RESULTS BASED MANAGEMENT POLICY

Purpose

1.   The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Results-Based Management (RBM) Policy seeks to establish a clear and agreed vision of RBM at UNFPA, which will allow a common understanding of how RBM is meant to be implemented within UNFPA. Its purpose is to foster a culture of measurement and results at UNFPA, creating a demand for and improve usage of credible information and evidence on results to inform decision-making.

2.   More specifically, the Policy communicates what RBM entails and how it can work as a management approach, defining clear roles and responsibilities. Further, it spells out what accountability for results means at UNFPA, including accountability in respect to results shared with partners in the context of the United Nations reform and United Nations Development Group (UNDG) guidelines.

3.   While the policy first and foremost applies to management, it is relevant for everyone at all levels of the organization. The Policy is complemented by UNFPA RBM guidelines which will provide details on its implementation, including development of result frameworks as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting on results.

4.   This policy supersedes the UNFPA RBM Policy Statement issued in 2000, when RBM was first introduced at UNFPA.

Terminology and Definitions

5.   The Policy responds to the emphasis in the *Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review*[1] on *reform efforts [which] should enhance organizational efficiency and achieve concrete results*, and adapts harmonized common UNDG RBM terminology[2] to facilitate such efforts.

- **Results-based management (RBM)** means implementing development assistance and managing the organization in a way that focuses on the sequence of desired results and uses evidence on results to inform decision-making in respect to design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities, as well as for accountability and reporting.

- **Planning**[3] can be defined as the process of setting goals, developing strategies, outlining the implementation arrangements and allocating resources to achieve those goals.

- **Monitoring** can be defined as the ongoing process by which stakeholders obtain regular feedback on the progress being made towards achieving their goals and objectives.

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[1] General Assembly resolution 62/208.
[2] UNDG RBM Handbook, final draft January 2011. The RBM definitions below have been harmonized with the agreed UNDG definitions.
[3] The definitions of planning, monitoring and evaluation are taken from the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009), p.6.

- **Evaluation** is a rigorous and independent assessment of either completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision-making.[4]

- **Results** are changes in a state or condition that derive from a cause-and-effect relationship. There are three types of such changes that can be set in motion by a development intervention – outputs, outcomes and impacts. Results can be intended or unintended, positive or negative.

- A **results chain** is the causal sequence for a development intervention or activities that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired results – beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, goals/impacts and feedback. It is based on a theory of change, including underlying assumptions.

- A **results framework** is a set of results that illustrate the performance of a group of interventions or activities, including a results chain, performance indicators and a measurement strategy. The results framework explains how results are to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions and risks.

- A **goal** is the specific end result desired or expected to occur as a consequence, at least in part, of the intervention or activity. It is the higher order objective to which a development intervention is intended to contribute.

- **Impact** is the positive and negative long-term effect on identifiable population groups produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

- **Outcomes** represent institutional and behavioural changes in development conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of goals.

- **Outputs** are changes in skills or abilities, or the availability of new products and services, produced by an intervention or activity.

- An **activity** is an action taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

- An **intervention** is an instrument for partner (donor and non-donor) support aimed to promote development. This usually refers to a country programme or a programme/thematic component within a country programme or a project.

- **Inputs** are the financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for an intervention or activity.

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[4] For a more comprehensive/extensive definition, see UNFPA Evaluation Policy (DP/FPA/2009/4).

- **Performance** is a comparison of what is achieved with what was expected.

- A **performance indicator** is the metric used to measure an aspect of performance, i.e. of results.

Guiding Principles

6.   The Policy provides the following key principles for a robust functioning RBM at UNFPA.[5]

Principle 1. Promote and support a culture of results

Fostering a strong organizational culture of results is critical and requires:

- Demonstrated **senior management leadership,** expressing continuous commitment and managing expectations for RBM
- **Knowledge** of and **capacity** for results-based management among all staff.
- **Informed demand** for results information from managers across the organization, and requirements in place for results-based planning, budgeting and reporting.
- **Supportive and flexible organizational systems** and incentives, procedures and practices.
- A capacity to **learn** and adapt, making time for exploration, reflection, and learning from both successes and failures.
- A clear definition of **roles** and **responsibilities** for RBM.

Principle 2. Build strategic results frameworks with ownership at all levels

Set out the overall and specific results intended to be achieved and determine best ways to achieve them, namely:

- An organizational **results-based strategic framework** with the organization's programmes and management activities aligned to the framework.[6]
- Evidence-based **strategies**, including the roles of implementing partners, outlining the logic and assumptions behind the programme design and with attention to analysis and management of risk.
- Reasonably clear and concrete **performance expectations**.
- A **strategy for measuring** key results, including a manageable set of **performance indicators**.
- A **reporting strategy** indicating aspects of performance to be reported to whom and when.[7]

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[5] The principles are based on – and have been adapted from – a set of principles for RBM developed for the UN Secretariat in 2007. See Mayne, J., *Best Practices in Results-Based Management: A review of experience*, Volume 1: Main Report, UN Secretariat, July 2007, p 15. See also Accountability Framework, ERM and internal control framework, and RBM Framework (A/62/701), Report of the Secretary-General, 19 February 2008.
[6] The current overall organizational framework for UNFPA is the Strategic Plan 2013-2017 .

- Establish clear **ownership** by managers and staff of results frameworks.[8]

Principle 3. Measure sensibly

Gather and analyze credible information on performance through:

- Credibly **measuring** results and costs using both ongoing monitoring and periodic evaluation, and **assessing** actual results and costs in light of the performance expectations.
- Assessing the **contribution** and influence made by the programmes and management activities to the observed results.
- **Confirming the validity** of the results measured, providing sufficient evidence.

Principle 4. Develop user-friendly RBM information systems

Develop RBM information systems to *support* RBM practices, not hinder them:

- Building **cost-effective, user-friendly** and **relevant** RBM information systems.

Principle 5: Use results information for learning, managing, reporting and accountability

Realize the benefits from results-based management through:

- **Using results** to inform and improve performance and budgets.
- Identifying and **using best practices** to improve performance.
- Credible **performance reporting** internally and externally, telling a coherent performance story.
- Use relevant evidence on results to **inform accountability** assessments.

Principle 6. Build adaptive RBM through regular review and update

Implementing RBM is an ongoing learning process:

- **Regularly review and update** all aspects of RBM—frameworks, indicators, expectations, measurement strategies, systems for continued relevance, usefulness and cost.

Accountability for Results

7.   As stated by UNFPA's Accountability Framework (DP/FPA/2007/20), the Fund recognizes the increased focus on accountability within the aid and development environment

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[7] It is important to emphasize that reporting should be done for utilization and decision-making – not reporting for reporting's sake.

[8] While managers and staff are the owners of internal (including management) results, partner countries should to the extent possible take ownership of development results. On country ownership, see section on Accountability for Results below and The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action.

and is committed to enhancing accountability within the organization and in all its operations and partnerships. It describes accountability as "*being held responsible for [one's] decisions and actions …*".

8.   UNFPA's Oversight Policy (DP/FPA/2008/14) aims to strengthen UNFPA accountability, risk management and assurance processes. Further, the Fund's Enterprise Risk Management framework, developed in 2010, provides the overarching framework to guide the identification of areas requiring stricter controls and strengthened accountability and to ensure that risk is used as a decision criterion at all levels of operations. The Fund's Internal Control Framework provides guidance on controls and *financial accountability,* which is the obligation to report on the intended or actual use of the resources. A key element that completes this notion of accountability is integrity, which is the path leading to the effective delivery of services.

9.   Building on the above, and consistent with the UN's definition of accountability (see UNDAF guidelines and UNDG RBM Handbook), this RBM Policy focuses specifically on elements of UNFPA's accountability for results.

UNFPA is accountable for the following:

- Delivering agreed *outputs* on time and within cost;
- demonstrating that the *outputs are making a contribution* to the achievement of the desired sequence of outcomes[9];
- monitoring and tracking *global trends* and *outcome and goal* indicators results[10];
- *utilizing resources* in a transparent and efficient manner;
- demonstrating that learning has occurred and decisions are based on information and evidence.

10.   These accountability elements apply to UNFPA in general as well as its organizational units and staff. Good management for results especially entails:

- **Monitored implementation**: Implementing agreed activities, monitoring and evaluating the outputs and outcomes being achieved, and assessing the contribution being made.
- **Results-based learning**: Using the empirical evidence on results gathered to improve performance through adjustments to delivery approaches, to the underlying results strategy and/or to the expected results.
- **Accounting for performance**: Using results information to credibly present a performance story on what has been accomplished and learned.

11.   Thus, at the level of organizational units and individuals, accountability for results could be more simply defined as being accountable for undertaking and demonstrating good RBM

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[9] Many stakeholders contribute to outcomes and each would have their respective accountability towards the shared results. The notion of '*respective accountability*' reflects the fact that accountability is not fungible and must, in the final analysis, be attached to a specific actor. (See UNDG RBM Handbook, Final Draft Janaury 2011 UNDG meeting version)

[10] These would be outcomes and goals as endorsed in the global strategic frameworks.

practices. This perspective should then be translated to individual performance appraisal and development (PAD) plans: determine what individuals will be doing *and achieving*, ensuring that they are managing for results.

Reporting on Results

12.   Reporting is an essential element of an accountability process, whereby those doing the accounting for performance report on accomplishments in relation to expectations. Reporting on results at UNFPA takes place *at all levels*. Based on the performance indicators defined in the respective results frameworks, the UNFPA reporting at country, regional and global levels should be consistent with the following:

- Staff responsible for specific programme areas report to the management of the country office on the performance of the interventions based on the Annual Work Plans (AWPs), Office Management Plans (OMPs) and Standard Progress Reports by implementing partners.
- Country offices report to regional offices and the headquarters/Executive Director on the performance of the country programme through the Country Office Annual Report (COAR).
- Regional offices report on the performance of regional programmes to headquarters/Executive Director through the Regional office Annual Report (ROAR).
- Headquarters divisions report on the performance of global and other programmes and services to the Executive Director through the division's annual report (HQAR).
- The Executive Director reports on UNFPA overall performance to the Executive Board through the Annual Report to the Executive Board.

13.   Reporting at UNFPA serves two purposes: as input to the accountability process at all levels, and as a means to communicate results information for learning about what is working and not working well.

14.   The accountability discussed above focuses on UNFPA's accountability for its own performance. It stresses, in addition to knowing (and reporting) the outputs and outcomes that have occurred, the need to demonstrate the contribution being made and occurrence of learning. This should happen at all levels of reporting. Each organizational level at UNFPA needs to determine its contribution to higher level outcomes and goals.

15.   In addition to its performance reporting to the Executive Board, UNFPA reports on the state of the various issues within its mandate. This typically involves gathering and reporting national statistics, and aggregating the data to regional and global levels. Reporting on the 'state' of an issue involves description of the general context and problem being addressed, raising awareness about both the status quo and remaining gaps. While an important aspect of UNFPA's accountability reporting, this type of reporting is separate from the reporting on UNFPA's performance.

16.   Reporting on the ongoing learning is another key component in UNFPA reporting. This reporting shows how UNFPA learns and improves, making good use of its resources. As an example of such reporting, UNFPA country and other offices may describe how they have adjusted their operations based on information/data gathered on the achieved results.

Roles and responsibilities

17.   UNFPA's Terms of Reference for different staff positions clearly articulate RBM competencies and tasks. The roles and responsibilities for different divisions and units at UNFPA have been set out in their individual terms of reference. RBM is everybody's business and is a priority for UNFPA, and the following section builds on these current terms of reference and summarizes RBM roles and responsibilities of staff, managers and UNFPA offices.

All staff

In planning:
- **Develop/propose results frameworks**, including outputs, outcomes and goals, as appropriate within an area of responsibility.
- **Understand the results strategies being used:** Know the sequence of expected results and consider the assumptions and risks; explain why the intervention/activity would contribute to the desired outputs, outcomes and goals.
- **Define performance expectations:** Set meaningful and realistic expected targets for the results.
- **Devise a measurement strategy:** Determine a set of indicators to measure and track how well the expected sequence of results is unfolding.
- **Devise a reporting strategy:** Determine *what* is to be reported, *where* and *when*, *by whom* and *to whom*.

In monitored implementation:
- **Manage activities and outputs:** Focus on their immediate responsibilities, including keeping their operations running smoothly, adhering to rules and procedures and delivering planned activities.
- **Measure and analyze results information:** Gather evidence and information on key outputs, outcomes and goals, and assess this information against the defined targets.
- **Assess the contribution being made** by the intervention/activity to the observed results through evaluations, reviews and assessments.

In adjusting and learning:
- **Purposefully learn from evidence and analysis:** Use evidence and analysis of results and contributions to adjust delivery and periodically modify or revalidate/confirm the design of the intervention/activity.
- **Periodically review the evidence** of results being gathered in terms of continued relevance, usefulness and cost.

In accounting for performance:
- **Report on performance against expectations**: Report on the accomplishment of key results, and on the contribution being made by the intervention/activity — assess the difference it is making.

All Managers

18.   In addition to the responsibilities mentioned above, managers have the following additional RBM-related responsibilities:

In planning:
- **Critically appraise the results strategy frameworks** being used.
- **Approve** the results strategy frameworks.

In monitored implementation:
- **Critically appraise the results information** being gathered.

In adjusting and learning:
- **Critically appraise the** occurring **review and learning**.
- **Use results information** to inform decisions and introduce adjustments in interventions/activities.

In accounting for performance:
- **Critically appraise the performance** being reported
- **Use results information** in holding others accountable.
- **Approve reports** on results performance.

In overseeing RBM:
- **Establish, approve and communicate a strategic results framework** including high-level results expectations and required resources.
- **Support RBM**, including identifying and assisting RBM champions and managers and staff who innovate and make use of the lessons learned, providing resources, and respecting managerial freedom that was previously granted.
- **Provide consistent leadership in RBM**, including coherent and regular communication on results management and personifying an evaluative culture, i.e. "walking the talk".
- **Manage expectations for RBM** through setting out reasonable yet challenging expectations, proceeding gradually and with modesty, and balancing accountability with learning.

19.   For more specific evaluation roles and responsibilities, see also the UNFPA Evaluation Policy (DP/FPA/2009/4) and memo from Executive Director to all UNFPA staff 29 October 2009.

Regional Offices

20.   **UNFPA regional offices** [11] have the same responsibilities for their regional programmes as country offices do for their country programmes (listed under All Staff). In addition, they are responsible for:

- Exercising quality assurance for country offices, including assessing the quality of the results frameworks for UNDAFs and Country Programmes.
- Monitoring the results and reports of Country Programmes in their region.
- Providing feedback on results and evaluation reports from countries in their region.
- Providing RBM advice and assistance to regional colleagues and country offices.
- Assisting in the sharing of lessons learned.

Programme Division

21.   The Programme Division (through its Environmental Scanning and Planning Branch)[12] is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining (updating) UNFPA's RBM policy.
- Developing and updating UNFPA RBM standards, guidelines and capacity development tools.
- Providing support (advice, guidance) to UNFPA divisions and offices on RBM-related activities.
- Coordinating UNFPA's reporting on its overall performance, as part of its accountability to the Executive Board, through the Executive Director's Annual Report.
- Facilitating sharing of experiences and lessons learned.

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[11]Refer to the Terms of Reference for UNFPA regional offices.
[12] Refer to the Programme Division's Terms of Reference