

# 2022 Annual Organizational Survey Report on the Use of Evaluations in UN-Habitat



June 2023



UN-HABITAT

## 2022 Annual Organizational Survey Report on the Use of Evaluations in UN-Habitat

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Produced by the Independent Evaluation Unit

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### Disclaimer

The Annual Organizational Survey Report on use the use of evaluations in UN-Habitat was prepared by Dr Herieth Khatib Kamote, an independent consultant, on behalf of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU). The designations employed and the presentation of the material in the report do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part UN-Habitat. Excerpts may be reproduced without authorization on condition that the sources are indicated.

### Acknowledgement

The IEU would like to thank all those who participated, shared their thoughts and suggestions in the survey. Your feedback was important and hopefully the survey results will be used to strengthen the evaluation function and use of evaluation in UN-Habitat.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>ERP</b>	External Relations and Partnership Branch
<b>IEU</b>	Independent Evaluation Unit
<b>JIU</b>	Joint Inspection Unit
<b>MACS</b>	Management Advisory Services and Compliance Division
<b>OED</b>	Office of Executive Director
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OIOS</b>	Office of Internal Oversight Services
<b>PDB</b>	Programme Development Branch
<b>ROAF</b>	Regional Office for Africa
<b>ROAS</b>	Regional Office for Arab States
<b>ROAP</b>	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
<b>SPMB</b>	Strategic Planning and Monitoring Branch
<b>TOC</b>	Theory of change
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UPB</b>	Urban Planning Branch

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Since 2012, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) has institutionalized annual organization evaluation surveys on the use of evaluations to measure perceptions of UN-Habitat staff on the use of evaluations. This annual survey report is the eleventh in a series. The reports have been used to promote the use of evaluations as a basis for accountability, to enhance learning and contribute to the development effectiveness of UN-Habitat.

The objectives of the 2022 annual organizational survey were to understand how UN-Habitat evaluations are used, to identify factors that constrain their use, and to provide feedback and suggestions on how their use could be improved. The survey report is structured along the sections of introduction, objectives of the survey, approach and methodology, the survey findings, conclusions and recommendations aimed at improving the use of evaluations in UN-Habitat. The target audience of the survey results is the respondents to the survey, the staff of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) and UN-Habitat Management.

### Approach and methodology

The online survey questionnaire was designed with 15 questions, having both quantitative (12 questions) and qualitative (3 questions). The questionnaire was sent to 168 UN-Habitat staff members in January 2023. The survey was administered by UN-Habitat. Sixty-four (64) respondents completed the questionnaire. Raw data were provided by the IEU to the consultant, Dr Herieth Khatib Kamote, who carried out data analysis and prepared this report. This report contains the survey results which includes findings, suggestions from respondents, and the consultant's recommendations on how the use of evaluations in UN-Habitat could be improved.

### Key survey findings

The survey report highlights areas of strengths and weaknesses of UN-Habitat's evaluation findings. Key messages from respondents include the following:

- **56 per cent** of the respondents indicated evaluations reports were easily accessible and 44 per cent were not.
- **75 per cent** of respondents had not read or been briefed on evaluation reports.
- **14 per cent** of respondents think evaluation reports are considered by senior management, and 26 per cent are not sure.
- **32 per cent** of respondents indicated that evaluations are used to improve new designs and ongoing projects.

Constraints highlighted by respondents that hinder better use of UN-Habitat's evaluations include time availability, limited resources, lack of commitment by senior management, lack of procedures and tools, inadequate training and the lack of an evaluation culture.

### Suggestions to improve evaluation use

Respondents gave 45 suggestions that could improve the use of evaluations, including users and key stakeholders to be involved and consulted throughout the evaluation process; support of senior decision makers being a key need of a senior manager's commitment to implement evaluation recommendations; improving sharing of evaluation findings to enable organizational learning; the Evaluation Unit to be more independent, resourceful

and fit-for-purpose; building internal evaluation capacity; updating the website to include evaluation information; better communication on evaluations; regular periodical briefing on evaluation activities; innovative ways of sharing information (briefs, videos, newsletters, etc), and making evaluations more attractive to read.

## Recommendations

Based on the survey results and suggestions by respondents, 11 recommendations were crafted by the consultant. They are summarized as follows:

1. Prioritize evaluations based on agreed criteria.
2. Invest in the evaluation function and support of the senior management is key.
3. Involve and consult evaluation users and key stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.
4. Evaluators need to ensure that recommendations are relevant and implementable.
5. Develop an evaluation communication strategy.
6. Repackage evaluation knowledge based on user needs.
7. Increasing the level of ownership of the evaluation findings and recommendations.
8. Meetings and workshops to be encouraged to facilitate the sharing of knowledge gained from evaluations.
9. Management responses and follow-up to implementation of recommendations should be a priority monitored by UN-Habitat's management.
10. Basic web-based and in-person evaluation training should be offered.
11. Repository of findings, recommendations and lessons learned to be shared with staff members.

## 1. Introduction

The value of evaluation depends on its use (UNEG 2012). According to Patton (1997), evaluations are done with the intention of being used. However, in reality, a large share of evaluations is not used or not used enough (Laubli Laud and Magne 2014).

Since 2012, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) has institutionalized annual organizational evaluation surveys on the use of evaluations, to measure perceptions of UN-Habitat staff on the use of the evaluations. This annual survey report is the eleventh in a series. The reports have been used to promote the use of evaluations as a basis for accountability, to enhance learning and contribute to the development effectiveness of UN-Habitat.

This report represents the results from the 2022 Annual Organizational Survey on the use of evaluation in UN-Habitat. The online survey questionnaire, which had 15 questions, 12 of them quantitative and 3 qualitative) were sent to 168 UN-Habitat staff members in January 2023. Of these respondents, 64 completed the questionnaire. This report contains an analysis of the survey of the results, suggestions and recommendations to improve the use of evaluations in UN-Habitat.

The survey report is structured along the sections of introduction, objectives of the survey, approach and methodology, the survey findings, conclusions and recommendations aimed at improving the use of evaluations in UN-Habitat. The target audience of the survey results is the survey respondents, the Evaluation Unit staff and UN-Habitat management.

## 2. Objectives of the survey

According to UNEG Norms and Standards of evaluation 2016, the purposes and objectives of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning. The evaluation aims to understand why—and to what extent—intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking, development and organizational effectiveness.

The objective of the survey was to understand how UN-Habitat evaluations are used, to identify factors that constrain evaluation use, and to provide feedback and suggestions on how the use of UN-Habitat evaluations could be improved.

## 3. Concept of evaluation use and utilization

The concept of evaluation use should be understood to support discussion on the findings. According to Alkin (2005),

“Evaluation use, or evaluation utilization, occurs when evaluation information in the form of findings, or evaluation practice, has [an] influence on the actions or thoughts of stakeholders.”

However, some researchers disagree about the specific meanings of “use” and “utilization.” Some “believe that the term ‘use’ implies direct use of evaluation findings”, in opposition to utilization, which refers to “a dynamic process that occurs over time” (Patton, 2008, p. 107 in Alkhalaf 2007). In this survey report, evaluation use will mean how UN-Habitat uses the information derived from the evaluation results, lessons learned and evaluation recommendations made.

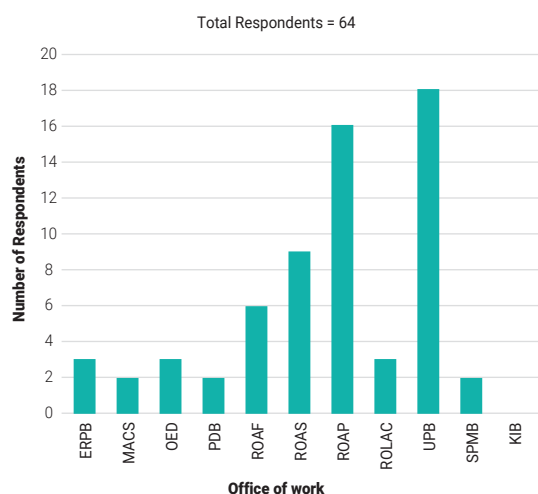
## 4. Survey findings

### QUESTION 1 Office of work

Respondents were asked to specify in which office they work. The question is intended to understand how different UN-Habitat offices use evaluation products and services. Chart 1 shows the number of respondents from each office.

From the responses received, the Urban Practices Branch (UPB) has the highest number of respondents to the questionnaire, 18 respondents (18 per cent); followed by the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), 16 respondents (25 per cent), followed by the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAP), 9 respondents (14 per cent). The Knowledge and Innovation Branch (KIB) did not respond to the organizational questionnaire. This is remarkable because evaluations contribute to knowledge and innovations for which the branch is responsible. So, the branch was expected to lead in responding to such survey.

**Chart 1: Respondents by work office**

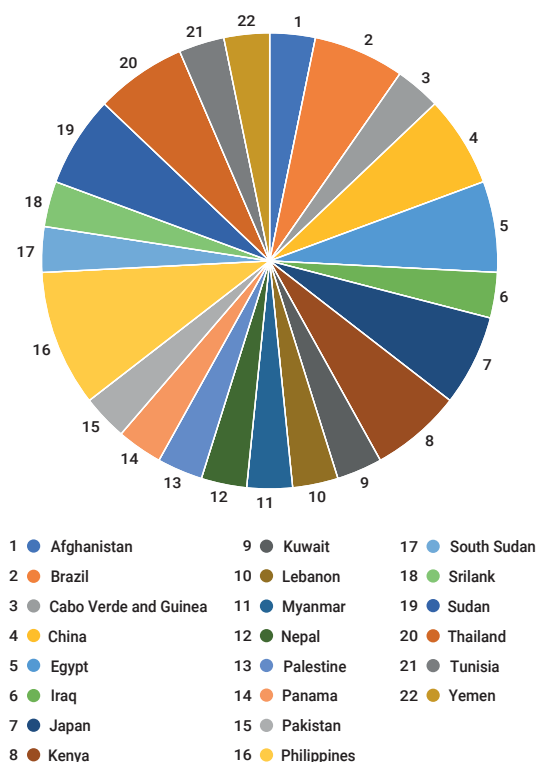


### QUESTION 2 The country office

Question 2 asked staff to specify the country in which they are working; 31 of 64 respondents responded to this question. Chart 2 shows respondents by country of work.

Although UN-Habitat works in over 90 countries,<sup>1</sup> only staff working in 22 countries responded to this question. Philippines had the highest number of respondents (3); followed by Brazil, China, Kenya and Thailand with 2 respondents each. The remainder countries had one responding staff member. Chart 2, shows respondents by country of work.

**Chart 2: Shows respondents by country of work**



1 Such on internet : In how many countries does UN-Habitat work - Search (bing.com)



### QUESTION 3 Duty stations of respondents

Question 3 asked respondents to specify their duty stations. This question attracted 64 respondents from 35 duty stations. Although in question 2, only two responded as working in Kenya, in question 3 there were 27 respondents (42 per cent) stating their duty station as Nairobi. It means most staff who said their duty station is Nairobi did not respond to the question regarding the country in which they work.

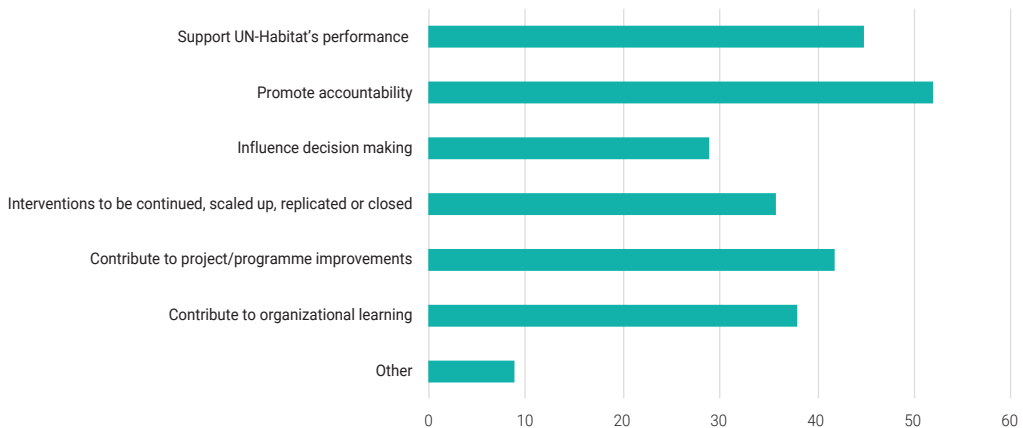
### QUESTION 4 Reasons for conducting evaluations in UN-Habitat

Question 4, asked staff why evaluations are conducted in UN-Habitat, and asked them to select what they thought were the most important reasons, among the 6 suggested options. Chart 3 indicates key reasons for conducting evaluations from staff members' perspectives.

From Chart 3, promoting accountability to UN-Habitat's stakeholders including donors, governing bodies and New Urban Agenda partners was the most selected reason (52 times). It was followed by supporting UN-Habitat's performance and effectiveness in terms of assessing and reporting the results the organization achieves (selected 45 times). Contributing to project and programme improvements was selected 42 times and contribution to organizational learning 38 times. Evaluations influencing decision-making was selected 29 times.

According to UNEG Norms and Standards of Evaluation, 2016, the purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning; and to contribute to evidence-based decision-making. Answers to this question confirm that respondents understand the key reasons for conducting evaluations in the context of contributing to the effectiveness of UN-Habitat.

**Chart 3: Reasons for conducting evaluation in UN-Habitat**



## QUESTION 5

### Involvement in different evaluation activities

Question 5 asked the kind of evaluation-related activities in which respondents were involved in 2022. They were directed to tick all options that apply from the eight options. Chart 4 shows how respondents were involved.

The most frequently selected activity was the review of project proposals in pre-PRC/PRC meetings (39 selections). This selection was followed by respondents being involved in facilitating the evaluation process by providing the required information on evaluation or logistics (28 selections); followed by both providing inputs to follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations (23 selections) and being involved in the evaluation process by being interviewed or consulted (23 selections). The least selected option was the participating in training workshops (13 selections).

From the literature, active and meaningful involvement of key stakeholders in the design, management, conduct and follow-up on evaluation increases the use of evaluations.<sup>2</sup> UNEG Standard 4.6 on stakeholder engagement emphasizes inclusiveness and diverse stakeholder engagement in the planning, design, conduct and follow-up on evaluations being critical to ensure ownership, relevance, credibility and the use of evaluation. Also, Norm 2 on Utility,

emphasizes clear intention to use evaluation results when commissioning evaluations and that evaluations should be used to contribute beyond the organization by generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders.

## QUESTION 6:

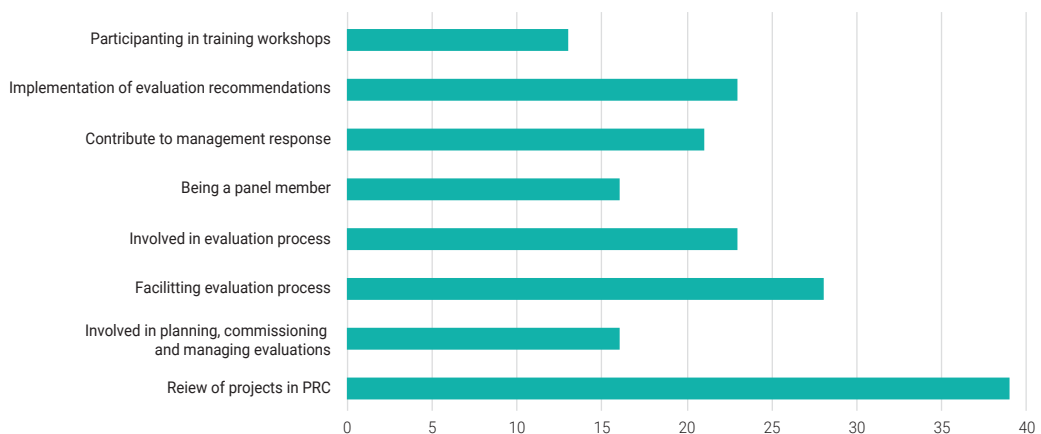
### Accessibility of evaluation reports

Question 6 asked respondents whether UN-Habitat evaluation reports are effectively disseminated and accessible. These reports are available on [www.unhabitat.org/evaluation](http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluation). The question was an attempt to determine if the mechanism of sharing the reports, externally and internally, through the UN-Habitat evaluation website and Habnet were effective.

From Chart 5, of 64 respondents, 36 of them (56 per cent) indicated that evaluation reports are effectively disseminated and accessible; 28 respondents (44 per cent) indicated they are not. The use of evaluation is facilitated through the disclosure and dissemination of evaluation reports and other evaluation products.

The most common way to disseminate evaluation reports is through websites, externally and internally. According to UNEG standard 1.5., this requirement is fundamental to fulfilling evaluations' accountability purpose. In addition, paragraph 62 of the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy 2013, specifies that all evaluations

**Chart 4: Respondents' involvement in different evaluation activities**

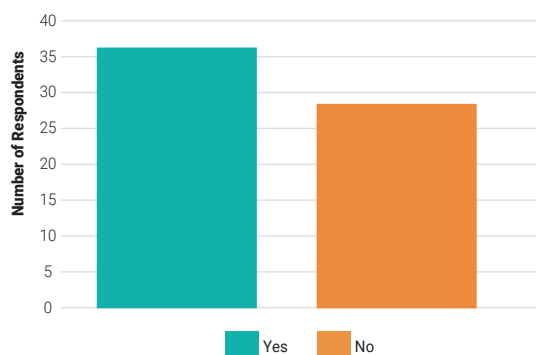


undertaken by UN-Habitat must be available on the UN-Habitat evaluation website: [www.unhabitat.org/evaluations](http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluations). Also, paragraph 62 of the evaluation policy states that to maximize learning opportunities for the organization, the Evaluation Unit will promote the generation and sharing of lessons learned from evaluations and that dissemination strategies will be developed for all external evaluations and will include effective and creative methods for sharing evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned through internal and external entry points to ensure uptake and use of evaluations.

Since 44 per cent of respondents indicate that UN-Habitat evaluation reports are not effectively disseminated and accessible, then there is a need to focus on dissemination and communication strategies of evaluation products, including targeting intended users of evaluations to ensure they access the reports in a user-friendly manner. It is also important to take advantage of the new media and technology available, such as YouTube, for disseminating evaluation products.

### Chart 5: Accessibility of evaluation reports

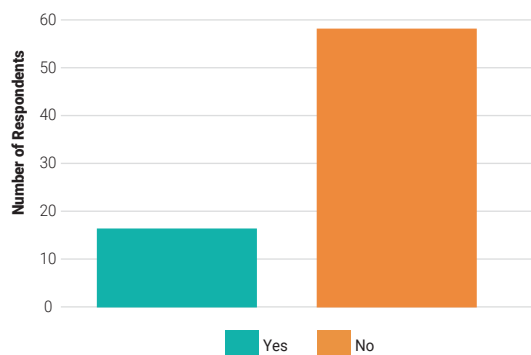
*Effective accessibility and dissemination of UN-Habitat evaluation reports*



### QUESTION 7: Read or briefed on evaluation reports

Question 7 asked whether in the the past 12 months respondents had read or been briefed on any of UN-Habitat Evaluation Reports. Chart 6 shows their answers to this question: 16 of 64 respondents (25 per cent) had read or been briefed. The remaining 48 respondents (75 per cent) had not.

### Chart 6: Respondents having read or been briefed on evaluation reports in past 12 months



Active engagement of internal and external stakeholders is a core principle of evaluation and ensures ownership of evaluation process (refer to UNEG standard 4.6). If 75 per cent of respondents had not read or been briefed on evaluation reports, then there is a need to develop a communication strategy that includes formal and informal communication to raise awareness and to ensure staff are encouraged to access the reports from UN-Habitat website.

Also, other evaluation products such as evaluation briefs, newsletters, videos, or other products with key findings and recommendations could be tailored and targeted at staff and key stakeholders to facilitate the use of evaluations. In addition, meetings and workshops to facilitate the sharing of evaluation knowledge from evaluations could be used. The key message is that the extent to which evaluation reports and evaluation results are briefed, discussed and shared significantly affects the use of evaluations.

### QUESTION 8: List of evaluation reports read by respondents

Those who indicate that they had read and had been briefed on the evaluation reports were asked to specify the report to which they refer. Table 1 shows the list of evaluation reports read or briefed on.

What respondents listed included other reports that were not of an evaluative nature (those highlighted in green colour). Although monitoring, research and audit

**Table 1: Evaluation reports listed by respondents as read or briefed on in the past 12 months**

No.	Evaluation Title
1	Evaluation Report of Land Programme in DRC
2	Evaluation Report of NUP in Bolivia
3	UN-Habitat Evaluation Manual
4	UN-Habitat Lebanon Relevant Evaluation Reports
6	Evaluation Report of Gender Mainstreaming
7	Only the evaluation reports I was involved in
8	Multiple
9	A few
10	Evaluation report titled: Women's Access to Land to Consolidate Peace in South Sudan
11	SP3 Monitoring Results
12	UNCT Country Results
13	Evaluation Report of the UN-Liaison Offices
14	UN-Habitat Brazil Internal Research
15	UN-Habitat Audit Report

reports complement evaluation, they are distinct and not evaluation reports. There is a need for UN-Habitat staff and management to get clarity on and make distinctions between these separate yet complementary functions of evaluation, audit and research.

### QUESTION 9: Evaluation reports considered by senior management

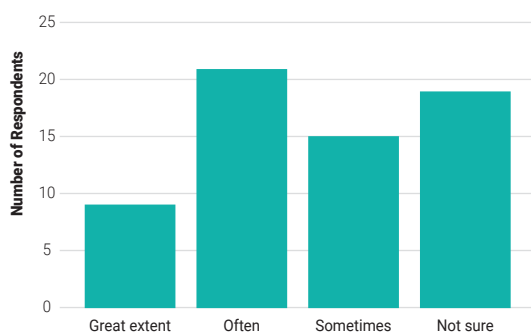
Question 9 asks the extent to which evaluation reports were considered by senior management in UN-Habitat. Chart 7 shows responses from the 64 survey participants.

On this question, 23 respondents (26 per cent), the highest number, said they were not sure if senior management considered evaluation reports. Those who thought management did were the lowest number: 9 respondents (14 per cent). This should be a concern because, according to UNEG Standard 1.4, each United Nations body should ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that management

responds to evaluations. An organization's senior management is responsible for providing a formal management response to each evaluation.

**Chart 7: Respondents perceptions on senior management considering evaluation reports**

*Extent to which evaluation reports are considered by senior management*



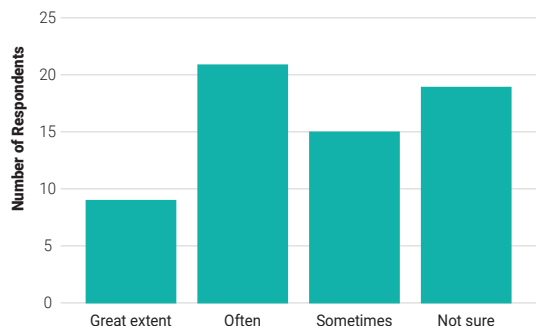
### QUESTION 10: Use of evaluations to improve projects and programmes

Question 10 asked the extent to which respondents felt that evaluations are used to contribute and improve the designs of UN-Habitat's new projects and programmes and to improve the management and implementation of ongoing projects. Chart 8 shows responses from the 64 survey participants.

Respondents who answered that evaluations are often used to contribute and improve designs of UN-Habitat's new projects, programmes, management and implementation of ongoing ones had the highest number of respondents: 21, representing 32 per cent. They were followed by 19 respondents (30 per cent) who were unsure. The 9 respondents (14 per cent) who indicated that evaluations are used to a great extent represent the lowest number.

One of the objectives of evaluations is to contribute to enhanced learning in organizations to improve current and future policies, strategies, programmes, projects as well as processes. If 30 per cent of respondents are unsure of the evaluation's effectiveness in this respect, then there is a need for basic training on its role in the project management cycle.

**Chart 8: Evaluations contributing to improved designs of UN-Habitat new projects and programmes and to improve management and implementation of on-going projects**



**QUESTION 11:  
Evaluations to create organizational culture**

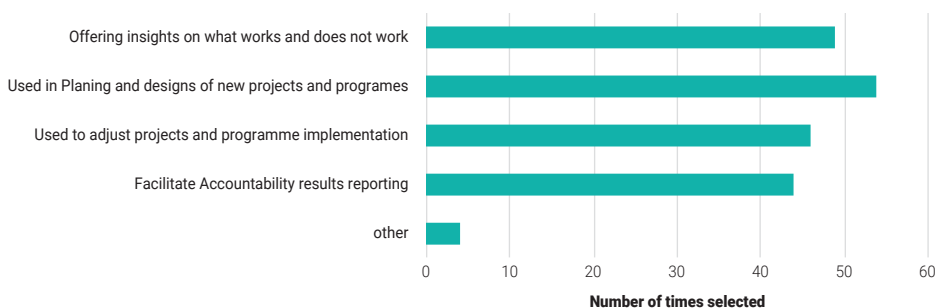
Question 11 asked how UN-Habitat evaluative evidence can be used to create organizational culture, where evaluation evidence and learning are valued

and used to inform decision-making. The respondents were also asked to tick all that was appropriate. Responses are in chart 9.

Using evaluation evidence in planning and designs of new projects and programmes was selected 54 times, making it the most frequently selected criterion. This outcome was followed by offering insights on what works and does not work (selected 49 times), followed by using to adjust projects and programmes implementation (46 times). Facilitating accountability in results reporting was selected 44 times.

The answers show that respondents are clear on the strategic intent of evaluation. According to UNEG Norm 2 – utility, when commissioning an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the evaluation results. The utility of evaluation is manifested through its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, informed decision-making and accountability for results.

**Chart 9: Using evaluative evidence to create organizational culture and in decision-making**



## QUESTION 12: Improving use of UN-Habitat evaluations

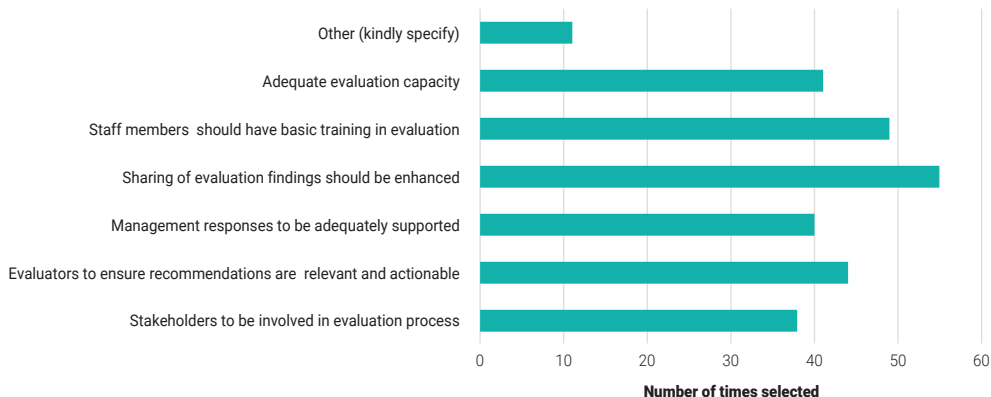
Question 12 asked what should be done to improve the use of UN-Habitat evaluations, from the respondents' point of view. Respondents were asked to tick all that was appropriate. Chart 10 shows what respondents thought on the matter.

The most frequently selected option for improving evaluation use was the sharing of evaluation findings to enhance and enable organizational learning (55 times). It was followed by staff members involved in the project cycle, including planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation to get basic training in evaluation (49 times). Evaluators need to ensure that evaluation recommendations are relevant, accurate and actionable was selected 44 times. Evaluation capacity in terms of human and financial

resources should be adequate was selected 41 times, and management responses and follow-up to take place and be adequately supported was selected 40 times. Users and stakeholders of evaluation to be involved and consulted throughout the evaluation process was the least selected (39 times).

The key message here is that effective use of evaluation is determined by several preconditions or key factors, including (but not limited to) (i) good evaluation planning, including the relevance of the evaluation; (ii) credibility and quality of the evaluation report, which is assured by meaningful stakeholder involvement; and (iii) appropriate management response to the evaluation, including acceptance of evaluation recommendations. Also, UNEG Norm 14 on evaluation use and follow-up states that organizations should promote these two elements, using an interactive process that involves all stakeholders.

**Chart 10: Perspectives of respondents on what could improve the use of UN-Habitat evaluations**

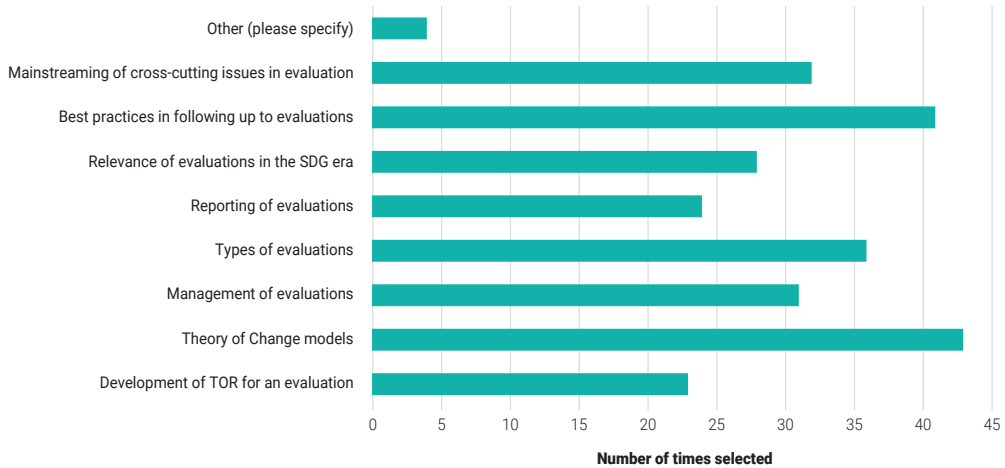


## QUESTION 13: Areas to receive basic training

Question 13 asked about areas in which respondents would you like to receive basic training in the year 2023. Chart 11 shows the responses.

From the respondents' selections, the theory of change was the most selected (selected 43 times). Best practice to follow evaluations ranked second

(selected 41 times). It was followed by types of evaluations (selected 36 times). Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues in evaluation was selected 32 times. Next comes managing evaluations with 31 selections. Relevance of evaluation in the SDG era had 28 selections, reporting evaluations 24 selections and TOR 23 selections. From these responses, it is evident that within UN-Habitat there is a need for basic training on evaluation.

**Chart 11: Areas in which respondents would receive basic training in 2023**

#### QUESTION 14: Constraints face to better utilize evaluation findings

Question 14 wanted to know the main constraints respondents faced to utilize evaluation findings and recommendations better. Of the 64 respondents, 43 list their constraints.

**Time Availability** was identified as a constraint.

One respondent said there is pressure on implementation and reporting, leaving less time for evaluations. Another highlighted that there are too many evaluations that they lose focus and nothing gets done.

**Resources (both financial and staff capacity)** were listed as constraints. It was mentioned that the global Evaluation Unit should be adequately resourced to engage with country-level offices to provide strategic, useful and adapted advice and feedback; and feedback only during PRC on funding allocation. Another respondent listed the lack of a budget for evaluation activities, such as training, workshops and retreats for evaluation. Another respondent said there is a need for dissemination of evaluation findings and that implementation of recommendations are limited because of extra funds needed, while another said donors do not often consider good recommendations due to budget constraints. Having dedicated core funding to support the whole evaluation process from regional offices would be essential.

**Lack of commitment of senior managers.** Some respondents identified the lack of commitment to evaluation by senior management and programme managers as a constraint. One respondent said, "I feel at least with the gender evaluation, which has no different, it was merely a boxlike tick exercise. The evaluation team can do much, but without [the] commitment of senior management it's a waste of time.

Some respondents identified the lack of **procedures and tools** as a limitation of evaluation use. One respondent said there is lack of communication strategies like briefs and executive summaries and that evaluation information is limited. Another respondent indicated that evaluation results are not easily accessible, and they were not aware and involved in evaluation processes. Another one said that they have little experience in evaluations and training is needed. Lack of dissemination and communication of evaluation findings and recommendations was also identified as a constraint and that findings normally emerge after the completion and closing of the project and evaluation becomes less useful.

Furthermore, **lack of evaluation culture** was mentioned as a major constraint. It was listed that managers fear evaluations. Also, short-term projects do not allow for evaluations, whose products are not systematically accessible. Another respondent said that there is little experience in evaluations and that training is needed.

## 5. Suggestions to improve the use of evaluations

Question 15 requested respondents to give three suggestions on how the use of evaluations in UN-Habitat could be improved. Of the 64 respondents, 42 provided their suggestions as follows:

1. Evaluations should be clustered at the country level to enhance contribution to the wider United Nations effort at country level.
2. Thematic evaluations should be at a fixed period and well-planned so that enough time can be devoted to the implementation of recommendations.
3. Management evaluations must be aligned with the Joint Inspection Unit and system-wide evaluations and be proportional to UN-Habitat's size.
4. The Evaluation Unit should be more independent, resourceful, suitable and serving UN-Habitat's projects and programmes.
5. The Evaluation Unit should be inclusive in embracing projects that do not have a budget or funding to cover the unit's service fee. The Unit should spearhead evaluations and be innovative in offering support and mobilizing resources elsewhere.
6. The functions and forms of evaluation should not leave any project, programme or office behind its work plan for the sake of money or a service fee of the Evaluation Unit. The theory of change should be self-practiced within the Evaluation Unit to make the Unit more productive, inclusive and resourceful.
7. Staff members involved in the project cycle—including planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation—should have training in evaluation.
8. Need for periodic and wider briefing at the branch level on the collection of findings.
9. Need for all staff involved in the project cycle should partake in the evaluation process.
10. Need for best practices and learning captured and widely shared to all every period.
11. Need for periodic and wider briefing at the branch level on the collection of findings and need all staff participating in the project cycle to be involved in the process.
12. Activate the support and response/availability of the Evaluation Unit at headquarters to provide the needed support at the country level.
13. Regardless of the budget of the project, evaluation should always be conducted by external consultant.
14. The Evaluation Unit is to provide generic theme-specific checklists for monitoring, midterm and for the final evaluation frameworks and plans.
15. Focus on staff capacity-building, intensive training in programme management, also train staff in evaluation reporting.
16. UN-Habitat should have a pool of quality evaluators rostered that project managers can access; the facility should include information should feed-back of UN-Habitat colleagues on their performance.
17. Update the website and include evaluation information.
18. Learning from evaluations could be shared more extensively at the regional level by area of focus; for example, during yearly retreats.
19. Share the summarized reports and organize training and briefing sessions.
20. To have an effective global-level Evaluation Unit that is adequately resourced, which engages with country-level offices; provides strategic, useful and adapted advice and feedback, and not only the PRC on funding allocation.



21. Better communication, better training, better visibility of evaluation activities in the agency. provide feedback and offer basic trainings on project evaluation.
22. Broaden the feedback and sharing mechanism for evaluation results. 35. Conduct training for staff on different topics of evaluation.
23. Popularize the shared platform of evaluation documents. 36. Modify the reporting format. Create a digital and standard reporting format that should reflect the project's progress, risk and opportunities, and show some generic and descriptive.
24. The use of evaluations would be improved if there is also a midterm review process, which may help adjust some of the issues before it is too late in the evaluation process. 37. During project design, the evaluation budget should be calculated and included in the cost estimation. The evaluation team or evaluation officer who handles the evaluation through the project life cycle and the final evaluation should be include.
25. Provide regular public reviews of new evaluations carried out, like the sessions held by the different Communities of Practice 38. Key messages of the evaluations results could be shared on social media to highlight the impact of some good projects (so for the public).
26. Design systemic indicators which include subjective information - most of the time is the only way to grasp how things work. 39. Prepare fact sheets on key findings and recommendations to be shared widely (often people do not have the time to read a full technical evaluation report).
27. Consider micro, intermediate, and macro scales and levels and a wider stakeholders' spectrum. 40. In the PRC process, it could be useful to share previous evaluations of similar projects so that the new projects can learn.
28. Advise how the impact is measured: define impact and the purpose for which it is measured. 41. Make evaluation reports more attractive to read.
29. Prepare the key actions in an appealing and separate format. Then, share the evaluative information. 42. In the PRC guidelines, indicate if projects benefitted from recommendations of any previous evaluation.
30. Create a 2–3 minute audio on the key findings and recommendations. 43. Institutionalize regular monitoring and evaluation Data tracking on key and common indicators (but single form for multiple use, not multiple forms).
31. Systematically organize a meeting to share the evaluation findings. 44. Allow more options for managing evaluations.
32. Improve the capacity of the Evaluation Unit to supervise and oversee evaluations; for example, missions to project locations. 45. Shared action implementation plans following sharing of the evaluation findings and recommendations. Reports of actions made should be disseminated for transparency.
33. Provide a budget for the Evaluation Unit to support the follow-up and implementation of the evaluation recommendations.
34. Facilitate at least one annual evaluation workshop in each region for the Evaluation Unity to

## 6. Conclusions

The aim of the survey was (i) to understand how UN-Habitat uses evaluations; (ii) to identify factors that constrain evaluation use; (iii) and suggest how the use of evaluation in UN-Habitat could be improved.

UN-Habitat undertakes different types of evaluation. These evaluations result in findings, lessons learned and recommendations that stakeholder, and UN-Habitat staff, are supposed to use to improve the organization's performance.

From the survey results, constraints and suggestions listed by respondents to the survey, UN-Habitat needs to strengthen the use of evaluation. This will be determined by key factors including, but not limited to, relevance of the evaluations and timing, so that evaluation findings are available when decisions are made. The evaluations also need to be credible, which delivers independence, impartiality and inclusiveness in the evaluation processes. There is a need to increase staff and management buy-in in the evaluation process; a need to facilitate in-depth dialogue about evaluation results and follow-up to influence the planning and implementation of strategies, programmes and projects.

In commissioning and conducting evaluations, there should be a clear intention to use the resulting evaluation findings and recommendations to inform decisions and actions. The use of evaluation is

manifested through its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, informed decision-making and accountability for results.

Communication and dissemination of evaluation results are an integral part of the evaluation process. The Evaluation Unit should have an effective strategy for communication and dissemination that is focused on enhancing evaluation use. The strategy should include awareness-raising and the benefits of effective communication to enhance the utilization of the evaluations; tailored products to different user audiences, social media engagement to increase awareness of evaluation work, and innovative evaluation products (for example, briefs, newsletters, videos, semi-annual reports).

Adequate follow-up mechanism for the implementation of recommendations should be in place, based on management responses. This should be an electronic tracking system accessible not only by the Evaluation Unit but also by other evaluation users.

UN-Habitat should promote evaluation use and follow-up, using an interactive process that involves stakeholders, engaging evaluation users in the whole evaluation processes to increase their interest in evaluations.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the survey results, highlighted constraints faced in using evaluations and suggestions to improve use of evaluation in UN-Habitat, the consultant made recommendations aimed at improving the use of evaluations in UN-Habitat.

### 1. **Prioritize evaluations based on agreed criteria.**

UN-Habitat should prioritize evaluations based on agreed criteria, develop evaluation plans and define evaluation scope with the intended users of the evaluations. Evaluations should be designed to ensure that they provide timely and useful information when decisions are made.

### 2. **Invest in evaluation function and support of the senior management is key.**

UN-Habitat should invest in the evaluation function by providing reasonable resources in terms of core financial and staff capacity. Commitment and support of senior management will be a key factor in providing resources to the Evaluation Unit that will enable it to prioritize and plan evaluations to serve the purposes of learning, accountability and influence decision-making.

### 3. **Involve and consult evaluation users and stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.**

To Maximize the relevance and use of evaluations in UN-Habitat, evaluation users should be consulted on the whole evaluation process.

### 4. **Evaluators need to ensure that recommendations are relevant and implementable.**

### 5. **Develop evaluation communication strategy.**

Once the evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations are produced by evaluators, communication of the findings needs to differentiate communication of evaluation

products to different audiences. Different communication channels could be encouraged, including websites, media, workshops, videos, and other innovative ways to complement sharing of the technical evaluation reports published on the UN-Habitat internal and external websites.

### 6. **Repackage evaluation knowledge based on user needs.**

The Evaluation Unit should solicit users' views and repackage evaluation knowledge in synthesis to increase its uptake and usage.

### 7. **Increasing the level of ownership of the evaluation findings and recommendations**

through formal and informal processes during the evaluation process, provision of management response and follow-up on implementation of evaluation recommendations.

### 8. **Meetings and workshops to be encouraged to facilitate the sharing of evaluative knowledge from the evaluations.**

The extent to which evaluation documents, follow-up reports, and lessons learned are discussed and shared, significantly affects the use of evaluation results and ensures transparency.

### 9. **Management responses and follow-up to the implementation of evaluation recommendations should take place and be adequately supported.**

### 10. **Basic web-based, as well as in-person evaluation training, should be offered to senior management and those staff involved in planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.**

### 11. **Repository of findings, recommendations and lessons learned to be shared to enable organizational learning and use.**

## Annex: Organizational survey questionnaire

### Organizational Survey on Use of UN-Habitat Evaluations – December 2022

UN-Habitat Organizational Survey on use of UN-Habitat Evaluations is conducted on an annual basis by the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU). The results of the survey are used to promote use of evaluations as the organization builds a culture and practice of evaluations. Over the past years, efforts have been taken to embed evaluative evidence in planning and accountability frameworks, however, evaluation findings and recommendations continue to be perceived as under-utilized.

UN-Habitat being a significant producer of evaluation reports in the UN system, enhancing their use is a needed focus area. In 2022, OIOS reviewed 14 UN-Habitat evaluation reports produced in 2020 and 2021 and selected 13 (93%) reports that were found have good evaluation evidence. These reports will be shared via the OIOS Evaluation Knowledge Management Platform as good examples to enhance evaluation knowledge and learning.

This survey targets senior managers, project managers, evaluation focal points and other substantive staff members involved in planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluating UN-Habitat's work. You are invited to complete the survey, which requires only 10 minutes to complete. The survey will remain open until 14 February 2023. Your feedback is very important and will contribute to understanding how UN-Habitat uses evaluations and inform on how use of evaluations could be enhanced. If you have any questions about the survey, kindly contact the Independent Evaluation Unit ([unhabitat-evaluation@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-evaluation@un.org)). We thank you in advance for completing the survey.

#### 1. In which office are you currently working (Kindly, specify your office)

- Strategic Planning and Monitoring Branch
- Knowledge and Innovation Branch

- External Relations and Partnerships Branch
- Urban Practices Branch
- Programme Development Branch
- Management Advisory and Compliance Division
- Office of the Executive Director
- Regional Office for Africa
- Regional Office for Arab States
- Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

#### 2. Specify which country/ liaison office you are currently working?

#### 3. Specify your Duty Station?

#### 4. In your opinion, what are the reasons for conducting evaluations in UN-Habitat? Select what you feel are the most important reasons.

- To influence decision making, strategy or policy agenda
- To promote accountability to UN-Habitat's stakeholders including donors, governing bodies and New Urban Agenda partners
- To contribute to organizational learning and promoting evaluation culture
- To support UN-Habitat's performance and effectiveness in terms of assessing and reporting the results the organization achieves.
- To contribute to project/programme improvements
- To determine if interventions should be continued, scaled up, replicated or closed

#### 5. In 2022, what kind of evaluation related activities have you been involved in? Click as many options that apply

- Review of project proposals in pre-PRC / PRC meetings
- Involvement in planning, commissioning, or managing evaluation, such as being on Evaluation Reference Group.

- Facilitating evaluation process by providing required information on evaluation or logistics
- Involved in evaluation process by being interviewed or consulted
- Contributed to the management response and action plan of an evaluation
- Provided inputs to follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations
- Being an Interview Panel Member during interviews for recruitment of independent evaluation consultants
- Participated in training workshop on results-based management or evaluation
- Other please specify

**6. Are UN-Habitat evaluation reports effectively disseminated and accessible? UN-Habitat evaluation reports are available on [www.unhabitat.org/evaluation](http://www.unhabitat.org/evaluation) and Habnet under services 'evaluation'.**

- Yes
- No

**7. In the past 12 months, have you read or been briefed on any of UN-Habitat Evaluation Reports?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, specify the report your read or you were briefed on

**8. To what extent are evaluation reports considered by Senior Management in UN-Habitat**

- Great extent
- Often
- Sometimes
- Not sure

**9. To what extent do you feel that evaluations contributed/ improved the design of UN-Habitat new projects and programmes and to improve management and implementation of on-going projects ?**

- Great extent
- Often
- Sometimes
- Not sure

**10. How can UN-Habitat evaluative evidence be used to create organizational culture, where evaluation evidence and learning are valued and used to inform decision-making** (Tick all that is appropriate)

- Offering insights on what works and does not work
- Used in planning and designs of new projects and programmes
- Used to adjust project/programme implementation to improve delivery of projects and programmes
- Facilitating accountability in results reporting
- Other (Kindly specify)

**11. In your view, what should be done to improve use of UN-Habitat evaluations?** (Tick all that is appropriate)

- Users and stakeholders of evaluation should be involved and consulted throughout the evaluation process
- Evaluators need to ensure evaluation recommendations are relevant, accurate and actionable
- Management responses and follow-up processes must take place be adequately supported
- Sharing of evaluation findings should be enhanced to enable organizational learning.
- Staff members involved in project cycle, including planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation should have basic training in evaluation
- Evaluation capacity in terms of human and financial resources should be adequate
- Other (kindly specify)

**12. In which areas related to evaluation would you like to receive basic training in 2023?**

- Development of Terms of Reference for an evaluation
- Theory of Change models
- Management of evaluations
- Types of evaluations
- Reporting of evaluations
- Relevance of evaluations in the SDG era
- Best practices in following up to evaluations
- Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues in evaluation
- Other (please specify)

**13. What are the main constraints you face to better utilize evaluation findings and recommendations?****14. Give three suggestions on how the use of evaluations in UN-Habitat can be improved.****THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY**



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in an urbanizing world**

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



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