

Synthesis Report

Evaluation Synthesis of Coordination

12 February 2021

Assignment No: IED-21-005

Inspection and Evaluation Division



Inspection and Evaluation Division

Function

“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization” (General Assembly resolution 48/218 B).

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Executive Summary

The need for better coordination in the United Nations (UN) system has grown along with the increased interconnectedness and complexity of transnational issues. Coordination is essential for what the Secretary-General considered ‘networked’ and ‘inclusive multilateralism drawing on the critical contributions of civil society, business, foundations, the research community, local authorities, cities and regional governments.’¹ As the success of the UN reform agenda require working across silos, avoiding duplication, harnessing complementarities, and serving Member States to achieve Agenda 2030, better coordination is pivotal to these efforts.

To this end, this synthesis review by the Office of Internal Oversight Services - Inspection and Evaluation Division (OIOS-IED) provides an over-arching summary of key results and recommendations pertaining to the topic of coordination. It is meant to facilitate learning by sharing trends, insights and options to assist leaders and managers exercising their responsibilities.

This is part of a series of OIOS-IED synthesis review reports that assessed evidence from past inspections and evaluations on topics of strategic importance. A total of 32 inspection and evaluation reports published by OIOS-IED since 2017 were included in this review. Results and recommendations from these reports were considered under eight dimensions of coordination, and further organized under the three criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The eight dimensions were: accountability, coherence, administrative support functions, programme implementation, communications, alignment, convening power and partnerships, and roles and responsibilities.

Across these coordination dimensions, the synthesis revealed coordination challenges regarding accountability and Results-based Management (RBM) practices, programmatic coherence, alignment of administrative support functions, initiatives and policies, insufficient information sharing as well as blurred boundaries of work. These challenges led to risks of duplication, overlap or even competition among units or entities, and of limiting the performance and standing of the UN system.

On the other hand, the synthesis also highlighted convening power as a key strength, especially at regional and global levels. Where coordination was done well at the country level, it appeared to enhance the legitimacy and standing of the UN system. It was also observed that sustainable development actors were generally effective in integrating goals and objectives of multiple partners at the strategic level.

Positive coordination examples related to partnerships included their contribution to the promotion of dialogue and political consensus, the sharing of experiences and practices, advocacy and intergovernmental support. As partnerships are an essential facet of coordination, managers should ensure that they are built on a shared vision with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Careful attention is essential as there is no certainty that relevant stakeholders embarking on partnerships will have identical interests.

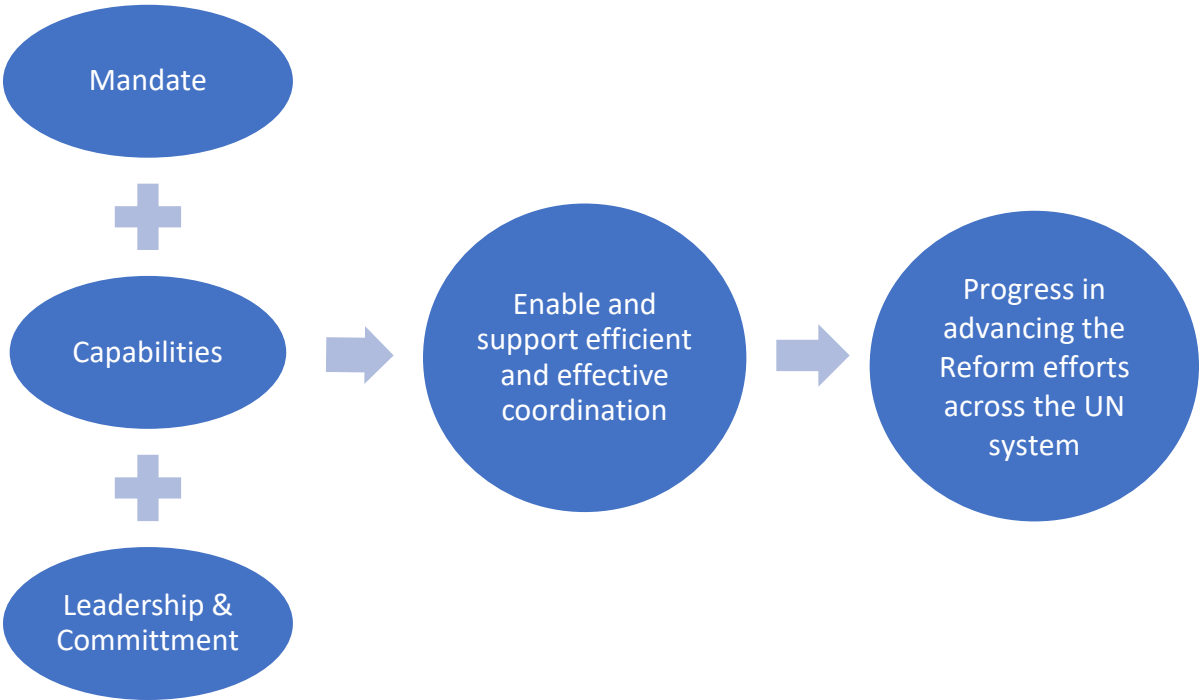
Better and more purposeful coordination has never been more urgent for effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused massive global suffering, especially for vulnerable populations. The all-encompassing nature of the pandemic calls for a deliberate and coordinated response from the UN. Enhanced coordination is also needed for the Organization to maintain effectiveness. Correspondingly, some

¹ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-07-17/secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-segment-of-the-united-nations-economic-and-social-council-%E2%80%99multilateralism-after-covid-19-what-kind-of-un-do-we-need-the-75th>

of the shortcomings in coordination identified in this review have the potential to undermine the response of the UN system and its legitimacy. Embracing and improving coordination will help navigate the challenges of responding to the pandemic.

In summary, the synthesis identified three key factors enabling and supporting improved coordination:

- **Leadership & commitment:** The extent to which coordination was embraced as an important function to strengthen partnerships, support implementation, and gain credibility and influence.
- **Capabilities:** The extent to which competencies, resources and guidance were available to facilitate, manage and oversee coordination activities and achieve coordination objectives.
- **Mandate:** The extent to which the mandate and vision of the unit or entity clearly articulated its roles, responsibilities and expectations vis-à-vis coordination at operational, programmatic and/or strategic levels.



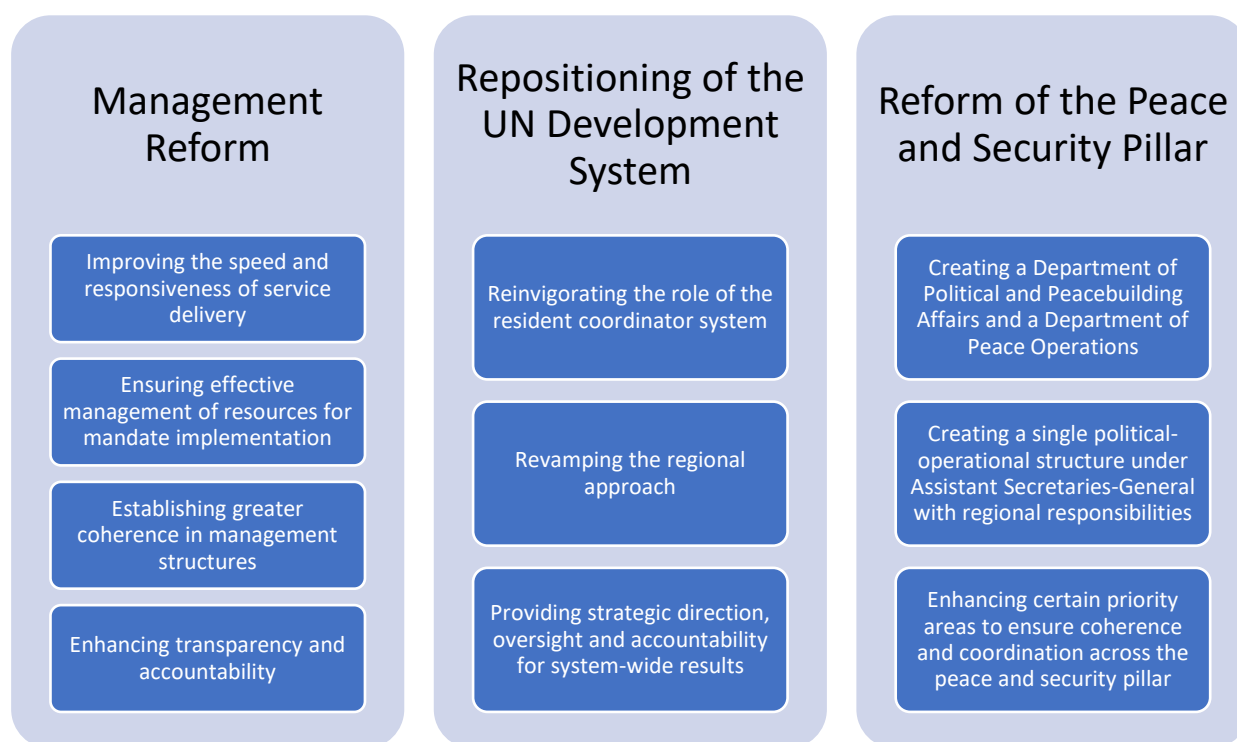
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1. The Secretary-General has identified three focus areas of reform² to enable the Organization to deliver better results and improve the lives of those it serves: management, sustainable development and peace and security. The reform vision of the Secretary-General is predicated on the UN system and entities working more closely together, breaking down silos and further strengthening integration. Enhanced coordination plays a pivotal role in this process. Below is an overview of key elements of each reform area where coordination is most relevant.



2. In order to help decision-makers better understand issues or patterns across the Organization on matters related to coordination, and how strengths and weaknesses in coordination can affect the Organization, this synthesis report aggregates and summarizes evidence across 32 OIOS-IED inspection and evaluation reports completed between January 2017 and June 2020. This is part of a series of OIOS-IED synthesis reports that assessed evidence from a range of topics and entities covered by past inspections and evaluations.

² A/RES/72/266B), Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations, (A/RES/72/236, Operational activities for development of the United Nations system), and (A/RES/72/199), Restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar.

1.2 Objective

4. This synthesis review provides an over-arching summary of key OIOS-IED inspection and evaluation results and recommendations pertaining to the topic of coordination. It is meant to facilitate learning by sharing trends and insights that can be helpful to senior leaders.

1.3 Definition

5. Coordination is not an end to itself but a process meant to facilitate and ensure the efficient and effective use of resources by different actors, so that there is no duplication or working across purposes, or programmatic gaps, such that the result of coordinated efforts can be greater than the sum of the parts of disparate efforts. Coordination in the United Nations may be a process led by an individual or an entity, division or organization.

6. The UN does not have an articulated definition of coordination. However, the term occurs in the terminology of various UN entities; governing and executive bodies (e.g. the Committee for Programme and Coordination – CPC; and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination - CEB), programmes (e.g. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - OCHA; and the Development Coordination Office - DCO), and functional positions (e.g. Resident Coordinators), which have the responsibility or function, among others, to coordinate.

7. One IED evaluation report defines coordination as “bringing together and working with different entities to address their respective issues”³. Furthermore, the Terms of Reference of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC)⁴ were also considered in establishing the following working definition:

The integration and alignment of activities, programmes, functions and responsibilities of the United Nations, its agencies, stakeholders and partners to achieve optimal timing, sequencing, resource allocation and complementarity in pursuit of goals and objectives.

8. Defining the term coordination was difficult across a large, diverse and complex organizational structure such as the UN system. There are some associated concepts that are often used in UN system. Their definition and description also depend on the perspective and context, e.g. a partnership in sociology is different from a partnership in business or the legal profession. The report considered references to four concepts - partnerships, cooperation, collaboration and coherence – as these were reasonably aligned with the working definition of coordination.

Partnerships: A partnership is an arrangement where parties, known as partners, agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests. The partners in a partnership may be

³ see para 10 of E_AC.51_2019/6 Evaluation of the offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Violence against Children

⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/ga/cpc/tor.shtml> 3. In discharging these responsibilities, the Committee shall: (a) Consider on a sector-by-sector basis the activities and programmes of the agencies of the United Nations system in order to enable the Council effectively to perform its functions as coordinator of the system and ensure that the work programmes of the United Nations and its agencies shall be compatible and mutually complementary;

individuals, businesses, interest-based organizations, government, civil society organizations or combinations thereof.

Cooperation: Cooperation involves individuals, groups or entities working together for the achievement of their individual or collective goals or purpose.

Collaboration: Bringing together a set of skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors for a common purpose.

Coherence: defined as “the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution”, it was also recently introduced as an additional criterion by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) to the five existing evaluation criteria.

1.4 Approach, Dimensions and Criteria

9. For the purpose of this synthesis, evaluation results and recommendations relating to the above definition of coordination were included in the analysis on a case-by-case basis, even if the term coordination was not explicitly used.
10. While most OIOS-IED evaluations over the past several years have not explicitly assessed or referred to coordination, aspects of coordination were treated in varying detail as factors influencing performance. This synthesis exercise was guided by the below-mentioned analytical approach. Information in the selected reports were coded as coordination using an inductive process that started with broad themes that were progressively refined.
11. In aggregating evidence, this synthesis was guided by the following key questions:
 1. What were the objectives of coordination? What was coordination expected to contribute to? Why was coordination considered relevant or important?
 2. What patterns and practices with respect to coordination were conveyed in OIOS-IED reports and how has coordination influenced programme results?
12. Reports were also considered in relationship to the four thematic areas: Human rights and humanitarian assistance, peace and security, sustainable development and organizational management and support.
13. A summary of the applied analytical approach is presented below:
 1. Identification of relevant reports for synthesis based on a content scan going back four years
 2. Creation of a database that used the reports as the unit of analysis with relevant metadata
 3. Reduction of redundancy among categories and classification of results and recommendations in reports
 4. Extraction of trends including frequency of references, and
 5. Application of an iterative approach to develop typologies and categories based on the content of the evaluation reports

14. A total of 32 inspection and evaluation reports published by OIOS-IED since 2017, covering 26 individual United Nations entities, and three reports covering a group of entities, were selected for this review out of a total report universe of 38. A pre-screening phase determined if there were substantive references to coordination that would warrant a report to be included in the analysis. While most of the 32 reports did not explicitly assess coordination, all had content relevant to coordination as defined above, that was coded and analysed. The 32 reports covered all four thematic areas of work of the Secretariat.

15. During the analysis, the objectives of coordination emanating from the references in the evaluation reports were categorized inductively. As coordination is not a goal in its own right, the following different dimensions of coordination were used in the assessments of achievements and challenges of coordination

1	Coherence of goals, objectives or vision
2	Alignment between initiatives, strategies and policies
3	Convening power and partnerships
4	Accountability, including Results Based Management and Monitoring and Evaluation practices
5	Programme implementation
6	Communications, including advocacy and event management
7	Administrative support functions
8	Clarity and complementarity of roles and responsibilities

16. These dimensions were then aligned in terms of their contribution to the performance criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The detailed results of the analysis are presented by criteria in Section 2 of this report. The below figure visualizes the relationship between coordination, the eight identified dimension and the three criteria as applied in this synthesis report.



1.5 Limitations

17. This synthesis review encountered three main methodological limitations. First, the findings of this review should not be considered as fully representative of coordination across the United Nations Secretariat: the 32 reports assessed did not cover all entities regularly evaluated by OIOS. Second, the analysis may be biased towards elements of coordination that led to underachievement due to the problem identification and solving focus of OIOS-IED reports. However, it should be noted that about one third of the coded results suggested positive effects of coordination. Third, given the different approaches used by OIOS-IED teams that assessed coordination in different entities – either directly or indirectly – inter-rater reliability was not known, and inevitably, some interpretation was needed to code and analyse references.

2. Findings

2.1. Overview

18. A total of 25 programme and seven thematic evaluation reports published by OIOS-IED between 2017 and 2020 were reviewed. A total of 390 references (339 result statements and 51 recommendations) in these reports were to coordination or closely related concepts (see section 1.3 for details), which were categorized per thematic area (see Table 1).

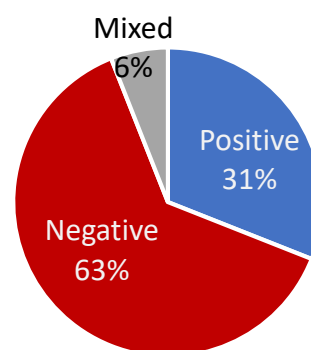
Table 1: Number of coded references per thematic area

Thematic area	Result	Recommendation	Total	# of Reports
Human rights and humanitarian assistance	51	10	61	5
Peace and security	112	16	128	12
Sustainable development	131	19	150	10
Organizational management and support	45	6	51	5
Total	339	51	390	32

19. The majority (71 per cent) of references (278 of 390, results + recommendations) were found in evaluations focused on the peace and security and sustainable development areas. This was similar to the proportion of reports (68 per cent or 22 of 32) from these two thematic areas.

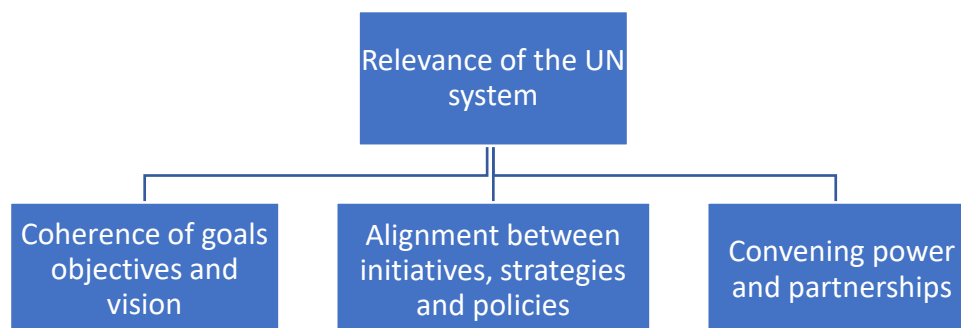
20. The assessment of each result statement was coded as positive, negative or mixed. A negative assessment meant that the related result found areas of underperformance, underachievement or areas for improvement with regard to coordination; a positive assessment referred to findings that identified strengths and coordination practices that worked well; and a mixed assessment was used when the result statement was balanced and no clear direction could be identified. The distribution in Figure 1 shows that for two negative/critical results there was about one positive reference. Recommendations were viewed separately from result statements and were not coded under negative, positive or mixed.

Figure 1: Assessment of results



2.2. Enabling Programmatic Relevance

21. Among the total of eight dimensions, three contribute to relevance. Coordination in support of coherence, alignment and convening power and partnerships are expected to strengthen the internal and external relevance of the UN system, its entities and programmes.



Summary

22. Of the 158 coded result statements, 54 per cent (85) were negative and 44 per cent (69) positive. Most result statements fell in the thematic areas sustainable development (48 per cent) and peace and security (32 per cent). It is clear that there is room for improvement in strengthening coordination in support of programmatic relevance, particularly in the peace and security area. Overall, a total of 22 recommendations were recorded.

Table 2: Overview of coded references and reports by thematic area for, alignment and convening power and partnerships.

Thematic area	Results			Recommendations
	-	+	Mixed	
Human rights and humanitarian assistance	11	9	2	5
Peace and security	32	18	0	8
Sustainable development	37	37	2	6
Organizational management and support	5	5	0	3
Total	85	69	4	22

23. The following table 3 summarizes the three dimensions related to the relevance aspects of coordination. Summary data indicated that there were significant positive results amongst the coordination mechanisms related to “Convening power and partnerships” which enhanced the overall relevance of the Organization. There were, however, less positive results overall in coordination towards coherent goals setting, and use of coordination mechanisms towards alignment of initiatives, strategies and policies.

Table 3: Definition and key finding by dimension.

Dimension	Definition	Key Finding	+ in %*
Coherence (of goals, objectives or vision)	This assessment focused on coherence in the setting of goals, objectives and vision and on coherence within or among entities.	Despite some achievements, there was room to strengthen coordination in support of coherence, particularly to ensure integrated goals and objectives of multiple partners at the strategic level and to promote a coherent and coordinated implementation.	32 (+1)
Alignment (between initiatives, strategies and policies)	The assessment of alignment focused primarily on how the evaluated entity was able to arrange operational aspects within and/or among partners and stakeholders.	There is significant potential to improve alignment within the UN system as well as with partners if coordination mechanisms are embraced and effectively applied, especially at country and regional level.	26 (-5)
Convening power and partnerships	The assessment of coordination through convening power and partnerships focused primarily on how the evaluated entity collaborated with internal and external actors, and built and maintained partnerships for enhanced dialogue, collaboration, and leadership.	Despite some challenges for the peace and security pillar, the Organization is applying coordination mechanisms reasonably well to enhance partnerships and the convening power of the UN system, especially in support of sustainable development. With a total of 58% positive results, this was the best performing out of all eight dimensions. The assessment was largely positive in three out of four thematic areas, except for Peace and Security.	58 (+27)

* % of positive result statements, (in comparison to total (31%) for all eight dimensions)

Coherence

24. Result statements with regard to coherence of goals, objectives or vision offered a mixed picture. Evaluated sustainable development actors were generally effective in integrating goals and objectives of multiple partners at the strategic level in order to promote a coherent and coordinated implementation process. Nonetheless, along several thematic areas, coherence appeared to be lacking at the operational and subprogramme level, due to absence of a common approach and shared vision amongst actors, unclear priorities to achieve goals and objectives, and lack of information-sharing and integration of analysis. In some instances, goals and objectives appeared not fully aligned with timeframes and resources available, making some of the entities' mandates unrealistic and difficult to achieve. This appeared particularly an issue within the area of peace and security.

25. Recommendations touched upon a variety of issues related to goals, objectives and vision. One key recommendation was that, in cases where Member States set goals and objectives that were not aligned with the expected timeframes and available resources, the Organization needed to be more realistic as to what could be achieved. The development of joint strategies and monitoring mechanisms was also recommended in order to strengthen the coherence of goals, objectives or vision. Improved coherent strategies with measurable results facilitate internal and external coordination and are central to the effective implementation and achievement of the sustainable development goals. In addition, these

recommendations supported progress of the larger UN system's goal to work across the main thematic areas of work in order to deliver the mandates more effectively.

Alignment

26. The majority of result statements (25 of 43) fell within the thematic area of sustainable development where issues of alignment seemed more relevant. Disaggregation by level showed that the evaluations were clearly more critical concerning alignment at regional and country level than global.

27. The main critical findings that led to inadequate alignment were summarized as follows:
- Competition for resources and over leading roles for programme implementation and management
 - Unclear partnership policy and practices, particularly for multilateral agreements
 - Fragmented planning and implementation
 - Lack of joint programming and consultation
 - Unsystematic revision and/or introduction of new policies and frameworks
 - Lack of guidance and leadership from HQ locations
 - Limited commitment to coordination and integration

28. On the positive side, coordination worked well and facilitated alignment in cases where policies and guidance were in place and - importantly - followed-up. In other examples, complex undertakings and multi-faceted work put a premium on coordination or the entity embraced and recognized its unique role and mandate as global convener, chair and moderator. Also, successful coordination and alignment at country level with key partners appeared to enhance the legitimacy and standing of the UN system. In summary, there is significant potential to improve alignment within the UN system as well as with partners if coordination mechanisms are embraced and effectively applied, especially at country and regional level.

29. Most recommendations focused on operational aspects such as clarifying responsibilities and establishing entry points for coordination, designing and implementing joint projects or sharing of information. One was more strategic and recommended strengthening partnership strategies and practices and reducing barriers to align across organizations and programmes.

Convening power and partnerships

30. The assessment was largely positive in three out of four thematic areas. However, peace and security had more negative than positive results while the result statements categorized under sustainable development were largely positive.

31. Evaluated entities focusing on sustainable development appeared to effectively engage in partnerships to support the SDGs, especially at the regional and global level. Positive examples related to coordination included their contribution to the promotion of dialogue and political consensus, the sharing of experiences and practices, advocacy and intergovernmental support. Notwithstanding certain effectiveness in convening power and promoting international and multi-party collaboration, challenges regarding coordination and coherence within the evaluated entities remained. Some of the issues highlighted were lack of information-sharing between sections and divisions, poor strategic planning, and insufficient programmatic coherence.

32. While peace and security entities showed some positive results in forging external partnerships at the global level, many challenges remained at the country- and mission level, where evaluations

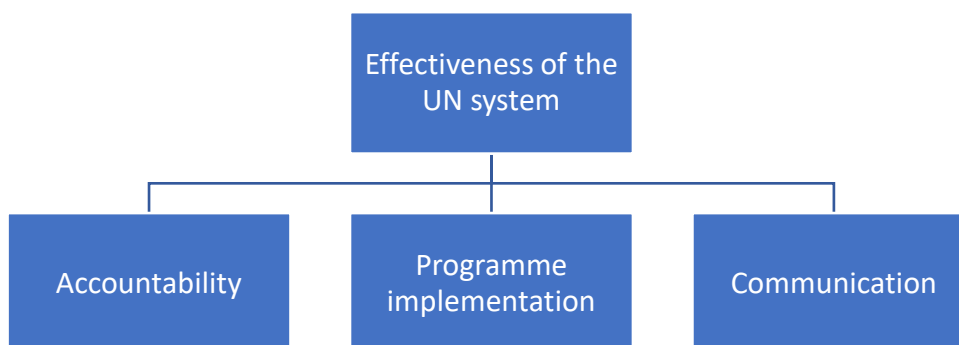
identified coordination issues due to poor collaboration between uniformed and civilian personnel, between mission pillars such as Mission Support and substantive sections, and between headquarters and the field.

33. In all thematic areas, leadership and management appeared pivotal in convening power, enhancing dialogue and collaboration, and forging partnerships. Coordination, both at the strategic as well as the programmatic level, appeared to be directly impacted when management fell short. Discontinuity in leadership, an issue especially prevalent in work environments with high staff turnover, also negatively impacted coordination and coherence of work. In summary, despite challenges, the Organization is applying coordination mechanisms reasonably well to enhance the convening power – a key role of the Secretariat and its entities.

34. Half (six) of the total number (12) of recommendations focused on peace and security, with an additional three recommendations that referred separately to sustainable development and organizational management and support. Three quarter of all recommendations focused on coordination with actors external to the evaluated entity, more specifically on the need to leverage existing partnerships and proactively identify other relevant partners. In order to strengthen collaboration mechanisms, the evaluated entities were required to develop an overall partnership strategy and roadmap to identify shared goals, objectives, types and complimentary capacities.

2.3. Enabling Programmatic Effectiveness

35. Among the total of eight dimensions, three enable programmatic effectiveness. It is assumed in this analysis that there is a relationship between accountability, programme implementation, and communications, and that these dimensions contribute to coordination towards effectiveness of the UN system, its entities and programmes.



Summary

36. Of the 115 coded result statements, 65 per cent (75) were negative and 23 per cent (26) positive. Most result statements fell in the thematic areas peace and security (37 per cent) and sustainable development (31 per cent). With the exception of the organizational management and support area, there were more negative than positive assessments of coordination towards effectiveness. A total of 17 recommendations were recorded.

Table 4: Overview of coded references and reports by thematic area for, accountability, programme implementation, and communication.

Thematic area	Results			Recommendations
	-	+	Mixed	
Human rights and humanitarian assistance	10	3	3	4
Peace and security	30	6	7	5
Sustainable development	26	6	4	7
Organizational management and support	9	11	0	1
Total	75	26	14	17

37. The following table 5 summarizes the three coordination dimensions that contribute to effectiveness. Two out of the three dimensions were below average in comparison to the number of overall positive results. Summary data indicated that there were significant negative results amongst the coordination mechanisms related to Accountability. Negative results for this criterion were related to the inadequate management practices of the Organization, including strategic planning and internal coordination. There were, however, some positive results related to Programme implementation: Partnerships supported in some cases the effective completion of programme activities. Lastly, results data indicated the Communication element of coordination was inadequate at all levels and posed a risk to UN coherence.

Table 5: Definition and key finding by dimension.

Dimension	Definition	Key Finding	+ in %*
Accountability (incl. results-based management and monitoring and evaluation practices)	The assessment under this dimension focused on how coordination affected or contributed to results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, and accountability practices. The linkages between coordination and budgeting, planning and reporting were examined.	Coordination in support of accountability was weak, particularly in peace and security; The large majority of results were negative. Examples included lack of programmatic coherence, weak internal management practices and insufficient strategic planning internal coordination cited as key challenge.	6 (-25)
Programme implementation	The assessment focused on direct and indirect project or programme implementation and the substantive work of the Organization. It explored the relationship between implementation of the programme of work, and the extent to which coordination was connected to effectiveness.	Coordination for effective programme implementation was found to be lacking, with the lack of policy, guidance and coordination mechanism as constraints. Key examples showed that partnerships appeared to play a positive and important complementary role in supporting implementation.	34 (+3)
Communication (incl. communications,	The assessment focused on the effectiveness of coordination in communications, advocacy and	There was a lack of internal communications coordination and inadequate sharing of timely	22 (-9)

advocacy and event management)	event management. Communications referred to the sharing of information and public relations; advocacy referred to various outreach, influencing and fundraising activities; event management related to the implementation of meetings, events, and consultations (including with Member States).	information at all levels. Lack of communication was linked to inadequate coherence among UN entities and risks cementing a silo mentality.	
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* % of positive result statements, (in comparison to total for eight dimensions)

Accountability⁵

38. The vast majority (83 per cent) of the result statements related to coordination in support of accountability were negative, in particular with regard to the thematic areas peace and security, and sustainable development. It appears that improved coordination can provide an enabling environment for strengthening accountability practices such as internal and external reporting, programme and strategic planning, integrated assessments and RBM. However, this was seldomly realized and in multiple cases constrained by silo mentality, lack of integration of relevant actors, ad-hoc decision-making, planning fatigue, and lack of resources, all of which could have been mitigated by better internal coordination.

39. Even though almost three quarters of the recommendations focused on sustainable development, the issues they addressed were cross-cutting for all thematic areas. In order to improve result-based management, monitoring and evaluation, and accountability practices, the evaluated entities were recommended to develop integrated strategic planning mechanisms that systematically included and engaged all relevant actors, and to be focused on results and outcomes rather than outputs. This was expected to include tracking systems for project implementation, monitoring and evaluating project outcomes and learning from past experiences.

Programme implementation

40. The majority (67 per cent) of the result statements were negative, in particular under sustainable development, accounting for the highest frequency as well as the least number of positive references. Additionally, under sustainable development and human rights and humanitarian assistance areas, negative results were oriented to the external aspects of programme coordination. There were, however, notable positive results in the area of organizational management and support which accounted for a total of ten references.

41. Partnerships appeared to play a positive and important complementary role in supporting implementation and increasing the visibility and core messages of the Organization. There were many positive examples of successful partnerships. However, the data also indicated partnership activities lacked clear guidelines and were not adequately leveraged. The analysis identified key factors for effective partnerships, such as alignment of strategic goals, effective management, and strong leadership.

⁵ A/Res/64/259 'Towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat': reaffirms commitment of Member States to strengthening accountability in the Secretariat

42. Across different entities, the evaluations found a general lack of policy guidance or strategy to, explicitly, direct or facilitate coordination tasks. Numerous evaluation reports referenced the inadequacy of internal and external implementation coordination mechanisms. In summary, substantive work is more effectively coordinated when there are clear policies and strategies in place to steer coordination activities.

43. There were five recommendations related to programme implementation. The majority of recommendations related to programme implementation called for clarity or creation of policies and guidance to support coordination. Additionally, it was recommended that entities develop clear accountability for jointly coordinated programmes including enhanced reporting on outcomes.

Communication

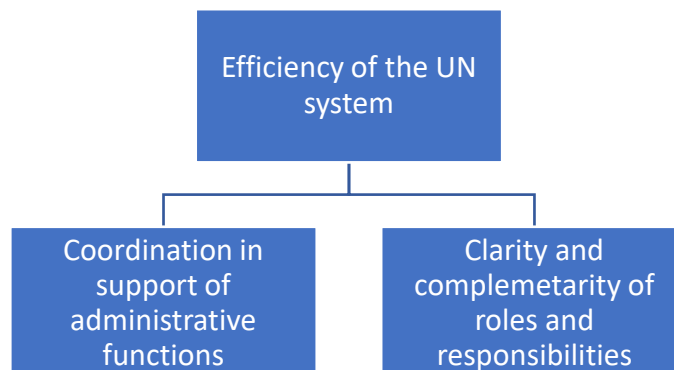
44. Externally, Member States expressed general satisfaction with communication and management of meetings and events across the sampled reports. Internally, there were numerous references to the lack of complete and timely sharing of information at various levels such as programme, regional and global. The lack of information sharing mechanisms was linked to inadequate coherence among UN entities. It risks cementing a silo mentality and undermining the recently adopted Secretary-General's Data Strategy⁶. On the other hand, strategic relationships and clusters were effective in information sharing and reduced duplication in the UN system.

45. There were only two recommendations for this dimension. One recommendation touched upon the need to unify internal communication amongst offices and programmes. The second recommendation was to improve open and clear communication with Member States.

⁶ SG Data Strategy: Memo dated 11 August 2020: EOSG-2020-05486

2.4. Enabling Programmatic Efficiency

46. Among the total of eight dimensions, two enable programmatic efficiency. Coordination in support of administrative functions and to ensure the clarity and complementarity of roles and responsibilities are expected to strengthen the efficiency of the UN system, its entities and programmes.



Summary

47. Of the 68 coded result statements, 84 per cent (57) were negative and only 16 per cent (11) positive. Most result statements fell in the thematic areas sustainable development (31 per cent), followed by peace and security (26 per cent) and organizational management and support (22 per cent). Coordination towards greater efficiency appears to be weak across the thematic areas. A total of nine recommendations were recorded.

Table 6: Overview of coded references and reports by thematic area for D3 and D8.

Thematic area	Results			Recommendations
	-	+	Mixed	
Human rights and humanitarian assistance	9	5	0	1
Peace and security	15	3	0	3
Sustainable development	20	1	0	3
Organizational management and support	13	2	0	2
Total	57	11	0	9

48. The following table 7 summarizes the two dimensions related to enabling greater programmatic efficiency. Summary data indicated that there were mainly negative results related to the dimension Roles and responsibilities. The numerous identified weaknesses for this dimension also validate the objectives and efforts of the Management Reform pillar. In reference to administrative functions, the results reflected on some positive examples of efficiencies gains through modification and simplification of administrative processes.

Table 7: Definition and key finding by dimension.

Dimension	Definition	Key Finding	+ in %*
Administrative support functions	The assessment focused primarily on the relationship between administrative efficiencies, or lack thereof, and the various levels and types of coordination. It is important to note that these administrative functions are usually not the primary focus of OIOS-IED evaluations.	Improved coordination has led to efficiency gains in some instances; however, the absence of integrated processes and clear guidance for certain functions remained a weakness.	35 (+4)
Clarity and complementarity of roles and responsibilities	The assessment of roles and responsibilities focused on decision-making, authority and the division of work.	Weaknesses and challenges regarding the clarity and complementarity of functional roles and responsibilities were a source of frustration for staff and partners, undermined the efficient implementation of programmes, and negatively affected coordination.	10 (-21)

* % of positive result statements, (in comparison to total for eight dimensions)

Administrative support functions

49. Evaluation results reviewed demonstrated the positive connection between efficient administrative processes and coordination at the programmatic level. Positive examples included efficiencies gained through modification of administrative processes, such as procurement. Additionally, harmonization of information technology and data platforms, and the integration of systems improved information sharing and thereby facilitated coordination.

50. Conversely, the lack of efficient administrative functions hindered coordination. The absence of clear guidance for certain administrative processes across the UN system prevented optimal consultation of substantive work. For example, some result statements were critical of human resources policies, or of their inconsistent implementation which resulted in lack of coherence.

51. There were two recommendations issued related to the efficiency of administrative functions. First, to improve coordination, entities were requested to integrate and ensure a common approach to data. Secondly, it was recommended to establish a clear delegation of authority with a monitoring and reporting framework.

Roles and responsibilities (clarity and complementarity)

52. In comparison to all other dimensions, roles and responsibilities had a significantly higher proportion of negative result statements. 90 per cent of results pointed to shortcomings. Most results statements referred to entities operating at the global level.

53. Weaknesses and challenges regarding the clarity and complementarity of functional roles and responsibilities were a source of frustration for staff and partners and undermined the efficient implementation of programmes. The main challenges described in the results statements can be summarized as follows. They applied to both, internal workings of the entity as well as partnerships:

- Duplication of efforts
- Working in silos
- Incoherent and overlapping priorities
- Incomplete and inconsistent change management efforts
- Inadequate accountability mechanisms
- Suboptimal leveraging of networks and partnerships

54. The recommendations for this dimension focused on:

- Strengthen existing networks for engagement and leveraging synergies among partners
- Establish internal and external coordination mechanisms
- Develop strategy and action plan for strengthening coordination
- Clarify and communicating roles and responsibilities
- Mechanisms to address duplication and gaps

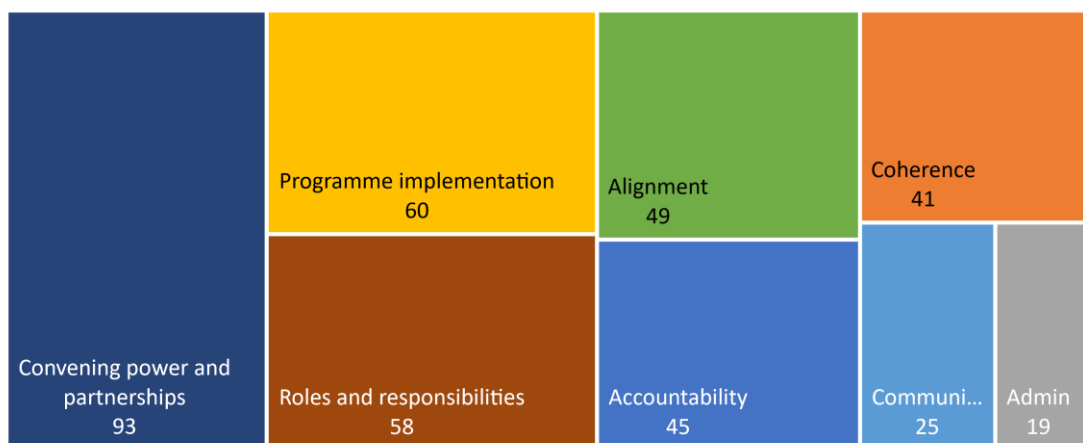
3. Conclusion

55. This synthesis report provides a summary of how coordination has both constrained and enabled programme performance as documented in IED inspection and evaluation reports since 2017. Across the objectives of coordination identified in this exercise and described as eight coordination dimensions, the report identified shortcomings as well as positive effects of sound and effective coordination. This section summarizes the key insights (3.1) as well as take-aways in reference to the UN reform agenda (3.2), for consideration by programme managers (3.3) and for the Covid-19 response (3.4).

3.1 Key insights

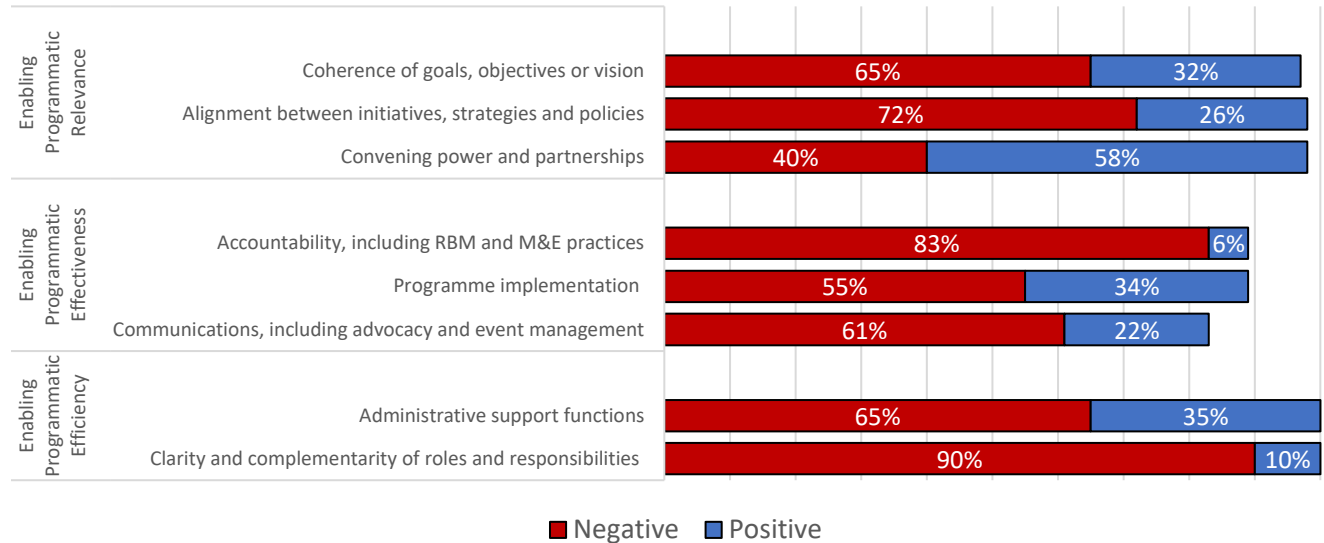
56. As expected, references (results statements plus recommendations) were not equally distributed among the eight coordination dimensions. The following Figure 2 shows that three dimensions – Programme implementation, Convening power and partnerships and Roles and responsibilities covered more than half of the results statements (54% or 211 of 390).

Figure 2: Number of references by dimension.



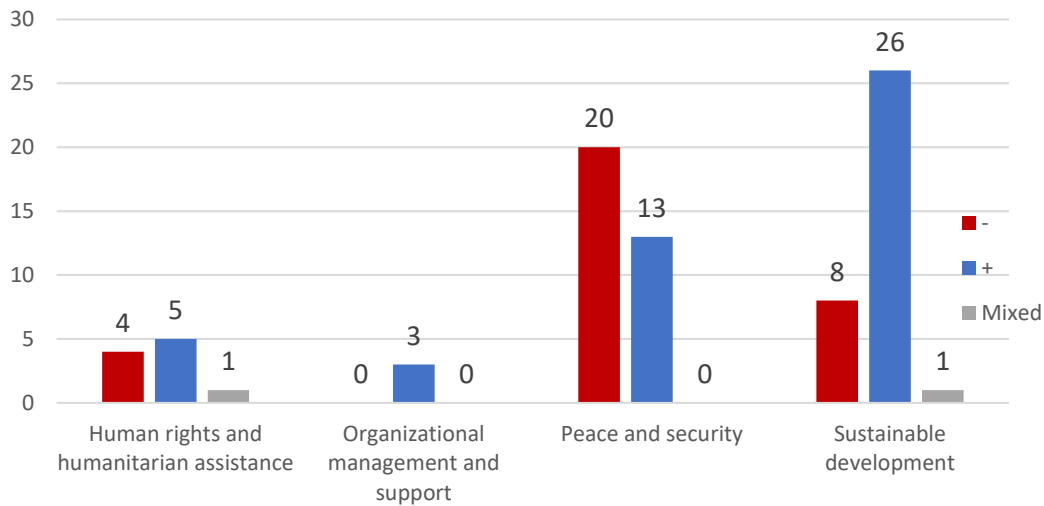
57. As described in section 2.1 (Figure 1), two-thirds of the result statements were negative/critical (63% of total) and one-third positive (31% of total). Figure 3 shows the distribution by criteria and dimension. The two dimensions where shortcomings were predominantly identified were accountability and roles and responsibilities.

Figure 3: Positive and negative results statements in % and by dimension (excluding “mixed”).



58. The coordination of convening power and partnerships was performed significantly better than average. Though challenges remained at regional and country level and within the peace and security pillar, the synthesis showed considerable achievements – and acknowledgment by partners – of the global and regional convening power of the UN system. See Figure 4 for details.

Figure 4: Assessment of results statements by thematic area for convening power and partnerships.



3.2 Key take-aways for the UN reform agenda

59. The essence of the Secretary-General's reforms is working as "one United Nations", across silos. To this end, better coordination has a central role to play. Despite specialization, expertise on the same subject or issues can be found in multiple UN entities, as well as externally. To support and strengthen the reforms, better coordination is essential.

60. The UN reform is focused on three pillars: management reform, repositioning of the UN development system, and reform of peace and security. At the core of each of the reform pillars is improved UN coherence and coordination.

61. The evaluation results synthesized in the present report validate and support key elements of the reform. For example, the current management reform addresses gaps in the accountability system, streamlines administrative processes through shared service centres, enhances the budgeting and strategic planning processes with the implementation of UMOJA, and reduces administrative burden through the revision of the delegation of authority system.

62. The repositioning of the UN development system has focused on the re-imagined Resident Coordinator system and has been structured to ensure coherence of goals and strengthen accountability through its new location within the UN secretariat reporting to the Secretary-General. It also provides needed clarity of roles and responsibilities. The development system reforms are positioned to facilitate enhanced coordination across the thematic areas of work. Coherence of goals is also a central component to peace and security reform with its stated effort to align peacekeeping efforts and political missions.

63. Although benefits reform efforts have yet to be fully realized, the current changes in progress across the three pillars of the UN system have sought to address many of the critical findings reported in OIOS-IED evaluations and lay the foundation for a more integrated and better coordinated UN system.

3.3 Key take-aways for programme managers

64. This synthesis yielded the following insights and foresights that can be useful for programme managers on coordination as actually practiced in the UN. In addition, it offered forward looking options for programme managers on how to shape and strengthen their work at a time when they face the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To enable programme relevance:

- Coordinating effectively means **fostering trust, dialogue and consensus amongst partners**. Programme managers should provide a platform for and build bridges with all relevant stakeholders to come to a shared agreement.
- With limited time and resources available, coordination to achieve **programmatic coherence within and across entities and thematic areas is key**. For example, identifying shared goals, objectives and complimentary capacities; integrating result-based management; developing tracking systems for project implementation; and establishing follow-up mechanisms on joint decision making.

To enable programme effectiveness:

- Programme managers should **invest in, promote and coordinate partnerships within the United Nations system as well as with external stakeholders** by pursuing a shared vision; championing an inclusive environment; outlining partnership strategies; and developing institutional linkages with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Programme managers need to **identify gaps in coordination policies and strategies and seek ways to strengthen internal and external coordination mechanisms.**
- **Leadership and management are essential in coordinating effectively**, but also in bringing about required organizational changes. Programme managers should be aware of their pivotal role and consciously, and fully, commit to their coordination responsibilities in improving the way we work.

To enable programme efficiency:

- Duplication of work hampers effective coordination and is often the result of silo mentality, mismanagement or power dynamics. This can be addressed by **actively sharing relevant information and breaking down silos.**

65. There is no substitute for effective leadership and decision-making by programme managers in taking coordination forward. Through their words and deeds, managers send powerful messages that can be emulated by staff and are essential to overcome the persistent risks of silo mentality, ‘turf’ related issues and problematic organizational dynamics. Entrusted with mandates and authority for choosing widely differing pathways for action, they are the crucial linchpins to help the UN better serve the peoples of the world.

3.4 Key take-aways for Covid-19 response

66. Improved and purposeful coordination has never been more urgent as the Covid-19 pandemic has caused massive global suffering and will continue to have far-ranging health, social, economic and environmental implications, especially for vulnerable populations.

67. The all-encompassing nature of Covid-19 calls for a deliberate and coordinated response from the UN. However, some of the noticed shortcomings such as unclear roles and responsibilities, limited partnerships, insufficient coherence and alignment of strategies, programmes and policies have also the potential to undermine the response of the UN system and its legitimacy to address the pandemic and its global effects. On the other hand, the strength of the UN system to convene and establish partnerships – as reflected in this synthesis – is an obvious advantage for addressing the pandemic.

68. At operational level, embracing and improving coordination will help navigating the challenges of responding to the outbreak and mitigating its effects. New channels of communication and new networks and partnerships are currently being created to share information, avoid duplication of efforts or jointly advocate for action and resources. Some of these new avenues of collaboration may prove to be very efficient and effective and stay for good rather than being of temporary nature only.

4. Annexes

4.1 List of OIOS-IED evaluations and inspections reviewed

The 38 IED reports below published as final or in draft since 2017 comprise the evidence base reviewed for this synthesis report. Reports still in draft at the time of this synthesis analysis are highlighted in yellow.

Reports Universe: Included in the content analysis

	Issue Date*	Entity	Entity**	Report No	Title	Type
1.	06-Oct-2016	DPKO/DFS	DPO	IED-16-015	Evaluation of the Integration Between Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Country Teams in Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire and the	Programme Evaluation
2.	29-Sept-16	DPKO/DFS	DPO	IED-16-014	Evaluation of the Results of National Police Capacity-Building in Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire and the DRC by UNPOL in in MINUSTAH, UNOCI and MONUSCO	Programme Evaluation
3.	17-Feb-17	DPKO, DFS	DPO	A/71/798	Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services: review and evaluation of strategic deployment stocks	Programme Evaluation
4.	07-Apr-17	DPKO, DFS	DPO	IED-17-001	Evaluation of DPKO/DFS Planning during the Force Generation Process and Related Engagement with the Security Council and Troop-Contributing Countries	Thematic Evaluation
5.	12-Jan-17	ESCWA	ESCWA	E/AC.51/2017/4	Evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Programme Evaluation
6.	12-Jan-17	ECE	ECE	E/AC.51/2017/5	Evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe	Programme Evaluation
7.	17-Feb-17	EOSG	EOSG	E/AC.51/2017/7	Evaluation of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Programme Evaluation

8.	21-Mar-17	OCHA	OCHA	E/AC.51/2017/11	Evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Programme Evaluation
9.	21-Mar-17	UNHCR	UNHCR	E/AC.51/2017/10	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for 2017	Programme Evaluation
10.	17-Mar-17	Regional commissions	Thematic	E/AC.51/2017/8	Thematic evaluation of the regional commissions	Thematic Evaluation
11.	12-Feb-18	MINUSMA, MINUSCA, DPKO, DFS, OHCHR	DPO	IED-18-002	Evaluation of re-hatting in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)	Programme Evaluation
12.	25-Feb-19	DM	DMSPC	E/AC.51/2019/3	Evaluation of the Office of Human Resources Management	Programme Evaluation
13.	08-Mar-18	MICT	IRMCT	S/2018/206	Evaluation of the methods and work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	Programme Evaluation
14.	12-Jan-17	UNHCR	UNHCR	E/AC.51/2017/2	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Programme Evaluation
15.	26-Apr-19	DOS, DPO	DPO	IED-19-007	Evaluation of the contribution of the UNMISS Civil Affairs Division to the reduction of local conflict in South Sudan	Programme Evaluation
16.	13-Mar-19	DGACM	DGACM	E/AC.51/2019/5	Evaluation of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management	Programme Evaluation
17.	22-Feb-19	DPI	DGC	E/AC.51/2019/2	Evaluation of the Department of Public Information	Programme Evaluation
18.	08-Mar-19	OHCHR, DPO, DMSPC	Thematic	IED-19-004	Evaluation of the effectiveness of human rights monitoring, reporting and follow-up in the United Nations multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations	Thematic Evaluation

19.	07-Mar-19	UNODA	UNODA	E/AC.51/2019/4	Evaluation of the Office for Disarmament Affairs	Programme Evaluation
20.	25-Mar-19	OLA	OLA	E/AC.51/2019/9	Evaluation of the Office of Legal Affairs	Programme Evaluation
21.	25-Mar-19	UNHCR	UNHCR	E/AC.51/2019/8	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Programme Evaluation
22.	14-Mar-19	CAAC, SVC, VAC	OSRSGs	E/AC.51/2019/6	Evaluation of the Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Violence against Children	Programme Evaluation
23.	22-Mar-19	UNEP	UNEP	E/AC.51/2019/7	Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme	Programme Evaluation
24.	08-Mar-19	OOSA	OOSA	IED-19-003	Evaluation of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs	Programme Evaluation
25.	13-Jun-19	UN Secretariat	Thematic	IED-19-001	Evaluation of United Nations entities' the preparedness, policy coherence and early results associated with their support to Sustainable Development Goals	Thematic Evaluation
26.	20-Mar-19	UN Secretariat	Thematic	A/74/67	Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives	Thematic Evaluation
27.	09-Mar-20	OHRLLS	OHRLLS	IED-20-003	Evaluation of OHRLLS	Programme Evaluation
28.	25-Mar-20	NEPAD	NEPAD	IED-19-018	Evaluation of Support to NEPAD	Programme Evaluation
29.	16-Mar-20	DPPA	DPPA	IED-20-001	Evaluation of DPPA early warning / conflict prevention	Programme Evaluation
30.	10-June-20	DESA	DESA	IED-19-015	Evaluation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Programme evaluation

31.	04-May - 20	UNODC	UNODC	IED-19-016	Evaluation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Programme evaluation
32.	Draft*	DPO	DPO		Evaluation of DPO mission organizational culture	Thematic Evaluation

Reports Universe: Not included in the content analysis

	Issue Date*	Entity	Entity**	Report No	Title	Type
1.	30-Jul-18	DPKO, DFS	DPO	IED-18-010	Inspection of the performance of missions' operational responses to Protection of Civilians (POC) related incidents	Inspection
2.	02-Oct-17	DPKO, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, MINUSCA	DPO	IED-17-013	Evaluation of the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations in deterring and confronting armed elements in the DRC, Mali and the Central African Republic	Thematic Evaluation
3.	17-Mar-17	OHCHR	OHCHR	E/AC.51/20 17/9	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights	Programme Evaluation
4.	28-May-20	UN Women	UN Women	IED-19-012	Inspection of evaluation function	Inspection
5.	12-Jan-17	UNRWA	UNRWA	E/AC.51/20 17/3	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Programme Evaluation
	12-Jan-17	DPA	DPPA	E/AC.51/20 17/6	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs	Programme Evaluation
6.	17-Mar-17	UN Secretariat	Thematic	A/72/72	Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives	Thematic Evaluation

*This report is still a draft

**Revised for analysis and consistency based on structural changes since 2019

Source: oios.un.org/inspection-evaluation-reports

4.2 List of acronyms

DGACM	Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
DGC	Department of Global Communications*
DMSPC	Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance*
DOS	Department of Operational Support*
DPO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations*
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs*
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
IRMCT	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals*
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Office for Disarmament Affairs
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHRLLS	Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OIOS-IED	Office of Internal Oversight Services – Inspection and Evaluation Division
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OOSA	Office for Outer Space Affairs
OSAA	Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
OSRSGs	Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Violence against Children
RBM	Results-based Management
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for the Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

*Office/entity title changed from initial report publication