

Terms of Reference

Process Evaluation of the East Asia Pacific Regional Office

Version of 04 July 2021

Please note documents that are underlined (but not hyperlinked) are available on UNICEF EAPRO's intranet and will be shared with consultant after contract is issued. Documents available on our external webpages have an active hyperlink.

1. INTRODUCTION

The UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) intends to commission a Process Evaluation assessing the relevance, effectiveness, timeliness, and coherence of selected Regional Office (RO) processes, with a focus on processes that are related to supporting Country Offices (COs) in the region. The RO process evaluation will be referred to as the RO-PE. This document sets out a Terms of Reference on the scope, design, and methodology for the RO-PE.

The Regional Office (RO) developed its Regional Office Management Plan (ROMP) for 2022-2025; and it has been gone through the required approval processes. Reflections have taken place on performance against the previous ROMP through statutory meetings, annual reporting and the Mid Term Review along with other regular and COVID-related review processes. This process evaluation presents an opportunity to engage the regional team and Country Offices (CO) in gathering and documenting evaluative judgement on selected RO processes.

Since early 2020, COVID-19 has had a massive impact across all of UNICEF's work in the region and has dominated the RO's work recently. The timescale for returning to "normality" remains unpredictable. Yet there is an increased optimism in recent months for a better future based on the roll-out of COVID vaccines. It is important that this RO-PE considers prospects for improvements in RO processes that are used as part of regional work prior, during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. It is envisioned that the evaluation should contribute to defining what processes would be fit for purpose within the "New Normal", and how the region can meet organisational aspirations on ***Reimagining – Not Going Back: Recover, Rebound, Reimagine***¹ and the vision set in "***Reimagining a better future for every child in East Asia and the Pacific after COVID-19***" document.

¹ For details of our vision and goals, please refer to <https://www.unicef.org/eap/not-going-back>

2. REGIONAL CONTEXT AND THE REGIONAL OFFICE

The new Regional Office Management Plan (ROMP) for 2022-2025 noted East Asia Pacific is home to one third of the world's population, including more than one-quarter of its children, and is culturally, economically, and politically diverse. The region is the world's most vulnerable region to natural disasters, including those related to climate change, which often impact children most heavily.

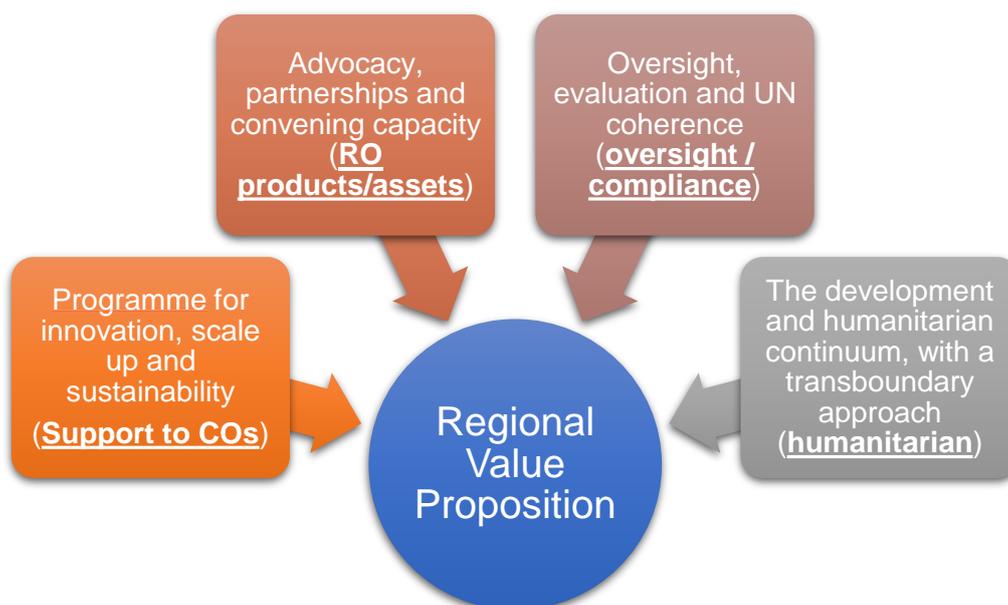
The new ROMP was developed at a pivotal moment, as countries attempt to balance managing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine rollout whilst attempting to navigate a pathway to recovery from its economic and social impact. In the region, the pandemic has claimed lives, disrupted the delivery of essential services and livelihoods, and plunged an additional 33 million children into poverty. Children were particularly affected by school closures, temporary suspension of essential primary services (including health care), increased violence and other rights violations; although to varying degrees according to the local country situation. A slow and uneven emergence from the pandemic's heavy toll has revealed underlying challenges of inequality and deteriorating mental health. Adolescent participants in a global consultation on the Strategic Plan indicated that their education situation got worse due to COVID-19 (76%) and that the most urgent need was better training for teachers and access to technology (43%); they felt responsibility to tackle climate change (76%) and that the priority action to address this was to raise awareness (43%); and that they wanted to learn more about mental health at school from professionals rather than teachers (58%).

The East Asia Pacific Regional Office

As described in the *Enabling results for children at scale: A shared value proposition of UNICEF Regional Offices* document of 2019, the key accountabilities of Regional Offices include:

1. Leadership and representation of UNICEF in the region, advocacy to improve the situation of children and women, and collaborative work with regional partners within a mandate of UN coherence;
2. Strategic planning and policy development to define regional strategies and plans in the context of global priorities;
3. Technical guidance, oversight and performance monitoring of the progress, effectiveness, and relevance of country programmes; and
4. Oversight of management, working practices, cost effectiveness and evaluation and audit exercises.

The East Asia Pacific office developed following model to describe how the RO will work within its own value proposition in supporting Country Offices to fulfil their mandate and champion the rights of children in the region.



Occasionally initiatives such as Country Programme Evaluations will highlight specific issues relating to RO (and Headquarters) support. At times recommendations are developed with a view to improve RO support. As recognised in the COVID-19 regional Real Time Assessment, and associated reviews and learning events, the successes, challenges and opportunities for RO support to COs tended to be influenced by the response to the pandemic.

3. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to obtain an independent assessment of the added value, strengths, and weaknesses of selected processes, including those through which the EAPRO supports its Country Offices. The evaluation would have both summative and formative aspects with the summative aspect assessing RO performance over the last four years (2018 to 2021), taking into consideration that 2020 and 2021 were years that the RO implemented support and oversight during a global COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation has multiple purposes linked to Regional Office processes; they include: (i) identify successful processes; (ii) to promote simplified processes, and where heavy processes are identified, suggest paths for simplification; (iii) identify processes with low added value that can be considered for deprioritisation; (iv) identify processes that need to be retained but improved. The evaluation will be seeking evidence and perspectives from RO and CO informants.

The emphasis will be on the formative dimension of the evaluation; providing an objective, independent perspective on how the RO can improve its contribution to EAP region's CO programming for children in the coming four-year cycle. Commissioning this at the end of the 2018-2021 ROMP period provides an opportunity to take stock on the extent to which RO functions have performed and adapted in a fast-changing context and a diverse region. The evaluation will have a strong utilisation focus, and will be very much oriented to ensuring that the findings and recommendations of the evaluation will inform the ROMP 2022-2025 implementation from the second half of 2022. It should also feed into the Mid-Term review of the new ROMP. Relevant parts

of this RO-PE will also inform the Phase II of the Global Real Time Assessment of UNICEF's COVID response.

Objectives

Based on the above stated purpose, the following overall questions have been drafted:

1. Which RO processes are successful, have worked well in providing relevant, timely, and effective support to country offices?
2. Which RO processes and approaches have met obstacles and bottlenecks, or which proved over-ambitious to the extent that they have not worked well?
3. Which RO processes are assessed to be coherent amongst sections and able to break down silos and how do these compare to processes that are undertaken in a siloed and sector specific -focused manner.
 - a. Assess whether a siloed approach is suitable for particular processes – determine if any simplifications can be formulated and suggested.
 - b. Assess how to break down the siloed approaches where an integrated, simplified process would add value in attaining eventual results for children (normally this is done through RO support to CO for improved localized implementation).
4. Which RO processes and approaches are deemed relevant and necessary, yet face obstacles and bottlenecks that hinder their good performance?

The above may be refined or modified during the Inception Phase of the work. From the findings and conclusions arising from the revised evaluative questions, the Evaluation Team (ET) is to suggest recommendations to describe how to improve processes (taking objectives one to four above into consideration) and simplify the same wherever possible to enhance relevance, effectiveness, timeliness and coherence and efficacy? Based on the findings, determine which RO support processes and approaches need to be: (a) retained, promulgated or and built on; (b) revised; or (c) deprioritised?

The above evaluation questions will be broken down and further developed during the Inception Phase of the RO-PE. In terms of standard OECD DAC criteria, the evaluation will focus **Relevance, Effectiveness, and Coherence**. With respect to efficiency, only the **timeliness** dimension should be assessed. In this process evaluation, coherence refers largely to internal coherence within UNICEF, focused on issues such as how well the internal RO functions are well coordinated and synergistic in support of CO needs and demand.

Evaluation Scope

The following is the proposed scope for the process evaluation.

Timeframe to be assessed: 2018 to mid 2021 period.

Functional/ section scope: the evaluation would focus on **Programme** oriented functions: these would include UNICEF's:

- Lead sectors of child protection, education, health, nutrition, social policy, and WASH,
- Key cross cutting sectors and those acting in support of other sectors – gender, disability, adolescents, climate change, early childhood development, Communications for Development (C4D), security, disaster risk reduction and management (including humanitarian action) /risk informed programming, Technology for Development (T4D),

- Planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation
- Advocacy and general communications (as opposed to C4D)

Other key functions of the RO are **to be excluded from** the scope:

- Operations and Common Support Unit (CSU) and associated business processes which are subject to other forms of review and audit processes
- Private Sector fund raising and Business for Results. It is intended that there will be a full evaluation of the PFP functions within the next two years

As previously noted, the reason for commissioning this during 2021 is so that it can inform the implementation of the new ROMP, and contribute to any required change management required due to the implementation of the new ROMP. Assessing the processes within the following headings are proposed, but to be refined during the Inception Phase:

- **Technical guidance for COs**
 - Management of CO requests for support (identification, management, response/follow up, closing of CO requests for technical support - link to the CO Request platform)
 - Feedback from COs on the appropriateness and usefulness of the support
 - Processes related to Quality assurance
 - Managing HQ requirements versus priority setting and priority needs at the CO level
 - Regional and country Humanitarian Action for Children
- **Strategic planning and policy development at country level**
 - CPD development (including technical guidance/expertise in the development; & Quality Assurance of documents (PSN/CPDs);
 - CPD approval process (i.e. submission to OSEB, and approval by ExBoard)
- **Oversight of management, working practices, cost effectiveness, and evidence generation exercises**
 - Providing feedback and management direction to COs
 - Evidence generation initiatives², quality assurance, management, and capacity development
 - Knowledge Management and good practice sharing
 - Capture and sharing good practices and facilitating cross country exchange
 - Developing systems for resource capture and access
- **Leadership, fund generation and representation of UNICEF in the region**
 - The process of establishing required regional leadership roles (based on agreed priorities)
 - Regional resource mobilization
 - Processes around the UN representation and joint initiatives – link to DCO and other joint UN initiatives

As noted above, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic should not dominate the process evaluation to the exclusion of pre-COVID work. Documentation on the RO After Action Review on the COVID response should be taken into consideration, but the focus should be on the learning and assessments from both pre-COVID and during COVID eras to inform the implementation of the new ROMP. The evaluation team is encouraged to highlight RO contributions and approaches that were

² These include evaluations, research and studies that fall under the mandate of the Research Evaluation and Studies Committee (RES Com).

carried out since 2018 that may offer viable and productive ways forward for the coming years and should be integrated into “new normal” processes for the RO starting in 2022.

Key Users and Intended use

The primary users of the evaluation are the UNICEF RO management and sections. The Secondary users are the 14 COs as they will contribute to the assessment and expect to benefit from improvements arising from the evaluation recommendations. UNICEF HQ and other RO are also considered as secondary users.

Primary users and intended use	
UNICEF EAP Regional Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide learning from the RO processes used during the UNICEF 2018-2021 ROMP period and associated RO contributions to results for children– identify successful / good practices, and areas needing improvement to inform the 2022-2025 ROMP and associated processes. • Inform decision-making for the RO senior management on RO management; workplan development processes, working of statutory committees and prioritisation of processes. • Lead to an improved set of processes to be implemented during the new ROMP period (2022 to 2025).
Secondary users and intended uses	
UNICEF EAP Country Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain insights on whole-of-office RO processes, including their functioning, strengths and weaknesses leading to improved RO-CO understanding and engagement. • Build on the findings and recommendations to orient support requests and prioritisation for the benefit of CO programming.
UNICEF Headquarters and other Regional Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain insights on EAP reflections on effectiveness and added value that may be of use for other ROs and key HQ departments

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation will be based on the standard evaluation criteria promoted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with certain criteria selected for use. For the purposes of this evaluation, the following definitions apply:

- **Relevance:** assesses the RO’s added value and comparative strengths in priority areas relevant to the COs. This includes the RO’s ability to identify the most relevant/appropriate approaches and processes to best meet CO needs and country level (and country context) priorities
- **Effectiveness:** assesses the extent to which the RO has achieved its objectives in supporting COs, looking at intended results and identifying the most effective processes (ways of working)
- **Coherence/connectedness:** assesses the RO’s ability to be consistent, well-coordinated and synergistic in its approach to supporting COs to meet their goals. A secondary consideration is on the extent that the RO can successfully ensure that UNICEF processes are consistent with, and supportive to joint UN work at country and regional levels

Assessing Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability dimensions of the RO's work will not be included. Yet, with respect to efficiency, only the **timeliness** dimension should be assessed. "Timeliness" – in this case refers to the delivery of support occurring within a favourable timeframe for the COs receiving it and in a manner that would impact the work of the COs to deliver results with required speed.

5. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

During inception the evaluation team would develop a final list of the main evaluation questions (normally 6-8 questions) under the OECD DAC criteria, along with more detailed sub-questions. The following are proposed for consultation:

Relevance

- To what extent is RO support processes relevant to the needs and priorities of COs, and how well does this prove adaptable to different CO contexts, office capacities and priority setting?
- How does the relevance of support perceived by stakeholders vary across the programme sections and what are the reasons for this?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the processes in the RO successfully supported CO programme delivery over the 2018 – 2021 period?
- What do stakeholders identify as the most value adding types of RO support and why? What do stakeholders identify as less effective and why?
- To what extent does the RO successfully fulfil its role as a knowledge management; knowledge broker and facilitator of dissemination of important child related knowledge?

Timeliness

- To what extent is RO support made available to COs within time scales that are most favourable to CO needs and priorities?
- What can be identified as the most important enablers and barriers to provision of timely support?

Coherence

- To what extent is the support provided by the RO consistent, well-coordinated, cross-sectoral, and internally joined up for COs' needs?
- To what extent is the RO successfully coordinating with key partners and allies at regional level (including other UN agencies) towards shared aims, and is ensuring UNICEF is building on its distinctive competence and adding value to these processes? (relating to external coherence)

The evaluation team would consider these questions and propose any changes, omissions, or additions to this list during inception. The evaluation team would develop an evaluation matrix setting out the questions, more detailed sub questions, success criteria for each question, how analysis would be carried out and sources for data.

6. METHODOLOGY

During the Inception Phase, a short survey and a small number of meetings involving senior RO staff (senior management and section heads) to decide on what aspects of RO support functions should be assessed in details by the evaluation team.

Evaluation Data collection methods

At minimum, the evaluation team will draw on the following methods:

1. Refine the scope based on discussions within the RO. This should take place in parallel with the desk review as set out below. (1) mapping of the ‘particular end’ (i.e. results/purpose of support processes), (2) identify the key ‘actions or steps’ (i.e. workflow); (3) define key inputs (whom involved, ways of working etc.)
2. Comprehensive desk review of available documentation – RO processes and associated reports mid-year and end-year reviews relevant to this evaluation.

Existing documentation that can be drawn on includes:

- Client satisfaction surveys completed by COs on EAPRO’s performance – done annually. This was not conducted during 2020 due to COVID-19 demands but calls were set up with COs to get their feedback and hear their needs.
- The RO Country Request platform set up to manage requests from COs
- ROMP documents – these reflect on the present period and set out priorities for the RO for the coming period
- Consultations with COs during the COVID-19 regional Real Time Assessment (RTA) and various After Action Review (AAR) contain some feedback from COs on strengths and weaknesses of RO support
- Regional Office Adaptive Management Review 2020
- The RO COVID-19 After Action Review included consultation with several COs to solicit their views on RO added value and areas for improvement

3. Initial consultations through **Focus Groups** with RO staff and the Reference Group to shape the inception process. Consultation with a selection of former staff members (particularly for the early years under review) should be considered and incorporated as far as possible.
4. An **online survey** should also be designed to enable engagement of all RO sections and ideally a representative from each of the 14 COs. This should be carried out in the early stage of the process and aimed at identifying key headlines on RO strengths and weaknesses. The survey should enable a more focused and efficient running of the main KII and group exercises set out below. The RO and CO survey should contain almost identical questions so that RO and CO responses can be compared.
5. **KII and Group exercises** with RO stakeholders to explore initial findings arising from the surveys in more depth.
6. **Group exercises with a selection of CO staff.** It is envisioned that 5-6 COs would be invited to take part and selected in a manner to ensure proper range of UNICEF CO country contexts, programme size and relevant criteria to be agreed upon at the Inception Phase.

As noted above, it is important that similar questions and lines of enquiry are used with RO and CO staff groups so that areas of “shared resonance” and areas of “differing perspectives” can be clearly drawn out.

It is important to note that data collection might need to be done remotely in case of travel/ movement restrictions due to COVID-19 continues. Appropriate remote data collection methods need to be proposed and considered from the onset.

Assessing and validating findings

- **A draft report** would be circulated to RO and participating CO teams for comments so that factual inaccuracies and areas needing clarification can be addressed. Conclusions will be based as far as possible on triangulation of evidence collected and reasonable judgement. Conclusions should provide insights pertinent to the object and purpose of the evaluation and will be presented in a workshop.
- **Initial findings validation workshop:** Initial findings will be presented to stakeholders in a workshop (or Webinar) to assess the validity/ accuracy of the findings. This should take place at the stage when initial findings have been developed and documented in a draft report. Feedback would be documented including where any divergent views, sensitivities, or lack of consensus on these findings arise.
- **Final report/ Recommendations workshop:** Once data analysis is finalized, a final workshop with the Reference Group and Management Team will be conducted. Focus of the workshop will be on the co-creation of recommendations that are prioritised, useful and actionable. It is suggested that preliminary and well-thought recommendations are brought as inputs, although enough space should be given for acceptance of any modifications suggested.

Limitations

Evaluation Consultant bidders will be encouraged to identify the limitations and risks of their proposed methods and present mitigation measures in their proposal.

One significant limitation will likely be in busy stakeholders at regional and country level being able to find sufficient time to fully participate in the process – especially for those playing more time-consuming roles in the Reference Group. The Evaluation team will be asked to carefully consider time efficiencies for participants and develop a mix of methods that will maximise inputs within reasonable time allocations. Clear signalling from the Reference & Management Group (R/MG) on the importance of participation in the exercise will be important and opportunities are there for regular updates through the weekly *one hour EAPRO*³ meeting.

Identifying successful and less successful *ways of working* can be challenging, given this often stems from an intangible mix of expertise and experience, working styles, communication and influencing approaches, and the levels of demand for support at different times. It will be important that evaluation methods place emphasis on evidence drawn from tangible examples; connecting how

³ These meetings are commonly referred to as What’s Up meetings.

certain ways of working led to improved performance; and triangulating feedback from different stakeholders.

The Evaluation Team will be guided by [UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy](#) (2018), the [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\) Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (2016), [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#) (2020), [UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation](#) (2014), and [UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards](#) (2017)

Specific reference is made to the **UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines, as well as the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis and UNICEF's Evaluation Reporting Standards**.⁴ Note that the standards cover the need of an ethical review of the Inception Report (IR) and evaluation tools, especially when vulnerable populations are included into the data collection. Ethical review from an IRB should be considered in the proposal and in the timeline and are the responsibility of the consultant. Good practices for evaluations are always to be followed. Any sensitive issues or concerns should be raised with the Evaluation Manager as soon as they are identified.

7. WORKPLAN AND DELIVERABLES

The Evaluation Team would develop a detailed workplan for carrying out the evaluation, and set out the expected timeframes, and deliverables. An estimated timeframe is provided within brackets and yellow highlight below. A total of 75 working days (WD) is the estimated level of effort required from the lead and 50 WD from the national consultant.

Evaluation Outputs and Deliverables

Evaluation products expected for this exercise are:

- 1) **An Inception Report** (in English) of approximately 30 pages (no more than 35) excluding annexes. This would confirm a mutual understanding of what is to be evaluated; provide refinement and confirmation of evaluation questions, scope, and methodology proposed (sampling, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis plan, limitations) in the ToR; timescale and workplan; a summary of the evaluation process (evaluation briefing note) for stakeholders. [20 WD after signing of contract]
- 2) **A summary of initial evaluation findings of maximum 10 pages** excluding annexes, and a PowerPoint presentation to contribute to the initial findings and consultation workshop. The report should include findings from the desk review and data collection with an initial attempt to triangulation of findings. The report should also present an evaluator's view on the quality / richness of data and insights collected so that further consultation can be factored in to address gaps. [30 WD after approval of Inception Report]
- 3) **A draft report and a final report** that fully conforms to the Global Evaluation Report Oversight System of ideally 40 pages but not more than 50 plus executive summary and annexes. The structure of the reports can be agreed during inception. The draft report will be revised until approved by the R/MG. [Draft Report 15 WD after Deliverable Two; 10 WD for feedback of R/MG; Final Report due five WD from submission of comments by R/MG]
- 4) **A Power Point presentation of the final report** to be used to share final evaluation findings and conclusions with the Reference Group in a validation workshop and updated to include

⁴ See: <https://www.unicef.org/media/54796/file>

final recommendations for use in subsequent dissemination events; [Five WD from approval of Final Report] and

- 5) A **four-page Evaluation Brief** that is distinct from the executive summary in the evaluation report and it is intended for a broader, non-technical and non-UNICEF audience, and should resemble an e-book or infographic as much as possible. [Five WD from approval of Final Report]

8. MANAGEMENT OF THE PROCESS

A **Management Group** will be established comprising of selected senior staff from the Regional Office and the Regional Evaluation Advisor. A small **Reference Group** will be established, made up of Regional Advisors and senior staff from Country Offices (COs). To keep the group manageable, it is proposed that it should comprise of three RO advisors and three CO senior managers. The Reference Group will play an advisory function. Consideration can be made on including a relevant senior staff member from HQ or another region to provide some external (non EAP) insight.

The Reference Group will provide feedback on the design of the evaluation and on the inception and draft reports to help ensure high quality products; help identify key stakeholders to be consulted; and participate in review and validation exercises at key stages. The Reference Group should also help socialise the process amongst colleagues and play a role in co-creating recommendations. The CO representatives will have a particular role to play in acting as the “voice” of the 14 COs in the region.

9. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation should be conducted by an experienced **senior-level expert as Team Leader**. The Team Leader will be supported by a junior consultant / researcher.

Team Leader skills and experience

- A minimum of 10 years of evaluation / organisational development experience in developing countries with excellent understanding of evaluation principles and methodologies.
- Demonstrable creativity in adapting and applying a range of robust evaluation methods to suit particular tasks.
- Experience in conducting process evaluations for UN agencies preferably including UNICEF or major bilateral donor Country Programmes, and familiarity with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines.
- Understanding of the roles, functions and key planning processes of Regional Offices in UN organisations is strongly preferred.
- Experience in leading and managing process evaluations with large, complex organisations, including designing, and carrying out remote method consultations.

- Diplomacy and tact in carrying out and presenting findings of evaluations.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Strong English report writing skills and a track record of producing high quality reports.

National Consultant skills and experience

- A minimum of five years of evaluation / organisational development experience in developing countries with good understanding of evaluation principles and methodologies.
- Understanding of the roles, functions and key planning processes of in a multi-national organization.
- Familiarity with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines.
- Good verbal and written communication skills.
- Experience in conducting process evaluations preferable.