

## Evaluation Management Response Document

**Region:** HQ

**Office:** Evaluation Office

**Evaluation Year:** 2018

**Evaluation Title:** Evaluation of innovation in UNICEF work. Evaluation Synthesis Report.

**Person In Charge For Follow Up to Management Response:** Thomas Davin

### Overall response to evaluation

This evaluation sought to assess if UNICEF was, and is, 'fit for purpose' to employ innovation as a key strategy to achieve the outcomes and goals defined in its strategic plans 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 through the development of case studies, an organizational assessment and a synthesis of findings. Senior Management and staff across the organization have responded positively to both the process and the outcomes of the evaluation, noting the inclusive nature of the work, professionalism in the management of the evaluation, and systematic engagement with the reference group and relevant stakeholders at key moments throughout the evaluation. Overall, the quantity and quality of the evidence collected was found to be substantial and responsive to the initial terms of reference. The evaluation concluded that significant progress has been made in several key components of advancing innovation. However, there is substantial ground to cover, and changes are needed, notably in areas identified as barriers or impediments to innovation, if innovation is to bring meaningful and sustainable results for children. Interviews with key staff and senior management feedback point to a concurrence with this overarching finding and the associated recommendations, although differences of opinion have been noted with some of the specific recommendations provided, particularly the proposed organizational structure. Strong agreement has been expressed on a few key findings including: 1) the need for UNICEF to develop an overarching strategy which sets out how it intends to go about innovation, what it intends to achieve, how staff can contribute, and the need to address the key barriers and impediments to innovation noted in the evaluation; 2) greater investment in the function of transitioning innovation work into programmes; and, 3) organizational culture as a barrier. Overall there is broad agreement on the systems assessment findings, and the need for UNICEF to look at the internal processes required to fulfil the ambition of innovation. However, some have noted an HQ-bias in the recommendations, positing that a bottom-up and south-south approach was lacking in the development of the proposed structural options.

### Planned Use of the Evaluation

The analysis and recommendations provided by this evaluation will serve as the foundational document and key input for the Innovation element of the 2018-2019 Organizational Repositioning and Realignment exercise. To this end, a process for apprising staff and senior management of the findings will take place, including through the GMT. Broad dissemination of the report, and a participatory process for development of the management response will be ensured, including via bilateral, group and virtual consultations at all organizational levels (HQ, RO, CO and Field Office). With the resulting consensus across the organization on agreement with the three overarching recommendations, the findings from the evaluation will serve to guide the organization in its process to develop a new vision, strategy, and plan for organization of the innovation function (VSO) across all levels of UNICEF. This process will include key informant interviews on the future state of innovation in UNICEF, a global human-centre design workshop to gather input into the VSO, and a series of engagements with staff and managers to explore implementation modalities for the VSO. With this input UNICEF leadership will be able to work towards a clear, prioritized action plan to implement the strategy and make the requisite changes to organizational structure, people and human capital, technology, and resources.

### Recommendations and Actions

No.	Recommendations/Actions	Responsible Section (Action)	Responsible Person Name (Action)	Expected Completion (Action)	Mgt Response / Implementation Stage	Reason/Action Taken
1	Develop a shared strategic vision and approach that directly addresses fundamental constraints in the current approach and drives decision-making across the organization. The approach needs to directly address key barriers and impediments to innovation through the development of UNICEF-wide positions on: a) Lack of appetite for risk as a major impediment to innovation; b) How different parts of the organization contribute to innovation; c) Commitment to increased transparency of governance/oversight and decision-making roles within dedicated innovation units; d) More standardized approaches and processes, based on good practices already used in parts of the organization, should be adapted for wider use; e) Clarity on medium- and long-term staff requirements to enable implementation of innovation as a core strategy; and, f) Greater attention to and investment in learning and uptake.				Agree	

1.1	Constitute a VSO Secretariat comprised of HQ representation and Senior Field Advisor from CO to gather, synthesize, and analyse ideas from within the organization (e.g., whitepapers, draft vision papers, etc) as input into vision and strategy. Input to be gathered via bi-lateral and group interviews, and workshop with HQ, RO, and CO representation. Constitute a VSO Secretariat comprised of HQ representation and Senior Field Advisor from CO to gather, synthesize, and analyse ideas from within the organization (e.g., whitepapers, draft vision papers, etc) as input into vision and strategy. Input to be gathered via bi-lateral and group interviews, and workshop with HQ, RO, and CO representation. Specific ideas and input are to be gathered around how to address the key barriers and impediments to innovation identified in the recommendation.	Office of DED, Field Results	Vivian Lopez	3/30/2019	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of Reference Developed for CO representation on VSO Project Team</li> <li>• Field Staff Member Identified and mission to NYHQ confirmed</li> <li>• Terms of Reference developed to solicit vendor support in planning and facilitation of workshop</li> <li>• Vendor Identified and contracted</li> <li>• Identified list of stakeholders to interview</li> <li>• Developed interview guide</li> <li>• Background information collected from relevant sources to act as input to vision and strategy (i.e., from ICTD, Ool, Field Results etc.)</li> <li>• Individual and group meetings conducted by Sr Field Advisor and Secretariat, and external consultants with a broad array of staff spanning all organizational levels (HQ, RO, CO, Sub-Office), humanitarian and programming areas and relevant functional areas, e.g. PFP, Legal, DFAM.</li> <li>• Workshop complete and staff input provided to VSO.</li> </ul>
1.2	Develop and submit draft Vision and Strategy for feedback (workshop attendees, key stakeholders and Global Management Team); Conduct peer review with key external peers (UN, private sector, funders). Submit for OED approval	Office of DED, Field Results	Shanelle Hall	4/30/2019	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft VSO developed and sent to workshop attendees, key stakeholders and GMT for feedback</li> </ul>
1.3	Receive approval of Vision and Strategy from OED	Office of DED, Field Results	Shanelle Hall	5/31/2019	Completed	The Innovation for Impact Strategy has been cleared by the Executive Director and disseminated to the Global Management Team

1.0	Share vision and strategy with all staff via Global Broadcast Message and socialize VSO through key engagements with the field, e.g. RMT, DROPS, Thematic Network Meetings	Office of the DED, Field Results	Shanelle Hall	9/30/2019	Completed	The Innovation for Impact Strategy, cleared by the Executive Director, was first presented at the GMT. Since then, the strategy has been broadly rolled out across the organization through a series of internal communications campaign and multiple engagement channels. These have included: an all-staff announcement and follow-up messages; global webinars and Yammer Communities of Practice engagements; regional Management Team (RMT) discussions; function-specific meetings to embed the strategy within technical areas; integration into orientation programmes such as ROPs, new staff inductions, and NETI briefings. This multi-pronged approach ensured that the vision and strategy were socialized widely, reaching staff at all levels and functions, and embedding the strategy into both organizational dialogue and practice.
2	Act on needed structural change to advance innovation as a means of achieving results for children. Key elements of this recommendation include: • In order to provide clear strategic vision and manage the wide-ranging innovation portfolio, a senior management role is needed at the Deputy Executive Director level to oversee the various dimensions of organization's agenda. • Innovation Enabling Services teams should also be created, with responsibility for portfolio management and prioritization as well as development and provision of frameworks, tools and processes, monitoring, evaluation, knowledge-sharing, learning and feedback. • Leadership for digital innovation should be housed under the ICT Division, which should also bring together various parts of headquarters that are currently working on digital innovation. • There is a need for dedicated innovation staff in COs, especially in medium to large programmes, and also in ROs.				Agree	
2.1	Solicit specific input on organizational structure from key stakeholders and relevant leadership as input into draft options	Office of DED, Field Results	Shanelle Hall	4/10/2019	Completed	• Draft organization functions and structure developed and shared with leadership
2.2	Draft options and solicit feedback on organization of Innovation function from OED as a part of the activities listed under recommendation 1. Options developed will consider how best to address the key elements identified in the evaluation of the need for DED level oversight, creation of an innovation enabling services team, the bringing together of all digital innovation, and the need for dedicated innovation staff	Office of the DED, Field Results	Shanelle Hall	4/30/2019	Completed	-Building on existing options, evaluation findings and individual and focus group discussions, multiple structural options were developed - Draft structural options were presented to the Deputy Executive Directors, Chief of Staff, and Executive Director for discussion. -The Executive Director chose an option to be included within the PBR submission.
2.0	Conduct Programme Budget Review (PBR) for Innovation	Office of Innovation	Shanelle Hall	6/30/2019	Completed	An updated OMP for the Office of Innovation (2018-2021) and corresponding PBR documents were submitted and approved by PBR.
3	Utilize a portfolio management approach for innovation				Agree	

3.0	Identify portfolio management approaches currently used by the organization (e.g., ICT Board, SD Innovation Unit) and review against leading practices in innovation portfolio management	Office of Innovation	Thomas Davin	4/12/2019	Completed	During the development of the Innovation for Impact Strategy, information was collected from across the organization on the portfolio management approaches in use. Building on this landscape assessment, the Office of Innovation formalized portfolio management practices through the establishment of nine thematic portfolios, the creation of governance structures, and the development of tools and processes to guide implementation. Dedicated staff members were recruited to implement portfolio management.
3.0	Develop approach to innovation portfolio management, including governance, stage-gate processes, suggested balance of resource allocation, who manages the portfolio, SOPs, KPIs, etc. Note: The portfolio management approach will be developed and approved as a part of the activities presented in recommendation 1.	Office of Innovation	Thomas Davin	4/30/2019	Completed	A cross-functional task team (PD, EMOPS, ICTD, and OoI) was formed to propose a working model for managing a portfolio that would focus UNICEF's innovation efforts and resources on programme priorities most in need of acceleration. The Office of Innovation has since developed portfolio management approaches, establishing nine thematic portfolios: climate change, gender equality, humanitarian, health and nutrition, immunization, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, youth, WASH, and learning. Landscape analyses were conducted to map existing initiatives, and, together with PG, global-level problems to be addressed were defined. In addition, the Office of Innovation developed a series of documents outlining who, how, and when the portfolio approach is applied, along with a working manual. Processes were updated and refined to support its application, including an ambition matrix derived from the corporate strategy on innovation. The 5D Innovation Framework was developed to guide the portfolio management process across UNICEF. A stage-gate process, informed by the innovation maturity model, was introduced with thresholds defined by the 5D Framework for each stage of innovation (ideation, pilot, acceleration, transition to scale, and scale). Annual reviews of 5D assessments governed progression through the stages. Governance structures for innovation portfolio

						<p>management were formalized through a three-tier model with clear mandates and Terms of Reference. At the strategic level, the Global Innovation Board (GIB) provides direction by setting priorities, making investment decisions, and aligning senior leadership around UNICEF's unified problem-led innovation vision. The Innovation Steering Committee (ISC) acts as both a Braintrust and coordination anchor, recommending resource prioritization, reviewing tools and frameworks, negotiating overlaps across portfolios, assessing portfolio health and balance, and flagging risks to the GIB. At the operational level, thematic teams are responsible for managing innovation portfolios in line with the established approach. Together, these governance mechanisms ensure coherence, accountability, and effective resource allocation across UNICEF's innovation efforts. The COMPASS initiative provides guidance for Country Offices on adapting portfolio management to local contexts. Portfolio-level KPIs were also introduced, complementing solution-level KPIs, to monitor the progress of each thematic portfolio. These were aligned with two Strategic Plan indicators to capture both the breadth of impact and resource mobilization.</p>
3.0	Map UNICEF's current innovation portfolio across divisions and levels (HQ/RO/CO)	Programme Division; Office of Innovation	Vidhya Ganesh, Thon Davin	6/30/2019	Completed	<p>As part of the landscape analysis of thematic portfolios, both external and internal solutions were mapped to provide a comprehensive view of UNICEF's innovation ecosystem. INVENT, a corporate system to record innovations and digital solutions, was updated through Regional and Country Offices, consolidating innovative solutions across the organization into a single repository.</p>

3.0	<p>Implement a portfolio management approach to innovations in the organization to inform decision-making. The implementation of the Portfolio management approach will be one aspect of the broader implementation of the Innovation strategy.</p>	Office of Innovation	Thomas Davin	12/31/2021	Completed	<p>To implement a portfolio management approach as part of the innovation strategy, UNICEF has strengthened leadership and governance capacities. A Head of Portfolios/Governance and dedicated portfolio managers were recruited to operationalize and oversee portfolio management. In addition, two thematic hubs (Learning and WASH) were established to drive focused innovation in these priority areas. The 5D Innovation Framework has been applied to guide investment decisions, ensuring that choices are evidence-based and aligned with organizational priorities. Governance structures have been fully leveraged, with the Global Innovation Board and Innovation Steering Committee endorsing investments that are substantiated by 5D reviews and recommendations from portfolio managers.</p>
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