



Evaluation of Human Resources Management in UNICEF

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1. Summary

The UNICEF Evaluation Office, located in New York Headquarters, ensures organizational accountability and learning through independent evaluations and other evaluative exercises that assess organizational performance and the impact of UNICEF's programmes. As part of its Plan for Global Evaluations, 2022-2025¹, the Evaluation Office is commissioning an independent Evaluation of Human Resources (HR) Management in UNICEF. The evaluation seeks to answer the following question:

“How effectively does UNICEF’s HR management contribute to the organization’s mission, values, and strategic objectives while ensuring its workforce’s well-being, diversity, and inclusivity?”

The UNICEF Strategic Plan (SP) 2022-2025² identifies HR management as pivotal to achieving the organization's strategic goals and objectives and embeds people management in multiple SP enablers and change strategies. Considering the critical importance of human resources, UNICEF has launched a OneHR Strategy 2022-2025³ and the Global HR Delivery Model “to ensure that people and teams thrive in an environment that is nurturing and conducive to deliver on our core commitments for every child”. In response to an Independent Task Force (ITF) on Workplace Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority⁴, UNICEF also invested in coordinating culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion approaches across offices and all areas of UNICEF’s work. In addition, the organization strives to promote an ethical and values-based culture and equal opportunities for career advancement for women and men, with a view to “making UNICEF an employer of choice”⁵.

In looking at HR management in UNICEF, this evaluation will cover the key components of people management across all contexts in which the organization operates, including humanitarian crises and fragile settings. These components include the importance of HR practices being in harmony with UNICEF’s mission and values, the effectiveness and efficiency of HR processes and systems, talent development and capacity building, the promotion of diversity, inclusion, equity and gender equality, reflecting UNICEF’s values and commitment to these principles, and the safety, security, and well-being of UNICEF’s workforce.

These Terms of Reference (ToR) present the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, define the scope of work, spell out the evaluation questions, approach and methodology, and required qualifications of an evaluation team to conduct the evaluation. It is expected that the evaluation team will be comprised of eight external team members, as follows: one principal evaluator (team lead), which is a human resources expert; one organizational development specialist; one international humanitarian expert; one diversity and inclusion specialist; one security and safety advisor; one psychosocial support specialist; one research and evaluation specialist; and one project manager.

The evaluation is expected to occur between January and December 2024 to inform the OneHR Strategy, the SP’s implementation, and other related initiatives. The users of this evaluation include UNICEF senior leadership and UNICEF staff at all levels. The evaluation, jointly with the management response, will be considered for presentation at the UNICEF Executive Board in June 2025.

¹ E/ICEF/2022/3, Plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025, <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/documents/plan-global-evaluations-20222025>.

² E/ICEF/2021/25, UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/documents/UNICEF_Strategic_Plan_2022%E2%80%932025-SRS-2021#:~:text=The%20UNICEF%20Strategic%20Plan%2C%202022,child%20is%20included%20and%20has.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 2019, Report of the Independent Task Force (ITF) on Workplace Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority, https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/Independent-Task-Force_report_EN.PDF.

⁵ Ibid.

2. Background and Rationale

As of June 2023⁶, UNICEF's total staff comprise 17,197 individuals (8,457 female and 8,740 male) representing 187 nationalities. Of this total, there are 5,148 International Personnel (2,669 female and 2,479 male), 6,040 National Officers (2,917 female and 3,123 male), and 6,009 General Staff (2,817 female and 3,138 male). 1,398 staff are in Headquarters in New York, 1,303 in other Headquarters locations (Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Copenhagen, Istanbul, Florence, Geneva, Nairobi, Seoul, Tokyo, Valencia), 891 in seven Regional Offices and 13,535 in Country Offices. Approximately 22% of staff work in non-family duty stations, while 78% are in family locations. Only 2% of UNICEF staff are under the age of 30. In addition, there are 4,202 individual consultants based in various locations or home-based for a total workforce of 21,399. In 2022, the staff turnover rate for UNICEF was 13% (of which 5% were resignations, 5% end of appointments, 1% retirement, and more).

It is widely recognised that investments in staff and the optimal functioning of its HR can be a strategic driver of organizational success. In UNICEF, the central importance of HR management permeates the organization's Strategic Plan (SP) 2022-2025, which established revised priorities and organizational strategies for promoting the rights of children and their well-being to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. Human resources management is highlighted in the SP enablers and change strategies, from its emphasis on forging "an agile and responsive business model" to "decentralised and empowered governance and decision-making," positioning "innovation" as a widespread mode of thinking and working, fostering "dynamic and inclusive people and culture," and more.

In 2022, the OneHR community (or HR function) developed its vision to support the implementation of the SP, including the related OneHR Strategy for 2022-2025 and the new Global HR Delivery Model, building on various efforts to re-imagine the UNICEF business model – particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. The OneHR Strategy and the new Global HR Delivery Model are presented in Annex 1.

In addition, in response to the 2019 ITF on Workplace Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority⁷, UNICEF invested in coordinating Culture, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion approaches across offices and all areas of UNICEF's work, in addition to promoting an ethical and values-based culture within the organization.

UNICEF's HR management is informed by the core values of Care, Respect, Integrity, Trust, Accountability, and Sustainability (CRIAS)⁸, which are aligned with the broader principles and values of the United Nations (UN) System and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). The UNICEF's updated Competency Framework⁹ also clearly establishes common standards of behaviour to guide how the organization operates. In humanitarian action, UNICEF's HR management is driven by the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs)¹⁰, which promote timely deployment of personnel at the onset of emergencies, effective planning, duty of care measures, appropriate capacity and standards of conduct.

Measuring the effectiveness of HR management is considered essential to ensure that HR policies, processes, practices and behaviours contribute to the organization's success in achieving its mandate. Despite the pivotal role of HR management, the effective management of people in UNICEF has yet to be comprehensively assessed since the 2006 Strategic Review of HR Management conducted by the Evaluation Office. Some other exercises have, however, tried to shed some light on components of HR management. For instance, a more focused Review of the

⁶ UNICEF, Workforce and Recruitment Data Report, 2023, Q2.

⁷ 2019, Report of the Independent Task Force (ITF) on Workplace Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority, https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/Independent-Task-Force_report_EN.PDF.

⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/careers/unicef-core-values>

⁹ https://www.unicef.org/careers/media/1041/file/UNICEF%27s_Competency_Framework.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/core-commitments-children>

Fast-Track Recruitment Process (FTRP) to improve emergency recruitment was completed in 2012, and more recently, the 2019 ITF report.

Against this backdrop, **the Evaluation Office has prioritised this independent evaluation of HR management in UNICEF in its Plan for Global Evaluations.** More specifically, this evaluation of HR management in UNICEF is part of a sequence of discrete but interconnected exercises to ensure accountability and ongoing learning in this crucial underlying aspect of UNICEF's work: people management. At the earliest and most formative, forward-looking level, this area was partially explored in the Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025¹¹, completed in 2022. This early exercise ascertained to what extent UNICEF had the elements in place to achieve the SP goals and measure its progress between 2022 and 2025 – not just within human resource management but in all aspects of the organization's work. The evaluation is also set in the context of other exercises to enhance HR management within the organization. These include but are not limited to:

- The results of the 2022 Global Staff Survey and regular Pulse Surveys and their action plans in response¹²;
- The 2022 Humanitarian Review¹³, which provides recommendations for strengthening human resources in emergencies and its management response;
- The management response to the internal thematic audit on Performance Management and Career Development in UNICEF¹⁴, completed in April 2023;
- The Evaluation of the Reasonable Accommodation Fund for Employees and Job Applications, led by the Evaluation Office and slated for completion by November 2023;
- The Developmental Evaluation¹⁵ of Internal Communication and Staff Engagement, conducted by the Evaluation Office and set for completion by June 2024;
- The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Strategic Plan, led by the Division of Data, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM) and to be completed by June 2024;
- The Evaluation of the Gender Policy and the Gender Action Plan, carried out by the Evaluation Office and planned for completion by August 2024;
- Various Joint Inspection Unit reviews of HR management within the UN, notably, the Review of Flexible Working Arrangements in the UN System, the Review of Mental Health and Well-being Policies and Practices in the UN System Organizations; the Review of Quality, Effectiveness, and Sustainability of Health Insurance Schemes in the UN System; the Review of the Use of Non-Staff Personnel and Related Contractual Modalities in the UN System; the Review of Policies, Measures, Mechanisms and Practices to Prevent and Address Racism and Racial Discrimination in the UN System¹⁶;

¹¹ 2022, Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Positioning to Achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan (2022-2025), UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/reports#/detail/19027/evaluability-assessment-and-formative-evaluation-of-unicefs-positioning-to-achieve-the-goals-of-the-strategic-plan-2022-2025>.

¹² The evaluators will be able to review the action plan of DHR and a sample of action plans produced by other offices/divisions.

¹³ 2020, Strengthening UNICEF's Humanitarian Action: THE HUMANITARIAN REVIEW, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/media/108046/file/Humanitarian%20Review.pdf>.

¹⁴ 2023, OIAI Report on the Performance Management and Career Development, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/auditandinvestigation/documents/2023-oiai-report-performance-management-and-career-development>.

¹⁵ Developmental Evaluation (DE) is an evaluation approach that can assist in developing new initiatives. This is currently the case for internal communication, which is a new enabler in the UNICEF Strategic Plan.

¹⁶ See: <https://www.unjuu.org/content/reports>.

- Other recent studies and reports that have highlighted HR management issues¹⁷. Beyond these specific exercises, the evaluation team can harness a wealth of administrative and human resources data on core elements of HR management.

This evaluation is thus expected to draw on and, wherever applicable, coordinate with other evaluative exercises to help inform HR management in a continuous and iterative learning-focused manner to promote organizational effectiveness. The evaluation will assess the organization’s approach and performance in managing people toward fulfilling UNICEF’s mandate for children from 2019 to the present. It will generate forward-looking recommendations to help hinge the organization in the most positive direction possible in its HR management approaches, both in development and humanitarian contexts.

3. Purpose, Objectives, Use and Scope

The purpose of this evaluation is multifaceted, and it will serve multiple and complementary objectives. Its primary purpose is to enhance UNICEF’s capacity to fulfil its mission and improve its support for children’s rights and well-being by providing an independent, impartial and credible perspective on HR management. The evaluation will foster organizational learning by providing insights into areas where UNICEF’s HR management can be enhanced and improved and help identify good practices and areas for future growth, leading to ongoing refinement of HR practices in the organization. While contributing to learning and continuous improvement, the evaluation will promote accountability and transparency in HR processes, fostering trust among personnel.

The central question of this evaluation will be the following:

“How effectively does UNICEF’s HR management contribute to the organization’s mission, values, and strategic objectives while ensuring its workforce’s well-being, diversity, and inclusivity?”

It is expected that the evaluation will broadly examine HR management systems in their entirety to systematically and objectively assess the extent to which HR policies, processes, practices and behaviours are relevant, coherent, effective, and efficient in enabling our people’s performance in service of the organization’s mandate for children.

The more specific objectives of the evaluation are to assess:

- **Relevance and coherence of HR management with UNICEF’s organizational mission:** The evaluation will help determine the extent to which UNICEF’s HR management policies, processes and practices align with the organization’s mission, vision, and UNICEF’s Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, across all contexts, including humanitarian crises and fragile settings.
- **Effectiveness and efficiency of HR processes and systems:** The evaluation will assess the effectiveness and efficiency of HR processes and systems. This includes examining how HR practices contribute to the recruitment, performance management, mobility and retention of a skilled workforce. The evaluation will study the new performance management appraisal system and its possible scalability. The evaluation will also examine the efficient allocation of human resources to support emergency responses, including the capacity of the organization to quickly identify, recruit, and deploy qualified personnel to respond to emergencies.
- **Talent management and capacity building:** The evaluation will assess UNICEF’s talent management, training, and capacity-building initiatives. It will gauge how well HR supports staff growth and skill development to address evolving challenges in career development.
- **Culture, diversity, inclusion, equity and gender equality:** The evaluation will examine UNICEF’s organizational culture and its alignment with its core values and ethical principles. The evaluation will study

¹⁷These include country or thematic audits and evaluations, led by UNICEF or at the interagency level.

the organization's commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity and gender equality within its workforce. This includes assessing HR strategies, practices and behaviours that promote equal opportunities for all, especially in leadership roles.

- **Staff well-being, occupational safety and health:** The evaluation will focus on the safety, security, health and well-being of UNICEF personnel, particularly those working in challenging or high-risk environments. It will assess HR efforts to protect staff and to provide psychosocial support when needed, taking stock of the lessons learned during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation will also examine the effectiveness of new working modalities, including the newly created procedure on flexible working arrangements to promote better work-life balance.

By examining previous evaluations and other evaluative exercises, the evaluation will also examine UNICEF's capacity to learn and adapt. The evaluation will consider how HR processes incorporate lessons learnt and recommendations to enhance organizational resilience and effectiveness. The evaluation will also provide insights into enablers and hindering factors and areas where UNICEF's HR management can be enhanced and improved by identifying good practices and areas for development, leading to ongoing refinement of the HR strategies and practices. Ultimately, the evaluation will provide recommendations that will inform ongoing efforts to support the implementation of the current SP, the OneHR Strategy, and other initiatives. The evaluation will study HR management in UNICEF in its evolution from 2019 and the ITF report to the present day.

The primary users of this evaluation are the Office of the Executive Director and, in particular, the Deputy Executive Director for Management and **the Division of Human Resources**. The evaluation will serve as a resource to **all senior management at the country, regional and HQ levels**, as HR management is a whole-of-organization responsibility in planning the future direction, strategy, and resourcing of HR management within UNICEF. These include the Ethics Office, the Culture and Diversity team, the Global Shared Services Centre, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Staff Association and all other Divisions and Offices at the regional and country levels. Other users include **UNICEF staff at all levels**, the Executive Board, governments, and partner organizations within and outside the UN.

Strengthening HR management in UNICEF is a corporate priority for the success of the SP and the organization. Hence, the evaluation will take a whole-of-organization approach, assessing HR management at Headquarters, regional and country levels. The evaluation will consider the multicultural nature of the organization and UNICEF policies on gender equality, diversity, and the inclusion of its workforce. The evaluation will reflect on the widely diverse array of operating contexts, cultures, and specific national political and socio-economic conditions under which UNICEF works and that the organization must ensure that its workforce meets the demands to support the diverse national priorities and needs while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030.

The evaluation will provide an account of the progress achieved since the 2019 ITF report, with renewed attention on culture and diversity. It will look at the adequacy of the OneHR Strategy in light of the organizational needs emanating from the SP and, more widely, the UN Reform, which seeks to empower managers and staff, simplify processes, and increase transparency. At the same time, DHR will receive particular attention in this exercise to acknowledge the Division and the OneHR community's central role in setting standards, policies, procedures, guidance, and HR services across the organization. The evaluation will analyse the role of, and coordination with, other offices in supporting HR management, particularly the Ethics Office, the Office of Culture and Diversity, the Global Shared Services Centre, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Staff Association. The evaluation will also examine how HR management is evolving following the COVID-19 pandemic to become more agile and innovative in managing people, introducing new work modalities, flexible working arrangements, and new approaches to performance appraisal. Furthermore, the evaluation will examine the HR function, needs, and gaps in development and emergency contexts. This is very important, even more so, as the organization is considering more dynamic

work arrangements to allow for more effective surge mechanisms and expand the humanitarian Emergency Response Team concept to non-humanitarian contexts.

The evaluation will draw widely on the views of staff at all levels of the organization, build on good practices and standards in HR management, and new and emerging trends in HR practice in international organizations within the UN System and globally. Considering the UN System rules and regulations relating to HR, the evaluation will pause only on aspects of these regulations within UNICEF's control.

4. Evaluation Questions

The main indicative evaluation questions are presented herein using the key evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness while considering cross-cutting considerations such as gender equality, equity and inclusion. It is expected that these will be further refined and agreed upon during the inception phase in consultation with the Evaluation Reference Group.

1. Relevance and coherence of HR management with UNICEF's organizational mission

- How effectively does UNICEF's HR management align with the organization's mission and strategic objectives of promoting the rights and well-being of children worldwide? Are HR policies and practices designed to support and advance UNICEF's humanitarian goals and principles?

2. Effectiveness and efficiency of HR processes and systems

2.1 Recruitment and staffing

- How effective is UNICEF in attracting candidates who align with the organization's mission and values?
- To what extent do UNICEF recruitment processes ensure staff are selected and hired based on their qualifications, skills and experience, promoting fairness and transparency, equal opportunity, and recruiting the most qualified candidates? How effectively and coherently are diversity and inclusivity in the workforce promoted through HR recruitment?
- How timely and efficient are HR processes leading to acquiring qualified and diverse talent to meet the organization's needs?

2.2 Onboarding and orientation

- To what extent are new hires provided the necessary tools, resources, and training to perform their roles effectively and efficiently? Does the onboarding process effectively integrate new employees into UNICEF's culture and work environment?

2.4 Performance management

- To what extent is the new performance appraisal process clear, transparent, and aligned with UNICEF's goals and values? Is the new performance appraisal system without ratings more effective in assessing people, improving their performance, and increasing their future potential?
- How well does the performance management system identify and recognise high performers (as well as underperformers)?

2.3 Mobility and retention

- How effectively does UNICEF manage internal mobility, including rotations and emergency deployments?

- Are there clear career pathways and development opportunities for staff within UNICEF, including options for career advancement?
- What strategies or incentives exist to retain staff in critical roles or complex duty stations? Are these strategies effective in reducing staff turnover?

3. Talent management and capacity building

- To what extent are staff provided opportunities for continuous learning and professional development that align with their career goals and UNICEF's needs? Are there development plans for staff to track and achieve their career objectives?
- How well does UNICEF identify and nurture high-potential employees and prepare them for future leadership roles? Are succession planning and career development opportunities in place to ensure a pipeline of qualified individuals for key positions?

4. Culture, diversity, inclusion, equity and gender equality

- How effectively does UNICEF's organizational culture align with its mission to promote children's rights and well-being? Are the core values, ethical conduct and principles of UNICEF reflected in daily operations and decision-making?
- How effective are UNICEF's leadership and management practices in creating a positive work environment and retaining talent? Do staff feel supported and empowered by their supervisors and managers?
- How effective are UNICEF's initiatives to ensure a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment?
- How effective are UNICEF's initiatives to promote gender balance at all levels of the organization, including senior leadership?

5. Staff well-being, occupational safety and health

- To what extent does UNICEF have mechanisms to provide psychosocial support to staff who may experience stress, trauma or emotional challenges due to their work?
- How effectively are the policies and procedures in place to address and prevent harassment and discrimination in the workplace?
- How well are HR policies and practices designed to promote work-life balance and prevent burnout among staff?
- How well does UNICEF's procedure on flexible working arrangements accommodate staff's individual needs and well-being, including remote work options?

5. Approach and Methodology

The proposed methodological approach for this independent evaluation of HR management in UNICEF is utilization-focused and participatory, drawing upon mixed methods. It will combine an evaluation criteria-based approach complemented with a theory-based and complexity model approach to support learning and improvement.

A mixed-method approach will capture quantitative and qualitative aspects of HR management in UNICEF. While the evaluation methodology will be confirmed as part of the inception phase, the following possible instruments can be considered by the evaluation team:

1. Desk Review

- Reviewing HR policies, procedures, and documentation to assess the relevance and coherence of HR management with organizational goals and objectives, the UN System, the ICSC, international standards and regulations.

2. Data Analysis

- Analysing HR data and monitoring frameworks, such as recruitment metrics, turnover rates, performance appraisals, mobility, deployments, and training records, to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of HR processes and identify trends and areas of improvement. The evaluation team will also analyse data from the Staff Surveys, the Pulse Surveys and the EDGE Surveys.

3. Key Informant Interviews

- Conducting interviews with senior management and relevant personnel to gain insights into HR practices, challenges, and strategies. A representative number of interviews would be around 400 (with approximately 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level).

4. Surveys and Questionnaires

- Surveys and questionnaires will be administered at various levels to gather feedback on HR processes, workplace culture, and perceptions of diversity, inclusion and safety.

5. Benchmarking

- Comparing UNICEF's HR practices and outcomes with other leading humanitarian organizations to identify good practices and areas where UNICEF might need to catch up or excel. A minimum of four organizations will be selected for the analysis.

6. Field Visits and Observations

- Conducting site visits to observe HR processes in action, particularly in NY Headquarters and other HQ locations where the HR function is currently localised (Istanbul and Budapest), Supply Division, and a sample of Country Offices (including small, medium and large country offices and one country office running an emergency operation). A visit to a Regional Office can be combined with a visit to an HQ location outside of NY or a Country Office in the same duty station. Approximately ten field visits should be planned.

7. Comparative Analysis

- Comparing HR practices and outcomes over time to measure progress and the impact of HR initiatives on organizational goals.

8. Thematic case studies

- A thematic case study approach will be employed to analyse specific HR-related case studies to assess the effectiveness of specific HR initiatives. In the preparatory phase of the evaluation, the following themes have been identified: a) the new performance appraisal system without ratings; b) the mobility procedure; c) the allocation of human resources to support emergency responses; e) the talent management framework; d) the procedure on flexible working arrangements to promote better work-life balance.

Data triangulation will be a crucial methodological approach to enhance the validity and reliability of findings. The evaluation team is expected to consider a series of strategies to ensure triangulation of data in the evaluation process.

As an evaluation of HR management, participatory approaches will be used to involve HR staff and employees at various levels to produce valuable insights and ensure that the evaluation process is inclusive and representative.

Additionally, the evaluation team will be expected to follow UNICEF standards on evaluation ethics and quality, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, UNEG Code of Conduct, and UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation.¹⁸ The process will include the following mechanisms:

- **Confidentiality:** Protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals who provide information during the evaluation. Ensure that all data collected, including responses to survey and interview transcripts, are kept secure and anonymised to prevent the identification of individual participants. Likewise, the willingness of internal and external stakeholders to speak to these issues critically will depend on the provision of absolute confidentiality and anonymity.
- **Informed consent:** Obtain informed consent from individuals participating in the evaluation. Clearly explain the purpose of the evaluation, how their information will be used, and any potential risks or benefits. Participants should have the option to withdraw their consent at any time.
- **Impartiality and objectivity:** Obtain informed consent from individuals participating in the evaluation, especially when conducting interviews or surveys. Avoid conflict of interest that could compromise the integrity of the evaluation.
- **Non-discrimination:** Treat all individuals fairly and without discrimination based on gender, race, nationality, age, etc. The evaluation should assess HR management practices for equity and fairness.
- **Participation:** Maximize the degree of participation of UNICEF staff in the evaluation wherever feasible.
- **Data disaggregation:** Ensure proper data disaggregation by gender, disability, equity, and human rights-relevant factors. Ensure that evaluation products use gender-sensitive, disability-inclusive, and human-rights language.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** Be culturally sensitive and respectful of customs, norms and values when conducting the evaluation process. Ensure that individuals have a way to raise concerns or grievances.
- **Avoid harm:** Practice the ‘do no harm’ principle during the evaluation process and ‘do more good’.

The selected company must sign the UNEG Code of Conduct for evaluations and the non-disclosure agreement to abide by UNICEF’s security protocols to protect sensitive data.

In evaluating HR management in UNICEF, several potential risks should be anticipated and mitigated to ensure a successful and ethical evaluation process. In Table 1 below are some possible risks and corresponding mitigation measures that should be considered. Other risks can be identified by the evaluation team in their proposal.

Table 1: Risks and mitigation measures

Risk	Risk Mitigation Measure
Privacy and confidentiality: Unauthorized access to sensitive employee data leads to privacy breaches.	Ensure that all data collected is anonymized and stored securely. Access to evaluation data is provided only to authorized evaluation team members. Follow UNICEF data protection and privacy regulations.
Bias and management of perceptions: Staff perceive the evaluation as biased or favoring specific individuals or groups.	Adjust the analytical process to augment the number of sources of information or key informants. Present evidence of contribution only when plausible based on the type and reason for UNICEF’s contribution.
Resistance and opposition risk: Resistance from HR staff and other stakeholders who may fear the evaluation or its implications.	Communicate the purpose and benefits of the evaluation to all UNICEF staff. Engage staff in the evaluation process and seek their input and feedback.

¹⁸ These references are available at the following link: <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/resources>

Data accuracy risks: Inaccurate or incomplete data leads to unreliable evaluation findings.	Use multiple data sources and triangulation to cross-verify information. Ensure data collection tools are well-designed and tested. Conduct thorough data validation, verification, and triangulation.
Ethical concerns and conflicts of interest: Ethical dilemmas or conflicts among team members.	Establish a clear code of conduct in line with UNICEF and UNEG standards.

The evaluation team will be expected to follow UNICEF standards on evaluation ethics and quality, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, and UNEG Code of Conduct, as well as with UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation.¹⁹ The process will include the following mechanisms:

- Respecting gender and human rights principles throughout the evaluation process, including the protection of confidentiality, the protection of rights, the protection, dignity and welfare of people, and ensuring informed consent.
- Data validation will take place at all levels with participants’ consent.
- Maximizing the degree of participation of stakeholders in the evaluation itself wherever feasible and a commitment to using participatory approaches in conducting the case studies.
- Ensuring proper data disaggregation by gender, disability, equity, and human rights-relevant factors.
- Ensuring that evaluation products use gender-sensitive, disability-inclusive, and human-rights language.
- Ensuring privacy protocols and compliance with all legal data management rules and considerations.
- Practising the ‘do no harm’ principle during the exercise.

The evaluation team will have access to critical internal data and perspectives. These must be held with the utmost confidentiality. Likewise, the willingness of internal and external stakeholders to speak to these issues critically will depend on the provision of absolute confidentiality. The selected Company must sign the non-disclosure agreement (NDA), abide by UNICEF’s security protocols, and ensure that sensitive data is protected.

6. Management and Governance Arrangements

UNICEF’s Evaluation Office commissions the evaluation. A Senior Evaluation Specialist in the Evaluation Office will manage the exercise to ensure impartiality, independence and credibility and supervise the work of an external evaluation company who will conduct the evaluation. The evaluation manager may delegate oversight duties to other persons for portions of the work but will retain overall approving authority.

The evaluation manager will coordinate the evaluation with the Division of Human Resources (DHR), the Ethics Office, the Culture and Diversity team, the Global Shared Services Centre, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Staff Association and other Divisions and Offices. In each Division and Office, focal points will be identified to ensure access to information and key stakeholders to ensure the evaluation will produce relevant and reliable findings and actionable recommendations.

Furthermore, an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will support the evaluation in an advisory capacity. The ERG will be chaired by the Deputy Executive Director for Management, consisting of internal resource persons and external experts deemed helpful. The ERG will mainly focus on supporting quality assurance during the evaluation process, reviewing main deliverables, and supporting and validating the conclusions and recommendations.

Quality control protocols and processes established by the UNICEF Evaluation Office will be followed to ensure quality assurance and close management through all stages of the exercise. The evaluation manager will produce a note detailing management arrangements for the evaluation during the inception phase.

¹⁹ These references are available at the following link: <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/resources>

7. Required Qualifications and Experience of the Evaluation Team

The evaluation team conducting this evaluation is expected to be comprised of eight external team members, as follows: one principal evaluator (team lead), which is a human resources expert; one organizational development specialist; one international humanitarian expert; one diversity and inclusion specialist; one security and safety advisor; one psychosocial support specialist; one research and evaluation specialist; and one project manager. The team will work under the overall supervision of a Senior Evaluation Specialist (evaluation manager) in the Evaluation Office.

The principal evaluator, the international humanitarian expert, and two other specialists are expected to work full-time on this evaluation, while the other team members may be employed part-time.

The principal evaluator will be responsible for the day-to-day coordination and supervision of the evaluation team. The responsibilities of the principal evaluator (team leader) include:

- Lead the evaluation, ensuring that HR practices are thoroughly assessed and aligned with UNICEF's mission and goals;
- Develop the evaluation methodology and direct all parts of the evaluation, being directly accountable to the evaluation manager in the Evaluation Office;
- Coordinate and supervise the work of the evaluation team in their contributing roles;
- Provide bi-monthly progress reports on the implementation of the evaluation (written or in person);
- Train other team members on participant/case selection for sampling purposes, using data collection instruments and data quality assurance;
- Ensure the quality of the process from start to finish, outputs, methodology and timely delivery of all products, including adherence to ethical standards adherence (e.g., the confidentiality of data) during all phases of the evaluation;
- Implement or oversee the implementation of data collection, such as interviewing key stakeholders; conducting field visits and observation; developing survey protocol; developing data management procedures and tools; coding, entering and cleaning data; analysing data;
- Draft presentations and write draft evaluation reports and the final evaluation report;
- Ensure that the deliverables emerge in a timely fashion, following a high-quality, in-depth analytic process, as well as ongoing consultation with the evaluation manager and the Evaluation Reference Group; and
- Present findings to key stakeholders at external meetings and conferences (in coordination with the evaluation manager).

The Proposers will outline the other team members' responsibilities in their technical proposals.

The qualifications of each team member should align with their roles and areas of expertise. Herein is a breakdown of the capabilities and expertise expected of each team member.

Principal evaluator (team lead):

- A university degree at the Masters' level or equivalent in human resources management, organizational development, or a related field;

- At least 15 years of professional experience in HR management, preferably within humanitarian organizations or international agencies;
- Strong knowledge of HR policies, practices, and legal frameworks;
- Familiarity with evaluation approaches and methodologies;
- Knowledge of UNICEF mandate and programming about the Sustainable Development Agenda;
- Proven expertise in leading exercises similar in scope to the present evaluation;
- Demonstrated ability to supervise an evaluation team; and
- Fluency and excellent communication and report writing in English and working knowledge of French, Spanish, Arabic or another UN language that may be helpful during fieldwork desirable.

Organizational development specialist:

- A university degree at Masters' level or equivalent in organizational development, organizational psychology, or a related field;
- At least ten years of experience in HR management, preferably within humanitarian organizations or international agencies; and
- Strong knowledge of HR policies, practices, and legal frameworks.

International humanitarian expert:

- A university degree at the Masters' level or equivalent in international development, humanitarian studies, or a related field;
- At least ten years of experience in international humanitarian work; and
- Familiarity with humanitarian principles and practices.

Diversity and inclusion specialist:

- A university degree at the Masters' level or equivalent in diversity and inclusion, social work, or a related field;
- In-depth knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and practices; and
- Experience in developing and implementing diversity programmes in international organizations.

Security and safety advisor:

- A university degree at Masters' level or equivalent in security management, risk management, or a related field;
- Extensive experience in security and safety risk management, particularly in high-risk or conflict zones and
- Familiarity with security protocols in humanitarian contexts.

Psychosocial support specialist:

- A university degree at Masters' level or equivalent in clinical psychology, counselling, or a related field;
- Proven expertise in providing psychological support to individuals in challenging or traumatic situations and

- Knowledge of staff well-being programmes.

Research and evaluation specialist:

- A university degree at a Masters' level or equivalent in evaluation, research methodology, or a related field;
- Strong background in research design, data collection, and analysis;
- Proficiency in both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods; and
- Familiarity with UNICEF and UNEG evaluation standards and ethics.

Project manager:

- A project management certification or an advanced degree in project management, business administration, or a related field;
- Demonstrated experience in project management, including planning, coordination, and resource management; and
- Strong organizational and leadership skills.

UNICEF will pay particular attention to ensuring the selection of a gender-balanced, geographic, and culturally diverse evaluation team and complementary subject matter and evaluation experience. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include experts from the Global South as part of the evaluation team (as part of the same institution or in a consortium). The experts developing the methodology for the RFPS must be involved in the evaluation.

8. Evaluation Schedule and Deliverables

A timeline of around twelve months is envisaged for the evaluation, from January to December 2024. The evaluation will be proposed for presentation to the Executive Board in June 2025. The evaluation is organized in five phases, as follows.

The evaluation team will conduct a comprehensive desk review and data analysis in the first or inception phase (January to February 2024). An inception mission (five days) to NY HQ will be conducted, and KIIs will also be carried out to finetune the scope of the case studies. Deliverables for phase one include:

- A PowerPoint presentation of the evaluation approach and methodology; and
- An inception report of a maximum of 30 pages or 20,000 words without annexes, confirming a shared understanding of what is to be evaluated and how for review by the evaluation manager and the Evaluation Reference Group.

In phase two (March to June 2024), the evaluation team will collect data for each case study, focusing on gathering qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation team will conduct field visits, observations, launch surveys, and benchmarking analyses. Deliverables comprise:

- The case studies reports will be prepared for review by the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Reference Group and other key stakeholders. Each case study report will be a maximum of 15 pages each or about 10,000 words;
- The analysis of survey data; and
- The benchmarking analysis.

In phase three of the evaluation (July to September 2024), the evaluation team will progress with the data collection, analysis and triangulation of evidence to present findings, preliminary conclusions, and the first draft of the evaluation report. Deliverables include:

- A PowerPoint presentation to support the validation of findings and preliminary conclusions by the Evaluation Reference Group and other key stakeholders, including UNICEF leadership, HR staff and other experts; and
- A first draft of the final evaluation report for review by the Evaluation Reference Group and other key stakeholders. Before being shared, the report will be quality assured by the Evaluation Manager and will be circulated only when it is of sufficient quality, in line with UNICEF quality standards for evaluation and template for evaluation reporting.

In phase four of the evaluation (October to November 2024), while the evaluation report will be refined, the evaluation recommendations will be co-created through a collaborative and participatory process involving key stakeholders. Co-creating recommendations will help ensure they are practical, actionable, and aligned with the organization's goal and mission. Deliverables for phase four comprise:

- A PowerPoint presentation to support the conduct of a participatory workshop to co-create evaluation recommendations and
- The second draft of the evaluation report for validation by the Evaluation Reference Group.

Finally, in phase five (December 2024), the evaluation team will consolidate the final evaluation report and focus on producing other products that will support the communication and socialisation of the evaluation. Deliverables for phase five are:

- The final evaluation report should not exceed 60 pages or 40,000 words, excluding the executive summary and annexes. The Evaluation Manager will review the report for approval by the Director of the Evaluation Office and
- Other products, including infographics (for inclusion in the final evaluation report and other products), a standalone four-page evaluation brief (distinct from the executive summary in the evaluation report) intended for a wider audience, and a final PowerPoint presentation to be presented in a final webinar.

Additional products may include PowerPoint presentations for meetings with the Evaluation Reference Group to summarise work progress. All products will be in standard English²⁰ and follow the requirements of the UNICEF Style Book.

Proposers are invited to reflect on the outline of each evaluation product in their technical proposal.

The final report will be completed by December 2024 and proposed for presentation to the UNICEF Executive Board, along with the management response in June 2025.

Relevant standards and guidance documents are the UNEG Norms and Standards, UNEG Code of Conduct, UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, UNEG Guidance on Evaluating Institutional Gender Mainstreaming, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, UNICEF's Evaluation Policy, Guidance

²⁰ The Evaluation Office will translate the final evaluation report in other UN languages, as necessary.

on Gender Integration in Evaluation, Guidance on Disability-Inclusive Evaluations, UNICEF standards for evaluation reports as per GEROS, as well as UNICEF Ethics Procedure.²¹

9. Payment Schedule

Unless applicants propose an alternative payment schedule, payments will be as follows:

- Approved inception report (phase one): Two months after signing the contract;
- Approved data collection and assessment for the thematic case studies, field visits and debriefings (phase two): Six months after signing the contract;
- Approved presentation of findings and preliminary conclusions of the evaluation and first draft of the final report (phase three): Nine months after the signing of the contract;
- Approved co-creation of recommendations workshop and second draft of the final report (phase four): Ten months after the signing of the contract; and
- Approved final report, presentation and other products (phase five): Twelve months after signing the contract.

10. Application Requirements for Technical and Financial Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated based on a combination of technical and financial considerations, including the need to meet the mandatory criteria. The technical quality of the proposals will account for 70 per cent of the final score; financial proposals will account for 30 per cent.

A panel of UNICEF specialists will review the technical proposals first; only proposals that meet the mandatory criteria and receive a minimum of 70 points (out of 100) during the technical evaluation will be considered further. Proposals that pass the technical stage will receive a financial score, and the two will be added together.

Content of the technical proposal

The technical proposal will be in PDF format and must include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- A. Table of contents.
- B. Request for proposals for services form (page 3 of the Request for Proposals for Services – RFPS – document).
- C. Presentation of the bidding institution (institutions if a consortium), after that referred to as the applicant, including:
 - Name of the applicant;
 - Date and country of registration/incorporation and location of offices or agents;
 - Summary of corporate structure (detailed organogram), business areas, corporate directions, experience, and values;
 - Past two years' annual turnover (in US dollars); and
 - Number of full-time employees and type (technical experts, administrative and logistics support staff, financial staff, etc.).
- D. Short narrative description of the applicant's experience and capacity in the following areas:

²¹ Please refer to the following links for accessing relevant procedures, guidance and resources: <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/resources> and <http://www.uneval.org/>

- Evaluation of human resources, organizational culture, and other evaluations of human resources management;
 - Previous evaluations of institutional/organizational effectiveness;
 - Evaluation of development programmes and humanitarian action;
 - Previous evaluations conducted for international development organizations using UNEG norms and standards for evaluation; and
 - Capacities, including the ability (if a part of the proposed methodology) to conduct case studies in the areas related to the objectives of the evaluation.
- E. List similar and relevant past and ongoing evaluations carried out by the proposer in the past five years. Include full reports or links to complete reports listed as examples of the proposer's relevant past and ongoing evaluations (at least 3), on which the proposed key personnel directly and actively contributed or authored, and references of supervisors (minimum three; for each, please indicate, name, and contact information). UNICEF may contact reference persons for feedback on services provided by the proposers. A template is provided in Annex 2.
- F. Proposed methodology. There is no minimum or maximum length. It should minimize repeating what is stated in the ToR. If in doubt, ensure sufficient detail is provided for UNICEF to judge the technical expertise. The required content is as follows:
- Understanding of, and comments on, the context and rationale for the evaluation;
 - Understanding of and comments on the evaluation scope;
 - Comments on the evaluation criteria and questions and areas of particular interest in the evaluation;
 - Understanding of, comments on, potential risks and mitigation measures, and ethical issues related to this evaluation exercise. This must include a description of the applicant's ethics and data privacy protocols;
 - Proposed evaluation approach and methodology, with a sufficient level of detail on each phase and activity of the evaluation process, including data to be collected to answer the evaluation questions, envisaged data collection and analysis methods, the sampling methodology, the criteria to select the benchmarking organizations, the thematic case studies, and other methods. Particular attention should be paid to the participation of UNICEF staff, utilization of evidence, the mix of quantitative and qualitative data and methods; data disaggregation, accuracy, and triangulation; approaches to data treatment and analysis; and quality assurance;
 - Comments and additional details/suggestions on the deliverables proposed in the ToR, if any;
 - Comments and suggestions on the management arrangements described in the ToR, if any, and proposed internal management and quality assurance arrangements; and
 - The presence of partners/consultants or others not typically full-time members of the bidding institution should be indicated, describing how they will be engaged, trained, supported, and supervised.
- G. Work plan, which will include as a minimum requirement the following:
- General work plan based on the one proposed in the ToR, with comments and proposed adjustments, if any; and
 - Detailed timetable by activity. It must be consistent with the general work plan and the financial proposal. It must factor in sufficient time to draft deliverables, their quality assurance by the

evaluation team, UNICEF and the Evaluation Reference Group, and finalization. It should also consider the vacation time of evaluation team members.

H. Evaluation team:

- Summary presentation of proposed experts;
- Description of support staff, if any;
- Level of effort of proposed experts by activity. It must be consistent with the financial proposal.
- CVs of each proposed expert. For information, the principal evaluator and other key experts will be asked to sign a statement of exclusivity and availability before the contract signature; however, at the stage of the proposal submission, the proposed team is expected to be available for the entire duration of this assignment.

Content of the financial proposal

The financial proposal must be entirely separated from the technical proposal. The financial proposal will be submitted in both PDF and Microsoft Excel format. Costs will be formulated in US dollars and free of all taxes. It will include the following elements as a minimum requirement:

- A. Overall price proposal; and
- B. Deliverables-based budget in Annex D Financial Proposal (total cost of deliverable is based on roles used for the deliverable, consultants daily rate x number of days = total cost of the deliverable).

As per UNICEF procurement procedure, the budget for this evaluation assignment is not disclosed.

Bidders should provide only travel costs for the inception phase in the proposal. Additional travel costs will be factored in after the thematic case studies and field visits are identified, and the contract shall be amended. All travel and the related budget should be pre-approved by UNICEF. When travelling, the evaluation team will be responsible for administering their travel and all travel costs (i.e., flights, daily subsistence allowance, etc.). Travel expenses will be reimbursed separately upon presentation of receipts based on actual expenditure or as per UN rates (<http://icsc.un.org/rootindex.asp> and <https://icsc.un.org/Home/DailySubsistence>), whichever is lower. International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) of special hotels will not be applicable. Travel expenses shall be calculated based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of the trip, and costs for accommodation, meals, and incidentals shall not exceed applicable DSA rates, as promulgated by the ICSC.

11. Assessment of Proposals

Under this RFP, the evaluation process identifies the most responsive proposal, based on the evaluation criteria, technical scores and minimum quality threshold specified in the RFP. The RFP states that the most responsive proposal will be the highest scoring proposal following a cumulative analysis which weights technical and financial scores using technical/financial weightings stated in the RFP. Combined Technical and Financial Score with weightage 70:30 applies.

Mandatory criteria

Applicants must provide documentation of proven expertise from UN agencies or development partners, showcasing the applicant's expertise in designing, managing, and administering evaluations of institutional/organizational effectiveness and human resources management. This should include a summary table presenting the applicant's track record of conducting similar evaluations across various development partners for UN agencies or organizations. A template is provided in Annex 2.

Technical criteria

The following criteria will be used in evaluating the technical proposals:

Technical Evaluation Criteria		
Section 1: OVERALL RESPONSE	Demonstrated understanding of this assignment's purpose, scope, requirements, and deliverables, including HR management in UNICEF and the UN System.	5
	Clarity and completeness of the conceptual framework for data collection, compilation, analysis and reporting.	5
	Familiarity with relevant evaluation approaches (i.e., participatory and mixed methods) applicable to HR management.	5
	Focus, scale/size, and scope of past and current evaluations implemented, including evaluation types.	5
	Adequacy of risk assessment, with- recognition of the risks/peripheral problems and methods to prevent and manage risks/peripheral issues.	5
	Demonstrated ability to conduct high-quality evaluations in various contexts.	5
Total Section 1: 30 points		
Section 2: METHODOLOGY	Quality of proposed implementation plan, i.e., how to undertake and execute each stage, with proposed project phases.	5
	Quality of the proposed approach and methodology for the assignment, from data collection, compilation, and analysis.	15
	Ability to conduct data collection, including proposed methods and tools for doing so.	10
	Demonstrated ability to conduct evidence-generation activities ethically. These include a description of in-house ethical review mechanisms/teams and/or partnerships with independent ethical review boards.	5
Total Section 2: 35 points		
Section 3: QUALIFICATIONS	Quality and relevance of the sample work provided, including validation through reference checks.	10
	Relevant academic qualifications, skills, and years of technical experience of team members, including familiarity with UNICEF and/or other UN agencies and previous experience working for international organizations.	10
	The proposed team members' oral and written communication skills, including facilitating and conducting meetings and performing work in English, French, Spanish and Arabic (using in-house or outsourced resources).	5
	A clear description of quality assurance mechanisms and staff to be employed by the applicant to deliver quality products under this RFPS. Includes both in-house and outsourced quality assurance.	5
Total Section 3: 30 points		

Section 4: SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT PROCESS	Annex 3 for SDG Goal 12 and its target 12.7 is duly completed, signed, and returned with the Technical Proposal.	5
Total Possible Points		100
Minimum qualifying required Score (Total Technical Proposal)		70

Financial criteria

The following criteria will be used in evaluating the financial proposals:

- The price should be broken down for each deliverable of the proposed work based on an estimate of time, which needs to be stated;
- Applicants must complete the financial proposal form with the daily rate of each team member;
- The total amount of points allocated for the price component is 30. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among invited firms/institutions/individuals who obtain the threshold points in evaluating the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price, e.g.:

$$\text{Score for price proposal X} = (30 * \text{Price of lowest priced proposal}) / (\text{Price of proposal X})$$

Under this RFPS the Combined Technical and Financial Score with weightage 70:30 applies.

Annex 2: Template to Outline Previous Experience

The applicant can use the template below to document expertise from a UN agency or development partner in designing, managing, and administering institutional/organizational effectiveness and human resources management evaluations.

Project title	Date (start, end date)	Scope of work (evaluation purpose and objectives)	Budget	Role and responsibilities	Supervisor (name, role, organization, e-mail contact)	Relevant public links of final deliverables

Annex 3: Sustainable Procurement Checklist

The UNICEF Procedure on Sustainable Procurement is one of UNICEF’s responses to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12 – “Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns” and its target 12.7 – “promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, by national policies and priorities”. Sustainable procurement encompasses three pillars – economic, environmental and social. Bidders are encouraged to read the [Sustainable procurement procedure](#) produced by UNICEF Supply Division.

Each box below has been assigned with 1 point. The last box has been set with 2 points. If applicable, please checkmark the box for the following:

- Has your company committed to the economic pillar (for example, policy/ SOP to include local resources to develop the local economy in the area of work, including small businesses and businesses owned by marginalized groups)? Please provide relevant policy/certification / SOP to evidence the claim.
- Has your company committed to the social pillar (for example, policy/ SOP protecting human rights and labor issues (workers’ rights), including persons with disabilities and gender in the workforce)? Please provide relevant policy/certification / SOP to evidence the claim.
- Has your company committed to the environmental pillar (for example, policy/ SOP to minimize the impact on the environment from purchasing, reduction of wastage, reduced CO2 emissions, etc.)? Please provide relevant policy/certification / SOP to evidence the claim.
- Please explain how you plan to integrate sustainability measures in the execution of the contract if awarded to you (250 words):

Annex 3 for SDG Goal 12 and its target 12.7 must be duly completed, signed, and returned with the Technical Proposal.