



HANDBOOK ON PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

United Nations Development Programme

HANDBOOK ON PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

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FOREWORD

Supporting national capacity development for poverty reduction and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals lies at the very heart of UNDP's mandate. That means that we must work with programme countries to assist in the formulation of those strategies, policies, structures, and processes, which will have system-wide developmental impact.

Active in 166 countries around the world, UNDP must be relevant to the emerging needs of programme countries. We must have a clear vision of the direction in which we need go and the outcomes we want to help achieve. We must be able to respond quickly and appropriately to challenges and opportunities.

Results-based management provides a set of principles, approaches, and tools which can help us achieve these goals. By always trying to answer the “so what difference does our intervention make?” question, we will keep our focus on how we can support real and sustainable improvements being made in the lives of those we serve.

This, in turn, requires us to embrace a culture of evaluation. The tremendous store of knowledge which UNDP has, and has access to, including the lessons learned from evaluations, should more fully inform our programming and our decision making.

I hope that the publication of this handbook will help us and our partners to be even clearer about the higher-level results we want to achieve; to develop and act on strategies to achieve those results; to use systematically lessons drawn from evaluations to make decisions; and, ultimately, to improve our contribution to the advancement of human development.



Helen Clark
Administrator

PREFACE

This 2009 version of the 'Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results' aims to support UNDP in becoming more results-oriented and to improve its focus on development changes and real improvements in people's lives. It replaces and updates the previous Handbook from 2002. It was a breakthrough in driving the effective application of the results-based management approach in programming and performance management.

The Handbook recognizes that planning, monitoring and evaluation require a focus on nationally owned development priorities and results, and should reflect the guiding principles of national ownership, capacity development and human development. Globally, there has been a significant shift away from the project approach in favour of programme and national approaches. All partners and members of the Executive Board expect UNDP to demonstrate tangible results in development cooperation. UNDP also faces intensified calls for accountability to citizens for how resources are used, what results are achieved, and how effective these results are in bringing about progress in human development.

In June 2006, a UNDP Evaluation Policy was approved by the Executive Board. In 2007, an independent evaluation of the adoption and use of results-based management in UNDP found that UNDP continued to demonstrate a weak results culture despite notable progress on some fronts. The evaluation recommended that UNDP improve its capacities to manage for outcome-level change. This Handbook, therefore, complements the programme and operations policies and procedures by providing practical guidance on how to plan, monitor and evaluate for development results. The Handbook cannot, on its own, foster a culture of results in UNDP or among its partners. However, together with other initiatives, we hope it will make a significant difference.

This updated Handbook marks a departure from the previous publication. First, recognizing that results planning is a prerequisite for effective programme design, monitoring and evaluation, the revised Handbook integrates planning, monitoring and

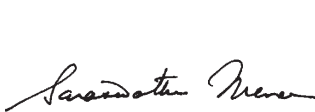
evaluation in a single guide. Second, the Handbook reflects the requirements and guiding principles of the evaluation policy, including national ownership, which is now mainstreamed throughout the cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluation. Third, the revised Handbook includes a comprehensive chapter on evaluation design for quality assurance to guide UNDP staff and evaluators in ensuring professional standards of quality in evaluation. There will be online training and regional workshops to support the application of the Handbook across the organization at all levels.

While the primary audience for the Handbook is UNDP staff, we hope that it will contribute to the efforts of all our partners who, like UNDP, strive towards greater development effectiveness. To facilitate wider dissemination of the publication, in addition to the printed version of this Handbook, the document is available on the UNDP website at www.undp.org/eo/handbook.

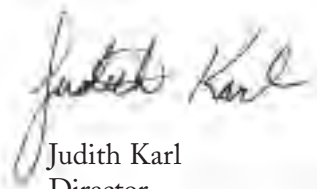
This Handbook is a joint product of the Bureau for Development Policy, Evaluation Office and Operation Support Group. We would like to thank colleagues in these units who helped conceive, draft and refine the Handbook over a number of iterations. Special thanks go to the core authors of the Handbook: Asoka Kasturiarachchi and Thomas Eriksson of the Bureau for Development Policy, Stephen Rodriques of the Operation Support Group, and Azusa Kubota of the Evaluation Office, who also marshaled the process as the Task Manager for the Handbook. Nurul Alam of the Evaluation Office provided overall quality assurance and guidance throughout the process.

The revision of the Handbook benefited from the commitment of many individuals, who provided substantive and technical inputs to the various drafts. In December 2008, a review workshop was held in New York where a number of UNDP country office senior managers, programme officers, monitoring and evaluation specialists and representatives from the Headquarters units and regional bureaux helped refine the draft. Heather Bryant, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer from the UNDP Nepal country office, deserves special mention. Thanks also go to Enid Marshall for support on evaluation methodology and Jessica Murray for substantive editorial support. Comments and feedback solicited from UNDP colleagues through the knowledge network discussions were also extremely helpful, and we are grateful to the many contributors and to Florencia Tateossian, the EvalNet facilitator.

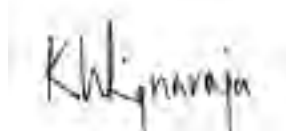
Last, but not least, we would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions and administrative assistance of the Evaluation Office staff, Anish Pradhan and Concepcion Cole, the copy editing of Margo Alderton, and the design and format of the Handbook by Julia Dudnik Stern.



Saraswathi Menon
Director
Evaluation Office



Judith Karl
Director
Operations Support Group



Kanni Wignaraja
Director, Capacity
Development Group
Bureau for Development Policy

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Assessment of Development Results
APR	Annual Project Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ERBM	Enhanced Results-based Management
ERC	Evaluation Resource Centre
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MfDR	Managing for Development Results
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (of the UNDP)
RBM	Results-based Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund

UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNV	United Nations Volunteers

INTRODUCTION

This 'Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results' is an updated edition of the 2002 edition of 'Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results'.¹ It seeks to address new directions in planning, monitoring and evaluation in the context of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) corporate strategic plan, the requirements of the UNDP evaluation policy approved by the Executive Board in 2006 and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) 'Standards for Evaluation in the UN System'.² The updated Handbook also incorporates information recommended by key users of the Handbook during various workshops held by UNDP units.

The guiding framework of UNDP for planning, monitoring and evaluation is provided in the 'Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures' (POPP)³, the evaluation policy⁴, and the UNEG 'Standards for Evaluation in the UN System'. The POPP and evaluation policy aim to provide guidance to UNDP management and staff on key functions and mechanisms through which the results and principles enshrined in the overarching programmatic documents of UNDP, including the strategic plan, are to be achieved. They reflect the intentions of the Executive Board and also inform UNDP stakeholders of how UNDP conducts its work.

These documents provide the prescriptive content on what needs to be done, by whom and by when. This Handbook complements this content by providing UNDP

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- 1 UNDP, 'Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results', Evaluation Office, New York, NY, 2002.
 - 2 UNEG, 'Standards for Evaluation in the UN System', 2005. Available at: http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22.
 - 3 UNDP, 'Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures', 2008. Available at: <http://content.undp.org/go/userguide>.
 - 4 UNDP, 'The Evaluation Policy of UNDP', Executive Board Document DP/2005/28, May 2006. Available at: <http://www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf>.

programme units with guidance on ‘how to’ and practical tools to strengthen results-oriented planning, monitoring and evaluation in UNDP.

WHAT DOES THE HANDBOOK DO?

The **objectives** of this Handbook include the following:

- To provide the reader with:
 - A basic understanding of the purposes, processes, norms, standards and guiding principles for planning, monitoring and evaluation within the UNDP development context
 - Knowledge of the essential elements of the planning and monitoring processes in UNDP: developing a robust results framework for projects and programmes, with clear indicators, baselines, and targets; and setting up an effective monitoring system
 - Knowledge of the essential elements of the evaluation process in UNDP: developing an evaluation plan; managing, designing and conducting quality evaluations; and using evaluation for managing for development results, learning and accountability
- To enhance the results-based culture within UNDP and improve the quality of planning, monitoring and evaluation

WHO IS THE HANDBOOK FOR?

The Handbook has multiple and diverse **audiences**:

- **UNDP staff** in country offices, regional bureaux, regional centres, Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), Partnership Bureau, and other units that manage programmes⁵, such as:
 - Planning and monitoring global, regional and country programmes and other projects and activities
 - Managing the commissioning process of evaluations
- **UNDP managers** who oversee and assure the quality of planning, monitoring and evaluation processes and products, and use monitoring and evaluation for decision making
- **Stakeholders and partners**, such as governments, United Nations and development partners, and beneficiaries, who are involved in UNDP planning, monitoring and evaluation processes
- The **UNDP Executive Board**, which oversees and supports the activities of UNDP, ensuring that the organization remains responsive to the evolving needs of programme countries

⁵ This includes country offices, regional bureaux, regional centres, Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), Partnership Bureau, and others that have programmatic responsibilities for development initiatives (programmes, projects and activities).

- **Independent evaluators** who need to understand guiding principles, standards and processes for evaluation within the UNDP context
- **Members of the national, regional and global development and evaluation community**

The reader of the Handbook will understand:

- The importance of good programme and project design for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- The critical role of monitoring in demonstrating the performance of programmes and projects, and in steering the implementation process towards the intended results
- How monitoring lays the groundwork for evaluation
- Different types of evaluations in UNDP and their contributions to learning and accountability
- The role of monitoring and evaluation in strengthening UNDP development effectiveness and managing for development results
- Principles, norms, standards, policy, processes and responsibilities governing planning, monitoring and evaluation in UNDP
- Where to look for references and materials for additional information and guidance

HOW IS THE HANDBOOK ORGANIZED?

Chapter 1 of the Handbook provides an overview of the integrated nature of planning, monitoring and evaluation, and describes the critical role they play in managing for development results. Underlying the entire Handbook is the principle that planning, monitoring and evaluation must at all times be considered in relation to, and build upon, one another. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the conceptual foundations of planning and specific guidance on planning techniques and the preparation of results frameworks that guide monitoring and evaluation. Chapter 3 provides guidance on how to plan for monitoring and evaluation before implementing a plan. Chapter 4 focuses on issues related to monitoring, reporting and review. Chapters 5 through 7 provide an overview of the UNDP evaluation function and the policy framework, introduce key elements of evaluation design and tools and describe practical steps in managing the evaluation process. Chapter 8 presents practical steps and examples in using knowledge from monitoring and evaluation in managing for development results.

HOW SHOULD THE HANDBOOK BE USED?

This Handbook is not designed to be read cover-to-cover. It is intended to be used as a reference throughout the programme cycle.

The Handbook is about planning, monitoring and evaluating **results**. It is not a Handbook on programme or project management. Some of the topics that would normally be covered in a programme and project management manual will therefore

not be addressed in this Handbook, such as cost-benefit analyses, environmental impact assessments, technical appraisals and so forth. For these topics, the POPP should be consulted.

In addition, the following compendiums should accompany this Handbook to enhance understanding of pertinent topics:

- Planning, monitoring and evaluation in conflict prevention and recovery settings, developed by BCPR
- Guidelines on Outcome Evaluations (under development)

The compendiums are available on the Evaluation Office website at www.undp.org/eo/handbook.

The development of this Handbook was led jointly by the BDP, Evaluation Office and Operations Support Group, and was supported by valuable input from UNDP colleagues in Headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices.