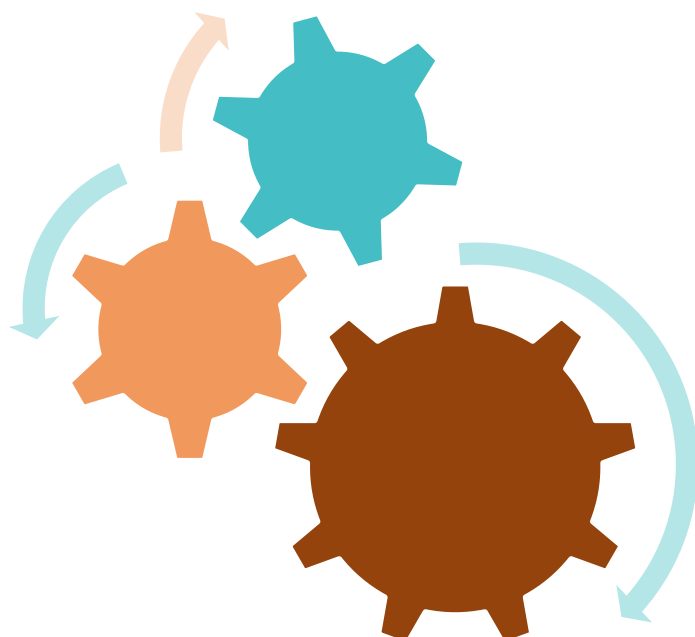


# EVALUATION POLICY AND STRATEGY

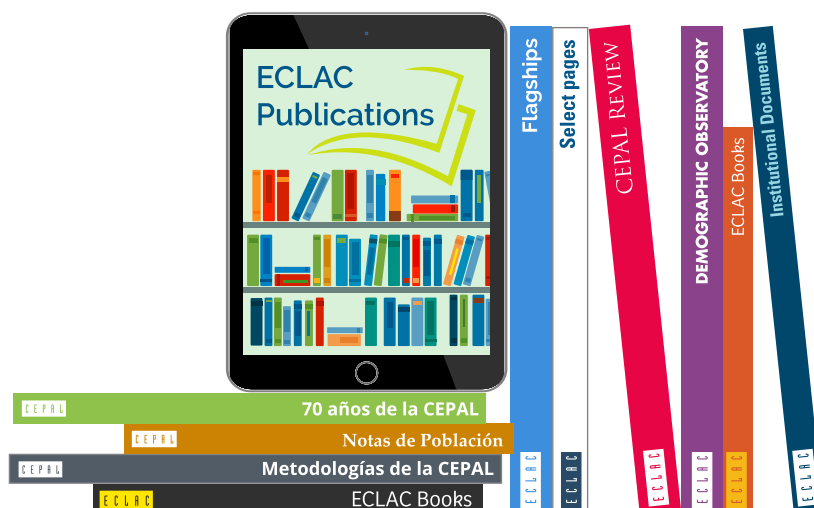
MARCH 2024



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ECLAC

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This updated and revised version of the evaluation policy and strategy of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was prepared by Anne-Sophie Samjee, Programme Management Officer in the Programme Planning and Operations Division of ECLAC, with the assistance of Paula Muñoz Gilloux, Programme Assistant and under the supervision of Sandra Manuelito, Chief of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of the same Division, under the overall guidance of Raúl García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of ECLAC.

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## Acronyms

BTAD	Business Transformation and Accountability Division
CEPALDIS	ECLAC Disability Inclusion Strategy
DA	Development Account
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PPEU	Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit
PPOD	Programme Planning and Operations Division
RBM	Results-based management
TORs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNDIS	UN Disability Inclusion Strategy

## A. Presentation

The present document describes the revised policy and strategy for the practice of evaluation within the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); it updates and supersedes the 2017 ECLAC evaluation policy and strategy. The purpose of the Commission's evaluation policy and strategy is to strengthen the evaluation function by maximizing transparency and coherence and ensuring high quality standards in its evaluations, in order, in turn, to contribute to greater accountability, improved performance, and institutional learning within the Commission. The Commission's policy has been established in accordance with the Secretariat's rules and regulations on evaluation,<sup>1</sup> in accordance with guidelines established by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).<sup>2</sup> The policy and strategy is also aligned with the norms and standards of evaluation established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).<sup>3</sup>

## B. Evaluation at the UN

The evaluation function within the United Nations Secretariat was largely shaped by the reform initiative launched by the Secretary-General to increase the effectiveness of the Organization's work spelled out in the 1997 Secretary-General's "Programme for Reform,"<sup>4</sup> which led to the institutionalization of results-based management (RBM) in the United Nations.

The need to strengthen the evaluation function in the United Nations Secretariat was subsequently highlighted in several key documents, most recently the Report of the Secretary-General, *Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: ensuring a better future for all (A/72/492)*, in 2017. The administrative instruction, *Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat, ST/AI/2021/3* lays out the instructions and procedures for the implementation of the evaluation function under article VII of the Secretary-General's bulletin "Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation" (ST/SGB/2018/3).

### 1. Definition of Evaluation at the UN

The definition of evaluation as agreed within the UN Evaluation Group is: "an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders. The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning".<sup>5</sup>

### 2. Types of evaluation

Evaluation in the Secretariat can be divided into two major categories, namely internal and external evaluation.

#### (a) External evaluation

External evaluations are designed, managed and conducted by an entity outside the programme being evaluated, such as the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) as part of its UN system-wide mandate or the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). ECLAC is committed to collaborating with external evaluations conducted by oversight bodies and implementing their recommendations to improve its accountability and compliance processes.

Evaluations of cooperation programmes and projects can also be conducted by donors, following their own policies and procedures, in accordance with the agreements in place with ECLAC.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, "Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation", Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2018/3), June 2018, [Available on-line at: <http://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2018/3>].

<sup>2</sup> OIOS, "Inspection and Evaluation Manual", September 2014 [Available on-line at: [https://oios.un.org/resources/2015/01/OIOS-IED\\_Manual.pdf](https://oios.un.org/resources/2015/01/OIOS-IED_Manual.pdf)].

<sup>3</sup> UNEG, "Norms and Standards for Evaluation, UNEG", June 2016 [Available on-line at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>].

<sup>4</sup> United Nations General Assembly, report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (A/51/950), July 1997, p. 19 [ Available on-line at: <https://undocs.org/A/51/950>].

<sup>5</sup> Extracted from the document "Guidelines - Administrative Instruction on Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat" presented with ST/AI/2021/3.

**(b) Internal evaluation**

Internal evaluations are evaluations conducted by a given entity on its own programmes. At ECLAC, they result in evaluation outputs in the form of evaluation reports that meet the norms and standards of evaluation in the UN System established by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG).

The ECLAC evaluation policy and strategy focuses on internal evaluations managed by ECLAC.

## C. Evaluation at ECLAC

### 1. Definition of Evaluation at ECLAC

A process that seeks to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, theme, sector, operative area or institutional performance in the light of its objectives and expected accomplishments, analyzing both expected and unexpected results. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes.

### 2. Key objectives of evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of the work of ECLAC in all its substantive areas and has contributed to improve programme planning, design and implementation. As an important accountability mechanism, it enhances the Commission's legitimacy and credibility. It also helps ECLAC to ensure a results orientation in the activities it undertakes, and to identify the impacts of its interventions. Moreover, it is an important driver of institutional learning, allowing ECLAC to replicate best practices and apply innovative approaches.

The evaluation function at ECLAC has three main objectives:

**(a) Accountability**

Evaluation at ECLAC constitutes an important accountability mechanism for reporting to United Nations governing bodies, member States, donors, implementing partners and beneficiaries, enhancing the legitimacy and credibility of the Commission's work in supporting economic and social development in the region. Evaluation also contributes to the identification and dissemination of the Commission's key achievements.

**(b) Managing for results**

As a key element of results-based management, evaluation assists ECLAC managers to more effectively plan objectives, expected accomplishments, outputs and activities for results leading to a more efficient allocation of resources. Evaluations are also useful to identify the results of the diverse activities the Commission undertakes, and recognize strengths and weaknesses in the Commission's work processes.

**(c) Learning, innovation and organizational change**

The lessons learned and recommendations derived from evaluations allow ECLAC managers to identify effective practices and innovative approaches which are useful for the continuous improvement of the Commission's work. They also serve as key inputs in determining corrective action to be taken to improve the Commission's overall performance and effectiveness.

### 3. Guiding principles

All definitions presented in this section are aligned with those of UNEG, as set out in its Norms for Evaluation in the UN System and those of OIOS as set out in its List of Key Oversight Terms.<sup>6</sup>

**Guiding principles:** Human rights, gender mainstreaming, disability inclusion, environmental considerations, regional cooperation and engagement, internal and inter-agency coordination, and participation and inclusion are the key principles guiding the ECLAC evaluation function. In practice, this means that all evaluations should incorporate these principles as lines of analysis of the evaluation, by reviewing how these principles were respected and promoted throughout the design and implementation of the project, programme or area under evaluation. ECLAC also seeks to ensure that the evaluation process itself applies these same principles, and that evaluations ultimately contribute to promoting and reinforcing them.

#### (a) Human rights

Evaluations should always assess the extent to which the activities and products of ECLAC respected and promoted human rights, equity and justice, including whether ECLAC interventions treated beneficiaries as equals, safeguarded and promoted the rights of minorities, and helped to empower civil society. Moreover, the evaluation process itself, including its design, the collection of data, and dissemination of the evaluation report, should be carried out in alignment with these principles.

#### (b) Gender mainstreaming

Evaluations should examine whether the design and implementation of the Commission's activities took the needs and priorities of women into account, whether they treated women as equal players, and whether they served to promote women's autonomy, in line with the ECLAC gender mainstreaming strategy (2020).<sup>7</sup>

#### (c) Disability inclusion

In line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and the ECLAC Disability Inclusion Strategy (CEPALDIS) launched in 2021, ECLAC will ensure that disability inclusion is mainstreamed throughout its evaluation process.

#### (d) Environmental considerations

Whenever possible and relevant, ECLAC will strive to include environmental considerations into its evaluation process, including climate change and other environmental concerns.

#### (e) Regional cooperation and engagement

ECLAC strives not only to respond to development needs in Latin America and the Caribbean, but also to serve as a forum and facilitator in building regional consensus and supporting public policy formulation to meet the challenges facing the region. It promotes multilateral dialogue, sharing knowledge and building networks at the global, regional and subregional levels. The Commission also seeks to promote intra- and interregional cooperation between the regional commissions and to collaborate with other regional organizations, particularly other United Nations entities. Moreover, the engagement and ownership of the Commission's partner countries within the region is essential to ensuring that its work is aligned with regional priorities, that its activities help build technical and institutional capacities, and that its impacts are sustainable. To this end, evaluations should examine whether ECLAC activities respond to these priorities and the extent to which its counterparts are involved in planning and implementation processes.

<sup>6</sup> UNEG, "Norms and Standards for Evaluation", June 2016 [Available on-line at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>].

OIOS, "List of Key Oversight terms", April 2013, [Available on-line at [https://oios.un.org/resources/2015/01/list\\_key\\_oversight\\_terms.pdf](https://oios.un.org/resources/2015/01/list_key_oversight_terms.pdf)].

<sup>7</sup> ECLAC, "Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) 2013-2017", October 2013, [Available on-line at <http://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/40448>].



**(f) Internal and inter-agency coordination**

Many of the Commission's programmes and projects are implemented in coordination with its subregional and national offices, or in partnership with other United Nations agencies, both at intra- and interregional level. Effective coordination in programme planning and implementation is critical to ensuring that resources are used efficiently and results are achieved. Evaluations should consider the extent to which ECLAC has coordinated its activities with its offices away from headquarters and with other United Nations partners. Evaluations will also consider the contribution of different sources of funding, including the regular programme of technical cooperation, to the achievement of project and programme outcomes.

**(g) Participation and inclusion**

Assessments of the work of ECLAC should consider whether all stakeholders, including the United Nations, national counterparts, and beneficiaries were able to take active roles in project implementation and whether particular emphasis was given to the inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups. Similarly, the evaluation process should involve all stakeholders, including programme managers and other implementing partners, in an inclusive manner in the evaluation design, data collection, and quality assurance process.

**(h) Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets**

ECLAC will strive to uphold and promote United Nations principles and values in its evaluation practice. In particular, ECLAC will take measures to ensure that all of its evaluations include an assessment of whether and how the activities, projects or programmes being evaluated have promoted and contributed to the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**4. Norms**

The Commission's norms and standards for evaluation are aligned with those established by UNEG in its 2016 "Norms and Standards for Evaluation".<sup>8</sup> These have been adapted in this paper to the context of the evaluation function within ECLAC.

**(a) Utility**

In all evaluations commissioned by ECLAC, there should be a clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. At ECLAC, the utility of evaluation manifests through its use for accountability, managing for results and learning, innovation and organizations change, which are ensured through an intentional process to select, design and conduct evaluations and the institutionalization of a proper evaluation follow-up process.

**(b) Credibility**

All evaluations at ECLAC are to be carried out through transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders, a rigorous methodology and robust quality assurance systems to ensure the credibility of evaluation results, findings, recommendations and lessons learned.

**(c) Independence**

In order to ensure the independence of the evaluation function, it should be fully transparent and free from undue influence. While evaluations at ECLAC are managed by its staff, measures are taken to maximize to the extent possible the independence of the evaluation function. The evaluation function is separate from other management functions within PPOD so as to ensure full discretion in the supervision of evaluations. Moreover, ECLAC takes various measures to safeguard the independence of the evaluative process. For example, the function of ECLAC staff is limited to setting the ECLAC evaluation policy and guidelines, evaluation planning and monitoring, task management of evaluations and

<sup>8</sup> UNEG, "Norms and Standards for Evaluation", June 2016 [Available on-line at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>].

quality assurance. ECLAC contracts its evaluators externally, and their independence from the evaluation subject is considered a prerequisite for their selection. Additionally, ECLAC ensures that evaluators have full access to all relevant information and are provided full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially, without the risk of negative effects on their career development, and are allowed to freely express their assessment.

#### **(d) Impartiality**

ECLAC should ensure impartiality at all stages of the evaluation process, including the planning and design of evaluations, selection of evaluation consultant(s), involving all relevant stakeholders, and ensuring that evaluators conduct evaluations in an impartial manner by objectively conducting their evaluations, ensuring the validity of evaluation results and taking into consideration the views of all stakeholders.

#### **(e) Ethics**

As established by UNEG norms, ECLAC should ensure that evaluations are conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the 'do no harm' principle for humanitarian assistance. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and that sensitive data is protected and that it cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of private information from those who provide it. When evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered, it must be reported discreetly to a competent body (such as the relevant office of audit or investigation).

#### **(f) Transparency**

All stakeholders should be consulted in the evaluation process in order to create ownership and facilitate consensus to facilitate transparency in the evaluation process. Terms of Reference (TORs) and evaluation reports should be shared with all members of the ERG, including representatives of the implementing partners. Evaluation reports as well as management response should be made accessible to the public through publication on the ECLAC website.

#### **(g) Professionalism**

All ECLAC evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. Professionalism is ensured through rigorous selection processes of evaluation staff and external consultants (evaluators), rigorous evaluation methodologies and quality control systems.

## **5. Types of evaluation conducted by ECLAC**

Evaluations at ECLAC are typically commissioned and managed by the Commission's PPOD and are carried out by external consultants. In some cases, ECLAC undertakes evaluations by agreement with (and with financing from) an external donor. Evaluations are in some cases submitted to the Executive Secretary, and depending on their scope and relevance, they might also be presented to the ECLAC member States. Internal evaluations constitute the entire portfolio of evaluations conducted by ECLAC and are therefore the subject of the present policy and strategy document. These evaluations address various dimensions of the Commission's work, categorized here according to three different levels of analysis:

#### **(a) Cross-cutting and strategic issues**

ECLAC may undertake evaluations examining specific cross-cutting or strategic issues of relevance to its mandate and activities.

#### **(b) Substantive divisions, subregional and national offices**

ECLAC may undertake evaluations of its individual substantive divisions, subregional and national offices, to examine the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the work of its subprogrammes, and/or subregions or countries covered by its subregional and national offices over a given period.

### (c) Programmes and projects

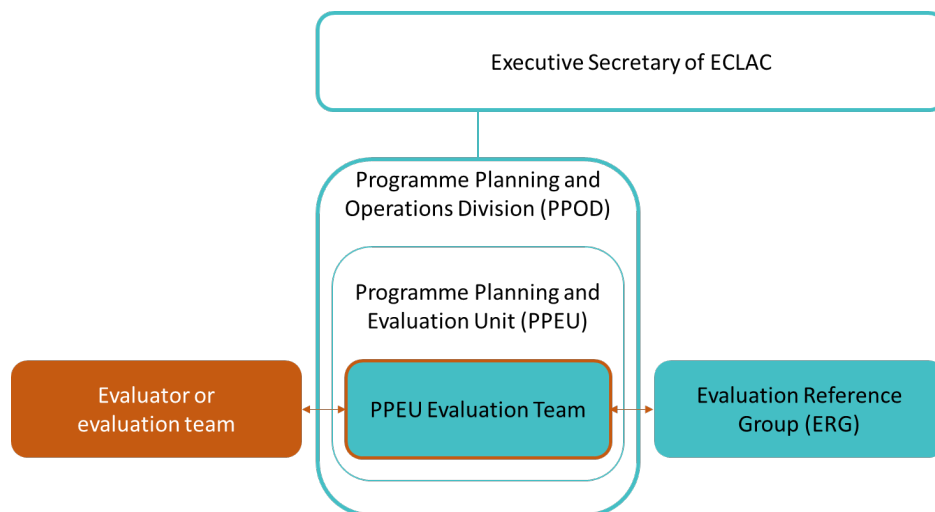
The majority of ECLAC evaluations are undertaken at the level of its individual programmes and projects, which are often implemented in partnership with other United Nations entities or external donors.

## D. Institutional framework

### 1. Institutional framework of the evaluation function

The evaluation function at ECLAC is a subset of its overall monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. The Commission's evaluation function is situated within the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (PPEU) of PPOD. The PPEU Evaluation Team is composed by a Programme Officer and an Evaluation Assistant, reporting to the Chief of the PPEU. The unit operates under the overall supervision of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis, who, in turn, reports directly to the Executive Secretary of the Commission. The PPEU Evaluation Team is separate from other management functions in the Division so as to ensure, to the extent possible, independence in the evaluation function.

**DIAGRAM 1**  
Institutional structure of the evaluation function



Source: Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (PPEU).

### 2. Roles and responsibilities

#### (a) Executive Secretary of ECLAC

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC carries overall responsibility for the Commission's programme of work, and is accountable to the Secretary-General, the United Nations Member States, as well as the States members of ECLAC. As part of his/her roles and responsibilities, the Executive Secretary:

- ✓ Approves the evaluation policy of ECLAC
- ✓ Oversees the work of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis
- ✓ Approves the Commission's evaluation plan as presented in the Proposed Programme Budget before its submission to the United Nations Secretariat and General Assembly for final approval
- ✓ Draws on evaluation recommendations to inform strategic decision-making regarding the Commission's programme of work

**(b) Programme Planning and Operations Division (PPOD)**

The evaluation function of ECLAC is carried out by the Evaluation Team under the guidance of the PPEU Chief and the overall supervision of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis, head of the Programme Planning and Operations Division. It implements all aspects of the evaluation function, with the following responsibilities:

**(i) Evaluation planning and governance**

- ✓ Develops and regularly updates the evaluation policy and strategy
- ✓ Develops and regularly updates evaluation guidelines
- ✓ Prepares the evaluation plan
- ✓ Periodically reports on the overall outcomes of the evaluation function
- ✓ Ensures that evaluation results feed into the Commission's programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting processes
- ✓ Incorporates evaluation findings in the Commission's organizational learning and knowledge management systems

**(ii) Management of evaluations**

- ✓ Commissions the evaluations
- ✓ Selects external evaluators based on a competitive selection process
- ✓ Manages the overall evaluation process and provides relevant information and documentation to evaluators
- ✓ Provides coordination with programme stakeholders and facilitates quality assurance of evaluations through joint review of evaluation deliverables
- ✓ Coordinates the preparation of management responses to evaluations, as well as the definition and implementation of follow-up actions with the respective divisions

**(iii) Communication and dissemination**

- ✓ Regularly updates programme managers on planned evaluations, evaluations in progress, and the findings and follow-up actions of completed evaluations
- ✓ Regularly updates ECLAC website on the evaluation function, providing access to the evaluation policy, guidelines, completed evaluation reports and their respective management responses, as well as other related up-to-date information on the evaluation function
- ✓ Establishes partnerships with evaluation networks and other associations active in the area of evaluation

**(c) ECLAC division programme managers and other implementing partners**

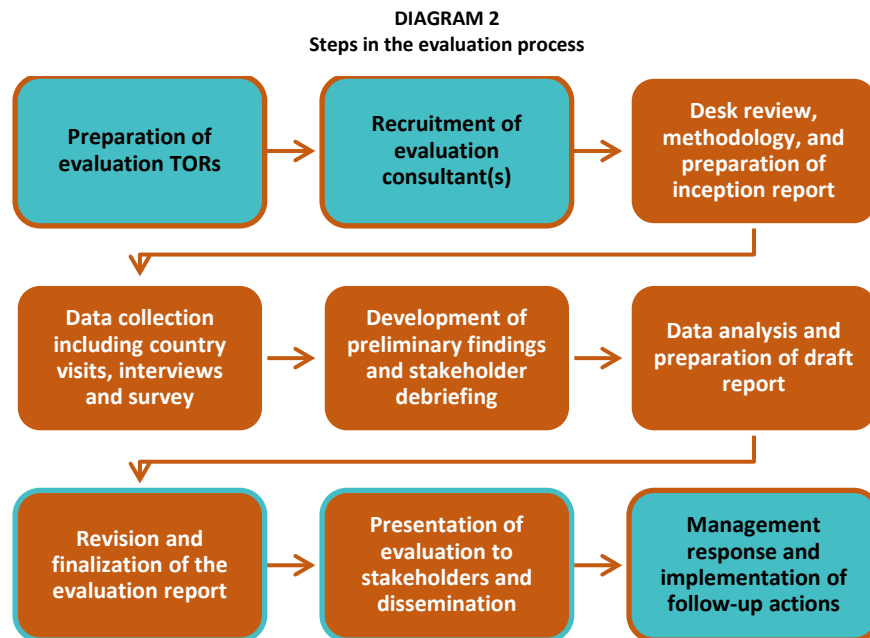
Programme managers in the various substantive divisions and subregional and national offices of ECLAC play an important role in the preparation, quality review and follow-up processes of evaluations and are formally represented in the evaluation process through the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).<sup>9</sup> Specifically, they:

- ✓ Nominate representatives to the ERG
- ✓ Provide relevant information and documentation to evaluators and act as informants in the evaluation process
- ✓ Review the evaluation report for robustness of evidence and factual accuracy
- ✓ Establish and implement follow-up actions in response to evaluation recommendations

<sup>9</sup> See page 15 for further details on the ERG.

**(d) Evaluator/Evaluation team (External consultant)**

- ✓ Undertakes the desk review, designs the evaluation methodology and prepares the inception report
- ✓ Conducts the data collection process, including the design of the electronic survey and semi-structured interviews
- ✓ Carries out the data analysis
- ✓ Drafts the evaluation report and undertakes revisions

**E. The evaluation process**

Source: Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (PPEU).

**1. Planning and budgeting evaluations**

The ECLAC evaluation plan is prepared along with the Proposed Programme Budget of ECLAC, currently elaborated on an annual basis. This plan indicates the topic, estimated cost and time frame of each evaluation. Evaluations of programmes and projects that are mandated to be evaluated in their project documents are included based on their planned closure dates, while thematic and strategic evaluations are determined by PPOD in consultation with ECLAC substantive divisions and subregional offices, according to need and relevance. In accordance with ST/AI/2021/3, ECLAC will strive to ensure that each one of its subprogrammes is evaluated, in whole or in part, at least once every six years.<sup>10</sup> The evaluation plans submitted as part of the programme budgets are considered to be estimates rather than formal commitments, and adjustments are sometimes made to respond to changing conditions. The annual evaluation plan is reflected in the Proposed Programme Budget for ECLAC to be formally submitted to the General Assembly.

In addition to the human resources assigned to evaluation as part of the Commission's overall programme of work, ECLAC aims to allocate approximately 2-5% of the total budget of each of its programmes and projects to evaluation. In order to attain this benchmark, and as stipulated in the Development Account Evaluation Framework, four percent of the total DA

<sup>10</sup> Subject to changes to follow any revision of ST/AI.2021/3 that might supersede this requirement.

budget in a tranche are to be earmarked for the evaluation function.<sup>11</sup> ECLAC will also conduct an evaluation of extrabudgetary projects and programmes as requested by donors, provided funds are provided for this purpose. Furthermore, and whenever feasible, extrabudgetary projects and programmes over US\$200,000 that are not evaluated separately by their respective donors should earmark appropriate resources for M&E functions. Additionally, and subject to the availability of resources, PPOD will carry out ad hoc thematic or strategic evaluation. Evaluation costs generally include:

- ✓ Human resources
- ✓ External evaluator fees
- ✓ Travel of external evaluator and ECLAC staff
- ✓ Editing and translation of evaluation reports
- ✓ Evaluation training needs

## 2. Preparation of the evaluation terms of reference (TORs)

For each of the evaluations conducted by ECLAC, terms of reference are prepared by the PPEU Evaluation Team, including, but not limited to, the following information:

- (a) General background of the project, programme or thematic area to be evaluated, including its objectives and main activities.
- (b) The main elements of the methodology proposed for the evaluation, indicating its objective, purpose, scope, main evaluation questions and criteria.
- (c) Roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process.
- (d) Deliverables, deadlines, payment schedules and conditions.
- (e) Profile of the evaluator or evaluation team members.

## 3. Recruitment of evaluation consultants

In order to ensure the independence of the evaluation function, it should be fully transparent and free from undue influence. While evaluations at ECLAC are managed by its staff, measures are taken to maximize to the extent possible the independence of the evaluation function. The evaluation function is separate from other management functions within PPOD so as to ensure full discretion in the supervision of evaluations, and the Programme officer in charge of Evaluation has the authority to submit reports directly to the Executive Secretary. Moreover, ECLAC takes various measures to safeguard the independence of the evaluative process. For example, the function of ECLAC staff is limited to task management of evaluations. In addition, ECLAC contracts its evaluators externally, and their independence from the evaluation subject is considered a prerequisite for their selection. Additionally, ECLAC ensures that evaluators have editorial independence, demonstrate impartiality in their assessment and are given access to all relevant information on the subject of the evaluation.

Once the TORs for the evaluation have been completed a vacancy announcement for external consultant(s) is circulated through Inspira.<sup>12</sup> The announcement is further disseminated through various M&E networks, and through direct e-mail to ECLAC's evaluation roster of consultants.

Evaluation candidates are assessed on Inspira based on the criteria set in the TORs; interview of short-listed candidates and reference checks can be conducted as appropriate to finalize the selection.

<sup>11</sup> UN Development Account Evaluation Framework, October 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Inspira is the on-line United Nations recruitment and human resources management system.

## 4. Evaluation methodology

Evaluations are generally carried out over the course of three to six months, depending on their scope (project evaluations are generally shorter while thematic and strategic evaluations require more time). All evaluations are conducted in three main stages:<sup>13</sup>

### (a) Inception

As part of the inception phase the evaluator should, based on the evaluation TOR, prepare a more detailed work plan of all the activities to be carried out related to the evaluation, clearly defining its outputs and deliverables and detailing the methodology to be used. The evaluator should also draft an inception report based on the approved work plan and the secondary data review. The inception report should include a detailed evaluation methodology including the description of the types of data collection instruments that will be used and a full analysis of the stakeholders and partners that will be contacted through the evaluation as part of the data collection efforts as well as drafts of the data collection tools to be used for the survey, focus groups and interviews.

### (b) Data collection

The following data collection methodologies should be considered when conducting any evaluation at ECLAC:

- (i) Desk review of all relevant documentation and secondary data collection analysis.
- (ii) Self-administered surveys
- (iii) Semi-structured interviews and focus groups to validate and triangulate information and findings from the surveys and the document reviews.
- (iv) Field visits (depending on evaluation scope and budget)

Methodological triangulation is an underlying principle to any evaluation conducted at ECLAC. Suitable frameworks for analysis and evaluation are to be elaborated – based on the questions to be answered.

### (c) Reporting

Following data collection, the evaluator will prepare the following deliverables:

- (i) Field Visit Report and preliminary findings, which should include the main results of the field visits (if any) and the preliminary findings based on data analysis of surveys, interviews and focus groups.
- (ii) Draft final evaluation Report, which should include the main draft results and findings, conclusions of the evaluation, lessons learned and recommendations derived from the evaluation.
- (iii) Final Evaluation Report, which should include the revised version of the preliminary version incorporating to the extent possible all the comments and observations from the evaluation management team of ECLAC and the ERG.
- (iv) Presentation of the results of the evaluation. A final presentation of the main results of the evaluation to ECLAC and other stakeholders involved in the evaluation will be conducted at the same time as the delivery of the final evaluation report.

## 5. Quality Assurance

ECLAC uses several means to ensure the highest standards of quality in its evaluations.

**(a) Guidelines:** All ECLAC evaluations are carried out in accordance with evaluation guidelines developed by PPEU. These guidelines outline the evaluation process, key evaluation criteria and questions, as well as the format and content of

<sup>13</sup> The evaluation planning and implementation process is outlined in more detail in the document Preparing and Conducting Evaluations: ECLAC guidelines.

deliverables, including the TORs, inception report, presentation of preliminary findings, the report of the evaluation and the follow-up action plan.

- (b) Evaluator competencies:** ECLAC follows a defined set of criteria for the experience and qualifications required in the selection of the evaluator. Key competencies required by ECLAC for the assignment of a consultant to an evaluation include:
- (i) An advanced degree in a field relevant to the topic of the evaluation
  - (ii) Relevant and extensive experience in conducting evaluations
  - (iii) Relevant experience in the subject being evaluated is desirable
  - (iv) Experience in the region(s) where the programme or project has been implemented
  - (v) Relevant language proficiency
  - (vi) Experience with international (development) organizations is required. Experience in Regional Commissions and United Nations projects is highly desirable.
  - (vii) Proven competency in quantitative and qualitative research methods, particularly self-administered surveys, document analysis, and informal and semi-structured interviews are required.

While the large majority of evaluations are carried out by a single external evaluator with the support of ECLAC evaluation staff, teams composed of two or three consultants may be required for larger thematic and strategic evaluations.

- (c) Review of evaluation deliverables:** The task manager provides continuous guidance and feedback to the evaluator throughout the evaluation process and reviews all evaluation deliverables, including the inception report, methodological data collection tools, presentations to implementing partners, and the draft and final evaluation report. ECLAC programme managers in the respective substantive divisions also provide continuous feedback to the task manager and evaluator.
- (d) Evaluation Reference Group (ERG):** An ERG, composed of a representative of each programme implementing partner, is a formal panel set up to provide feedback on the evaluation's preliminary finding and review the draft evaluation report. Comments by all panel members are consolidated by PPEU and submitted to the evaluator, who addresses them in the revision process as well as through a response template.

## 6. Dissemination Policy

Once each evaluation report has been finalized, a formal meeting to present the evaluation to the directors, unit chiefs, programme officers and planning and monitoring focal points of the Divisions involved in the implementation of the project or programme is held. During the meeting, the evaluator presents the main findings resulting from the evaluation of the programme or Project activities, lessons learned, best practices and recommendations to improve the implementation of such types of activities. All evaluation reports are then uploaded on the ECLAC website. Moreover, evaluation results are summarized in the report on the activities of the Commission, in the Proposed Programme Budget, as well as during strategic planning meetings with substantive divisions and offices away from headquarters.

## F. Evaluation use

### 1. Evaluation follow-up process

As a result of every evaluation conducted by ECLAC, a wide range of findings, lessons learned, best practices and recommendations are identified. The Programme Planning and Evaluation unit (PPEU) of the Programme Planning and Operations Division (PPOD) is responsible for following-up the implementation of actions in response to evaluation recommendations, coordinating and supervising the activities carried out by the different substantive Divisions of the Commission.



**(a) Objective of the evaluation follow-up process**

The follow-up process of evaluation's recommendations is of great usefulness for the institution, specifically for:

- (i) The continuous monitoring of key actions, undertaken to implement evaluation recommendations, provide useful information for the Commission to report to its different donors and stakeholders by providing relevant information related to the measures taken to improve its activities.
- (ii) The monitoring of recommendations also enhances results-based management, as carrying out activities that support the implementation of recommendations promotes the efficiency, efficacy and/or effectiveness of the various activities carried out within ECLAC and in coordination with other entities; achieving an improvement in the performance of the work of the different Divisions.
- (iii) Furthermore, this process promotes institutional change through the identification and promotion of best practices and lessons learned that will further contribute to the continuous improvement process of the Commission.

**(b) Response matrix and evaluation recommendations implementation plan**

Once the final edited version of the evaluation report is ready, the PPEU as well as the representatives of the ERG review the recommendation included in the final report and decide on their acceptance or not, prepare a draft response matrix and evaluation recommendations implementation plan, detailing each of the recommendations and key actions proposed by the evaluator in the final report and that have been accepted by ECLAC.

A meeting with representatives from PPOD and the directors, chief units, programme officers and planning and monitoring focal points of the Divisions is held to agree a final response matrix and evaluation recommendations implementation plan. The final matrix is distributed via e-mail to all the stakeholders involved in the follow-up process.

**(c) Monitoring Process**

Based on the agreed response matrices and implementation plans, a consolidated evaluation recommendations follow-up matrix per Division/Office will be prepared. Once a year, the substantive Division in charge of the following-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations will be requested to update the status of implementation of each of the agreed action, using the consolidated evaluation recommendations implementation follow-up matrix.

**(d) Finalization of the follow-up process**

The established date of completion for each specific action, will depend on deadline agreed between the substantive division and PPEU in the follow-up matrix. As substantive Divisions report actions as implemented, they will be withdrawn from the Division's consolidated matrix. On the other hand, the follow-up process of the implementation of the recommendations related to a specific evaluation, will be considered as concluded, once all the agreed actions related to that specific evaluation have been reported as implemented.

**2. Information dissemination process****(a) Knowledge products**

Recommendations and lessons learned identified in the evaluations carried out by ECLAC are consolidated periodically into a document that is widely disseminated to programme managers, focal points and directors of the different Divisions of ECLAC.

For each evaluated project, a briefing note is produced, summarizing the key achievements of the project and evaluation results. The briefing notes are shared with ECLAC senior management upon completion of the evaluation, as well as with the implementing division during strategic planning meetings, and with the ECLAC Projects committee. Other evaluation knowledge products may be developed as needed.

**(b) Other reporting instances**

Evaluation results will be used as appropriate in other reporting instances such as the report of activities of the Commission.

**3. Institutionalization of evaluation results**

**(a) Annual meetings**

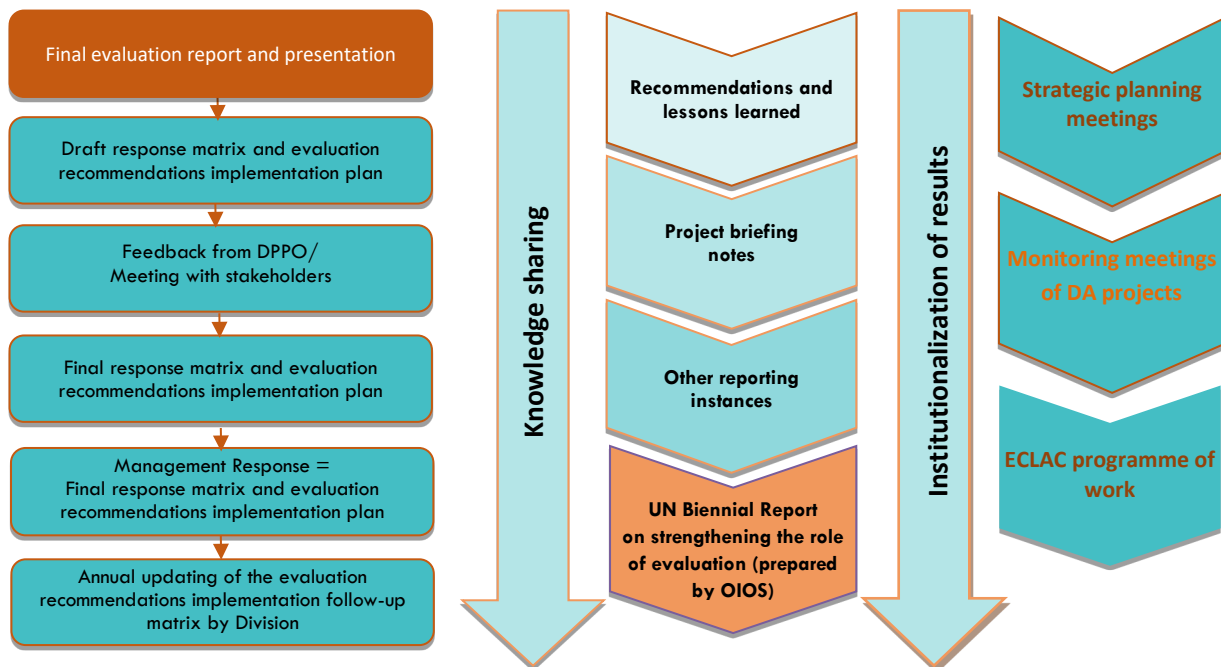
In the annual technical strategic planning meetings, information on the main results of the evaluations carried out during the reporting period should be shared, including outstanding recommendations and main lessons learned. The goal is to further encourage the adoption and continuous implementation of the identified best practices and improvement processes, contributing to their institutionalization.

**(b) Preparation of the ECLAC programme of work and programme plan**

When preparing the programme of work of ECLAC, efforts will be made to incorporate the recommendations and lessons learned from previous evaluations which are pertinent to their specific area of work, taking therefore advantage of the knowledge acquired through the evaluation recommendations implementation follow-up process.

The current Proposed Programme Budget format includes a summary of evaluation results and their effect on programming.

**DIAGRAM 3**  
Evaluation follow-up process



Source: Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (PPEU).

## G. Coordination and knowledge-sharing on evaluation

### 1. United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)

ECLAC is a member of UNEG, adhering to its norms and standards for the carrying out of the evaluation function.

### 2. United Nations evaluation networks

Issues related to the implementation of the evaluation function within the Regional Commissions are discussed during annual meetings of the chiefs of programme planning divisions from all five United Nations regional commissions.<sup>14</sup> In 2012, the regional commissions established an interregional M&E focal points network with the purpose of ensuring effective communication and information-sharing on M&E use and practice.

Moreover, ECLAC is a member of the Development Account evaluation network, which serves to enhance the sharing of resources and experience in evaluation of Development Account projects, and its alignment, where possible, with practices, norms and standards of the United Nations Department of Management, UNEG and OIOS. ECLAC also participates in the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) Evaluation Community of Practice, and a number of other networks that bring together experts throughout the United Nations system to conduct webinars and online discussions on various topics of interest within the practice of evaluation.

### 3. Global and regional evaluation networks

In addition to its current participation in evaluation networks across the United Nations, ECLAC also plans to widen its cooperation on evaluation to further networks and associations outside the United Nations system, both in the Latin America and Caribbean region and globally.

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<sup>14</sup> Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).