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Management and Governance matters: Evaluation: Annual report

The WHO South-East Asia Region recognizes the importance of, and is committed to, advancing the culture of “Evaluation”, as outlined in the WHO South-East Asia Regional Framework for Strengthening Evaluation for Learning and Development and the South-East Asia Region Evaluation Workplan for 2018–2019.

This document provides an update on the status of implementation of the South-East Asia Region Evaluation Workplan for 2018–2019 and key considerations for the way forward. The Region has made considerable progress in implementing the 2018–2019 evaluation workplan. As of mid-June 2019, two evaluations have been completed, eight are ongoing and two have been initiated. The Region has also collaborated with the Global Evaluation Office to improve the management of evaluations in line with the Global Evaluation Policy and the principles of and guidance provided by the Regional Evaluation Framework.

The attached Working Paper was presented to the High-Level Preparatory (HLP) Meeting for its review and recommendations. The HLP Meeting reviewed the paper and made the following recommendations for consideration by the Seventy-second Session of the Regional Committee:

Actions by WHO

- (1) Provide the reasons for postponement or cancellation of evaluations in the Working Paper to be prepared for the Regional Committee.
- (2) Develop criteria to prioritize evaluations in future workplans.
- (3) Use the results of evaluations to improve programme implementation.

The working paper and the HLP recommendations are submitted to the Seventy-second Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia for its consideration.

Introduction

1. The Executive Board approved the amended WHO Evaluation Policy at its 143rd session vide decision EB143(9) in May 2018. The policy requires the Secretariat to report annually to the Board on progress in the implementation of the evaluation activities, including the progress on the Organization-wide Evaluation Workplan 2018–2019. The 2019 annual report was presented to the 145th session of the Executive Board (EB145/6).
2. Consistent with WHO's Global Policy and the Region's commitment and high importance accorded to Evaluation, the WHO South-East Asia (SEA) Regional Framework for Strengthening Evaluation for Learning and Development (SEA/RC70/6 Inf. Doc. 1 Rev. 1) and SEA Region Evaluation Workplan for 2018–2019 (SEA/RC70/6 Inf. Doc. 2) were developed in 2017. The Framework and Workplan were presented to the Seventieth session of the Regional Committee in September 2017. These key documents are aimed at further expanding the culture of evaluation in the Regional Office and country offices.
3. The SEA Region Evaluation Workplan 2018–2019 includes the ambitious scope of undertaking 16 evaluations, including various programmatic and country-specific topics across all technical categories of WHO's General Programme of Work.
4. An update on the status of the Evaluation Workplan 2018–19 in the SEA Region was placed before the Seventy-first session of the Regional Committee in September 2018 (document number SEA/RC71/7). This report presents an update of the progress made since then, including institutionalization and streamlining of evaluation functions in the SEA Region.

Progress

5. The SEA Region has made considerable progress in implementing the 2018–2019 evaluation workplan. As of mid-June 2019, the overall status is as follows (details are included in the Annex):
 - a) Two evaluations have been completed:
 - i. 10 years of implementation of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund;
 - ii. Evaluation of community clinics in Bangladesh.
 - b) Eight evaluations are ongoing at the regional and country levels:

Regional-level evaluations:

 - i. Evaluation of WHO's contribution to combat antimicrobial resistance in the South-East Asia Region;
 - ii. Evaluation of the adaptation and use of WHO guidelines on reproductive, maternal and newborn health (RMNH) in the WHO South-East Asia Region, and
 - iii. Evaluation of national immunization technical advisory groups (NITAGs) in the WHO South-East Asia Region.

Country-level evaluations:

- i. Evaluation of WHO's contribution to enhance/strengthen the health information system in Nepal
 - ii. Evaluation of the impact of WHO information products related to noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and health systems in Sri Lanka, 2012–2019
 - iii. Evaluation of WHO country offices (WCOs) contribution to advancing the agenda of viral hepatitis B and C prevention and treatment in India
 - iv. Evaluation of WHO's role in the development of national multisectoral action plans for prevention and control of NCDs in India, and
 - v. Evaluation of WHO's contribution towards nutrition outcomes in Sri Lanka (2014–2018).
- c) Two evaluations have been initiated but not commissioned:
- i. Evaluation of WHO's contribution to preparedness, response readiness and recovery of the health system from multihazard emergencies; and
 - ii. Evaluation of the contribution of the WHO Country Office in Timor-Leste for the implementation of the national immunization programme in Timor-Leste.
- d) Four have been postponed:
- i. Analysis of the technical quality of publications of the WHO Regional Office for the past 10 years – more preparatory work is needed to compile all 10 years' publications and ensure a comprehensive evaluation.
 - ii. Extent to which WHO's activities in the SEA Region have adapted to reflect the more inclusive and integrated approach to development – this evaluation has not been commissioned due to continuing and rapid developments in WHO's role on advancing the SDGs, including the SDG GAP.
 - iii. In-depth situation analysis of unmet needs and gaps for adolescent health in Member States – a rapid assessment of adolescent health programme implementation in 10 Member States is under way. The need to continue with the evaluation as planned will be revisited once the assessment is completed.
 - iv. The WCO's contribution to the kala-azar elimination programme in India – this evaluation has been put on hold and may be considered for future due to ongoing repurposing of WCO India support to the Government of India on the kala-azar elimination strategy.
6. In addition, evaluation has started of the eight Regional Flagships, which is not included in the SEA Region 2018–2019 Evaluation Workplan, and is planned to be completed by the end of 2019.

7. The following evaluations, which were started before 2018, have been completed:
 - a. Evaluation of tobacco control policies and programmes, including the implementation of the WHO MPOWER technical package in the SEA Region's Member States, has been completed and the management response prepared on the basis of the recommendations.
 - b. Evaluation of collaboration between WHO and WHO collaborating centres of the SEA Region was completed, and the report is under review by the technical unit.
8. The Global Evaluation Plan also includes the India Country Office evaluation, which was completed in February 2019, and the Myanmar Country Office evaluation planned for the third quarter of 2019.

Strengthening the management of evaluations

9. The SEA Region, in collaboration with the WHO Global Evaluation Office, has improved evaluation management while ensuring consistency with the Global Evaluation Policy 2018 and Regional Framework principles and guidance. Particular attention has been given to ensuring independence and objectivity, and quality assurance, by developing standard concept notes; setting up evaluation management groups for each evaluation; following consistent processes for review and approvals; and monitoring recommendations and management response.
10. As guided by the WHO South-East Asia Regional Framework for Strengthening Evaluation for Learning and Development, an executive summary of each completed report will be made available online after the recommendations of the evaluations are accepted and the management response with action plan is developed.
11. One of the challenges previously identified in the implementation of the SEA Region Evaluation Workplan was resource limitations. This was addressed by allocating flexible funds to budget centres to conduct planned evaluations. However, challenges related to availability of qualified evaluators for some programmatic and specific country evaluations and the limited time to fully implement the Regional Evaluation Workplan continue.

The way forward

12. As the implementation of the SEA Region Evaluation Workplan progresses, mechanisms will be put in place to systematically collect and disseminate the results and recommendations to facilitate learning and development from such evaluations.
13. As stipulated in the SEA Regional Evaluation Framework, experiences and lessons learnt from the implementation of the 2018–2019 Evaluation Workplan should be used to update this Framework and prepare the Evaluation Workplan for 2020–2021. Based on the experiences to date, it is important to define criteria to prioritize evaluations at country and regional levels, including the relevance and feasibility of evaluations planned for a biennium, as well as the complementarity of audits, reviews and monitoring exercises that also contribute to organizational learning and development.

Annex

SEA Region Evaluation Workplan 2018–2019, status and progress (as on 15 June 2019)

Budget Centre/ Lead Office	Evaluation type	Title of Evaluation	Category in Twelfth General Programme of Work	Status	Progress as on 15 June 2019
SEA regional/centralized evaluations					
Cross- departmental/ Country support and Reforms	Programmatic	Evaluation of WHO's contribution to combat antimicrobial resistance in the South-East Asia Region	Cross- category	Ongoing	The Concept note has been finalized by Evaluation Management Group. Call for expressions of interest is being published in the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) website.
Cross- departmental/ Director, Programme Management Office	Thematic	Analysis of the technical quality of WHO Regional Office publications for the past 10 years	Cross- category	Postponed	Requires more preparatory work to compile all 10 years publications published by the Regional Office to ensure a comprehensive evaluation process. Plan to start in end 2019 and to be completed in 2020.
Health Systems Development	Thematic	Extent to which WHO activities in the SEA Region have adapted to reflect a more inclusive and integrated approach to development	Cross- category	Postponed	Due to continuing and rapid developments in WHO's role on advancing the SDGs, including the SDG GAP plan, this evaluation has been delayed to consider all relevant aspects before moving forward.
WHO Health Emergency Programme	Thematic	Evaluation of SEARHEF – 10-year milestones	Emergency (Category 5/12)	Completed	Completed and management response to be drafted after accepting recommendations

Budget Centre/ Lead Office	Evaluation type	Title of Evaluation	Category in Twelfth General Programme of Work	Status	Progress as on 15 June 2019
Nepal	Country-specific	Evaluation of WHO's contribution to preparedness, response readiness and recovery of the health system from multihazard emergencies	Emergency (Category 5/12) and Category 4	Initiated	Terms of reference have been drafted. The evaluation should be completed in the fourth quarter of 2019.
Sri Lanka	Country-specific	Evaluation of the impact of WHO information products related to NCDs and health systems in Sri Lanka, 2012–2019	Category 2 and 4	Ongoing	Evaluation has been commissioned through a competitive bidding process under the guidance of the Evaluation Management Group.
Timor-Leste	Country-specific	Evaluation of the contribution of the WHO Country Office in Timor-Leste for implementation of the national immunization programme in Timor-Leste	Category 1	Initiated	Planned for the fourth quarter of 2019. Concept note and ToRs have been drafted and Evaluation Management Group constituted.
Family Health, Gender and Life Course	Programmatic	Evaluation of the adaptation and use of WHO guidelines on reproductive, maternal and newborn health (RMNH) in the WHO South-East Asia Region	Category 3	Ongoing	Expressions of interest have been received and RFP is being issued. Work is expected to commence in the third quarter of 2019.
	Thematic	Evaluation of national immunization technical advisory groups (NITAGs) in the WHO South-East Asia Region	Category 1	Ongoing	Expressions of interest have been received and a Request for Proposals is being issued. Work is expected to commence in the third quarter of 2019.

Budget Centre/ Lead Office	Evaluation type	Title of Evaluation	Category in Twelfth General Programme of Work	Status	Progress as on 15 June 2019
	Thematic	An in-depth situation analysis of unmet needs and gaps for adolescent health in countries	Category 3	Postponed	Postponed to next biennium as a rapid assessment of adolescent health programme implementation in ten countries is under way. The need to continue with the evaluations will be revisited in 2020.
Decentralized evaluations					
Bangladesh	Country-specific	Evaluation of community clinics in Bangladesh	Category 4	Completed	Evaluation completed, and final report is being reviewed.
India	Country-specific Programmatic	Evaluation of WCO's contribution to advancing the agenda of viral hepatitis B and C prevention and treatment in India	Category 1	Ongoing	Evaluation has been commissioned. Finalization of the report and dissemination planned for the third quarter of 2019.
	Country-specific Programmatic	Evaluation of WCO's contribution to kala-azar elimination programme in India	Category 1	Postponed	This evaluation has been put on hold and may be considered in the future due to ongoing repurposing of WCO India support to Govt of India to focus more on kala-azar elimination strategy.
	Country-specific Thematic	WHO's role in the development of National Multisectoral Action Plan for prevention and control of NCDs in India	Category 2	Ongoing	Evaluation work is in progress. Draft report expected by the third quarter of 2019.

Budget Centre/ Lead Office	Evaluation type	Title of Evaluation	Category in Twelfth General Programme of Work	Status	Progress as on 15 June 2019
Nepal	Country-specific Programmatic	Evaluation of WHO contribution to enhance/strengthen the health information system in Nepal	Category 4	Ongoing	Data collection and analysis of data are ongoing. First draft of the report is expected in the third quarter of 2019.
Sri Lanka	Country-specific Programmatic	Evaluation of WHO contribution towards nutrition outcomes in Sri Lanka (2014–2018)	Category 2	Ongoing	Expressions of interest have been received and an RFP issued. Work is expected to commence in the third quarter of 2019.