

eio

independent
evaluation

Independent Strategic Evaluation UNIDO's Thought Leadership and Global Positioning in ISID

June 2025

OBJECTIVES



ASSESS
UNIDO's
thought
leadership in
ISID



EVALUATE
the relevance and
effectiveness of
UNIDO's global
positioning



IDENTIFY
organizational
weaknesses and
areas for
improvement



FOCUS ON
initiatives and
success stories in
UNIDO's thought
leadership

SCOPE

This **formative** evaluation assesses UNIDO's activities from **2016 – 2025**, informs on gaps and challenges, and suggests ways in which UNIDO can strengthen its role as a **thought leader in industrial development**.

METHODOLOGY



LITERATURE REVIEW



BENCHMARKING
UNIDO against 10
organizations



CITATION ANALYSIS



**STAKEHOLDER
CONSULTATIONS**
49 HQ and field personnel



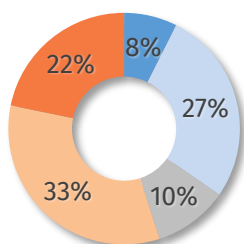
CONTENT INVENTORY



SURVEY
to UNIDO personnel
202 respondents

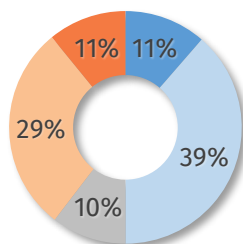
Some reasons for UNIDO's relatively weak thought leadership in ISID: (supported by survey results)

Limited collaboration to
integrate core functions



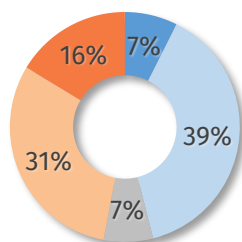
UNIDO staff have incentives to
cooperate towards integrated delivery
of its core functions

Limited attention to research
and thought leadership



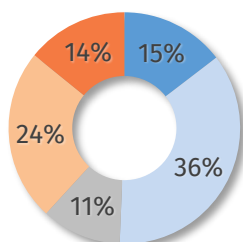
UNIDO has deployed its resources to
effectively support its global positioning
and thought leadership

Internal incentive systems not
conductive to thought leadership



UNIDO's organizational structure is
conductive to developing synergies
among its core functions

Money-driven
technical cooperation



UNIDO's TC and investment promotions
are well aligned in the country
in which UNIDO operates

Some thematic areas in which UNIDO could become a thought leader:



Industry decarbonization and green
alternatives, e.g., transformation of big
industries, emerging global compliance
standards, national decarbonization
roadmaps, etc.



"Green" minerals required for energy
transition, e.g., used in car batteries,
magnets for wind turbines, electrolyzers,
etc.



Digital technologies, e.g., AI, robotics,
big data platform economies, 3D-
printing, etc.

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Do not know ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

KEY FINDINGS

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Clear constitutional mandate
- Complementary core functions (in theory)
- TC that connects to country level
- UNIDO recognized as neutral broker between government and private sector
- Expertise in some technical fields with increasing demand (e.g., green industrial parks, circular economy, industrial decarbonization)
- Some long-standing direct engagement with private sector
- Agility to engage with partners and acquire new projects

WEAKNESSES

- Technical cooperation/money-biased business model
- Limited research and policy capabilities
- Insufficient incorporation of practical learnings into normative functions
- Inappropriate incentives and metrics
- Limited competencies in technical fields with increasing demand (e.g., digitalization, AI, critical minerals)
- Internal competition translating to limited cooperation across units
- Lack of synergies between TC, ITPOs, research and policy, and convening function
- Lack of project upscaling
- Increasing weakening of in-house technical expertise

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growing demand for expertise in industrial development at country, regional and global level
- Increasing need to convene multilateral dialogue on industrial policy
- UNIDO as an attractive partner for countries concerned with current erosion of multilateralism and rules-based global economic governance
- Creation of unique knowledge products based on technical cooperation
- Integration and use of UNIDO field network
- Increasing demand for neutral brokers

THREATS

- Reduction in funding allocation to multilateral organizations and global challenges
- Increasing competition for funding within the UN
- Challenges to multilateralism

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Area 1:

Build, articulate, and ensure shared institutional understanding, internally and with external stakeholders, of UNIDO's unique value proposition and corporate identity.

UNIDO should decide on the appropriate mix of services that is most suitable to achieving its objectives:

1. Technical cooperation agency specialized in industrial development
2. Technical cooperation agency with enhanced normative function
3. Global thought leader with grounded experience in policy implementation

Area 2:

Establish an incentive system towards results and impact on ISID, to strengthen thought leadership.

Area 3:

Strengthen and redefine the Research and Policy function (if Areas 1 and 2 are addressed).

Area 4:

Strengthen international peer learning, convening function and partnerships (if Areas 1 and 2 are addressed).

