

Costed Evaluation Plan Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office

Programme cycle	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme (2026-2029)
Indicative budget	US\$ 27,96 million (Regular resources: 15.46 million; Other resources: 12.50 million)
Regional programme priority areas (outcomes))	<p>Outcome 1: By 2029, accelerate the reduction of preventable maternal deaths</p> <p>Outcome 2: By 2029, accelerate the reduction of unmet need for family planning</p> <p>Outcome 3: By 2029, accelerate the reduction of all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices</p> <p>Outcome 4: By 2029, adaptation to demographic change has strengthened the resilience of societies for current and future generations, while upholding individual rights and choices.</p>
Previous regional programme evaluation	<p>Period covered: Regional Programme (2022-2025)</p> <p>Year of completion: 2024</p> <p>Evaluation quality assessment rating: Highly satisfactory</p>
Gap mapping/analysis of relevant evaluative evidence and knowledge gaps that are strategically important to inform the design and implementation of the upcoming country programme	<p>The costed evaluation plan for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) Regional Programme (2026-2029) is based on a comprehensive analysis of the following centralized and decentralized evaluations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative Evaluation of the UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme 2022-2025 • Independent Evaluation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 • Joint Evaluation of Phase II (2020-2023) of the UNFPA/UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage • Formative Evaluation of UNFPA Support to Adolescents and Youth (2015-2022) • Evaluation of UNFPA Support to Population Dynamics and Data (2014-2022) • Mid-term Evaluation of the Maternal and Newborn Health Thematic Fund – Phase III 2018-2022 • Mid-term Evaluation of the UNFPA Supplies partnership (2013-2020) • Recent country programme evaluations with programme cycles partially overlapping with the Regional Programme 2022-2025 (Kazakhstan, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan) • Multi-Country Assessment of the UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Project (CISPop) • Formative Evaluation of the UNFPA Engagement in the Reform of the United Nations Development System • A Synthesis of UN System Evaluations of SDG 5 (2024) • Evaluation of UNFPA Support to the Prevention of, Response to and Elimination of Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices (2012-2017) • Evaluation of UNFPA Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2012-2020) • Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls • Evaluation of the UNFPA Capacity in Humanitarian Action (2012-2019)

- Evaluation of the regional project “Expanding Choices: Gender-Responsive Family Policies for the Private Sector in the Western Balkans and Moldova (2019-2023)”
- Evaluation of the regional joint programme “EU 4 Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence”

Outcome 1: By 2029, accelerate the reduction of preventable maternal deaths

Existing evaluations offer a solid evidence base for programming to reduce preventable maternal deaths, showcasing effective and sustainable strategies for building technical expertise and systematically delivering quality, integrated sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, especially in the area of maternal and newborn health. These insights also confirm the relevance of UNFPA’s strategic focus on ensuring adolescents’ and youth’s access high-quality, responsive SRH information and services, and highlight innovative approaches used during the COVID-19 pandemic to overcome access barriers, especially in humanitarian settings. The imperative of strengthening quality of care in health systems and scaling up sustainable emergency obstetric and newborn care networks is also well-supported by evaluative findings. Collectively, these evaluative insights demonstrate that UNFPA’s efforts are effectively contributing to increased access to SRH and maternal and newborn health services for women, adolescents and youth, accelerating progress towards reducing preventable maternal death. However, critical knowledge gaps remain within this otherwise strong evidence base. Most significantly, there is a lack of evaluative evidence demonstrating how UNFPA’s support has specifically contributed to the reduction of preventable SRH-related deaths. This constitutes a major outstanding question for many countries in the region. This gap is underscored by the dire cervical cancer situation in EECA, where it causes more female fatalities than maternal causes, and late diagnoses profoundly miss opportunities for preventable cures, leading to increased morbidities. Closing this particular evaluative evidence gap is essential for shaping more targeted interventions and ensuring effective alignment with critical health priorities at country level.

The regional programme evaluation (RPE) (2026-2029) will provide the necessary evidence to identify sustainable, effective and efficient solutions across the development and humanitarian continuum that can be scaled up to reduce preventable maternal and other SRH-related deaths..

Outcome 2: By 2029, accelerate the reduction of unmet need for family planning

While existing evaluations offer strong evidence for strengthening the enabling environment for family planning and positioning it as a strategic priority for public health, gender equality and economic development across diverse contexts, they largely focus on data systems, service delivery models, and commodity logistics. In particular, there is limited evaluative evidence on the systematic integration of human rights-based approaches in family planning services, and on their effectiveness in advancing gender equality, social inclusion, and empowerment, especially among marginalized populations. Furthermore, socio-cultural and structural barriers like discriminatory norms, resistance to gender and sexual rights, and pronatalist policies are insufficiently explored in evaluations, despite their disproportionate impact on women, girls, and young people, especially in low-fertility, socially conservative, or fragile governance contexts. There is also a lack of understanding regarding how UNFPA’s strategies can be better tailored to the intersecting needs of diverse groups in complex environments.

The RPE (2026-2029) will directly address these critical gaps by assessing the regional programme’s efforts to tackle these structural challenges. It will generate evidence on how the programme supports countries in influencing fertility aspirations, advocating for rights-based and family-friendly policies, particularly in low-fertility settings, and strengthening financing and protection mechanisms for improved access to family planning. The RPE will also examine innovative partnership models, including shifts from funding to financing and investment strategies, to reduce unmet need for family planning.

Outcome 3: By 2029, accelerate the reduction of all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices

Evaluative evidence strongly supports integrating gender equality into national policies, strengthening governance systems to address gender-based violence (GBV), ensuring equitable access to multi-sectoral GBV response services, and engaging men and boys. However, significant knowledge gaps persist. Specifically, there is limited robust evidence on the extent to which UNFPA’s GBV prevention efforts measurably reduce GBV prevalence. Critical shortcomings also exist in evaluative evidence on the impact of social protection mechanisms. Moreover, gender-transformative approaches addressing the structural drivers of GBV and harmful practices remain underdeveloped, with a particular need to strengthen community-based programmes that challenge

deeply rooted gender and social norms and enhance multi-sectoral GBV responses. Evaluations also illustrate that challenges in designing and implementing truly gender-transformative and rights-based interventions persist, especially amidst increasing social and cultural resistance in several countries within the region. Evidence on what works, what does not, why, and for whom in the complex context of EECA remains scarce.

The RPE (2026-2029) will generate evidence to support countries in piloting and scaling up innovative, gender-transformative approaches to address GBV. This includes programming to empower women and girls, promote positive masculinities, and expand access to comprehensive sexuality education for out-of-school youth as a prevention strategy against GBV and harmful practices. The evaluation will also assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and coherence of the regional programme's support to countries in strengthening multi-sectoral GBV service provision, with particular attention to underdeveloped areas such as GBV case management. The evaluation of the interagency project "EU 4 Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence programme (phase 2)" will also provide crucial evidence to address critical knowledge gaps for GBV prevention in the region. The evaluation will provide insights on how interventions effectively shift attitudes towards equitable gender norms and identify good practices for sustainable norm change and engaging men and boys across diverse contexts.

Outcome 4: By 2029, adaptation to demographic change has strengthened the resilience of societies for current and future generations, while upholding individual rights and choices

Although evaluative evidence broadly supports integrated, people-centered approaches in population and development interventions, particularly in strengthening data systems and incorporating demographic insights into policy, significant evidence gaps persist. A key gap is the absence of a comprehensive framework for demographic resilience that is universally applicable across diverse demographic trajectories, adaptable to humanitarian contexts, and integrated with intersecting megatrends like migration and climate change. Existing evaluations also reveal a lack of cohesive population insights that systematically link data from various sources (censuses, civil registration and vital statistics systems, and national transfer accounts) into national development planning with a consistent rights-based, gender-responsive, and inclusive lens. Furthermore, there is limited evaluative evidence of UNFPA's influence in shaping policy options, navigating human rights pushbacks, or effectively addressing these issues in politically or culturally sensitive environments. Evaluations highlight an undefined normative role for UNFPA and a scarcity of documented lessons learned from strategies in contexts marked by pronatalist governance, persistent inequalities, and geopolitical complexity.

The RPE (2026-2029) will address these gaps by assessing how the regional programme supports countries in understanding, anticipating, and responding to demographic shifts and climate change. It will specifically examine efforts to generate evidence and shape policy options around global trends like population ageing, fertility aspirations, and demographic resilience. The RPE will also evaluate how SRH and GBV concerns are integrated into climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies, ensuring inclusive, rights-based, and resilient emergency preparedness and response.

Evaluations

Evaluation title	Intended use of evaluation findings	Type of evaluation	Humanitarian evaluation (yes; partially; no)	Joint evaluation (yes; no), including partners	Programme/ project budget in US\$	Evaluation estimated budget and source of funding	Timeframe (month and year)	Evaluation manager
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				where applicable		(regular resources (RR); other resources (OR)) in US\$		
Regional Programme Evaluation (2026-2029)	Inform the design of the new regional programme; include interventions of a catalytic nature contributing to country-level results in the new regional programme; determine the discontinuation of interventions under the new regional programme; inform decision-making and the strategic positioning of UNFPA in the region; enhance accountability towards UNFPA country offices, national governments, donors, and rights holders	Regional programme evaluation (RPE)	No	No	27.96 million	80,000 (RR)	Preparation phase: October - December 2027 Implementation phase: January - September 2028	EECARO Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor
Joint evaluation of the interagency project "EU 4 Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence programme (phase 2)"	Inform the development of phase 3 of the project (2027-2029); support strategic decision-making to enhance interagency collaboration, scale impactful interventions, and strengthen efforts to challenge gender stereotypes and prevent gender-based violence across participating countries; contribute to broader learning on gender equality programming in the region	Project/ programme evaluation	No	Yes UN Women; UN Women is the lead agency	2.40 million	26,125 (OR) (UNFPA's contribution to the total estimated evaluation budget of 109,600)	September 2025 - May 2026	EU4GE regional interagency project manager

Evaluation Capacity Development						
Evaluation capacity development activity	Objectives of evaluation capacity development activity	Category of evaluation capacity development	Type of evaluation capacity development (individual; institutional; enabling	Targeted stakeholders	Estimated budget and source of funding (regular resources (RR);	Timeframe (month and year)

		(internal; national)	environment)		other resources (OR) in US\$	
Participation in IEO-led cross-regional evaluation capacity building workshop	Develop the knowledge and skills of regional planning, monitoring and evaluation staff to provide capacity development, technical assistance and quality assurance for country-level evaluations, in particular country programme evaluations	Internal	Individual	EECARO Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor	3,400 (RR)	June 2028
Provide support to strengthen the capacity of young and emerging evaluators in Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Develop the knowledge and skills of young and emerging evaluators to support data collection and analysis as part of UNFPA country programme evaluations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia	National	Individual	Members of EvalYouth Eastern Europe and Central Asia	20,000 (RR) (5,000 per year over the four-year period covered by the regional programme)	January 2026 - December 2029