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**Speaking the Same Language within the  
International Organizations; A Proposal  
for an Enhanced Evaluation Approach to  
Measure and Compare Success of  
International Organizations**

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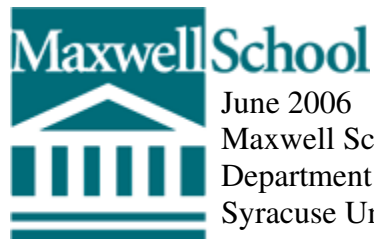
# **SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE**

## **WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

A Proposal for an Enhanced Evaluation Approach to  
Measure and Compare Success of International Organizations

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## List of Abbreviations

CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination
DFID	British Department for International Development
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GA	General Assembly
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IIA	Institute of Internal Auditors
IMDIS	Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System
IO	International Organization
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MEFF	Multilateral Effectiveness Framework
MOPAN	Multilateral Organizations Performance Assessment Network
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PPBD	Programme Planning and Budget Division
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely manner.
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research

## Executive Summary

It is currently difficult for Member States to assess and compare the success or performance of UN organizations despite recent movements towards results-based approaches. Efforts in the implementation of logical frameworks have been too independent and uncoordinated and left at the discretion of agencies. This has led to different and deficient implementations of the same theoretical approach making it almost impossible to draw any conclusions. The lack of a common approach is perceptible across agencies in the diversity of evaluation standards and terminology used to describe the same concepts, the unevenness and diversity of staff training as well as in the way intentions and results are presented. The myriad of organizations with some different sort of evaluation role may be seen as an additional symptom of the lack of coordination within the UN system.

The establishment of a useful and reliable evaluation process in the UN system requires three main elements: 1- a common and enhanced evaluation framework, 2- the human and organizational capacity to ensure the accurate implementation of the framework, and 3- the commitment of Member States and agencies to implement the approach. This report mainly discusses the common evaluation framework and methodological issues, although it also provides significant insight regarding how to build the human and organizational capacity of the UN to carry out this approach.

Assessing the success of an organization entails the determination of three elements: mandate or mission relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. The report provides insight into these three components of success but its primary focus is on effectiveness. Measuring effectiveness entails establishing precise targets to be reached by agencies and collecting actual results in order to assess if intended targets are being met. Indeed, assessing effectiveness encompasses comparing intentions (provided by targets) to actual achievements (collected through monitoring). The UN Secretariat itself does not provide targets to be met by the organization. Additionally, it over-emphasizes outputs (output implementation rates) and disregards the “big picture” provided by outcomes.

Under the proposed approach, subprograms meeting most of their targets are the most effective. Programs (agencies) with a large share of effective subprograms (programs) may be considered effective themselves. As a way to simplify and give an intuitive sense of effectiveness, subprograms could be attributed a category or color following a “traffic light” methodology (green for satisfactory, amber for average, red for below expectations) according to the share of targets satisfactorily met. The same could be done for programs according to their share of satisfactory subprograms. Program and subprogram performance data of every agency could be centralized (by a coordinating body) in a comprehensive webpage that would facilitate comparison between similar functions or themes across the UN system [Please refer to pg. 27 for an elaborate illustration].

The report also suggests the possibility of complementing this objective approach with a perception survey. Despite significant limitations of this type of subjective approach, it is still widely used and gives an idea of which organizations are best regarded by their peers.

Contrasting actual performance data and perception indicators could be revealing, and could shed light in areas where the objective methodology may fall short.

One of the most important recommendations concerns the organizational capacity ensuring the accurate implementation of the evaluation approach. This capacity should be embodied by a centralizing coordinating body (perhaps under the CEB) that would 1-ensure a common evaluation training and support of UN staff and uniformity of standards (terminology, methods, etc.), 2- centralize performance data gathered from agencies in a common database and present results in a user-friendly manner where programs and agencies could be compared and 3- verify the validity of the data submitted by the agencies (performance auditing).

## Introduction

The never-ending quest for reform, for improving the functioning of the Organizations of the United Nations (UN) system, has been an integral part of the life of the UN since its earliest days. Perhaps the most important reform proposal was made in July 1997 by Secretary General Kofi Annan, emphasizing the need for a results oriented programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation system for the UN, in order to shift the focus away from control and monitoring of inputs to accountability for results. Currently, most of the organizations of the UN system have adopted some version of the results based approach. However, it is essential to speak in the same evaluation language, through the integration of the aforementioned different versions of evaluation approaches, in order to be able to measure and compare results within the UN system.

This study analyzes the fundamentals of measuring success and develops analytical tools that could be used to determine the measure of effectiveness of UN organizations. The answers to the following questions provide the structure of this study:

*What is the definition of a successful UN agency? What criteria should be used by member states or others in making determinations about which UN organizations meet their objectives and which do not? For instance, what is an organization's mandate? Does it meet the mandate? Is the mandate still relevant? What influences the organization's efforts? How well does it work in concert with others? How is the organization evaluated; what oversight provisions exist; how does this organization meet the objectives of the UN? How is its success calculated?*

The study is structured in six sections. 1- The first section analyzes the most important evaluation bodies within the UN system and the current overall situation in practice. 2- The second section applies the logical framework approach to illustrate the outcomes needed to ensure a more sound evaluation framework within the UN system, and delineates the scope of the study. 3- The third section provides the fundamentals for defining, measuring and comparing success. 4- The fourth section uses the research on evaluation initiatives currently in practice within the UN and make proposals about how to use and improve those tools more efficiently; analyzes the variables that are currently evaluated and determines which other factors should be considered while measuring and comparing effectiveness. 5- The fifth section provides the details about the advantages and disadvantages of using a complemented subjective approach. 6- Finally, the study concludes with a summary of the proposed recommendations presented throughout the study.

## 1. Background and Analysis of Current Situation

The UN has placed great emphasis on the need for evaluation, and a number of evaluation bodies have been formed by the UN system in order to see whether program managers are taking responsibility and being accountable, and whether adequate results are being delivered. However, these evaluation bodies have not been successful in measuring the performance of UN agencies, amongst other things, due to lack of strategic and implementation flaws. The purpose of this section is to address these issues, and assess the resulting overall situation of evaluation within UN agencies.

This section is divided into three parts: 1- the first part of this section analyzes three of the most prominent evaluation bodies within the UN system and briefly describes their functions and tasks; 2- the second part criticizes the flaws and inadequacies of these evaluation bodies; 3- and the last part discusses the consequent overall situation of evaluation within the UN agencies.

### Existing Evaluation Approaches within the UN

Below is a delineation of the functions and tasks of the three most prominent existing evaluation bodies of the UN system.

#### **JIU**

#### ***Joint Inspection Unit***

- The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)<sup>1</sup>, created on November 1966, is the only independent external oversight body of the UN system mandated to conduct evaluations, inspections and investigations system-wide.
- The Unit is responsible to the General Assembly of the UN and similarly to the competent legislative organs of those specialized agencies and other agencies within the UN system which have accepted its statute.
- The Unit aims - to assist the legislative organs of the participating agencies in meeting their governance responsibilities; to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the respective secretariats in achieving the legislative mandates and the mission objectives established for the organizations; to promote greater coordination between the organizations of the United Nations System; to identify best practices, propose benchmarks and facilitate information-sharing throughout the system.

<sup>1</sup> "The Joint Inspection Unit" <<http://www.unjiu.org/en/reform.htm>>



## **CPC**

### ***Committee for Programme and Coordination***

- The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC)<sup>2</sup> was formed in 1976, and functions as the main subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly (GA) for planning, programming and coordination. In the UN, CPC has been assigned the responsibility for monitoring the results based system of UN agencies, by determining whether performance is adequate and effective, and by making recommendations for future programming.
- In short, the Committee reviews the programmes of the UN as defined in the Medium-Term Plan, and assists the ECOSOC in the performance of its coordination functions within the UN system. The committee also stays in close contact with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the JIU.
- The JIU, which has an objective of enhancing the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the UN system, through inspection and evaluation, is asked to bring to the attention of the CPC any problem, which it may consider important within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities.
- Furthermore, the reports of the JIU concerning the economic, social and human rights programmes of the UN system (such as reports dealing with UNDP, the UNHCR, and the UNITAR) are examined by the CPC, which in turn reports to the ECOSOC and the GA.

## **OIOS**

### ***The Office of Internal Oversight Services***

- The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)<sup>3</sup>, an independent inspection office under an Under-Secretary-General, was created in 1994 to assist the Secretary General in fulfilling internal oversight responsibilities over UN resources and staff.
- The office's responsibilities include providing independent, professional and timely internal audit, monitoring, evaluation, management consulting, and investigation activities that promote a culture of accountability and transparency and improved program performance.
- OIOS's authority spans all UN activities under the Secretary-General.
- OIOS is divided into four operating divisions: (1) Internal Audit Division I (New York); (2) Internal Audit Division II (Geneva); (3) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Consulting Division; and (4) Investigations Division.
- OIOS acquires its funding from mainly two sources – the regular budget resources, which are funds from assessed contributions from member states that cover normal, recurrent activities

<sup>2</sup> "Committee for Programme and Coordination" <<http://www.un.org/ga/cpc/>>

<sup>3</sup> "United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services" <http://www.un.org/depts/oios/>

such as the core functions of the UN Secretariat; and the extrabudgetary resources, which come from the budgets for UN peacekeeping missions financed through assessments from member states, voluntary contributions from member states for a variety of specific projects and activities, and budgets for the voluntarily financed UN funds and programs.

- The OIOS is supposed to exercise operational independence, and should be able to discharge its responsibilities without any hindrance or need for prior clearance.
- The Institute of Internal Auditors' (IIA) standards for the professional practice of auditing, which OIOS and its counterparts in other UN organizations formally adopted in 2002, state that audit resources should be appropriate, sufficient, and effectively deployed. These standards also affirm that an internal audit activity should be unbiased and free from any interference of conflicts of interest. It is also stated in the International auditing standards that financial regulations and the rules of an international institution should not restrict an audit organization from fulfilling its mandate.

## **UNEG**

### ***The UN Evaluation Group***

- UNEG<sup>4</sup> was established in January 1984 to provide a forum for the discussion of evaluation issues within the UN System and promotes simplification and harmonization of evaluation reporting practices among UNDP and the executing agencies. UNDP chairs UNEG and provides the Secretariat facilities.
- Members of UNEG discuss issues of evaluation policy and practices, and share information on evaluating technical cooperation programmes and projects, including those of strengthening national capacities, increasing their involvement in the evaluation process and developing practical solutions to problems.
- UNEG has published “*Norms for Evaluation in the UN system*”<sup>5</sup>, and “*Standards for Evaluation in the UN system*”<sup>6</sup>.
- In the former document, an initiative undertaken in part in response to GA resolution of December 2004, UNEG defines norms that “seek to facilitate system-wide collaboration on evaluation by ensuring that evaluation entities within the UN follow agreed-upon basic principles. They provide a reference for strengthening, professionalizing and improving the quality of evaluation in all entities of the United Nations system, including funds, programmes and specialized agencies.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “UN Evaluation Group” <http://www.uneval.org/uneval>

<sup>5</sup> UNEG. “Norms for Evaluation in the UN System”  
<<http://www.uneval.org/docs/ACFFC9F.pdf>>

<sup>6</sup> UNEG. “Standards for Evaluation in the UN System”  
< <http://www.uneval.org/docs/ACFFCA1.pdf>>

<sup>7</sup> UNEG. “Norms for Evaluation in the UN System”. Pg: 2  
<<http://www.uneval.org/docs/ACFFC9F.pdf>>

- The standards for evaluation, which are built upon the norms for evaluation, are “intended to guide the establishment of the institutional framework, management of the evaluation function, conduct and use of evaluations.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Analysis of the Existing Evaluation Bodies**

The aforementioned evaluation bodies have not been successful in ensuring adequate performance, good management, accountability, and transparency within the UN agencies. Based on research and information provided in reports prepared by GAO<sup>9</sup> and Mathiason (2004)<sup>10</sup>, below is a delineation of a number of strategic and implementation flaws that have impeded CPC’s, UNEG’s, and OIOS’s effectiveness and smooth functioning.

- Secretary General calls for CPC’s monitoring & evaluation function to be strengthened:

The CPC has not performed its monitoring functions or its programme planning review function too well. The Secretary General’s second phase reform proposals have called for the monitoring and evaluation function of the CPC to be strengthened. The CPC review tends to focus on process issues rather than drawing substantive conclusions. By not drawing strong conclusions, CPC is not able to provide the necessary incentive to the Secretary-General to take steps to improve weak programmes or eliminate them, or to allocate resources according to effectiveness of programmes.

- OIOS incapable of acting effectively as an independent inspection office

Although OIOS has great potential as an independent internal oversight body, it has proved to be ineffective due to a number of problems in its planning and implementation. First of all, the current funding arrangements constrain OIOS’s ability to be flexible with reallocating resources as necessary to address high risk areas. Reliance on other entities for funding takes away OIOS’s ability to operate independently as mandated by the General Assembly and required by international auditing standards that OIOS has adopted. OIOS depends on the resources of the funds, programs, and other entities it audits. The managers of these programs can deny OIOS permission to perform work or not pay OIOS for services. UN entities could thus avoid OIOS audits or investigations, and high-risk areas can be and have been excluded from timely examination.

Mathiason (2004)<sup>11</sup> discusses another factor that hinders OIOS’s ability to act as an independent oversight body. In making its report on Programme performance, OIOS has submitted its performance reports to the Programme Planning and Budget Division (PPBD) for clearance, and hence, acting like a subcontractor to this office. This defies the UN mandate’s

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<sup>8</sup>UNEG. “Standards for Evaluation in the UN System”. Pg: 2  
< <http://www.uneval.org/docs/ACFFCA1.pdf>>

<sup>9</sup> GAO. “Internal Oversight and Procurement Controls and Processes Need Strengthening”

<sup>10</sup> Mathiason, John R. “Who Controls the Machine, III: Accountability in the Results Based Revolution”. Mathiason is a former Deputy Director of UN Division for Advancement of Women and Professor of “Evaluation of International Programs and Projects” at Maxwell School.

<sup>11</sup> Mathiason, John R. “Who Controls the Machine, III: Accountability in the Results Based Revolution”.

requirement that the OIOS should be able to discharge its responsibilities without any hindrance or need for prior clearance. This practice restricts OIOS from being independent and from making its own impartial critical analysis, based on their evaluation and assessment of which programmes were effective and those that were not.

Since the adoption of the IIA international standards for the professional practice of internal auditing in 2002, OIOS has developed and implemented the key components of effective oversight. However, the office has not yet fully implemented them. No doubt that effective oversight requires proper adherence to professional auditing standards. OIOS's lack of ability to meet key components of the international auditing standards can hinder the office's effectiveness in carrying out its functions as the UN's main internal oversight body. Furthermore, although OIOS has adopted a risk management framework since 2001 to link the office's annual work plans to risk-based priorities, it has not yet fully implemented this framework either. This risk management framework includes plans for organization-wide risk assessments to categorize and prioritize risks facing the organization, and plans for assessing risk areas facing each entity for which OIOS has oversight authority. By not following this framework, OIOS is incapable of prioritizing the allocation of resources to oversee those areas that have the greatest exposure to fraud, waste, and abuse. According to the GAO report, "Although OIOS's framework includes plans to perform client-level risk assessments, as of April 2006, out of 25 entities that comprise major elements of its "oversight universe," only three risk assessments have been completed."<sup>12</sup>

Although the annual reports contain references to risks facing the office and the UN agencies concerned, the reports do not provide an overall assessment of the status of these risks or the consequence to the organization if the risks are not addressed. Clearly, this implies that OIOS officials currently cannot justify whether the entities they choose to examine are those that pose the highest risk.

The GAO report further disparages OIOS' lack of a mechanism to determine appropriate staffing levels to help justify budget requests. The report also states that while training opportunities are available for OIOS staff members, it is not mandatory, and the office does not have any systematic approach to track continuing professional development in order to ensure that all staff are maintaining and acquiring professional skills.

- *UNEG fails to create its desired outcomes:*

The first criticism of UNEG is its failure to create the desired outcomes with its published "Norms" and "Standards" for evaluation within the UN system. If the UN agencies did follow these norms and standards, there would be no further need for improvement of the UN evaluation system. Next, one of UNEG's objectives is the "simplification and harmonization of evaluation reporting practices among UNDP and the executing agencies."<sup>13</sup> Clearly, neither simplification or harmonization of evaluation practices within UNDP and the executing agencies have not been achieved. The following section discusses more elaborately the lack of this simplified common evaluation approach.

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<sup>12</sup> GAO. "Internal Oversight and Procurement Controls and Processes Need Strengthening" Pg: 11

<sup>13</sup> "UN Evaluation Group" <<http://www.uneval.org/uneval>>

## Overall Current Situation

The inadequacy of the major evaluation bodies of the UN system is reflected in the poor evaluation approach of UN agencies. Although most UN agencies have adopted some version of the results based approach, in practice, most of these agencies lack a common, effective, and results oriented evaluation framework. The greatest problem seems to be the lack of a common evaluation approach, which includes the lack of common terminology/ language used for evaluation, lack of a central database, lack of common training methodology for evaluation staff members, and a lack of common evaluation manual/ glossary.

The logical framework is one of the primary components of the results based approach in the UN. The log frame is essentially a planning tool that “starts with objectives, determines what results are needed to achieve the objectives, then determines what output is necessary to obtain the results, defines the activities necessary to produce the output and finally, establishes the inputs that are needed to carry out the activities.”<sup>14</sup> All results based approaches used by any UN agency should be based on the logical framework, and consist of the aforementioned elements. However, the main problem is the difference in specifics of how each step is defined. This lack of common agreed terms and terminology has been one of the difficulties in implementation of a results based approach. If terms and hence the concepts are applied correctly, Member States will have access to specific measures by the international organizations of the changes that will occur as a direct result of their investment of resources.

Another great flaw in the current system of results based management is that there is no clear way or mechanism to monitor or evaluate whether results have been achieved. Programming documents do not indicate in clear and measurable terms what specific results have been obtained once the budgets have been approved. There are often no real measurements comparing actual results to desired or the intended targets.

In general, determining results in international organizations is complicated due to the fact that most results are indirect. Unless the intended results are carefully formulated, they can be confused with national results. Thus due to these external factors, drawing causal links between the actions of the UN agencies and the outcomes, might be very difficult. Outcomes need to be realistic and the performance indicators to measure the outcomes need to be clearly defined. Mathiason points out that while IAEA has made proper use of the log framework approach by explicitly defining and measuring objectives, outcomes, and the corresponding performance indicators, UN has not been able to do the same, where there has frequently been a discrepancy between the ‘expected accomplishment’ and the performance measures to be applied.

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<sup>14</sup> Mathiason, John R. “Who Controls the Machine, III: Accountability in the Results Based Revolution”. Pg: 66.

The following section will illustrate some of the necessary actions that need to be taken in order to address the current problems within the UN evaluation system using the logical framework approach.

## 2. General Objective and Scope of the Report: Applied Log-Frame

This section will apply the results-based approach, the log-frame, to illustrate some of the necessary actions to tackle the current deficiencies in the UN evaluation system mentioned above. The framework explains the necessary steps to achieve the general objective of ensuring a more open and sound evaluation framework among UN agencies to measure and compare results, strategic allocation of resources and efficient service delivery.

Under the result-based programming approach, to achieve the aforementioned objective, a series of Specific, Measured, Achievable, Realistic and Timely manner (SMART) outcomes have to be obtained. The main outcomes in this case should be related to 1- the establishment and improvement of the necessary evaluation framework, tools and institutions; 2- the capacity (human and organizational) to use those tools; and 3- the actual commitment and use of them. Those outcomes could be expressed as follows:

- Enhanced common evaluation approach to measure and compare systematically the performance of UN agencies.
- Improved evaluation skills of UN members and agencies' staff.
- Strengthened internal and external oversight institutions.
- Increased use of enhanced evaluation system to develop action plans and recommendations directed to improve the performance of their agencies.

The following outputs should then be considered:

- Elaboration of a performance evaluation framework to assess UN agencies in a coordinated and integrated manner with focus on the results.
- Establishment of an *Independent Coordinating Body* to integrate existing evaluation tools and techniques to assure consistency and uniformity, and validate UN Internal Evaluators' work and their independence<sup>15</sup>.
  - i. Coordinated training session
  - ii. Coordinated evaluation manuals and tutorials
  - iii. Publication of lessons learned and best evaluation practices promoting the transfer of knowledge
  - iv. Development of a strengthened central database system to integrate consistent information for assessing and monitoring UN agencies.
  - v. Establishment of a central counselor to provide guidance.
  - vi. Elaborate an Action Plan to create more independent and autonomous oversight institutions.

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<sup>15</sup> The proposed *Independent Coordinating Body* considers as well the *Independent Audit Advisory Committee* mentioned by Ambassador Bolton in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last May 2006. Our proposal has a wider scope, considering not only the UN Secretariat and the OIOS's work, but the UN system in general.

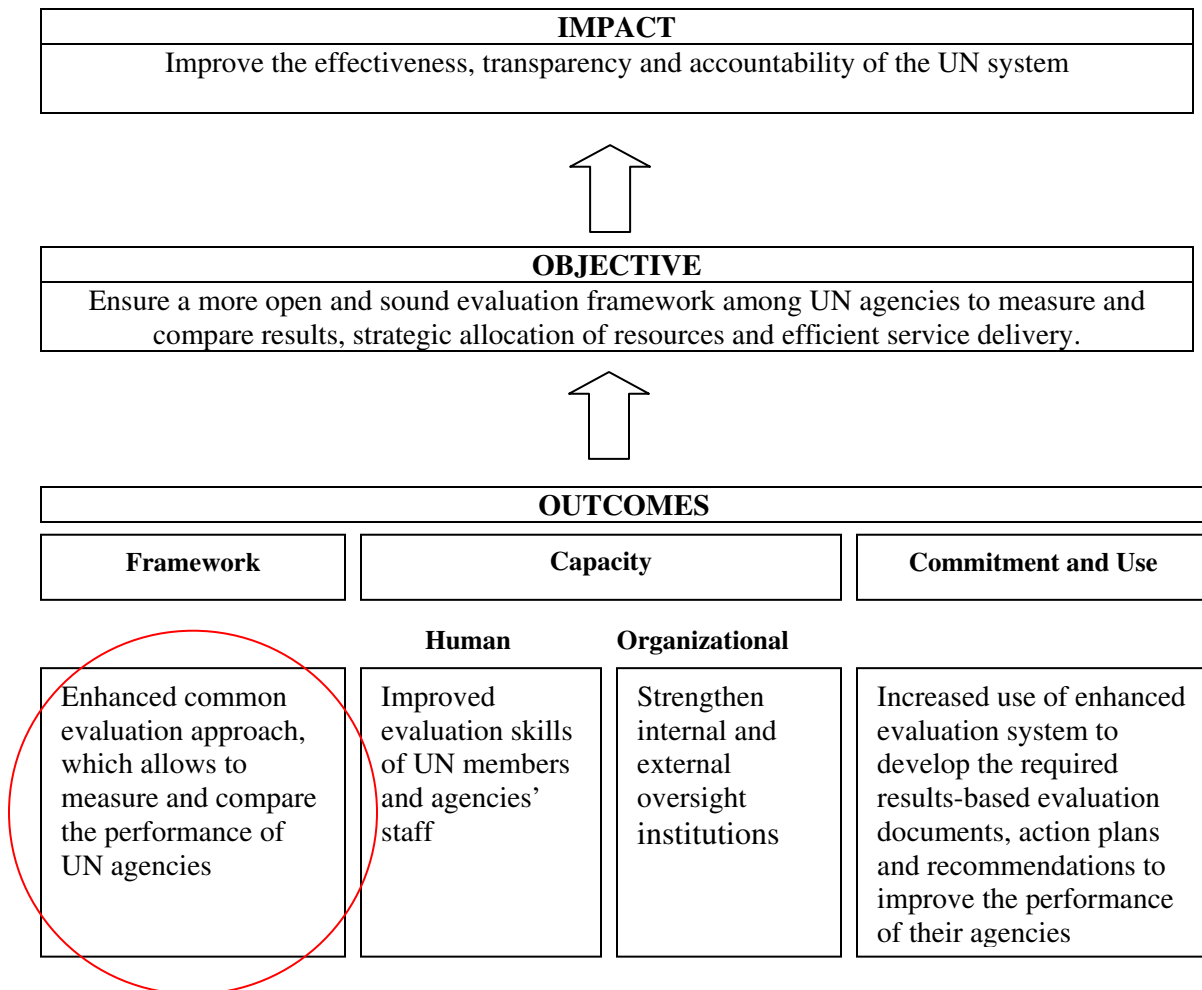
- Formulation of an Action Plan to promote the production of adequate diagnostic assessments and actions-oriented recommendations.

The impact, which represents the long term observed changes in the beneficial population when the program’s objectives are achieved, would be improved effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the UN system.

The description of the important outcomes and the corresponding performance indicators are illustrated in detail in the Annex 1. The next step in the logical framework approach will be to determine the targets, the performance indicators’ data sources, the methods of data collection, and the inputs that would be necessary to undertake those tasks.

In summary, we have listed four potential outcomes, which are critical to reach the main objective and ensure a more open and sound evaluation framework among UN agencies to measure and compare results, strategic allocation of resources and efficient service delivery (See Graph 1). Nevertheless, the scope of this project, which could be considered as an initial phase, is focused in the first outcome. That is, propose an enhanced common evaluation approach to measure and compare the performance of UN agencies.

**Graph 1: Impact, Objective, and Outcomes**



The next section will explain in detail the proposed methodology for an enhanced common evaluation approach to measure and compare the performance of UN agencies.

### 3. The Fundamentals of Measuring Success

The objective of this section is to present the components of organizational success. It also addresses the theoretical framework for measuring and eventually comparing success.

#### 3.1. How to define success?

The success of a UN agency can be decomposed in three elements: 1- the relevance of its mandate and objectives, 2- the effectiveness with which the agency accomplishes its specified goals and 3- the efficiency in the use of resources to carry out its mission.

- Mandate relevance

To be considered successful by Member States a UN agency should first have a relevant mission that addresses current challenges. This entails a relevant and up-to-date mission formulated in the organization's mandate. Given that a mission is defined in a particular context in time, its relevance or usefulness may be threatened by changes in context. A mission may no longer be useful to Member States or may not be adapted to actual challenges. Ideally, an unsuitable or irrelevant mission should be re-defined or terminated respectively.

- Effectiveness

This element corresponds to the capacity of an agency to achieve its mission in a timely manner. Once Member States agree on the mandate and objectives of an agency it is possible to measure how well this organization is carrying out the mission it was given. This requires a precise definition of what the agency is supposed to achieve in a given timeframe in order to assess its actual achievements. Effectiveness and mission relevance are distinct elements given that an agency can be effective in reaching irrelevant objectives.

- Efficiency

This component corresponds to an organization's ability to optimally allocate resources between activities. Efficiency is defined as the output to input ratio. An agency that uses fewer resources to produce the same output is considered more efficient. Outputs differ from one activity to another while inputs are a common denominator usually measured in terms of labor time or money. Note that an organization can be effective in reaching its goals but inefficient in the use of resources.

In general, in order to be successful an UN agency should have a pertinent mission, reach its pre-specified objectives in a timely manner and allocate resources optimally between activities. For the purpose of our study we will mainly focus on effectiveness, although we will provide some insights about efficiency and mandate relevance.



### 3.2. How to measure and compare success?

- Determining mandate relevance

As previously noted, the relevance of a mandate is subject to the evolution of the international context. This phenomenon calls for a systematic periodic review and update of agency mandates and missions in order to keep objectives in phase with current challenges. At present, there is not a systematic approach to review or appraise the relevance of agency mandates.

Given that mandates are set by Member States and that States commonly have different views and priorities it is very likely that such an approach may generate disagreement. In addition, because of the collegial decision making process within the UN, the introduction of a systematic mandate review approach constitutes a delicate reform that entails extensive negotiation and consultation between Member States.

Such a reform may face opposition by some member if it is perceived as an attempt by reformer countries to shift the current balance of power within the UN system to their advantage. To a great extent mandate setting is an inherently political matter in which Member States must agree on what they believe to be the most appropriate missions for different agencies.

Nevertheless, it is possible for an independent UN entity to make recommendations to Member States about changes in mandates. Such an impartial mandate assessment could be perceived as an operational step benefiting all Member States rather than being perceived as a political arm wrestle in which reformer countries are perceived as pushing forward their interests to the detriment of others.

- Measuring and comparing Efficiency

Assessing efficiency consists of measuring the amount of resources put into the production of a particular output. It requires monitoring of activities in order to determine the amount of resources invested towards producing an output. Note that it is possible to set efficiency targets taking as reference efficiency results from previous years or figures from similar activities in other organizations (within the UN system or even in the NGO sector).

Comparing efficiency across agencies is very delicate. Given the nature of efficiency measures (output/input) it is inaccurate to compare efficiency figures across different functions or inherently different programs. It would be like comparing the resources needed to produce an apple and an orange. A useful approach would be to compare the resources needed to produce similar apples in two different organizations –an apple being the output of a subprogram for instance. The only useful comparison is to contrast efficiency figures between similar activities with similar outputs.

- Measuring Effectiveness

Measuring effectiveness consists of comparing intentions with actual achievements. Indeed, an effective organization is one that reaches its intended objectives in the predetermined

timeframe. Measuring the ability of an agency to achieve its intended objectives in a timely manner requires 1- the definition of precise and quantified targets to be met by the agency and 2- the monitoring and reporting of the agency's actual results. Such an approach requires the implementation of a full-fledged strategic framework and log-frame matrix with the appropriate results monitoring and reporting capacity.

As previously described, a strategic framework entails the specification of goals and objectives, intended outcomes with their respective indicators, intended outputs as well as the activities that would generate these outputs. Its role is to strategically and rationally organize activities to achieve intended goals in an optimal manner. The key element in assessing effectiveness consists of comparing intended results with actual ones. In the UN system, intended results are the ultimate product of a strategic plan and are commonly presented in the Program Budget and Medium Term Plan, and actual results are gathered through agency monitoring and are sometimes published in the Program Performance report. As we will discuss later, the way results are presented in the Program Performance document is deficient and therefore hinder the capacity to successfully evaluate agencies.

Once an evaluator compares actual results with intentions it is possible to assess to what extent did the agency, program or division accomplish its goals. It becomes then possible to make some judgments and to attribute a sort of qualification or "grade" according to the degree to which the targets were achieved. This type of method is also used under the name of "stoplights" or "traffic lights" in which an agency, program or subprogram receives a "green light" if achievement of intended targets is satisfactory, an "amber light" if it is average and a "red light" if below expectations. An illustration of this approach will be provided in the next section of the study.

Note that a "strategic framework" without precise targets to be met by the different departments and divisions of an agency is close to useless since it cannot be used as a tool to gauge performance. In fact, it does not provide end-states that the agency seeks to reach, but merely the "direction" of its activities or an "idea" of what the goals are. As previously noted, this is one of the main downfalls in the UN system, that is, the lack of specific and quantifiable objectives and targets to be met by the organization. This is why it is currently impossible to assess the effectiveness of most UN agencies.

- *Effectiveness at the output or outcome level?*

An organization tries to influence its environment through its activities in order to reach its intended outcomes. The more complex and global intended outcomes are, the more difficult it is for the agency to influence those outcomes. Indeed, an agency does not control its environment since there are multiple actors exerting influence simultaneously in multiple and intricate ways. Therefore, an agency is not fully responsible for the achievement -or failure- of an intended outcome. However, an agency is fully responsible for the production of its own outputs.

This phenomenon raises serious questions about the level in which effectiveness is defined. Should it be at the outcome level, the output level or both? Focusing only at the outcome level ignores the influence –negative or positive– that other actors have on the outcome.

On the other hand, focusing simply on outputs may lead to over-emphasis on these and divert the agency from its ultimate mission or “big picture” which is provided by intended outcomes. A better, but more complex approach consists of focusing of both, outputs and outcomes, which would encourage agencies to produce those outputs that contribute most to the accomplishment of the intended outcomes.

- Measuring overall Effectiveness

With the successful implementation of a full fledged strategic plan an agency would have plenty of targets to meet. Those targets can be defined and organized under different headings such as programs or themes (HIV/AIDS, humanitarian relief, rural development, etc.) or functions (internal management, service delivery, etc.). A main challenge is aggregating the results of different targets under the same heading. The objective is to provide a simple way for Member States to know which agency, program or subprogram is meeting its intended targets.

As previously noted, if a target is quantified it is then possible to assess to what degree the target was achieved (e.g. 80% of the target was achieved). It becomes possible to determine the proportion of objectives within a subprogram that reached, for instance, at least 75% of the intended targets. Different “grades” could be attributed to classify subprograms according to the proportion of targets that met the intended goals. For instance, we could attribute a “green light” to a subprogram in which 80% of the objectives were met satisfactorily (at least 75% of a target was reached). Member States could then assess the proportion of satisfactory, average and below expectation subprograms within each individual program of an agency. Additional “grades could then be attributed to programs according to their subprogram performance. The possibilities are vast.

An important disadvantage is that details of success at the subprogram level are lost if only aggregated results at the program or agency level are presented. Member States should be able to go to (at least) to the subprogram level to appraise precise actions carried out by the agencies. This approach has also the potential advantage of allowing comparison between programs and subprograms within and across agencies and to follow overall progress. Nevertheless comparison within and across agencies requires serious caution as we are about to discuss.

- Comparing Effectiveness

Comparing performance is a delicate process that can be easily misleading or manipulated. In fact, only comparing *comparable* figures is relevant and useful. A very useful assessment consists of assessing the evolution of performance for a subprogram or program within an agency. Performance measures from previous years allow evaluators to gauge how much progress has been done. Note that this concerns not only effectiveness but efficiency as well.

Comparison of effectiveness across agencies, programs and even subprograms is more difficult. In order to compare the achievement of an objective, targets of two subprograms have to be *equally challenging* for the agencies. Indeed, it is easier to reach an easy target than a difficult one and comparing the achievement of unequally difficult targets is thus misleading. The comparison of effectiveness of different subprograms, programs or agencies lies on the very

strong assumption that targets are set at the same difficulty level. If this assumption is verified then comparison becomes more accurate and therefore useful.

Additionally, it is more useful to compare effectiveness of similar functions within different agencies such as comparing internal management of the FAO and UNESCO for instance. Another approach would consist on aggregating performance data (as previously described) and compare whole agencies or programs between them. Although this approach omits important details at the subprogram level as we pointed out earlier, it gives an idea to Member States about which agencies are globally better in fulfilling the targets that these were intended to reach.

The next section will illustrate some evaluation initiatives currently in practice within the UN and make proposals about how to use and improve those tools and which other factors should be considered while measuring and comparing effectiveness.

## 4. From Current UN Practices to an Enhanced Methodology

This section presents the current practices of a small sample of UN entities that are carrying out some sort of results-based approach. The sample consists of the UN organizations using the “best practices” and it is the result of a short research conducted by the authors (See Annex 2). The objective is to analyze and criticize the current practices and propose recommendations for improvements. These proposals will form an integral part of our recommendations for an enhanced evaluation approach of the success of UN organizations.

### 4.1. Measuring within Organizations

- *Illustration of the UN Secretariat approach*

The UN Secretariat was chosen because it is claimed to be one of the UN entities that is more advanced towards a results based approach. The UN Secretariat has implemented a system called IMDIS (Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System) through which program managers provide their results to the OIOS for evaluation.

As we previously explained, an organization needs to provide both its actual accomplishments and its precise pre-stated intentions or objectives in order to assess performance. The UN Secretariat presents its intentions and results in two distinct types of documents: the *Medium Term Plan*<sup>16</sup> (MTP) and the *Programme budget*<sup>17</sup> for its intentions, and the *Programme Performance*<sup>18</sup> document presented by the OIOS for its results.

The Medium Term Plan presents all the programs and subprograms within the Secretariat. The document provides details about the objective, strategy, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each subprogram. Nevertheless, despite providing information about expected accomplishment and indicators of achievement, the

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<sup>16</sup> The Medium Term Plan for 2002-2005

<sup>17</sup> The Programme Budget for 2002-2003, part IV, Section 9 (Programme 7 of the Medium-Term Plan for the period 2002-2005)

<sup>18</sup> The Programme Performance for the 2002-2003 biennium

document needs to go further since it lacks precise targets for its subprograms. The box below is an excerpt of the MTP for 2002-2005<sup>19</sup> and illustrates this point:

**Programme 1: Political affairs**

**Subprogramme 2: Electoral assistance**

[...]

**Expected accomplishments**

1.11 The technical capacity of Member States requesting assistance for the conduct of elections in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions would be enhanced.

**Indicators of achievement**

1.12 An indicator of achievement would be the provision of electoral assistance to Member States in response to their request.

Although the documents refer to accomplishments and indicators, an evaluator does not know for instance by *how much* should the capacity of Member States be enhanced or *what is the proportion* of electoral assistance requests that are expected to be met. This imprecision is present throughout the subprograms in the document. There are no quantified targets to be achieved and therefore it becomes impossible to gauge how effective the agency was in the implementation. Indeed, without a precise reference of what success encompasses, evaluators cannot emit judgments about performance.

The Programme Performance presented by the OIOS was conceived to provide the results of the activities carried out by the UN Secretariat. Here is how the OIOS describes the report<sup>20</sup>:

The present report is a product of collaboration between the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the managers of substantive programmes. The managers provided, through IMDIS, their reporting on the highlights of results achieved by their programme as a whole and on each expected accomplishment set out in the 2002-2003 programme budget. The Office of Internal Oversight Services verified with due diligence the statements reported and their correspondence to the approved indicators of achievement, and persistently steered the content of reporting towards results. Through joint efforts, the final reporting was made as concise and focused as possible.

First of all, performance results are presented as “implementation rates” of outputs that were expected to be implemented as shown in the table below:

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<sup>19</sup> The Medium Term Plan for 2002-2005, pg 6.

<sup>20</sup> The Programme Performance for the 2002-2003 biennium, pg 7-8.

**Table 1: Rates of output implementation, by programme budget section**

Budget section	Number of outputs	Implementation rates (percentage) <sup>a</sup>			
		I <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>2</sub>	I <sub>3</sub>	
2	General Assembly affairs and conference services	2 676	57	57	62
3	Political affairs	1 948	79	79	81
4	Disarmament	2 278	53	53	65
5	Peacekeeping operations	966	94	94	95
6	Peaceful uses of outer space	508	93	94	169
8	Legal affairs	2 212	81	83	111
9	Economic and social affairs	3 257	94	94	120
10	Africa: New Agenda for Development	148	84	85	103
11A	Trade and development	1 051	82	82	92
11B	International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO)	222	95	95	127
12	Environment	1 180	90	94	195
13	Human settlements	177	90	93	300
14	Crime prevention and criminal justice	457	96	96	142
15	International drug control	957	87	89	122
16	Economic and social development in Africa	381	87	87	111
17	Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	1 058	89	90	106
18	Economic development in Europe	4 668	92	92	104
19	Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean	681	93	94	121
20	Economic and social development in Western Asia	219	93	94	109
22	Human rights	3 912	87	87	113
23	Protection of and assistance to refugees	206	97	97	97
25	Humanitarian assistance	1 008	98	98	99
26	Public information	1 020	91	92	101
27A	Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management	421	98	98	110
27B	Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts	1 244	95	95	95
27C	Office of Human Resources Management	158	89	89	89
28	Internal oversight	115	100	100	185
<b>Total</b>		<b>33 131</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>102</b>

<sup>a</sup> I<sub>1</sub> is the percentage of all mandated outputs that were implemented. I<sub>2</sub> is the percentage of total outputs that were implemented. I<sub>3</sub> is the percentage of all outputs implemented compared with the outputs programmed in the 2002-2003 budget.

Source: *Programme Performance for the 2002-2003 biennium of the UN*, p21.

The notion of “output implementation” is confusing although the previous excerpt makes reference to the gap between intended accomplishments and actual ones. However, given that the intended accomplishments provided in the Programme Budgets and in the MTP do not provide specific targets to be met, it is difficult to draw conclusions about what “implementation” stands for. At what point is an output considered implemented? It could probably be misleading to consider “implementation rate” a substitute for “success rate” given that there is no clear information concerning the terminology. In summary, the UN Secretariat possesses a relatively advanced strategic framework but its lack of precise targets to be met heavily affects efforts to assess performance and thus hinder the usefulness of the strategic framework.

Another drawback is the over-emphasis in outputs because of the lack of reference to intended outcomes in the Programme Performance document (presenting the results). This approach omits the connection between outputs and outcomes and unfortunately does not allow evaluators and donors to successfully assess the “outcome-effectiveness” of the outputs being implemented. For instance, an implementation rate of 100 percent could be qualified as excellent but information about the impact (outcome level) of these outputs is omitted and thus makes this approach incomplete. Consequently, there should be clear reference to outcomes as well in the Programme Performance report and perhaps a narrative explaining the connection between the outputs that were produced and actual outcomes.

In addition, results are presented by programs forming output aggregates of subprograms as in table 1 of the *Program Performance* document. This aggregated presentation does not provide details about which subprograms are doing better or worse in terms of “output implementation”. Information at the subprogram level is extremely important because it pushes evaluators to seek for explanations of low output implementation rates at the subprogram level.

Furthermore, results from previous years are not presented and therefore does not allow following implementation rate progress in time for different subprograms. Indeed, a figure without context may be misleading since it omits information about improvement in the implementation of subprograms.

Finally, the presentation of the MTP, *Programme Budget* (intentions) and *Programme Performance* (results) documents could be improved. For instance, these documents should be available in the same webpage. A more user-friendly version of the *Program Performance* document that includes a systematic comparison of results at the subprogram level to the programmed intentions would be extremely valuable.

In summary, the combination of precise targets for each subprogram with references to actual outcomes and performance figures from previous years at a disaggregated subprogram level presented in a more accessible and user friendly results report could greatly enhance the current evaluation process of the UN Secretariat.

▪ *Illustration of “Best Practices” Approaches*

Under the result-based programming approach, the outcomes that have to be obtained to achieve the objectives should have the SMART characteristics. In this sense, one of the key elements for UNICEF’s success, as William Brisben, U.S. Representative to UNICEF noted, could be explained by its emphasis on measurable results<sup>21</sup>.

The Executive Board of UNICEF, in its *Annual Report of the Executive Director: Results achieved for children in support of the Millennium Submit agenda, through the medium-term strategic plan 2002-2005*, provided qualitative and quantitative measures of progress against the targets indicated in its *Medium-Term Strategic Plan* (MTSP), with additional discussion of lessons learned and issues arising for consideration looking ahead to the formulation of the next strategic plan. Therefore, UNICEF applies the following steps:

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<sup>21</sup> Ambassador John Bolton. Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (May 2006).

1. Quantitative and qualitative establishments of targets and related outcomes—*MTSP 2002-2005*
2. Quantitative and qualitative analysis and measure of actual progress –*Annual Report of the Executive Director June 2006*.
3. Used quantitative and qualitative evaluation and lessons learned to establish targets for the next period—*Implementation of Organizational Plan 2006-2006*.

The following Table summarizes the UNICEF’s quantitative analysis of progress in “Fighting HIV/AIDS”, one of the established priorities in the MTSP 2002-2005<sup>22</sup>.

**Table 2: MTSP programme indicators – Fighting HIV/AIDS**

Indicator	2002	2003	2004	2005
National situation analysis on HIV/AIDS and children/youth has been undertaken	70	74	66	75
National strategy approved to take PMTCT to scale	65	84	89	93
National strategy approved to take prevention of HIV among young people to scale	80	88	89	92
National strategy approved to take school-based life skills education to scale	64	71	79	87
National strategy approved to take action for protection/care of OVCs to scale	31	36	47	60
National strategy approved for comprehensive care for HIV-infected children and their families	n.a.	32	46	48

Source: *Annual Report of the Executive Director: Results achieved for children in support of the Millennium Submit agenda, through the medium-term strategic plan, 2002-2005*. UNICEF.

Assuming that UNICEF has carefully formulated the expected results and controlled by external factors, one step is still missing in UNICEF’s approach, which is needed in order to provide a more complete picture of the effectiveness of the agency in meeting its intended targets. There is not an explicit quantitative comparison between the targets intended and the actual progress. This additional step is critical to measure the agency in terms of its capacity to achieve intended targets satisfactorily or not. Therefore, the analysis of effectiveness among years and comparisons among agencies become more feasible.

The Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, in the *2003 Results-oriented annual report to the United Nations Capital Development Fund* (June 2004), assessed the results achieved by the UNCDF for the period of its *Strategic Results Framework (SRF) 2000-2003*. According to its methodology<sup>23</sup>, “annual targets for outcomes and outputs are set for projects and linked with the SRF indicators”. Then, the performance is rated according to target achievement rates for each project reporting under a specific SRF outcome indicator. The categories were defined as follows:

<sup>22</sup> The UNICEF’s priorities for this period are: Early childhood development; Immunization ‘plus’; Girls’ education; Fighting HIV/AIDS; Protecting children from violence, exploitation, abuse; Emergency preparedness and response.

<sup>23</sup> For more information see Annex of the *2003 Results-oriented annual report to the United Nations Capital Development Fund* (June 2004). Pg. 27.



- (a) Over 100%: Exceed targets
- (b) 75 - 100%: Satisfactory
- (c) 50 - 74%: Partially achieved
- (d) Below 50%: Below expectations

The example could also use the “traffic lights” approach (i.e. green, amber and red) instead of the rating categories (i.e. satisfactory, partially achieved and below expectations). Then, the performance under each outcome indicator could be calculated by the rate of achievement dividing the number of projects attaining 75% or more of their targets (i.e. satisfactory and beyond) by the number of total projects reporting under the indicator. The table below shows an example of the aforementioned approach.

Project	Target	Achievement	Percentage	Category
Project 1	100 villages	80 villages	80%	Satisfactory
Project 2	50 communes	25 communes	50%	Partially achieved
Project 3	2 districts	2 districts	100%	Satisfactory
Overall assessment of indicator			67% (i.e. 2 out of 3 projects attain 75% or more of their targets)	Satisfactory

Source: “2003 Results-oriented annual report to the United Nations Capital Development Fund”, Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, June 2004.

In order to facilitate inter-year comparability of different indicators, the assessment of the overall progress towards an outcome could be calculated by taking the average of the scores of the rate of achievement. Finally, “the assessments of outcomes are aggregated under each sub-goal and analyzed to determine the overall performance of the fund and identify future corrective measures”<sup>24</sup>. For example:





Outcome indicator	Total number of projects reporting	Number of projects satisfactory or better
Indicator 1	3	2 (67%) – satisfactory]
Indicator 2	16	15 (93.8%) – satisfactory]
Indicator 3	10	6 (60%) – partially achieved]
<b>Overall assessment of progress towards outcome</b>		<b>73.4% (Rating: partially achieved)</b>

Source: “2003 Results-oriented annual report to the United Nations Capital Development Fund”, Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, June 2004.

For instance, Table 3 provides UNCDF’s information regarding intended targets, actual progress and the ratio of both measures. Then, it can be easily rated according to the aforementioned approach.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

**Table 3: Outcome 1.5.2. Best practices of UNCDF pilot projects are replicated by other donors**

Indicators	2000 results	2001 results	2002 results	2003 results		2003
1.5.2.a – UNCDF support to local authorities is replaced or increased through co-financing by other donors.	80% 4/5	100% 2/2	40% 2/5	50% 2/4	→	Part. Achieved 
1.5.2.b – UNCDF programmes are replicated outside UNCDF programme areas by other donors.	n.a.	50% 1/2	67% 2/3	40% 2/5	→	Below expect. 
1.5.2.c – UNCDF programme methodology has been adopted by other donors.	n.a.	0% 0/1	67% 6/9	67% 4/6	→	Part. Achieved 
Average	80%	50%	58%	52%	→	Part. Achieved 0% (0 out of 3 attain 75% or more of targets) 

Source: “2003 Results-oriented annual report to the UNCDF”, Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, June 2004.

Another illustration could be found in the *Multi-year funding framework report on UNDP performance and results for 2004* (June 2005), reported on the implementation of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF) for 2004-2007. The report “aspires to provide a rigorous and balanced analysis of the effectiveness of UNDP contributions to development results in programme countries”<sup>25</sup>.

The following Table summarizes UNDP’s quantitative analysis in “Responding to HIV/AIDS”, one of the established priorities in the MYFF 2004-2007<sup>26</sup>.

**Table 4. Average rates of achievement of annual targets towards intended outcomes (by service line)**

Service line	Rates of achievement (%)		
	Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved
<b>5. Responding to HIV/AIDS</b>			
5.1 Leadership and capacity development to address HIV/AIDS	59	38	3
5.2 Development planning, implementation and HIV/AIDS responses	52	44	4
5.3 Advocacy and communication to address HIV/AIDS	59	27	14

Source: “Multi-year funding framework report on UNDP performance and results for 2004”, Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, June 2005.

<sup>25</sup> *Multi-year funding framework report on UNDP performance and results for 2004*. Pg. 1.






<sup>26</sup> UNDP’s priorities are: Reducing human poverty, Democratic governance, Energy and environment, Crisis prevention and recovery and, Responding to HIV/AIDS.

In summary, the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches used by OIOS as well as UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF lead us to our proposed approach, which contains the following steps:

- Step 1: Quantitative and qualitative establishments of targets and related outcomes.
- Step 2: Quantitative and qualitative measure of actual progress, which consider (See Table 5 below):
  - Ratio actual progress related to intended targets
  - Rating categories or rating colors (“traffic lights”)
  - Ratio of achievements
- Step 3: Used quantitative and qualitative evaluation and lessons learned to establish targets for the next period.
- Step 4: Provide a unified and user-friendly document presenting steps 1 to 3. That is, explicit linkage between outcomes with targets, as well as targets with actual progress, and future targets.

**Table 5**  
**Step 2: Measure of Actual Progress**

**(NAME OF UN ORGANIZATION)**

PER YEAR	2004			
Themes	Overall Ratio Intended/ Actual	Overall Rating traffic lights (green, amber, red),	Overall Rating Categories (satisfactory, partially achieved, below expectations)	Rates of Achievement (Satisfactory)
<u>Human Poverty</u>	53		Part. Achieved	54
<u>Democratic Governance</u>	51		Part. Achieved	52
<u>Energy and Environment</u>	50		Part. Achieved	45
<u>Crisis Prevention/ Recovery</u>	40		Below Expect.	42
<u>HIV/AIDS</u>	76		Satisfactorily	57

#### 4.2. Measure across Organizations

While different international agencies have diverse mandates, they could share similar programs and/or functions. Therefore, it could be possible to compare agencies based on these similarities as far as each of them is evaluated using comparable approaches.

The proposed steps mentioned in the section above facilitate the inter-year comparability of the overall progress but those steps could be used as well to compare among different

organizations. The rate of satisfactory achievement allows as scoring each program (subprogram and/or function) and calculating an overall average that could be then comparable among organizations, representing the percentage of satisfactorily achieved targets. For instance, the performance results from the UNICEF's quantitative analysis of progress in "Fighting HIV/AIDS" could be comparable with the performance of UNDP's HIV/AIDS program. In this specific case, UNICEF will need to calculate and provide their ratio of achievement.

In the case of functions, according to Mathiason (2005)'s<sup>27</sup> study, "their (secretariats) primary purpose is to ensure that the global community holds together and how well they do so depends on how they perform a series of functions that have been delegated to them by states". Then, he recognizes five functions: 1- regime creation, 2-information mobilization, 3-norm enforcement, 4- direct services (humanitarian assistance, peace and security services and international economic management) and 5- internal management (program planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, building maintenance and security provision for personnel).

Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that any data construction and interpretation of indicators in comparing differences between agencies, and over time, cannot be measured with absolute precision. There are certain threats to validity as each program (subprogram and/or function) would not be completely the same and would have differences which make their comparison hard.

### **4.3. Visual and Integrated Presentation**

A visual and user-friendly presentation of the effectiveness could be provided as well. The information could be easily accessible through an integrated website, similar in outlook to several examples created for non-profits (i.e. Charity Navigator, GuideStar<sup>28</sup>). This integrated website will facilitate the access to the results derived from our proposed evaluation approach.

For instance, it would be possible to search the evaluation results by agency, theme, or by year. The UN effectiveness information will be classified in three groups: Ratios, Charts and figures, and Peer UN organizations. The first group would indicate the ratio of intended targets versus actual progress, the rating by categories (i.e. satisfactory, partially achieved, below expectations) and by traffic lights (i.e. green, amber, red), as well as the rate of achievement. The effectiveness ratios will be available by program priorities and subprograms, as well as an overall rate of achievement. The second group will provide the same effectiveness information graphically. Finally, the third group would allow observing and analyzing the effectiveness of a list of agencies with similar program priorities and/or subprograms and functions. Additional information would include the mandate of the organizations and the results from the perception survey. The Graph below represents a visual example of the potential front page of the user-friendly online presentation of the results.

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<sup>27</sup> Mathiason, John R. "Invisible Governance". Pg: 22.

<sup>28</sup> See [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org) and [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

**SEARCH**

By Agency  
 **GO**

By Theme  
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By Year  
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**(NAME OF UN ORGANIZATION)**

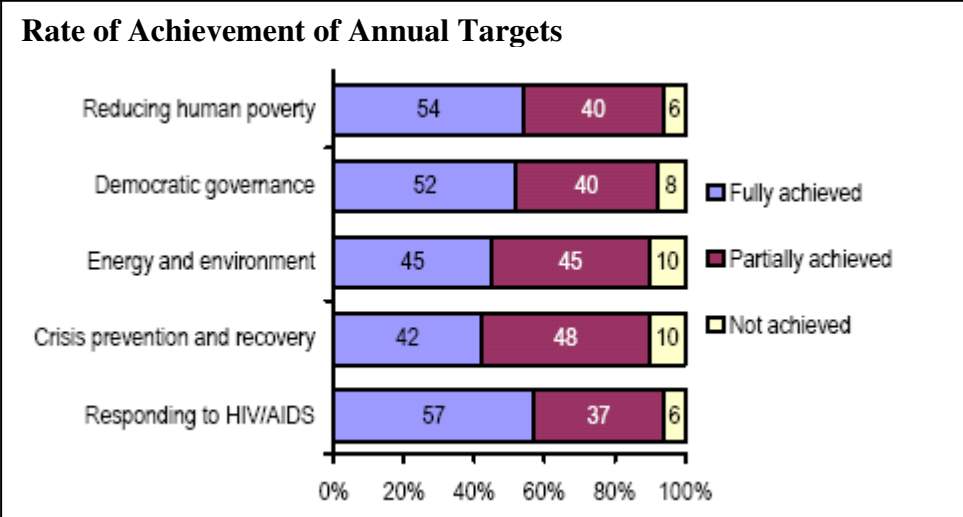
**MISION/ MANDATE**

UNXX is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.

**EFFECTIVENESS: RATIOS**

<u>Rate Achievement-Fully Achieved</u>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
Human Poverty	58	58	54
Democratic Governance	58	58	52
Energy and Environment	50	45	45
Crisis Prevention/ Recovery	42	42	42
HIV/AIDS	50	52	57
<b><u>OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS</u></b>	52	51	50

**EFFECTIVENESS: CHART AND FIGURES**



**EFFECTIVENESS: PEER UN ORGANIZATIONS**

THEME - AGENCY  
 HIV/AIDS – UNDP  
 HIV/AIDS – UNICEF  
 HIV/AIDS – UNAIDS  
 Others

**PERCEPTION SURVEY**

THEME - AGENCY  
 HIV/AIDS – UNDP  
 HIV/AIDS – UNICEF  
 HIV/AIDS – UNAIDS  
 Others

## 5. Perception Survey: A Complementary Approach

A perception survey approach could be considered as a compliment to the aforementioned objective approach, providing us with an additional tool to contrast the objective information with knowledge about the perception of UN organizations' performance. This section is divided into three parts: 1- description of the most important existing perception surveys used within the UN system, 2- analysis and criticism of this approach, and 3- description of our proposed complementary approach.

### 5.1. Similar Existing Approaches

- DFID – MEFF

In 2004, the British Department for International Development (DFID) implemented the first Multilateral Effectiveness Framework (MEFF), which is an initiative to evaluate the organizational effectiveness of 23 multilateral agencies, and to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses.

This framework was developed as an in-house research mechanism, meaning it only included the perceptions of DFID staff about UN organizations, based on personal and organizational points of view. As a result there is considerable chance for bias in the results. In addition, as DFID is a branch of one government, it is difficult to consider its framework as neutral as it should be.

Another problem with MEFF is that in their definition of effectiveness they merely evaluate 'being in place and availability of corporate management systems' in the UN, whereas they should also be assessing whether these management systems have been implemented properly and if they actually produced the agency goals.

- Others

Another example is the UN Organizational Integrity Survey. It's a survey done in 2004 by OIOS, as part of a process to develop an Organizational Integrity Initiative (OII)<sup>29</sup>, contracted with Deloitte & Touche LLP consulting agency, with the purpose of measuring both attitudes and perceptions about integrity among UN staff.

The survey was done internally with a population of 18,035 UN employees, and received a 33% response rate. The purpose was to survey the UN employees' perception about UN organizational integrity, consisting of factors such as Honesty, Professionalism, Equity, Fairness, etc. While this report is not exactly in line with the goal of our project, it still provides useful insight for further methodological development.

Another similar work is the Multilateral Organizations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). MOPAN is a network of nine donor countries (Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK) which jointly conducts an annual survey of multilateral partnership behaviors in developing countries. Their plan is to survey a

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.un.org/News/oss/sg/integritysurvey.pdf>

few multilateral organizations each year. In 2003 MOPAN published its pilot research done by the Norwegian 'Chr. Michelsen Institute'<sup>30</sup> which only focused on health programs sponsored by WHO, WB, AfDB, AsDB and IDB. Two years later, in 2005, MOPAN published its survey of the perceptions of multilateral organizations (World Bank, the UN Population Fund and UNAIDS) at the country level.

MOPAN does not aim to provide inter-agency comparisons<sup>31</sup>, but rather seeks to provide member founder agencies with a better understanding of the evaluated UN agencies, and create support for their decisions in front of their parliaments and public. Like MEFF, MOPAN is an in-house evaluation, which only gathers information and data from its member countries' diplomatic and civil staff. Another problem with MOPAN is its limited scope and slow pace. MOPAN's plan is to only cover 3-4 multilateral organizations in 8-10 countries each year.

## **5.2. Analysis and criticism of the Perception Survey Approach**

Conducting surveys have certain advantages – they can efficiently collect information from a large number of respondents with statistical techniques to determine validity, reliability, and statistical significance. Also surveys are flexible, cover a wide range of information, standardized so relatively free from several types of errors, relatively easy and cheap to administer.

However, there are also certain disadvantages for survey techniques, which include the dependency on participants' motivation, honesty, memory, and willingness to respond. Also even in random sample, the respondents are usually self-selected, potentially biased and may not answer honestly or with full information.

A few prominent criticism of the survey approach are listed below:

1. Methodology: Surveys present individual perception of the organization's competency and it is not a measure of its broader competency in reality. Surveys have the 'lag problem' or 'Inertia'. Most perceptions of people are a result of past behaviors of organizations and typically do not reflect an unbiased and accurate current status. Also, these surveys tend to evaluate the organizations PR ability rather than their real organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

2. Implementation: The problem that arises with implementation of the survey is simply access; more specifically, access to people. As public sector servants, UN staff's contact information should be readily available to the public, but in practice such lists are rarely easily accessible and the contact information of past staff members is even more difficult to find.

3. Definitions/Criteria: There is need for exact detailed definitions and criteria for designing the questionnaire and also for formulating the stoplight evaluation process. Such criteria would take time and furthermore, ensuring that each question in the survey is appropriate and relevant to each diverse agency, would be a time consuming task. It is a major challenge to compare agencies with considerable differences in their missions and goals; however, it has proven to be possible in other similar cases and studies.

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<sup>30</sup> [http://www.cmi.no/pdf/?file=/publications/2003/mopan\\_final\\_report\\_2003.pdf](http://www.cmi.no/pdf/?file=/publications/2003/mopan_final_report_2003.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.ifivatchnet.org/doc/MOPAN2005.pdf>, Pg: 3.

### 5.3. Our Perception Survey Approach

Different UN organizations have different perceived competency and success among public and among their cohorts. As mentioned earlier, our survey approach is a tool to evaluate this perceived success which, as a complement to the objective methodology, would provide insightful information regarding the performance of UN organizations. Consequently, UN agencies and member states could learn from potential differences between results of objective and subjective approaches and adjust accordingly to attain betterment.

Below is an analysis of our proposed perception survey approach, and suggestions for tackling some of the aforementioned problems of the approach:

- A questionnaire will be designed, compiled through advice from board members and a Technical Advisory Board (including experts in quantitative and qualitative analysis) and be made available both online and in hardcopy. The survey will consist of questions regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of UN Organizations. Answers for this section will be subjective and based on the perceptions of those taking the survey.
- A solution to the lack of access could be to have some level of support and agreement from each UN agency that we want to evaluate in advance. For staff members who have recently left or retired, data from associations like “Federation of Association of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS)”<sup>32</sup> could be used.
- There is need for proper incentive mechanisms, which needs further research.
- It can be assumed that most participants will possess knowledge of only a few organizations and not necessarily all the organizations asked about in the survey. This problem could be solved through statistical models - since different survey participants would know different organizations, this will enable us to cover a wide variety of organizations at the end. Also as our proposed survey is going to be conducted according to certain themes (like agencies with HIV-AIDS programs), participants would have better knowledge in their specific specialized theme.
- The perception survey might also encounter the problem of “Logrolling” which includes potential mutual support of the respondents to their friend organizations. This could be solved with a larger sample size and by ensuring a diverse body of respondents.
- The survey could be used in periodic cycles, for example each 1, 2 or 5 years.

In summary, a survey approach is very feasible, fast, and cheap compared to other qualitative approaches, hence the reason for other available rankings which also use this approach. From looking at the most famous available indexes comparing countries, it seems that they mostly use the same approaches with similar estimations. We are proposing complementing this approach with the ‘traffic light’ approach, in order to reduce the problems of both.

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<sup>32</sup> “[FAFICS] is a Federation of 21 member Associations of Former International Civil Servants of organizations and agencies of the United Nations System who were either recruited internationally or locally. The Federation was established twenty-five years ago and has offices at the UN Headquarters in New York and in Geneva.” It has membership and contact information of about 47,000 former UN staff which provides considerable sample size. <http://www.un.org/other/afics/whatisfafics.htm>



## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

As mentioned previously in the paper, in order to measure performance, effectiveness, and overall success of UN agencies a number of factors need to be addressed. A few of these factors include an enhanced common evaluation approach which allows to measure and compare the performance of UN agencies, improved skills and training methods of UN members and agencies' staff carrying out evaluations, and strengthening internal and external oversight institutions. However, due to the limited scope of our capstone project, we were able to focus on only one of the aforementioned factors, which is perhaps the most important one – the establishment of a common evaluation approach.

Below is a summary of the proposed recommendations presented throughout the study:

- 1) Establishing a common evaluation approach for measuring and comparing the performance of UN agencies, through a performance evaluation framework that primarily focuses on the results. The steps required for this are:
  - Step 1: Quantitative and qualitative establishments of targets and related outcomes.
  - Step 2: Quantitative and qualitative measure of actual progress, which consider
    - Ratio actual progress related to intended targets
    - Rating categories or rating colors (“Traffic lights”)
    - Ratio of achievements
  - Step 3: Used quantitative and qualitative evaluation and lessons learned to establish targets for the next period.
  - Step 4: Provide a unified and user-friendly document presenting steps 1 to 3. That is, explicit linkage between outcomes with targets, as well as targets with actual progress, and future targets.
- 2) Establishing an *Independent Coordinating Body*. This independent body need not be a new one. Given that there already exists so many oversight entities within the UN system, it is not pragmatic nor is it feasible to establish a new oversight body. Rather, it is our suggestion that an already existing body (perhaps the JIU<sup>33</sup>) be enhanced to perform the tasks of an overall coordinating body (the responsibilities for this body are listed below). For practical reasons it could be proposed that this independent body should be placed under the CEB (UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination). By doing this, the independent body would not be perceived adversely by the UN agencies, and at the same time there would be a clear framework of accountability (See Graph 2 below).

The coordination body will be responsible for:

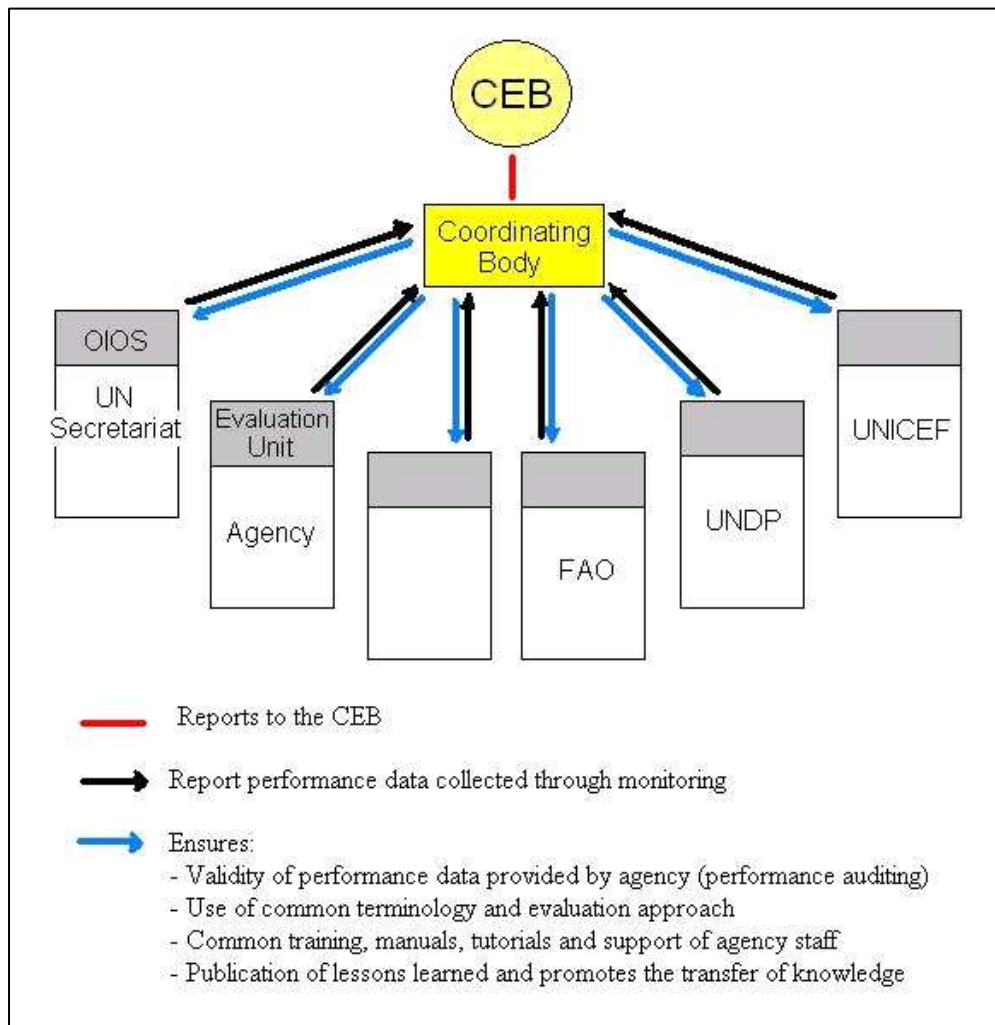
- Improving competency of UN staff members carrying out evaluations, and ensuring consistency and uniformity, through 1- Mandating the usage of common terminology and language in evaluations approaches used by all agencies 2- Coordinated training sessions 3- Coordinated evaluation manuals and tutorials 4- Publication of lessons learned and best evaluation practices promoting the transfer of knowledge.

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<sup>33</sup> Our reason for choosing JIU as the institution that can be enhanced is because the functions and responsibilities of this unit seem to be the most closely identified with our proposed independent coordinating body.

- Adapting an easy, clear and concise way of measuring effectiveness – more precisely, knowing which agency, department or division is meeting its intended targets. Although most UN agencies have adopted some form of the results based approach, there are very few that actually abide by the logical framework system, which is an origin of the results based approach. Programming documents of most organizations at present do not use clear and concise measures of comparing actual outcomes to targeted outcomes. This needs to be done in order to show the results achieved. Also, there needs to be yearly comparison of the achievements in order to track improvement.
- Development of a strengthened central database system to integrate consistent information on program performance and effectiveness of UN agencies. The independent body will validate, collect and present the information on the central database, and monitor the overall database system. [Section 4 illustrates the central database.]

**Graph 2: Independent Coordinating Body**



- 3) Use a subjective survey methodology providing the perception of professionals active in the respective fields. This will complement the aforementioned objective methodology.

- 4) The US mission, with the help of other member states, should ensure that the UN General Assembly ratifies the new coordinated evaluation to be mandatory, and also that each UN agency's governing body or governing council ratifies the same obligations for the respective agencies. The goal is to mandate all UN agencies to honor the central evaluation coordination body.

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### Electronic Resources:

Charity Navigator

[www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org)

Committee for Programme and Coordination

<http://www.un.org/ga/cpc/>

GuideStar

[www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

The Joint Inspection Unit

<http://www.unjiu.org/en/reform.htm>

UN Evaluation Group

<http://www.uneval.org/uneval>

-United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services

<http://www.un.org/depts/oios/>

## Annex 1: Outcomes and Performance Indicators

Outcomes	Performance Indicators
1. Enhanced common evaluation approach to measure and compare systematically the performance of UN agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>*Publication of action plans or standards agreed to establish a common performance measurement framework to evaluate and monitor UN agencies performance.</i></li> <li><i>*Media coverage of improvements made to the UN evaluation system.</i></li> <li><i>* Publication of action plans or standards agreed to strengthen the central database system and integrate consistent information.</i></li> </ul>
2. Improved evaluation skills of UN members and agencies' staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>* Number of consistent logical frameworks with feasible objectives.</i></li> <li><i>* Number of coordinated training sessions</i></li> <li><i>*Number of participating agencies and staff that successfully achieve the training's goals.</i></li> <li><i>* Publication of coordinated evaluation manuals, tutorials and glossary.</i></li> </ul>
3. Strengthen internal and external oversight institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>* Publication of action plans or standards agreed to create more independent and autonomous oversight institutions, and enhance reporting formats and procedures.</i></li> <li><i>* Positive assessments of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee about OIOS' work and independence.</i></li> <li><i>*Media coverage of improvements made to the UN oversight institutions.</i></li> <li><i>* Increase in the perception about the competency, independency and autonomy of UN oversight institutions.</i></li> </ul>
4. Increased use of enhanced evaluation system to develop the required results-based evaluations documents, action plans and recommendations to improve the performance of their agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>*Publication of performance assessments and action-oriented recommendations based in the new approach to measure and improve performance of UN agencies.</i></li> <li><i>* Publication of self-diagnostic assessments or self-evaluations by programme and senior managers.</i></li> <li><i>* References of preliminary assessments in the Strategic Frameworks.</i></li> <li><i>* Increased use of the central database.</i></li> <li><i>* Increase in the perception about the usefulness of the common evaluation framework designed.</i></li> <li><i>* Increase in the perception about the effectiveness of UN agencies.</i></li> </ul>

**Annex 2: Sample of UN Organizations**

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Program
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

## Consultant Members' Small Bios

**Amir Farmanesh** was born in 1979 received a B.S. degree in Materials Engineering from Iran University of Science and Technology (2002) and earned several diplomas - in subjects ranging from Conflict Resolution and Security Studies to project management and Social Entrepreneurship - along the way. He also graduated from Asia-Pacific Leadership Program with East-West Center in University of Hawaii. Among the highlights of his experience are serving as an advisor to the Mayor of Tehran and Director of Mayor's Youth Advisory Group (2002-2003); acting as Iran National NGO Focal Point for UN IYV 2001; working for the UNEP-ROAP (United Nations Environment Program - Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific) in Bangkok, Thailand. Mr. Farmanesh also has been involved in the UN (UNEP – UN-Habitat) Governing Councils and was a member of the UNEP Youth Advisory Council. He also provides Youth Advisory role for Managing Board of Conference of NGOs with Consultative Status with the UN and he co-wrote a report published by UN about Youth participation in UN Millennium Development Goals. He is currently studying for a Joint Degree in MPA and M.A. in International Relations in Syracuse University, Maxwell School with Full scholarship from World Bank. He will start his PhD in Policy Studies at the University of Maryland, School of Public Policy in Fall 2006. More information: [www.farmanesh.ir](http://www.farmanesh.ir) Contact: [farmanes@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:farmanes@maxwell.syr.edu)

**Tami Hasegawa** was born in Peru. She completed her undergraduate studies in Economics from the Universidad del Pacifico and received the AFP-Union Vida Excellence Award 2001, which is provided to the best students of Economics at the National level. She has experience as a Research Analyst and Consultant of public sector agencies and, international and civil society organizations. She has joined several organizations in developing countries, especially from Latin America, to develop evaluation tools to improve the transparency of public policies. Consultant for the Peruvian Ministry of Education: “Evaluation of the Ministry of Education Program on Technology Implementation for Public Schools: HUASCARAN”, and for the IADB: “The Peruvian Budget System and its Effects in the IADB Operation Process”. She has coordinated the “National Program of Public Investment Project Evaluation”, addressed to Peruvian Regional Governments and financed by USAID. In addition, she was Chief of the Projects' Evaluation Unit in 2004 of a Peruvian non-profit organization that was recognized by the IADB for promoting youth's development. Currently, she is an MPA candidate at Maxwell School, Graduate Assistant of the Department of Public Administration and, Research Associate at the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs. Contact: [tami.hasegawa@gmail.com](mailto:tami.hasegawa@gmail.com), [pthasega@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:pthasega@maxwell.syr.edu).

**Ariel Ortiz Bobea** was born and raised in the Dominican Republic and holds dual Dominican-Italian citizenship. He started his academic training in life sciences and mathematics at the University of Paris XI in France and then entered the French “Grandes Écoles” system where he obtained his graduate Engineering degree at the *Institut national agronomique Paris-Grignon (INA P-G)*, the agricultural and life science school of ParisTech. For his master's thesis in agricultural development he conducted together with a colleague, a general agro-economic diagnosis of a rural area in Kaffa Zone, Ethiopia, that led to development policy and project proposals to local authorities. Before coming to Syracuse he worked as a development consultant



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