

## UNFPA Management Response to Evaluation

<b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b>	
<b>Country, Region or HQ division/unit that commissioned the evaluation</b>	Arab States Regional Office-ARAB STATES
<b>Evaluation Title</b>	Summative Evaluation Arab States Regional Programme (2008-2012)
<b>Year of the evaluation</b>	2013
<b>Type and/or focus area of evaluation</b>	Regional
<b>MR submission date</b>	February 04, 2014
<b>Approved By</b>	
<b>Evaluation Manager</b>	Mohamed Afifi, Other, Arab States Regional Office
<b>General Management Response</b>	The UNFPA Arab States Regional Office welcomes the findings and recommendations of this Summative Evaluation of the Arab States Regional Programme 2008-13. All accepted and partially accepted recommendations have been taken into account during the development of the Regional Programme Action Plan 2014-17. Detailed responses to the seven sections of the evaluation recommendations are documented below.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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<p><b>Recomendation 1</b></p>	<p>Capacity Building: Training activities and events have often been pursued as an end in themselves. In reality they represent an intermediate output in a chain of results resulting in a final outcome of enhanced organizational capacity of UNFPA country offices (COs) and partner organizations (POs). ASRO needs to invest more in developing a comprehensive strategic plan for capacity building of COs and POs across the region. This strategy will include the results from a full stakeholder mapping exercise and an in-depth CB needs assessment of all COs and POs. Included in the strategy will be an assessment of the achievements and challenges of South-South technical cooperation initiatives undertaken by both COs and the RO to-date. There will be a plan for an operational follow-up mechanism to assess and pursue the outcomes of CB initiatives on individual and organizational performance. There should be a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of the COs and RO in implementation of the strategy. COs should actively participate in the selection of regional implementing partners (IPs). Full operationalization of the roster of individuals and organizations certified as candidate providers of technical expertise in the region will be planned for within the strategic plan. Establishment of clear milestones and targets for CB enhancement will be included in the plan with an allocation for documentation and monitoring and evaluation of CB results at all levels in the results chain.</p>
<p><b>Management Response</b></p>	<p>Accepted</p>
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	<p></p>

No.	Key Action(s)	Deadline	Responsible unit(s)	Semiannual implementation status updates (reports will be generated on June 30 and December 31)	
				Status	Comments
1.1	Develop a comprehensive capacity development plan for the Arab States region that is evidence-based and addresses institutional capacity development needs. To this end - and within the framework of the Regional Programme Action Plan 2014-17 - ASRO will undertake an assessment of key regional institutions.	June 30,2014	ASRO	December 12,2013	
				December 12,2013	
				December 12,2013	
1.2	Diversify means of providing technical assistance and strengthen south-south and triangular cooperation.	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	
1.3	Focus on brokering technical assistance by further enhancing and expanding the roster of vetted consultants and networks of technical experts.	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	

<b>Recomendation 2</b>		Advocacy: There is need to invest further effort in creating tools for and providing technical assistance to counterparts to further institutionalize advocacy processes in their organizations. More technical assistance is required to follow-up and assist partners to implement advocacy plans. There is a need to better clarify the concept and process of advocacy to counterparts. Further, there is a need for greater integration of PDS and RH in addressing advocacy issues.									
<b>Management Response</b>		Accepted									
<b>Comments</b>											
	<b>No.</b>	<b>Key Action(s)</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsible unit(s)</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2"><b>Semiannual implementation status updates (reports will be generated on June 30 and December 31)</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th><b>Status</b></th> <th><b>Comments</b></th> </tr> </table>	<b>Semiannual implementation status updates (reports will be generated on June 30 and December 31)</b>		<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>		
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	2.1	Outline the concepts, processes and goals of advocacy in the Arab States region to key internal and external stakeholders.	June 30,2014	RCA	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>December 12,2013</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>December 12,2013</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>December 12,2013</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	December 12,2013		December 12,2013		December 12,2013	
December 12,2013											
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	2.2	Base advocacy efforts on the ICPD Beyond 2014 Cairo Declaration and its integration in the global post-2015 development agenda.	December 31,2017	ASRO	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>December 12,2013</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	December 12,2013					
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<b>Recomendation 3</b>		Research: There is need for greater focus on building the capacity of national universities and research centres to ensure sustainability and ownership of these skills. Further, there is need for a greater link between research and advocacy.									

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	3.1	Expand partnerships with regional, sub-regional and national research institutions and networks, based on a new knowledge management approach that focuses on a policy oriented research agenda for the Arab States region.	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	
	3.2	Ensure proper dissemination of research and knowledge products and adapt language and format of knowledge products to the regional context and target audience.	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	
<b>Recommendation 4</b>				Partnerships: There is need to go beyond the 'traditional' partners of ASRO and to better engage the country offices in the selection of local counterparts for regional programme initiatives. The recommendations under 4.1 above apply with the further requirement for greater investment in the assessment of the capacity of existing partners in order to develop a phase-out or 'graduation' plan to ensure their sustainability in the future.		
<b>Management Response</b>				Accepted		
<b>Comments</b>						

No.	Key Action(s)	Deadline	Responsible unit(s)	Semiannual implementation status updates (reports will be generated on June 30 and December 31)	
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4.1	Assess the capacities of new and existing partners as part of the comprehensive capacity development plan for the Arab States region.	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	
4.2	Establish, operationalize and strengthen regional and inter-regional networks of key stakeholder groups (e.g. young people, women, parliamentarians, media professionals and researchers).	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	
4.3	Engage new and emerging stakeholders (e.g. religious leaders, women NGOs) in advocacy activities, both as messengers and audiences.	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	

**Recomendation 5**

RP Management: It is recommended that ASRO management consider the establishment of a dedicated programme support unit (PSU) which takes on the responsibilities currently shared between the RD, DRD and technical advisors currently with assigned country focal point responsibilities. The office would be staffed by a team of country programme generalists with previous experience in CO management roles. This would help to relieve pressure on TA advisors from responding to ad hoc requests and juggling demands upon their time. It would provide a greater lead-time for identification and contracting of external technical assistance for the COs. The Regional Office (RO) may look to the other UNFPA regional organisations in their approach to identifying and prioritizing the TA needs of COs, and this may form part of the planned comparative review of the five ROs which is being planned for this year.

A more systematic process for TA planning for COs between CO and RO is recommended. One strategy worthy of consideration might be to develop a more structured system for programming CO requests for technical assistance over a sixmonth period. The Regional Planning Meeting can be structured to include a process of COs presented their challenges and achievements and work plans, followed by a session where specific requirements are tabled and commitments made to provide brokered and direct provision of TA for agreed periods in the calendar. The HR function of recruitment and replacement of international staff appears to be woefully lacking in efficiently identifying and recruiting personnel. The statement that there is a lack of competent professionals applying for vacant positions (ROAR 2012) is not accepted as a satisfactory explanation for the tardiness in recruiting vacant positions. While recognizing that there are signs of improvement in of-late with a significant increase in recruitment in 2012, nevertheless the recruitment process needs to be closely monitored by both the RO and HQ

				management, to prevent positions remaining vacant for periods in excess of one year which has been the norm over this programme cycle.		
<b>Management Response</b>				Partially Accepted		
<b>Comments</b>						
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	5.1	Review the organizational structure of the regional office with a view to strengthen programme support to country offices and improve the efficiency of the regional office.	December 31,2014	RDO	December 12,2013	
	5.2	Engage country offices to systematically plan and schedule the provision of technical assistance.	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	
	5.3	Work with DHR to further speed up recruitment processes in the Arab States region.	December 31,2017	RDO	December 12,2013	
					December 12,2013	

<b>Recomendation 6</b>	Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation: Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation of ASRO and COs systems need to be operationally realised and harmonized with other RBM&E systems in the UNFPA family. RP and CP Tracking Tools all need to be revisited to ensure that no TBDs are allowed on CPD submissions unless there is a signed agreement to complete all TBD baselines and targets within a 90-day period following Executive Board approval of the CPD. There is need for a strategy to ensure a better follow-up monitoring of the effects and impact of CB events, in close coordination with country offices. Further, there is need for additional investment in increasing the capabilities and commitments of counterparts to RBM&E.
<b>Management Response</b>	Accepted
<b>Comments</b>	

No.	Key Action(s)	Deadline	Responsible unit(s)	Semiannual implementation status updates (reports will be generated on June 30 and December 31)	
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6.1	Work with DHR to speed up the recruitment for the Monitoring and Evaluation function in the regional office.	March 31,2014	RDO	December 12,2013	
6.2	Engage country offices to identify mechanisms for the operational harmonization of Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation systems on the country, regional and global level.	December 31,2014	M&E	December 12,2013	
6.3	Ensure quality and sustainability of capacity development interventions and plan for an operational follow-up mechanism.	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	
<b>Recomendation 7</b>			Future Strategic Direction: There is need to continue to invest effort in further identifying, differentiating and focusing on the unique mandate of UNFPA within the region and at all costs avoiding greater proliferation of areas of intervention. Further concentration of effort on MDG5A and B with a particular concentration of effort in the cluster of Djibouti, Yemen, Sudan and Somalia is warranted in a holistic effort which involves support to RHR from all the focus areas, of PDS, Gender, youth and HIV and humanitarian assistance.		
<b>Management Response</b>			Accepted		
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7.1	Further align the Regional Programme Action Plan 2014-17 with UNFPA's strategic direction, as defined in the bull's eye, to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health, realize reproductive rights, and reduce maternal mortality to accelerate progress on the ICPD agenda, to improve the lives of adolescents and youth, and women, enabled by population dynamics, human rights, and gender equality.	December 31,2013	ASRO	December 12,2013	
7.2	Continue to support country offices in maintaining the bull's-eye focus on UNFPA's core mandate, especially during programme development stages (CPD/CPAP).	December 31,2017	ASRO	December 12,2013	