Council of Europe Evaluation Policy

November 2019

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Council of Europe

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Preface

The new evaluation policy approved by the Committee of Ministers in November 2019 reflects international norms and standards, in particular as regards the independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation function and the transparency of evaluation results. It is a decisive step forward towards a strengthened organisational culture of evaluation, learning and accountability.

I consider the policy to be a milestone in enhancing the Organisation's capacity to assess its performance and demonstrate its comparative advantage and value. At a strategic level, evaluation can help us debate, set priorities and take decisions on the best way forward for achieving the Council of Europe's goals. At programme level, it can help us to further increase the impact of our support to member States and to ensure the continued confidence of our member States and donors in the Organisation's work.

Making use of evaluation reports may bring innovative thinking, improve existing ways of working, promote internal collaboration and thus coherence, while at the same time enhancing dialogue with our partners. I trust that senior management and staff across the Organisation will fully embrace and implement the new policy.

For my part, I will continue to foster an enabling environment for the further development of the evaluation culture within the Organisation.

The Secretary General
Marija Pejčinović Burić

Preamble

In 2017, the need to develop a new evaluation policy was raised on numerous occasions.

In the context of the Programme and Budget cycle for 2018-2019, the Secretary General made proposals to reinforce the evaluation function and recognised the role of evaluation in the on-going reform: "during the biennium, a renewed focus will be placed on evaluating activities and programmes for their efficiency, effectiveness and impact [and] the Organisation's evaluation policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary, taking into account the peer review exercise".[1]

The Committee of Ministers invited the Secretary General to take appropriate measures to develop further an effective evaluation culture within the Organisation, with a view to further rationalising activities as appropriate.[2]

The Oversight Advisory Committee, in its annual report, stated that the evaluation function was "critical to installing an evaluation culture in the Council of Europe" and proposed recommendations such as directives from top management as an enabling condition, updating the evaluation policy, giving full attention to the results of the peer review of 2017 and paying more attention to decentralised evaluations (evaluations managed by MAEs other than the DIO).[3] The new Oversight Advisory Committee, which took up its duties in the autumn of 2017, also made concrete recommendations for the development of a new evaluation policy, stating that it should be based on international standards.

The Peer Assessment of the Evaluation Function of the Council of Europe[4] made several recommendations on how to further improve the evaluation function, including the need to develop a new evaluation policy. The Committee of Ministers asked the Secretary General to follow up on its recommendations as part of the continued reform process.[5]

Based on the considerations above, a new Evaluation Policy has been prepared by the Directorate of Internal Oversight.

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1. SG/Inf(2017)28-rev.
2. Committee of Ministers' decision CM/Del/Dec(2017)1300/11.1-Part1, paragraph 12.
3. Committee of Ministers (CM(2017)107). Oversight Advisory Committee (Annual report from 1 July 2016 to 7 July 2017).
4. Peer Assessment of the Evaluation Function of the Council of Europe, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (August 2017).
5. Committee of Ministers' decision CM/Del/Dec(2018)1312/11.4.

Introduction

1. As stated in Article 2 of the Financial Regulations, the Secretary General is responsible for putting into place a governance system for the Organisation, including a framework for the evaluation of results.[6]

2. This updated Evaluation Policy supersedes the previous one and also updates the criteria for establishing projects.[7] The Evaluation Guidelines will be updated to reflect changes made in the policy and submitted to the Committee of Ministers. They will be regularly updated to introduce new processes and procedures related to evaluation or relevant to it.[8]

3. The renewed vision for evaluation in the Organisation emphasises the following elements:

    ► an overall focus on knowledge generation, programme improvement and organisational learning, so that evaluation can serve the needs and priorities of the Council of Europe and support the Organisation in strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

    ► a strong organisational culture of accountability for achieving results and for using resources efficiently, supported by transparent reporting mechanisms on achievements and lack thereof;

    ► a commitment to conducting evaluations that are independent, impartial, credible and useful, and to make relevant and timely contributions to decision-making processes;

    ► a comprehensive, integrated, coherent, transparent and useful evaluation system with strong alignments with other international organisations and standards;

    ► a renewed commitment by all to support and use evaluation in decision-making as a means to improve the relevance and impact of the Council of Europe work and to make evaluation a collective effort.

4. The Policy takes inspiration from the norms and standards for evaluation established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)[9] and the OECD DAC Summary of Key Norms and Standards.[10]

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6. Financial Regulations and Supplementary Provisions of the Council of Europe.
7. Evaluation Policy, Committee of Ministers CM(2008)156 and Establishing criteria for projects CM(2006)101-final approved at the Deputies 984th meeting – 17 and 18 January 2007.
8. The Committee of Ministers took note of the Evaluation Guidelines in 2014, DD(2014)238.
9. United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation.* New York: UNEG.
10. OECD DAC (2010). *Evaluating Development Co-operation – Summary of Key Norms and Standards*, Second edition. Paris: OECD.

I. DEFINITION, PURPOSE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF EVALUATION

5.   The Council of Europe's definition of evaluation is adapted from that of UNEG:

6.   Evaluation is a systematic and impartial assessment of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria, such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and added value.[11] An evaluation should provide relevant, credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of the Council of Europe and its stakeholders.

7.   All evaluations share the purposes of learning, accountability and evidence-based decision-making by systematically analysing the underlying causal logic and assumptions, linking activities, outputs and outcomes. This enables the Council of Europe to understand how well its activities and programmes are designed and how they are making a difference. Evaluation aims at making important contributions to organisational reforms and innovation.

8.   Evaluation should be distinguished from self-assessment and project monitoring, which is conducted by the management of the intervention itself with the purpose of adapting activities to changing circumstances and reporting on progress in the achievement of results. Self-assessments feed into evaluations but do not follow evaluation standards and processes and are not covered by this Policy.

9.   The guiding principles of the Organisation's evaluation function are based on UNEG evaluation norms and comprise of independence, impartiality, credibility, utility, ethics, as well as human rights and gender equality.

Utility

10.   Utility refers to the extent to which evaluations inform decisions and actions and contribute to organisational learning and accountability for results.

11.   The Council of Europe is committed to enhancing utility by planning and conducting evaluations with a clear intent to use their results, undertaking them in a timely way to inform decision-making processes, publishing and actively disseminating evaluation results in user-friendly formats to concerned stakeholders, and systematically following up on the implementation of recommendations. To optimise the utility of evaluations and the evidence they produce, the evaluation process should be inclusive and participatory at all stages. Particular attention must be given to ensuring the participation of those actors who might be directly affected by evaluation recommendations. Finally, careful consideration should be given to political sensitivities at all stages of the evaluation process.

Credibility

12.   Credibility refers to the extent to which evaluations provide robust and credible evidence-based findings and are conducted in an impartial, professional, technically competent and transparent manner. Credibility is essential to increase the utility of evaluations. The Council of Europe is committed to enhancing credibility by applying transparent evaluation processes, appropriate evaluation methodology and rigorous quality assurance mechanisms. Credibility also requires that evaluators have the necessary competencies and skills to conduct and manage evaluations and that they keep abreast of new developments in their field. Furthermore, credibility depends on stakeholders' understanding of the value and processes of evaluation, which should be satisfactorily explained in the framework of conducting an evaluation. Finally, evaluations should be balanced and apply a constructive approach.

Independence and Impartiality

13.   Independence and impartiality refer to the extent to which evaluations deliver objective assessments which are free from undue influences that distort or bias their conduct or findings.

14.   Independence and impartiality are necessary for the credibility of evaluations. The Council of Europe is committed to safeguarding the independence and impartiality of its evaluations.

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11.   All evaluation criteria are defined in Appendix 1.

15.   The mandate of the Directorate of Internal Oversight (DIO) states that it should:

"provide independent oversight, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value to and improve the Organisation's operations."

16.   Under the authority of the Secretary General, the Director of Internal Oversight enjoys operational independence in the conduct of his or her duties. This independence is obtained primarily through the organisational status of the Directorate of Internal Oversight which reports directly to the Secretary General. The Director of Internal Oversight has the authority to initiate, carry out and report on any action, which he or she considers necessary to fulfil his or her responsibilities. The Director of Internal Oversight shall inform the Oversight Advisory Committee of any restrictions and limitations in the conduct of his/her duties.

17.   The Director of Internal Oversight has to accept requests for his or her services from the Secretary General, but he or she may not be prohibited from carrying out any action within the purview of his or her mandate. The DIO carries the responsibility of setting the evaluation work programme.

18.   It has full discretion to directly interact with all relevant stakeholders and to publish and disseminate its evaluation reports to decision-makers subject to provisions detailed below in Section V under 'Publication'.

19.   Finally, evaluation staff and evaluation team members must demonstrate professional integrity and not have been (or expect to be in the near future) directly involved in the policy setting, design or management of the evaluation subject nor have any other form of conflict of interest.

Ethics

20.   Ethics in evaluation refers to the extent to which evaluations are conducted with the highest standards of integrity as well as respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment, human rights and gender equality.

21.   DIO evaluation staff and external evaluators sign and are expected to abide by the Council of Europe's code of conduct for evaluation. In particular, evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, must ensure that sensitive data is protected and that it cannot be traced to its source, and must validate statements made in the report with those who provided the relevant information. When evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered, it must be reported discreetly to a competent body (such as the internal audit or investigation function).

22.   In turn, the evaluees are respectful of evaluators and the evaluation process. They do not seek to put undue pressure, engage in disrespectful behaviour or attitude that jeopardises the carrying out and completion of the evaluation exercise.

Human Rights and Gender Equality

23.   Human rights, gender equality and respect for diversity in evaluation refer to the extent to which evaluations contribute to their enhancement. Council of Europe evaluations, where appropriate, assess whether and how evaluees strengthen human rights and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality. Furthermore, cross-cutting dimensions such as gender mainstreaming, civil society participation and, as appropriate, attention to other relevant groups are incorporated in the evaluation process. Evaluations should encourage and enhance participation, tackle discrimination and enable inclusion.

II.   RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EVALUATION

The Committee of Ministers

Normative work	▶ approves the Evaluation Policy; ▶ approves the appointment of the Director of DIO;
Resourcing	▶ provides sufficient resources for evaluation in the Organisation in accordance with the provisions in Section VI;
Planning	▶ communicates its needs in terms of support for its decision making to the DIO and takes note of the evaluation work programme;[12]
Use	▶ takes note of and/or considers published evaluation reports and the proposed follow-up; ▶ follows the implementation of evaluation recommendations.

The Secretary General

Normative work	▶ ensures compliance with the Evaluation Policy; ▶ assures the independence and integrity of the evaluation function and creates an enabling environment which recognises the importance of evaluation as a key accountability and learning mechanism; ▶ notifies the Committee of Ministers, for their approval, of the person he/she intends to appoint as the Director of DIO;
Resourcing	▶ ensures that adequate resources are allocated to evaluation in budget proposals, in accordance with the provisions made in Section VI;
Planning	▶ communicates decision-making needs to DIO and reviews and endorses the evaluation work programme;
Use	▶ ensures that the Secretariat prepares a management response, including an action plan to evaluations; ▶ in case of diverging views on recommendations between the Major Administrative Entities (MAEs), the Secretary General takes a decision on the issues raised and is the final arbiter on the adequacy of proposals for the effective implementation of recommendations and management responses by the MAEs; ▶ is responsible for the implementation of action plans to address recommendations.

Council of Europe Management and staff

For DIO-managed evaluations	
Evaluability	▶ ensure the effective results-based design, monitoring of and reporting on implementation and performance of programmes to generate relevant and timely information for management for results and evaluation;
Resourcing	▶ within the limits of the available budgetary means, provide sufficient resources and capacity for evaluation in their areas of responsibility;

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12. In accordance with established practice through which the GR-PBA discusses and takes note of the annual work programme for DIO, including evaluation, at least once a year and noting the provisions hereafter relating to 'The Directorate of Internal Oversight - Planning' (cf. page 16) whereby DIO consults with the Committee of Ministers when developing the evaluation work programme.

Planning	▶ inform the DIO of the priorities for evaluation in their areas of responsibility for the purpose of establishing the DIO work programme; ▶ inform the DIO of all planned decentralised evaluations;
Design/ Implementation	▶ fully co-operate with DIO-managed evaluations and actively contribute to their design, preparation and implementation, including by: a) providing the evaluators with a complete information dossier, b) facilitating access to stakeholders, and c) commenting on the draft terms of references and draft reports (including the feasibility of recommendations); ▶ appoint members to reference groups senior enough to take position on behalf of their MAEs;
Use	▶ submit the management responses to evaluations, including an action plan with timeline to DIO; ▶ conduct regular follow-up to and reporting on implementation of accepted DIO-managed evaluation recommendations; ▶ consider the strategic and operational implications of evaluation findings, ensure the implementation and use for decision-making of accepted recommendations, and provide assurance to the Secretary General that appropriate actions have been taken to implement them.

For decentralised evaluations	
Evaluability	▶ ensure the effective results-based design, monitoring of and reporting on implementation and performance of programmes to generate relevant and timely information for management for results and evaluation;
Resourcing	▶ within the limits of the available budgetary means, provide sufficient resources and capacity for evaluation in their areas of responsibility;
Planning	▶ identifies, with key partners and stakeholders, priority areas for evaluation when designing programmes and projects; ▶ inform DIO of all planned decentralised evaluations;
Design/ Implementation	▶ apply the DIO Evaluation Guidelines notably in respect of quality assurance;
Use	▶ consider the strategic and operational implications of evaluation findings, ensure the implementation and use for decision-making of accepted recommendations; ▶ disseminate the reports and their results to target audiences in appropriate formats; ▶ send a copy of the evaluation reports of decentralised evaluations and action plans to DIO and to the SG at the latest within two months of the receipt of the final report and provide information on their plans for publication and dissemination of the reports as per Section V of the Evaluation Policy.

The Oversight Advisory Committee

Normative work	▶ serves in an advisory capacity and reports to the Committee of Ministers and may advise the Secretary General on the independence, credibility, performance and value added of the evaluation function as well as on the appointment of the Director of Internal Oversight;
Planning	▶ advises the Secretary General as necessary on the work programme and budget of the evaluation function and reports to the Committee of Ministers in accordance with its terms of reference;
Use	▶ advises on the timely and effective implementation of evaluation recommendations.

The Directorate of Internal Oversight (DIO)

Normative work	▶ establishes an effective organisation-wide evaluation system to promote organisational learning, reform and accountability for results; ▶ periodically reviews and updates the Evaluation Policy; ▶ submits an annual report to the Secretary General and to the Committee of Ministers;
Planning	▶ identifies strategically relevant and timely evaluation topics in consultation with the Secretary General and other relevant stakeholders, such as the Committee of Ministers, and develops the evaluation work programme, taking into consideration the criteria for selecting topics outlined in Appendix 2, for review and endorsement by the Secretary General; ▶ ensures that evaluation provides representative coverage of the Council of Europe activities;
Design/ Implementation	▶ independently designs and conducts evaluations in accordance with this policy, its guidelines, international evaluation norms and standards and in particular the guiding principles listed in Section I; ▶ has the authority to establish direct communication and contact with any relevant evaluation stakeholder and ensures key stakeholders' participation in and contribution to all phases of the evaluation process; ▶ has the authority to review any documentation and request any information that is relevant for conducting the evaluation; ▶ assures the quality of the DIO-managed evaluation process and products; ▶ ensures that recommendations are targeted towards precise needs, are of a transformative nature contributing to meaningful learning and subsequent innovation and change; ▶ has the authority to declare evaluation reports final;
Use	▶ submits evaluation reports to the Secretary General for preparation of a management response, including an action plan; ▶ transmits published evaluation reports and related action plans[13] to the Chair of the Ministers' Deputies and presents corresponding findings, conclusions and recommendations to the relevant governance bodies; ▶ reports annually on the status of recommendations (acceptance and implementation); ▶ regularly reports on evaluation findings to the Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General, the Senior Management Group, other relevant stakeholders and, through its annual report, to the Committee of Ministers; ▶ has the authority to publish and publishes evaluation reports and management responses in accordance with the provisions detailed below in Section V under 'Publication' and widely disseminates evaluation results and lessons learned to relevant stakeholders through organising events and other means of communication; ▶ regularly follows up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations;

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13. The policy on publication of Reports and Action Plans is set out in paragraphs 39-42 and 44.

Support to decentralised evaluation	Is responsible for assurance of the quality of decentralised evaluations: ► establishes a framework that provides technical and quality assurance support to decentralised evaluations; ► provides advice on the selection of consultants, drafting of terms of reference and draft evaluation reports; ► supports the development of learning groups of practice and knowledge networks drawing on recommendations from reports; ► provides technical advice on the implementation of Evaluation Guidelines; ► provides training and coaching on evaluation methodologies and processes; ► provides advice on the evaluability of Council of Europe interventions such as programmes, strategies and policies; ► publishes decentralised evaluation reports on the DIO intranet and internet websites.

III. EVALUATION SYSTEM IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

24.   The Council of Europe's evaluation system consists of DIO-managed and decentralised evaluations.

DIO-managed evaluations

25.   DIO-managed evaluations are funded through the DIO's resources and managed by DIO. They typically assess areas of high significance or strategic importance that generally encompass several MAEs.

26.   The evaluations are conducted using the internal capacities and expertise of DIO and/or external consultants in line with evaluation and ethical guidelines and the code of conduct for evaluators. DIO assures the quality of the entire evaluation process, including the final report and tracks the implementation of recommendations. All completed evaluations are submitted to the Secretary General.

27.   DIO-managed evaluations can assess the following areas:

   a.   Evaluation of projects and programmes of the biennial Programme and Budget (including thematic and cross-cutting evaluation, regional or country programme evaluation);

   b.   Organisational evaluation (which refers to the functioning of the Council of Europe, including institutional arrangements, Council of Europe offices and Partial Agreements).

Decentralised evaluations

28.   Decentralised evaluations are evaluations which are managed by MAEs other than DIO and funded through the Ordinary Budget or extra-budgetary resources. They typically assess a single programme, funding agreement, strategy, entity, or other area of action and are submitted to the relevant Committee of Ministers' rapporteur group through the Secretary General, steering committee or donor who requested it.

29.   Decisions to launch decentralised evaluations at entity/project/programme level take into account the requirements of donors and/or of a governing body. Decentralised evaluations are conducted by external consultant evaluators who have not been involved in the design, implementation or management of the subject under evaluation. They shall meet the same level of norms and standards as independent evaluations, including DIO Evaluation Guidelines and ethical guidelines as well as the code of conduct for evaluators. DIO is responsible for establishing a framework that provides guidance, quality assurance, technical assistance and professionalisation support, as well as for regularly reviewing its implementation for advising on the selection of consultants, on the drafting of terms of reference and on draft evaluation reports.

30.   As detailed above, decentralised evaluations should apply the DIO Evaluation Guidelines. Specific roles and responsibilities of DIO and MAEs in respect of decentralised evaluations are set out above in Section II: Responsibilities.

Joint evaluations

31.   Joint evaluations are funded and managed jointly by DIO and donors or partner organisations. Such evaluations fall under this Evaluation Policy.

Methodological depth of the analysis

Complete systematic evaluations

32. Complete systematic evaluations are comprehensive, rigorous and in-depth assessments of an intervention or an entity, which require substantial investment of resources, but can also produce most relevant and informative results.

Tailored evaluations

33. Tailored evaluations are assessments focused on one or more specific and well-defined dimension(s) of an intervention or an entity, which is/are of primary interest to stakeholders or a specific management component.

34. DIO has the authority to decide which approach to employ for each evaluation based on consultations with stakeholders, an analysis of available resources, the urgency of providing information and the questions that need to be answered.

IV. QUALITY ASSURANCE

35. DIO has established quality assurance mechanisms for evaluations in line with the OECD DAC evaluation quality standards[14] and UNEG norms and standards[15] for the purpose of continuous improvement of the quality and usefulness of its evaluation processes and evaluation reports.

36. The principal components of the quality assurance mechanism are the following:

 ► DIO sets the standards for the Council of Europe for planning, conducting and using all evaluations in the form of guidance material and methodological tools available on its website;

 ► DIO assures the quality of DIO-managed evaluations in accordance with the aforementioned standards and guidelines;

 ► DIO consults with stakeholders concerned on the terms of reference/inception reports as well as draft evaluation reports;

 ► DIO makes use of reference groups and, if relevant, of subject-matter experts, to ensure that the evaluation process meets quality expectations;

 ► DIO may commission periodic independent meta-evaluations to assess report quality of its own reports and those of decentralised evaluations;

 ► DIO periodically commissions an external peer review of the Evaluation Policy and evaluation function;

 ► DIO provides staff with relevant training/coaching advice and guidance material to strengthen the necessary skills and knowledge required to carry out evaluations and evaluability assessments of programmes, policies and strategies.[16]

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14. OECD DAC (2010). *Evaluating Development Co-operation – Summary of Key Norms and Standards*, Second edition. Paris: OECD.
15. United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). Norms and Standards for Evaluation. New York: UNEG.
16. Evaluability is defined as the "extent to which an activity or a programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion". An Evaluability Assessment "calls for the early review of a proposed activity in order to ascertain whether its objectives are adequately defined and its results verifiable". (OECD DAC (2002). Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. Paris: OECD).

V.   EVALUATION USE

37.   The Council of Europe is committed to an effective use of the knowledge and learning generated by evaluations in decision-making. Effective use requires a strong evaluation culture. By participating in and using evaluations, staff, senior management and the Committee of Ministers alike promote a culture of organisational learning, improve transparency in the use of resources and enhance accountability for results. Evaluations should be used in good faith.

38.   Key standards for ensuring evaluation use are:

> ► inclusive and participatory evaluation processes;
>
> ► management response and follow-up mechanism;
>
> ► evaluation reports reflected and referenced in the Programme and Budget and results reporting;
>
> ► targeted knowledge sharing products based on evaluation;
>
> ► new policies and programmes take relevant evaluation reports into account and refer to them.

Publication

39.   Transparency is essential to provide substantive accountability vis-à-vis stakeholders and to improve communication of programme results and impact.

40.   DIO-managed Council of Europe evaluation reports are made public on the DIO intranet and internet sites within two months after the Director of Internal Oversight has declared them being final, whether or not a management response has been received.[17]

41.   Decentralised evaluation reports and their action plans shall be published on the Internet and Intranet sites of the Council of Europe.

42.   As per Section II concerning the role of the Council of Europe management and staff, they shall submit to the DIO (for publication) and the Secretary General final evaluation reports and action plans.

Dissemination

43.   To facilitate a wider use of evaluation findings, DIO develops communication and dissemination plans early in the evaluation process in order to identify key target groups and to consider the most effective approaches to knowledge sharing. DIO regularly disseminates information on completed evaluations in different formats, including events, and presents key findings and lessons learned relevant to specific target groups. Informal meetings are also held periodically with permanent representations, management, the Senior Management Group, programme staff and relevant external stakeholders to share and to discuss evaluation lessons.

Management response

44.   Council of Europe evaluation reports require a management response. The response should be prepared no later than two months after an evaluation report has been declared final by the Director of Internal Oversight and shall be published at the same time as the evaluation report or when it is received if this is after the publication of the report.

45.   The management response consists of two parts: (i) a general statement providing management's overall view on the report findings and recommendations, and (ii) details on whether management accepts individual recommendations and how it intends to address accepted recommendations. As such, the management response signals a strong commitment to follow-up.

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17.   In accordance with Committee of Ministers' Resolution Res(2001)6 on access to Council of Europe documents and Council of Europe rules on protection of privacy and data protection preventing publication of classified information. It is noted that Council of Europe management and staff have a responsibility to comment on draft evaluation reports and to prepare a management response (cf. page 15 'Council of Europe Management and Staff – Design/implementation'). Evaluation reports are declared final by the Director of Internal Oversight, are published and are sent to the Chair of the Ministers' Deputies in accordance with the provisions on page 16.

46.   DIO reports annually on the implementation of accepted evaluation recommendations to the Secretary General who reports to the Committee of Ministers. The report includes information in respect of acceptance and non-acceptance of recommendations, and highlights success stories, lessons learned and areas for improvement as necessary.

VI.   RESOURCES FOR EVALUATION

47.   An effective evaluation function requires a secure and adequate investment in terms of financial and human resources in order to ensure the development of an evaluation function capable of generating credible evidence through its evaluations.

48.   The resourcing of evaluation is consequently guided by the following key principles:

▶ Allocation of adequate resources to DIO-managed and decentralised evaluations is ensured by the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General within the limits of the overall budgetary means of the Organisation;[18]

▶ Within the limits of the overall budgetary means of the Organisation, adequate funds should be made available for the planning, conduct, reporting and dissemination and follow-up of evaluations in accordance with the evaluation work programme and adequate human resources should be provided to enable the DIO to perform its mandate in accordance with the Evaluation Policy;

▶ DIO and MAEs can receive financial voluntary contributions, and in kind non-monetary contributions (e.g. in the form of secondments and short-term expertise);[19] any such voluntary contribution should be made respecting the norms and standards applicable to independent evaluations, including DIO Evaluation Guidelines and ethical guidelines as well as the code of conduct for evaluators.

VII.   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

49.   This policy supersedes the previous Evaluation Policy of 2008 and becomes operational once it has been approved by the Committee of Ministers. DIO will develop a strategy for implementing the Policy and will update existing guidance materials and instructions to reflect the contents of this Policy.

VIII.   REVIEW OF THE POLICY

50.   The DIO will regularly monitor the implementation of the Policy.

51.   A review of the implementation of the Policy should be undertaken as part of the next external peer review (as mentioned in Section IV above) of the Evaluation Function to be carried out in 2022.

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18.   UNEG Standard 1.2 refers to the UN Joint Inspection Unit, Analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system, 2014, paragraph 73, with respect to financial benchmarking within the UN system (as an example: central evaluation functions of most UN system organisations operate on average with 0.3% of organisational expenditures, which is considered insufficient within the UN system).

19.   Subject to applicable Council of Europe rules and regulations in force and, noting that the Council of Europe is committed to safeguarding the independence and impartiality of its evaluations (cf. paragraph 14), information concerning any specific funding and/or non-monetary contributions is indicated in the report.

APPENDIX 1: EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria	Definition	Questions to consider
Relevance	The extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities of the Organisation and the needs of the target groups.	► To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid? ► Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives? ► Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which an activity attains its objectives.	► To what extent were the objectives achieved/are likely to be achieved? ► What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
Efficiency	Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the activity uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. Costs may be influenced by several factors such as time, competence and rules and procedures.	► Were activities cost-efficient? ► Were objectives achieved on time? ► Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?
Impact	The positive and negative changes produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors.	► What has happened as a result of the programme or project? ► What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries? ► How many people have been affected?
Sustainability	Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after funding has been withdrawn.	► To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased? ► What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?

Added value	Ability of the Council of Europe, through its specific approach, composition and working methods to make a significant contribution.	► To what extent has the Council of Europe a clear comparative advantage vis-à-vis other international actors in the implementation of the intervention? ► To what extent is the effectiveness of the intervention higher due to the fact that it was implemented by the Council of Europe?

APPENDIX 2: SELECTION CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION TOPICS

Criteria	Considerations
Contribution to decision-making	► Will the findings be relevant and contribute to on-going and/or future work? ► Does the institutional or the environmental context support change and improvement in the design and implementation of the evaluation subject? ► Will the results of the evaluation be timely to contribute to reform efforts or decision-making at the level of the Secretary General and Committee of Ministers? ► Has senior management expressed interest in the evaluation?
Strategic significance	► Is the subject of the evaluation an issue of strategic significance for the Council of Europe that contributes to the Organisation's core mandate and priorities? ► Does it address issues that are on the public agenda?
Feasibility	► Is the evaluation expected to achieve its objectives? ► Is the data available or adequate to address the evaluation objectives? ► Does the environmental context allow for a thorough assessment?
Significance of investment	► Is the budget volume of the evaluation subject significant?
Coverage and diversity	► When was/is the last/next assessment of the evaluation subject through a centralised evaluation, a decentralised evaluation, an external evaluation or an audit?
Organisational learning	► Will the evaluation contribute something new to institutional learning? ► Is the evaluation subject a pilot initiative with the possibility of replication?
Risk	► Will the evaluation findings feed into the Organisation's assessment and mitigation of risk (to its mandate or reputation) as a result of projects or initiatives that may be deemed critical, sensitive or controversial?

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member States, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member States have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE