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UNIDO EVALUATION GROUP

ODG/EVA Review

Follow-up on completed evaluations 2011

June 2012

## Follow-up on completed evaluations 2011

### I Background and introduction

1. The management response system was introduced, by issuance of the Evaluation Policy, in May 2006. As of that date an evaluation report is transmitted together with a Management Response Sheet (MRS). The MRS allows a tracking for each recommendation of the level of acceptance (i.e., fully accepted, partially accepted, or non-acceptance), of action taken vis-à-vis individual recommendations, and of the status of implementation of this action (e.g., completed, in progress, not completed). Normally, the management response (first input) is to be delivered one month after the submission of the evaluation report and the report on follow-up actions (final input), one year after circulation of the MRS.

2. Since 2008 ODG/EVA has reported annually on the follow-up to recommendations contained in evaluation reports<sup>1</sup> with the purpose of documenting the progress made towards implementing recommendations and to share observations in connection with the management response system and its utility.

3. ODG/EVA reviews the status of responses to evaluation recommendations regularly and continuously. The management response cycle is considered complete when all steps towards finalizing a management response sheet (MRS) have been taken by the responsible managers.

4. In the current report ODG/EVA presents the progress made towards the follow-up to recommendations for evaluations that were conducted during 2011 and earlier. It also provides an overview of management responses that are considered complete and of those that are still outstanding.

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation Group. Reports on the follow-up on completed evaluations: 2008 (6 March 2009), 2009 (16 March 2010), 2010 (23 March 2011)

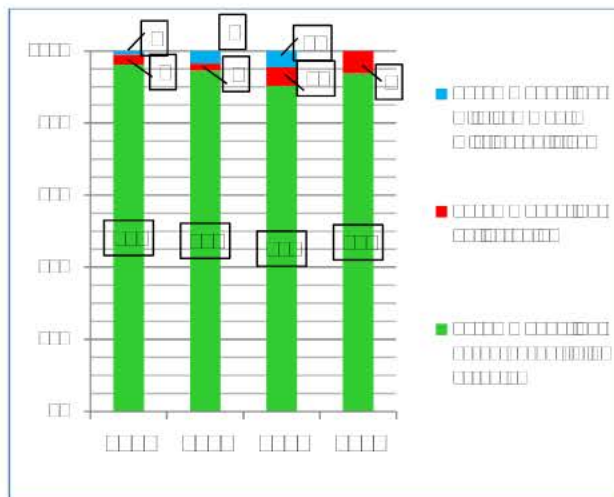
## II Status of management responses to evaluations

### A. Management response sheets issued in 2011

5. From the 20 MRSs issued in 2011, a total of 12 MRSs, equivalent to 60 per cent, had been returned by May 2012 and contained the first input/comment on the level of acceptance<sup>2</sup> of individual recommendations. In summary, project/programme managers/responsible officer(s) replied to 129 recommendations for which they indicated their acceptance (94) and partial acceptance (27) of recommendations. Out of the 129 recommendations, 8 were not accepted.

6. As indicated in Figure 2 below, the acceptance rate<sup>3</sup> of recommendations continues to be high and reached 94 per cent in 2011.

Figure 1. Overview on the acceptance rate of recommendations (2008-2011)

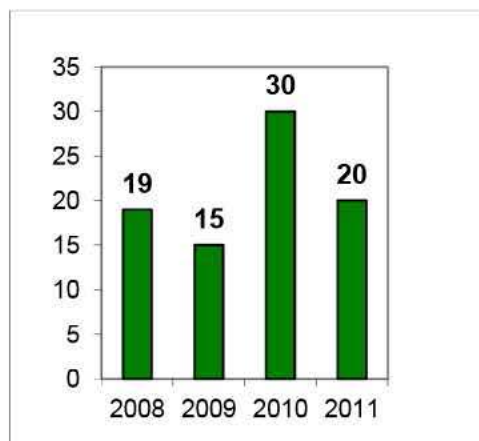


<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The level of acceptance of a recommendation can be indicated as **fully accepted** (a recommendation is accepted in its entirety), **partially accepted** (a recommendation is accepted in principle; it should be noted that the main reason for a partial acceptance of a recommendation is that it is not certain if a follow-up project or phase will materialize, or that there will be resources available to implement the recommendation), or as **not accepted** (a recommendation is not accepted/rejected); for the latter two levels of acceptance, the respondent is required to provide a brief explanation.

7. Figure 1 below shows the number of MRSs issued, which corresponds to the number of evaluations finalized during the given period.

**Figure 2.** Total number of management response sheets issued (2008-2011)



8. Table 1 below provides a snapshot of the follow-up on recommendations for evaluations for which an MRS was issued (together with an evaluation or review report) in 2011. It also provides details on the total number of recommendations (317) made by the evaluators for the 20 evaluations/reviews.

**Table 1.** Snapshot of follow up on recommendations issued in 2011 (as at 2012-05-23)

Type of evaluation activity	No. of delivered eval. / review reports and MRS in 2011	Of which No. of MRSs responded to (first input /comment rcvd.)	Total No. of rec.	Total No. of recs. responded to from 12 MRSs	Of which No. of recs. accepted (*)	Of which No. of recs. partially accepted (²)	Of which No. of recs. not accepted (²)
		In per cent			In per cent	In per cent	In per cent
Ind. evaluations (Country evaluations, stand-alone projects, thematic area)	□□□	□□□	□□□□	□□□□	94	27	8
		60			73	21	6

4. [http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46447&Cr=evaluation&Cr2=management+response+sheet&Cr3=](#)

9. Annex 1 to the MRS contains a questionnaire that gives project/programme managers the opportunity to provide feedback on the evaluation process. From the 12 MRSs that were received, 10 such annexes (83 per cent) were completed. The information provided indicates that 88 per cent of the respondents found the evaluation timely and that the resources allocated were adequate. A total of 94 per cent of the respondents found the evaluation findings relevant and useful and 97 per cent considered the recommendations pertinent and useful. Another 88 per cent confirmed that lessons learned were valid for wider application and beyond the project that was evaluated.

*“The findings of the [evaluation] report are helpful in the ongoing blueprint phase of the TO-BE processes.”*

(Source: Independent evaluation. UNIDO's online procurement test)

#### **B. Management response sheets with one-year follow-up cycle completed by 2011**

10. As regards the status of implementation of recommendations from 30 evaluations/reviews for which the one-year follow-up cycle had been completed by 2011, a total of 20 MRSs were returned containing the final inputs/comments. As can also be seen from Table 2 below, one year after the MRS was issued, 43 per cent of the recommendations responded to had been implemented and 36 per cent were still under implementation.

11. In line with the above, a total of 21 per cent of the recommendations responded to had not been implemented at the time of reporting. The reasons given for not implementing a recommendation vary (e.g., a recommendation had originally not been accepted, financing needed to take action had not been available, a project/programme was not extended, or information on the follow-up to the recommendation was still pending).

12. It should be noted that the status of implementation of recommendations depends on the date when the evaluation report was issued and when actions taken vis-à-vis individual recommendations were due. Most of the “recommendations in

progress” require long lead times as they are often dependent on fund raising and/or formulating or executing new programmes/activities. In some instances implementation of recommendations is not possible because a successor phase or follow-up project did not materialize.

13. ODG/EVA records the implementation of recommendations beyond the 12 month period covered by an MRS as and when it is reported.

Table 2. Implementation of recommendations for evaluations with follow-up cycle completed by 2011 (as at 2012-05-23)

Evaluation Title (Country/Region)	Status (Y/N)	Date (YYYY-MM)	Responsible (Name)	Budget (USD)	Comments (Notes)
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-03	J. Smith	100,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-06	A. Brown	200,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-09	M. Green	150,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-12	K. White	80,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-01	L. Black	120,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-04	N. Grey	90,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-07	O. Blue	110,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-10	P. Yellow	70,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-11	Q. Purple	60,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-02	R. Pink	130,000	Recommendations implemented...
Evaluation of the impact of the... (Country/Region)	Y	2011-05	S. Orange	50,000	Recommendations implemented...

1. The data in this table is based on the information provided in the MRS reports and the follow-up reports. The data is subject to change as more information becomes available.





15. Annex I to the present report provides more detailed information on the follow-up to recommendations for each individual evaluation, inter alia, on the level of acceptance and on the status of implementation<sup>7</sup> of recommendations. As the process of follow-up to recommendations is dynamic, information related to the management response to MRSs is reviewed and updated continuously and as it becomes available, under the ODG/EVA intranet entry that contains data since the introduction of the MRS system.

16. This annex also contains information on the composition of the evaluation team (ODG/EVA responsible officer and international evaluation consultant) for each evaluation. Out of a total of 25 international consultants that had been recruited in connection with evaluations that were completed in 2011, 48 per cent were women and 52 per cent men.

17. The implementation of evaluation recommendations is also monitored through other means. For instance, ODG/EVA as advisors to the STC, AG and AMC reviews project proposals and provide feedback to these committees on whether or not recommendations of past evaluations have been taken into consideration. In fact, many new project and programme documents provide information on how recommendations of past evaluations have been reflected or considered. This shows that the learning purpose of evaluations is often met.

### **III System of management response: Observations and challenges**

18. With some exceptions, compliance by project/programme managers to submit a timely follow-up to recommendations contained in MRSs continues to be weak.

19. Despite continuous efforts to solicit responses, delays were frequent and sometimes as long as fifteen months, with an average delay of 5.8 months. The major reasons for delays remain unchanged as compared with previous years (staff turnover, heavy workload, implementation pressure, low priority given to the evaluation exercise). Annex I provides information on the evaluations for which the

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<sup>7</sup> A recommendation is considered implemented when the action required vis-à-vis an individual recommendation has been completed.

management response is outstanding as well as on who is responsible for completing and submitting the MRS.

20. At this juncture, it should be noted that the External Auditor reported that "... the evaluation process, when viewed in light of the Evaluation Policy, appeared to be robust ... However, the response, acceptance and implementation rates indicate otherwise and therefore there was an urgent need to identify the main reasons for the same. It would not be an over statement to say that UNIDO was not fully benefitting from the evaluation exercise. UNIDO could derive more benefit if further attention was given to the implementation of recommendations."<sup>8</sup>.

21. In the same report, the External Audit recommends, inter alia, that "Response to independent evaluation reports issued by the EVA may be made mandatory for the project management staff."<sup>9</sup>.

22. ODG/EVA would again like to draw attention to the importance of a prompt handover and information/confirmation of successors who will assume the responsibility to follow-up on evaluation recommendations, for instance in the case of responsible managers retiring and of supervisors supporting the process.

23. ODG/EVA will continue to inform staff about the management response system – in particular when training new staff or briefing staff about evaluation activities.

24. With regard to the intranet entry on the follow-up to evaluation recommendations<sup>10</sup>, ODG/EVA will continue its efforts to direct staff to this site and to use the on-line system. In parallel, ODG/EVA will continue to work with the SAP team on exporting this electronic follow-up system to the SAP platform.

## IV Conclusions

25. A total of twelve management response sheets – out of 20 issued in 2011 – have been filled in. With regard to the acceptance rate of recommendations contained in MRSs issued in 2011, 94 per cent of the recommendations were accepted/partially accepted while 6 per cent were not.

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<sup>8</sup> Report of the External Auditor (IDB.40/3-PBC.28/3), 23 April 2012

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> [http://intranet.unido.org/intra/Evaluation/Follow-up\\_on\\_recommendations](http://intranet.unido.org/intra/Evaluation/Follow-up_on_recommendations)

26. Out of 30 MRSs for which the one year follow-up cycle was completed by 2011, a total number of 20 MRSs were returned, thus providing information on the status of implementation of action taken vis-à-vis individual recommendations. A total of 43 per cent of the recommendations responded to were implemented, 36 per cent were still under implementation and 21 per cent had not been implemented at the time of reporting.

27. UNIDO could derive more benefit if further attention was given to the implementation of recommendations.

28. ODG/EVA will continue to provide information on the intranet on the follow-up to evaluation recommendations<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid*