



UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

THE USE OF EVALUATION IN UNODC: LEARNING AND IMPROVING THROUGH EVALUATIVE THINKING

Independent Evaluation Unit

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UNITED NATIONS
New York, 2008

In brief...

The self-evaluation was aimed at promoting learning and improvements in the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) through a review of the evaluation activities conducted since its inception. As the first evaluation of this type in UNODC, the exercise has proven beneficial and replication by other units is encouraged.

Evaluation use in UNODC reflects an emerging evaluative culture of importance to the organization. Evaluations have been used to improve project and programme interventions and provide decision-makers with information and have prompted internal debates.

A total of 66 evaluations were conducted in UNODC between January 2004 and May 2007. A total of 1,083 recommendations, lessons learned and best practices can be found in those reports.

A total of 579 recommendations were made in the period under review. Of the recommendations sampled for the exercise, 60 per cent have been partially or fully implemented. When considering only the recommendations that were accepted (75 per cent), the percentage of those implemented to some degree jumps to 80 per cent.

Seventy per cent of respondents found evaluation reports to be useful or very useful; 75 per cent characterized evaluations as having had some or considerable impact on projects and programmes.

Recommendations made in country project level evaluations have higher acceptance and implementation rates than those made in the Annual Evaluation Reports.

IEU has realized it must change certain business practices in order to consolidate the emerging evaluation culture and increase the quality of its products. Recommendations include adopting a utilization-focused evaluation approach, improving communications with counterparts and rationalizing its workload. The purpose of these recommendations is to help IEU contribute even more to UNODC's efforts to delivering on its mandates.

Evidence suggests that an evaluation culture is taking root in UNODC. The organization has used evaluations to its benefit and respondents value the quality of the reports.

Summary table of major findings, supporting evidence and recommendations

<i>Findings</i>	<i>Supporting evidence/examples</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
1. UNODC has used evaluations as a process for learning as well as a means to improve practices in the last four years. There is potential for increasing the use of evaluation in the organization. To do so, IEU must adjust the conceptual approach (model) it uses in order to increase the utility of evaluations.	Staff find evaluations useful but believe there is room for increased utility. Perceived emphasis on evaluations conducted for compliance reasons; need to consolidate nascent evaluation culture; meeting needs of Primary Intended Users (PIU) increases evaluation use.	IEU should adopt the Utilization-Focused Evaluation approach as the basis for conducting evaluations in UNODC. (Essential)
2. Communications between IEU and its counterparts have at times been deficient and thus have had negative effects upon some evaluation exercises.	Counterparts call for better dialogue with IEU; IEU recognizes deficiencies in the Unit's communication capacity.	IEU staff should undergo training in effective communication and facilitation. (Essential)
3. Rationalizing IEU's workload according to the resources available will increase the quality of evaluation products. As a means of consolidating an evaluation culture through developing capacity in the organization, IEU needs to provide close support to project/programme-led exercises.	Evaluations to date (10 in-depth) have taken an average of 13 months to complete; 36 per cent of recommendations made have been fully implemented (based on the sample); only 62 per cent of accepted AER recommendations have been implemented.	IEU should adjust its workload according to human, financial and material resources available. IEU needs to develop and exercise more discipline by not taking on new, unplanned assignments, unless an equivalent task is dropped from its work-plan as a result. (Essential)
4. No systematic rating has been conducted for ranking evaluation topics.	Inconsistent use of the eleven criteria already in existence; efforts to balance drugs and crimes issues.	IEU should implement a rating and ranking system for identifying potential evaluations issues. (Important)
5. Evaluation reports are the most visible product of IEU's work and must thus be of the highest quality. The quality of evaluation reports (texts) is important, especially for organizations that place a premium on documentation such as the UN. A majority deem reports to be useful or very useful.	70 per cent found evaluation reports to be useful or very useful; 75 per cent characterized evaluations as having had some or considerable impact; clear, specific, evidence-based recommendations were more likely to be accepted and implemented.	IEU should develop a Quality Assurance process (checklist) for evaluators to use when drafting TOR, designing the evaluation, conducting the exercise and drafting reports and recommendations. (Important)
6. IEU can improve its planning mechanisms.	Allow sufficient time for PIU participation; provide evaluators adequate time to conduct the exercise; flexibility in scoping.	IEU should use Evaluability Assessments as the primary input for planning individual evaluations. (Important)
7. A monitoring mechanism needs to be established; build upon current summary matrix, implementation plan and data collection instruments used for the present evaluation.	ExCom instructed IEU in April 2007 to monitor the implementation of recommendations.	IEU should implement a Recommendation Implementation Monitoring System based on instruments already in place as well as those developed for this evaluation. (Important)
8. Investing in professional development of staff is important for any organization.	There has been minimal investment in IEU professional development.	Senior management should support the professional development of IEU staff. (Important)
9. IEU requires evaluation resources for staff use (i.e. methodology texts, key journals, evaluation-related documents from other organizations and academic books).	IEU has no specialized materials for use by staff and consultants.	IEU should invest in creating a resource library of specialized texts and reports. (Advisable)
10. Use and accessibility of lessons learned (LL) and best practices (BP) identified in evaluation reports are limited.	50 per cent of survey respondents have used both LL and BP; 37 per cent neither; 11 per cent only LL; 2 per cent only BP.	IEU must identify an effective means of sharing lessons learned and best practices identified in evaluation reports as part of UNODC's knowledge management system. (Advisable)
11.		IEU should conduct a follow-up evaluation to the present exercise in three years. (Advisable)

Executive summary

In late 2003, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) became operational. Almost four years and 66 evaluations later, the Unit decided to engage in a self-evaluation exercise to assess how UNODC has used its products in order to learn from the past and improve its future work. The evaluation covered all evaluations produced between January 2004 and May 2007.

The exercise was designed as an improvement-oriented, formative self-evaluation. The Primary Intended User (PIU) of the evaluation is the Independent Evaluation Unit of UNODC. The Executive Director and Senior Management are important stakeholders in the exercise.

Methodology

Working under the general guiding principles of Utilization-Focused Evaluation, the evaluation emphasized the active involvement of IEU staff in all stages of the exercise. The evaluation collected data through interviews, an online survey, document reviews and a Recommendation-Use questionnaire. A random-stratified sample was taken from the project report.

The evaluation was constrained by some participants (all from the same section) not wanting to participate in the survey. A total of 66 per cent of those invited to take the survey started it but only 36 per cent completed it. Additionally, IEU staff were occupied with other tasks and did not devote as much time to the exercise as would have been ideal.

Main findings

Evaluation at UNODC:

- The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) was established as part of the changes introduced by the Executive Director;
- Prior to the creation of IEU, the evaluation function in UNODC was at best minimal;
- IEU approached evaluations at UNODC using the CIPP model as a guide;

Evaluation culture:

- In 2004 UNODC's evaluation culture was virtually non-existent, though this has changed considerably;
- It is perceived that evaluations have been conducted for compliance reasons and should instead be used for promoting improvements;
- IEU must encourage more interactive, collegial dialogue at all stages of the evaluation process;
- The value of evaluation lies in the discussions that take place previous to, during and after the exercise.

Evaluations conducted:

- During 2004-2007 66 evaluation reports were produced;
- A total of 579 recommendations, 337 lessons learned and 167 best practices were generated.

Use of evaluations:

- Evaluation use occurs even before reports are presented;
- 50 per cent of respondents use lessons learned and best practices;
- 75 per cent of recommendations made were accepted of which 80 per cent were implemented to some degree;
- Respondents rated the quality of recommendations favourably;
- Over 70 per cent viewed evaluation reports as useful or very useful.

Improving IEU:

- IEU should continue to focus on helping UNODC do better through evaluation;
- IEU needs to improve its communication with counterparts;
- Evaluations must address the needs of Primary Intended Users (PIU);
- IEU workload needs to be rationalized;
- Improved planning for conducting evaluations is necessary.

Monitoring the implementation of recommendations:

- IEU was given the responsibility for monitoring in April 2007;
- A simple yet effective system needs to be introduced.

Recommendations

A total of 11 recommendations are presented:

- IEU should adopt the Utilization-Focused approach as the basis for conducting evaluations in UNODC.
- IEU staff should undergo training in effective communication and facilitation.
- IEU should conduct one in-depth evaluation and provide close support to two others per cycle in addition to producing the Annual Evaluation Report, monitoring implementation of recommendations and assisting project evaluations.
- IEU should implement a rating and ranking system for identifying potential evaluations issues.
- IEU should develop a quality assurance process (checklist) for evaluators to use when drafting TOR, reports and recommendations.

- IEU should use evaluability assessments as the primary input for planning evaluations.
- IEU should design a recommendation implementation monitoring system based on instruments already in place as well as those developed for this evaluation.
- IEU staff should be supported in their professional development.
- IEU should invest in creating a resource library of specialized texts and reports.
- IEU should maintain a database of lessons learned and best practices (contingent on UNEG experiences).
- IEU should conduct a follow-up evaluation to the present exercise in three years.

Conclusions

Evidence suggests that an evaluation culture is taking root in UNODC. The organization has used evaluations to its benefit and respondents value the quality of the reports. Nonetheless, more work needs to be done in order to consolidate these gains. IEU needs to improve certain business practices in order to contribute to UNODC's efforts in delivering on its mandates.

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Introduction

1. In late 2003, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) became operational. Almost four years and 66 evaluations later, the Unit decided to engage in a self-evaluation exercise to assess how UNODC has used its products in order to learn from the past and improve its future work. The evaluation covered all evaluations produced between January 2004 and May 2007.
2. The evaluation report presents data collected through questionnaires, interviews, document reviews and a survey. Particular attention was devoted to collecting data on how to increase the use of evaluation and improving IEU business practices.
3. By definition, evaluation assesses merit and worth, and therefore, the report examines IEU's products and practices from that perspective. Designed as a learning/reflective exercise, the evaluation has helped IEU take stock of what happened during the time under review in order to determine how it can improve its practices.
4. The underlying premise of the evaluation is that there is always room for improvement. As part of the improvement process, IEU also requested that the evaluation make concrete suggestions to address the deficiencies identified.
5. The exercise was designed as an improvement-oriented, formative, self-evaluation. The Primary Intended User (PIU) of the evaluation is the Independent Evaluation Unit of UNODC. The Executive Director and Senior Management are important stakeholders in the exercise. Other evaluation "clients" within the organization are also part of the target group.

Methodology

6. Working under the general guiding principles of Utilization-Focused Evaluation (Patton, 1997), the evaluation stressed the need for the active involvement of IEU staff right from the outset of the exercise. The purpose of the evaluation, the Terms of Reference (TOR), the main evaluation questions, designing data collection instruments, the findings analysis and recommendations were discussed at each stage within IEU with the facilitation of the evaluator.

7. The evaluator ensured that important issues were not glossed over or avoided altogether. The evaluator, as author of the report, is solely responsible for its content. In the few cases of disagreement between the evaluator and the PIU, due note will be made of this in the body of the report.

Data collection

8. Document reviews were conducted for:

- determining the types and number of evaluations conducted in the last three years;
- determining the number of recommendations, lessons learned and best practices produced;
- context setting, identifying normative issues and matters related to UNODC's evaluation system.

9. Two instruments were designed:

- I. Recommendation-Use Questionnaire (RUQ): collected data on how many recommendations were accepted, implemented and reasons related to their use/non-use;
- II. Online Survey: collected general information on UNODC's evaluation culture as well as the quality and use of lessons learned and best practices. Question Pro, a specialized online survey service provider, was used.

10. Interview guides were designed for semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. The guides explored, among others, issues related to IEU business practices, challenges and viable recommendations for improvements.

Sampling

11. Given resource and time constraints, a sample of recommendations had to be made. In selecting the recommendations to be included in the RUQ, the following samples were taken:

- All the recommendations made in the Annual Evaluation Reports (2004, 2005 and 2006) were selected;
- All the recommendations made in the thematic evaluations (10 reports) were selected and
- A random-stratified sample was taken from the project reports. The sample consisted of 50 per cent from the total project reports (24 out of 48 reports).

12. A total of 60 per cent of the reports were included in the RUQ; 332 recommendations (57 per cent of all recommendations) were in the RUQ.

13. Participants in the survey were selected for inclusion if they were actual or potential users of evaluations and worked in the Divisions of Operations, Policy Analysis, Treaty Affairs or Management. A total of 148 individuals, both at Headquarters and in the field, were identified.

14. The interviews aimed to cover all members of the Executive Committee, four professional staff at IEU, and a sample of convenience of Senior Management.

Additional informants

15. Interviewing consultants that had been hired in the past by IEU was not contemplated in the original design of the exercise. Given that the role played by consultants emerged as an important issue in the initial stages of data gathering, the evaluator decided to contact a few consultants in order to obtain their views on various relevant topics. The sample was one of convenience. Five former consultants were sent a series of questions via email; three responded.

Constraints

16. Unfortunately, the four professional staff of IEU were unable to participate to the desired extent at the various stages of the evaluation. During the period in which this evaluation was conducted (June 1st through September 30th) the key IEU staff were: conducting field missions on two separate evaluations; overseeing the reformulation of evaluation policies and guidelines by two external consultants; supporting project evaluations from field offices and preparing and conducting a training seminar in South Africa.

17. As is pointed out in the body of the report, the multiple roles played by IEU, the workload and deficiencies in planning impact adversely on the quality and ultimate use of evaluations. This evaluation exercise was directly affected by such issues.

18. A total of 146 persons were invited to participate in the online survey, of which 97 (66 per cent) started it. Only 36 per cent of those invited, i.e. 53 persons, completed the whole survey. This disappointing result was despite three reminders having been sent out. A contributing factor for the low response rate was the August holidays for many HQ based staff. Nonetheless, the data gathered through the survey is used in the report; its importance, though, must be placed in its proper context.

19. Another point related to the online survey: one participant asked to be removed from the list of those invited to participate; another communicated that they did not want to participate; a third felt the survey was skewed so as to obtain a certain type of responses and therefore did not take the survey. All three came from the same Section. Four persons from that Section had been invited to participate and none took the survey. Discrete attempts by the evaluator to encourage their participation failed.

20. While conducting the evaluation, important issues emerged that fell outside the scope of the exercise; for example, why do country programmes such as Afghanistan or large projects not have a dedicated evaluation unit in situ? What should be the levels (benchmarks) for judging recommendation acceptance and implementation as adequate? These issues should be explored by IEU.

Issues regarding self-evaluation

21. The evaluator is a member of IEU and actively participated in the work of the Unit during the period under review. This fact alone may give the impression that a clear conflict of interest exists; this is not the case.

22. Given that the evaluation is focused on learning and promoting improvements through a process of reflection using evaluative methods, IEU considers the exercise a great example of a self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is defined as an evaluation at the project/subprogramme level conducted by the persons who designed and/or implemented the activities under review.

23. Self-evaluations are routinely conducted by UNODC projects with relatively small budgets. Self-evaluations are by definition not independent. Nonetheless, IEU would achieve little (and fool even fewer) if it attempted to brush important issues under the carpet during this exercise; it would be a self-defeating act.

24. Additionally, promoting an evaluative culture is best done by example, and IEU has taken the first step by conducting this type of evaluation. Other units are encouraged to undergo reflective evaluative exercises similar to this one and share their findings with colleagues. Doing this encourages an organization to learn from its actions.

25. It must also be remembered that it is the prerogative of the Executive Director to initiate an external, independent evaluation of the work done by IEU at any time.

Findings and analysis

Evaluation at UNODC

26. The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) was established as part of the changes introduced by the Executive Director in 2003. Reflecting the need to strengthen the internal evaluation capacity as recognized in the UNODC Operational Priorities, IEU was constituted with a strong and clear mandate in the context of the restructuring of UNODC. IEU became operational in early 2004.

27. IEU operates under the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8) as well as the professional guidelines set by the United Nations Evaluation Group's Norms and Standards.

28. Prior to the creation of IEU, the evaluation function in UNODC was at best minimal, at times undergoing periods of near complete abandonment and under-use. Consequently, the organization's evaluation culture was practically non-existent.

29. Prior to 2004, evaluations had been conducted almost exclusively at the project level. These evaluations were ultimately done in order to comply with donor guidelines and not geared for encouraging organizational learning and improvement. IEU found the quality of the final products varied, with acceptable reports being the exception rather than the norm.

30. IEU was originally established under the Policy Analysis and Research Branch of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs but was re-located in 2007 and now reports directly, on substantive matters, to the Executive Director of UNODC. IEU is responsible for planning and coordinating the evaluation activities of UNODC.

31. IEU is a small unit with five staff (three professionals and two support staff), all funded from extra budgetary resources. Since 2006 the Unit has a Junior Professional Officer. Additional support is provided through the occasional use of interns.

32. One of the first tasks IEU accomplished was in establishing UNODC's new evaluation system. During 2004, IEU developed and formulated four important documents that formed the necessary foundation for institutionalizing the "revitalized" evaluation function within the organization:

- I. Guiding principles for evaluation at UNODC—provides a set of guidelines that evaluators of the activities of UNODC should uphold in practice;

- II. Independent evaluation function: a strategic framework—aimed at creating a common understanding among UNODC management, staff, partners and Member States about what evaluation is and its role in the strategic management of UNODC mandates;
 - III. Standard format and guidelines for project evaluation report—to assist evaluators in preparing a standard project evaluation report by providing an outline of information to be collected and assessed; and
 - IV. Guidelines for project self-evaluation—guidelines and a self-evaluation template to assist managers charged with the responsibility of carrying out or supervizing self-evaluations. The self-evaluation system is available online under ProFi.
33. During the three years, 2004-2007, IEU produced:
- Three Annual Evaluation Reports
 - Ten Thematic/In-depth evaluations and provided assistance to
 - Fifty-three project evaluations¹
34. IEU approached evaluations at UNODC using the CIPP² model as a guide. The various normative documents produced by IEU in 2004 clearly reflect the spirit of this approach, and thematic evaluations embody this philosophy. A more detailed analysis of the CIPP model and the perception that evaluations at UNODC emphasize process over impact can be found in the section entitled: Types of Evaluation.
35. There are other models on conducting evaluations available that may be better suited to the current situation of UNODC.

Interpretation

On evaluation at UNODC

Evaluation at UNODC was designed by IEU under the assumption that the organization as a whole had a basic understanding of evaluation, its uses and benefits. IEU overestimated the organizational readiness and acceptance that the revitalized evaluation function would have among UNODC colleagues. Likewise, IEU overestimated its capacity to effectively promote an evaluation culture.

The CIPP model does have its advantages, though it has been perceived to have placed too much emphasis on process rather than impact. Adopting a different conceptual approach towards evaluation in UNODC would be beneficial. The findings presented throughout this report support the need to change the approach used by IEU.

¹Fifty-three project evaluations were identified during the document review. 5 of these were not included in the RUQ sampling pool since the reports were not available for examination. IEU backstopped all fifty-three exercises.

²CIPP is an evaluation model that stands for context, input, process and product. CIPP evaluations can focus either on each individual component or, as in the case of thematic evaluations at UNODC, all four parts.

The “Utilization-Focus Evaluation” approach, as a guiding framework, is worthwhile implementing.

Evaluation professionals are familiar with the Utilization-Focus approach and there is ample literature available for non-experts to familiarize themselves with the model. The essence of Utilization-Focused evaluations, as the name implies, is use. The value of an evaluation has to be measured by the use it has. As such, useful evaluations require addressing the needs of the intended user of the exercise in a systematic manner.

Refer to Recommendation # 1 for suggested actions.

Evaluation culture

36. As stated earlier, in 2004 UNODC’s evaluation culture was virtually non-existent. Not only was the evaluation function absent, the anxiety that the creation of the Independent Evaluation Unit caused is supported by anecdotal evidence.

37. Evaluation, as a discipline, has evolved through the years and the uses it is put to have evolved. Conducting evaluations for accountability purposes or compliance reasons has given way to emphasizing learning, programme improvement and knowledge generation. The overall purpose of evaluation is to determine value and merit of that which is being evaluated.

38. The online survey and the interviews produced an interesting picture regarding the current attitudes of UNODC staff vis à vis evaluation. For example, respondents were asked:

Question: In your opinion, what have been the reasons for conducting evaluations in UNODC?

The answers that obtained the most aggregate ranked first and second choice votes were:

- I. To comply with UNODC rules requiring project/programme evaluations (compliance)
- II. To contribute to project/programme and/or organizational improvements (improvement)
- III. To determine the merit or worth of what is being evaluated (judgment)

Tied for fourth place were reasons of accountability, assist decision makers and learning. Conducting evaluations for public relations reasons came in last place.

39. The notion that evaluations at UNODC were primarily of a compliance nature was unintentionally re-enforced by IEU’s own actions. In the 2004 AER, for example, IEU stated:

“IEU has the responsibility to make it possible for UNODC both to satisfy compliance with the accountability requirements of the governing bodies, and its role as a vital management tool for senior management and programme/project managers.”

40. Complicating matters even more is the widespread view among those UNODC staff interviewed that IEU had been overly jealous of its independence, over-reacting when it perceived that pressure was being exerted on it regarding substantive issues and thus not creating a positive image of the evaluation function.

41. Some of the comments in this regard were:

“IEU pushes the independence issue too far [...] and therefore the perception is that IEU is outside UNODC.”

42. And more tellingly,

“IEU must learn, must listen. It is part of the system [...] while preserving its independence.” (Note: The “must learn” and “must listen” were not intended as orders, but rather, the informant was highlighting the perception that IEU does not listen or learn, using the fact that it is independent to deflect any dialogue.)

43. IEU staff expressed that the “independence” regards substantive issues (e.g. methods, report contents, team composition etc) and is at the heart of producing credible evaluation products. That type of independence does not mean IEU is outside of UNODC.

44. In the same vein, another informant expressed the need for:

“[...] more interactive, collegial dialogue at all stages of the process [...]”

While one senior manager stated:

“[IEU] looks like another police body: Gotcha!”

45. There was one case when, indeed, a stakeholder insisted on changes being made to an evaluation report against the will of IEU, that in hindsight can be attributed to that individual’s very limited understanding of evaluation. Senior Management rightly intervened in favour of IEU and set the matter straight. Yet IEU remained apprehensive and continued to be jealous of its independence. As more and more evaluation reports were produced and the tone of the debate became more volatile, the quality of communication decreased.³ A vicious circle followed.

46. A couple of informants mentioned that IEU was perceived as being “too close” to certain donors, implying that information was being shared prematurely and perhaps exposing the organization to criticism based on preliminary findings. One informant stated:

“It often seems as if IEU is instrumentalized by external detractors.”

³The issue of communication is explored in greater detail later in the report.

47. The same informant stressed that the need for IEU to lobby for donor funds justified a relationship with donors but it was perceived as if IEU was also vulnerable to external influences. Specific evidence of this was not provided. The perception in itself is enough to warrant mentioning.

48. On the other hand, a positive sign of an evolving evaluative culture was also captured by the Online Survey. Respondents were asked:

Question: In your opinion, what should be the reasons for conducting evaluations in UNODC?

The answers that obtained the most aggregate ranked first and second choice votes were:

- I. To contribute to project/programme and/or organizational improvements (improvement)
- II. To determine the merit or worth of what is being evaluated (judgment)
- III. To assist decision makers responsible for deciding policy (decision-making)

49. Tied for fourth place were reasons of accountability and learning. Compliance reasons dropped to fifth followed by public relations last.

50. Another sign that evaluation, and more important, evaluative thinking, is taking root in UNODC is a comment submitted by a staff member:

“[...] evaluation reports generate the so much needed discussion on the usefulness of UNODC's undertakings - it is currently the only platform in which contentious views are being displayed. It is therefore key to further strengthen the IEU function and transmit to all project managers an evaluation culture, which entails critical review of one's action, corrective measures, learning from good and bad experiences, sharing lessons, building upon evaluation findings, etc. Therefore, it is not just the reports that matter so much to the health of UNODC, but the entire process and discussions that take place previous to, during and after an evaluation.”

51. As part of its efforts to promote an evaluative culture, IEU is conducting a series of training seminars for UNODC staff (at HQ and in the field) on evaluation⁴. Participants have started to use the skills acquired during the training and helped colleagues with managing evaluations. Unfortunately, it has also been reported that some trainees have been asked not to devote too much time on evaluations because of competing priorities.

⁴The Strategic Planning Unit and IEU have joined forces and conduct training in their respective areas as part of the same event.

Interpretation

On evaluation culture

UNODC's evaluation culture has evolved from being virtually non-existent to one with roots taking hold. IEU must adapt its business practices in order to foster the organization's nascent evaluation culture. Recommendations to this effect are made later in the report.

To what degree the fear of evaluation manifests itself as a criticism of IEU is difficult to ascertain. It is normal for some anxiety to exist but as the evaluation culture grows it will hopefully subside. Undoubtedly, any resistance towards evaluation could be attributed to shortcomings in IEU. Yet it would be disingenuous to dismiss other possible contributing factors such as: the extent to which learning is encouraged in the organization; the level of understanding of what evaluation is and how it should be used; and/or the degree of proactive support from senior management for evaluation. These issues are highlighted in order to provoke a constructive discussion on the matter.

What more can senior management do to support evaluation? How can it nurture the nascent evaluation culture in UNODC?

IEU expressed the need for a specific recommendation to be made encouraging senior managers to learn more about evaluation. The author believes the issue is one better addressed through improved communication between IEU and UNODC management and a shared understanding of how best to promote evaluations. Those truly interested in consolidating evaluation will find the time and resources to do so.

Depicting IEU as a police body is unfortunate especially since the comment was made by a senior manager. IEU must re-double its efforts in explaining what evaluation is and is not.

Some members of IEU felt that the quotes found in this (and other) sections are not representative of opinions in UNODC, since the majority of the quotes presented are from HQ based senior managers. Although this observation is true, the role that senior managers can play in promoting (or not) evaluation in the organization required their opinions to be emphasized to a greater extent.

It is not surprising that compliance is ranked highest given the experiences of staff with the evaluation system that became operational in 2004.

Just as staff gain an appreciation of evaluation, IEU must also realize that it is not immune to being counter-productive in promoting an evaluation culture. The perception that it does not listen and engage in collegial deliberations is not productive. Whether or not the perception is founded, the fact remains that IEU can improve its communication and style of engaging colleagues while still preserving its independence. They are not mutually exclusive (refer to the Communication section for more information and corresponding recommendation).

With hindsight, IEU could have reacted more constructively in deflecting what it perceived as, and at times were, encroachments of its independence.

The perception that IEU is “too close” to some donors is a subjective matter, difficult to verify without explicit evidence to support the assertion. It is known that Member States have used evaluations to stress certain issues to Senior Management. IEU should not shy away from engaging any stakeholder, as long as it is within the parameters of the established code of conduct for evaluators.

It is encouraging to see that staff view evaluation as a means of promoting project, programme and organizational improvements. More fundamental perhaps is the comment made that it is not so much the evaluation report that counts as the evaluative deliberation that takes place before, during and after an exercise. Actions stemming from the evaluative process are at the heart of a useful evaluation.

IEU training seminars contribute to the consolidation of an evaluation culture.

Evaluations conducted

52. During the 41 months under review (January 2004- May 2007) a total of 66 evaluations were conducted in UNODC. For five of those evaluations, sufficient information was unavailable and therefore only 61 evaluations were analyzed⁵ during the course of this exercise.

Table 1. Evaluation totals

<i>Type of evaluation report</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Annual evaluation report	3
Global programme/thematic project	10
	48
<i>Total</i>	61

The geographic distribution of the evaluations conducted is reflected in table 2.

Table 2. Total reports by region

<i>Type/region</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage of evaluation reports</i>
AER	3	5
Global programme/thematic	10	16
Africa and the Middle East	16	27
Central and Eastern Europe	2	3
Latin America and the Caribbean	11	18
South and East Asia and the Pacific	9	15
West and Central Asia	10	16
<i>Total</i>	61	100%

The project evaluations were further broken down by the geographic coverage of the projects themselves as shown in table 3⁶.

⁵For a full list of reports included, see annex 1.

⁶The reason for this is explained in greater detail in the Use of Evaluation section.

Table 3: Project evaluation reports by type and region

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country project</i>	<i>Regional project</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage of project reports</i>
Africa and the Middle East	11	5	16	33
Central and Eastern Europe	1	1	2	4
Latin America and the Caribbean	10	1	11	23
South and East Asia and the Pacific	5	4	9	19
West and Central Asia	6	4	10	21
<i>Total</i>	33	15	48	100%

The 61 evaluation reports contain a total of 1,083 separate recommendations, lessons learned and best practices as shown in table 4.

Table 4. Breakdown of recommendations, lessons learned and best practices

<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Lessons learned</i>	<i>Best practices</i>
579	337	167

Interpretation

On evaluations conducted

IEU, with three evaluation professionals, conducted 10 thematic evaluations, produced three Annual Evaluation Reports and provided support to an additional 53 project evaluations. Although there are no benchmarks as to how many evaluations can be conducted per professional evaluator in a year, anecdotal evidence indicates that the level of output by IEU is high. Not all evaluation exercises are equal and therefore comparisons are difficult to make.

Within the United Nations Secretariat the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME) as set out in ST/SGB/2000/8 established a minimum number of in-depth evaluations to be conducted. Rule 107.2/c/iii states "At least one in-depth evaluation study shall be undertaken each year. Such a study shall normally be completed within two years."

Additional information as to what this means can be found in the Workload section.

Use of evaluations

53. Evaluation use in UNODC is, in practice, equated with the number of recommendations implemented. Evaluation reports can highlight issues resolved during the exercise as well as identifying lessons learned and best practices though no formal actions must be taken as a result.

54. Evaluations at UNODC, as stated in the organizational culture section, are perceived to be conducted primarily for complying with rules and only after that does the

concept of “use” appear; they are used for programme/project improvement. Assisting decision makers and learning are further down the list.

55. There are examples of projects and programmes using evaluations conducted in other parts of the organization as the basis for adjusting their own activities and adopting best practices. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit reported that it used the Tools and Toolkits evaluation to assist them in designing their own toolkit.

56. There is evidence that sometimes issues are addressed or resolved during the evaluation as a direct result of the exercise itself. The Global Programme Against Corruption for example, suspended plans of printing additional toolkits given the preliminary findings of the aforementioned evaluation. Similarly, during the thematic evaluation in Central Asia, managers did not wait for the report to come out, withdrawing project proposals they had submitted to the Project Proposal Committee in order to incorporate elements identified during the exercise.

57. Likewise, the present exercise was underway when IEU decided to tackle the communication problems that were being identified during the course of the evaluation as an area where improvement was needed. Some preliminary action has been taken by IEU in this respect.

58. During the course of conducting interviews for the present evaluation, the evaluator shared with relevant units in UNODC the experiences from other organizations on knowledge management and the promotion of institutional learning. In particular the experiences of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada) were highlighted. The evaluator encouraged those responsible for UNODC’s research activities and strategic planning to review IDRC’s practices as possible sources of best practices.

59. A different type of use for evaluation products is as an input for public relations. The Global Assessment Programme incorporates information from the evaluation of its activities into briefing materials and presentations. The fact that the evaluation is publicized as a result promotes transparency and allows the public to examine the programme in more detail if it so wishes.

Interpretation

On use of evaluations

Equating evaluation “use” to simple quantitative formulas such as percentage of recommendations accepted and implemented is misleading. Persons bored by matters they associate with processes are easily seduced by “hard numbers” since they believe these are indicative of bottom-line “results”. Appreciating qualitative information, especially if it deals with less tangible issues such as knowledge and insights acquired through an evaluation, is difficult.

Learning is one of the purposes for conducting evaluations and as such, inculcating evaluative thinking becomes a sine qua non of that type of exercise in particular. The use of evaluation for learning must be encouraged by any organization

striving for leadership in its field of action. It is important, therefore, to promote evaluative thinking.

Focusing exclusively on percentages of recommendations used encourages a passive-reactive mindset towards evaluation. The Primary Intended User (PIU) waits for the exercise to happen, reacts to the report (often defensively) and soon moves on to another task. Ownership? Learning? Evaluative thinking? Not a priority.

As the evidence shows, evaluations are used in many ways, even during the exercise itself. The more engaged primary intended users are, the higher the chance of “non-traditional” (i.e. were the recommendations implemented) use occurring. Corrective actions may be made without waiting for the report to be published. Learning may occur when new information emerges and is assimilated, leading to different behaviour; or different actors are brought together and engage in sharing experiences. Even learning about evaluation itself (known as process-use) may also occur.

Evaluation reports must take note of this type of results yet be clear that the corrective measures applied may not necessarily address all elements related to the issue. Equally important, recommendations may still be required on particular matters related to the issue that was addressed.

Use of lessons learned and best practices

60. Sometimes evaluations identify lessons learned (LL) and best practices (BP) during the course of the exercise. The evaluation collected data as to how the various stakeholders of evaluations had used the LL/BP identified in reports. The primary instrument used to collect this data was the Online Survey.

61. A total of 93 per cent of the respondents (59 individuals) answered that they had read an evaluation report fully or partially. Figure 1 shows the answers⁷ to the question: Have you used lessons learned and or best practices found in evaluation reports?

Figure 1. Use of lessons learned and best practices

Frequency analysis				
	Answer	Count	Per cent	
1.	Only lessons learned	6	11.11%	
2.	Only best practices	1	1.85%	
3.	Both	27	50.00%	
4.	Neither	20	37.04%	
	Total	54	100%	

⁷Only 54 individuals answered the question.

62. Figure 2 shows the respondent's reasons for not having used lessons learned or best practices. Figure 3 reflects the reasons respondents expressed for using LL and BP. Figure 4 refers to the constraints respondents faced when trying to use LL and BP.

63. Respondents rated the quality of LL and BP favourably. Issues related to credibility, timeliness, relevance and applicability were rated positively. Figure 5 shows respondents' views as to how LL and BP can be improved.

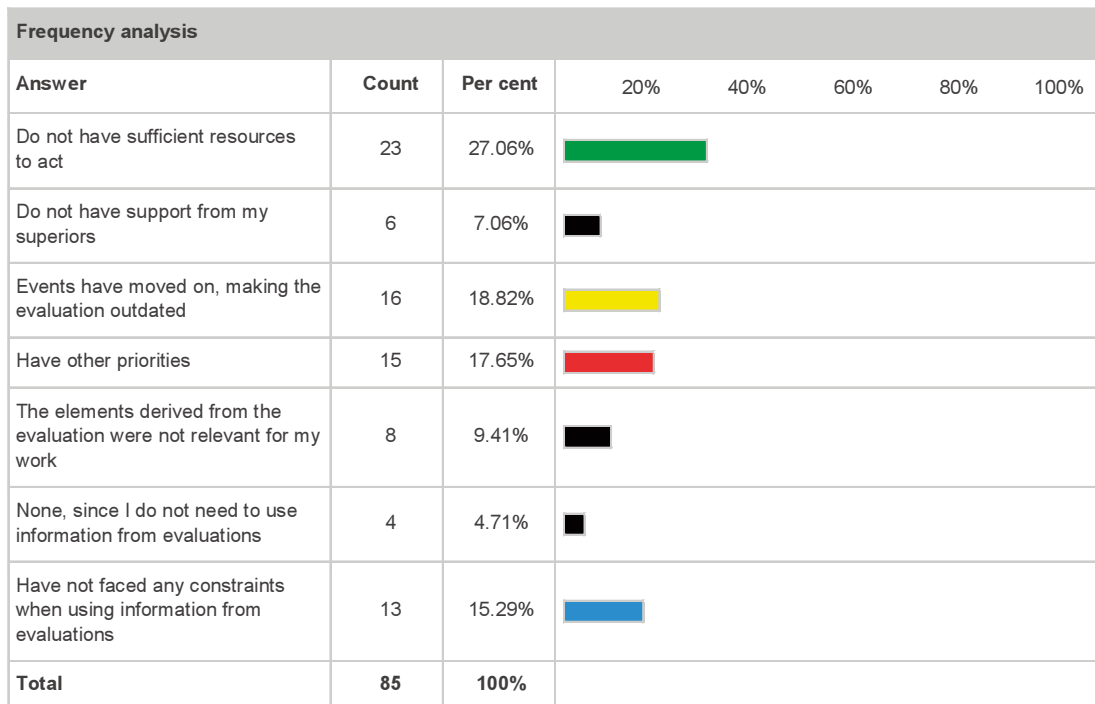
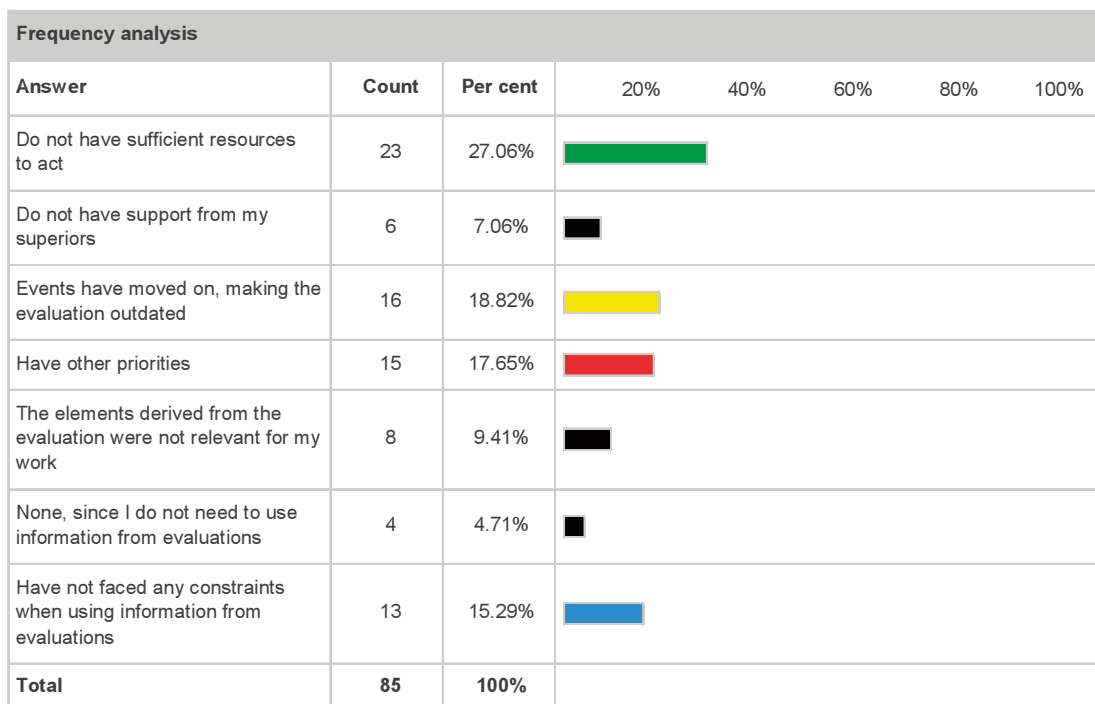
Figure 2. Reasons for not using lessons learned and best practices

Frequency analysis				
	Answer	Count	Per cent	20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
1.	Have not come across lessons learned/best practices in a report	3	8.33%	
2.	The quality of the lessons learned/best practices was poor	4	11.11%	
3.	Have not needed to use lessons learned/best practices from a report in my work	7	19.44%	
4.	The lessons learned/best practices did not apply to my work	9	25.00%	
5.	The lessons learned/best practices were not credible	3	8.33%	
6.	The lessons learned/best practices were not timely	2	5.56%	
7.	Apart from reports, do not know where to find them	8	22.22%	
	Total	36	100%	

Figure 3. Reasons for using lessons learned and best practices*

Frequency analysis				
	Answer	Count	Per cent	20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
1.	Policy development	16	16.33%	
2.	Designing a new project/programme	26	26.53%	
3.	Correcting ongoing activities	17	17.35%	
4.	Incorporating them into a project extension	17	17.35%	
5.	General knowledge	21	21.43%	
6.	Other	1	1.02%	
	Total	98	100%	

*Only 54 individuals answered the question.

Figure 4. Constraints in using LL and BP***Figure 5. How to improve the quality of LL and BP in evaluation reports**

*More than one answer possible.

Interpretation

On lessons learned and best practices

There is some evidence of learning having occurred as a result of evaluations in UNODC, though there is no system in place to track it. It is relatively easier to measure use of lessons learned, best practices and the implementation of recommendations. This type of use can in and of itself have a learning dimension, though what the data shows is more related to actual use than learning having taken place.

The use of LL and BP in UNODC is clear. There is, unfortunately, little information available as to what constitutes a benchmark in this regard. IEU could encourage UNEG to study the matter and thus gain an understanding as to what UNODC's level of use means in relation to other UN entities.

Making LL and BP available beyond reports would facilitate use. The potential impact this would have could be great, since LL and BP are used for designing new projects or improving existing ones. The limitation of resources does curtail the use of LL and BP. Additionally, IEU can increase the quality of LL and BP by stressing evaluators draft them with the four elements identified in figure 5.

Refer to recommendation # 10 for suggested actions.

Use of recommendations

64. The data on the use of recommendations was collected using the Recommendation Use Questionnaire.

65. In 2004 ExCom decided it would track the implementation of recommendations. No data was collected in any systematic manner in the past three years.⁸ ExCom decided that as of April 2007 IEU would be responsible for tracking the implementation of recommendations.

66. As part of the data collection of this exercise, a considerable amount of information regarding the use of recommendations was gathered. Recommendations made in IEU reports are not binding on the organization.

67. Using the inventory⁹ of evaluations as a starting point the following graphs and tables provide an idea as to the extent of the use of recommendations:

⁸See the Recommendation Implementation Monitoring System section for further details.

⁹Refer to the Methodology section for further information regarding the sample.

Table 5. Recommendations accepted

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Accepted	248	75%
Not accepted	41	12%
Not known/no response	43	13%

n=332

Table 6. Recommendations implemented (of those accepted)

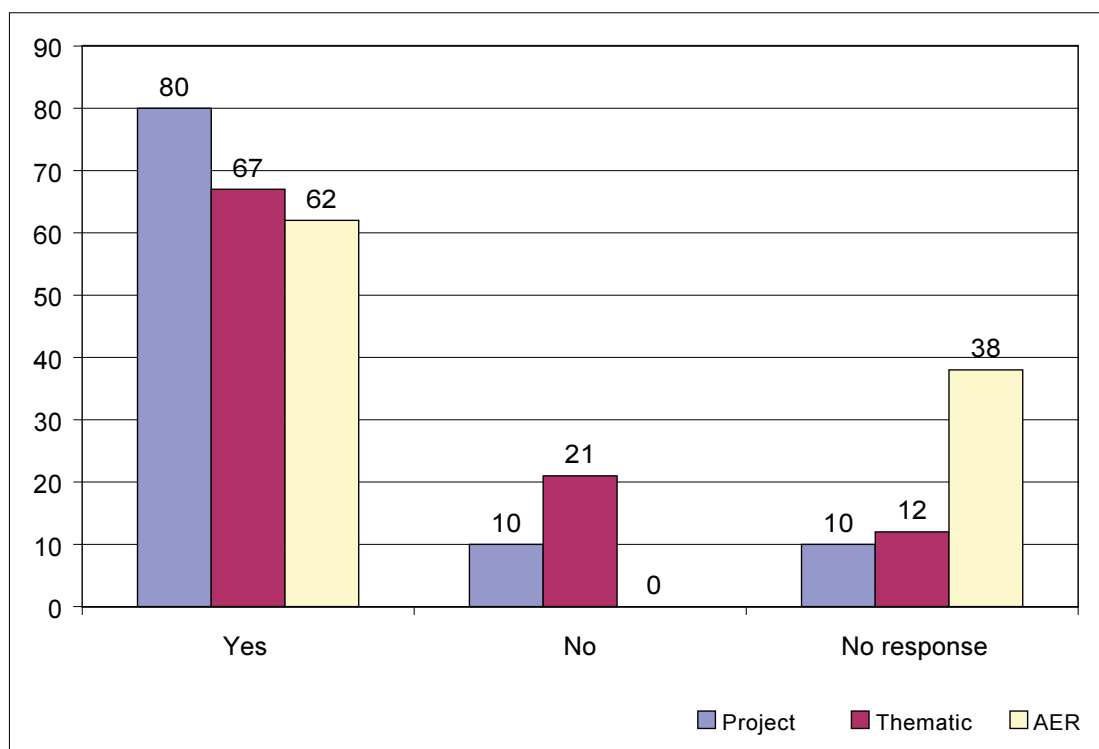
<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Fully	119	48%
Partially	79	32%
No	47	19%
Not known/no response	3	1%

n=248

Table 7. Recommendations implemented (of total made)

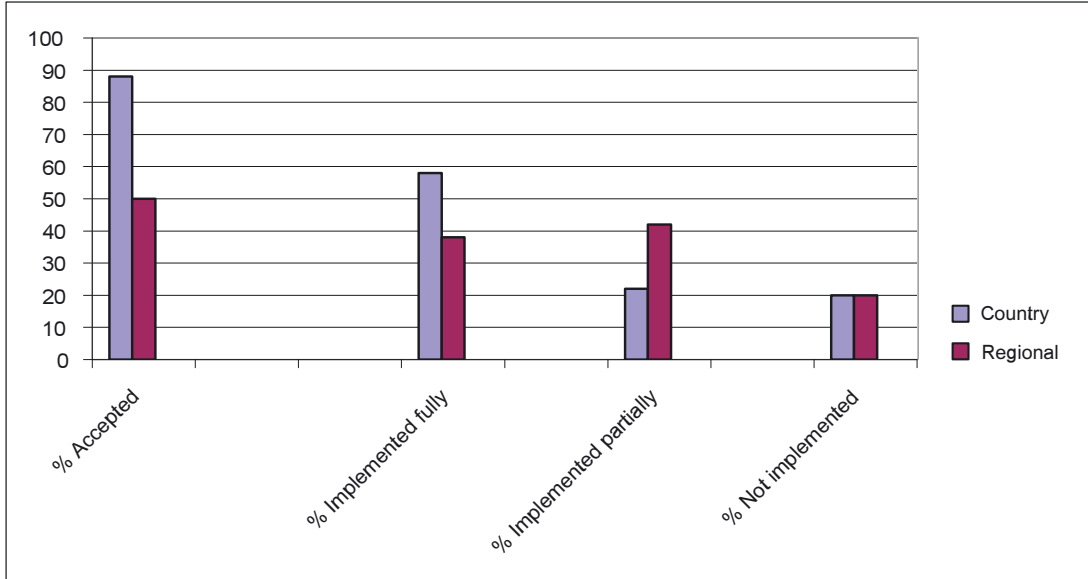
<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Percentage (n=332)</i>
Fully	36%
Partially	24%
No	14%
Was not accepted	13%
Not known/no response	13%

An interesting picture emerges when the data is organized by evaluation type:

Figure 6. Percentage of recommendations implemented (of those accepted) by evaluation type

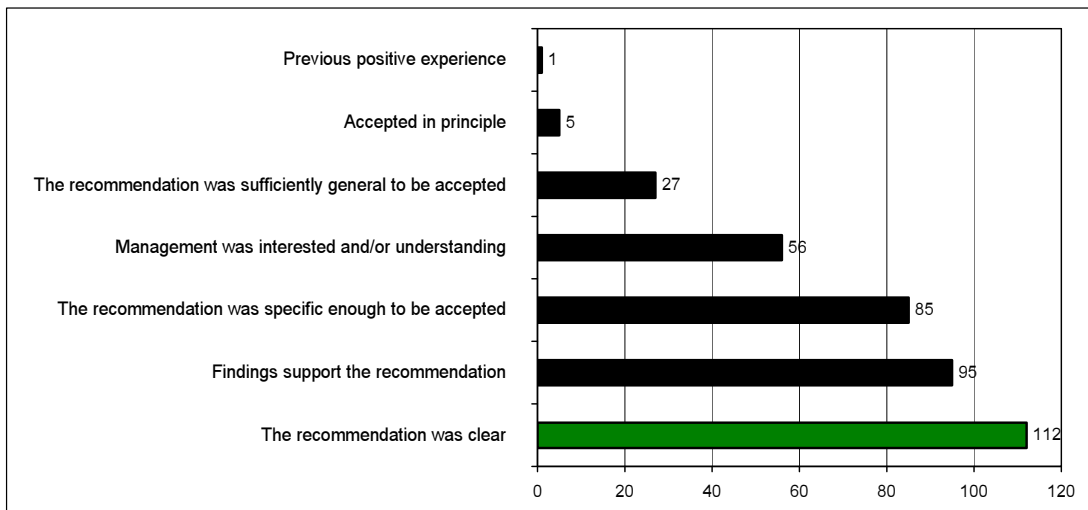
A closer analysis of project data reveals the following:

Figure 7. Percentage of recommendations implemented (of those accepted) by project evaluation type

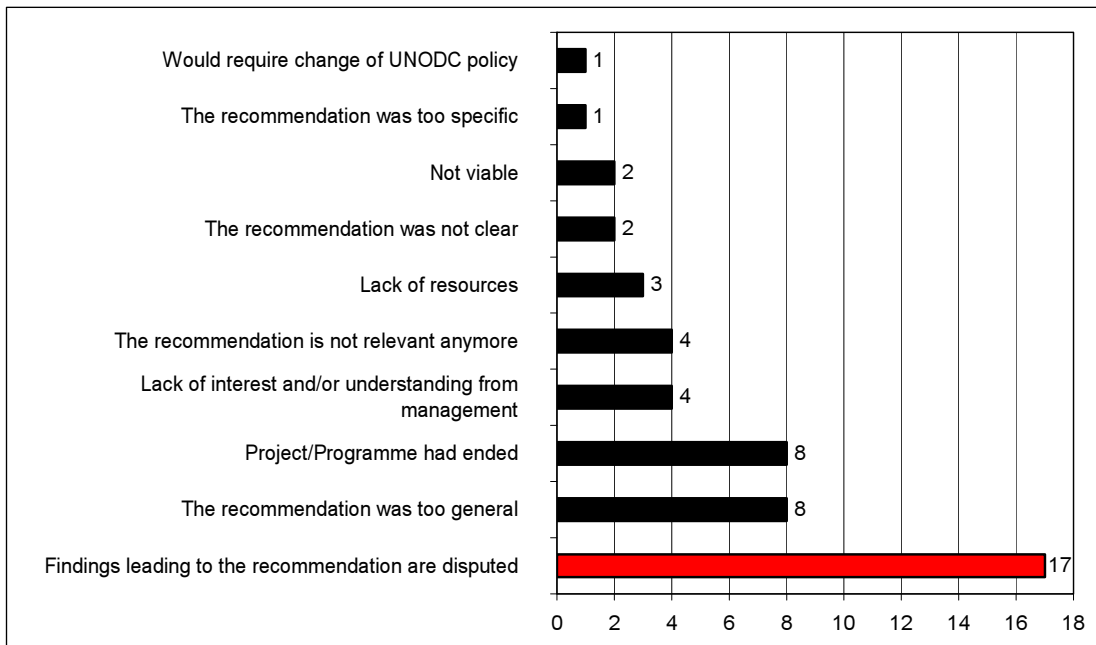


68. Other issues the questionnaire explored were the reasons why recommendations were/were not accepted and similarly regarding implementation. Figure 8 shows the reasons leading to recommendations being accepted.

Figure 8. Reasons why recommendations were accepted*

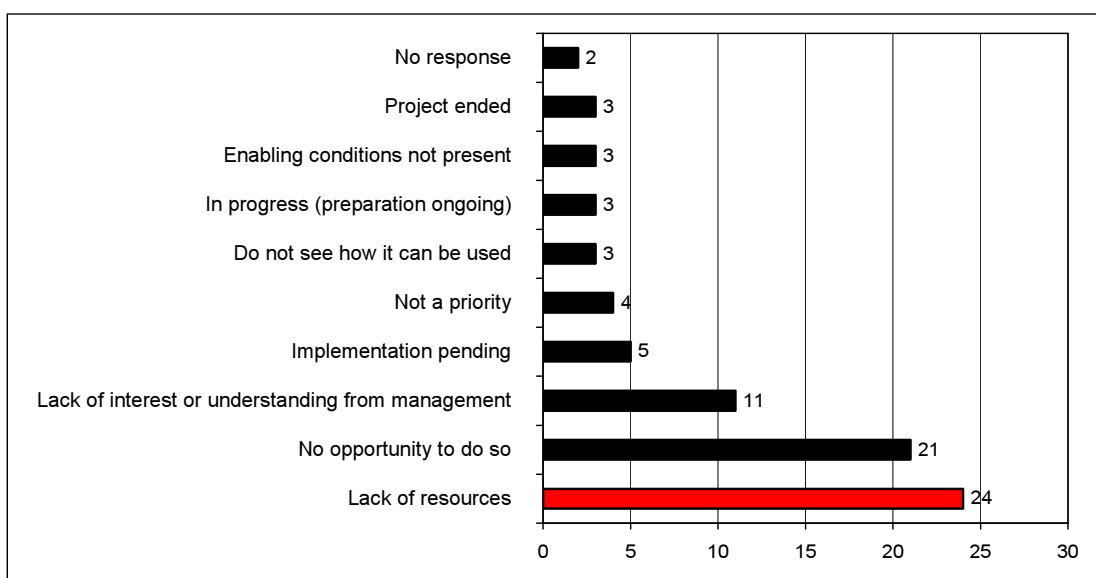


*More than one answer possible.

Figure 9. Reasons why recommendations were not accepted*

69. The partial implementation of recommendations was primarily attributed to them being underway (and thus not fully implemented) and due to lack of resources.

70. The main reasons cited for non-implementation were insufficient resources and not having the opportunity to implement them yet. Figure 10 shows the reasons for no implementation at all.

Figure 10. Non-implementation reasons

*More than one answer possible.

71. Information regarding the quality of recommendations was also collected. Figures 11 and 12 show the ratings provided by respondents to key quality issues.

Figure 11. Were the recommendations ...?

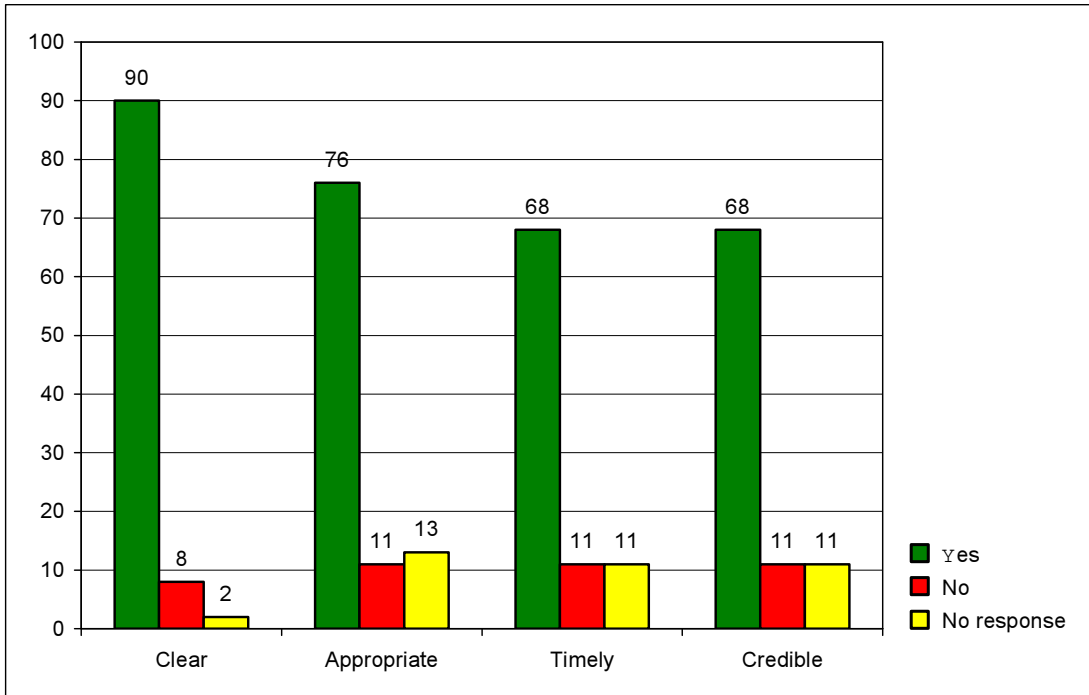
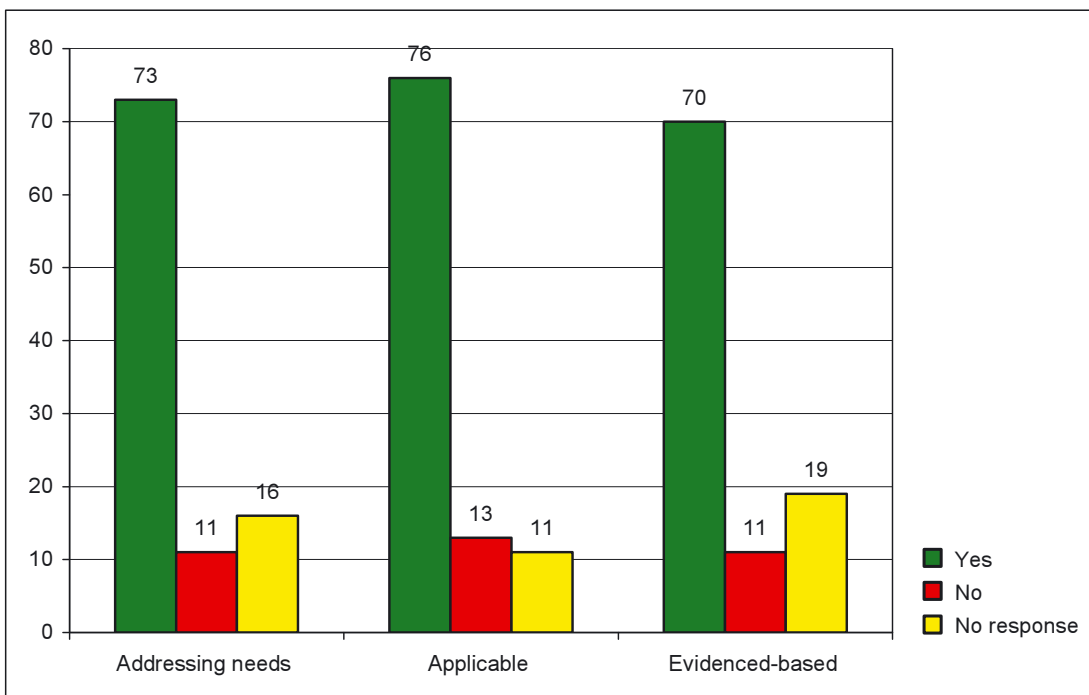


Figure 12. Were the recommendations ...?



Interpretation

On recommendations

In the absence of benchmarks, it is impossible to determine what constitutes an adequate level of accepted/implemented recommendations. The sample taken indicates that 75 per cent of recommendations made in evaluation reports were accepted. Of those, 48 per cent have been implemented. An additional 32 per cent have been partially implemented. In other words, 80 per cent of the recommendations accepted have been implemented to some degree.

The implementation rate drops to 36 per cent for fully and 24 per cent to partially when considering all recommendations made. In other words, of all recommendations made, 60 per cent have been implemented to some degree.

It is also important to keep in mind that recommendations are not equal. Some recommendations may address “simple” issues such as adjusting a monitoring indicator as opposed to one requiring the organization to develop a strategy. The statistics make no distinction between these recommendations.

Furthermore, the acceptance/implementation rate of project level recommendations distorts the overall numbers. It could be argued that the comparatively lower level of acceptance/implementation of recommendations from AER reports is a cause for concern since the nature of these has an organization-wide implication. Equally disturbing is the lack of information as to whether or not many AER recommendations had been implemented at all as shown in figure 6.

Figure 6 and figure 7 highlight a trend that merits further review by IEU in the future. Acceptance of recommendations and their implementation rates decrease the “closer” the evaluation exercise gets to HQ. What is the cause of this phenomenon? Are project evaluations conducted differently or is the evaluation culture more developed in the field than at headquarters?

Clear, evidence-based recommendations increase the likelihood of acceptance and implementation. Equally important is the “applicability” (viability) of the recommendation, especially if resource constraints are considered when drafting them. The lack of benchmarks again makes it very difficult to comment beyond the data collected on the seven criteria of a quality recommendation. The data shows that the recommendations found in reports are of a good quality when judged by the aforementioned criteria. IEU should continue to build upon this solid foundation.

Overall use of evaluation reports

72. Beyond specific elements in a report, additional information about the overall usefulness of evaluation reports was gathered. The Online Survey asked if the reports respondents had read had been useful:

Figure 13. Degree of utility of evaluation reports

Frequency analysis								
	Answer	Count	Per cent	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
1.	Very useful	12	22.22%					
2.	Useful	26	48.15%					
3.	Somewhat useful	15	27.78%					
4.	Not useful	1	1.85%					
	Total	54	100%					

73. The online survey provided respondents with the opportunity to submit opinions. Comments pertaining to the usefulness of evaluation reports included:

“They provide good information on the progress and shortcomings of UNODC projects. This is really necessary because many staff seem to focus on the implementation and have little time to reflect on what is being achieved.”

“The usefulness was limited because the evaluators (in the three reports I read) took a clear position which reflected the position of part of the UNODC staff involved. I believe that the usefulness of an evaluation report would increase if more efforts were made to reflect different opinions. At present, evaluations are used by staff/managers to prove that they were right/successful (since the evaluation said so).”

“The quality of the reports I have read varied widely. Some were instructive/constructive, others the precise opposite, betraying a lack of understanding on the part of the evaluators of the subject, its context and constraints.”

74. Respondents ranked the following options of how to increase the usefulness of evaluations: (in order of importance)

- Evaluations should address the needs/concerns of primary users;
- Establish an effective recommendation implementation system;
- Evaluations should be more participatory;
- Staff should be trained in evaluation issues;
- Evaluations should be planned well in advance;
- Increase the engagement of senior management in evaluation exercises;
- Evaluations should be disseminated more widely.

75. Respondents also had the opportunity to suggest additional ways by which evaluations could be made more useful:

“Some good points have been made but often in a negative tone, providing only criticism rather than constructive suggestions for improvement. Some recommendations, e.g. regarding funding, have been beyond UNODC's power.”

"[...] prepare evaluations which assist UNODC to open new business segments (i.e. criminal justice reform) by analyzing what has worked best and how to effectively increase the operational range of programme implementation [...]"

"IEU should have different product lines, not just judgment evaluations but different types of evaluations."

"IEU should also look- when relevant- at experiences, Best Practices of other organizations who work in similar areas. [That would] bring fresh air [and] views from [the] outside- [would] put UNODC's work in perspective."

76. Finally, the online survey asked about the degree of impact that evaluations had on a project or programme. Respondents characterized the impact as follows:

Figure 14. Degree of impact the evaluation had

Frequency analysis							
Answer	Count	Percent	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
1. Considerable impact	8	21.62%					
2. Some impact	20	54.05%					
3. Minimal impact	8	21.62%					
4. No impact	1	2.70%					
Total	37	100%					

77. It is important to note that IEU recently introduced a peer-review process of its reports. Subject matter experts not associated to the evaluation review and comment upon the draft evaluation report.

Interpretation

On usefulness and impact

The comments made by respondents emphasize the importance of evaluations addressing the needs of the Primary Intended Users. It is the job of the evaluators to ensure that issues are not overlooked or swept aside since it is in nobody's interest to ignore important matters. It is at this stage where the independence of IEU can be handy. Using a utilization focus approach encourages ownership of an exercise while increasing the likelihood of it being used as the evaluation progresses.

It is interesting to note that over 70 per cent of respondents found the evaluation reports they read to have been useful or very useful. The challenge for IEU is to increase this percentage in the coming years.

Over 75 per cent of respondents felt that the evaluations had some or considerable impact on the respective projects and programmes. It is very important for the consolidation of UNODC's evaluative culture to do whatever is necessary to improve the quality of evaluation exercises.

The practice of peer-reviewing reports is positive and contributes to increasing not only the quality but credibility of the evaluation exercise. This report was peer-reviewed by an evaluation professional external to UNODC.

Refer to Recommendation # 5 for suggested actions.

Learning from experience: improving IEU

78. The information collected through the various instruments and from the interviews in particular led IEU to reflect on how it could better contribute to UNODC delivering on its mandate. IEU's efforts in examining various facets of its work and the role it plays in UNODC yielded valuable information and was at the centre of the exercise.

Roles

79. The Terms of Reference for IEU state that the objective of the Unit is "To direct, supervise and carry out all programme, project and thematic evaluation activities in UNODC." The overall framework in which this objective must be achieved is laid out in the Management Instruction entitled "Evaluation Policies and Responsibilities" (UNODC/MI/7/Rev. 1, 1 May 2004).

80. UNODC's evaluation policy assigns IEU 14 distinct responsibilities. These include:

- IEU develops, manages and executes UNODC evaluation programme as well as leads in-depth evaluations and other management studies; undertakes operational reviews of Field-offices on institutional and managerial arrangements that have an impact on programme delivery;
- IEU coordinates and manages evaluation activities, including the preparation of an annual evaluation plan;
- IEU elaborates technical and procedural guidelines for evaluation;
- IEU prepares evaluation policies, standards, criteria, guidelines, tools and procedures; and trains, advises and guides staff in programme/project evaluations and performance measurement;
- IEU identifies best practices and lessons learned from the analysis of evaluation findings;
- IEU establishes a dissemination and feedback mechanism that communicates evaluation results within UNODC as well as Member States and
- IEU monitors implementation of evaluation recommendations;

81. Operationally, IEU evaluators identified that their work entailed¹⁰:

- Conducting evaluations;
- Managing evaluations;
- Supporting project evaluations;
- Training UNODC staff;
- Monitoring the implementation of recommendations;
- Fundraising;
- Maintaining UNODC's evaluation system

82. IEU evaluators were asked to point out how much time (percentage-wise) was spent on the points identified. They were then asked to do the same but distributing the time as they thought it should be used. The results indicated that their time was being spread over the various tasks instead of focusing on one or two "core" activities (conducting and supporting evaluations).

83. The interviews conducted also yielded some views as to the role of IEU. One informant (not from IEU) expressed:

"The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) has three key roles, namely:

- (a) ensure that project and programme managers increase their awareness on quality-control with regards to project and programme implementation;
- (b) ensure that technical assistance recipients (and donors) have a standardized yardstick to measure project and programme impact; and
- (c) ensure that UNODC becomes a more client-oriented and management-by-objectives technical assistance delivery machinery."

84. Another opinion expressed was:

"IEU must perceive itself as a management tool." (a means to an end)

85. And finally, a third opinion:

"IEU must help the ED make UNODC relevant and efficient."

Interpretation

On roles

The role of IEU is clear: it exercises the evaluation function in UNODC.

How to "exercise" that function is what requires more precision, especially considering resources available and organizational culture. There is a danger in trying to be too many things at once, in particular if the usefulness of evaluation is to be

¹⁰Apart from the usual administrative and bureaucratic work typical of any organization.

increased. The dilemma IEU faces is whether to focus on one area (i.e. conduct evaluations) to the detriment of other tasks or to continue doing the same tasks but reduce the workload.

The message from stakeholders is also clear: evaluations should be used to help UNODC do better. The core business of IEU is to evaluate.

A strategic decision as to how IEU can do its work more effectively needs to be made. The goal is to consolidate the evaluation culture in the organization so as to allow IEU to then concentrate on conducting and supporting useful evaluations. Investing upfront on assisting projects to improve the quality of evaluations, training staff and supporting self-evaluation exercises will in the medium term enable IEU to conduct more in-depth and thematic evaluations.

The price of this approach is to reduce the number of thematic/in-depth evaluations while taking a decidedly more hands-on role in a number of project and programme evaluations. At the same time, continue providing training and improving the quality of the consultants roster.

The results of this approach can be reviewed after two years in order to determine when IEU can shift its emphasis back to thematic/in-depth evaluations. One of the risks to this approach is in project/programme managers assuming a passive role in the belief that IEU will be responsible for managing the evaluations from start to finish. IEU's role is one of quality control, providing methodological support and increasing the utility of the exercise.

Refer to the Workload section for additional information.

IEU business practices

86. The exercise identified a series of day-to-day work practices that have had an effect on how the evaluation function has been conducted. The information collected has to be understood within the context of the organizational culture as well as part of the broader changes that have taken place in UNODC in the past few years.

Communication

87. Many of those interviewed expressed that "communication" was a major weakness in IEU business practices. The perception is that IEU relies too much on emails, is impatient, does not listen, emphasizes procedures too much; overall, many think that IEU is ineffective at communicating.

88. Some of the comments included:

"IEU is too rigid and mechanistic; process oriented."

"Improve the way in which you communicate, your style"

"Listen to people, gain credibility."

89. IEU staff recognized that improving their communication skills was required and understood how this deficiency could have contributed to some of the problems faced in the past.

Interpretation

On communication

IEU acknowledging that it must improve its communication is an important first step. Acquiring skills in effective communication (oral and written) is a commitment IEU made during the evaluation. Listening is also important, specially for evaluators, given the apprehension and anxiety many evaluands feel.

It is important to note that though the message evaluators deliver can at times be unpleasant, little is served by shooting the messenger. Likewise, the messenger must learn how to deliver the message so as to keep the focus on the ultimate purpose of the evaluation.

Refer to Recommendation # 2 for suggested actions.

Work plan: Criteria for determining IEU led evaluations

90. IEU produced in early 2004 the "Independent Evaluation Function: A Strategic Framework" that delineated, among other things, the parameters of how topics for evaluation would be selected. The framework refers primarily to evaluations to be conducted by IEU, above and beyond the ones already contemplated in project/programme documents. It states that:

"The selection of projects and programmes to be evaluated will primarily be based on consultations and agreements with management, the Operations Division, Technical Units and the Evaluation Unit. Senior Management inputs and views will be sought and taken into consideration during the development of the evaluation plan. The Independent Evaluation Unit will, however, have the final say on the selection of activities to be included in the evaluation plan."

The framework goes on to list 11 criteria¹¹ to be considered. The intended use of the exercise and evaluability (feasibility of evaluating) of the subject were not specifically mentioned. Implied in the criteria is the issue of timeliness: will the evaluation "arrive" in time for decision-making or other uses?

91. IEU attempted to maintain a balance between drug and crime issues as well as the strategic level of importance (global, regional and country programme evaluations).

92. Opinions expressed during the interviews reflect a wide variety of criteria/reasons that respondents believed were used for selecting evaluations. These included:

"Flavour of the month from ExCom" (which brings topics to the attention of IEU).

¹¹Medium term priorities, organizational strategic considerations, programme coverage, potential for generating lessons, size and budget, thematic topics, global and regional coverage, status of projects, phased approach, pilot projects and those projects that might be renewed or extended.

93. On the other end of the spectrum:
- “IEU presents it (work plan); it’s a fait accompli. It would seem quasi-antagonistic if ExCom were to try to change the plan of IEU.”
94. Practical suggestions for criteria to be used included:
- “Should be based on a strategic assessment in what and where UNODC needs to improve its performance.”
95. “Focus on problem areas or perceived problem areas. The results of these will help [...]. Why Central Asia?”
- “Improve project and programme performance. To look at our practices and see if what we do really are best practices.”
- “Consider elements such as: Size/budget, emerging issues, time bound elements linked to strategies, compliance-required evaluations.”
96. Many stakeholders were not aware of the criteria contained in the Strategic Framework.

Interpretation

On criteria

The need for criteria is clear. The ones currently in place provide a degree of order though they are insufficient. Additional precision to those criteria is required. What precisely does “strategic importance of thematic topics” mean? How does it rank in importance compared to other criteria?

The opinion of management and other stakeholders is very important, yet the consultations must be structured and decisions evidence based. What is seen as important by one individual may not be to another. The criteria provide a framework to organize the exchange of suggestions.

Also, given the important resource constraints IEU faces, two additional criteria need to be included:

Evaluability: simply put, is the programme ready for evaluation? (what will it take to evaluate) and

Utility: what is the intended use of the evaluation? (the broader the use, the better)

There is ample literature available on the issue of evaluability assessments and utilization of evaluations for IEU to operationalize these two criteria.

The matter becomes even more important if IEU were to reduce the number of thematic/in-depth evaluations it leads as suggested earlier. The resources

required for methodically determining what will be evaluated should not be underestimated.

Refer to Recommendation # 4 for suggested actions.

Types of evaluations

97. During the interviews it emerged that some Senior Managers want IEU to focus more on impact evaluations rather than what they currently perceive to be an emphasis on process evaluations. Some said:

“IEU should focus on impact evaluations rather than process evaluations.”

“Focus seems to be on process not a substantive evaluation of issues.”

98. The CIPP approach, mentioned earlier, covers a range of issues including process as well as what senior managers mean by impact (called Product in the CIPP nomenclature). An analysis of the ten thematic evaluations shows that context, input and process issues are covered, as are product (outcomes) issues. The Annual Evaluation Reports also deal with context, input, process and product matters.

99. The perception of senior managers regarding the emphasis on process lies in the nature of the discussion as the various evaluation reports are reviewed in the draft and final stages. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most discussions centred on process matters raised in reports to the detriment of product issues.

100. Another informant felt that IEU was focusing too much on judging and not enough on other types of evaluations:

“IEU should have different product lines, not just judgment evaluations but different types of evaluations.”

101. There are numerous types of evaluations (that can be used in multiple combinations). The types range from cost-benefit analysis and goal-based focused to implementation and impact and many more. IEU has many options at its disposal.

102. Beyond the “types” is the concept of the “purpose” the evaluation is to be used for. Passing judgment and accountability are two purposes for evaluation. Learning and improvement, as in this exercise, are two more. There are others.

103. An IEU led evaluation in UNODC has, rightly or wrongly, become synonymous with a blue-cover, thematic/in-depth exercise for passing judgment and proposing improvements.

Evaluations can be more than that.

Interpretation

On evaluation purposes

It is important to understand beforehand what the purpose (learning, decision-making, improvement, accountability etc) of an evaluation is, so as to design the exercise accordingly. The type of evaluation that results must address the needs of the primary user with the adoption of appropriate methodology. These factors also have implications as to what level of resources will be required. Trade-offs may be needed in order to obtain maximum use of an evaluation within the available resources.

In this sense, IEU must be more creative, particularly since it has limited resources.

Some may believe that accountability and improvement are more important than other purposes and thus be alarmed if different purposes are championed.

Assuming one type of evaluation is better than another is simply wrong. It is better to ask what is needed and what will be done with it than to use a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach.

Evaluations may be conducted in order to comply with donor requirements, yet this does not mean the exercise should exclusively focus on accountability. More importantly, an evaluation could serve various purposes at the same time.

On process vs. impact

The perception that process rather than impact is being addressed by evaluations in UNODC is misleading. The tone and focus on process issues during the discussion of the reports seem to take center stage to the detriment of outcome related matters. Additionally, underplaying the importance of the linkages between process and impact is a mistake. IEU must understand the organization's need to demonstrate its accomplishments yet ensure that the organization also deals with the fact that more could be accomplished if processes were better.

Senior Managers stress "actions" and "doing" and therefore become impatient when they perceive IEU as focusing on "sterile" strategic issues and processes. IEU's implementation of the CIPP approach has reinforced the perception that process is at the center, though a careful look at reports clearly shows otherwise.

IEU, nonetheless, must ensure that it addresses the needs of evaluation users while at the same time stressing the need not to neglect the basic building blocks that all successful actions require. The fact that some view strategic level issues as sterile is in itself telling of the challenge facing IEU and other units in UNODC.

The message that there is a link running from the strategy, down through effective programmes and projects culminating in desired outcomes must be continuously made. IEU has not been able to communicate this message effectively.

Additionally, there is confusion among stakeholders as to what “impact” means.

It is of critical importance to use the correct terminology since it will avoid confusion and frustration on all sides. A clear distinction needs to be made between outcomes and impact. The two words are often used interchangeably.

Outcomes are the end results of the project/programme in relation to its objectives and/or upon the target population. This is what CIPP means by Product.

Some evaluators define impact as a long term outcome (time based). Impact can also mean the effects of the project/programme on a larger segment of the population beyond the originally intended target group.

The need expressed by Senior Managers for impact evaluations must to be considered by IEU. Do Senior Managers mean impact or outcome? The answer has important implications on how evaluations are conducted.

An impact evaluation is a more complex, lengthy and resource intensive undertaking. Projects and programmes should be based on needs assessments, have baselines, have appropriate performance indicators, among other elements, incorporated into their design and implementation. When these key factors are lacking or insufficient any evaluation, let alone an impact evaluation, becomes more difficult if not impossible.

Yet some regard pointing this out as focusing too much on process.

Refer to Recommendation # 1 for suggested actions.

Workload

104. The issue of how much work a unit or an individual should be able to do has an important subjective element to it. Expectations, personalities, team dynamics, quality concerns, available resources, staff movements and many other factors can affect the outputs delivered.

105. Independent of this, job descriptions, Unit TORs and other institutional norms that outline what is to be achieved exist. In regards to evaluation, the most important regulation is the Secretary-General’s Bulletin ST/SGB/2000/8 cited earlier. Rule 107.2 deals in broad terms as to how often components of a Programme must be evaluated. The only reference to a specific required number of evaluations to be conducted relates to in-depth exercises that may be required by intergovernmental bodies or the Secretariat. Point (iii) states:

“At least one in-depth evaluation study shall be undertaken each year. Such a study shall normally be completed within two years.”

106. There are no benchmarks available to assist evaluators determine with any precision how much can be done by one person in a year. Apart from what can be inferred

from the quote regarding the length of time it should take to do an evaluation, little else can be relied upon.

107. Three professional evaluators at IEU completed 10 in-depth evaluations in a little over three years (40 months). This means that it takes an evaluator approximately 13 months to complete an evaluation at the current level of quality and that is “used” to the degree already identified.

108. Annual evaluation reports, project evaluations and providing training, as mentioned earlier, were part of the workload the unit had as well. Bureaucratic matters, typical of any organization, also add to the workload.

109. An IEU evaluator stated “People don’t understand what it takes to do a good evaluation.” At the same time, IEU is aware that the amount of work it takes on exceeds its capacity to deliver the quality of work it desires. IEU accepts that it can deliver better evaluation products, yet it continues to overestimate its capacity to deliver. A Senior Manager reflected: “I wonder what kind of quality [of evaluations] we get.” Yet an IEU staff member stated that: “To do less than two evaluations in a year would be politically unacceptable.”

110. Senior managers were asked how many thematic/in-depth evaluations were reasonable to expect in a year. The comments varied:

“One per year is too little.”

“One or two max.”

“Reduce the workload. Quality over quantity.”

“It looks like reports are goals in themselves and not a means to an end.”

“IEU is a three person unit so it should not try to pretend it is a 30 person unit.”

111. A related element to the workload is the importance of staff development. Professional development (courses for IEU staff) was not prioritized given resource constraints. Management stated repeatedly the importance of professional development not only for the benefits the organization would obtain but also as an incentive for staff.

Interpretation

On workload

In its zeal to contribute to organizational improvement, IEU was constantly stretched thin, by taking on too many tasks. IEU management acknowledges that this is the case. IEU staff point out that few outside IEU understand what it takes to deliver a good evaluation, yet it continues to take on tasks. IEU should not think its relevance increases the more evaluation products it can deliver.

Undoubtedly, the quality of the products produced by IEU can be improved. In order to increase the credibility and usefulness of evaluation in UNODC, the quality must be improved. The tension between quality and quantity should not exist, especially when placed in the context of consolidating the evaluation culture in the organization; quality should win every time.

The current level of quality, as derived from the data collected, has served UNODC needs to date. Increasing the usefulness of evaluation and consolidating an evaluation culture require evaluation products that meet new needs.

Senior managers seem to agree that two IEU led evaluations per year would strike a balance between quality and quantity given current resources. Currently it takes thirteen months, on average, to conclude an evaluation.

What constitutes an acceptable number of IEU led evaluations per year? Why must evaluations be concluded within one year? The answer is linked to the purpose of the evaluation, the type of approach and availability of resources. The scope of an exercise can be adjusted accordingly allowing for appropriate methods to be employed. Having that flexibility is essential. It is conceivable that one year IEU could complete three evaluations, while in another maybe only one.

Being more user-focused, improving quality and being realistic as to what is viable with the resources available could mean that a typical IEU led evaluation would take an evaluator more than 13 months. This is because the time required to engage primary intended users in an active manner is much more than what current IEU practices have attempted. To reduce the amount of time required, the scope of the exercise could be narrowed down. There is room for manoeuvring, but the habit of stretching IEU thin must be broken.

IEU could explore various scenarios in determining how to best utilize its resources. For example: by shifting emphasis, as suggested in the Roles section, to a more hands-on involvement in project and programme evaluations, but not actually leading the exercises would require trading one thematic/in-depth for every two close-support ones an IEU evaluator takes on. Evaluations would take approximately 15 months to conduct. IEU would still produce the Annual Evaluation Report, monitor the implementation of recommendations and assist (quality assurance) project evaluations as it currently does.

Refer to Recommendation # 3 for suggested actions.

On staff development

Investing in professional development should be more than rhetoric. IEU staff can become more efficient and productive by participating in a variety of seminars and events that range in costs. Having a resource "library" at the unit, for example, would also facilitate learning and professional development.

Refer to Recommendations # 8 and # 9 for suggested actions.

Conducting evaluations

109. The most visible IEU products are the Annual Evaluation Reports and the thematic/in-depth evaluations. How these are produced determines to a great extent their value and credibility inside and outside UNODC. IEU's business practices not only set the framework for conducting the exercises but equally as important set the tone for the interactions with stakeholders, and ultimately influence the usefulness of the evaluation.

Involving primary intended users

110. The degree of participation IEU encourages from Primary Intended Users is best described as moderate. Consultations regarding the TORs, selection of consultants and sharing preliminary findings and draft reports are the highlights.

111. There is an element of passive-reactive dynamics, whereby the PIU see their role as "being the subject of the evaluation" and not as the "users" of the exercise. Instinctively they react defensively and are suspicious of the real reasons behind the evaluation. IEU reinforces that dynamic by insisting on moving the process along given the pressures it has to deliver on time. Matters are not helped when the issues identified in the organizational culture section are thrown into the mix.

112. Various informants stressed the need for a different dynamic:

"[...] more interactive, collegial dialogue at all stages of the process - including drafting recommendations; so we can focus on elements that need improvement."

"The dialogue between IEU and the primary intended users is weak, it's between deaf people."

113. Increasing the quality and amount of interaction and involvement of PIU, requires that more time is allotted to conducting the exercise and providing IEU staff with the skill set needed to facilitate that type of engagement.

114. IEU staff stated that PIU, and managers in particular, did not dedicate the time and attention that evaluations required, often delegating junior staff to the exercise. IEU perceives that to many, the evaluation is like an obstacle course to be navigated rather than an opportunity to benefit from.

Planning

115. Planning evaluations requires due consideration of many of the issues already identified such as workload, purpose of the exercise, availability of resources, methodology and scope. IEU-led evaluations have traditionally been planned to be concluded within 12 months (often linked to yearly work plans—April through March). Many evaluations exceed that time frame.

116. Common reasons for delays include untimely disbursement of funds, difficulties finding consultants that are subject specialists, limited time available to evaluate and logistical complexities in organizing missions.

117. Some interviewees stated:

“IEU must understand the work pressures of evaluands.”

“More preparation of ground before evaluation starts.”

118. An IEU evaluator agrees with the importance of properly planning evaluations:

“Planning is key. Allowing enough time for participation is essential.”

Evaluation consultants

119. Evaluations conducted at UNODC rely heavily on hiring short term external evaluation consultants. These consultants are subject matter specialists with varying degrees of experience in conducting evaluations. For thematic evaluations, consultants work closely with and under the guidance of IEU; project evaluations are managed by Field Offices and receive limited support from IEU.

120. The quality of the work done by consultants (for both thematic and project evaluations) ranges from excellent to mediocre. Although anecdotal evidence points to the majority of the work produced by consultants being of an acceptable quality, there is room for improvement. The improvements that can be made are not one-sided; UNODC's selection, managing and support of consultants can be improved.

121. IEU attempts to identify the best consultants, maintaining a database on subject matter specialists. Nonetheless, it is difficult to always hire the ideal candidate. As one IEU member stated: “Not only does the person need to be a subject expert and have evaluation experience, they also need to be available when we need them and accept the salary we offer. Financial limitations come into play.”

122. Some managers expressed disappointment with the level and preparation of consultants.

“It puts me off when they ask me how UNODC is organized or [about] its processes. They should know this already.”

“IEU and consultants need to re-align their profile to subject expertise and less on process issues.”

123. Two managers suggested that it might be advisable to include one individual as a “resource” member of the evaluation team. This would be an experienced UNODC staff member, not associated with the issues being evaluated, whose role would be to enrich the exercise by bringing a different perspective to the process.

124. Four¹² evaluation consultants that had been hired by IEU during the period under review were asked to answer various questions regarding their experience in conducting evaluations in UNODC. They felt that the TOR were of a good standard and that the PIU were clearly identified. They did see some room for improvement.

¹²Only three responded to the questionnaire.

125. Regarding the time allotted to conduct the evaluation one consultant stated:

"[...] The time was too short. It really took considerably more time to finish the project and to cover all of the activities plus post-activity reviews."

126. This opinion was widely held.

127. As to the questions to be addressed in the evaluation, consultants felt that PIU could play a more active role, and if they did, it was still advisable for IEU to ensure all relevant issues of importance to the organization were included. One said:

"There needs to be more rigorous consideration of the questions - the PIU should obviously contribute to that process, but UNODC Senior Managers and the IEU need to ensure that the questions are genuinely challenging."

128. There was no consensus regarding the background briefings and documents that were provided to consultants. Some were satisfied while one said:

"IEU documents [were] reasonable, but substantive units [were] reluctant to provide documents. In fact [...] documents previously not provided [were used] to refute some evaluation findings. Conversations [with] ...IEU [were] ok; though substantive units [were] sometimes defensive and invariably view[ed] evaluators as the enemy."

129. When asked "In what areas, from your experience of working with IEU, could the Unit improve its practices?" some of the responses included:

"It would be helpful if the consultant could be identified earlier, so that there was more time to absorb the briefing material and to have discussions with IEU."

"[...] Build capacity within UNODC to ensure that evaluation frameworks are developed during the project/programme development so that questions are known, data vehicles are established etc. at the outset."

"I thought that the unit lacked some basic analytical support and assistance. We had to depend upon apprentice staff who did not have strong analytical skills. I can understand how a small unit may not be able to retain junior analysts who can manage the data collection, processing and analysis. But it might help if the unit knew where and how to obtain this assistance."

"Pay more!"

Interpretation

On conducting evaluations

Evaluations conducted by IEU are not only the most visible products of the Unit, but also the ones that often lead to more debate and tensions between Management and the evaluators. The differences of opinions can be exacerbated by individual styles, problems in communication and mistrust.

Evaluators must do more to diminish the factors that result in unproductive situations. Management and PIU must also do their part by truly committing to the evaluation and evaluative thinking. It is frustrating for evaluators to face resistance (documents not being provided for example) and be viewed as the enemy.

All parties must dedicate the time required by an evaluation and not try to rush things.

On involving primary intended users

The level of participation, and more important, the type of participation PIU have in current evaluations can be increased. Adopting a utilization-focused approach by IEU will increase the level of ownership and usefulness of an evaluation on the part of PIU. IEU's role, apart from ensuring the objectivity and impartiality of the exercises, is to facilitate, guide and of course, evaluate.

Refer to Recommendation # 1 for suggested actions.

On planning

Availability of resources is a prerequisite and should determine a go/no go decision.

The comments provided by consultants are also very relevant to planning issues.

It is impossible to plan for every eventuality but investing more resources up-front pays-off in the long run.

Refer to Recommendation # 6 for suggested actions.

On evaluation consultants

The use of consultants is one of the most important elements to the credibility of an evaluation. Despite some observations made by interviewees, every effort is made to hire consultants who are subject matter specialists. No "process" specialists have been hired for IEU led evaluations. The quality of work delivered by consultants has improved, though IEU staff still spend a disproportionate amount of time on quality assurance of deliverables.

Background documents and briefings provided by substantive staff and IEU to consultants are adequate, though it is of concern when some consultants use part of their time assigned to data collection on context issues instead.

The idea of a “resource” person is very interesting and deserves further exploration. Exactly who and how needs to be defined; a clear distinction between the roles evaluators have and that of a resource person would need to be made if the suggestion is adopted.

The feedback provided by the consultants is extremely valuable and provides a great deal of insight. IEU can take action on suggestions regarding time allotted to an evaluation, design of an exercise and support provided to consultants. Ensuring that the building blocks of proper project/programme design are included at the start is more difficult given the belief of some in UNODC that more emphasis should be placed on actions and not on “process”. When external observers repeatedly point out deficiencies in the design of projects and programmes, then it is time to actually “take action” and address the problem.

What goes around, comes around

IEU staff have used this exercise to reflect on the issues identified in order to learn from their experiences, improve their practices and ultimately become greater contributors to UNODC’s efforts to deliver on its mandate. Unfortunately, IEU has not been immune to the shortcomings of its own business practices.

The degree of IEU’s engagement in this exercise, as Primary Intended User, exceeded the levels of prior evaluations conducted at UNODC. This was per design. The level though, was still below what was required. The evaluator stressed from the outset that IEU would gain in proportion to its involvement. Although somebody from the unit was present at key activities, more would have been gained with everybody present. Likewise, not everybody commented/contributed to instrument design or conceptual debates. Data analysis on the other hand was a very participatory activity.

IEU, like other UNODC staff, were conducting their daily tasks (including travelling on missions) during the course of the evaluation. Deficiencies in planning and insisting on using certain types of methods to collect data increased the amount of time required for finishing the evaluation well beyond the original time allotted.

Ultimately, IEU and the author have realized how easy it is to underestimate the time, energy and intellectual effort required for a truly participatory and useful evaluation. The lesson learned is in ensuring that the demands and expectations that Primary Intended Users, stakeholders and evaluators have are realistic.

Gaining a better understanding of these issues and adjusting IEU practices accordingly are ways in which this evaluation has already been put to use. Ensuring bad habits do not return will also depend, in part, on implementing some of the recommendations made in this report.

Recommendation implementation monitoring system

130. IEU proposed, during the definition of UNODC's evaluation system in early 2004, that one of the Unit's responsibilities should be monitoring the implementation of evaluation recommendations. ExCom decided that it would conduct monitoring itself since it saw it as a management activity. IEU attempted to persuade ExCom to the contrary, pointing out that conducting adequate monitoring required dedicated resources and a tracking system which were not available to ExCom at the time. ExCom decided, nonetheless, that it would monitor the implementation of recommendations.

131. During 2004-2007 little information was available at the central level as to what recommendations had been accepted or on the status of implementation. The formal mechanism for ExCom accepting or rejecting evaluation report recommendations was never outlined.

132. It emerged, during the course of interviews, that ExCom is a decision-making body¹³ and that when no recommendations are objected to, all recommendations are deemed accepted.

133. A complicating factor has also been in assigning somebody the responsibility to implement a given set of recommendations. In the cases when the evaluation only dealt with the work of one unit, the matter was straightforward; this was not the case for the recommendations in the Annual Evaluation Reports and many thematic evaluations. Project level evaluations are clearer in this regard except when summative (end of project) evaluations were conducted.

134. Likewise, the lack of implementation plans for the Annual Evaluation Report and project evaluation recommendations added to the confusion.

135. In April 2007, ExCom decided to make IEU responsible for monitoring the implementation of recommendations derived from evaluation reports.

136. The present exercise, as part of the data collection activities, undertook an in-depth review of recommendation use during the preceding four years¹⁴ since no data was available.

137. IEU is currently designing a monitoring system in order to comply with ExCom's directive. The Terms of Reference for the present exercise required the evaluator to produce a proposal for such a system as an input to IEU's deliberations.

¹³Diverging opinions regarding ExCom as a decision-making forum exist at the Senior Manager level though ODCCP/EDB.13/Rev.1 14 June, 2002 points 5, a and b are clear in ExCom being designated as a decision-making forum.

¹⁴More information regarding this can be found in the Methodology and Evaluation Use sections.

Interpretation

On a recommendation implementation monitoring system

Given the critical role evaluations play in the organization, it is unfortunate no effective monitoring system was put in place to monitor the implementation of recommendations. The confusion that resulted, not only from the lack of clarity from ExCom as to whether or not a given recommendation was accepted (in the case of AERs and thematic evaluations) but also as to whom should coordinate the monitoring efforts on its behalf, did not contribute to strengthening the credibility of the evaluation function.

A monitoring system must track the recommendations from all evaluations conducted at UNODC, including those derived from AERs and project level assessments. IEU must insist on obtaining clarity as to who will be responsible for implementing any given recommendation. This assumes that it is clear which recommendations are accepted in the first place. The importance of implementation plans can not be underestimated.

The data collected through this exercise can only indicate an approximation of the degree to which recommendations have been used in the past four years. Introducing a monitoring system will improve the accuracy of the data generated.

Refer to Recommendation # 7 for suggested actions.

Recommendations

138. The findings indicate that UNODC has used evaluations in a significant manner. At the same time, they also point to the need for IEU to improve important aspects of how it does business so as to increase even further the utility of evaluations within the organization.

139. The recommendations that follow are grouped into three categories: Essential, Important and Advisable. Essential recommendations are indispensable to the future of the subject of the evaluation since they address high-risk issues. Important recommendations deal with medium-risk issues while those labeled advisable pertain to low-risk matters.

Essential

Recommendation 1: Conceptual approach to evaluation

IEU should adopt the Utilization-Focused approach as the basis for conducting evaluations in UNODC.

140. IEU must adapt the conceptual approach (model) it uses in conducting evaluations.

Implications/assumptions

- IEU staff acquire the skill-set required by the Utilization-Focused approach;
- Utilization-Focused evaluations take longer to conduct than exercises have to date;
- Staff of the projects and programmes that are evaluated dedicate the necessary time to the exercise.

Recommendation 2: Improving communications skills

IEU staff should undergo training in effective communication and facilitation.

141. The negative effect of poor communications between IEU and its counterparts have upon evaluation exercises can not be underestimated. Likewise, the adoption of the utilization-focused evaluation approach requires that IEU staff acquire skills necessary for facilitating the evaluation process.

Implications/assumptions

- Identifying the appropriate training programme for both the Unit and individuals;
- IEU can only be held accountable for its communication deficiencies and not those of its counterparts;
- Availability of financial resources.

Recommendation 3: Rationalizing IEU's workload

IEU should adjust its workload according to the human, financial and material resources available. IEU needs to develop and exercise more discipline by not taking on new, unplanned assignments, unless an equivalent task is dropped from its work-plan as a result.

142. IEU must improve its ability to determine how much it can do with the resources it has. The recommendation is no prescriptive in the sense that it determines, a priori, the quantity of evaluations that must be conducted. This is to be done on a case by case basis and depends on various factors such as the evaluability assessment, resource constraints etc.

143. Introducing a Utilization-Focused approach will result in more time being required to conclude an evaluation. Additionally, as a means of consolidating an evaluation culture through developing capacity in the organization, IEU needs to provide close support to project/programme led exercises. Emphasizing evaluation capacity building (ECB) through process-use is an effective way for IEU to use its limited resources.

Implications/assumptions

- Any additional work IEU takes on results in an equivalent task being dropped so as to maintain the planned workload stable;
- The training IEU provides would be phased out and replaced by computer-based training;
- Clear criteria need to be established for selecting the evaluations which IEU will support (i.e. consider size of the programme, number of UNODC staff that will acquire evaluation capacity, geographic distribution and resource availability).

Important

Recommendation 4: Criteria for selection of evaluation topics

IEU should implement a rating and ranking system for identifying potential evaluations issues.

144. Despite the eleven criteria already in existence and the efforts to balance drugs and crimes issues, no systematic rating has been conducted for ranking evaluation topics.

Implications/assumptions

- Clarification (eventual purging) of the current eleven criteria;
- Conducting evaluability assessments on the top three issues (programmes);
- Adding intended use as a criteria.

Recommendation 5: Improving the quality of evaluation exercises

IEU should develop a Quality Assurance process (checklist) for evaluators to use when drafting TOR, designing the evaluation, conducting the exercise and drafting reports and recommendations.

145. A quality evaluation starts with an appropriate design of the exercise, on through how it is carried out and culminates simultaneously in how it is used. It is important to invest time in designing, assembling a team, conducting the exercise and promoting use.

146. Evaluation reports are the most visible product of IEU's work and must thus be of the highest quality. The quality of evaluation reports (texts) is important especially for organizations that place a premium on documentation such as the UN. The evidence shows in particular that clear, specific, evidence-based recommendations were more likely to be accepted and implemented.

Implications/assumptions

- The Quality Assurance instrument(s) can be designed using models readily available online.

Recommendation 6: Improving planning of evaluations

IEU should use evaluability assessments as the primary input for planning individual evaluations.

147. The evidence indicates that IEU can improve its planning of evaluations, potentially avoiding delays and frustrations in the long term. IEU must allow for sufficient time to conduct an evaluation.

Implications/assumptions

- The evaluability assessment should begin at least three months before drafting the TOR;
- When external evaluators (consultants) are used, they must be given adequate support to “translate” the TOR into viable action plans.

Recommendation 7: Recommendation implementation monitoring system (RIMS)

IEU should implement a recommendation implementation monitoring system based on instruments already in place as well as those developed for this evaluation.

148. RIMS should be based on the following principles:

1. Simplicity—given the limited resources, only essential information should be tracked. Data should be collected once a year.
2. Clarity—the focus should be on knowing which recommendation is to be implemented, by when and who will be responsible.
3. Accuracy—supporting evidence of implementation progress could be collected through a sample of convenience so as to guarantee the recommendations were implemented as intended.

147. The following elements should be included in RIMS:

- (a) The Summary Matrix (SM) should be included in all evaluation reports. The SM is a useful communication tool that would serve as the basis for the recommendations Implementation Plan (IP) (see annex 2).
- (b) The IP must include all recommendations made in the respective report. The recommendations not accepted must be identified as such. The remaining recommendations must be recorded in the IP with all cells filled out.
- (c) A questionnaire based on the RUQ used for this evaluation should be administered to the appropriate individuals so as to determine the implementation status and the reasons for it.
- (d) The AER should compile the data gathered through the RUQ.

Implications/assumptions:

- Availability of resources.

Recommendation 8: Professional development

Senior Management should support the professional development of IEU staff.

148. Investing in professional development of staff is important for any organization. Considering that IEU's work touches upon the whole of UNODC, logic dictates that its staff should regularly receive training in evaluation issues. The purpose is to increase the quality of IEU products by providing staff with up-to-date knowledge and improving their skills.

Implications/assumptions:

- Availability of resources;
- Professional development includes training, participation in conferences and in specialist organizations among others.

Advisable**Recommendation 9: Resource Library**

IEU should invest in creating a resource library of specialized texts and reports.

149. There is a need for IEU to collect evaluation resources for staff use (i.e. methodology texts, key journals, evaluation related documents from other organizations and academic books).

Implications/assumptions:

- Availability of resources.

Recommendation 10: Facilitating the use of lessons learned and best practices

IEU must identify an effective means of sharing lessons learned and best practices identified in evaluation reports as part of UNODC's knowledge management system.

150. IEU has been working towards creating a database containing LL/BP under the assumption that that is an effective means of delivery. It would be very useful for IEU to consult UNEG and other organizations in order to identify knowledge management options that increase the use of LL/BP.

Implications/assumptions:

- Availability of resources;
- Consult UNEG members in order to identify best practices on this issue.

Recommendation 11: Follow-up evaluation

IEU should conduct a follow-up evaluation to the present exercise in three years.

Implications/assumptions:

- Implementation of recommendations made in this report;
- Availability of resources.

151. It is important to determine the value and impact that the changes proposed by the present exercise will have had.

Conclusion

152. IEU set out to learn how it could improve its work by engaging in a self-evaluation. Through a systematic process of questioning what it has done, collecting data and reflecting on findings, IEU has begun a process that does not end with the publication of this report. Using evaluative thinking has to become an everyday thing, not only for the Unit, but for the organization as a whole.

153. The use of evaluations in UNODC, if measured by the number of recommendations accepted and implemented, is significant. Yet that only tells part of the story.

154. The challenge that UNODC faces lies in consolidating an evaluation culture throughout the organization in order to promote learning and improvements and increase accountability. How UNODC will go about achieving this is at the heart of truly useful evaluations.

155. Looking at evaluations as something that happens to the organization, programmes and projects must be reversed. Thinking that evaluation use begins upon receipt of a final report has to end. Equating evaluation use to the number of recommendations implemented greatly diminishes the value of an exercise. The passive-reactive cycle that evaluation users go through has to be broken. All of these are challenges currently facing UNODC and IEU in particular.

156. The secret of a useful evaluation begins with getting involved in it; right from the start. Among other things, this means that relevant stakeholders will devote the time necessary for the exercise. It also requires evaluators with appropriate skills beyond substantive (crime and drugs) expertise to guide and facilitate the process.

157. Evaluation is not auditing, inspection or investigation; interaction and cooperation between all parties is essential. The use of evaluation is therefore greatly determined by the quality of these interactions.

158. Evidence suggests that an evaluation culture is taking root in UNODC. The organization has used evaluations to its benefit, and respondents value the quality of the reports.

Annex I: List of projects

<i>ID</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Title</i>
AER/04	Global	2004	Annual Evaluation Report 2004
AER/05	Global	2005	Annual Evaluation Report 2005
AER/06	Global	2006	Annual Evaluation Report 2006
GLO/B79	Global	2004	Evaluation of the Global Programme against Money-Laundering
THE/T &T	Global	2004	Evaluation of tools and toolkits as a modality of programme delivery by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
THE/NDS	Global	2004	Evaluation of the Development Account Component of the National Drug Control System
THE/GPAT	Global	2004	Evaluation of the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings
THE/CBT	Global	2005	Evaluation of UNODC's e-Learning Initiative (with emphasis on computerbased training) as a Modality of Technical Cooperation and Capacity-building.
THE/AD	Global	2005	Thematic Evaluation of UNODC's Alternative Development Initiatives
THE/GAP	Global	2005	Evaluation of the Global Assessment Programme on Drug Abuse
THE/SMTC	Global	2006	Evaluation of UNODC's Support Mechanisms for Technical Cooperation
THE/CA	Central and Eastern Europe	2006	Thematic Evaluation of Counter-Narcotics Enforcement in Central Asia
GLO/R35	Global	2006	Evaluation of the Global Project on Strengthening the Legal Regime Against Terrorism (mid-term)
HUN/R12	Central and Eastern Europe	2004	Assessment of corruption in Hungary (terminal evaluation)
RAS/C74	South and East Asia and the Pacific	2004	Strengthening of Judicial and Prosecutorial Drug Control Capacity in East Asia
EGY/F53 JOR/F49	Africa and the Middle East	2004	Strengthening the Treatment and Rehabilitation Services for Drug Abusers in Egypt and Jordan (terminal evaluation)

RAS/C74	South and East Asia and the Pacific	2004	Strengthening of Judicial and Prosecutorial Drug Control Capacity in East Asia
MOZ/C47	Africa and the Middle East	2004	Capacity Building in Drug Control for the Government of Mozambique (Self Evaluation)
BRA/E02	Latin America and the Caribbean	2004	Drug Abuse and STD/HIV/AIDS Prevention Project (terminal evaluation)
SAF/E66	Africa and the Middle East	2004	Community-based Counselling, Treatment and Rehabilitation Services for Drug Abusers in Disadvantaged Areas. (terminal evaluation)
LEB/R71	Africa and the Middle East	2005	Independent Evaluation Report: Support on the National Anti-Corruption Strategy
LEB/R72 and LEB/R30	Africa and the Middle East	2005	Independent Evaluation Report: Strengthening Legislative and Institutional Capacity for Juvenile Justice and Support to the Juvenile Justice System in Lebanon
CMB/F14	South and East Asia and the Pacific	2005	End of Project Evaluation Report: Strengthening the Secretariat of the National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD) and the National Drug Control Programme of Cambodia
CAR/G41	Latin America and the Caribbean	2005	Terminal Evaluation Report: Youth-Centred Drug Abuse and HIV/AIDS Prevention in Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada
NIR/G50	Africa and the Middle East	2005	Mid-term Evaluation Report: Partnership for Drug Abuse and HIV/AIDS Prevention in Nigeria.
RAF/E13 and RAF/E14	Africa and the Middle East	2005	Terminal Evaluation Report: Judicial System Training in Drugrelated Casework in Southern and East Africa
RER/E29	West and Central Asia	2005	Mid-term Evaluation Report: Precursor Control in Central Asia
RER/F75	West and Central Asia	2005	Mid-Term Evaluation Report: Diversification of HIV Prevention and Drug Treatment Services for Injecting and Other Drug Users in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
VIE/G55	South and East Asia and the Pacific	2005	Mid-term Evaluation Report Interdiction and Seizure Capacity Building with Special Emphasis on ATS and Precursors
NIR/ G73	Africa and the Middle East	2005	Terminal Evaluation Report: Upgrading of the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency Jos Training Academy into a Regional Law Enforcement Training Centre
PAK/F51	South and East Asia and the Pacific	2005	Project Self-Evaluation: Mainstreaming and Prevention
RAF/B66	Africa and the Middle East	2005	Project Self- Evaluation: Local Expert Networks for Demand Reduction Programme in Africa
RAF/E15	Africa and the Middle East	2005	Project Self-Evaluation: Enhancing the Capacity of Governments and NGOs in the Drug Demand Reduction Programmes in Eastern Africa

RAS/D91	South and East Asia and the Pacific	2005	Terminal Evaluation Report: Development of Cross-Border Law Enforcement Cooperation in East Asia
RAS/G44	South and East Asia and the Pacific	2005	Terminal Evaluation Report: ASEM Anti-Money Laundering Project
RAF/960	Africa and the Middle East	2005	Terminal Evaluation Report: Control of Licit Drugs in Eastern Africa
BRA/D31	Latin America and the Caribbean	2006	Institutional Strengthening of the National Police Academy (terminal evaluation)
BRA/D32	Latin America and the Caribbean	2006	Training for Public Security Proposals (terminal evaluation)
BRA/D33	Latin America and the Caribbean	2006	Strengthening of Chemical Precursor Control (terminal evaluation)
BRA/D34	Latin America and the Caribbean	2006	Integrated National System for Information on Justice and Public Security (terminal evaluation)
AFG/G24	West and Central Asia	2006	Capacity Building for Drug Control: Strengthening of the CND and Six Provincial Offices (terminal evaluation)
COL/H70	Latin America and the Caribbean		Proyecto Piloto de "Manejo Forestal en la Costa Pacífica de Nariño del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Alternativo"
ETH/E84	Africa and the Middle East	2006	Drug Demand Reduction programme in Ethiopia (DDR-E)
GLO/I05	Global	2006	Evaluation of The Paris Pact Regional Coordination Programme Development for Countries Affected by Afghan Heroin Trafficking
GLO/I93	Global	2007	Self Evaluation: UNODC support to preparation of the International Ministerial Conference on the Afghan drug routes ("Paris 2–Moscow 1"), Moscow, Russian Federation
HON/H88	Latin America and the Caribbean	2006	Programas Especiales de Empleo para la Inserción Socio-Laboral de Jóvenes Desempleados, si Oficios que se Encuentran en Situación de Riesgo de Desintegración Psico-Social.
JAM/F87	Latin America and the Caribbean	2006	Drug Abuse Prevention Programme for Youth at Risk in Jamaica (terminal evaluation)
KYR/G64	West and Central Asia	2006	Drug Control Agency- Kyrgyz DCA (mid-term evaluation)
MAR/G56	Africa and the Middle East	2006	Demand Reduction Programme for Mauritius (mid-term self evaluation)
NIR/F22	Africa and the Middle East	2006	Strengthening Treatment and Rehabilitation Services offered by Government and NGOs (terminal evaluation)
RAF/H33	Africa and the Middle East	2006	Development of a Drug Control Capacity in the Sea Ports of East and Southern Africa (terminal evaluation)

RER/F35	Central and Eastern Europe	2006	Strengthening of Capacities for Collection and Analysis of Criminal Intelligence in South-eastern Europe
TUR/G36	West and Central Asia	2005	Strengthening of the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) Phase II
AFG/R40	West and Central Asia	2007	Reform of the Juvenile Justice System (terminal evaluation)
AFG/R41	West and Central Asia	2007	Reform of the Penitentiary System
AFG/R42	West and Central Asia	2007	Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Capacity Building
INS/R43	South and East Asia and the Pacific	2006	Strengthening Judicial Integrity and Capacity in Indonesia
COL/C81	Latin America and the Caribbean	2005	Programa para la Descentralización del Plan Nacional de Drogas (terminal evaluation)
NIC/D55	Latin America and the Caribbean	2005	Acciones de Sensibilización y Medidas de Prevención para Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes en Situación de Riesgo de Uso Indebido de Drogas y Explotación Sexual

Annex II: Recommendations implementation plan matrix

Evaluation title:

Thematic area:

<i>Evaluation recommendation</i>	<i>Specific action to be taken</i>	<i>Resources required</i>	<i>Indicators of accomplishment</i>	<i>Completion date</i>	<i>Name of focal point</i>	<i>Observations</i>
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

Annex III: List of persons interviewed

Mr. Antonio Maria Costa Executive Director UNODC

Mr. Francis Maertens, Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs UNODC

Mr. Franz Baumann, Director, Division for Management UNODC

Ms. Kuniko Ozaki, Director, Division for Treaty Affairs UNODC

Mr. Jeffery Avina, Director, Division for Operations UNODC

Mr. Bo Mathiasen, Chief of Staff UNODC

Mr. Sandeep Chawla, Chief, Policy and Research Branch UNODC

Mr. Backson Sibanda, Chief, Independent Evaluation Unit UNODC

Mr. Mahbub, Alam, Evaluation Officer UNODC

Ms. Barbara Torggler, Evaluation Specialist UNODC

Mr. Ugi Zvekic, Chief Strategic Planning Unit UNODC

Ms. Fumika Ouchi, former Evaluation Expert

Mr. Amado Phillip De Andres, Deputy Regional Representative UNODC in Senegal

Mr. Chris van der Burgh, Chief Africa and the Middle East Section UNODC

Mr. Alain Ancion (First Secretary), Permanent Mission of The Netherlands in Vienna

Ms. Stephanie Wickes, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the United States in Vienna

Ms. Alison Crocket, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom in Vienna

Mr. Naoyuki Yasuda, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Japan in Vienna

Mr. Ayman Ahmed ElGammal, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Egypt in Vienna

Annex IV: Data collection instruments

Use of evaluation recommendations questionnaire

The Independent Evaluation Unit is reviewing how the lessons learned, best practices and recommendations generated by evaluation reports during the last three years have been used in UNODC. This questionnaire focuses exclusively on the recommendations made in the 2004 Annual Evaluation Report. The information collected will be analyzed in conjunction with other data and used in a report intended to make suggestions for improving the use of evaluations in the organization.

Instructions: The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part deals with each recommendation made in the report. The second part deals with the big picture, asking you to consider all the recommendations as a whole.

Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge. You may consult other sources/colleagues.

The questionnaire has been designed to be completed within the Word document. Once completed, please return it to roger.miranda@unodc.org by XXXX 2007.

If you require further clarifications please feel free to contact Roger Miranda at IEU (roger.miranda@unodc.org)

Part 1: Use of recommendations

A series of questions follows under each recommendation. Please ensure you consider all the options under each question since, due to page breaks, you may miss all possible answers.

1. Example recommendation: There is a need for UNODC to develop an overarching strategy (a plan designed to achieve a long-term aim/goal) as an instrument that operationalizes conventions, unifies strategic objectives, strategic frameworks and global programmes in line with resource availability. The strategy will provide the necessary links between operational priorities, the 2006–2007 strategic framework on the one hand, and results-based management and project cycle management on the other. This recommendation recognizes that UNODC now has a Strategic Planning Unit dedicated to the pursuit of an organizational strategy.

1. To whom was this recommendation addressed?

- Project management
- UNODC country office
- UNODC regional office
- HQ regional section
- ExCom
- Unit at HQ
- IEU

Other:

2. Was this recommendation accepted?

Yes (if Yes, go to question 2(a)) No (if No, go to question 2(b))

2(a). Why yes?*(you may select more than one)*

- The recommendation was relevant
- The recommendation was sufficiently general to be accepted
- The recommendation was specific enough to be accepted
- The recommendation was clear
- Findings support the recommendation
- Management was interested and/or understanding

Other:

2(b). Why not?*(you may select more than one)*

- The recommendation was too general
- The recommendation was too specific
- The recommendation was not clear
- Findings leading to the recommendation are disputed
- Lack of interest and/or understanding from management
- Project/programme had ended
- The recommendation is not relevant anymore

Other:

<p>3. Was it implemented?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially (if Partially, go to question 3(a))</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No (if No, go to question 3(b))</p>	
<p>3(a). Briefly explain reasons why it was implemented partially:</p>	<p>3(b). Why not? <i>(you may select more than one)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of resources</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No opportunity to do so</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest or understanding from management</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not a priority</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not see how it can be used</p> <p>Other:</p>

Part 2: General issues

The questions that follow should be answered taking into consideration all the recommendations as a whole.

1. Overall, were the recommendations formulated clearly? Yes No
2. Overall, were the recommendations appropriate? Yes No
3. Were they timely? Yes No
4. Are they credible? Yes No
5. Overall, do the recommendations address needs/requirements?
 Yes No
6. Are they applicable? Yes No
7. Are they based on evidence? Yes No
8. What factors, in your experience, increase the likelihood of a recommendation being used?

9. What was your role in relation to the evaluation that resulted in the recommendations mentioned in part one? (more than one answer is possible)

Commissioned it

Managed it

Implemented some/all recommendations of it

Was not directly involved in any aspect

Other:

Please feel free to give us any comments/suggestions you may have regarding evaluations (and recommendations in particular) at UNODC:

Optional information:

Name: _____

Position: _____

E-mail: _____

Online survey questions

Note: The order of the questions was slightly different in the online version.

This survey is part of a broader effort aimed at determining the use UNODC has made of evaluations in the past four years. Information has already been collected on the quality of recommendations found in evaluation reports and how these have been used.

This brief survey will focus primarily on issues related to lessons learned and best practices identified in evaluation reports. In general terms, a lesson learned is knowledge or understanding gained by experience; a best practice is a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has been proven to reliably lead to a desired result.

Additionally, a couple of general questions regarding evaluation at UNODC shall be posed.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

General

1. *In your opinion, what should be the reasons for conducting an evaluation? Please rank in order of importance.*
 - To determine the merit or worth of what is being evaluated
 - To assist decision makers responsible for deciding policy
 - To promote accountability as part of an oversight and compliance system
 - To generate information for public relations activities
 - To contribute to project/programme and/or organizational improvements
 - To contribute to staff and/or organizational learning

2. *In your opinion, what have been the reasons for conducting evaluations in UNODC? Please rank in order of importance.*
 - To determine the merit or worth of what is being evaluated
 - To assist decision makers responsible for deciding policy
 - To promote accountability as part of an oversight and compliance system
 - To generate information for public relations activities
 - To contribute to project/programme and/or organizational improvements
 - To contribute to staff and/or organizational learning

3. *Have any projects/programmes you deal with been evaluated in the last four years?*
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No

4. *Have you read (fully/partially) an evaluation report(s) (e.g. Annual Evaluation Report, thematic or project report)?*
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No (takes respondent to question 6)

Use

5. *How would you describe the report(s) you have read? (select one)*
 - (a) Very useful (takes respondent to question 26, then to 6)
 - (b) Useful (takes respondent to question 27, then to 6)
 - (c) Somewhat useful (takes respondent to question 28, then to 6)
 - (d) Not useful at all (takes respondent to question 29, then to 6)

6. *How can UNODC increase the utility of evaluations? (rank in order of importance)*
 - (a) Evaluations should be more participatory
 - (b) Evaluations should address the needs/concerns of primary users

- (c) Evaluations should be planned well in advance
 - (d) Evaluations should be disseminated more widely
 - (e) Establish an effective recommendation-implementation system
 - (f) Train more staff in evaluation issues
 - (g) Increase engagement of senior management in evaluation exercises
 - (h) Other (specify)
7. *Have you used lessons learned and/or best practices found in UNODC evaluation reports?*
- (a) Only lessons learned (takes you to question 9)
 - (b) Only best practices (takes you to question 10)
 - (c) Both (takes you to question 11)
 - (d) Neither (takes you to question 8)
8. *The reason for not having used lessons learned and best practices is: (you may select more than one)*
- (a) Have not come across lessons learned/best practices in a report
 - (b) The quality of the lessons learned/best practices was poor
 - (c) Have not needed to use lessons learned/best practices from a report in my work
 - (d) The lessons learned/best practices did not apply to my work
 - (e) The lessons learned/best practices were not credible
 - (f) The lessons learned/best practices were not timely
 - (g) Apart from reports, do not know where to find them
9. *The reason for not having used best practices is: (you may select more than one)*
- (a) Have not come across best practices in a report
 - (b) The quality of the best practices was poor
 - (c) Have not needed to use best practices from a report in my work
 - (d) The best practices did not apply to my work
 - (e) The best practices were not credible
 - (f) The best practices were not timely
10. *The reason for not having used lessons learned is: (you may select more than one)*
- (a) Have not come across lessons learned in a report
 - (b) The quality of the lessons learned was poor
 - (c) Have not needed to use lessons learned from a report in my work
 - (d) The lessons learned did not apply to my work

- (e) The lessons learned were not credible
 - (f) The lessons learned were not timely
11. *The reason for using lessons learned was: (you may select more than one)*
- (a) Policy development
 - (b) Designing a new project/programme
 - (c) Correcting ongoing activities
 - (d) Incorporating them into a project extension
 - (e) General knowledge
 - (f) Other (specify)
12. *The reason for using best practices was: (you may select more than one)*
- (a) Policy development
 - (b) Designing a new project/programme
 - (c) Correcting ongoing activities
 - (d) Incorporating them into a project extension
 - (e) General knowledge
 - (f) Other (specify)

Quality

13. *Were the lessons learned credible?*
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
14. *Were the lessons learned timely?*
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
15. *Were the best practices credible?*
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
16. *Were the best practices timely?*
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
17. *Can the lessons learned be applied across projects/programmes?*
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) Sometimes
18. *Can the best practices be applied across projects/programmes?*
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) Sometimes

19. *What can be done to improve the quality of lessons learned in UNODC evaluation reports? (you may select more than one)*
- (a) Lessons learned should concisely capture the context from which it is derived
 - (b) Lessons learned should be applicable in different contexts and identify target users
 - (c) Lessons learned should suggest a prescription and should guide action
 - (d) Do not know
20. *What can be done to improve the quality of best practices in UNODC evaluation reports? (you may select more than one)*
- (a) Best practices should concisely capture the context in which it has been proven
 - (b) Among the proven practices, they should be the best at achieving some result
 - (c) Best practices should suggest a prescription and should guide action
 - (d) Do not know

Relevance

21. *Do the lessons learned you have come across address issues relevant to your work?*
- (a) Always
 - (b) Most of the time
 - (c) Sometimes
 - (d) Hardly ever
 - (e) Not yet
22. *Do the best practices you have come across address issues relevant to your work?*
- (a) Always
 - (b) Most of the time
 - (c) Sometimes
 - (d) Hardly ever
 - (e) Not yet

Constraints

23. *In general, what constraints do you face when trying to use lessons learned, best practices and/or recommendations derived from evaluations? (rank in order of importance)*
- (a) Do not have sufficient resources to act
 - (b) Do not have support from my superiors
 - (c) Events have moved on, making the evaluation outdated

- (d) Have other priorities
- (e) The elements derived from the evaluation were not relevant for my work
- (f) None, since I do not need to use information from evaluations
- (g) Have not faced any constraints when using information from evaluations

ID

24. *You are in: (select the one that is closest to your primary function)*
- (a) Senior management (P5 and above)
 - (b) Project/programme management
 - (c) Technical/substantive content expert
 - (d) Other: (specify)
25. *Where are you based?*
- (a) HQ
 - (b) Field
26. *Please briefly describe why you have found the evaluation report(s) you have read very useful:*
27. *Please briefly describe why you have found the evaluation report(s) you have read mostly useful:*
28. *Please briefly describe why you have found the evaluation report(s) you have read somewhat useful:*
29. *Please briefly describe why you have found the evaluation report(s) you have read not useful at all:*
30. *Considering the projects/programmes you deal with that have been evaluated in the last four years, we'd like to focus on the actual impact that the evaluation(s) had on the projects/programmes themselves. An impact could have been on project/programme operations, on planning, on funding, on policy, on decisions, on thinking about the intervention and so forth. In your opinion, what was the degree of impact that the evaluation(s) had on the projects/programmes themselves?*
31. *The previous question focused on the evaluation(s) impact on the projects/programmes themselves. Sometimes evaluations have a broader impact on things beyond immediate projects/programmes, things such as general thinking on issues that arise from an evaluation, position papers, policy, or legislation to name a few. In your opinion, what was the degree of impact that the evaluation(s) had beyond the projects/programmes themselves?*



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