compare CGIAR's MR system with those of selected comparator organizations. This will help to identify best practices and areas where CGIAR can learn from the experiences of others.
- **Consultative workshops** with key stakeholders to discuss the findings of the review and gather input on recommendations.

⁶ Annex B of the GEF Review could be a useful input for designing the interviews.

⁷ The survey was launched from 16 August–15 September 2024. 70 respondents included professionals with experience in managing independent evaluations, particularly UN agencies, international/regional development banks, donors, and other organizations. The survey aimed to map evaluation management practices including the communication about results and tracking systems of the management response to recommendations.

⁸ Survey: Mapping of Effective Models for Evaluation Management. The report is currently being finalized.

<https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation/news/survey-mapping-effective-models-evaluation-management>

Annex 1: Management Response Mapping

Mapping table of Management Responses across comparable organizations.

The table below consolidates data sourced from the official websites of each organization and a sample of corporate and thematic evaluation reports (N=30). These sources were selected to provide an overview of the selected organizations with findings from specific evaluations. The final column, Average Number of Recommendations per Evaluation, represents an average derived from a detailed review of three to four thematic or corporate evaluation reports per organization, providing an overview of the typical recommendation patterns observed in recent evaluations.

| # | Organization | Structure /reference | Ex. of recommendations-thematic /corporate eval. | Average nr. of recs per eval | Responsibilities in implementing rec. |
|---|--------------|--|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | IFAD | Organizational Chart | <p>CORPORATE-LEVEL EVALUATION-IFAD's decentralization experience (2023)</p> <p>B.1. Recommendations to the President and senior management</p> <p>Rec. 1. Before proceeding further, IFAD should take stock of its decentralization efforts to correct the course of decentralization 2.0. To do so, it should identify and address shortfalls and apply adaptive learning processes to inform future decentralization actions.</p> | 6 | IFAD Management |
| 2 | FAO | Organizational Charter | <p>THEMATIC EVALUATION-Evaluation of FAO's cash and voucher assistance (2024):</p> <p>Rec.1. Develop a vision and strategy. Rationale: FAO needs corporate leadership for CVA to be impactful and delivered efficiently and in compliance with existing FAO policies. 1.1. Develop cross-functional mechanisms (such as a task force and a Senior Management-level steering committee) to formulate and implement a CVA strategy as recommended in 1.2. These mechanisms should bridge institutional siloes; enhance linkages between OER and technical division workstreams (including social protection); and, once approved, execute, monitor and report on the strategy. (Table with Who and When).</p> | 5 | FAO Management |
| 3 | WFP | WFP Organigram | <p>Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2024):</p> <p>Rec. 1: Urgently invigorate and strengthen commitment to, and accountability for, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) across WFP by appointing a cross-organizational task force to operationalize the 2023 Executive Director's circular through an implementation plan for 2024-26.</p> | On average less than 6 | WFP management |

| # | Organization | Structure /reference | Ex. of recommendations–thematic /corporate eval. | Average nr. of recs per eval | Responsibilities in implementing rec. |
|---|--------------|--|--|------------------------------|--|
| 4 | AfDB | Organizational chart | <p>Evaluation of Counterpart Funding at AfDB (2024): Rec. 1: Update the 2008 policy provision on counterpart funding to ensure its continued relevance, while maintaining the possibility to fund up to 100% of total project costs, by: aligning better the policy to the bank’s current institutional structure; reconsidering the risk-sharing objective of the policy; making the scope of the policy’s application more explicit; clarifying the role of cofinancing; and clarifying how in-kind counterpart funding should be treated in the context of project costing.</p> | less than 5 | Management |
| 5 | ILO | Organizational Chart | <p>Independent high-level evaluation of ILO’s strategies and actions for promoting decent work in the rural economy (with a focus on rural employment), 2016-23- Rec. 1: The ILO should review and update the 2011 strategy document in view of the emerging global trends and existing ILO strategies. The strategy should be further expanded by means of a well-articulated theory of change to promote systemic integration of DWRE across the ILO and to ensure sufficient emphasis on all four pillars of decent work and the cross-cutting areas so as to accommodate evolving realities of the world of work. The strategy should be complemented by a comprehensive results framework, time bound plan of action, a monitoring and reporting framework, an intra-organizational coordination framework that provides clear roles and responsibilities, and a fundraising strategy to overcome the issues of fragmented programming.</p> | less than 10 recommendations | Senior managers and technical staff |
| 6 | UNESCO | Strategic Management Board | <p>Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) – Rec. 1: Strengthen the strategic positioning of ASPnet in the Education Sector to ensure that its mandate is conducted effectively and efficiently. The Executive Board requested this evaluation to help strengthen UNESCO ASPnet. This network commemorated its 70th anniversary in 2023, and as of today, it remains unique and relevant working with education institutions throughout the world to promote UNESCO’s values. However, to ensure its long-term contribution within the Education Sector, ASPnet must have a strategic framework that clearly reflects its expected contribution, results, and outcomes, as well as cooperation with other units, divisions, and sectors.</p> | less than 5 | The unit that requests the evaluation is responsible for implementing recommendations. |
| 7 | GEF | Organization | <p>Evaluation of the GEF’s Approach to and Interventions in Water Security – Rec. 1: The GEF Secretariat should ensure that aspects of water security that are key to each GEF focal area are represented in the results measurement framework and project and program design.</p> | Around 5 recommendations | The GEF Secretariat |

| # | Organization | Structure /reference | Ex. of recommendations–thematic /corporate eval. | Average nr. of recs per eval | Responsibilities in implementing rec. |
|---|--------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 8 | UNDP | Organizational Chart | <p>Independent Evaluation of UNOSSC’s Support to the Group of 77 and China-</p> <p>Rec. 1: Recognizing the Project completion in December 2023, UNOSSC should now identify other means to continue providing technical support to the G77 and the Office of the Chair. This continued support should be articulated in a structured offer of programmatic and technical services to the G77 and Office of the Chair, which is fully aligned with UNOSSC’s Strategic Framework and designed to promote greater south-south cooperation.</p> | On average less than 10 recommendations | Management/ technical units staff |
| 9 | UNITAR | Organizational Chart | <p>Evaluation of UNITAR learning-related event certifications–UNITAR Programme Units delivering learning events should ensure full compliance with the UNITAR Certification Policy and strengthen familiarity of programme unit personnel with the Certification Policy and Objective Assessment of Learning (OAL) guidelines.</p> | On average around five recommendations | UNITAR Management |

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