

Thematic Review

Strengthening knowledge and institutions and policy advice

Part I – Main Report



UNITED NATIONS
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ANNEXES: Available in a separate volume at: www.unido.org/evaluation)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

COM – Capability (capacity), Opportunity and Motivation

IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development

IRPF – Integrated Results and Performance Framework

ISID – Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development

KASA – Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Aspirations

MSI – Management Systems International

MTPF – Medium-Term Programme Framework

PC – Pre-conditions

PCP – Programme for Country Partnership

POPs – Persistent Organic Pollutants

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

SEPT – These could be added in Socio-economic, Political Technological Factor

ToC – Theory of Change

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNIDO – United Nations Industrial Development Organization

I. FOREWORD

This report is intended to provide UNIDO management with findings from the analysis and synthesis of independent evaluation study reports as they pertain to the concepts of strengthening knowledge and institutions and with specific reference to policy advice. It represents a distillation of key messages from the studies reviewed and focuses on key reports produced since 2015. This report supports the conceptual definitions, relevant theories of change, indicators (operational definitions) development and a menu of assumptions and possible pre-conditions in support of UNIDO’s policy advice services and its relevant guidance documents. The review tool was developed for this study and refined over the course of the review is expected to inform management on the UNIDO’s strategic and policy advice services, and contribute to strengthening UNIDO’s results-based management systems to guide preparation and quality assessment of the MTPF. In this regard, the findings of this report emphasize UNIDO’s needs in terms of near term adjustments to the Integrated Results and Performance Framework (IRPF), established to enable consistent monitoring of progress towards the achievement of MTPF outcomes and priorities at the corporate level.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this study was to take stock of lessons from past UNIDO Independent evaluations related to knowledge and institutional strengthening (GC.17/6, in annex), including policy or industrial policy development and to inform the thinking and design of the revamping of its RBM framework in the context of the new Integrated Results and Performance Framework (IRPF). This includes the transition from a project-based logframe approach to a Theory of Change (ToC) model. The latter is embedded in a seven step results hierarchy. Both thematic and country evaluation studies dating back to 2015 were reviewed revealing that only a handful of recent studies articulate a formal theory of change (program theory) and make some mention (let alone systematic assessment) of the areas under review. For this reason this study focusses on eight recent thematic and country studies and complements the review by drawing on recent international sources in terms of defining key concepts, developing and using measurements and assumptions to tell a development performance story related to strengthening knowledge and institutions and policy work – including what may be called impact pathways.

Evaluations reviewed showed that theories of change either did not exist or where they did exist were inconsistent and in most cases quite limited in terms of helping to frame a UNIDO performance story. For the new ‘wider’ UNIDO vision it seems important that a consistent results chain logic – programme theory approach be adopted. Various models were found in the studies reviewed (e.g. PCP 2017, India 2018). All were consistent with a behaviour-oriented approach and some noted the different domains of different core functions – the micro, mesa, macro orientation currently taken in the IRPF renewal. (e.g. Youth and Gender themed evaluation 2015).

Review of UNIDO planning documents, evaluations and related agency definitions suggest that – despite a lack of explicit definitions, strengthening knowledge and institutions can be considered virtually synonymous with what many call ‘capacity’ or ‘institutional capacity’. Leading agencies such as the UNDP have in turn come up with explicit criteria in this regard – including the notion of performance, stability and adaptability. While the general idea of capacity or institutional capacity is noted in several evaluations – none really get at systematic definitions as shown in the UNDP guidance.

Notwithstanding the dearth of change theories – all theories that were found showed policy work leading to elements of strengthened knowledge and institutions (sometimes this was inferred). So policy can clearly be seen as a means to build knowledge and institutional strength – though it is almost never alone as a support function in attempting to do this. This was best articulated in a recent evaluation (India 2018) where the Kirkpatrick learning model was explicitly referenced in evidence building. This model is embodied in the Bennett model currently being used to reform the IRPF. While the specific examples largely referred to education and much of it for technical adoptions – there were also mentions of policy impacts at various levels – from specific implementation guidelines right up to major enabling legislation. The linking of multiple functions to institutional strengthening as also defined as improved coordination – was also shown in recent work (e.g. PCP 2017).

The main conclusion of this study is that the conceptual definitions which have emerged and have been recently modelled in case work are consistent with and build on concepts presented in past evaluations. They now put more emphasis on impact pathways which are now being also applied in corporate RBM applications such as the IRPF.

One implication – derived by observations of the continued merging in evaluation studies of concepts around policy advice / support and changes to ‘norms’ (e.g. China POP 2018) – i.e. laws, regulations, standards etc. suggest that changes to practice norms – be they part of legal and regulatory practice or a component of voluntary practices – should be that they are considered part of an integrated set of

outcomes associated with research, information and policy advice and a support ‘family’ or spectrum. They may be included in Technical Cooperation projects – as are specific policy support functions in many cases – but they follow a similar results pathway and should be considered part of a common archetype when focussed on government actors. In other words – what is the difference if a government ends up passing new policies which deter (i.e. sanction or punish) behaviours they *don’t* want or provide inducements (Financial or otherwise) for people or entities to adopt practices they *do* want or simply provide information in the hope that people will logically adopt changes for their own self-interest? These are all decisions and policies developed and adopted – presumably with UNIDO assistance.

Another implication related to the broad set of functions and some of them under policy which include capacity building, suggest that increased knowledge and strengthened institutions almost always – in the context of UNIDO – also connect to the idea of scaling up for practice and policy adoption above and beyond the scope of direct assistance. For this reason – much of the UNIDO performance story revolves around enabling and catalysing this process – yet it is woefully under-described as a systematic process to date. The literature revealed important definitions of scale-up, its measurement, results pathways, barriers and enablers and even checklists for scale up considerations.

These conclusions lead to the following recommendations for UNIDO:

1. The use of programme theories involving multiple functions, multiple actors and focusing on research based behavioural logic (e.g. Kirkpatrick, Bennett) and influencing factors (assumptions, preconditions and risks) should be continued and regularized so as to provide consistent archetypal templates for both evaluation as a function and for corporate RBM consideration.

A review of evaluation studies showed that when theories of change were described, they differed in specificity, emphasis and sequencing. While these evaluations dealt with different subject matters and scopes – and some variance is to be expected – their interpretations and definitions of common results chain logics were significantly different from each other in terms of fundamental conceptualization. This in turn led to different considerations of assumptions, factors and important pre-conditions. The opportunity for generative learning, when basic terms and frameworks differ to such a large extent, is limited.

Common types of results pathways – currently under development – would seem appropriate to be used as a basis to pull evaluation work, MTPF and other planning, M+E and reporting and management work together going forward.

2. The notion of strengthened knowledge and institutions should be linked to the concept (construct) of institutional capacity and as such should be developed drawing on world leading guidance for this area (e.g. draw on the UNDP guidance). Review work showed that the concept of strengthened knowledge and institutions has been linked to broad notions of capacity essentially by inference – there were no formal definitions found which made that link in the documents reviewed.
3. The core function of ‘normative’ work – once considered distinct from technical cooperation, policy and convening functions should be understood as fitting a behavioural change pattern similar to that of policy adoption or change. For the purposes of planning, monitoring, evaluation and analysis, consideration should be given to consolidating the metrics for this function into a more broadly defined policy function which itself may be seen as operating at multiple levels and supporting both capacity building as well as direct enabling support through a policy cycle and such elements as agenda setting, collaborative consensus building (convening) and policy changes as well as policy implementation changes.

4. Given its prominent place in UNIDO's overall logic, the concept of scaling up should be better defined – drawing on notable elements found in (particularly recent) evaluations but also recent work defining scale up, its process, measurement and criteria to assess readiness. Such readiness rating criteria should be used to help define institutional 'performance' capacity (strength).
5. Assumptions, pre-conditions, risks and other important influencing factors as shown in theories of change found in recent evaluations should be more systematically structured and defined for completeness in consideration and for ease of use. The rating tool developed for this study – with a few modifications – may serve as a good starting point. In particular – factors, assumptions and preconditions related to behavioural change and the adoption of practices, policies and innovations should be more deeply considered. It is further suggested that for simplicity the Capability, Opportunity and Motivation construct which has recently emerged in world evaluation circles be pursued to see if it can help to 'sort' factors, assumptions and risks in key areas as applied to both country and themed evaluations.
6. Given the abstract and difficult-to-quantify work of UNIDO in its support – especially in the areas addressed by this study, further mining of evaluation materials might help to establish summary rating tools that both rate the quality of engagement and partnership and then go beyond that for capacity (readiness) assessment of scale up or perhaps as sub-elements of scale-up for such concepts as technical, commercial, policy and regulatory scale up 'readiness'. When combined with current evolutions of these concepts worldwide, consistent rubrics and rating tools for these areas might help to consistently codify and reliably measure concepts which up to now have been somewhat crudely rated in selective opinion-seeking. The rating tool for scale up found in recent work done by the Brookings Institute could serve as a good start.
7. Overall, the approach taken for each of the above implications should follow the five principles of results based management and learning organizations – as recently articulated by UN Joint Inspection Unit review work. The first three of these principles relate to focussing on a common vision, using a results chain based theory of change and taking a systems approach. The kind of behavioural logic inferred by these principles applied to key system actors along with a consideration of important contextual factors are all supported by emerging recent evaluation practice and are formally recognized in the model for assessment.

The fourth and fifth principles derived from UN review work relate to the use of indicators; and the functioning of monitoring and evaluation should be used together to promote both on-going review and adjustment as per plans and deeper periodic learning. UNIDO Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Quality Monitoring functions appear to be well placed and authorized to pursue these principles for organizational learning.

Beyond the five principles noted above, recent UN Joint Inspection Unit review work noted important managerial elements related to making a true transition to RBM. These included strategic management, operational management, knowledge management, change management and responsibility management considerations. A key element to all of this is to recognize that the movement is at once a big transition to align and integrate systems for UNIDO *and* it involves all organizational levels as well as funders. This favours an approach which encourages experimentation, risk taking, ongoing feedback and learning. RBM can be seen as a long term proposition involving the development and refinement through feedback of systems, procedures and controls over a long – term.

III. INTRODUCTION

Objectives

The objective of this study is to take stock of the aggregated findings, lessons and recommendations from past evaluations related to knowledge and institutional strengthening, including to policy or industrial policy development, in order to:

- improve understanding of what knowledge and institutional strengthening and policy advice means in the context of UNIDO’s mandate and operations;
- identify the key actors and institutions, as well as the key behaviors and practices (including policy change, technology adoption, standards and protocols, management systems etc.), in line with the new IRPF results hierarchy and related tools and policies;
- identify preliminary evidence on the key preconditions for policy adoption based on UNIDO support;
- guide UNIDO in the decision making, inter alia regarding the results-driven and realistic approach for incorporating policy advice in its planning, strategies, operations and delivery of products and services, the extraction of data and evidence for knowledge products from UNIDO’s projects and the targeting of key institutions and behaviors in UNIDO’s interventions;
- provide preliminary evidence on how to report on knowledge and institutional strengthening and policy advice to Member States; and,
- provide preliminary evidence on how UNIDO could profile its knowledge and institutional strengthening and its policy-advisory function under the framework of the reform process launched by the Secretary-General for the development operations of the UN system.

All six objectives are covered in this report.

Background

The Medium-term programme framework 2018-2021 elevated “Strengthening knowledge and institutions” to a stand-alone strategic priority for the Organization. It thus offers a fresh platform for UNIDO to advance and report on the results of its operations in relation, inter alia, to the policy advice it extends to its Member States within the scope of its projects and programmes. As further clarified in the Note by the Secretariat (GC.17/6, in annex), this priority has been singled out not as an end in itself but rather as an enabler to Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) and a contributing factor to achieve greater “integration and scaleup”. More specifically, the new strategic priority “strengthening knowledge and institutions” includes, among others, the following elements of UNIDO’s work:

- (a) **“Advancing the technical, policy and normative knowledge base for ISID**, including by extracting relevant data, knowledge and policy recommendations from technical cooperation projects and programmes;

- (b) **Building the analytical, statistical and reporting capacity on ISID-related matters**, also in the context of the follow-up and review architecture of the SDGs, at the global, regional and national level;
- (c) **Facilitating the policy dialogue** on issues **pertaining** to the advancement of ISID, particularly, but not exclusively, in developing and middle-income countries;
- (d) **Strengthening** the Organization’s efforts to **perform the sector-specific technical and analytical work required in the appraisal phase of large-scale country programmes**, including the PCPs; and,
- (e) **Strengthening the institutional capacity of Member States** of UNIDO for ISID, facilitating the integration of all services delivered by UNIDO across functions and thematic areas for the provision of long-term development results.”

UNIDO is in the process of revamping its RBM framework in the context of the new Integrated Results and Performance Framework (IRPF). The Organization has adopted a new approach that is meant to facilitate the smooth transition from a project-based logframe approach to a Theory of Change (ToC) model. The latter is embedded in a seven steps results hierarchy based on the work of Claude Bennett (see PBC.34/CRP.2 in annex), which includes, inter alia, a structured detailing of the outcome level, which encompasses level 3 (engagement –the actors/institutions reached by UNIDO), level 4 (their reactions), level 5 (KASA – Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Aspirations) and level 6 (practice and behaviour change, including the adoption/adaption of policies, protocols, standards technologies, business practices and other related behaviours and actions). These outcome levels (3-6 in the new UNIDO results hierarchy) are epitomized in the MTPF 2018-2021 by the new strategic priority “Strengthening knowledge and institutions”, which is at the center of this assignment. Within this framework special attention is dedicated to the “technical knowledge and policy components of UNIDO’s technical cooperation projects” so that they can more effectively shape “policy recommendations ...a larger, programmatic scale”.

Scope

The scope of this study was set out to encompass independent evaluation studies conducted in the past 5-6 years with a focus on “strengthening knowledge and institutions”, with a special focus on policy advice. The review highlights the key actors and institutions UNIDO deals with at the programmatic level and the key behaviors and practices (including policy change, technology adoption, standards and protocols, management systems etc.) that its interventions aimed at influencing. Past thematic and country evaluations were reviewed dating back to 2014 (but in some cases covering further back). In this survey it was found that strengthened knowledge and institutions and policy advice were rarely mentioned as results pathways in the evaluations reviewed. Our review found that the most elaborated discussion of theories of change and conceptual constructs related to strengthening knowledge and institutions and policy advice (and indeed *all* connections of a results or impact pathway from UNIDO support to ISID and SDG goals) occurred in the theories of change representations of the most recent studies. For this reason, recent studies with some theory of change description were singled out for more detailed analysis.

Methodology

After accumulating knowledge and understanding of UNIDO’s corporate RBM objectives, processes and current status, the reviewer conducted an assessment of the evaluations provided to gauge their relevance in terms of mentions of the key concepts and constructs of interest to the study – ‘strengthening knowledge and institutions’ as defined above and ‘policy advice’ – as found and interpreted in studies. A review of relevant related materials was conducted¹ so as to define these concepts, relevant results logic related to them and pertinent factors influencing achievement in these areas. These were then assembled into a tool for analysis based on PBC.34 / CRP.2. (See **Annex B**. See **Annex C** for a list of studies in the review. For relevant references – see **Annex D**. For detailed findings pertaining to the most significant studies see **Annex E**.) This tool was then refined and adjusted as new knowledge was revealed from evaluation studies reviewed as a pretest. The tool was reviewed with project authorities in August 2018.

Once established, the tool was used – as applicable - to derive information from the evaluations related to theories of change and theories of programme, interpretations of the key concepts of strengthened knowledge and institutions – early on deemed to be consistent with capacity or capability as defined by both the IRPF and relevant literature (also noted as part of GC17/6 annex – as described above), and policy as defined by several relevant models. (See **Annex D** for relevant literature referenced for this analysis.)

In order to complete the approach, certain Spanish language reports were added to the review which display and describe emerging concepts, constructs and ideas regarding strengthening knowledge and institutions and policy advice performance and results. The recent Independent Country Programme Evaluation of Colombia (2018) is summarized as one of a select group reviewed with explicit programme theories. See **Annex E**.)

Limitations

While this review has used a research based and, therefore, theoretically tested content analysis approach to examine past independent evaluations with a view to supporting corporate RBM understanding, development of the core concepts and providing a validation of emerging guidance, it faces several limitations.

The ISID addition of ‘strengthened knowledge and institutions’ at such a prominent level, is a relatively new construct for UNIDO. As such – evaluations done prior to 2018 will typically have limited to no mention of this now fundamental goal or stepping stone to ISID and SDG achievement. For purposes of framing findings, given the limited UNIDO definitions available, the UNDP definition of capacity was drawn upon to help provide specific characteristics. (See **Annex F**.)

Likewise policy advice has had many interpretations, and continues to do so, in UNIDO. In some cases it has been associated with distinct organizational units, while in others it has been recognized as being part of many UNIDO offerings – such as being part of Technical Cooperation work and indeed fundamental to normative practices. Several elements of the literature – including policy cycles and policy impacts were drawn upon to help frame the findings.

¹ The review focused on all English language reports with particular emphasis on those which articulated a distinct theory of change. Spanish language documents were added to the scope of the study in late August and these will be reviewed for the final comprehensive report. (See Annex C for a list of the studies reviewed to date.)

Finally the idea of scaling up, fundamentally linked to the concepts of knowledge and strengthened institutions – though left somewhat generally defined, was refined via reference to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and Management Systems International (MSI), in a special Brookings Institute comparative discussion paper. (See **Annex G.**)

In addition to conceptual limitations – essentially inherent in studies dealing with such abstract concepts as policy advice and strengthening knowledge and institutions, some practical limitations have been faced by the study.

The study was limited to published evaluation reports. While evaluation reports have sometimes contained background information on how key constructs have been defined, most do not elaborate on them and as such the deeper conceptual information provided is limited – some of which may have been contained in unpublished technical reports and working papers.

Original report authors will generally not be available for direct interviews – and in any case given elapsed time in many cases may not be able to provide additional context and insight.

Having recognized these limitations, this study is still able to draw on the evaluation documentation which in many cases – particularly in recent years – has included discussions to at least some extent related to the key constructs and concepts to be examined here. (The key studies found in this regard – along with key details – can be found in **Annex E.**)

At the end of the day the goal was not to ‘take an average’ or to ‘sum the accounts’ of the findings regarding the ideas of strengthening knowledge and institutions and policy advice – but rather to find and/or validate and help codify promising emerging ideas, definitions, measures and analysis for use going forward.

IV. FINDINGS

i) Towards an improved understanding of what knowledge and institutional strengthening and policy advice mean in the context of UNIDO’s mandate and operations.

The notion of knowledge and institution strengthening was not explicitly defined by the evaluations reviewed. Strengthening knowledge and institutions is one of the four strategic priorities of UNIDO, which was introduced in the Organization’s medium-term programme framework 2018-2021. According to the UNIDO web site, the term describes the Organization’s strategic direction towards strengthening the knowledge base for inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) at the project, programme, country and international level, as well as the institutional capacity at the technical, policy and normative level.

Questions on institutional strengthening tended not to be included in evaluation issues as such and therefore were typically only obliquely referenced. This is understandable given the recent nature of this term. Where it was generally referenced, an inference was made that ‘strengthened’ typically meant capacity improvement which also typically inferred knowledge gain, however the term also referred to improved legal and regulatory frameworks as well. In the recent case of China and the POP reductions to meet Stockholm Convention commitments (2018) – it also meant strengthened capacity for enforcement in public institutions. So knowledge and institutional strengthening covered a wide scope and appears to be open to many interpretations.

A review of most recent evaluations suggests that knowledge and strengthened institutions corresponds to what the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines as capacity. The UNDP defines capacity² as “the ability of individuals, institutions, and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner.” The UNDP report on [Measuring Capacity](#) says that capacity development is the ‘how’ of making development work better and is, in essence, about making institutions better able to deliver and promote human development. It is claimed to be at the heart of UNDP’s mandate and functions, with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008–2013 (UNDP, 2008c) positioning capacity development as the organization’s overarching contribution to programme countries.

Furthermore, the UNDP measurement of capacity and specifically the capture of change in capacity are critical to understanding the success of the capacity development process and by inference the institutional strengthening and achievement of ISID type goals. The importance of being able to do so can be seen in the ability to i) understand what constitutes a starting point (how to articulate what capacities are there to begin with); ii) uncover where the hurdles to developing capacity are and design programmatic responses that will actually address those hurdles to drive improvement; and iii) most important, measure the change in an institution’s capacity to fulfil its mandate and provide insight into where to make investments for continuing improvement. For a detailed discussion of how to define, monitor, and validate capacity see **Annex F**.

Policy advice was also a concept which was not well defined in the evaluations reviewed. Policy can be considered to occur in stages. Cronin and Sadan (2015)³ suggest the following:

1. **Policy agenda setting:** Evidence of important need for intervention.
2. **Analysis of needs, problem, causes, options and operational feasibility:** Evidence needed to identify the most relevant and feasible policy option and develop a testable causal hypothesis for the intervention (a theory of change).
3. **Design:** Evidence on how best to implement, operationalise, monitor and evaluate the policy decision.
4. **Implement and monitor:** Evidence on progress and whether operational assumptions are working out as expected.
5. **Evaluate:** Evidence on change results as expected (outcomes and impact), what did and did not work, why, and how to improve results. See **Figure 1** below.

² Measuring Capacity, UNDP July 2010. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/undp-paper-on-measuring-capacity.html>

³ Paine Cronin, G. & Sadan, M., 2015, ‘Use of evidence in policy making in South Africa: An exploratory study of attitudes of senior government officials’, African Evaluation Journal 3(1), Art. #145, 10 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.145>

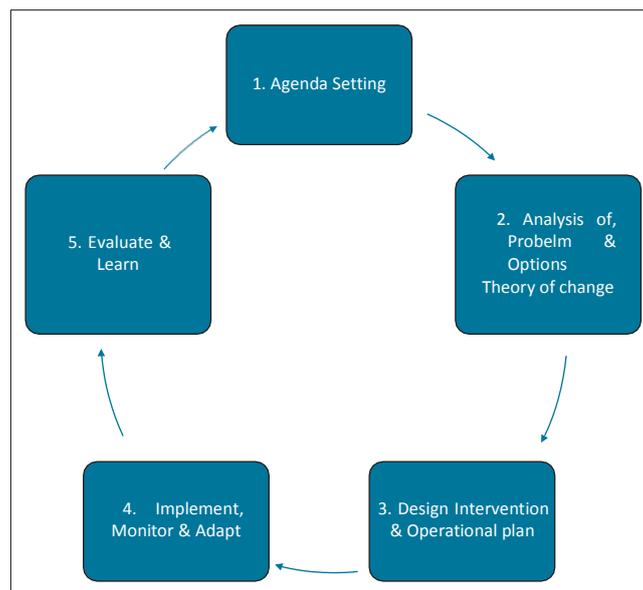


Figure 1: The stages of the policy cycle.

For the most part evaluations focussed on the adoption of specific policies, protocols, legal frameworks and defined policies in terms of specific tangible decisions and agreements

In certain reports prior to 2017-18, there were suggestions that institutional and policy outcomes were distinct – but at the same time these concepts were not connected to the performance framework for the Agency. For example in the Medium Term Programme Framework (MTPF) study of 2010-2013, published in 2015 – clear mention is made in the discussion of results that country level outcomes are to feed into policy outcomes and institutional outcomes – both within the purview of governments. The report then goes on to ask why these results figure in a UNIDO results framework. “..if UNIDO is not responsible for/accountable their achievement and they will not be aggregated and reported on, why do they figure prominently in its programme framework?” (see pg. 11). Clearly the mind-set up to 2015 was that these concepts were not important UNIDO results. As a consequence they were not consistently studied, tracked or analysed until very recently.

ii) Identifying key actors and institutions, their key behaviours and practices in relation to scale-up.

As noted above, UNIDO evaluations did not systematically assess a wide range of expected results for UNIDO initiatives prior to a couple of years ago.

The key actors and institutions identified in recent evaluations such as the 2017 PCP and the 2018 China POP evaluation as well as the MTPF evaluation (2015) provided the widest range of actors for consideration and these included government (national, regional and local – as well as international regarding trade implications), private sector enterprises – including those along the value chain and individuals and civil society members – though these groups are not typically directly reached by the initiatives under review.

The Colombia evaluation of 2018⁴ also provided a regional sectoral breakdown of actors. Intermediary groups were not typically included explicitly in change models, however, they were discussed in terms of context and findings in several cases. The need to better engage various related

⁴ Independent Country Programme Evaluation, Colombia 2018

stakeholders – and in the case of recent studies – a comprehensive list of stakeholders - was brought up consistently. When addressing strengthened knowledge and institutions and policy advice and support, it would appear relevant for studies to explicitly name important groups and institutions in this typically complex environment.

One area which was not well defined was the notion of scale up. Generally speaking it can be inferred that the broad adoption of practices by groups and communities outside of those directly assisted by UNIDO could be considered part of ‘scale up’ success. Given the absence of a clear definition and an articulated performance pathway for the concept of scaling up – and given its prominence in current UNIDO integrated planning, a brief review of current definitions and explanations in the literature is useful so as to provide a framework for the analysis.

Scaling up is defined⁵ as “expanding, replicating, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programs or projects in geographic space and over time to reach a greater number of people.”

The current IRPF suggestion that scale up is on-track if a comprehensive set of stakeholders are being reached and influenced via a mixed set of policy, convening and technical support so as to encourage spread beyond the entities directly assisted, is directly supported by the findings of recent studies. Otherwise, scaling up has not been elaborately defined, let alone put into a conceptual framework. Given its importance in the new UNIDO MTPF, it would seem appropriate to more systematically define scale up, its components, pathways, criteria for success and indicators. **Annex G** draws from recent work to provide such definition. Some of the key elements to scaling up have been highlighted as knowledge and learning. In this way, the notion of innovation, knowledge, learning and scale up are directly linked (See **Annex G, Figure G-1**).

Note that in this regard policy support to regulatory frameworks has recently been considered to be extremely important (see 2018 China POP study). Other domains were also deemed important including of course technology (particularly industrial scale trials), but also financing and business models (Independent Evaluation, PCP 2017), institutional capacities (including sharing and engagement), and the raising of general public/community awareness.

While few evaluations had a programme or change theory – only one explicitly discussed a theory of change within a programme that was based on research. The Independent Evaluation of India constructed what they called a New World Kirkpatrick Model for Evaluation and Capacity Development. **Annex E-7.A** has a more complete description. Unlike the preponderances of other evaluations the 2018 India Evaluation systematically assesses evidence against each Kirkpatrick level.

iii) Preliminary evidence on the key preconditions for policy adoption based on UNIDO support.

Only very few evaluations explicitly attempted to discuss preconditions for success at all – let alone for policy success and institutional knowledge and strengthening. Of those that did include the idea, the preconditions mentioned included (PCP **Annex E-2.A**):

- Strong Government ownership and commitment at the highest national authority level in the target region(s); including financial resource allocation from the Government to initiatives.

⁵ Cooley, L. and Linn, J. F. (2014) Taking Innovations to Scale: Methods, Applications and Lessons

- Governments in target regions or communities willing and having the capacity to take a leadership role; this is particularly true with regard to roles in resource and partner mobilization.
- Adaptive and conducive management needs to be in place.

Preconditions were also noted in the recent Colombia evaluation (see **Annex E-8.A**). However, theirs were combined with assumptions that made a list of 22 statements (see **Annex E-8.A**). A broad assessment of the pre-conditions and assumptions explicitly laid out by key evaluations and extent of coverage is contained in **Annex H**.

An analysis of the four evaluations which systematically considered assumptions and factors shows that evaluation factors and pre-conditions mostly cover broad Social Economic Political Technological and Environmental (SEPTE) as well as management/accountability factors. Studies have been a bit short on factors related to specific intervention types as linked to behaviours and factors related to innovation adoption. A consistent critical minimum level of host government support appears to be the biggest common concern /factor mentioned

In several evaluations the value of evidence, performance tracking and baseline information for comparisons was noted as a success key. The fact that stakeholders can see evidence of clear success in trials was seen as important. (This observation is very consistent with one of the fundamental tenets of innovation diffusion theory – ‘trialability’ and comparability of results). The fact that the results of a policy adoption are visible makes acceptance more likely. See Innovation factors in the **Annex B-1.4**. As rule – these factors were not mentioned in evaluations.)

Constructive engagement emerged as a strong theme in several studies. This was seen as a critical early outcome leading to successful change. In the recent China (POP 2018) study the following startling conclusion was drawn under the rubric of adaptive management but related to engagement (pg 58):

The project set up a management structure that ensured inter-institutional coordination and the engagement of all relevant sectors at the various scales. This process increased the complexity of the project and in the short run slowed down operations while all the stakeholders came on board. On the long run this proved to be a crucial instrument in reaching and engaging the different sectors of government at the national, provincial and local levels.

Addressing problems at the macro, meso and micro scale was also deemed to be an important factor and may again be seen as a criterion for both policy adoption and innovations for change in general. See both **Figure E-3.A-1** in **Annex E-3.1** and **Annex E-7.A** which links stronger institutions with pathways. The partnership evaluation discusses different types of partnerships and a partnerships lifecycle (see **Annex E-5**).

It can be noted that many of the above characteristics can be considered to fall into the generic categories of capability (capacity), opportunity and motivation (COM). Such a COM set of conditions have been suggested as the three key ingredients for change or adoption to occur.⁶

⁶ See for example [Implementation Science](#) *The Behaviour Change Wheel: a new method for characterizing and designing behaviour change interventions* Michie, van Stralen and West (2011)

iv) Towards a results-driven and realistic approach for incorporating policy advice in UNIDO planning, strategies, operations and delivery of products and services, the extraction of data and evidence for knowledge products from UNIDO’s projects and the targeting of key institutions and behaviors in UNIDO’s interventions.

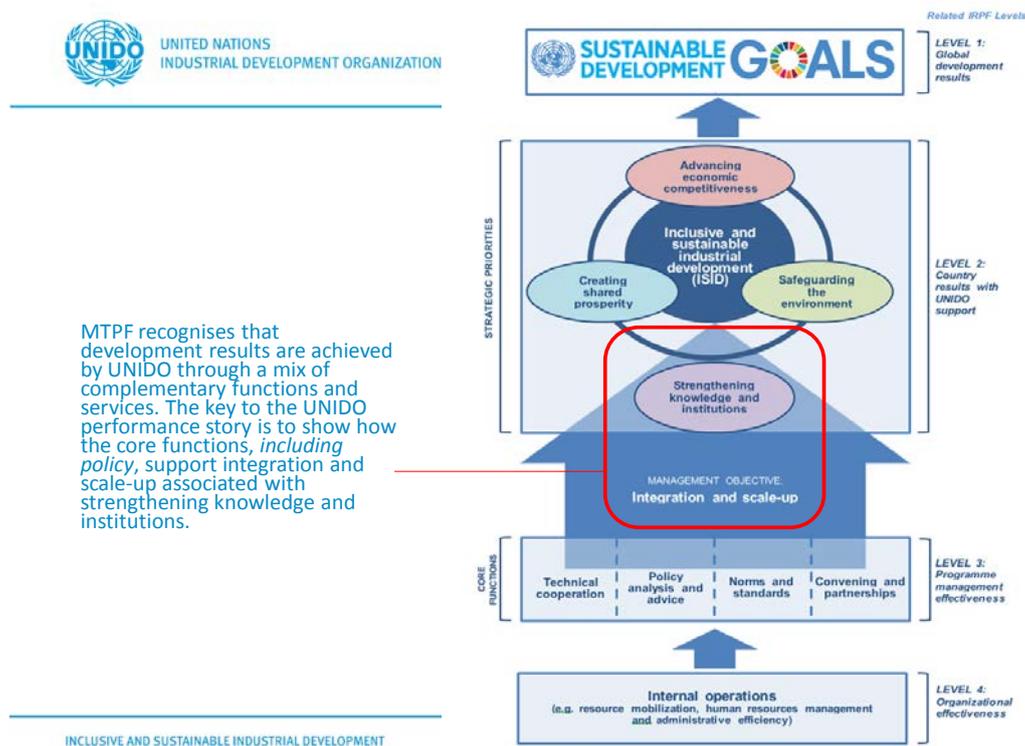
Most evaluations reviewed did not explicitly model policy advice as a function. The recent PCP evaluation was the most explicit in describing a results pathway. Even in this case the pathway shown in the theory of change and described in its theory of change chapter is relatively cryptic – describing a logical leap from providing advice to policy change. As a consequence the report concludes that there were relatively few policy changes (pg 17 of the report). Some might suggest this is a failure – yet elsewhere in the document one can find other markers of progress which suggest that agenda change and changes to organizational structure (institutional strengthening inferred) such as new organizations are created to allow change to occur. These additional markers – captured as part of the assessment tool in **Annex B** of this report and shown in the policy lifecycle in **Figure 1** – would therefore logically make sense to be included in the assessment criteria going forward since they would enable a graduated and cumulative assessment of learning, agenda change, changes in institutions and the way that policy is delivered as well as various ways of measuring capacity change..

v) Preliminary evidence on how to report on knowledge and institutional strengthening and policy advice to Member States.

The track taken by the IRPF working group at this time appears to be consistent with the fundamental capacity building and change logic of statements made in past evaluation reports – albeit they were generally not devoted to these concepts. The establishment of the theory of change for PCPs (December 2017. See **Figure E-2.A-1** in **Annex Figure E-2.A**) showed that independent evaluations have started to recognize and begin to define a broader systems view of results for UNIDO. The results model explicitly included all key UNIDO core functions, key government, non-government and important institutional stakeholders as well as direct support recipients. . This suggests that the recent case example work of the MTPF, the IRPF and emergent evaluation ideas are fundamentally consistent and mutually supportive.

As shown in **Figure 2**, the MTPF focuses on its four core functions supporting integrated, strengthened institutions and knowledge. The common focus is on behaviour change leading to benefit whether one defines this, as recent evaluations have done, using the Kirkpatrick theory categories (India 2018), or as the UNDP has defined it in terms of capacity (see performance, stability and adaptability categories defined in **Annex F**), or one uses the linkages of the IFAD innovation, learning (knowledge) scaling up results chain model (see **Figure Annex G-1** in **Annex G**). This means an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative indicators in support of social science change theory will be the best means of planning, monitoring, evaluating and reporting UNIDO performance - especially with regard to strengthened knowledge and institutions via policy support.

Figure 2: Medium-term programme framework, 2018-2021



vi) How can UNIDO profile its knowledge and institutional strengthening and its policy-advisory function under the framework of the reform process launched by the Secretary-General for the development operations of the UN system?

The evidence from recent evaluations suggests that a wider menu of target actors, functions/supports and results definitions should be considered than what has been used in the past so as to be helpful in telling the UNIDO performance story and in helping UNIDO to plan a truly integrated strategy. The menu would be applied in a results chain fashion to show how various types of convening, policy and technical support initiatives engage, support, influence and contribute to positive change and benefits at ISID and SDG levels. As noted above, the PCP (2017) theory of change model – served as an early attempt at a graphical representation of such a phenomenon. This can serve as a basis for further development.

In general, while several evaluations were either silent or gave short shrift to many results areas in their descriptions of theory (e.g. engagement, stakeholder cooperation and agenda change, specific knowledge / capacity changes prior to decisions on policy content) they in many cases noted these elements in explaining results observed. No cases were found where evaluation explanations could not be logically categorized using the results rating tool. Thus – while there may be room to consolidate some of the results categories and indicator types, there would appear to be little to no cause to expand them as of this reading. This finding suggests that the rudiments of a comprehensive and intellectually consistent approach are at hand in the present development of the MTPF/IRPF and the orientation of the current independent evaluation unit work.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main conclusion of this work is that UNIDO is on the right track in terms of its IRPF construct and that the conceptual definitions which have emerged and have been recently modelled in case work are consistent with and in fact build on concepts presented in past evaluations. Having said this, past evaluations have only recently begun to demonstrate the structured and higher level thinking that will be necessary to support the ‘strengthening knowledge and institutions’ ISID priority result which in turn serves to enable the achievement of the other original ISID results

The need for a consistent results logic / theory of change approach

Evaluations reviewed showed that theories of change either did not exist or where they did exist were inconsistent and in most cases quite limited in terms of helping to frame a UNIDO performance story. For the new ‘wider’ UNIDO vision it seems important that a consistent results-chain logic – programme theory approach be adopted. Various models were found in the studies reviewed (e.g. PCP 2017, India 2018). All were consistent with a behaviour-oriented approach and some noted the different domains of different core functions – the micro, mesa, macro orientation currently taken in the IRPF renewal. (e.g. Youth and Gender themed evaluation 2015).

‘Strengthened knowledge and institutions’ is capacity development

Review of UNIDO planning documents, evaluations and related agency definitions suggest that – despite a lack of explicit definitions, strengthening knowledge and institutions can be considered virtually synonymous with what many call ‘capacity’ or ‘institutional capacity’. Leading agencies such as the UNDP have in turn come up with explicit criteria in this regard – including the notion of performance, stability and adaptability. While the general idea of capacity or institutional capacity is noted in several evaluations – none really get at systematic definitions as shown in the UNDP guidance.

Policy work as influence and capacity building

Notwithstanding the dearth of change theories – all theories that were found showed policy work leading to elements of strengthened knowledge and institutions (sometimes this was inferred). So policy can clearly be seen as a means to build knowledge and institutional strength – though it is almost never alone as a support function in attempting to do this. This was best articulated in a recent evaluation (India 2018) where the Kirkpatrick learning model was explicitly referenced in evidence building. (**Annex E 7A.1**) This model is embodied in the Bennett model currently being used to reform the IRPF. While the specific examples largely referred to education and much of it for technical adoptions – there were also mentions of policy impacts at various levels – from specific implementation guidelines right up to major enabling legislation. The linking of multiple functions to institutional strengthening as also defined as improved coordination – was also shown in recent work (e.g. PCP 2017).

An inevitable link to scale-up

Another implication related to the broad set of functions and some of them under policy which include capacity building, suggest that increased knowledge and strengthened institutions almost always – in the context of UNIDO – also connects to the idea of scaling up for practice and policy adoption above and beyond the scope of direct assistance. For this reason – much of the UNIDO performance story revolves around enabling and catalysing this process – yet it is woefully under-described as a systematic process to date. The literature revealed important definitions of scale-up, its measurement, results pathways, barriers and enablers and even checklists for scale up considerations. (See **Annex F**)

These conclusions lead to the following direct implications for UNIDO:

1. The use of programme theories involving multiple functions, multiple actors and focusing on research based behavioural logic (e.g. Kirkpatrick, Bennett) and influencing factors (assumptions, preconditions and risks) should be continued and regularized so as to provide consistent archetypical templates for both evaluation as a function and for corporate RBM consideration.

A review of evaluation studies showed that when theories of change were described, they differed in specificity, emphasis and to some extent in sequencing. For example, whereas the theory of change for women and youth (2015) showed the capacity change of institutions as an immediate change leading to intermediate competitiveness through services and support, the PCP (2018) theory of change focuses on policy change but is virtually silent on institutional capacity per se. In contrast, the Colombia evaluation (2018) shows institutional capacity as the major thrust of the initiative and clearly an iterative process – as opposed to a flow through function. By contrast, the recent India (2018) evaluation refers directly to a research based theory of capacity building (Kirkpatrick) but systematically applied it at the individual level only. (See **Annex E-2, E-3, E-7 and E-8**). While these evaluations dealt with different subject matters and scopes – and some variance is to be expected – their interpretations and definitions of common results chain logics were significantly different from each other in terms of fundamental conceptualization. This in turn led to different considerations of assumptions, factors and important pre-conditions. The opportunity for generative learning, when basic terms and frameworks differ to such a large extent, is limited.

Common types of results pathways – currently under development – would seem appropriate to be used as a basis to pull evaluation work, MTPF and other planning, M+E and reporting and management work together going forward. **Annex B** for this study provides the basis of results logic for this work – including quality review criteria. **Annexes E, F and G** may be further drawn upon to augment this work – in addition to other sources referenced in **Annex D**.

2. The notion of strengthened knowledge and institutions should be linked to the concept (construct) of institutional capacity and as such should be developed drawing on world leading guidance for this area (e.g. draw on the UNDP guidance profiled in **Annex F**). Review work showed that the concept of strengthened knowledge and institutions has been linked to broad notions of capacity essentially by inference – there were no formal definitions found which made that link in the documents reviewed

3. The core function of ‘normative’ work – once considered distinct from technical cooperation, policy and convening functions should be understood as empirically fitting a behavioural change pattern similar to that of policy adoption or change. For the purposes of planning, monitoring, evaluation and analysis, consideration should be given to consolidating the function into a more broadly defined policy function which itself may be seen as operating at multiple levels and supporting both capacity building as well as direct enabling support through a policy cycle and such elements as agenda setting, collaborative consensus building (convening) and policy changes as well as policy implementation changes (see **Annex B** rating tool categories derived from Stevens and Summer).

4. Given its prominent place in UNIDO’s overall logic, the concept of scaling up should be better defined – drawing on notable elements found in (particularly recent) evaluations but also recent work

defining scale up, its process, measurement and criteria to assess readiness. Such readiness rating criteria as those found near the back of **Annex G** – should be used to help define institutional ‘performance’ capacity (strength).

5. Assumptions, pre-conditions, risks and other important influencing factors as shown in theories of change found in recent evaluations should be more systematically structured and defined for completeness in consideration and for ease of use. The rating tool developed for this study in **Annex B** – with a few modifications – may serve as a good starting point. In particular – factors, assumptions and preconditions related to behavioural change and the adoption of practices, policies and innovations should be more deeply considered. It is further suggested that for simplicity the Capability, Opportunity and Motivation construct which has recently emerged in world evaluation circles be pursued to see if it can help to ‘sort’ factors, assumptions and risks in key areas as applied to both country and themed evaluations.

6. Given the abstract and difficult-to-quantify work of UNIDO in its support – especially in the areas addressed by this study, further mining of evaluation work might help to establish summary rating tools that both rate the quality of engagement and partnership and then go beyond that for capacity (readiness) assessment of scale up or perhaps as sub-elements of scale-up for such concepts as technical, commercial, policy and regulatory scale up ‘readiness’. When combined with current evolutions of these concepts worldwide, consistent rubrics and rating tools for these areas might help to consistently codify and reliably measure concepts which up to now have been somewhat crudely rated in selective opinion-seeking. The rating tool for scale up found in recent work done by the Brookings Institute could serve as a good start. See **Annex F**.

7. the approach taken for each of the above implications should follow principles of results based management and learning organizations – as recently articulated by UN Joint Inspection Unit review work⁷. The first three of these principles relate to focussing on a common vision, using a results chain based theory of change and taking a systems approach. The kind of behavioural logic inferred by these principles applied to key system actors along with a consideration of important contextual factors are all supported by emerging recent evaluation practice and are formally recognized in the model for assessment provided as Annex B to this report. These principles have been addressed in previous conclusions.

The fourth and fifth principles derived from UN review work relate to the use of indicators and the functioning of monitoring and evaluation should be used together to promote both on-going review and adjustment as per plans and deeper periodic learning. UNIDO Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Quality Monitoring functions appear to be well placed and authorized to pursue these principles for organizational learning.

Beyond the five principles noted above, recent UN Joint Inspection Unit review work noted important managerial elements to making a true transition to RBM. These included strategic management, operational management, knowledge management, change management and responsibility management considerations. A key element to all of this is to recognize that the movement is at once a big transition to align and integrate systems for UNIDO *and* it involves all organizational levels as well as funders. As such, implementation favours an approach which encourages experimentation, risk taking, fast failure (ongoing feedback) and learning. Full implementation can likely be expected as happening in decades – not years. RBM can be seen as a

⁷ Results-Based Management in the United Nations Development System Analysis of Progress and Policy Effectiveness, Joint Inspection Unit. Geneva 2017

long term aspiration involving the development and refinement through feedback of systems, procedures and controls over a long-term.