

UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office

System-wide Evaluation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy

Summary Terms of Reference – October 2024



Background & purpose

The **United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)** was launched by the Secretary-General in June 2019 to provide the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations. The Strategy is the first ever system-wide mechanism for disability inclusion in the United Nations and is a reaffirmation of a common commitment at the highest levels of the Organization. The Strategy aims to strengthen disability inclusion across programmes and operations and enable the United Nations system to better support Member States in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), their achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, as well as other development and humanitarian commitments. The Strategy includes a system-wide policy and an accountability framework. It is implemented across the United Nations system by United Nations entities and by United Nations country teams (UNCTs).

Objectives & users

The independent system-wide evaluation will provide an external assessment of the UNDIS after 5 years of implementation. It will contribute to accountability and learning on disability inclusion in the United Nations system and inform key processes and events in this area. This is the first system-wide evaluation on disability inclusion in the United Nations system.

The specific objectives of the evaluation include assessing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of UNDIS to advance disability inclusion; facilitating learning by capturing good practices and lessons-learned, identifying barriers and enabling factors to implementation of UNDIS, as well as opportunities for improvement of the Strategy and its implementation; providing recommendations for consideration by United Nations entities and United Nations country teams; and contributing to processes and key events on disability inclusion such as the Global Disability Summit 2025, the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD; and the Secretary-General's report on UNDIS implementation.

The evaluation is expected to be used by a variety of stakeholders, including the Disability Inclusion Team that oversees and supports the coordinated implementation of UNDIS in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), all United Nations entities and United Nations country teams implementing

UNDIS, United Nations staff, including staff with disabilities, governments, persons with disabilities and

their representative organizations, broader civil society organizations, Member States and donors.

Indicative evaluation questions

Relevance, coherence and responsiveness

1. Was the UNDIS design relevant and fit for purpose in creating an institutional framework for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
2. Is the UNDIS responsive and flexible to adapt to different contexts, evolving needs and priorities?
3. Does the UNDIS appropriately integrate gender equality and human-rights dimensions and meaningful consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in its design?

Effectiveness

4. To what extent has UNDIS contributed to progress and change on disability inclusion in the United Nations system, creating an institutional framework for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
5. To what extent has the UNDIS improved United Nations support to Member States in their implementation the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
6. What have been unintended effects, positive or negative, of the operationalization of UNDIS in the United Nations system?

Sustainability

7. To what extent are results and effects sustainable in terms of leadership, institutionalization, integration into processes and frameworks, funding, human and financial resources, and intersectionality among others?

Efficiency

8. Has the UNDIS been operationalized in an efficient way in terms of governance and institutional arrangements; systems; human and financial resources; inter-agency mechanisms and coordination arrangements; intersectoral approaches and synergies with other system-wide strategies and agendas, use of partnerships and leveraging innovation?

9. Was there meaningful consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the implementation of UNDIS?

Best practices and lessons learned

10. What are the best practices and lessons learned in the design and operationalization of disability inclusion in the United Nations system? What are the enablers, barriers and gaps for successful implementation?

Key concepts/definitions

Disability Inclusion: The meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights into the work of the Organization, the development of disability-specific programmes and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Scope, methodology & ethics

The evaluation is global in scope and includes the implementation of UNDIS by all entities and country teams, including at HQ, regional and country levels. It includes all types of contexts in which the United Nations operates, including humanitarian -development - peace contexts. The evaluation covers operationalization of all areas of UNDIS by the United Nations system, from its launch in June 2019, until the end of the data collection phase (February 2025).

The evaluation will utilize a *real-time, utilization-focused and participatory approach* to facilitate the use of evidence and learning by decision-makers and implementers. It will utilize a *mixed-methods approach* to strengthen the reliability of data, validity of the findings, and to capture a wider range of perspectives and effects. It will utilize a *theory-based approach* complemented by contribution analysis to assess effectiveness of UNDIS and draw on a *most significant change approach* to understand and capture change beyond the theory of change and explore different levels of results.

The central analytical framework will be an evaluation matrix, connecting an appropriate mix of data sources and collection methods to each evaluation question/sub-question and enabling triangulation and comparative analysis. The evaluation will include internal and external validation techniques. Methods for data collection and analysis will be gender and human rights-responsive and disability-inclusive. Data collection methods will include key informant interviews and focus group discussions; review of administrative and monitoring data; document review, surveys; and direct observation, if feasible. Data collection will be carried out at HQ, regional and country levels.

The evaluation will be conducted in line with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

Disability inclusion, gender and human rights

The evaluation will integrate the UNEG Guidelines for Disability Inclusion in Evaluations; Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator; UNEG Guidelines on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, as well as the UNDIS Guidance on Consulting Persons with Disabilities. The evaluation will incorporate accessibility and reasonable accommodation to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the evaluation.

Evaluation team

The evaluation team is **independent and comprised of UNSDG-SWEO external consultants**. The team will work under the guidance and supervision of the UNSDG-SWEO evaluation manager in coordination with an inter-agency evaluation management group. The core team includes:

Michael Reynolds - Team Leader

Faith Tempest – Senior Evaluation Specialist

Priscille Geiser – Senior Disability Inclusion Specialist

Melissa Pomeroy – Evaluation, Gender and Human

Rights Specialist

Dagnachew Wakene – Disability Inclusion Specialist

Paula Hearn – Disability Inclusion Specialist

Nicholas Chua – Evaluation Analyst

Management & governance

The **UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office** has overall responsibility for steering the system-wide evaluation from start to completion in a credible, transparent, and utilisation-focused manner, in adherence with UNEG norms and standards.

An **Evaluation Management Group**, chaired by the SWEO Evaluation Manager, will provide expertise and advice on appropriate evaluation design, data collection and analysis methods, advice on secondary data sources and primary data collection opportunities, and quality assurance of evaluation deliverables.

An **Evaluation Reference Group** representing the evaluation's users will be engaged at key points in the evaluation process to comment on the approach, validate findings, and participate in the development of recommendations, ensuring that the evaluation is relevant and useful.

An **Evaluation Advisory Group** composed of independent experts with professional experience in disability inclusion.

Timeline

Preparation & Scoping:

June - Sep 2024

Inception:

Oct 2024

Data Collection/Analysis:

Nov 2024 - Feb 2025

Reporting:

Mar - June 2025

Dissemination:

July - Oct 2025