Meta-Synthesis

of Evaluation Reports

2017–2018
Independent Evaluation Section

Meta-synthesis of evaluation reports 2017 – 2018
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Preface

Over the past few years, the focus on evaluation as one key ingredient of evidence-based decision-making has increased. The ongoing United Nations reform and the Sustainable Development Goals require further investments into strong and independent evaluation results to inform the way forward and assess what has worked, how and why. UNODC is responding to those efforts by conducting independent, high-quality evaluations to foster organizational learning, accountability, the generation of knowledge and opportunities for dialogue among a range of actors, using the convening power of the evaluation itself.

Moreover, IES is engaging with other United Nations entities that have evaluation functions through UNEG to contribute to shaping the future of evaluation within the United Nations system and beyond. IES is also engaging with UNEG, in particular to translate the increased emphasis on evaluation and a system-wide evaluation of the United Nations reform into concrete actions. In resonance with the United Nations reform, which calls, inter alia, for cohesiveness, consolidation and interlinkages, in particular in the context of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNODC, through IES, presents herewith an in-depth analysis performed at a high level of abstraction, generating consolidated information on project and programme performance, as well as insights on evaluation results vis-à-vis the UNODC subprogrammes.

IES has applied a systematic technique for reviewing, analysing and summarizing the 31 evaluation reports, including 289 recommendations, that form the basis of the present study and has ensured that all reports meet UNEG standards, in addition to submitting them to the scrutiny of an independent company for additional quality control. Having said that, an important limitation of the present meta-synthesis is that its results are to be read within the framework of the terms of reference of evaluations, which follow criteria developed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, as well as the framework of the evaluations that have been included and that cover only two years and are, therefore, applicable to the whole Organization only to a certain extent.

Following the positive reception of the first (2011–2014) and second (2015–2016) meta-analyses and their use in various oversight reports and UNODC initiatives, the present third report is further tailored to the needs of its target audience. In particular, the revision of the assessment categories to allow for more granular information and the introduction of a new chapter focused on the UNODC strategic framework subprogrammes respond to the needs of using evaluation results at different levels and in different forums. As a result of the previous meta-analyses and related changes, the investments of IES in gender-responsive evaluation norms and standards have triggered an increased emphasis on this important topic, representing now the largest category of recommendations identified in the analysis.

I hope that you will find the report interesting and look forward to receiving your feedback.

Katharina Kayser
Chief, Independent Evaluation Section
In a nutshell

The present analysis is based on 31 evaluation reports; 26 independent project evaluations and 5 in-depth evaluations issued by UNODC between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2018. These documents contain 289 recommendations, which were placed in one to three categories each, producing overall 577 references. The evaluations were conducted by 65 independent evaluators and experts (34 women and 31 men). In an independent evaluation quality assessment, all evaluation reports were found to meet UNEG norms and standards (in 2018, 100 per cent of reports were rated as “good” or “very good”). Lastly, oversight reports and evaluations of other United Nations agencies were used to complement the available data and further increase the robustness of the information.
Executive summary

Background

The meta-synthesis (formerly "meta-analysis") is one of the key innovative efforts of IES to strengthen evaluation-based knowledge management in UNODC and is aimed at fostering a culture of evaluation, learning and accountability. It falls in line with the ongoing United Nations reform, which places increased emphasis on evaluation and lessons to be drawn from it at a higher strategic level.

The 2030 Agenda requires information beyond individual project and programme levels in order to inform strategic decision-making at the highest political levels. Therefore, evaluation-based knowledge products support decision-making at the organizational level as well as by Member States by extracting the key results and lessons learned from a large number of independent evaluations. Further to the positive reception of the previous two IES meta-analyses (for 2011–2014 and 2015–2016, respectively), the increasing demand from Member States and the use of those results in a variety of forums, as well as the increasing demand for information for evaluations at the aggregate level in the United Nations reform, IES has continued with the practice of preparing meta-analyses.

Methodology

The meta-synthesis follows the methodological approach adopted in the previous two analyses, while taking into account changing information needs. The analysis is based on a robust social-research methodology. Both a qualitative analysis and a quantitative assessment in the form of a frequency analysis were applied. The categories were revised on the basis of an in-depth review by two assessors to ensure, in particular, that the granularity of the project/programme cycle was captured in greater detail.

Gender equality and human rights

With the revision of UNODC evaluation norms and standards, the development of guidelines for gender-responsive evaluation, the recruitment of three dedicated gender experts for three in-depth evaluations, in addition to a full revision of the IES evaluators database and various other related activities, the evaluation results analysed in the present meta-synthesis have a strong focus on human rights and gender equality, with IES reaching gender balance in its independent evaluators. The fact that, in 2017 and 2018, IES met the requirements set in the Evaluation Performance Indicator of the annual United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women\(^1\) also confirms these positive developments.

The objective of the present third UNODC evaluation meta-synthesis is to increase knowledge and awareness of recurring recommendations and lessons learned contained in independent UNODC and external evaluation reports and audit results, with a view to increasing the use of evaluation results and promoting evidence-based decision-making at all levels.

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\(^{1}\)United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), “Promoting UN accountability (UN-SWAP and UNCT-SWAP)”. Available at www.unwomen.org.
Key results of the analysis

As shown in figure 1, the three main categories referred to by UNODC evaluation recommendations were “human rights and gender equality” (89 references), “project and programme implementation” (85 references) and “results-based management and knowledge management” (83 references). Results of the analysis of the other categories are covered in the main body of the report.

Recommendations relating to “human rights and gender equality” highlighted the need for strengthening the integration of related principles in the design of UNODC projects and programmes. Human rights and gender equality analyses would support the integration of these topics into strategic planning, implementation, reporting and monitoring.

Figure 1: Number of references in recommendations (each recommendation was placed in one to three categories)

Additional areas highlighted by independent evaluators were the need for considering the differential impact of UNODC activities on men and women and increasing capacity, resources and strategic partnerships to strengthen human rights and gender equality within UNODC and in its projects and programmes.

In this regard, a notable good practice was observed in one evaluation, in relation to efforts by UNODC to advocate awareness of human rights and gender equality issues among national partners with regard to the needs of the most-at-risk populations, such as women and detainees.

With regard to “project and programme implementation”, various evaluations highlighted the need for clearly delineating exit strategies for UNODC initiatives in close consultation with all partners, to ensure that results could be maintained over a longer period of time. The related need for improved sustainability strategies, in particular financial sustainability, in UNODC projects and programmes was highlighted. One specifically good practice was evidenced in UNODC support for Nigeria for strengthening the rule of law-based criminal justice responses to terrorism, where capacity-building efforts reached a substantial proportion of investigators, prosecutors and judges working on terrorism cases.

In the third largest category, namely, “results-based management and knowledge management”, the independent evaluators recommended in particular to further increase focus on improving existing
results-based management frameworks and mechanisms within UNODC. This relates to a more systematic collection of data at the outcome levels, identifying more appropriate indicators at different levels, as well as stronger engagement with all relevant stakeholders in the development of theories of change.

The other categories are analysed under the relevant chapters of the present report.

**Focus: results of the UNODC strategy and mandated areas of work and the Sustainable Development Goals**

For the first time, IES has introduced a dedicated chapter with key evaluation results directly linked to the UNODC strategic framework subprogrammes, thereby responding to the new requirement for using evaluation results at the subprogramme level in reports of the Secretariat. While the very synthesized examples below are individual illustrations from independent evaluations, they represent recurring findings and offer important learning for UNODC at large.

**Countering transnational organized crime (subprogramme 1)**

The Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism was highlighted as a flagship programme that had made a significant contribution to tackling the challenge of anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism around the world. However, additional studies in the area of trade-based money-laundering and other emerging challenges (such as cryptocurrencies and online gambling) should be conducted. In that regard, UNODC was identified as a potential global leader in research on the connection between human rights and gender equality and anti-money-laundering.

Further evaluations found that UNODC support for law enforcement and border control in Central Asia was of significant relevance to the beneficiaries in a number of priority areas, such as drug control and intelligence analysis. Opportunities exist for UNODC to increase the attention of Member States to human trafficking, terrorism prevention, anti-money-laundering and cybercrime in Central Asia.

In the area of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in South-East Asia and the Pacific, evaluators highlighted the relevance of UNODC support for combating child sexual exploitation, and they recommended that it continue to provide its support for further enhancing related legal frameworks.

**A comprehensive and balanced approach to counter the world drug problem (subprogramme 2)**

With regard to HIV/AIDS, evaluators recommended that UNODC increase its engagement in Central Asia to scale up the availability, coverage and quality of HIV prevention and treatment services for injecting drug users in community and prison settings and strengthen the incorporation of gender equality in national and regional initiatives.
Justice (subprogramme 5)

In the context of CPCJ, one evaluation highlighted the broad mandate of UNODC to support Member States in CPCJ reform and stressed the importance of revising its strategy in that area. Moreover, the innovative aspects of UNODC efforts in combining sports activities with life skills for crime and drug prevention were highlighted as good practice.

Research, trend analysis and forensics (subprogramme 6)

Likewise, evaluators found that the UNODC forensic services provided to the State of Palestine improved the criminal justice system in the West Bank, contributing to improved human rights conditions of victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Furthermore, the integral role of the UNODC thematic programme on research in improving the effectiveness of stakeholders’ responses to current and emerging challenges was highlighted.

UNODC and the Sustainable Development Goals

UNODC was identified as a “thematic leader” with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals by OIOS and is a custodian agency (alone or jointly) for 15 Goal indicators. In 2018, 88 per cent of all UNODC evaluations took the Goals into consideration, leading to various recommendations, including for UNODC to further increase its focus on the Goals and to include indicators related to the Goals in its programming comprehensively.
Introduction

The meta-synthesis (formerly "meta-analysis") is one of the key efforts of IES to strengthen evaluation-based knowledge management in UNODC and is aimed at fostering a culture of evaluation, learning and accountability. It falls in line with the ongoing United Nations reform,2 which places increased emphasis on evaluation and accountability at all levels. The 2030 Agenda requires information beyond individual project or programme level in order to inform strategic decision-making at the highest political levels. Therefore, evaluation-based knowledge products support decision-making at the organizational level by extracting the key results and lessons learned from a large number of independent evaluations.3

Background information

To ensure that all needs were met, and in response to feedback collected over the past few years, including the professional peer review of the evaluation function at UNODC carried out by UNEG and the OECD Development Assistance Committee (which concluded in 2016 that the first meta-analysis, issued in 2015, had been "well received by both senior management and Member States and generated interest and discussions"),4 IES decided to revisit its approach and introduced the following improvements to the present analysis:

- The meta-synthesis now consists of two parts:
  (a) The analysis, focusing – as in previous years – on the results of a frequency analysis and a qualitative review of all evaluations issued by UNODC in 2017 and 2018;
  (b) Synthesized evaluation results, based on a qualitative analysis, relating to the UNODC subprogrammes. This part focuses on individual evaluation results that offer important learning for UNODC at large in relation to the subprogrammes of the strategic framework. The inclusion of this chapter responds to the new requirement in the Secretariat to use evaluation results, in particular those at the subprogramme level, in its annual reports.

- The meta-synthesis follows the methodological approach adopted in the previous two analyses, while taking into account changing information needs. The analysis is, again, based on a robust social-research methodology, based on both a qualitative analysis and a quantitative assessment. The categories for assessing and reporting on all recommendations were revised by two assessors to ensure the rigour of the analysis and adapted to allow for an even more focused aggregation of data.

- Following the positive reception of the previous meta-analyses, and to allow for an even more granular aggregation of information, additional evaluation and audit results of other United Nations agencies or oversight bodies relating to the UNODC mandated areas of work have been included in the analysis.

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1 https://reform.un.org/
2 With the present biennial evaluation synthesis report, IES is implementing Commission for Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/14 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 18/6, as the report will be made available well in advance of the sessions of the Commissions held in the first part of each year.
Consequently, the goal of the present analysis was revised to increase knowledge and awareness of recurring recommendations and lessons learned contained in independent UNODC and external evaluation reports and audit results, with a view to increasing the use of evaluation results and promoting evidence-based decision-making at all levels.

This analysis, conducted by IES in 2019, is based on 31 evaluation reports consisting of 26 independent project evaluations and 5 in-depth evaluations issued between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2018 (see annex I for a list of the evaluations). As shown in figure 2, 39 per cent of the analysed evaluations are related to UNODC strategic framework subprogramme 1 (countering transnational organized crime), 19 per cent to subprogramme 5 (justice), 16 per cent to subprogramme 2 (a comprehensive and balanced approach to counter the world drug problem) and 13 per cent to subprogramme 6 (research, trend analysis and forensics). The remaining 13 per cent of evaluations relate to subprogrammes 3 (countering corruption, 7 per cent), 4 (terrorism prevention, 3 per cent) and 8 (technical cooperation and field support, 3 per cent).

Furthermore, the evaluations analysed for the meta-synthesis relate to a wide range of Sustainable Development Goals, with several programmes and subprogrammes contributing to their realization.

Selected examples: UNODC evaluation results and meta-analyses are used on a regular basis by internal and external stakeholders

In its audit of UNODC operations in Pakistan, OIOS drew from the results of the meta-analysis of 2015 and 2016. In particular, findings related to capacity-building and the measuring of behavioural change were used. In addition, the results of the mid-term in-depth evaluation of the country programme for Pakistan of 2013 were used to formulate the recommendation to “establish a formal policy or strategy for planning, organizing and measuring the long-term impact of capacity-building activities at the UNODC country office in Pakistan”.

In its audit of the management of the global programme on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism at UNODC of 2018, OIOS used the independent mid-term in-depth evaluation of that programme issued in 2015 as a key information source.
projects contributing to several Goals. As shown in figure 3, 29 of the 31 evaluations relate to, inter alia, Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong Institutions), 11 to Goal 5 (gender equality), 8 to Goal 10 (reduced inequalities) and 8 to Goal 3 (good health and well-being).

The 31 analysed reports contain 289 recommendations that were placed in one to three categories each, to ensure that the different aspects of a given recommendation could be appropriately reflected in the analysis (there are, overall, 577 references). Moreover, as shown in figure 4, the average number of recommendations per evaluation decreased from 12.9 in 2015–2016 to 9.3 in 2017–2018, thereby reflecting the changes made in UNODC evaluation templates and guidelines, in which evaluators were advised to decrease the number of recommendations for increased use of evaluation results. At the same time, the average number of references (assigned labels) per recommendation increased from 1.5 in 2015–2016 to 2 in 2017–2018.6

The present report focuses on the six major categories listed in figure 5 and, in addition to providing the total number of references as well as their overall percentage, provides an analysis of the major underlying themes of each category in the respective chapters.

Over the past few years, IES has invested in the development of a wide range of high-quality norms, standards, tools, templates and systems to improve the quality of UNODC evaluation reports.

This effort has included contracting independent external evaluation experts to assess the quality of all UNODC evaluation reports issued on an annual basis since 2014, in line with best practices in the United Nations system, such as those followed by UNFPA and UNICEF. The evaluation quality assessments found that all evaluation reports met the UNEG and UNODC norms and standards in 2017 and 2018, the 2018 assessment even reporting that 100 per cent of the reports issued in 2018 had been rated as “good” or “very good” (see fig. 6), which reflects a clear improvement in the quality of the evaluation reports over the past few years. The present meta-synthesis is therefore based on the results of high-quality independent evaluations.

6 Each evaluated project or programme can relate to more than one Sustainable Development Goal.

6 As in the previous two meta-analyses, each recommendation could be placed in up to three categories, and the increase is therefore not due to a different approach for assigning the categories. However, it may be the result of the revision of the categories.

Important note

While the 31 independent UNODC evaluations included in the meta-synthesis cover more than $300 million of the UNODC budget, as for any assessment conducted over a certain length of time, the results of the meta-synthesis, while aggregated and analysed on the basis of a strong methodology, should be seen in the context of the evaluated projects and programmes.
**Methodology**

As stated above, all independent evaluation reports issued in 2017 and 2018 were fully in line with UNEG and UNODC norms and standards. Figure 6 also illustrates the substantial improvements in the rating of UNODC evaluation reports in 2017 and 2018 compared with previous years. Accordingly, all 31 evaluation reports issued over that period were used in the present meta-synthesis as data sources.

The analysis followed the methodological approach of the previous two editions, while taking into account changing information needs, as detailed above. It is based on a robust social-research methodology. The meta-synthesis was conducted on the basis of both a qualitative analysis and a quantitative assessment in the form of a frequency analysis. The categories were revised on the basis of an in-depth review to ensure, in particular, that the granularity of the project/programme cycle was captured in greater detail. The categories were also continuously reviewed during the process, and a final check of the reliability of the categories was conducted by two IES staff members to ensure full relevance. Further information on the methodological approach, including its limitations and how they were surmounted, is provided in annex II.

**Gender equality in UNODC evaluation reports**

One of the key challenges in the first meta-analysis, conducted in 2015, was related to the limited integration of human rights and gender considerations in UNODC evaluation norms and standards. As a result of this finding, IES has strengthened its integration of human rights and gender equality aspects into the entire evaluation process, in line with the guiding principles of UNEG.

To meet the evaluation requirements of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for ensuring gender-responsive evaluations and to move towards transformative change, IES has integrated gender equality and women’s empowerment into all of its work. Efforts to mainstream gender issues and institute gender-responsive evaluations in UNODC have included a variety of actions, such as:

- Implementing mandatory evaluation criteria on gender equality and reviewing and updating all evaluation guidance materials
- Moving towards gender parity in the composition of both the evaluation teams and the evaluation stakeholders
- The assessment and reporting by EIS on progress to advance gender-responsive evaluations by including the gender issue in the evaluation external quality assurance process

These actions led to an increased focus on human rights and gender equality in the meta-analysis for 2015–2016 and are further reflected in the current synthesis. Since 2017, IES has reached gender balance in its independent evaluators, as shown in figure 6. Key factors for this achievement were the revision of evaluation norms and standards, the development of

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guidelines for gender-responsive evaluation, the recruitment of three dedicated gender experts for three in-depth evaluations and a full revision of IES evaluators database and various other related activities. Further to those improvements, the evaluation results analysed in the present meta-synthesis reflect the strong focus placed on human rights and gender equality. The fact that, in 2017 and 2018, IES met the requirements set in the “Evaluation” performance indicator of the annual United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women also confirms these positive developments.

Figure 7: Percentage of independent evaluators by gender (2011–2018)

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Key results of the analysis

Overview

IES revised the categories for the assessment of recommendations on the basis of feedback received from various senior evaluation experts and UNODC managers. In particular, the “project/programme cycle” category was split into more concrete subcategories, namely, “project and programme implementation”, “results-based management and knowledge management”, “delivery of assistance” and “project and programme strategy setting and development”. The introduction of these new categories allows for a more in-depth understanding of the recommendations and provides more granular information. Unlike the previous analysis, however, the results of the present analysis cannot be directly compared with those in the previous meta-analyses.10

As shown in figure 8, the analysis makes it evident that the majority of recommendations continue to relate to the project/programme cycle, with almost 30 per cent of recommendations referring to “project and programme implementation” and “results-based management and knowledge management”.

Figure 8: Number of recommendations per category (each recommendation was placed in one to three categories)

However, the category most referred to in recommendations is “human rights and gender equality”, with 15 per cent of all recommendations referring to this thematic area. As shown in figure 9, this constitutes a clear increase compared with previous years (2 per cent in 2011–2014 and 4 per cent in 2015–2016). The change seems to be closely linked to various key investments that IES made over the past few years to strengthen, inter alia, gender equality considerations in evaluations.

10 Considering that the categories were revised and split, a comparison with previous meta-analyses would not produce meaningful results. However, in the previous meta-analysis, 36 per cent of all references in recommendations related to “project/programme cycle”, 14 per cent each to “cooperation and coordination” and “capacity-building”, and 4 per cent to “human rights and gender equality”. 
The development of dedicated guidance for gender-responsive evaluations, integrating the issue of gender equality throughout the UNODC Evaluation Handbook, as well as all other templates and guidelines, the recruitment of dedicated gender experts in three in-depth evaluations, as well as evaluators with expertise in gender equality, were some of the key measures that have been implemented by IES since 2017.

The following sections provide a detailed analysis of the results for each of the six categories with the highest number of references. The key results of the remaining categories will also be elaborated on. The results of the "UNODC strategy and mandate" category is addressed in a new chapter entitled "Results of the UNODC strategy and mandated areas of work and the Sustainable Development Goals".

**Figure 9:** Percentage of references to human rights and gender equality in recommendations since 2011
Evaluation recommendations relating to human rights and gender equality refer to a wide variety of themes, considering their cross-cutting nature. In general, the need for strengthening the integration of human rights and gender equality considerations in the design of UNODC projects and programmes, including in results-based-management, is evident in numerous evaluations. Independent evaluators recommend to conduct a human rights and gender equality analysis to ensure that this topic is fully included in strategic planning, implementation and reporting, as well as the monitoring of UNODC projects and programmes. Moreover, it was noted that the design of projects and programmes should give consideration to their differential impact on men and women. In this regard, it was recommended in the evaluation of programme MMR/Z39 to conduct an in-depth value chain analysis by gender with a view to revising the design in order to strengthen achievements and manage expectations. It was also recommended in a different evaluation that the related gender mainstreaming strategy include specific results, targets, resources and accountability mechanisms to strengthen internal capacity for and commitment to

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**Human rights and gender equality (15 per cent of all references)**

**Meta-synthesis 2017-2018: percentage of references in independent evaluation recommendations:**

- Human rights and gender equality (15%)
- Project and programme implementation (15%)
- Results-based management and knowledge management (14%)
- Delivery of assistance (12%)
- Cooperation and coordination (11%)
- UNODC strategies and structure (9%)
- Remaining categories (24%)

**Number of references to “human rights and gender equality” by topic:**

- Human rights and gender equality (cross-cutting): 38
- Human rights: 17
- Gender equality: 34

**Most relevant evaluations:**

- In-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects and evaluations of GLO/U40, GLO/T59 and GLO/T92, MMR/Z39, PSE/X02, KGZ/K50, IND/A06 and XAM/Z17

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The Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism should take steps to increase the focus on gender mainstreaming in project planning, implementation and reporting. It should ensure that all activities and intended results of the programme give consideration to the differential impact on men and women. It should also explore undertaking research on the connections between human rights and gender equality on the one hand and anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism on the other hand, and seek to establish UNODC and the Global Programme as a leader in this field. (Evaluation of GLO/U40)
improving the impact of the programmes in advancing human rights and gender equality. In this regard, collecting gender-disaggregated data, for example, for trainings and expert meetings, would be essential to inform the strategic planning of projects and programmes. This need for strengthened inclusion of human rights and gender equality is also evident in the OIOS audit of UNODC operations in Pakistan, in which OIOS recommended that the country office strengthen its efforts towards mainstreaming human rights and gender by, inter alia, identifying measurable indicators for human rights and gender issues. In another audit report, OIOS also recommended that UNODC take appropriate steps to improve gender mainstreaming.

Further salient aspects in recommendations include a need for increased commitment to and capacity, resources and strategic partnerships for advancing human rights and gender equality in UNODC programming. In this regard, increasing the emphasis on human rights and gender equality in UNODC capacity-building activities is also recommended. While this relates to the content of the training, there is also an evident need for ensuring that project activities, including training courses, benefit women and men equally, in particular those in vulnerable groups (e.g., drug users) and for increasing the number of women police officers or police officers from minorities. In its audit report on UNODC operations in Pakistan, OIOS recommended that UNODC develop guidance for programme managers to assess and address the impact of technical cooperation activities on vulnerable beneficiaries.

Selected lesson learned

Investment in the design phase of any intervention is crucial to include a dedicated analysis of stakeholders with an explicit assessment of their capacities and expectations, a gender analysis and a value chain analysis of the commodities promoted by the subprogramme. (Evaluation of MMR/Z39)

Selected lesson learned

It is essential to improve awareness among the general population of how to gain access to the best care system through forensic clinics for victims of sexual and gender-based violence, as a priority. If the clinics are not used, there is a danger that the hospital space that they occupy might be reallocated to other purposes. (Evaluation of PSE/X02)

Commitment, capacity, resources and strategic partnerships

The Research and Trend Analysis Branch management should promote and support an explicit human rights and gender-focused approach in future programming. This will require stronger commitment, capacity, resources and strategic partnerships. The efforts could include designating a skilled human rights and gender focal point, engaging experts in that field, providing training for Branch and field staff and research focal points, nurturing partnerships with human rights and gender-focused organizations, providing visibility to related issues emerging from research and promoting exchange and debate around them. (In-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects)

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14 See the independent evaluation of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92.
15 See the independent evaluations of RER/F23 and XAS/569.
18 See the independent evaluations of IND/A06 and KGZ/T90.
19 See OIOS report No. 2018/122.
On the other hand, increasing internal UNODC capacity with regard to human rights and gender equality at all levels was identified as a priority in various evaluations. In this regard, evaluators also recommended, for example, to reinforce internal understanding, capacity and resources for gender mainstreaming through coaching, seeking gender expertise in recruitments as well as establishing strategic partnerships. Further investment in partnerships with other United Nations agencies and other organizations with relevant expertise (such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) and civil society organizations is necessary for better promoting human rights and gender equality in programme and project objectives and supporting Member States in advancing human rights and gender equality.

One key aspect in identifying the most relevant organizations working on human rights and gender equality is a thorough stakeholder mapping at all levels, as part of the development of the theory of change underpinning projects and programmes. Identifying, for example, other international organizations with specific gender programmes would ensure that those projects reinforce what is already being done, rather than developing unilateral activities and targets. However, the necessity to integrate human rights and gender equality in the actual delivery of UNODC assistance is evident in numerous evaluations, requesting for example that UNODC support for legal reform be human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive. The potential that UNODC has to act as an accelerator for advancing human rights and gender equality is evident, such as when independent evaluators recommend to raise public awareness of child sex tourism and children’s rights or advocate gender-sensitive policies, legislation and the collection of data on people who inject drugs and increased whistle-blower protection.

### Selected good practice

UNODC advocated the awareness of human rights obligations and gender equality-related issues with national partners in a continuous manner, in particular in relation to the needs of most-at-risk populations, including women and people in detention. (Evaluation of XCE/A01)

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See the in-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects and the independent evaluation of IND/A06.

See the independent evaluation of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92.

See the independent evaluations of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92, and MMR/Z39.

See the independent evaluation of XAM/Z17.

See the independent evaluation of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92.

See the independent evaluation of KGZ/K50.

Ibid.

See the independent evaluation of IND/A03.
Evaluation recommendations relating to the implementation of projects and programmes constitute the category with the second largest number of references in UNODC evaluations issued in 2017 and 2018. The majority of references related to the future development of the project or programme under evaluation, including the continuation or scale-up of the planned or implemented initiatives, the merging of projects and the revision of the role of steering committees.

**Selected good practice**

A further element of good practice was the achievement of a "critical mass" of participants, which was key to sustainability. One good practice that contributed to the effectiveness of the project and to sustainability was that training and other engagements (workshops, conferences) reached a substantial proportion of the investigators, prosecutors and judges involved in the judicial response to terrorism.

(Evaluation of GLO/R35-Nigeria segment)

One recurring topic relates to the clear formulation and devising of exit strategies for UNODC initiatives, to ensure that results can be maintained over a longer time period.\footnote{28 See the independent evaluation of NGA/V18 and the in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia.} In this regard, it is essential to ensure an open dialogue with the national Governments on exit strategy timelines in order to manage expectations, allowing Governments to plan accordingly.\footnote{29 See the independent evaluations of KEN/Z04, KGZ/K50 and the in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia.}

UNODC should devise an exit strategy, in conjunction with its governance structure, that would enable it to continue to engage with beneficiaries for project activities that have led, or could reasonably be expected to lead, to substantial benefit within the criminal justice system of Nigeria.

(Evaluation of NGA/V18)
Moreover, this phase should provide for time and resources to identify potential UNODC activities or engagements that should continue beyond the end of a single project or programme.30

Likewise, in relation to the exit strategy, various evaluations highlighted the need for improved sustainability strategies in UNODC interventions.31

**Sustainability and fundraising**

Reliable, predictable and long-term funding is essential for the Policy, Planning and Coordination Unit to fully carry out its work. The Global Programme should seek solutions in ensuring long-term funding. Careful consideration should be given to: (a) providing regular updates on Global Programme activities to the donor community; (b) holding regular and joint donor meetings with the permanent missions; (c) reassessing funding modalities for the Secretariat and the Global Programme in connection with other UNODC projects and programmes, which should include cost-sharing. (Evaluation of GLO/Y09)

Numerous recommendations focused on the need to ensure financial sustainability, which generally requires expanding partnerships, cooperation at various levels and a clear division of roles and responsibilities.32

The linkage of sustainability to fundraising efforts in evaluated projects was highlighted in various recommendations. In this regard, the in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia contained a recommendation to develop a more strategic focus on funding in order to expand the donor base and ensure the sustainability of the subprogramme, that is, by developing fundraising capacity and by elaborating and implementing a fundraising strategy.33 Against this backdrop, the diversification of the donor base of projects and programmes was recommended in order to guarantee impartiality and the sustainability of the interventions.34

**Selected lesson learned**

The prisons and youth crime prevention work appears more sustainable thanks to the strong links of these components with ongoing UNODC programming, which means that they are more institutionalized. The adoption of “Line up, live up” by Governments would firmly embed it in continuing educational practices and ensure sustainability. Replacing the current funding for prisoner rehabilitation will be difficult, but the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration is contributing to structural changes in prison administrations through the integration of prison work and the vocational training of prisoners. (Evaluation of GLO/Z82)

Moreover, the sustainability strategy should include a long-term vision for activities at different levels (e.g., regional, subregional and national).35 This is particularly relevant for short-term projects, where the planning for sustainability of short-term results is essential to manage the expectations of beneficiary institutions.36 The importance of building sustainability into the technical assistance that is provided was also highlighted as an essential element.37

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30 See the independent evaluations of NGA/V18 and X55/V02.
31 See the independent evaluation of GLO/Z82.
32 See the independent evaluations of BOL/Z68, GLO/Z82, MEX/Z56 and GLO/Y09.
33 See the in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia.
34 See the independent evaluation of COL/H45.
35 See the independent evaluation of XAW/Z28.
36 See the independent evaluation of MEX/Z56.
37 See the independent evaluation of GLO/R35-Nigeria segment.
Results-based management and knowledge management (14 per cent of all references)

Meta-synthesis 2017-2018: percentage of references in independent evaluation recommendations:

- Human rights and gender equality (15%)
- Project and programme implementation (15%)
- Results-based management and knowledge management (14%)
- Delivery of assistance (12%)
- Results-based management and knowledge management (14%)
- Cooperation and coordination (11%)
- Reporting (11%)
- Project and programme implementation (11%)
- UNODC strategy and structure (9%)
- Monitoring (7%)

Number of references to “results-based management and knowledge management” by topic:

- Monitoring: 35
- Logical framework: 23
- Reporting: 14
- Others: 11

Most relevant evaluations:

In-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects and evaluations of GLO/U40, NGA/V18, GLO/T59 and GLO/T92, MMR/Z39, GLO/T63, KEN/Z04, XAM/Z17, IND/A06, MEX/Z56, GLO/Y09, XAS/S69 and KGZ/K50

As in the previous meta-analyses for 2011–2014 and 2015–2016, results-based management, in particular monitoring, was identified in the meta-synthesis for 2017–2018 as one of the main areas for improvement in the evaluated projects and programmes.

Numerous evaluations highlighted that the results-based management systems were uneven, and recommendations were therefore made to improve them, so that the information might be collected at the outcome levels, and to assign specific roles and responsibilities in relation to results-based management.38 In the cluster evaluation of five global research projects of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch, evaluators underlined the need for the Branch to institute a systematic collection of data on its purported impacts and outcomes, including on public policies and national capacities. They also identified framing specific targets for outcomes and acceptable

Results-based management systems

The management of the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism should take steps to improve its results-based monitoring and evaluation system. Its efforts to use the Kirkpatrick model are a step in the right direction, but management should go beyond training outcome data to collect outcome information on other aspects of technical assistance. These efforts could include assigning specific monitoring and evaluation roles and responsibilities to staff and partners. (Evaluation of GLO/U40)

Concise logical framework

Develop a concise and realistic logical framework for future follow-up activities that interfaces with the minimum standards and satisfies usual standards of evaluability and logical consistency, formulated in a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound way and used for real-time project monitoring. (Evaluation of RER/F23)

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38 See the independent evaluation of GLO/U40 and the in-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects.
range for impact, involving field offices and partners and assigning specific responsibility to staff members as some of the steps that the Branch could take to initiate that process.39 The necessity to invest in dedicated expertise relating to results-based management is highlighted in various evaluations.40 In its audit of the management of the global programme on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism at UNODC, OIOS made similar recommendations, highlighting that improvements in strategic planning processes were necessary.41

In addition, independent evaluators recommended close engagement with all relevant stakeholders in the development of the theory of change aimed at improving the monitoring systems and identifying appropriate indicators, ensuring that the monitoring systems are manageable, that there is an adequate number of indicators and that those are of high quality, while clearly relating to the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting human rights and gender equality.42 The aforementioned OIOS audit also contained a recommendation in this regard, to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are established to record stakeholders feedback systematically.43 Various evaluations highlighted in particular the importance of developing a dedicated theory of change to ensure that activities, outputs, outcomes and, subsequently, the objectives, were clearly linked and could be measured appropriately.44

In this regard, numerous independent evaluators recommended that the existing monitoring frameworks, tools and processes be strengthened.45 This may include, for example, baseline surveys, which would result in the formulation of clear and unambiguous indicators, including at the outcome level, monitoring databases and systems, dedicated data collection in training activities and a continuous dialogue with key partners, including civil society organizations.46 The importance of ensuring that indicators are “more relevant to the outcomes that they hope to achieve and accurately reflect the sum of the outputs and quality of the inputs”47 is highlighted in various evaluations. In this regard, OIOS recommended in its audit of UNODC operations in Pakistan that UNODC “review and streamline performance reporting and monitoring by defining the purpose and scope of each report, avoiding duplication and ensuring that the reports are aligned with the activities in the workplan”.48 In this regard, OIOS also recommended in another audit that the existing project approval process be reviewed to enable the Programme and Project Review Committee to exercise its role of ensuring the strategic alignment of global programmes with the strategic framework of UNODC.49

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39 See the in-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects.
40 See the independent evaluations of NGA/V18 and of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92.
41 See OIOS report No. 2018/029.
42 See the independent evaluations of MMR/Z39, GLO/T63, GLO/T59 and GLO/T92, and KEN/Z04.
44 See the independent evaluations of IND/A06 and xAS/S69.
45 See the independent evaluation of KGZ/K50.
46 See the independent evaluations of IND/A06 and XAS/S69.
49 See OIOS report No. 2018/029.
Delivery of UNODC assistance (12 per cent of all references)

Meta-synthesis 2017-2018: percentage of references in independent evaluation recommendations:

- Capacity-building: 39
- Research: 18
- Normative services: 13

Most relevant evaluations:
In-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects and evaluations of GLO/R35-Nigeria segment, GLO/U40, IND/A03, GLO/Z82, KGZ/T90, RER/F23, MEX/X89, XAW/Z28, NGA/V18, GLO/Y09, COL/H45, GLO/T63 and XSS/V02

Capacity-building

In follow-up activities as part of the new programme, increase the use of: (a) pairings between regional or international experts and analysts; (b) the training of trainers; and (c) training courses held on the premises of beneficiary agencies. (Evaluation of RER/F23)

Selected good practice

The Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism made a very effective use of mentoring to build capacity in Member States, especially that of law enforcement agencies and financial intelligence units, to improve their effectiveness with regard to anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism. However, mentoring is an expensive capacity development strategy. Given the trade-off between effectiveness and efficiency, as well as resource limitations, the Global Programme has deployed some cost-effective methods, such as e-learning, the training of trainers and the development of regional networks (e.g., the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa and the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Asia and the Pacific). This is a best practice that the Global Programme should continue to expand and that would also benefit other UNODC programmes. (Evaluation of GLO/U40)

Recommendations relating to the approach of UNODC to delivering technical assistance in the form of capacity-building, research and normative services constitute the category with the fourth largest number of references. As already highlighted in the IES evaluation-based analysis of capacity-building, a comprehensive capacity-building strategy is essential to ensure the best possible results. This need is also reflected in the OIOS audit of the UNODC operations in Pakistan, in which the auditors recommended that

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51 See the independent evaluation of KGZ/T90.
the country office “establish a formal policy or strategy for planning, organizing and measuring the long-term impact of capacity-building activities”. Moreover, the independent evaluators recommended considering including specialized technical expertise in the design and production of training courses and adapting their contents to the needs of trainees, for example, linking terrorism prevention training with training on how best to use intelligence in criminal cases and ensuring that training on active case management is provided to all court users. Moreover, recommendations were made to include policymakers in capacity-building engagements and to foster networking among trainees with a view to sharing information, experiences and knowledge. The importance of further institutionalizing the modalities for training trainers was also highlighted in one evaluation, as it would support local training institutions. The full integration of human rights and gender equality in training activities is another area that was addressed in the reviewed evaluations.

Likewise, the in-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch drew recommendations aimed at reviewing the relationship between research and technical assistance/capacity-building to better meet the expectations of counterparts, in addition to stressing the necessity of further developing partnerships with research centres and universities for increasing self-sustainability. In this regard, one evaluation also contained a recommendation to facilitate the transfer of lessons learned on illicit crop monitoring to other related UNODC programmes.

Furthermore, evaluations provided recommendations regarding UNODC normative services, highlighting that UNODC should provide continuing technical support to Member States to fully develop, operationalize and disseminate their developed HIV/AIDS policies in line with country specific priorities and integrate the development of new CPCJ tools into a comprehensive testing and training implementation plan with other related projects and programmes.

52 See OIOS report No. 2018/122.
53 See the independent evaluations of GLO/R35-Nigeria segment and GLO/Z82.
54 See the independent evaluations of GLO/U40 and MEX/X89.
55 See the independent evaluation of IND/A03.
56 See the independent evaluations of xAW/Z28 and NGA/V18.
57 See the in-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects and the independent evaluations of GLO/Y99, BOL/Z68 and GLO/U40.
58 See the independent evaluation of COL/H45.
59 See the independent evaluation of xSS/V02.
60 See the independent evaluation of GLO/T63.
Cooperation and coordination (11 per cent of all references)

Meta-synthesis 2017-2018: percentage of references in independent evaluation recommendations:

- Human rights and gender equality (19%)
- Project and programme implementation (15%)
- Results-based management and knowledge management (14%)
- Delivery of assistance (12%)
- Internal UNODC cooperation (9%)
- UNODC strategy and structure (8%)
- Cooperation and coordination (11%)
- Remaining categories (24%)

Number of references to “cooperation and coordination” by topic:

- External cooperation: 32
- Internal UNODC cooperation: 14
- Cooperation strategy: 8
- Coordination: 8

Most relevant evaluations:
In-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects, in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia and evaluations of GLO/U40, COL/H45, GLO/R35-Nigeria segment, KEN/Z04, XAM/Z17, GLO/U40-Mekong region, IND/A03, MEX/X89, MMR/Z39, XSS/V02, GLO/T59 and GLO/T92, GLO/Y09 and GLO/Z82

The topic of cooperation and coordination, in particular with external parties, was once again highlighted by various independent evaluators as being essential for further investments in future projects and programmes. This area is also of particular importance to the work of United Nations entities at large in view of the ongoing United Nations reform.

Selected good practice

Partnerships were effective, such as the joint efforts with other United Nations agencies to support the CPCJ reform, pool resources, build on each other’s complementarities, mobilize a wider constituency and build on, use and showcase the expertise of UNODC. (Evaluation of GLO/T63)

Recommendations refer to the importance of continuing the ongoing best practices in partnership development⁶⁴ while reiterating the need for identifying new alliances and, to avoid potential dependence on personal relationships, formalizing the cooperation with external partners.⁶⁵ In this regard,

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⁶⁴ See the independent evaluations of GLO/U40 and GLO/U40-Mekong region.
⁶⁵ See the independent evaluations of COL/H45 and GLO/R35-Nigeria segment.
it was recommend, for example, to develop overarching road maps in order to strengthen partnerships, enhancing dialogue and increase engagement with other United Nations entities, the Member States and international bodies.\(^6\) In particular, the engagement with other United Nations agencies was highlighted as an opportunity for greater visibility, outreach and the sharing of expertise.\(^6\) However, in this regard, a relevant finding was noted in a strategic evaluation of UNFPA in relation to the partnerships of the Fund with other agencies:\(^5\)

Enhancing international cooperation was highlighted as essential for facilitating cross-border collaboration, inter-agency collaboration and the adaptation of legislative and policies.\(^6\) On the other side, independent evaluators recommended enhancing the focus on partnerships at the provincial level and strengthening collaboration with the private sector, for example, in anti-corruption efforts,\(^6\) and developing dedicated partnerships strategies with them.\(^6\) In this regard, the importance of strengthened cooperation with civil society organizations in some of the evaluated projects was reiterated.\(^6\) Moreover, evaluators advised UNODC to strengthen internal cooperation, including cross-section programming within UNODC (e.g., the...

**Selected good practice**

The creation of the centre of excellence is an example of a successful collaboration between UNODC headquarters (substance and coverage), Member States (initiative and political will) and the UNODC field office (administrative support) to build and sustain research capacity in the region without bringing people from outside or having to rely on headquarters. It is an innovative practice for a decentralized resource management initiative. The centre is wholly financed by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico and allows the Research and Trend Analysis Branch to extend its mandate, responding more adequately to the needs of the countries of the region. The human resources are all local and benefit from the technical expertise and supervision of Branch officials, which contributes to creating local capacities, strengthening the scope of the Branch in the region and, more generally, increasing and improving the visibility of UNODC in Latin America. (In-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects)

United Nations agencies, including UNODC, namely, that “while joint programmes and other types of partnership have helped to mitigate external fundraising competition for periods of time, they have not permanently transformed the relationship between agencies”\(^5\).

**Partnerships in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals**

The UNODC subprogramme senior management should strengthen the current focus on international cooperation, in particular through the further development and implementation of memorandums of understanding or similar agreements that facilitate the sharing of classified information, cross-border collaboration and communication, in-country intra-agency collaboration and communication, and adaptation of legislation and policies by Member States. This is a particular component of “building greater impact”. (In-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia)

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\(^3\) See the in-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects and the independent evaluation of KEN/Z04.

\(^4\) See the independent evaluations of KEN/Z04 and XAM/Z17.


\(^6\) See the in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia.

\(^7\) See the independent evaluations of IND/A03, MEX/X89 and BOL/Z68.

\(^8\) See the independent evaluation of MMR/Z39.

\(^9\) See the independent evaluations of XSS/V02 and XAM/Z17.
link between trafficking in persons and terrorism prevention) and internal partnerships, as well as cooperation and coordination between its headquarters and the regional and country offices, and among regional/country offices. This was also highlighted in the OIOS audit of UNODC operations in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, which contained a recommendation to the regional office to “consult with UNODC headquarters to strengthen coordination arrangements for planning, implementing and reporting on activities undertaken by global, regional and country programmes in the region”.

## Remaining categories – selected results (24 per cent of all references)

### Meta-synthesis 2017-2018: percentage of references in independent evaluation recommendations:

- **Human rights and gender equality (15%)**
- **Project and programme implementation (15%)**
- **Cooperation and coordination (11%)**
- **Delivery of assistance (12%)**
- **UNODC strategy and structure (9%)**
- **Results-based management and knowledge management (14%)**

### Number of references to “Remaining categories” by topic:

- **Budget, finance and funding**: 33
- **Advocacy and brokering role**: 32
- **Project and programme strategy setting and development**: 25
- **Human resources and procurement**: 23
- **Communication**: 23

### Most relevant evaluations:

- In-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia and evaluations of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92, XAW/Z82, GLO/T63, GLO/Z82, XAM/Z17, MMR/Z39, PSE/x02, GLO/R35-Nigeria segment, IND/A03, GLO/U40, XCE/A01, NGA/V18 and KEN/Z04

Some 24 per cent of the remaining references are subsumed under the “remaining categories” section, which covers such areas as funding and budget, advocacy, project development, human resources and communication.

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60 See the independent evaluations of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92, and GLO/Y09.
61 See the independent evaluations of GLO/T63 and GLO/Z82 and the in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia.
62 See the independent evaluations of XAS/S69 and MEX/Z56.
It was also stressed that the respective UNODC strategies and approaches should also clearly identify new potential donors for the corresponding projects and programmes. Recommendations were also made with regard to strengthening internal communication mechanisms and ensuring that disbursements are linked to project or programme outputs in Umoja and that this information can therefore be used for detailed reporting on and monitoring and assessing of the efficiency of activities.

**Focus on design**

Giving a specific focus to programme design, and ensuring an organizational focus on design processes, is an area where the UNODC senior management can provide leadership and direction and ensure that the necessary time and resources are directed to ensuring effective programme and project formulation processes. (Evaluation of GLO/Z82)

**Selected lesson learned**

An important lesson learned during the implementation of the subprogramme has been the need to allocate sufficient resources to an adequate inception phase before formulating the initiative. Many of the aspects of the subprogramme that could be improved could have been corrected if a series of analyses had informed its design. Most significantly, it has become clear that it is convenient to have: (a) an analysis of the context; (b) a stakeholder analysis with an explicit assessment of their capacities and expectations; (c) a gender analysis; and (d) a value chain analysis of the commodities promoted by the subprogramme (especially coffee). (Evaluation of MMR/Z39)

**Positioning of UNODC**

A key recommendation was to promote the strategic positioning and niche of UNODC. The Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section should seek to strengthen its strategic importance vis-à-vis Member States and other international key players. UNODC should be seen as a leading entity in combating trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. (Evaluation of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92)

**Selected lesson learned**

Hard-earmarked and low regular budget: minimal regular budget resources combined with mostly hard-earmarked funding make it very challenging to design and implement needs-based, comprehensive programmes and projects that can generate impact and bring about sustainable change. Further soft-earmarked funding, such as the ones given by Sweden, is critical for the Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section and the functioning of UNODC at large, and that message and exchange with the donor community should be argued for using data and analyses of what the funding has managed to yield, with concrete examples. (Evaluation of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92)

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74 See the independent evaluations of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92 and of XAW/Z82, and the in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia.

75 See the independent evaluations of GLO/T63 and GLO/Z82.

76 See the independent evaluation of XAW/Z17.
Moreover, in relation to advocacy, independent evaluators recommended that UNODC promote its strategic positioning in order to advocate and accelerate the continued fight by Member States against trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.\(^7\) One of the key strengths of UNODC, as already evidenced in the previous meta-analyses, is its capacity to promote inter-agency cooperation and coordination for countering drugs, crime and terrorism, as well as support for the regional networks by the beneficiary Governments.\(^7\) Moreover, the evaluated projects and programmes should further use the brokering role of UNODC to draw attention to its mandated areas of work, for example, by increasing the visibility of forensics among the judiciary by drawing attention to the capabilities and competencies of forensic services, or integrating HIV prevention and treatment services or work in prison settings.\(^7\)

However, the need for further engaging with civil society, as already highlighted in previous sections, is emphasized, considering in particular the specific capacity of UNODC to reach the highest political levels.\(^8\)

In addition, various recommendations were also related to the subject of project setting and development, with independent evaluators recommending that there be an increased focus on the design phase of projects and programmes, to allow sufficient time and resources for this essential phase of the project and programme cycle.\(^4\) Moreover, it was stressed that this phase needed to fully involve local counterparts in order to ensure that their needs were met.\(^8\) Closely linked to this is the need for defining a clear intervention logic, with a strong monitoring framework, as elaborated in detail in the section on results-based management of several evaluations.\(^9\)

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**Fundraising strategy**

The UNODC senior regional management in Tashkent and Vienna should develop a more strategic focus on funding in order to expand the donor base and ensure the sustainability of the subprogramme – i.e., by developing fundraising capacity and by elaborating and implementing a fundraising strategy. (In-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia)

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**Communicating results**

The programme office in the State of Palestine should consider how it communicates with donors and the media. There is a need for good news stories to demonstrate success, presented in easy-to-digest bite-sized portions. Overall, reporting should focus less on activities and more on effects and impact. This reporting would be in addition to normal UNODC reporting. (Evaluation of PSE/x02)

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Various evaluations also referred to the area of human resources and procurement, with evaluators indicating, for example, that projects and programmes needed to build internal staff capacity on human rights and gender equality to ensure that those cross-cutting areas were fully included in project formulation and implementation.\(^4\) The independent evaluators also highlighted the importance of continuing and increasing induction training courses, in particular those relating to financial management and Umoja.\(^3\) With regard to procurement, it was recommended in one evaluation that, at the end of each financial year, the programme agree with the

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\(^7\) See the independent evaluation of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92.

\(^8\) See the independent evaluation of MEX/256.

\(^9\) See the independent evaluations of IND/A06, GLO/282 and NGA/V18.
UNODC Financial Resources Management Service on a procurement plan for the following year that is both realistic and applicable to local needs. The need for coordination between UNODC headquarters and field offices in procurement processes was also highlighted in the OIOS audit of UNODC operations in Colombia.

Finally, various recommendations referred to the importance of further strengthening communication approaches in the evaluated projects and programmes. The use of various channels, including social media, is essential to draw attention to the work of UNODC in order to ensure that results are communicated to donors, recipients and other stakeholders. In addition, dedicated communication strategies may also be required in view of UNODC internal communication channels. In this regard, the need to develop a communication workplan for increasing the visibility of UNODC projects and activities was highlighted in an OIOS audit of UNODC operations in Nigeria.

Selected good practice

Another best practice, one that is often referred to as among the best communication products of UNODC programmes, is its branding and communication strategy. Annual reports are well designed, well structured and short, and highlight preliminary results in each pillar of the subprogramme. Furthermore, the subprogramme started using presentation tools to showcase results to donors and prepare presentations for other stakeholders. The material remains within UNODC branding requirements, but the annual reports incorporated the sandy colours of the region. According to interviewees, the reports are very useful tools to disseminate information and promote the subprogramme activities among key stakeholders.

(Evaluation of XAM/Z17)

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86 See the independent evaluation of XAM/Z17.
88 See the independent evaluations of PSE/X02 and GLO/Z82.
89 See the independent evaluations of KEN/Z04 and BOL/Z68.
Focus: results of the UNODC strategy and mandated areas of work and the Sustainable Development Goals

Important note
As already highlighted in the introduction, the present meta-synthesis introduces a new depth of analyses to foster learning and offer key evaluation results based on a qualitative analysis of all recommendations made in 2017 and 2018. This second part of the report is based on the references to “UNODC strategy and structure” in the analysis, but goes beyond this information by highlighting individual recommendations with broader applicability to complement the analysis presented in the previous part.

In line with the previous two meta-analyses, a focus has been placed on the reporting of results relating to the subprogramme, as well as the implications of the ongoing United Nations reform. With this in mind, IES has introduced in the meta-synthesis a new chapter dedicated to the analysis of the UNODC strategy, as well as a qualitative analysis of evaluation results at large, linked to the thematic areas of the UNODC mandates. As shown in the figure on the right, 9 per cent of all references in the recommendations issued in 2017 and 2018 referred to the UNODC strategy and structure. Most of them are related to country and regional strategies, thematic programming and strategies for service delivery.

Countering transnational organized crime (subprogramme 1)

Anti-money-laundering

The efforts by UNODC to support Member States in countering Money-Laundering are a long-standing mandated area of its work. The Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism was established in 1997 further to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. The mandate of the Law Enforcement, Organized Crime and Anti Money Laundering Unit was strengthened in 1998 by the Political Declaration and the measures for countering money-laundering adopted by the General Assembly.

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91 See the in-depth cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia and the independent evaluations of GLO/U40, GLO/U40-Mekong region, IND/A03, KGZ/T90, XSS/V02, XAP/A10, XCE/A01, KGZ/K50, GLO/R35-Nigeria segment, PSE/X02, GLO/T63, MARR/Z39 and BOL/Z68.
Assembly at its twentieth special session, which broadened the scope of the mandate to cover all serious crime, and not just drug-related offences.92

The in-depth evaluation of the Global Programme against Money Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism issued in 2017 found that the Global Programme was one of the flagship programmes of UNODC and that it had made a significant contribution to anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism around the world. The evaluation also stated that, as a result of the Global Programme mentoring, network development, training and other capacity development work, many countries exhibited better awareness of money-laundering and financing of terrorism and were better at enforcement, but that, while significant progress had been achieved, it would be naive to get complacent.93

Opportunity for ground-breaking research

The evaluation of GLO/U40 highlighted the opportunity for UNODC to be seen as a global leader in undertaking research on the connection between human rights and gender equality and anti-money-laundering.

Against this backdrop, it was highlighted that studies on how to address trade-based money-laundering and other emerging challenges should be conducted to inform the UNODC strategy. The independent evaluators stated that, as a result of stricter financial sector regulations, trade-based money-laundering, cryptocurrencies and Internet gambling appeared to be the most prominent emergent challenges. These challenges have further implications for partnerships and cooperation on this topic, for example, with the UNODC global Container Control Programme, which focuses “on technical assistance with a view to control drugs and crime”, and the World Customs Organization, as research has suggested that evidence of trade-based money-laundering is not readily apparent and requires special capacity of border control personnel.94 The evaluators also highlighted the opportunity for UNODC to be seen as a global leader in undertaking research on the connection between human rights and gender equality and anti-money-laundering.95

Thematic focus on Central Asia

The UNODC senior regional management in Tashkent and Vienna and subprogramme senior management should look strategically at the results framework of the subprogramme and give increased attention to outcomes 3, 4 and 5 (human trafficking, terrorism and money-laundering), as well as the ongoing discussions about outcome 6 (cybercrime), in order to increase the strategic focus of the subprogramme and to seize further fundraising and partnership opportunities. (In-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control in Central Asia)

The independent evaluators also recommended increasing the focus on financial investigations across the Mekong region and contributing to the development and delivery of financial investigation modules.96 Considering that there is significant experience in combating corruption and countering human trafficking in national agencies, but much less knowledge and understanding of following the money (much less understanding and knowledge of conducting financial investigations and the importance of this approach), UNODC should offer greater support. One particular area related to this is the new work now being done on animal trafficking, which can be enhanced by expanding the processes in order to include a process of following the money, and to include this in other areas, such as forestry crime and human trafficking.97

92 UNODC, “UNODC on money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism”. Available at www.unodc.org.
93 See the independent evaluation of GLO/U40.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 See the independent evaluation of GLO/U40-Mekong region.
97 Ibid.
Law enforcement and border control: strategic focus on Central Asia

In 2017 and 2018, numerous independent evaluations were conducted in Central Asia, including an in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of law enforcement and border control. The independent evaluators found UNODC initiatives to be of significant relevance to beneficiaries in a number of priority areas, such as drug control strategies, intelligence analysis and counter-narcotics investigations. A preliminary impact could be identified in a range of areas, including the database-based investigative processes, the use of technology at borders, memorandums of understanding or similar agreements, including the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre agreement, and cross-border collaboration and communication. In this regard, the evaluators highlighted the need for UNODC to increase attention to human trafficking, terrorism prevention, money-laundering and cybercrime in the regional strategy in Central Asia, seizing further fundraising opportunities and partnerships. Furthermore, evaluators provided very targeted recommendations, for example, on developing new research in the region. The country office in Kyrgyzstan and the Regional Office for Central Asia were recommended to conduct an “in-depth study into illicit drug smuggling, seizures and arrests within the region in order to better understand what has occurred, and the combined effectiveness of the UNODC numerous regional law enforcement coordination and cooperation mechanisms”.

Regional focus on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants

The independent evaluators found UNODC project XAP/A10 to counter trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants in South-East Asia and the Pacific highly relevant in that it responded to the needs and policies identified in project countries for combating child sexual exploitation. Consequently, they recommended that the UNODC Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific continue its support for “the enhancement of further legal frameworks in combating child sexual exploitation”, while ensuring that the respective needs assessments consider the different needs in the project countries. Closely linked to this support is the dissemination of relevant laws to front-line officials, including at the provincial and central levels. The development of a regional UNODC strategy on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants in Southern Africa was recommended to clarify the direction of UNODC initiatives in the region and support fundraising activities.

A comprehensive and balanced approach to counter the world drug problem (subprogramme 2)

HIV and AIDS

In 2017, various evaluations of the UNODC initiatives relating to HIV and AIDS were conducted, including in Central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The systematic advocacy efforts of UNODC in Central Asia resulted in the registration of methadone as a controlled drug and its inclusion in the nationally approved list of essential drugs, the institutionalization of the harm-reduction programmes and even their funding from the State budget. In this regard, the independent evaluators recommended that the unique characteristics of countries in Central Asia be fully considered to enable the scale-up of the availability, coverage and quality of HIV prevention and treatment services for
injecting drug users in community and prison settings, and that the Regional Office for Central Asia engage with the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to hold national dialogues in order to strengthen the regulatory framework for methadone maintenance treatment. UNODC is also prompted to clearly incorporate gender aspects in regional and national initiatives, including through high-level advocacy of gender-sensitive policies and legislation, the collection of gender-sensitive data and the adherence of all States and non-governmental bodies and organizations to gender standards, thus meeting the specific needs of people who inject drugs in community and custodial settings.\(^{106}\)

### Opportunity for advancing gender equality

Further incorporate gender equality in the UNODC initiatives in Central Asia for providing strategic advocacy of gender-sensitive policies, legislation, data and adherence to gender standards respecting people who inject drugs in community and prison settings. (Evaluation of XCE/A01)

In a related independent evaluation on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support in prison settings in sub-Saharan Africa, it was found that the UNODC initiatives were very relevant in terms of responding to identified national and regional priority needs relating to both inmates and staff within prison settings, and to the Sustainable Development Goals in terms of combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The independent evaluators highlighted that the project stimulated a collective response to HIV/AIDS in prisons, addressed critical HIV/AIDS issues and programming gaps and facilitated a more holistic view of human rights to HIV prevention, treatment and care support in prisons in sub-Saharan Africa. In this regard, they recommended that UNODC develop risk mitigation strategies to continue to cascade training to circumvent staff and inmate turnover, address increased service demand and uptake, improve prison health-unit infrastructure (for example, model clinics), ensure sufficient logistical, human and clinical resources to support prisons in undertaking routine monitoring of prison populations and consider exploring the funding of key posts at the national level to enhance and integrate certain activities within the national systems.\(^{107}\)

### Countering corruption (subprogramme 3)

With regard to countering corruption, independent evaluators recommended to continue to provide input and technical advice to the Corruption Eradication Commission as well as other institutional partners in Indonesia, considering the expertise of UNODC.\(^{108}\) In this regard, the evaluation team highlighted that UNODC should enhance its focus on whistle-blower protection by integrating “an element of research and capacity-building support to the development of further safeguards for whistle-blowers”.\(^{109}\)

### Terrorism prevention (subprogramme 4)

As already pointed out in relation to subprogramme 1, evaluators highlighted the opportunity for UNODC to increase support for Central Asian Governments in the area of terrorism prevention. In addition, evaluators highlighted the work of UNODC on terrorism prevention in Nigeria, where the technical assistance of UNODC with countering violent extremism and foreign terrorist fighters should be complemented with its expertise in border control, as well as input from other institutions and agencies, to ensure that holistic responses are prepared in order to tackle such issues as violent extremism.\(^{110}\)

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\(^{105}\) Ibid.

\(^{106}\) Ibid.

\(^{107}\) See the independent evaluation of XSS/V02.

\(^{108}\) See the independent evaluation of IND/A03.

\(^{109}\) Ibid.

\(^{110}\) See the independent evaluation of GLO/R35-Nigeria segment.
Justice (subprogramme 5)

Various independent evaluations in 2017 and 2018 covered the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. The final evaluation of the global programme on support for crime prevention and criminal justice reform (GLO/T63) highlighted the broad mandate of UNODC in supporting Member States in CPCJ reform. In this regard, the independent evaluators underscored the need for revising the UNODC-wide strategy on CPCJ reform, as no such strategy has been adopted since 2016, while CPCJ reform continues to be a standing item on the agenda of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. They confirmed that CPCJ norms and standards continued to be at the heart of the mandate of UNODC, together with the crime and drug conventions, and concluded that an organizational decision was needed to promote coherence and provide guidance by adopting an agency-wide CPCJ reform strategy and related programming architecture.111

Revising the UNODC-wide strategy on CPCJ reform

The final independent evaluation of the UNODC programme to support CPCJ reform highlighted the need for revising the UNODC strategy on CPCJ reform, as no UNODC-wide strategy on CPCJ has been adopted since 2016.

In relation to the above, an evaluation of UNFPA conducted in 2018 highlighted the important role of UNODC, as many of the results achieved in gender-based violence at the global level reflect the strong expertise gained by UNFPA in working with, inter alia, UNODC and the World Health Organization, on operational guidelines and toolkits under the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence.112

Countering gender-based violence

An UNFPA evaluation highlighted the importance of cooperation with UNODC for achieving results to address gender-based violence at the global level.

The essential role of UNODC in CPCJ reform is also underscored in the evaluation of the criminal justice programme in Kyrgyzstan (KGZ/T90), which was highlighted as a flagship initiative of UNODC in Central Asia. The independent evaluators stated that the programme was innovative in that it was reported to be the first of its kind to cover criminal legislation, prison management, crime prevention, police reform and forensic services under one umbrella. They recommended that the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia continue to invest in and support initiatives aimed at strengthening prison security procedures, thereby strengthening the enabling environment for evidence-based drug control programmes.113

Crime prevention: combining sports activities with life skills

The innovative approach of UNODC to combining sports activities with life skills through partnerships with international sport organizations and local non-governmental organizations has developed the understanding of sport as a vehicle for reaching out to vulnerable young people. (Evaluation of GLO/Z82)

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111 See the independent evaluation of GLO/T63.
113 See the independent evaluation of KGZ/T90.
Another important area highlighted in a UNODC independent evaluation is the combination of sports activities with life skills, which is innovative in the crime and drug prevention field. Partnering with international sports organizations and local non-governmental organizations has been useful for getting a clearer understanding of sport as a vehicle for reaching out to vulnerable young people. The combination of sports with life skills fills a gap in the suite of UNODC resources and can be adapted for use elsewhere.114

Research, trend analysis and forensics (subprogramme 6)

The efforts of UNODC in research and forensic services were highlighted in various independent evaluations in 2017 and 2018. The independent evaluators of the project on forensic human resource and governance development assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PSE/X02) found that the UNODC forensic services contributed to an improved criminal justice system within the West Bank, that the Palestinian Authority now had the means to analyse and present forensic evidence in court and that justice was swifter. They also stated that there were reliable indicators of contributions in support of the human rights of victims and the accused in cases of sexual and gender-based violence. However, they recommended to UNODC that future projects in the area of forensics “actively manage risk and reduce both the likelihood and impact of risk by making certain elements of delivery conditional. Assistance should be balanced against the requirement for recipients to support and then deliver key elements of: a comprehensive system (to include crime scene management); a sound legal basis for forensic services; firm governance for forensic services; and an agreed sustainment plan.”115 In relation to UNODC research, it was highlighted in the strategic in-depth evaluation of five global research projects that the thematic programme on research was “integral to the success of UNODC as a knowledge-based organization”. The independent evaluators concluded that the five projects made “a substantial contribution towards improving the effectiveness of stakeholder response to current and emerging challenges in the domain of drugs and crime”. On a more organizational note, the evaluators identified the need for UNODC to delineate clearly which projects and programmes should be funded from regular budget resources, to ensure that core functions, such as research, are not, or are only partially, dependent on extrabudgetary resources, thereby supporting the independence of services and products.116

Stable funding for core functions

The cluster evaluation of five global research projects highlighted the need for UNODC to delineate clearly which projects or programmes should be funded from regular budget resources, to ensure that core functions, such as research, are not, or are only partially, dependent on extrabudgetary resources.

Further results

Delivery at the country level

The delivery of technical assistance and normative support by UNODC is based on a global network of field offices, comprising 104 office locations, including 17 field offices.117 Therefore, various analysed recommendations related to the review of sustainability, as well as service delivery on the ground. In this regard, independent evaluators recommended that, for example, UNODC develop, together with government counterparts, a strategy at the country level to ensure the permanence of its office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.118

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114 See the independent evaluation of GLO/Z82.
115 See the independent evaluation of PSE/X02.
116 See the in-depth cluster evaluation of five global research projects.
117 As of November 2018; source: Division of Operations.
118 See the independent evaluation of BOL/Z68.
UNODC and the Sustainable Development Goals

OIOS conducted an evaluation of the preparedness, policy coherence and early results of United Nations entities associated with their support for the Sustainable Development Goals, in which it highlighted the role of UNODC as a thematic leader on the Sustainable Development Goals with a large number of documented changes aimed at aligning itself with the Goals. In this regard, UNODC has been identified, alone or jointly with other organizations, as a custodian agency for 15 indicators to monitor the achievement of relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. Consequently, IES has also developed mechanisms and approaches to include the Goals into all evaluations, and 88 per cent of all finalized independent evaluations carried out in 2018 took the Goals into consideration, as evidenced in the evaluation quality assessment.

Thematic leader

UNODC was identified by OIOS as a thematic leader on the Sustainable Development Goals and is a custodian agency (alone or jointly) for 15 Sustainable Development Goal indicators.

In this regard, evaluators recommended increasing the focus on the Sustainable Development Goals in UNODC programming. They highlighted that engaging with the highest-level policymakers was essential to making a meaningful contribution to the Goals, while exploring options for strengthening the ties between, for example, anti-money-laundering and the development agenda. The importance of comprehensively including indicators related to the Goals in UNODC programmes, including for future reporting to the Member States, was highlighted in one in-depth evaluation. In connection with this topic, OIOS recommended in its audit of the UNODC operations in Pakistan that the UNODC country office in Pakistan liaise with relevant departments at UNODC headquarters to develop a strategy for mainstreaming and raising awareness of the Goals in its areas of work. In the evaluation of project GLO/R35, Nigeria segment, it was highlighted that Goal 16 was "specifically reflected in the design of the training activities", thereby mainstreaming the Goal in the delivery of technical assistance and constituting a best practice.

120 See UNODC, “Better data to monitor violence, trafficking, corruption and access to justice” (Vienna, 2017).
121 See the independent evaluation of GLO/U40.
122 See the independent evaluation of GLO/T59 and GLO/T92.
125 See the independent evaluation of GLO/R35-Nigeria segment.
Conclusions

The third evaluation meta-synthesis report provides a strategic overview of the major recommendations identified in UNODC and external evaluations carried out within a two-year period. Through the analysis of more than 30 evaluations and 289 recommendations, IES aims to illustrate the frequency of recommendations made towards the major programmatic and thematic categories, while providing a clear picture of the areas which UNODC is recommended to address in its ongoing and future programming.

The report also enables Member States, United Nations senior management and other stakeholders to easily identify good practices, constraints and lessons learned and provides solid baselines for evidence-based decision-making at all levels. The major findings of the meta-synthesis allow for further enhanced, transparent and accountable delivery of UNODC mandates, in addition to the introduction of robust, comprehensive, effective and cost-efficient programmes.

As acknowledged in the report, the quality of the evaluations conducted by UNODC is constantly improving, as evidenced by the fact that all evaluation reports received for the first time either a “good” or “very good” rating, which boosts the aspirations of IES to further advance and develop evaluation norms, guidelines and standards in line with the United Nations reform initiative and the 2030 Agenda.

Given that UNODC was identified by OIOS as a thematic leader on the Sustainable Development Goals, the information stemming from the meta-synthesis report and the individual evaluation reports can serve as an important tool for reporting on the implementation of the Goals and contribute to the voluntary national reviews of the Member States. Likewise, the synthesized thematic findings of the present report may facilitate the identification and formulation of adequate responses to how the organization may assist the Member States in working towards achieving the Goals and their targets.

Overall, the analysis of the seven major categories of the meta-synthesis report elucidates several key issues. The Organization needs to further assess and discuss those and identify ways for their enhancement and integration. With recommendations ranging from further improving gender mainstreaming strategies to improving the collection of gender-disaggregated data, the emphasis has been placed on aligning further the activities of the Organization in order to fully integrate human rights and gender equality into its programmes.

The disaggregated data from the former “project/programme cycle” category, now split into four new categories, contain the second largest number of references. Recommendations ranging from the formulation of exit strategies for UNODC initiatives to the development of improved sustainability strategies comprise a large part of the new “project and programme implementation” category. Finally, the analysis of “results-based management and knowledge management”, which is the category with the third largest number of references, showed that the existing monitoring frameworks, tools and processes of projects and programmes need to be further strengthened, and underlined the need to improve engagement with the relevant stakeholders.

Besides the analysis of recommendations made towards the improvement of UNODC programming-related matters, the emphasis was also placed on issues related to the strengthening of partnerships, enhancing dialogue and increasing engagement with
Member States, other United Nations entities, stakeholders and international bodies to ensure greater visibility, outreach and the sharing of expertise.

By highlighting the most recurring themes of evaluations, the meta-synthesis report also allows both internal and external stakeholders, as well as UNODC field offices, to identify the major constraints related to programme implementation, while enabling them to detect similarities and look for mutually beneficial partnerships with a view to finding possible solutions. Similarly, UNODC branches, sections and field offices may share their best practices related to the implementation of recommendations among each other to facilitate improved programmatic coherence.

With the present report, IES would like to stress once again the importance of evaluation in the programmatic cycle and underline that it will continue to strengthen its guidelines, norms, standards and tools for the benefit of Member States and senior management. As in prior years, IES expresses confidence that the report will be perceived as constructive, providing opportunities for discussion in not only evaluation-related forums, but also during strategic decision-making processes.
Annex I. Evaluation reports

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<td>XAC/Z60, TAI/E24, TAI/H03, RER/H22 and XAC/K22</td>
<td>Evaluation report of the in-depth thematic cluster evaluation of the projects: XAC/Z60, TAI/E24, TAI/H03, RER/H22 and XAC/K22</td>
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<td>GLO/Z82</td>
<td>Mid-term independent project evaluation report of the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration: towards the promotion of a culture of lawfulness</td>
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<td>XAW/Z28</td>
<td>Mid-term independent project evaluation – Support to the ECOWAS regional action plan on illicit drug trafficking, related organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa</td>
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<td>Final independent project evaluation of &quot;Drug law enforcement systems for criminal intelligence collection, analysis and exchange&quot;</td>
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<td>Projector programme number</td>
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<td>XAS/S69</td>
<td>Mid-term independent project evaluation of the project capacity-building for Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the ratification and the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the additional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children – Southern African Region</td>
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*All independent evaluation reports are available on the IES section of the UNODC website.
Annex II. Methodological approach

Since 2014, UNODC has been contracting external, independent, senior evaluation experts to assess the quality of all UNODC evaluation reports, in line with best practices in the United Nations system, such as those followed by UNFPA and the United Nations Children’s Fund. Only UNODC evaluation reports that meet all UNEG and UNODC evaluation norms and standards are included in the analysis. As shown in the figure below, the external evaluation quality assessments found that all evaluation reports meet the UNEG and UNODC norms and standards, and 100 per cent of reports issued in 2018 very rated as “good” or “very good”, constituting a clear increase in the quality of evaluation reports over the past few years. Therefore, the present meta-synthesis is based on the results of high-quality independent evaluations.

Furthermore, the meta-synthesis includes the results of OIOS audits of UNODC operations, as well as complementary information stemming from evaluations of other United Nations entities.

The analysis followed the methodological approach from the previous two editions, while taking into account changing information needs. It is based on a robust social-research methodology, including all 31 independent evaluation reports issued in 2017 and 2018. The meta-synthesis was conducted on the basis of both a qualitative analysis and a quantitative assessment in the form of a frequency analysis. The categories were revised on the basis of an in-depth review to ensure, in particular, that the granularity of the project/programme cycle was captured in greater detail. The categories were also continuously reviewed during the process, and a final check of the reliability of the categories was conducted by two IES staff members to ensure their full relevance.

All recommendations were anonymized for the labelling process, to avoid influences on the type, topic or scope of the evaluation. Each recommendation was placed in one to three categories, ensuring that all spheres of the recommendation were reflected. As a result, 289 recommendations produced 577 references.

After finalizing the combined qualitative and quantitative assessment in the form of a frequency analysis, an exclusively qualitative analysis was conducted, primarily on the basis of recommendations of major programmatic in-depth evaluations, to combine the quantitative with the qualitative analysis. Recommendations and lessons learned were identified on the basis of their wider applicability to UNODC at large and highlighted throughout the present report.

Furthermore, the analysis was based on the recommendations in all UNODC evaluation reports, which follow terms of reference. Consequently, the limitations inherent to the terms of reference, which reflect the focus of the OECD Development Assistance Committee...
criteria, as well as the focus on partnership, human rights and gender issues, must be taken into account in reviewing the information contained in the present analysis.

Moreover, additional data sources were identified and included in the qualitative analysis, in particular UNODC audit reports and the evaluation reports of other United Nations entities.

Several limitations were encountered when conducting the analysis, as described below:

(a) While the analysed evaluations cover more than $300 million of the UNODC budget, the results of the analysis cannot be seen as applicable to the whole organization, as, for example, certain areas of the UNODC strategic framework were less evaluated than others (owing to different evaluation plans, project or programme cycles, among other factors). To mitigate this limitation, further sources of information were consulted, and an in-depth review of audit reports and a review of the evaluation reports of other United Nations entities were conducted. This allowed for a triangulation of the key results, ensuring the validity of the findings;

(b) As all evaluations are based on terms of reference that are in line with UNEG norms and standard and focus on the OECD Development Assistance Committee criteria; consequently, they place a particular focus on the criteria, which constitutes an inherent limitation for information outside of those categories.

Lastly, the limited financial and human resources of IES for conducting this type of analysis limited the depth and scope of the report. However, this was overcome to some extent through various rounds of feedback from different team members, to ensure a high-quality product.
## Annex III. List of documents reviewed

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<td>Philipp Mayring</td>
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<td>Audit of procurement and contract management at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Colombia (report No. 2018/073)</td>
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<td>Review of the global focal point for police, justice and corrections</td>
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<td>Paige Arthur (lead author), Christian Ahlund, Maaike de Langen and Kari Osland</td>
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<td><em>Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations</em></td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>Better date to monitor violence, trafficking, corruption and access</td>
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