
2014 UBRAF thematic report

Mutual accountability

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ACHIEVEMENTS

The Joint Programme continues to produce results and demonstrate value for money while the Unified Budget Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) is proving an innovative accountability tool, linking accountability to the achievement of specific goals and the measurement of results and contributions of the UNAIDS family against indicators and performance criteria.

Through its mid-term review, delivered to the 34th Programme Coordinating Board in 2014 and informed by external reviews, extensive data collection and analysis, the Joint Programme was able to assess its effectiveness and identify ways to improve UBRAF to enhance coordination, performance monitoring and accountability. A separate review of UBRAF indicators, which began in mid-2013, has additionally resulted in a revised and simplified indicator framework of 32 core indicators.

A refined version of the Joint Programme Monitoring System (JPMS) was developed and implemented for the third year of UBRAF to collect data from the Joint Programme at the country, regional and global level. This was used to prepare a consolidated performance monitoring report for the biennium. A review of UBRAF indicators since mid-2013 culminated in a revised and simplified indicator framework with 32 core indicators.

UNAIDS' first financing dialogue was held on 12 November with some 80 participants representing 42 Member States, 7 cosponsors and two Programme Coordinating Board nongovernmental organizations. The dialogue noted that the success of the goal of ending AIDS by 2030 depends on taking the opportunity to Fast-Track the response and ensure its positioning in the post-2015 agenda. A web portal, "Investing for results", was developed, providing an interactive platform with information on country-level achievements, results against priorities, funding trends and expenditures (<http://results.unaids.org>).

Building on the risk management policy and governance model, a risk management committee was established to guide and oversee the implementation of enterprise risk management in the UNAIDS Secretariat. A new piece of software, iTrack, was rolled out to the regional and country offices allowing quality compliance checks of purchase registrations and their storage electronically. Spot-checks were strengthened further to ensure compliance with policies and procedures. The adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) by the UNAIDS Secretariat continues to improve the comprehensiveness, quality and comparability of the Secretariat's financial reporting.

An external audit was conducted in March. In addition to the certification of UNAIDS' 2013 accounts, the audit reviewed management areas under procurement, non-commercial contacts and the use of long-term agreements. An implementation plan was developed to address the audit recommendations in a timely manner.

In 2014 the UNAIDS Secretariat entered the consolidation phase of strategic realignment. Efforts have continued to strengthen management and administrative systems and

workforce planning strategies, including staff development and implementation of the Secretariat Gender Action Plan.

The Secretariat Gender Action Plan was launched on International Women's Day 2013 with the overall goal of achieving gender balance and promoting the empowerment of women staff in the UNAIDS Secretariat. Two years on, the percentage of women UNAIDS country directors has increased from 27% to 37% and the percentage of P5 level positions and above held by women has increased from 36% to 43%. The Secretariat also continued its focus on the United Nations (UN) System-Wide Action Plan and was commended for its continued progress on promotion of gender equality and programmes aimed at supporting and empowering women staff.

Several initiatives demonstrating value for money and efficiency were undertaken during the course of 2014, such as the replacement of BlackBerries with iPhones, a new flat-rate plan for headquarters mobile telephone users, and the transition to an offshore travel agent that provides expanded coverage and savings, with lower transaction costs compared with Geneva-based travel services (leading to a saving of approximately Swiss francs 137 000 in the first 9 months of operations).

In 2014 the UNAIDS Secretariat launched the Performance and Learning Management system (PALM), an online system that manages performance evaluation reports electronically for all Secretariat staff. PALM streamlines the staff performance review process and provides UNAIDS learning resources in one place, including a range of e-learning courses on topics related to competency development and functional skills; a set of courses for staff joining UNAIDS for the first time; and mandatory courses such as security training. In early 2015 the first full PALM cycle was completed.

UNAIDS continues to be leveraged as a model Joint Programme and as a catalyst for broader reforms in intergovernmental and interagency fora within the AIDS response, including through inputs to Division of Labour and Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. UNAIDS' engagement in the UN Chief Executive Board and its three subsidiary bodies (United Nations Development Group (UNDG), High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and High Level Committee on Programmes) has helped to ensure the contributions of the AIDS response and the Joint Programme are included in system-wide discussions and processes regarding the post-2015 development agenda, including significant attention to improving operational effectiveness and alignment in the UN system across key themes such as workforce, new business models, accountability, risk management and data.

UNAIDS has been integrally involved in the development of the standard operating principles for Delivering as One, as part of joint UN efforts to enable a more coherent and results-oriented system. A joint UNDG–HLCM high-level mission to Brazil, co-led by the UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director, enabled participants to engage with organizations and the Government on a new business operations strategy and the establishment of the first joint operating facility for the UN system.

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND HOW THESE WERE ADDRESSED

Political and economic challenges persist in mobilizing sufficient resources for the Joint Programme. In particular, austerity programmes in major donor countries have placed downward pressure on official development assistance generally and specifically for HIV. A growing number of donor countries are questioning the value of multilateral efforts and AIDS is less of a central priority than in previous years. An important lesson, however, is that although cultivation of new donors and partners requires considerable time and effort, it does pay off.

Interest on ensuring accountability, results, impact assessments and efficiency gains continues: there is pressure on the UN to demonstrate cost-efficiency and effectiveness. There is similarly a push for timely financial reporting and good-quality narrative reporting to be provided to donors, demonstrating value for money and financial transparency and accountability.

Efforts have been made to reduce reporting burdens on country offices by establishing complementarity and reducing duplication among multiple reporting mechanisms (e.g. JPMS, Enterprise Resource Planning, Key Performance Indicators and High-Level Meeting tracking tools). This effort requires additional work, however.

KEY FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

The UNAIDS Secretariat will continue to do the following:

- Coordinating the Joint Programme: the Secretariat will continue to facilitate coordination, cohesion and collaboration across all areas of the Division of Labour. All members of the Joint Programme will seek to strengthen results-based management and enhance existing accountability frameworks for reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Another focus of the Secretariat will be on leading in mobilizing resources for the core budget.
- Strengthening Joint Programme accountability and governance mechanisms: strengthening support for governance will include enhancing intersessional work with regional groups and individual Board members, enhancing strategic support to the Programme Coordinating Board, such as through multi-stakeholder processes; using case studies in reporting and Programme Coordinating Board field visits; and building synergies and closer ties to the governance structures of cosponsors and other key partners, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United States of America President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and UNITAID.
- Ensuring strategic use of resources and cost-effective delivery of results: the continued implementation of the strategic realignment of the Secretariat will

ensure that financial and human resources are aligned with the UNAIDS vision to enable the Secretariat to deliver on its strategic role and the Division of Labour, while maximizing value for money. Sustained attention will be given to staff redeployment and restructuring of functions and skills sets, in line with evolving corporate priorities. The deployment of new technologies (transition to Cloud) and applications will help promote collaborative working and enhance knowledge management and communication throughout the organization.

- Enhanced accountability: measures such as the continued adoption of IPSAS and external assessments, including donor and multilateral, will continue to boost the accountability of the Joint Programme.

UNAIDS

20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

+41 22 791 3666

unaids.org