



Request for Expressions of Interest

UNEG Sub-Working Group on Evaluating Policy Influence - Methodology Working Group

Short-Term Consultant for the Stock-taking exercise on approaches of UN agencies to monitoring and evaluation of policy influence interventions

Background

The [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\)](#) is an interagency professional network that brings together the evaluation units of the UN system, including UN departments, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and affiliated organizations. It aims to promote, strengthen and advocate for a robust, influential, independent, innovative, and credible evaluation function throughout the UN system to support decision-making, accountability and learning.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides support to address global environment concerns. The [GEF Independent Evaluation Office \(GEF IEO\)](#) has a central role in ensuring independent evaluation function within the GEF. GEF IEO is a member of UNEG.

The UNEG Sub-Working Group on Evaluating Policy Influence - Methodology Working Group (hereinafter SWG-EPI) was initially established in June 2018 as an interest group to: i) explore the contemporary complexities and challenges for evaluating interventions aimed at influencing policy processes; and ii) exchange experiences on the different theories, methods and approaches to evaluate them.

The SWG-EPI was formalized in June 2020 at the UNEG Annual General Meeting. Building on the discussions held in the previous years, it seeks to develop a guiding framework to assist UNEG members and other interested stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating policy influence interventions, with a view to strengthening policy support to Member States.

Policy influence interventions are increasingly regarded as a means of promoting sustainable development. However, evaluating these interventions is not straightforward since policy process is a complex ecosystem. There are many limitations to ascertain the contributions of policy influence interventions to policy changes. Some challenges are: i) diversity of stakeholders simultaneously making or influencing policies at many levels and spheres; ii) existence of latent variables and vested interests that cannot always be mapped; iii) policy process' stages are very fluid and not always sequential; iv) links between cause and effect are often unpredictable, and it is not always possible to infer causality between activities and planned outcomes; v) the meaning of success can vary from one stakeholder to another; and vi) policy changes might not occur within the timeframe of the intervention being evaluated.

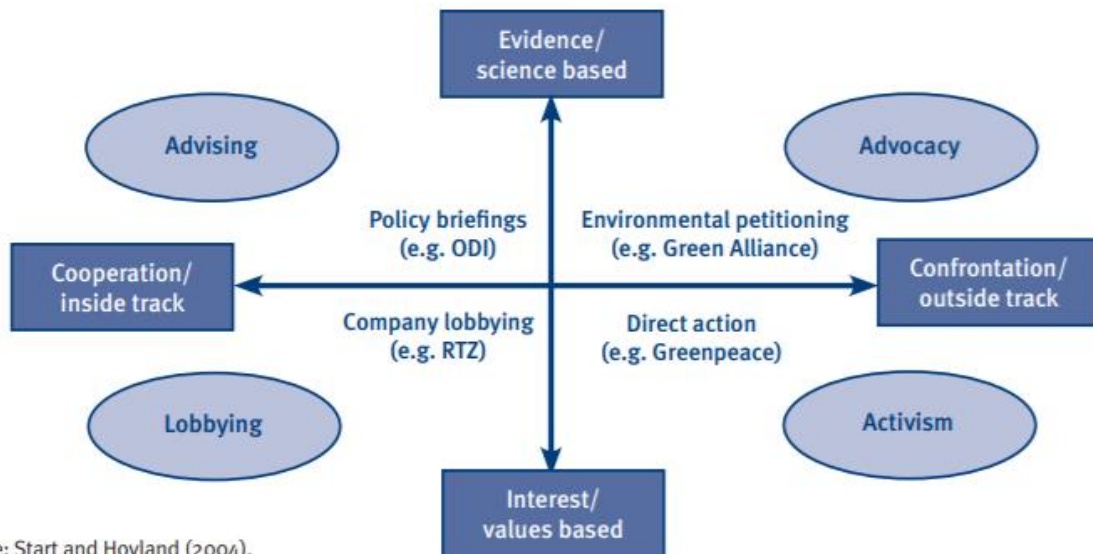
Although evaluating policy influence is neither a new nor an unexplored area, the challenges comprised in this type of evaluation transform overtime. Within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, interventions aimed at strengthening national policies and policy coherence are increasing and becoming more complex. Therefore, UNEG members should be ready to address the emerging demand for evaluating policy influence interventions.

In this context, the SWG-EPI is seeking a qualified and experienced consultant to conduct a stocktaking study on the UN's approaches to monitoring and evaluation of policy influence interventions.

Key definitions

For the purpose of these terms of reference, policy influence is defined as “ an intervention intended to catalyze, stimulate or otherwise seed some form of change through different forms of persuasion” (Start and Hovland, 2004). Policy influence can be done in different forms (e.g. advising, advocacy and activism) through different approaches (e.g. communication, research and community engagement) and target different outcomes (e.g. policy change, behavioral change and multi-stakeholder coordination). It can be either formal or informal and involve either single actors or complex networks. Figure 1 presents typology of policy influence interventions proposed by Start and Hovland.

Figure 1. Policy influence interventions



Source: Start and Hovland (2004).

Purpose and scope of the stocktaking study

The study has a threefold purpose of: i) taking stock of different definitions/understandings of policy support and types of policy influence interventions within the UN system in order to find a common ground; ii) reviewing existing frameworks, tools and methods for monitoring and evaluating these interventions across the UN system; iii) identifying good practices, relevant methods and areas to improve the UN system's approach to monitoring and evaluating policy influence interventions, thus contributing to strengthening the UN system's policy support to Member States.

Within this purpose, the study will examine a sample of guidelines and evaluation-related documents produced by UNEG member agencies during the period January 2016 – July 2021; i.e. from the advent of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to date. The main focus will be on interventions in the top two quadrants of Figure 1 (advising and advocacy).

The final report will highlight existing good practices, gaps, and entry points for improving monitoring and evaluation of policy influence interventions in view of the emerging demand triggered by the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Reform.

Tasks and responsibilities

The consultant will be responsible for designing and conducting the stocktaking study, and for presenting its results in a structured manner. In particular, the consultant will:

- With the support of UNEG members, compile existing corporate policies and guidance on policy support/policy influence.
- With the support of UNEG members, compile evaluation-related documents of policy influence interventions such as evaluation guidelines, concept notes, evaluability assessments, terms of reference and reports.
- With the support of UNEG members, identify frameworks, evaluation methods and other evaluation-related tools with aim of highlighting good practices.
- Survey UNEG members to identify overall challenges and limitations to evaluate policy influence interventions, as well as good practices and areas for improvement.
- Undertake a structured and systematic analysis of the data collected.
- Deliver intermediate presentations to the SWG-EPI, as required.
- Draft a report highlighting findings, conclusions and recommendations, with the outline to be defined in collaboration with the SWG-EPI.
- Develop a model theory of change that could be adapted to specific circumstances, and according to the policy influence interventions of each agency.
- Present the final report to the Methodology Working Group for discussion and validation.

The study should be conducted in accordance with the [United Nations Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), and the [UNEG Ethical Guideline for Evaluation](#).

Deliverables and timeline

Deliverable	Deadline	No. of days
Inception report, including research questions; detailed methodology; annotated bibliography; an initial list of stakeholders to interview; tools for data collection; and framework for data analysis.	24 September 2021	5
Data collection and analysis, including documentary review, key informant interviews and online survey.	1 November	25

Draft report for SWG-EPI internal review (approximately 30 pages without appendices and annexes)	15 November	10
Draft final report for submission to UNEG	3 December	5
Final report	20 December	5

Compensation, payments, and other arrangements.

The consultancy is for maximum 50 days to be undertaken from September 10, 2021 to January 31, 2022. The consultancy is home-based and does not include travel. The daily rate will be determined following the World Bank rules and procedures. The consultancy is home-based, and no travel is anticipated. However, in case such travel is required, it would be undertaken following the World Bank rules and procedures for such travel. All contracts with the GEFIEO are considered World Bank contracts.

Expected qualifications, experience, and skills

- Master's degree or higher in Political Science, Public Policy, Law, Political Economy, or any other discipline relevant to this study.
- At least 10 years of experience in conducting research and/or evaluation of policy influence interventions, including in an international setting. Publications on the topics relevant to monitoring and/or evaluation of policy influence (published reports, guidelines, toolkits, papers, etc.) is a strong asset.
- Demonstrated experience in leading participatory researches and/or evaluations, particularly remotely.
- Sound understanding of the functioning of UN agencies and the UN system
- Strong qualitative research skills.
- Demonstrated analytical skills and ability to write clear and concise reports.
- Working knowledge of English. Knowledge of one of other UN official languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish or Russian) is an asset.

Submission requirements

Interested consultants are hereby invited to submit a CV and a cover letter expressing how their work experience fits the qualifications above in English, to gefevaluation@thegef.org with "UNEG - Stocktaking on M&E of Policy Influence" in the subject line. The application deadline is August 16, 2021.

Annex I. Insights from the previous work of the UNEG Sub-Working Group on Evaluating Policy Influence - Methodology Working Group

Member Agencies that participate in the Sub-Working group exchanged experiences in evaluating policy influence and assembled a resource library on the topic. Below is the summary of the insights and resources collected.

Challenges identified:

1. On the 'WHAT' - Defining policy support

Challenges concern the lack of clarity on what is support to policymaking, and how it can be distinguished within the policy process. It also concerned the difficulties in expanding the results framework to include the 'policy for what' question as in the case of interventions supporting market development, including policy actors.

2. On the 'WHERE' - Understanding the context

Challenges concern the understanding of the evolving policy context and actors involved in particular stage of the policy process, and the existence of contradicting policies and support provided by different actors related to the same subject area.

data or the establishment of M&E systems within the changing context/policy environment. Evaluators must also be careful to understanding the evaluability of specific aspects of the policy support; being realistic about the expected outcome of the support and the feasibility of evaluating it (e.g. realistic Theory of Change)

Concerning the contribution and attributions tracking, it was noted that the more actors and variables targeting/involved in the same outcome, the harder is to assess contribution and attribution of the supported provided. Results and variables are often not tangible; hard to identify counter-factual.

Possible solutions:

1. To better define policy support

Organisations should focus on identifying the type and goal of the policy support as well as the stage of the policy process to which the support is provided. They should also tailor the analysis to the type of policy support evaluated.

Participants also invited to draw a line of accountability for the policy support evaluated (e.g. there are examples when it is not possible to attribute particular contributions/results to a particular event/project/action); and to specify carefully the results framework so that both direct and indirect results can be captured using appropriate mixed-methods data collection approaches (cf. work on this done by Consultative Group to Assist the Poor supporting measurement of improved financial inclusion systems).

2. To better understand the context

It is interesting to involve evaluators who are not only subject experts but also have a solid knowledge of political economy within particular country. A political economy analysis and policy influence mapping (key players, key influencers, observed and unobserved variables, other complementary and contradicting policies, etc.) can also be conducted.

Resource library assembled by the Sub-Working group:

Category	Resources
<p>On policy influence and complexity</p>	<p>Tsui, J.; Hearn, S.; Young, J. (2014). Monitoring and evaluation of policy influence and advocacy. ODI, Working paper 395 https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8928.pdf</p> <p>Bridging frameworkers and circlers: new ways of thinking about policy and evidence? (Politics & Ideas, 2015) http://politicsandideas.org/bridging-frameworkers-and-circlers-new-ways-of-thinking-about-policy-and-evidence/</p> <p>"Frameworkers" and "Circlers". Exploring Assumptions in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (Neufeldt, 2007) https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/71735708.pdf</p> <p>Mendizabal, E. Research uptake, what is it and can it be measured? On Think Tanks, 2013. https://onthinktanks.org/articles/research-uptake-what-is-it-and-can-it-be-measured/</p> <p>Learners, practitioners and teachers, a handbook on monitoring, evaluating and managing knowledge for policy influence https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/M%20Sociedad%20Civil,%20Learners,%20practitioners%20and%20teachers.%202010.pdf</p>
<p>On methods</p>	<p>Callahan, S. (2006). Evaluating soft stuff. Anecdote. http://www.anecdote.com/2006/04/evaluating-soft-stuff/</p> <p>Coffman, J. & Reed, E. Unique Methods in Advocacy Evaluation. http://www.pointk.org/resources/files/Unique_Methods_Brief.pdf</p> <p>Fernández Labbé, J. How to analyze the results of policy influencing: lessons from a new method under construction. Politics & Ideas, 2014. http://politicsandideas.org/how-to-analyze-the-results-of-policy-influencing-lessons-from-a-new-method-under-construction/</p> <p>Context Matters Framework. Politics & Ideas and INASP. http://cm.politicsandideas.org/homepage</p> <p>Davies, R. (1998). An evolutionary approach to facilitating organisational learning: an experiment by the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh, Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal, 16:3, 243-250. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14615517.1998.10590213</p> <p>Echt, L. & Hayter, E. (2018). Context Matters Framework case study. Supporting organizational change to improve the use of evidence in environmental protection in Ghana. P&I and INASP. https://www.inasp.info/sites/default/files/2018-09/CMF-Case-Study-Ghana-DIGITAL%5BCompressed%5D.pdf</p>

Deprez, S. (2013). The use of Outcome Mapping in value-chain development programmes. The case of Vredeseilanden (VECO). Outcome Mapping ideas No. 7 April 2013.

Gold, J.; Wilson-Grau, R.; Fisher, S.; Cases in outcome harvesting: ten pilot experiences identify new learning from multi-stakeholder projects to improve results. (*English*). Washington, DC: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/419021468330946583/pdf/901720WP0Box380n0Outcome0Harvesting.pdf>

Outcome Mapping: Considering Complexity, Relationships, and Context in M&E for Social Change. Kathrine Haugh's Blog, November 2015.

<http://katherinehaugh.com/outcome-mapping-considering-complexity-relationships-and-context-in-me-for-social-change/>

Rapid outcome mapping approach and project, ODI

<https://www.odi.org/blogs/5850-rapid-outcome-mapping-approach-and-project-management-policy-change>

Method-Driven Questions or Question-Driven

http://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting

Mayne, J. (2008) Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect. ILAC Brief 16 p.4. https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/70124/ILAC_Brief16_Contribution_Analysis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Young, J., Shaxson, L., Jones, H., Hearn, S., Datta, A., and Cassidy, C., (2014). *ROMA: a guide to policy engagement and influence*, Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

<http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9011.pdf>

Evaluating BCURE with realist evaluation <https://www.itad.com/knowledge-and-resources/bcure/>

Realist Impact Evaluation <https://www.odi.org/publications/8716-realist-impact-evaluation-introduction>

Communication, monitoring, evaluating and learning toolkit https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/long-form-downloads/odi_rapid_mel_toolkit_201801.pdf

Outcome harvesting community of practice : <https://outcomeharvesting.net/>

Outcome Mapping Learning Community.A LOT of OM and OH resources here!
<https://www.outcomemapping.ca/>

Better evaluation on outcome harvesting

https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting

	<p>Cases in Outcome Harvesting : Ten Pilot Experiences Identify New Learning from Multi-Stakeholder Projects to Improve Results https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20015</p> <p>Outcome-Based Learning Field Guide : Tools to Harvest and Monitor Outcomes and Systematically Learn from Complex Projects https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20006</p>
<p>On learning</p>	<p>Guijt, I: Exploding the Myth of Incompatibility between Accountability and Learning. At Ubels, J. et al (2010). Capacity development in practice – Improving on Results. SNV. https://www.academia.edu/1452140/Accountability_and_Learning</p> <p>Garvin, D.; Edmondson, A.; Gino, F. Is Yours a Learning Organization? Harvard Business Review. March 2008. https://hbr.org/2008/03/is-yours-a-learning-organization?referral=03758&cm_vc=rr_item_page.top_right</p> <p>Weyrauch, Richards and D’Agostino, 2011, Learners, practitioners and teachers. Handbook on monitoring, evaluating and managing knowledge for policy influence https://www.cippec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/1787.pdf</p>
<p>On the influence of evaluations</p>	<p>CIPPEC (2015). Lessons learned and challenges in the Policy influence potential of impact evaluations in Latin America. http://www.vippal.cippec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/TT-Series-4_Lessons-learned_3.pdf</p>