

Costed Evaluation Plan West and Central Africa Regional Office

Programme cycle	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) West and Central Africa Regional Programme (2026-2029)
Indicative budget	US\$ 47.6 million (Regular resources: 16.7 million; Other resources: 30.9 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: 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 regional programme	<p>The costed evaluation plan for the West and Central Africa Regional Programme (2026-2029) is based on an analysis of the following centralized and decentralized evaluations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative Evaluation of the UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Programme 2022-2025 • Independent Evaluation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 • A Synthesis of UN System Evaluations of SDG 5 (2024) • Evaluation of Technical Assistance under the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) Project • Mid-term Evaluation of the Maternal and Newborn Health Thematic Fund – Phase III 2018-2022 • Joint Evaluation of Phase II (2020–2023) of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage • Joint Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change Phase III (2018-2021) • Evaluation of UNFPA Support to Population Dynamics and Data (2014-2022) • Baseline and Evaluability Assessment on Generation, Provision and Utilization of Data in Humanitarian Assistance • Formative Evaluation of UNFPA Support to Adolescents and Youth (2015-2022) • Recent country programme evaluations with programme cycles partially overlapping with the Regional Programme 2022-2025 (Sierra Leone, Senegal, Ghana, Togo and Mauritania) • Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNFPA Supplies Partnership (2021-2030) • 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)

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

Evaluative evidence demonstrates that progress towards ending preventable maternal deaths significantly lags behind other regions and requires substantial acceleration to achieve the targets set for 2030. Optimizing strategies and approaches to enhance access to maternal health information and services is required to accelerate progress towards this outcome. While UNFPA aims to reinforce its normative leadership, there is limited rigorous evaluation on how its policy advocacy efforts and partnerships directly translate into tangible reductions in maternal mortality at the national and regional levels. Moreover, while efforts to strengthen data systems are mentioned in the Regional Programme Evaluation (RPE (2022-2025)), the evaluative evidence on how and under what circumstances improved maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response systems lead to better quality of care and a reduction in preventable deaths could be further strengthened.

The RPE (2026-2029) will focus on evaluating how UNFPA's normative leadership, policy advocacy, and partnerships translate into reduced maternal mortality, alongside the impact of strengthened maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response systems on the quality of care and mortality rates.

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

Existing evaluations illustrate that ending unmet need for family planning is lagging in the region, necessitating rapid acceleration to achieve the targets set for 2030. While existing strategies and approaches have contributed to progress towards the outcome, they have not been fully operationalized and optimized yet. Although integrating family planning within the universal health coverage package is recognized as important, there is limited evaluative evidence on the specific contributions of these integrated approaches to reducing unmet need compared to more traditional health-focused interventions. There is a lack of evaluative evidence on how effectively interventions reach and meet the needs of specific populations with high unmet need, such as adolescents, unmarried women, and those in rural or humanitarian settings. Understanding what works best for these diverse populations is crucial to accelerate progress towards ending the unmet need for family planning.

The RPE (2026-2029) will analyze how well the regional programme's interventions address barriers to family planning services, their success, and their long-term viability. It will offer evidence regarding support aimed at advocating for rights-based family planning policies and regulations particularly where fertility is high, and evaluate how effectively interventions reach specific underserved populations like adolescents in rural or crisis settings.

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

Evaluative evidence demonstrates that reducing gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices is slow due to pervasive gender inequalities, requiring substantial acceleration to achieve the targets set for 2030. Addressing discriminatory social and gender norms is the most critical accelerator to reducing gender equality and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, yet it has not been effectively operationalized. There is a pressing need for evaluative evidence focused on the relevance and effectiveness of gender-transformative approaches to address harmful social and gender norms, as well as the effectiveness of one-stop centres and safe spaces in promoting healing and recovery among GBV survivors. Evidence is also scarce on the effectiveness of primary prevention strategies and how well they adapt to diverse cultural contexts within the West and Central Africa region. Furthermore, there is a lack of evidence on the sustainability and the potential for scaling up successful pilot interventions to reduce GBV and harmful practices across different countries.

	<p>The RPE (2026-2029) and SWEDD+ evaluation are crucial to address these gaps. They will provide evidence on the effectiveness of gender-transformative approaches in contexts characterized by political instability, climate change, food insecurity, and humanitarian crisis. The evaluations will focus on measuring changes in norms and behaviours and evaluating the sustainability and scalability of successful interventions to prevent and respond to GBV and harmful practices across the region, including one-stop centres and safe spaces.</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> <p>Evaluations consistently find that UNFPA's support disproportionately emphasizes census and survey data production over its analysis, dissemination, and use. A critical evidence gap exists on the most effective strategies to bridge the divide between data producers and policy-makers, ensuring demographic analysis directly informs national development plans, sectoral strategies, and budgetary allocations. Furthermore, while UNFPA excels in supporting the collection of population data, more evaluative evidence is needed on how to effectively strengthen the entire data value chain. This includes building sustainable institutional capacity for data analysis within national statistical offices and line ministries, promoting data literacy among planners and civil society, and systematically integrating census data with other sources like civil registration and vital statistics for more granular and timely analysis.</p> <p>As a result, the RPE (2026-2029) and SWEDD+ evaluation will assess how UNFPA can strategically shift its support towards fostering a culture of data utilization. These evaluations will highlight effective strategies for data analysis, dissemination, and use to bridge the gap between data producers and policy-makers. They will also aim to identify good practices and lessons learned for building sustainable analytical capacity within national statistical offices and government ministries to translate population data into actionable policy insights.</p> <p>Cross-cutting areas</p> <p><i>Financing.</i> While the F2FF (Funding to Funding and Financing) agenda is recognized as a key accelerator for UNFPA's work in West and Central Africa, its operationalization remains nascent and highly variable across countries, as documented by the RPE (2022-2025). Despite successes like compact agreements securing dedicated budgets for family planning, significant barriers persist, such as limited technical capacity within UNFPA, ambiguity in F2FF interpretation, and severe funding constraints exacerbated by declining official development assistance, competing crises, politicization of funding for sustainable development, and internal policy restrictions on private sector engagement, in particular with extractive industries. There is a lack of evidence to explain why some countries operationalize F2FF better than others. This understanding is vital for effective financing discussions and policy advocacy within UNFPA's normative role.</p> <p>The RPE (2026-2029) will address these gaps by identifying key success factors in F2FF operationalization. It will also critically assess UNFPA's engagement with national budgeting processes, influence on international financial institutions, and partnerships with the private sector, providing crucial evidence for future programming at regional and country levels.</p> <p><i>Humanitarian preparedness and response.</i> While UNFPA's humanitarian architecture and capacity in the region are expanding, guided by a regional roadmap, there is a lack of evidence on how effectively the regional office supports country offices in operationalizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus across diverse crisis contexts. Furthermore, evidence on the effectiveness of awareness-raising activities in preventing GBV in emergencies remains scarce.</p> <p>The RPE (2026-2029) will address these gaps by examining the application of nexus approaches and shedding light on the effectiveness of GBV prevention in crisis settings, while also assessing the effectiveness of the regional humanitarian roadmap.</p>
--	--

Evaluations								
Evaluation title	Intended use of evaluation findings	Type of evaluation	Humanitarian evaluation (yes; partially; no)	Joint evaluation (yes; no), including partners where applicable	Programme/ project budget in US\$	Evaluation estimated budget and source of funding (regular resources (RR); other resources (OR)) in US\$	Timeframe (month and year)	Evaluation manager
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)	Partially	No	47.6 million	100,000 (RR)	Preparation phase: October - December 2027 Implementation phase: January - September 2028	WCARO Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor
SWEDD+ project evaluation	Inform decision-making regarding the design of mechanism for technical assistance; guide project adaptations for enhanced responsiveness to diverse and evolving country needs; support organizational learning by	Project/ programme evaluation	Partially	No	10 million	80,000 (OR)	January - October 2028	SWEDD+ Project Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

	identifying important lessons, best practices, and promising approaches for potential replication and scaling; enhance accountability towards UNFPA country offices, national governments, donors, and rights holders							
--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Evaluation Capacity Development						
Evaluation capacity development activity	Objectives of evaluation capacity development activity	Category of evaluation capacity development (internal; national)	Type of evaluation capacity development (individual; institutional; enabling environment)	Targeted stakeholders	Estimated budget and source of funding (regular resources (RR); other resources (OR)) in US\$	Timeframe (month and year)
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	WCARO Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor	2,900 (RR)	June 2026