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Follow-up on completed evaluations 2010

(Prepared by ODG/EVA)

(Status as at 2011-02-24)

Follow-up on completed evaluations 2010

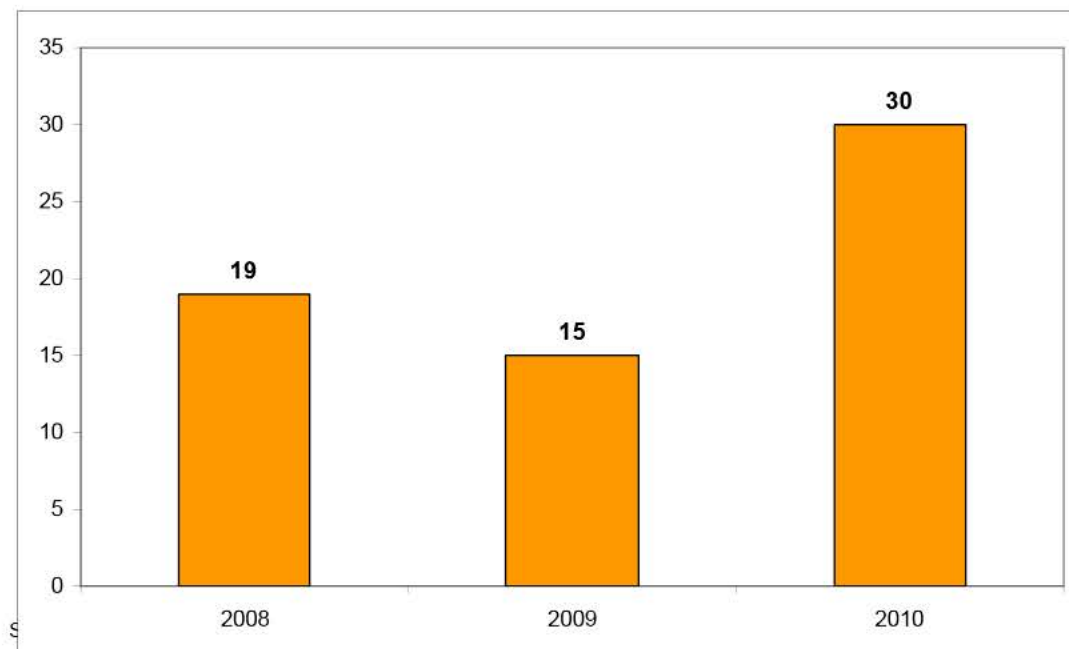
I Background and introduction

1. Since 2008, ODG/EVA has reported annually on the follow-up to recommendations¹. The purpose of these annual reviews is to report on the progress made towards implementing recommendations and to share observations in connection with the management response system and its utility.

2. ODG/EVA reviews the status of responses 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 and completion has been verified.

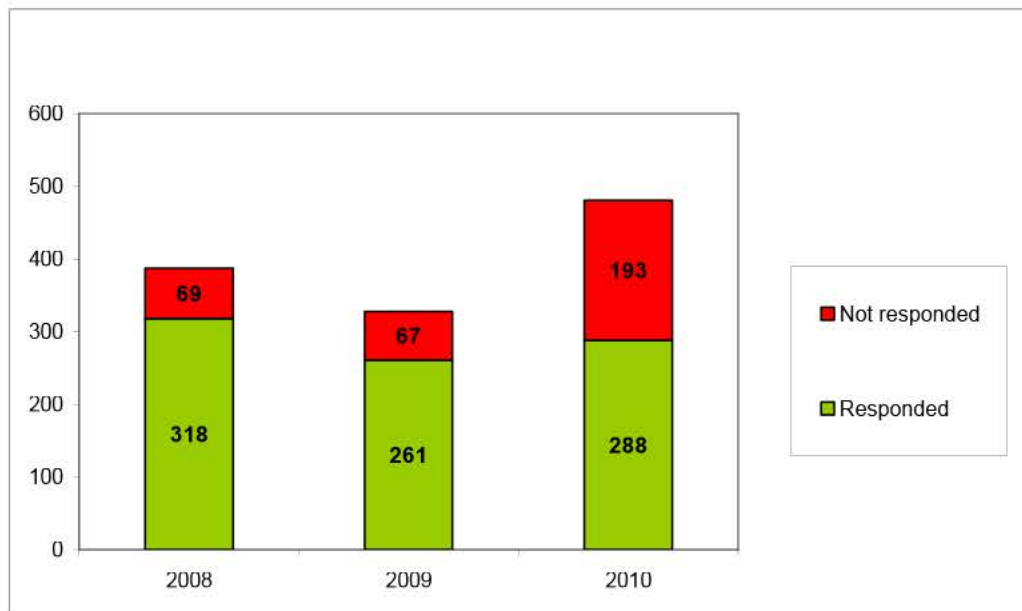
3. The figures 1 to 3 below show the development of the management response system over the past three years and provide, in particular, a comparison with regard to the number of MRSs issued (figure 1), the response rate (figure 2), and the acceptance level of individual recommendations (figure 3) over that period.

Figure 1 – Total number of management response sheets issued during the last three years



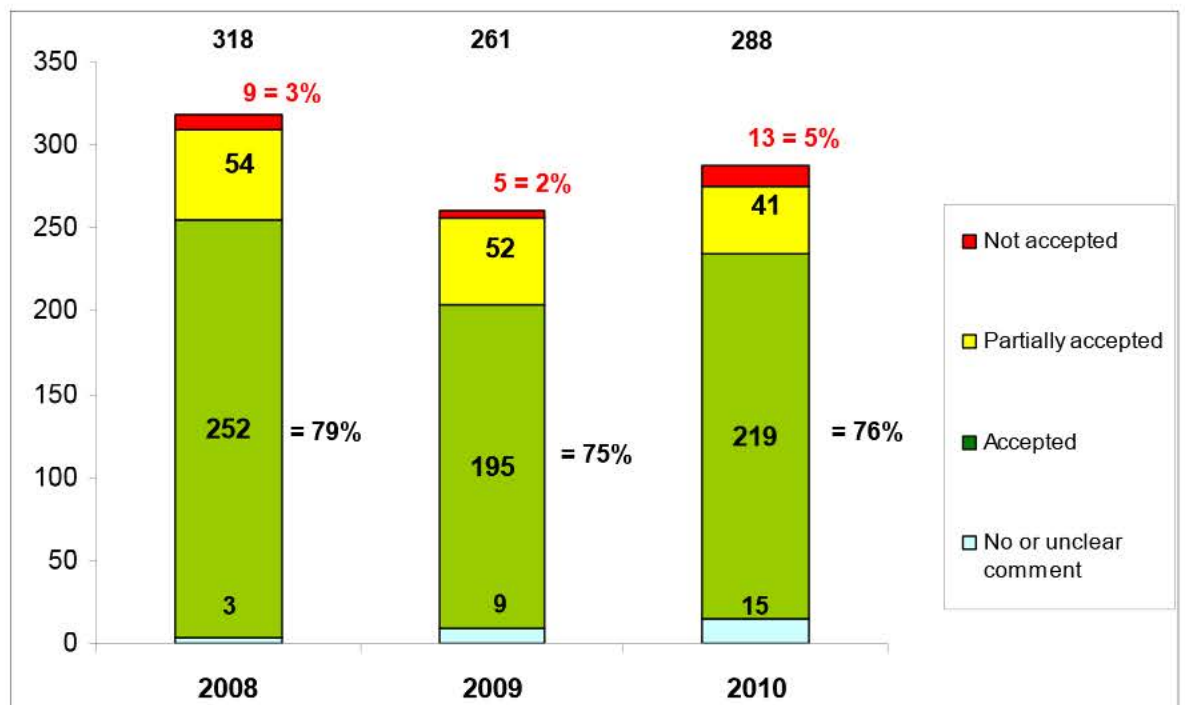
¹ Evaluation Group, Follow-up on completed evaluations 2008 (6 March 2009), and Follow-up on completed evaluations 2009 (16 March 2010)

Figure 2 - Total number of recommendations responded, or not responded to and that has been, or are still subject of follow-up



Source: Presentation by ODG/EVA, PTC/EVA Technical seminar (updated 2011-02-24)

Figure 3 - Overview on the acceptance rate of recommendations contained in MRSs



Source: Presentation by ODG/EVA, PTC/EVA Seminar (updated 2011-02-24)

4. In the current report ODG/EVA presents the progress made towards the follow-up to recommendations for evaluations carried out during 2010, or earlier. It provides an overview of management responses that are considered complete and of those that are still outstanding.

5. This report also covers issues related to organizational learning from evaluation activities. Attention is also given to the introduction of SAP-ERP and how this new IT architecture will affect the work of ODG/EVA and, in parallel, benefit users at large.

II Status of management response to evaluations

6. Table 1 below provides a snapshot of the follow-up on recommendations for evaluations for which a management response sheet (MRS) was issued (together with an evaluation or a review report). From the 30 MRSs, a total of 20 MRSs were duly completed. This represents 67 per cent. The stage of implementation of recommendations depends on the date 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 formulating new programmes/ activities. In some instances implementation is not possible because a succeeding phase is not appropriate or possible.

7. Moreover, table 1 above provides, inter alia, details on the total number of recommendations (481) made by the evaluators for the 30 independent evaluations/reviews. These recommendations are contained in the management response sheets (MRSs), prepared in connection with individual evaluations/reviews.

8. Out of the total 30 MRSs issued, 20 were returned containing the first (and in one instance also the final) input/comment to individual recommendations. In summary, project/programme managers/responsible officer(s) replied to 288 recommendations and indicated their acceptance (219) and partial acceptance (41) of recommendations. Out of the 288 recommendations, 20 recommendations were either not accepted (13) or the comments received were not clearly identifiable/understood (15).

Table 1 – Snapshot of follow up on recommendations 2010 (as at 2010-12-24)

Type of evaluation activity	No. of delivered eval. / review reports and MRS in 2010	Of which No. of MRSs responded to (first input /comment)	Of which No. of MRSs <u>not</u> responded to (first input /comment)	Of which No. of management responses with response cycle completed n	Of which No. of management responses with response cycle completed out of issued MRSs	Total No. of rec.	Total No. of recs. responded to from 20 MRSs	Of which No. of recs. <u>accepted</u>	Of which No. of recs. <u>partially accepted</u>	Of which No. of recs. <u>not accepted</u>	Of which No of recs. with comment missing and/or no clear comment on acceptance of rec.
		In percent	In percent	In percent	In percent			In per cent	In per cent	In per cent	In per cent
Ind. evaluations (IPs, CSFs, stand-alone projects, thematic area) and independent reviews	111	111	111	111	11	111	111	219	41	13	15
		67	23	93	7			76	14	5	5

Follow-up on completed evaluations 2010

9. With regard to the status of implementation of recommendations, it can be reported that for two – out of the total of 30 independent evaluations/reviews – the one-year response cycle was completed during the reporting period. From these two evaluations, the final input/comment to the MRS was received for one evaluation. This final input is currently under review by ODG/EVA. With regard to the remaining 28 independent evaluations/reviews, information on the status of implementation of recommendations was not requested at that stage of reporting. However, some project/programme managers already provided information with regard to the status, which is also reflected in table 1 above.

10. Annex 1 is a questionnaire that gives project/programme managers the opportunity to provide feedback on the evaluation process. From the 20 MRSs that were received, 13 annexes (65 per cent) were returned completed. The analysis of the comments received produced the following result with regard to the individual questions:

(a) *Was the evaluation timely?*

Individual evaluations were rated as timely by 84 per cent of the respondents.

The additional feedback, both critical - “The evaluation was slightly pre-mature as the cycle was not yet complete ...”² and positive - “It [*the evaluation*] was timely and cleared the way for preparation of Phase II”³.

(b) *Were the resources allocated to the evaluation exercise adequate?*

A total of 89 per cent of the respondents stated that the resources allocated to the evaluation exercise were adequate. However, feedback received in response to this question, e.g., “More resources would have allowed the consultant to cover the rest of the region and to give more depth to analysis and interpretations ...”⁴ confirm that adequate resource allocation for evaluation activities is essential.

(c) *Were the evaluation findings relevant and useful?*

A total of 98 per cent of the respondents rated the evaluation findings as relevant and useful. Feedback received to this question, e.g., “Suggestions expressed by the evaluators at the debriefing meeting have been taken into

² Independent process evaluation. UNIDO's Field mobility policy. April 2010

³ Independent evaluation. LEBANON. Increase access to export markets for Lebanese products and improvement of its quality infrastructure to increase TBT/SPS compliance (MACLE) (US/LEB/06/002)

⁴ Independent assessment. CÔTE D'IVOIRE-SENEGAL-TOGO. Assessment of country projects of the UNIDO/UEMOA SMTQ programme in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo. Part of independent thematic evaluation. UNIDO activities in the area of Standards, Metrology, Testing and Quality (SMTQ).

consideration while planning project activities for 2009 and 2010⁵ show clearly that evaluation results are, inter alia, an important tool to plan future project activities.

(d) A total of 86 per cent of the respondents found that the recommendations were pertinent and useful.

(e) *Are the lessons learned valid for wider application, beyond the project under evaluation?*

The lessons learned were found by 92 per cent of the respondents as valid for wider application, beyond the project under evaluation. The additional remarks, e.g., "Lessons learned are highly relevant and meet the needs of the agro-industrial sectors and are thus applicable in other socio-economic settings"⁶ confirm that organizational learning from evaluations is, inter alia, one factor to guide strategic development.

11. Annex I to the present report provides detailed information on the follow-up to recommendations for each individual evaluation. It also provides an overview of the general timelines for the follow-up, on the number of recommendations for each project, on the acceptance rates and – to the extent available – on the percentage rate of recommendations considered complete and/or that are still under implementation. Additional information is provided on the composition of the evaluation team (ODG/EVA responsible officer and international consultant) for a particular evaluation.

12. Table 2 below contains summary information on the status of implementation of recommendations from 15 evaluation activities (i.e., for eight projects, five integrated programmes/country service frameworks, one thematic programme and one programmatic evaluation) for which the one-year follow-up cycle was completed (in addition to the two mentioned above) during the reporting period. In total, six MRSs were returned completed (i.e., final input/comment). Final comments were received for five projects by end December 2010 and January 2011 respectively. The holiday period and the closure of offices can be considered as a reason for the delay in receipt of final inputs to the management response sheet.

⁵ Independent evaluation. MOROCCO. UNIDO export consortia initiative in Morocco (as part of the independent thematic evaluation of the UNIDO cluster and networking development initiatives). Appui à la création de consortia d'exportation (UE/MOR/04/127). Renforcement des capacités nationales dans la promotion et accompagnement de consortia d'exportation (UE/MOR/07/007). February 2010

⁶ Independent evaluation. LEBANON. Support for livelihoods and economic recovery in war-affected areas of Lebanon. Lebanese Agro-Industry Support and Economic Recovery (LAISER) (FB/LEB/07/001). January 2010

13. That table shows that 19 per cent of the recommendations responded to were completed and 28 per cent were still under implementation one year after the management response sheet was issued. A total of 53 per cent of the recommendations have not been implemented. The reasons for not implementing a recommendation vary (e.g., a recommendation had originally not been accepted, financing of response action did not materialize, a project/programme was not extended, or actual information on the follow-up to the recommendation is still pending).

Table 2 – Management responses with follow-up cycle completed in 2010 (as at 2011-02-24)

Project	Total No. of recs.	Number of recs. responded to	Of which No. of recs. implemented (percentage)	Of which No. of recs. with implementation in progress (percentage)	Of which No. of recs. not implemented / recs. not applicable (percentage)
IP Burkina Faso (Phase II)	58	56	28	61	11
CSF Indonesia (Phase II)	35	35	54	32	14
IP Uganda (Phase II)	36	36	3 (actual/final information pending)	8 (actual/final information pending)	89 (actual/final information pending)
Mozambique/Project Nos. US/MOZ/05/001, US/MOZ/05/A01	28	28	7 (actual/final information pending)	4 (actual/final information pending)	89 (actual/final information pending)
United Republic of Tanzania/Project No. US/URT/05/002	27	25	8 (actual/final information pending)	4 (actual/final information pending)	88 (actual/final information pending)
Global/Thematic review: UNIDO Projects for promotion of small hydro power for productive use	5	5	20	80	0
Ethiopia/IP Ethiopia (Phase II)	41	34	18	82	0
South Asian LDCs: UNIDO projects in Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives: TE/RAS/07/001, TE/RAS/07/A01, TE/RAS/07/B01, TE/RAS/07/C01, TE/RAS/07/D01	34	34	50	44	6
Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between UNIDO and UNDP	12	8	0 (actual/final information pending)	0 (actual/final information pending)	100 (actual/final information pending)
Uganda/Proj. No. TF/UGA/05/003	10	10	0	20	80

(Table 2, *cont.*)

Project	Total No. of recs.	Number of recs. responded to	Of which No. of recs. implemented (percentage)	Of which No. of recs. with implementation in progress (percentage)	Of which No. of recs. <u>not</u> implemented / recs. not applicable (percentage)
Uruguay/Project Nos. UE/URU/04/106, UE/URU/04/A06, UE/URU/04/B06	18	6	0 (actual/final information pending)	0 (actual/final information pending)	100 (actual/final information pending)
Syrian Arab Republic/IP Syrian Arab Republic: Made in Syria	25	25	12 (actual/final information pending)	0 (actual/final information pending)	88 (actual/final information pending)
Cambodia - Lao PDR - Viet Nam: SMTQ, Phase II/Proj. No. TE/RAS/06/001	11	11	0 (actual/final information pending)	0 (actual/final information pending)	100 (actual/final information pending)
ITPO Beijing	25	25	0 (actual/final information pending)	0 (actual/final information pending)	100 (actual/final information pending)
ITPO Shanghai	17	17	0 (actual/final information pending)	0 (actual/final information pending)	100 (actual/final information pending)
TOTAL	382	355	19	28	53

III System of management response: Observations and changes

14. With some exceptions, compliance by project/programme managers in timely follow up to recommendations continues to be a weak area.

15. Despite continuous efforts response delays of one to a maximum of eleven months are common. The average delay in delivering a management response was 3.5 months. The major reasons for delays remain unchanged (i.e., staff turnover, heavy workload, implementation pressure, low priority for this exercise).

16. The issue of staff turnover and/or reassignments of staff and the resulting changes in responsibility for following up recommendations requires specific attention. In light of the recent organizational restructuring⁷ ODG/EVA would like responsible Managing Directors, Branch Directors and/or Officers-in-Charge, Chiefs

⁷ UNIDO Secretariat Structure 2010 (UNIDO/DGB(O).95/Add.7, dated 26 February 2010)

of Branches/Units to ensure that a prompt hand-over and information/confirmation of successors who will assume the responsibility to follow-up on recommendations is ensured and channeled to ODG/EVA.

17. It should be noted that very often the usefulness of the management response exercise is questioned by project/programme managers. In particular, the perceived usefulness is weighed against the time available for post-project / programme completion work, the pressure to advance implementation of ongoing projects/programmes and the development of new projects/programmes.

18. The recent peer review of the evaluation function of UNIDO stresses that "... the usefulness of evaluations and their contribution to organizational learning are recognized as essential ..."⁸. The above-mentioned reactions indicate that further efforts are necessary to create awareness about the usefulness of the follow-up process. In parallel, the onus is on the responsible Branch Directors and/or Officers-in-Charge, Chiefs of Branches/Units to ensure that project/programme managers complete management responses as part of their responsibilities. In this connection, It should be recognized that the management response represents an important step towards a better use of evaluation results. ODG/EVA would also like to cite recommendation 14 of the Peer Review– EVA might want to consider moving actual follow-up on evaluations to management⁹, which should be implemented in cooperation with management with the aim to further strengthen the follow-up process to evaluations and, thus, to recommendations and lessons learned.

19. ODG/EVA also wishes to recall recommendation 15 – Incentives need to be strengthened to use the Management Response System as a management tool¹⁰.

20. ODG/EVA also observes that there is a continuous need to inform staff about the management response system, and especially when training new staff or briefing staff about evaluation activities.

⁸ Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (2010). UNEG-DAC. Peer review of the evaluation function of UNIDO, March 2010 – see also http://intranet.unido.org/intranet/images/9/91/Evaluation_report_Peer_review-final.pdf

⁹ [] []

¹⁰ [] []

21. With regard to the intranet entry on follow-up to evaluation recommendations, ODG/EVA has continued its efforts to direct staff to this site with a view to create greater awareness of the information available through this link.

IV Institutionalizing organizational learning from evaluations

4.1 Effective use of evaluation findings

22. In general, and within its mandate, ODG/EVA sees SAP-ERP, inter alia, as a gateway for ODG/EVA staff to have prompt, accurate and easy access to data required for the carrying out of evaluation-related tasks. Thus, gaining increased efficiency and effectiveness.

23. There will be a need to export the existing electronic follow-up to the new platform and to ensure that, in the future, evaluation recommendations and follow-up can be accessed and used more effectively, e.g., for the design of new projects and programmes.

24. With the introduction of SAP-ERP, ODG/EVA also sees the opportunity to better promote the lessons learned from evaluations through an integrated lessons learned database.

25. In the meantime, ODG/EVA will continue to make the lessons learned from evaluations available through the ODG/EVA intranet page, under the header Lessons learned.

26. In 2009, ODG/EVA developed and established an electronic retention schedule as an initiative to contribute to improved methods of knowledge management and to promote knowledge sharing. It records information on EVA activities and archives EVA evaluation reports from 1978 onwards. Based on examples from other United Nations organizations, this retention schedule was created with the aim of ensuring that evaluation reports are preserved and kept accessible.

27. ODG/EVA will ensure that with the transition to SAP-ERP, its electronic retention schedule will be integrated and further developed.

V Conclusion

28. A total of 19 management responses – out of 45 requested – have been collected. With regard to the acceptance rate of recommendations contained in MRSs issued in 2010, it can be summarize that 76 per cent of the recommendations were fully accepted, 14 per cent were partially accepted, and each 5 per cent were either not accepted or the comments received were not clearly identifiable/understood.

29. Given current circumstances, ODG/EVA will continue to further advocate the use of the management response system and take steps to further increase its usefulness and, once available, making – inter alia – full use of SAP-ERP for this and other evaluation-related activities as appropriate.

30. Along these lines, ODG/EVA will also continue to promote the use of lessons learned from evaluations to ensure an effective incorporation of the same into the decision-making process of managers, recipients and donors alike.