



Accountability System for the Protection of Civilians

Mission Evaluations

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SUMMARY

Mission evaluations conducted by the Department of Peace Operations' (DPO) Evaluation Team enable the UN Secretariat to assess the performance of field missions in carrying out their mandated tasks. They can help the Secretariat understand the strengths and weaknesses of a field mission and develop guidance to address gaps. As per the policy, "The primary purpose of DPKO/DFS evaluations is to strengthen the ability of DPKO, DFS and missions to accumulate and utilize experience, thus enhancing peacekeeping operations. Evaluations also improve accountability for results and the use of resources."¹ They aim to inform planning, training, budgeting, and programming to provide feedback to troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) and legislative bodies. Mission evaluations have been put on hold since the development of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS).

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RELEVANCE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

These evaluations can be used to assess the performance of missions in protecting civilians. They provide an opportunity to delve into a specific component's performance but can also be crosscutting. In the event that a component is not adequately implementing a peacekeeping mandate, remedial action can be suggested. Impromptu evaluations can also assess whether a mission—and which components of a mission—performed or underperformed in carrying out its POC mandate.

Examples

In 2015, the Senior Management Team of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS) requested the Evaluation Team to evaluate the protection functions and structures of peacekeeping missions. The evaluation was conducted in early 2016 and focused on the utility and effectiveness of mission-specific POC strategies in improving missions' performance on POC. The evaluation reviewed the UN missions in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Mali (MINUSMA), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as the African Union–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). It examined the missions' POC-specific strategies and the structures, procedures, and mechanisms they use to implement their POC mandates. The role and positioning of the senior adviser on POC was also assessed. The evaluation drew on desk research and field visits to MINUSCA, MONUSCO, and UNMISS.

¹ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS), "Mission Evaluation Policy," February 2013.

Governing rules

The UN policy on mission evaluations, published in 2013, outlines roles and responsibilities and describes the process of the evaluation. The policy is applicable to DPO, the Department of Operational Support (DOS), and peacekeeping missions.²

The Evaluation Unit, located within DPO's Policy, Evaluation and Training Division, visits missions to conduct evaluations and ensures that evaluation findings are incorporated into policies, best practices, and training in order to strengthen institutional practices.

There are three types of mission evaluations:³

1. **Programmed evaluations:** These seek to “evaluate the sufficiency and implementation of the mission's operational plan and progress towards the achievement of the mandate, conformity with DPKO and DFS policy and the effectiveness of mission components.”
2. **Crosscutting evaluations:** These apply to select components, whose performance is reviewed “across missions to identify systemic weaknesses requiring cross-cutting remedial action.”
3. **Impromptu evaluations:** These are activated as an immediate response “to determine cases of emerging problems or critical incidents within missions.”

Process and functioning

There are three phases to the evaluation process:⁴

1. **Planning phase:** The Evaluation Advisory Board of DPO and DOS, supported by DPET's Evaluation Unit, proposes an annual evaluation plan to the under-secretaries-general of DPO and DOS. Once approved, the Evaluation Unit drafts the terms of reference, identifies the evaluation team, and plans the evaluation in collaboration with the mission being evaluated. Field missions may also request evaluations through the normal chain of command.
2. **Conducting the evaluation:** The evaluation team reviews documentation at headquarters in New York and in the field and interviews staff at mission headquarters and field locations. At the end of the evaluation, the evaluation team provides an “out-brief” to the senior mission leadership. Upon returning to headquarters in New York, the evaluation team leader briefs the under-secretaries-general of DPO and DOS and other senior staff.
3. **Follow-up phase:** The Evaluation Unit distributes the report within DPO and DOS and to the field mission. It coordinates with the components of DPO and DOS to

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

ensure that follow-up action is undertaken and follows up on the implementation of recommendations at regular intervals.

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ANALYSIS

The three types of mission evaluations allow the Secretariat to comprehensively evaluate and assess a mission's performance in carrying out its mandated tasks. All parts of the mission are covered by the evaluation, which allows the Secretariat to identify, understand, and remedy gaps, including communication gaps between mission components or overreliance on one component over another. This is particularly relevant for POC, a whole-of-mission endeavor implemented by all components.

Crosscutting evaluations requested by the under-secretaries-general of DPO or DOS allow the Secretariat to review issues such as POC across a number of missions. Impromptu evaluations also allow missions to address emerging issues in real time instead of waiting for regular programmed evaluations.


The mission evaluation team is not based in the mission, which provides for a certain level of impartiality. However, the evaluation team also has limited time and resources, which can limit the comprehensiveness of its assessments.

Timing

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| Regular process | X | Programmed evaluations assess mission components on a regular basis. |
| Extraordinary measure after incident | X | Impromptu evaluations occur when an immediate response is needed to an evolving situation. |

Actors and answerability structure

Mission evaluations are a tool for the Secretariat. The under-secretaries-general of DPO or DOS generally call for an evaluation (in the case of crosscutting and impromptu evaluations), though the head of mission can also call for impromptu evaluations.

|  Held accountable by | Individuals | Unit | | | Mission | Secretariat | Contributing countries | Security Council/ 5 th Committee | Member states | Population | Other |
|--|-------------|----------|--------|----------|---------|-------------|------------------------|--|---------------|------------|-------|
| | | Military | Police | Civilian | | | | | | | |
| Individuals | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unit/ section/ component | Military | | | | | X | | | | | |
| | Police | | | | | X | | | | | |
| | Civilian | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Mission | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Secretariat | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Contributing countries | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Member states | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Security Council/ 5th Committee | | | | | | | | | | | |

Scope and objective

Evaluations provide “an objective assessment of performance, resource utilization and related effects, policy effectiveness, and managerial and structural issues at the mission level, as well as within mission components and formed units.” They are intended to inform “the management, policy development, resource utilization and training activities of both Departments,” as well as the strategic guidance given to mission leadership and feedback provided to T/PCCs, other member states, and legislative bodies. They also contribute to planning, results-based budgeting, and risk-management strategies.⁵

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| Collect best practices and lessons learned | X | During the evaluation process, best practices and lessons learned are recorded and disseminated internally. “Evaluations also provide mission leaders and staff with an opportunity to review processes and implementation, to identify lessons to be learned and to improve management.” ⁶ |
| Track performance | X | Programmed evaluations track the performance of a mission in carrying out mandated tasks. |
| Establish facts and circumstances | | |
| Establish responsibility | | |
| Identify structural and systemic issues | X | Evaluations can also identify structural issues at the mission level. |

Type of accountability

Mission evaluations contribute to organizational accountability and provide a form of performance accountability, as they assess the performance of various mission components and their ability to carry out mandated tasks.

Outcome

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| Learn | Disseminate and integrate internally | X | Mission evaluation reports are for internal use by DPO and DOS. However, on a case-by-case basis, T/PCCs may be briefed on the executive summary, findings, and recommendations. Furthermore, DPET's Evaluation Unit records and incorporates evaluation findings. |
| | Account for publicly | | |

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

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| Correct | Improve internal processes | | |
| | Inform the selection of personnel | X | Mission evaluations help the Secretariat understand and evaluate the performance of missions, which it can then translate into policies that enhance missions' ability to carry out their mandated tasks. "The results and follow-up of evaluation inform the management, policy development, resource utilization and training activities, strengthen the ability of Headquarters to provide strategic guidance to mission leadership based on comprehensive assessments of mission performance, and allow for improved feedback on operational issues to TCCs and PCCs, Member States and legislative bodies." ⁷ |
| Sanction | Recommend sanctions | | |
| | Establish incentives | | Mission evaluations do not establish incentives, but they can identify incentives that would improve missions' performance. |

Independence and impartiality

The Evaluation Advisory Board, headed by the director of DPET and consisting of six other senior staff from DPO and DOS, advises and proposes annual evaluation plans. These are approved by the under-secretary-general of DPO. Evaluation teams are preferably led by a former senior peacekeeping official (military, civilian, or police), an inter-disciplinary evaluation team comprised of specialists from DPO and DOS, and other departments and field missions.

Inclusivity

The evaluation team generally consists of both Secretariat-based and mission-based individuals. Mission evaluations concern all mission personnel and components. As such, their scope is inclusive. Crosscutting and impromptu evaluations allow missions and the Secretariat to look at specific components and specific issues. This flexibility allows evaluations to adapt to evolving circumstances.

Transparency

All mission evaluation reports are for internal use. Depending on the approval of the under-secretary-general for peace operations, individual briefings on a summary of the

⁷ Ibid.

findings and recommendations can be provided to concerned T/PCCs and legislative bodies. These briefings may be given on the condition that specific findings are not linked to individuals, specific contingents, or other entities.

| Follow-up mechanisms | | |
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| Possible follow-up mechanisms | X | Evaluations “inform the management, policy development, resource utilization and training activities of both departments [DPO, DOS], strengthen the ability of Headquarters to provide strategic guidance to mission leadership based on comprehensive assessments of mission performance, and allow for improved feedback on operational issues to TCCs, PCCs, Member States and legislative bodies.” ⁸ The Evaluation Unit is responsible for following up on evaluations, including distributing the report within DPO, DOS, and the field mission and coordinating with mission components at regular intervals to ensure that recommendations are being implemented. |
| Available enforcement measures | | |
| Transmissibility to other mechanisms | X | Issues of serious concern (such as safety and security, operational risks, conduct and discipline, or malfeasance) are reported by the team leader to the under-secretaries-general of DPO and DOS and the head of mission. |

⁸ Ibid.