

## **Independent System Wide Evaluation (ISWE)**

Of operational activities for development

### **The evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection**

Briefing Session

**Tuesday, March 3, 2015 1:15 pm – 2:45 pm**

Conference Room D, UN Secretariat Building

*\*\*\*Sandwiches and refreshments\*\*\**

Chair:	Sukai Prom-Jackson, Inspector, Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and Chair of the Evaluation Management Group for the evaluation
Presenters	Lucien Back, Chair of the Interim Coordination Mechanism for ISWE, and Executive Secretary of JIU Mr. Scott Green, Independent System Wide Evaluation (ISWE) Secretariat Coordinator
Discussants	Herman Habermann: Expert Consultant for scoping the evaluation Mary Strode: Expert Consultant for scoping the evaluation (in absentia)

The policy on independent system wide evaluation (ISWE) (resolution A/RES/68/229) calls for the evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The evaluation needs to be completed in time to support the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development in 2016 as well as sustainable development goals and the post-2015 agenda.

#### **Objectives of briefing session**

- To share information about ISWE.
- To share information about the evaluation and its role as a pilot for ISWE.
- To get stakeholder views and suggestions for framing the study in ways that make it relevant for policy formulation and for meeting the imperatives of the post 2015 development agenda.

#### **Discussion questions**

- 1) What are the critical issues which need to be addressed in the evaluation?
- 2) What type of approaches would make sense and enhance the quality of the evaluation given the nature of the topic?
- 3) What contextual factors should be considered in managing the study to enhance its value?

#### **Contact information for scoping the evaluation**

Sukai Prom-Jackson – [promjackson@un.org](mailto:promjackson@un.org); rajab email; [rsukayri@unocg.ch](mailto:rsukayri@unocg.ch) Lucien Back email:[lback@unog.ch](mailto:lback@unog.ch) Scott Green email [Green10@un.org](mailto:Green10@un.org)



**United Nations**

**Independent System-Wide Evaluation**

**of Operational Activities for Development (ISWE)**

**([http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf13/policy\\_for\\_independent\\_system-wide\\_evaluation\\_of\\_operational\\_activities\\_for\\_development\\_of\\_the\\_united\\_nations](http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf13/policy_for_independent_system-wide_evaluation_of_operational_activities_for_development_of_the_united_nations)).**

**Concept Note**

Evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system

to

Strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally-agreed development goals

March 2015

## **Purpose of ISWE**

The purpose of ISWE is to develop a coherent body of knowledge and strong evidence about operational activities for development that would support the work of the UN system as a whole.

The primary purpose of independent system-wide evaluation of United Nations operational activities for development is to assess whether the United Nations system is efficiently and effectively responding to global, regional and country level needs and priorities, and, where relevant, achieving the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs. In particular, independent system-wide evaluations are expected to assess whether the United Nations system effectively exploits opportunities for programmatic and operational synergies and draws on the capacities of all relevant entities, with a view to enhancing system-wide coherence and impact. Independent system-wide evaluations should promote learning to inform strategy and policy development, and serve as an important instrument to enhance the accountability of the UN system and its contribution to the greater good.

## **Purpose of this evaluation**

The main purpose of this evaluation is to guide the future role and contribution of the UN development system in strengthening national statistical capacity. The evaluation will provide input into the deliberations of Member States concerning the 2016 QCPR resolution. It is planned for completion by the end of 2015.

## **Background**

Capacity development and the United Nations system: Capacity development (CD) and ownership of national development strategies and systems are essential for the achievement of national and the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Capacity development has been identified as a core function of the United Nations development system. The UN system supports countries not by injecting financial resources but by contributing to the development of national capacities in all aspects of its work so countries can do things for themselves.

Member states have called for a coherent and coordinated approach of the United Nations development system to capacity development efforts of programme countries. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) recognizes and promotes capacity development as one of five key principles for UN country programming alongside a human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and results-based management. The UNDG has agreed on a common approach to capacity development and articulated the role of UN country teams in a joint position

statement. It has provided guidance. It also recognizes that as there is no “one size fits all” solution. Support for capacity development needs to be tailored to the specific needs and context of each country, to the subject for capacity development, and to the mandates of various organizations.

Complexities in capacity development: It is now fully understood that CD is a complex phenomenon that encompasses multiple levels, actors, power relationships and linkages. These multiple levels suggest a conceptualization based on understanding of systems and how they operate. It is an endogenous process and this implies that CD should build on what exists in order to improve it. The approach requires consideration of all contextual elements as well as the linkages between them. Hence the need for an all-inclusive strategy involving national, regional, global levels and all range of other actors. These features and others being conceptualized as part of the post 2015 agenda for a people-centred and partnership approach in development cooperation would play a central role in developing the conceptual framework for this evaluation.

Statistics, national statistical capacity, and emerging opportunities and challenges: Statistics is considered a global good and has value for not only national purposes but also for regional and global use and in particular for tracking MDGs and other internationally agreed conventions. The debate among states has identified a data revolution and made a call for commitments being made for the achievement of results to be fully accompanied by data and information to guide the systematic monitoring and assessment of the progress and impact of interventions and for mutual accountability. In particular, the debate on open data represents a growing commitment to see freely flowing data become a tool for social change with an enlarged involvement of people at national, local and regional levels. It calls for the development of statistical systems responsive at all levels – local, national, regional, and global levels.

It is also noted that as the world looks to develop a new set of targets in post-2015, there is new opportunity to use new information technologies to broaden collection of development data and enhance accountability and decision-making. Greater investment in surveys is needed as well as in new methods such as crowd-sourcing and analytical frameworks to monitor global progress and highlight investment needs. There is also a greater need to enhance national capacities for statistics at all levels. In general, the demands of the Post 2015 Agenda for accountability, learning and knowledge management highlight the critical importance for garnering valid and reliable data to enhance monitoring and effective decision making at all levels.

### **Rationale for the study**

Over 30 United Nations system organizations have been involved in developing global, regional and national statistics and in supporting countries in the development of statistical systems and the generation of data and statistical analysis and reporting for use at national, regional, and global levels. The attachment accompany this note provides a preliminary mapping of the activities of UN system organizations.

The success and challenges of the UN system’s role in strengthening national capacity for statistics has however never been assessed. For the UN system to continue to play a critical role and one that adds value in current context of changing agendas and growing development actors, there is a need

to better understand what has worked or not worked in the measurement and generation of quality data, data analysis and reporting, the access to and use of data, and the development of systems to support such function.

### **Evaluation questions and objectives of the overall evaluation**

The general questions raised are: What role has the UN system organizations played? Is the UN system doing the right things? Is it doing things right and in a coherent manner? What has worked or not worked? Has it added value? Has it enhanced impact, sustainability and readiness to address emerging changes and challenges? What are lessons for UN system role in the future?

On a preliminary basis, key objectives of the overall evaluation could include:

- Determining the successes, opportunities, challenges and constraints in countries in the development of national statistics supportive of national priorities as well as the priorities of internationally agreed conventions which require data collection and analysis at country level;
- Examining the role of the UN system organizations in strengthening statistical capacity including assessing the configuration, level of coherence, alignments, and complementarities among UN agencies
- Assessing the level of global partnership of the UN agencies in developing systems for statistics as a global good;
- Assessing the various methods and approaches that have been used by UN agencies active in supporting countries to enhance capacity for data collection and analysis and reporting and use and to assess the appropriateness, effectiveness and sustainability of the support for strengthened national capacities and what has or has not worked;
- Providing insights into the level of readiness including whether the UN is fit for purpose in addressing challenges and opportunities for national capacity building for statistics within the context of the post 2015 development agenda

### **Phases of the study**

Given the complex nature of the study, there will be two phases. Phase 1 is to scope the study and Phase 2 is to implement it. The scoping phase will help ensure that the evaluation is framed in a way the results can make a relevant and useful contribution to the QCPR policy discussions in 2016 including on-going systemic policy debates regarding the data revolution, the growing importance of national statistical capacity development and the broader UN “fit for purpose” debate. The scoping phase will provide an analysis of the range of UN system activities support for national capacity development, how this is positioned relative to the activities of other partners and non-traditional actors. It will outline the key issues challenges and constraints. Based on this, it will make a proposal for the scope and an appropriate approach for the study.

### **Management and conduct of the evaluation**

The evaluation will be managed by an Evaluation Management Group (EMG) with membership from evaluation units of UN system organizations. The EMG is chaired by the Joint Inspection Unit. Providing input in the evaluation is a Key Stakeholder Reference Group (KSRG). The evaluation will be conducted using independent expert consultants. Details on the management and quality assurance system are outlined in the ISWE policy

**[http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf13/policy\\_for\\_independent\\_system-wide\\_evaluation\\_of\\_operational\\_activities\\_for\\_development\\_of\\_the\\_united\\_nations](http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf13/policy_for_independent_system-wide_evaluation_of_operational_activities_for_development_of_the_united_nations)**.

### **Timeline**

Phase 1 Scoping – March – April 2015

Phase 2 Implementation of the evaluation: May – December 2015

Contact information: Scott Green [green10@un.org](mailto:green10@un.org)

**Contact Scott Green, ISWE Secretariat Coordinator at [green10@un.org](mailto:green10@un.org)**