

WMO EVALUATION POLICY

1. This policy derives from the UNEG definition of evaluation as “an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance”.
2. The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning. Evaluation aims to understand why — and to what extent — intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking, development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness, and application of lessons learned to formulation of programmes.

AIM AND SCOPE OF POLICY

3. The Evaluation Policy (hereinafter the Policy) provides the framework for planning, and conducting evaluations in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and reporting on and using the results from such evaluations. The Policy is in line with WMO regulations and rules and the Internal Oversight Charter
4. The policy has been prepared in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and with the definitions and criteria of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC).
5. The Policy aims to:
 - Set the conditions for the evaluation function to support learning and accountability and to help promote good practices and results-based management within WMO, of which evaluation is an integral part;
 - Define principles and minimum requirements, roles and responsibilities for the conduct of evaluation activities, and their use for WMO and its stakeholders; and
 - Define evaluation process and the way the Independent Evaluation Function located within the IOO interacts with decentralized evaluation and monitoring activities.
6. Evaluations are conducted by the Internal Oversight Office, MERP Unit, and external evaluators. They are commissioned by governance bodies, the Executive Management or by project/programme managers in line with donor requirements. All evaluation activity in WMO aim to conform to Norms and Standards of the United Nations, Evaluations Group (UNEG).

DEFINITION OF EVALUATION

7. An evaluation is a systematic, objective and impartial assessment of an on-going or completed project, program or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, its efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should contribute to learning and accountability and provide credible, evidence-based information, enabling the incorporation of findings and recommendations into the decision-making processes of WMO.
8. The evaluation function supports accountability of the Secretariat to the EC and the Congress, as well as that of WMO to donor entities and national stakeholders (particularly NMHSs). At the same time, it promotes learning and reflection by Members, management, staff, as well as that of national stakeholders.

9. Functionally, evaluation is an organization-wide responsibility focusing on learning and accountability. It examines processes and contextual factors to understand why and to what extent Long Term Goals are achieved and what outcomes and impacts (intended or not) they have.
10. Evaluation typically responds to questions such as “Are we doing the right things (relevance, operational comparative value or strategic niche)?” “Have we done them in the right way (efficiency, value for money, coherence and coordination)?” “Are we making a difference (effectiveness)?” “What remains at the end (impact and sustainability)?”
11. Evaluations can provide performance assessments at the level of the Organization. They look beyond the classical organizational performance criteria and also encompass the dimensions of organizational capacity and motivation as well as the external environment.

MONITORING

12. Monitoring is distinct from but complementary to evaluation. Its overall aim is to indicate whether implementation is on track to achieving the desired results, identify any bottlenecks, and inform management action (e.g. in reinforcing progress or making adjustments, as necessary). It can point to the need to conduct an evaluation; it further feeds much needed performance data into the evaluation analysis. Monitoring is focused on daily management issues and responds to questions such as: “How many?” “When?” “How?” “For how much?”
13. At WMO monitoring is conducted at two levels:
 - a. Strategic monitoring: conducted by means of a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are tracked on an annual basis. The KPIs measure progress at the outcome level (Strategic Objectives).
 - b. Operational monitoring: conducted at the output level against the annual milestones established in the Annual Operating Plan. Performance is regularly reviewed by means of rolling reviews of programmatic and process performance.

PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

14. Evaluation is an integral part of WMO’s Results-Based Management (RBM) system. Evaluation contributes to RBM by providing evidence-based information for decision-making
15. Evaluation helps to clarify the logical links between activities, their contributions to the achievement of expected results and to strategic goals. Evaluation supports the refining of existing RBM frameworks based on new theories of change.
16. Evaluations are focused on learning rather than on “fault-finding”. Evaluation reports focus on both key successes and main challenges and the ways to capitalize on the former and to address the latter.
17. Evaluation outputs can take the form of reports, briefings and other forms of information exchanges. Timely provision of such outputs is crucial for program planning, budgeting and implementation and reporting.
18. The main purposes of evaluation outputs are to:
 - Identify good practices established in the programmes and disseminate these to other programmes or organization-wide where relevant;
 - Make proposals for improving the quality, relevance and impact of ongoing and future program activities;
 - Provide an evidence base for improved decision-making;
 - Promote and ensure accountability to constituents; and

- Contribute to effective knowledge sharing within a learning organization.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND NORMS

19. Following are the guiding principles for conduct of evaluations in WMO:

- Adherence to international good practice. The Evaluations in WMO will be consistent with internationally accepted evaluation norms, standards and good practices, and will be harmonized with the UN family in the context of results-based management approaches.
- Ensuring professionalism. Evaluations will be managed by staff with the necessary evaluation management competencies and training, and will use quality standards for evaluation management. Evaluators will adhere to the highest ethical and technical standards, apply methodological rigour and respond to all criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility, including the responsible handling of confidential information.
- Transparency and learning. Evaluations will be conducted using a transparent process involving stakeholders as required to ensure factual accuracy and full ownership. Evaluation findings and recommendations will be disseminated to constituents, donors, the WMO and other agencies and partners concerned, in order to inform decision-making processes and support organizational learning.
- Independence of process. The WMO will ensure separation of evaluation management and implementation responsibility from line management functions for policies, programmes and projects, and will select evaluators from a wide and diversified pool according to agreed criteria for the purposes of avoiding any potential conflict of interest.
- Gender equality and non-discrimination. Evaluations will ensure that there is appropriate consideration of gender and non-discrimination issues in their design, analyses and reporting, while also addressing UNEG gender-related norms and standards.

TYPES OF EVALUATION

20. Evaluations conducted in WMO include:

- Project evaluations¹:** Assess projects contributions as a means to deliver WMO outcomes to constituents. They consider the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes, and test underlying assumptions about contributions to broader outcomes and impacts.
- Programme evaluations:** Assess for each programme or a set of activities the performance in achieving expected results and their contribution to the achievement of high-level results in the chain. They also support the programmes in defining their logic models and frameworks. As WMO is moving away from the concept of "programmes" as a means to organize its activities, programme evaluations may be gradually phased out.
- Strategic evaluations:** Assess, from the perspective of each strategic objective/long term goal. Their findings, conclusions and recommendations inform decisions on adjustments at the strategic level.
- Others:** Meta-evaluation and synthesis of evaluation findings could be conducted as needed and reports provided to stakeholders. Joint Evaluations, Contributions to System Wide

¹ Requirements for project-level independent, internal evaluations and self-evaluations are often established in the donor agreements. Such requirements will also include reviews for projects in their start-up phase. Resources for conducting project-level evaluations should be included in project budgets. In line with the practice in the UN system it will be WMO's endeavour to earmark 2%-3% of the project budget for project evaluations.

Evaluations , Evaluations of MDTF Activities are undertaken in cooperation with other evaluation entities in the UN system as required.

EVALUATION PLAN

21. IOO prepares a composite work plan consisting of all oversight activities in consultation with the Senior Management of the Secretariat, which is presented to the AOC. It includes internal audits, evaluations and other activities to be undertaken during the ensuing year. IOO proposes, prioritizes and finalizes evaluation topics for the Work Plan through management consultations and consideration of current and emerging organizational issues, results of rolling reviews conducted by MERP Unit etc.
22. Project evaluations are planned and conducted under the aegis of PMB. IOO and MERP Unit provide professional backstopping support in planning and conduct of evaluation (e.g. development of Terms of Reference, selection of qualified evaluators, and overall quality assurance). They also maintain the organizational evaluation repository with up-to-date information on past, ongoing and planned evaluations as well as provide the information to the AOC through IOO's plan of work. The list of project evaluations will be updated on a quarterly basis and changes included in the progress report. In line with the OECD Norms for Project Monitoring and Evaluation and UNEG Guidance, WMO shall endeavor that:
 - Every project shall define and implement a M&E plan, including indicators and plans for one or more evaluations;
 - All projects shall develop and implement a monitoring plan with indicators and conduct an end-of-project evaluation;
 - All projects with a value of over CHF 1 million shall add a mid-term evaluation to their monitoring and evaluation plan. Projects with a value of less than CHF 1 million shall only plan for a final evaluation. Self-evaluations are encouraged for all projects during the course of their implementation; and
 - All TORs for external evaluations should go through MERP or IOO for quality assurance; they should also provide expertise in the selection of qualified evaluators.
23. Evaluations could be undertaken to address issues of strategic significance or high risk, to inform significant investments, or to fill in a knowledge gap. Evaluations are also undertaken following a request of the Constituent Bodies and are planned and conducted by the respective departments.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

24. Evaluations in WMO will be conducted with reference to OECD/DAC criteria for evaluation.
 - Relevance - is the intervention doing the right things?
 - Coherence - how well does the intervention fit?
 - Effectiveness - is the intervention achieving its objectives?
 - Efficiency- how well are resources being used?
 - Impact- what difference does the intervention make?
 - Sustainability- will the benefits last?
25. Evaluations shall abide by the standards for equity-focused evaluations endorsed by UNEG. This means that they need to take into account the way that final beneficiaries of services (and goods as applicable) have access to their rights without any discrimination, e.g. by social status, origin, religion, political obedience, gender, age or health status. IOO/MERP Unit promotes monitoring

and evaluation of equity issues in the Secretariat by discussing these with the programmes, e.g. proposing that data about beneficiaries of WMO services are disaggregated by any relevant population category including by gender.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

INTERNAL OVERSIGHT OFFICE

26. IOO's mandate for evaluations is contained in the financial regulations². It oversees the strategic development and delivery of the evaluation function and ensures its independence, impartiality, quality, and utility at WMO; IOO's evaluation activities include:
- Conduct evaluations as per its composite annual plan of work, covering all internal oversight activities, subject to resource availability;
 - Coordinate the development of WMO Evaluation Plan and inform the Audit and Oversight Committee and governing bodies of all evaluation activities in WMO;
 - Provide quality assurance and support to other units as required; and
 - Represent WMO in UNEG and other relevant networks and entities as well as contribute to system-wide evaluation initiatives undertaken by ISWE Office, UNEG etc.

MONITORING EVALUATION RISK AND PERFORMANCE UNIT (MERP)

27. MERP is charged with strategic and operational monitoring and reporting as well as with risk and quality management. In coordination with IOO it provides backstopping and quality assurance support to all evaluation initiatives within the WMO. These include:
- Support self-evaluations of the operating plan (provide implementing units with a tool and a process as well as conduct periodic rolling reviews and encourage project assessment);
 - Support external project evaluations: (i) provide methodological and quality assurance support (e.g. TORs, selection of qualified evaluators, compliance with UNEG standards); (ii) develop and establish effective guidelines, tools and templates (e.g. for self-evaluation, project evaluation);
 - Other external evaluations: commission, as necessary;
 - Jointly with IOO maintain the WMO evaluation repository as well as a roster of evaluators with relevant background, working experience and evaluation competencies; and
 - Contribute to the WMO Evaluation Plan annually submitted to the AOC for information.

COMMUNICATION AND USE OF EVALUATIONS

28. All evaluations are stored in the WMO Evaluation Repository jointly maintained by IOO and MERP, with access made available to WMO Secretariat staff.
29. Final evaluation reports should contain a management response with an action plan for accepted and explanations for rejected recommendations. WMO endorses the UNEG standard on disclosure policy and makes key evaluation products publicly accessible to bolster the Organization's public accountability.

² Regulation 13.7 Under the broader scheme of internal oversight, the Secretary-General shall establish an office to provide for an independent verification of financial, administrative and operational activities of WMO, including programme evaluation, monitoring mechanisms and consulting services.

30. For independent project evaluations, all key project stakeholders – i.e. the donor, the national constituents and key national partners as well as WMO officials concerned – receive a copy of the finalized evaluation report. This is the responsibility of the project manager.
31. To ensure transparency and accessibility, all evaluation information is stored in the WMO Evaluation repository and is accessible to all WMO Secretariat Staff.
32. Effective use of evaluation requires management to integrate evaluation results and recommendations into policies and programmes and conduct systematic follow-up to evaluation recommendations

APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

33. The Policy is approved by the Secretary General after taking the advice of the Audit and Oversight Committee and forms part of Standing Instructions. D/IOO and H/MERP are responsible for keeping the policy up to date.