

# **Formative Evaluation of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Programme 2022-2025**

## **Terms of Reference**

### **A. Introduction**

1. Evaluation at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) serves three main purposes: (a) demonstrate accountability to stakeholders on performance in achieving development results and on invested resources; (b) support evidence-based decision-making; (c) contribute key lessons learned to the existing knowledge base on how to accelerate implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).
2. The Evaluation Office will conduct a formative evaluation of UNFPA's organizational readiness and strategic positioning to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the three transformative results, as articulated in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. An evaluation of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Programme 2022-2025 will be conducted as part of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 formative evaluation. This evaluation, which was included in the UNFPA LACRO Costed Evaluation Plan, will also serve as a catalyst for initial discussions on the design of the next Regional Programme, considering the current state of progress towards the SDGs and three transformative results in Latin America and the Caribbean Region.
3. The primary intended users of the regional programme evaluation (RPE) are: (i) UNFPA Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office; (ii) UNFPA Country Offices (COs) and the Caribbean Sub-regional Office (SRO); and (iii) the UNFPA Headquarters Divisions, especially the Evaluation Office. The results of the evaluation should also be of interest to a wider group of stakeholders, such as UNFPA national partners, sub-regional organizations, governments, civil society organizations, private sector, academia and other UN organizations.
4. The preparation of these terms of reference was based on a desk review and initial consultations with key stakeholders within UNFPA in the framework of the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Regional Programme. The evaluation team will conduct the evaluation in line with UNEG norms and standards as articulated in the terms of reference, under the management of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) for the RPE component and guidance from the regional evaluation reference group. Efforts will be made to ensure complementarity and synergy with the on-going evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

### **B. Background**

5. The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 is the second of three strategic plans intended to accelerate progress towards achieving the three transformative results – ending the unmet need for family planning, ending preventable maternal deaths and ending gender-based violence and harmful practices – and ultimately, achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and accelerating the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. In achieving these goals, UNFPA will directly contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – particularly to Sustainable Development Goals 3, 5, 10, 13, 16 and 17, and ultimately to Goal 1 – while aligning with the 2030 Agenda principles of human rights, universality and “leaving no one behind”.
6. The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 intends to accelerate progress towards achieving the three transformative results (TRs):

Outcome 1: By 2025, the reduction in the unmet need for family planning has accelerated;  
 Outcome 2: By 2025, the reduction of preventable maternal deaths has accelerated;  
 Outcome 3: By 2025, the reduction in gender-based violence and harmful practices has accelerated.

7. UNFPA will contribute to these three integrated outcomes by achieving six interconnected outputs. These outputs are (a) policy and accountability; (b) quality of care and services; (c) gender and social norms; (d) population change and data; (e) humanitarian action; and (f) adolescents and youth. All six outputs contribute to the achievement of each outcome having a multidimensional, 'many-to-many' relationship with them.
8. The main target groups of the Strategic Plan are women, adolescents and youth, especially adolescent girls. UNFPA applies a life-course approach, recognizing that people have different and changing needs throughout their lives as well as intergenerational connectedness. The Strategic Plan reaffirms the Fund's commitment to prioritizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, in all their diversity, women's rights, women's leadership and bodily autonomy for all.
9. Recognizing the setbacks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, the current Strategic Plan identified a series of key strategic shifts that are required to accelerate progress towards the 3TRs, including:
  - Aligning the organizational focus on achieving the 3TRs
  - Integrating the effects of megatrends
  - Increasing the focus on "populations left behind" and emphasizing "reaching the furthest behind"
  - Scaling up the provision of high-quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services
  - Expanding the humanitarian preparedness and response capacity
  - Mainstreaming resilience, prevention, preparedness and early action
  - Incorporating the multisectoral needs of women, adolescents and youth
  - Tailoring programmatic and technical assistance through country office-led processes with the UN on the ground
  - Strengthening the UNFPA normative role
  - Shifting the focus from funding to financing the ICPD agenda
  - Reinvigorating and expanding partnerships
  - Increasing the focus on joint accountability

### ***Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Programme (2022-2025)***

10. The **Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Programme (RP) 2022-2025** aims at supporting programmatic efforts of Country Offices (COs) towards accelerating the achievement of the three transformative results and advancing the ICPD agenda and the Montevideo Consensus in the region. The Regional Programme is built on the central and overarching principle of 'leaving no one behind', focusing on women, adolescents and youth of the most vulnerable population groups in the region, particularly indigenous, people of African descent, people living in rural areas, people in human mobility situations, persons with disabilities, and people with humanitarian needs.
11. The Regional Programme delivers six common outputs, aligned – with some adaptation for the regional Latin American and the Caribbean context – to the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025. These six common outputs are (a) policy and accountability; (b) quality of care and services; (c) gender and social norms; (d) population change and data; (e) humanitarian action; and (f)

adolescent and youth<sup>1</sup>. The programme integrates strategic interventions aimed at accelerating the reduction of preventable maternal mortality and the unmet need for family planning.

12. To the extent that structural inequalities are the critical development challenge in the region, the regional programme is built on the central and overarching principle of ‘leaving no one behind’, embedded across the programme through mainstreaming, targeted actions and disaggregated indicators. The programme will focus on women, adolescents and youth, and will apply intersectional approaches to reach the population groups left furthest behind particularly indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, people living in rural areas, people in human mobility situations, people with disabilities, and people with humanitarian needs. The following five cross-cutting approaches will be applied: (a) life-cycle and life-course; (b) gender equality; (c) human rights; (d) intercultural approach; (e) localized and targeted interventions.
13. Five accelerators are employed: (a) partnerships, United Nations coordination, and financing; (b) communication and advocacy; (c) innovation and adaptation; (d) data generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions and knowledge management; (e) efficient management and agile operational processes. The programme uses all five modes of engagement flexibly, depending on the contextual needs.

### ***Mid Term Review of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Programme (2022-2025)***

14. In 2023, a **Mid Term Review (MTR) of the LAC Regional Programme** has been conducted with the aim of assessing the progress towards the RP results to accelerate the achievement of the three transformative results in the Latin America and the Caribbean region and making the necessary adjustments to the Integrated Budget (IB) 2022-2025 and its implementation in light of emerging opportunities and challenges, and the findings of the recent LACRO internal audit.
15. In the framework of the MTR, LACRO engaged in the review of the theories of change of the RP 2022-2025. This process allowed the Regional Office to assess the continued relevance of the proposed priorities and key strategic interventions, while addressing some of the challenges faced in the RP’s first year of implementation. The prevention and reduction of adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality, and GBV and other harmful practices continue to be the key priorities for the LAC region. However, the exacerbation of existing structural challenges, particularly poverty and inequalities, conservative and anti-rights movement, emerging issues and megatrends within the regional context (i.e. effects of COVID-19 pandemic, ageing, climate change, migration and displacement) warrant different and/or strengthened emphasis on specific RP priorities and/or interventions to ensure acceleration of the three transformative results.
16. To this purpose, LACRO has identified **five strategic priorities** for the remaining two years of implementation of the Regional Programme:
  - a. Strengthen the RO oversight over CO programmatic and operational performance to accelerate the achievement of the three transformative results
  - b. Accelerate the shift from funding to funding and financing, promoting innovative partnerships and financing approaches with new actors
  - c. Strengthen UNFPA’s capacities for strategic communications to ensure a solid and coherent narrative for enhanced positioning and revamping of the ICPD agenda
  - d. Scale up the generation, analysis and use of disaggregated data and evidence on SRH, GBV, population dynamics and megatrends (ageing and human mobility) to support advocacy and evidence-based policy making and programming, including through socio-economic tools

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<sup>1</sup> Output 6 was reframed from “bodily autonomy and integrity” to “adolescent and youth” given the criticality of strengthening the agency and autonomy of women, adolescents and youth to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in this region,

- e. Strengthen UNFPA’s capacities in humanitarian preparedness and response and programming across the humanitarian-development nexus

17. Finally, the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) will not change in its essence, maintaining the 6 interconnected outputs. Related to the indicators, most of them have been revisited to highlight the role of LACRO in supporting COs to achieve the three transformative results in the countries in which UNFPA works.

### C. Purpose, objectives and scope

18. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide evidence to support UNFPA’s learning related to what works (and what does not) to accelerate progress towards achievement of the three transformative results in the LAC region and inform the design of the next Strategic Plan and the LAC Regional Programme 2026-2029 and their stated intent to focus on “unfinished business”.

19. The objective of this evaluation is to assess UNFPA’s **organizational readiness and strategic positioning to accelerate the progress towards the achievement of the three transformative results in the LAC region and provide inputs for the design of the next Strategic Plan and the Regional Programme**, taking into account the results of the recent Mid-Term Review of the RP and the 10th anniversary of the Montevideo Consensus and ICPD30. Key priority areas for the Latin America and the Caribbean region, namely prevention and reduction of adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality, and GBV and other harmful practices, will be closely assessed as well as the key strategic shifts proposed in the current SP, including effects of megatrends, LNOB, humanitarian response and nexus. The accelerators for change introduced in the current Strategic Plan will also be part of the analysis, especially in the case of the Regional Programme: a) partnerships, United Nations coordination, and financing; b) communication and advocacy; c) innovation and adaptation; d) data generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions and knowledge management; e) efficient management and agile operational processes.

20. Finally, a specific focus will be placed in the analysis of the UNFPA’s added value in a region of middle income countries (MICs) and its main role of oversight and support to COs, inter-governmental and normative role, policy support and advocacy, in order to strengthen RO, SRO, and COs capacities to accelerate the achievement of the three transformative results in the LAC region.

21. The evaluation will focus on the current Regional Programme period starting in 2022 until the end of data collection in mid-2024. A forward-looking perspective will be maintained so that the evaluation results will benefit both the remainder of the current Regional Programme’s cycle and the development of the subsequent one.

### D. Evaluation questions

22. The evaluation will address the following key questions, which will address evaluation criteria such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency within the framework of a formative evaluation. The evaluation questions will be reviewed during the inception phase. The regional evidence gathered will serve both the evidence repository for the whole corporate evaluation, as well as for the specific Latin America and the Caribbean regional report.

Evaluation questions		Evaluation Criteria			
		Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency
<i>Forward-looking perspective</i>					
i.	To what extent should UNFPA reconceptualize the next RP given the state of progress towards the SDGs and 3TRs in the region?	X			
<i>Accelerators</i>					
ii.	To what extent is each of the five accelerators relevant to the achievement of the 3TRs in the LAC region? To what extent is each of the accelerators enhancing programming at regional and country-levels?	X	X	X	
iii.	What have been the enabling and inhibiting factors in achieving the results?	X		X	
<i>Strategic Shifts</i>					
iv.	To what extent are the effects of megatrends, particularly of ageing, migration and climate change, being incorporated in the RP?		X		
v.	To what extent is UNFPA's programming in the LAC region focusing on "populations left behind" and emphasizing "reaching those furthest behind"?			X	
vi.	To what extent has the RP scaled up the provision of high-quality, comprehensive SRH information and services and multi-sectoral response to gender-based violence and harmful practices in the LAC region?			X	
vii.	To what extent has the RP ensured the scaling up of data and evidence for decision-making?			X	
viii.	To what extent has UNFPA expanded humanitarian preparedness and response capacity and HPD nexus programming in the LAC region?			X	
ix.	To what extent are the discriminatory social and gender norms and structural inequalities being addressed in the RP?			X	
x.	To what extent has UNFPA's normative role been strengthened in the LAC region?	X		X	
xi.	To what extent has the RP focus shifted from funding to funding and financing the ICPD agenda?				X
xii.	To what extent have UNFPA's strategic communication and resource mobilization and partnerships accelerated progress on 3TRs and ICPD PoA in the region?	X		X	

## E. Methodological approach

23. The evaluation will be theory-based with aspects of an adaptive/developmental approach. The use of mixed-methods will ensure that a broad range of data – both quantitative and qualitative – are examined. This evaluation will ensure that data from the MTR of the SP and the RP will be used, as appropriate.

24. The evaluation will carry out the following data collection, at a minimum:

- Desk review of key documents related to the Strategic Plan and Regional Programme 2022-2025;
- Desk review of strategic and programmatic documents (MTR report, revised ToC, LACRO internal audit, annual reports, second regional report on Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, etc.);

- Synthesis of evaluative evidence from corporate, regional<sup>2</sup> and country evaluations (CPEs);
  - Missions to selected country offices to be identified during the inception phase;
  - Interviews with UNFPA key informants at global, regional and country levels;
  - Interviews with other UN agencies at regional level.
25. Aspects of an adaptive, developmental approach will be applied in this evaluation, including an appreciation of complexity, systems thinking, timely feedback and co-creation. Consultation with key stakeholders during the data collection phase will enable the identification of key topics that will be added to the evidence base for analysis.
26. The six regional programmes, including the Latin America and the Caribbean, will be examined as integral parts of the Strategic Plan formative evaluation with specific regional reports produced to meet accountability requirements for the Regional Programme evaluations.
27. In order to assess the relevance and effectiveness of strategic shifts and accelerators, country-level data collection will focus on those Country Offices that developed and approved Country Programme Documents (CPDs) following the approval of the current SP and Regional Programme. Additional countries can be considered to reflect on the regional context and priorities. 2-3 Country Offices will be selected for the field missions.
28. Artificial Intelligence will be leveraged as much as possible and in accordance with UNFPA and UNEG rules and regulations to collect, analyze and store data. Additional data collection methods will be considered during the inception phase of the evaluation.

## **F. Evaluability Assessment**

29. This formative evaluation will benefit from aspects of the data collection carried out as part of the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan and the LAC Regional Programme. Results from the survey of staff perceptions on the Strategic Plan, LAC regional survey, financial implications of strategic priorities, key informant interviews and regional leadership meetings will be used.
30. As the Strategic Plan and the Regional Programmes will only have been implemented for two years when data collection for this evaluation starts, there will be an increased emphasis on collecting primary data sources in this evaluation. The secondary sources that will be reviewed include documentation prepared by different divisions/units/offices to aid implementation of the Strategic Plan and Regional Programme. CPDs developed following the approval of the Strategic Plan and Regional Programme will be reviewed. Performance reports will be assessed not to measure results achieved, but to identify evidence related to the strategic shifts called for in this Strategic Plan.

## **G. Evaluation Process**

31. The evaluation will be carried out in five phases and lead to the preparation and submission of the key deliverables, as described below.

### *Preparatory phase*

32. This phase will be led by the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office Evaluation Manager in close collaboration with the Strategic Plan Evaluation Manager based in the UNFPA Evaluation Office. It will include: (i) an initial documentation review; (ii) scoping interviews

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<sup>2</sup> Regional Evaluation on the UNFPA contribution to the prevention of adolescent pregnancy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

with UNFPA key informants; (iii) the drafting of evaluation terms of reference; (iv) the selection and hiring of the evaluation team; and, (v) the constitution of an evaluation reference group.

### *Inception phase*

33. The evaluation team will conduct the inception phase, in consultation with the evaluation manager and the evaluation reference group. This phase includes:

- A document review of key documents at global, regional office and country office levels;
- Desk review of all relevant centralized and decentralized evaluations, especially the regional evaluation on the UNFPA contribution to the prevention of adolescent pregnancy and the CPEs finalized in 2022-2023;
- A stakeholder mapping and analysis describing the 'stake' different individuals/offices have in the evaluand (RO, COs, SRO);
- The development of a final list of evaluation questions and related evaluation matrix (see template in Annex X) presenting assumptions, indicators, sources of information and methods and tools for the data collection;
- The selection of 2-3 countries for conducting the field missions;
- Development of country-specific data collection tools to be tested during an inception mission to one country, evidence table to gather country-level data and outline for the country debriefing presentation;
- The development of a comprehensive data collection and analysis strategy; and,
- An updated and detailed timeline for the evaluation.

34. The expected deliverables from this phase are:

- ✓ Concept note that specifies scope and methodology fit for the regional programme evaluation;
- ✓ A PowerPoint presentation summarizing the learning from the inception phase, as well as for regional and country-level data collection;
- ✓ An evidence table compiling the data and information collected from the inception phase;
- ✓ A PowerPoint presentation structured around the key components of the concept note, for the inception evaluation reference group virtual meeting.

### *Data collection phase*

35. During this phase, the evaluation team will:

- Conduct an in-depth document review;
- Conduct a systematic review of UNFPA evaluations, including a possible synthesis of evidence;
- Conduct interviews with key internal and external informants (at HQ, regional and country levels);
- Carry out 2-3 country missions and a visit to the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office;
- Complete regional programme analysis,

36. The outputs of this phase are:

- ✓ Evidence tables compiling the data and information collected during the country missions;
- ✓ Powerpoint presentations from the regional visit and the country missions;
- ✓ Powerpoint presentation for an end-of-data-collection ERG meeting.

## Reporting phase

37. The reporting phase will open with a workshop bringing together the evaluation team and the evaluation manager to discuss the evidence gathered during data collection. The objective is to help the evaluation team to deepen their analysis with a view to identifying the evaluation findings, main conclusions and related recommendations. The evaluation team then proceeds with the drafting of the final report, which will include six separate reports with findings, conclusions and issues for consideration for each Regional Office. These regional reports will be quality assured by the evaluation team, the evaluation manager and the Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisors.
38. This first draft final report will be submitted to the evaluation manager for comments. The evaluation manager will assess the quality of the submitted draft report according to the EQAA grid. If the quality of the draft report is satisfactory (form and substance), the manager will circulate it to the reference group members. In the event that the quality is unsatisfactory, the evaluators will be required to produce a new version of the draft report.
39. The second draft final report, and in particular the tentative conclusions and recommendations, will be presented by the evaluation team during a stakeholder workshop (attended by the ERG as well as other relevant stakeholders) and circulated to UNFPA Executive Committee members. The stakeholder workshop will take place at UNFPA HQ (New York) with regional workshops organized to present findings, conclusions and draft recommendations from the regional evaluations.
40. The evaluation team will revise and finalize the report following comments received. When submitting the final draft report, the evaluation team will also provide a detailed matrix indicating how each comment was addressed. The final report will follow the structure set out in annex X.
41. The report is considered final once it is formally approved by the Director of EO in consultation with the evaluation manager and the reference groups.

## Dissemination phase

42. The evaluation team will assist the evaluation manager in selected dissemination activities. In particular, they will prepare a PowerPoint presentation on key highlights of the evaluation report and an evaluation brief.

## H. Management and governance

43. The responsibility for the management and supervision of the regional programme evaluation (RPE) will rest with the Regional Office, in a coordinated manner with the evaluation manager and team leader of the global SP evaluation.
44. *The evaluation manager.* The evaluation manager will have overall responsibility for the management of the evaluation process, including hiring and managing the (team of) external consultant(s). The evaluation manager is responsible for ensuring the quality and independence of the evaluation (in line with UNEG Norms, Standards and Ethical Guidelines). The main responsibilities of the evaluation manager are to:
  - hire the external consultant(s) that will make up the evaluation team;
  - chair the reference group and convene review meetings with the evaluation team;
  - supervise and guide the evaluation team all through the evaluation process;
  - review, provide substantive comments and approve the concept note, including the work plan and methodology;



- facilitate the work of the regional evaluation team carrying out country missions/desk review
- review and quality assure all evaluation outputs in general and on the draft and final evaluation reports in particular;
- approve the regional programme evaluation report, in coordination with the reference group; and,
- disseminate the evaluation results and contribute to learning and knowledge sharing at UNFPA.

45. The *Evaluation Office* will participate in the selection of the regional evaluation team, as well as in the validation of the final evaluation report.

46. *The evaluation reference group.* The conduct of the evaluation will be followed closely by an evaluation reference group consisting of staff members of UNFPA and select external members. The reference group will play a key role in ensuring access to information and individuals, as well as reviewing draft deliverables. Specifically, the responsibilities of the reference group are to:

- provide feedback and comments on the draft terms of reference of the evaluation;
- act as the interface between the evaluators and the UNFPA services (in headquarters, regional and country offices), notably to facilitate access to informants and documentation;
- participate in review meetings with the evaluation team as required;
- provide feedback and comments on the draft concept note;
- provide comments and substantive feedback from a technical perspective on the draft and final evaluation reports;
- assist in identifying external stakeholders to be consulted during the evaluation process; and,
- play a key role in disseminating evidence and learning from the evaluation, contributing to disseminating the results of the evaluation as well as to the completion and follow-up of the management response.

## I. Evaluation Timeline

	<b>Evaluation Phase</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
0	Preparatory phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Drafting of terms of reference</i></li> <li>• <i>Procurement</i></li> </ul>	October - December 2023
1	Inception phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concept note</i></li> </ul>	January 2024
2	Data collection phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Field missions</i></li> </ul>	February - April 2024
3	Analysis and Synthesis	April - June 2024
4	Reporting and review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Draft final report</i></li> <li>• <i>Final report</i></li> </ul>	July - September 2024
5	Management response and dissemination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dissemination of the report</i></li> </ul>	October - December 2024