Evaluation of the UNFPA's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Program 2008-2012

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFPPD	Asian Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development
APPG	All Party Parliamentary Groups
AWP	Annual work plan
AWPMT	Annual Work Plan and Monitoring Tool
CB	capacity building
DOS	Division for Oversight Services (of UNFPA)
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EECARO	Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
EPF	European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development
FACE	Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IP	implementing partner
IPCAT	Implementing Partner Capacity Assessment Tool
IPDET	International Program for Development Evaluation Training
IPPF-EN	International Planned Parenthood Federation- European Network
LoU	letter of understanding
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MISP	Minimum Initial Service Package
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NCPHA	National Center of Public Health and Analyses
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PETRI	Peer Education Training and Research Institute
RH	Reproductive health
RHCS	Reproductive health commodity security
ROAR	Regional Office Annual Report
RPAP	Regional Program Action Plan
SP	Strategic plan
SRO	Sub-regional office
TOR	Terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
Y-PEER	Youth Peer Education Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Scope

This report presents the results of an external and independent evaluation that was commissioned by the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO) of the United Nations Population Fund. Created in 2008, the regional office collaborates with and supports 20 country offices in the region in their efforts to contribute to the integration of the priorities of the International Conference for Population and Development (ICPD) and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in three main areas, Population and Development, Reproductive Health and Gender Equality. EECARO and Sub-regional Office employ 31 professional and support staff and 15 short term consultants.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide EECARO and its management with an independent assessment of EECARO's performance along the Development Assistance Committee(DAC) criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability – and to provide findings and conclusions that assist the regional office in developing its next regional program action plan (RPAP 2014-2017). In this light, the evaluation was undertaken with a view to identify lessons to improve EECARO activities in the future, and to help optimize EECARO's partnering arrangements and capacity-building activities.

Context

In 2008 the EECARO Regional Program Action Plan 2008-2011, approved with a total budget of $17.9 million, led to the UNFPA's regionalization process, merging the functions of the geographic divisions, formerly based in New York, with the Country Support Team in Bratislava. Due to the withdrawal of the offer of the Government of Slovakia to host the regional office, the office remained temporarily in New York before settling in Istanbul in January 2011. The delay in establishing the regional office, due mainly to the search for a new location and lengthy staff recruitment, did affect EECARO in its regional program implementation. Besides providing support to country offices, the role of the regional office in Istanbul and its sub-regional office in Almaty is mainly that of a knowledge broker, facilitator of skills transfer, and promoter of institutional networks and south-south cooperation.

Key strategies of the 2008-2011 RPAP were to (i) strengthen national capacity to incorporate ICPD and MDG priorities in national development frameworks; (ii) mobilize the potential of United Nations reform; (iii) develop national capacity through south-south cooperation, and (iv) provide integrated technical and program support to country offices. The RPAP was extended until 2013 when the Strategic Plan Mid-Term Review led to a revised Plan, which focused on consolidating work by prioritizing; avoiding efforts to try to do everything

everywhere; avoiding "silo" thinking; and improving measurability. The revised RPAP approved for an additional amount of $18 million for the two years led to a modification of objectives, intended outcomes and outputs.

Methodology

In addition to spending several days at the EECARO in Istanbul, field trips and face-to-face interviews were carried out in 10 countries -six country offices and implementing partners in four countries. Skype calls were also held with EECARO staff and another two country offices.

The evaluation team faced methodological constraints related to (i) the flawed definition of UNFPA's indicators, which hampered reliable and systematic monitoring of program progress and influenced the assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the regional program, and (ii) the absence of counterfactuals, which prevented a rigorous application of the theory of change.

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation provides an overall assessment of the regional program and EECARO's achievements from 2008 to 2012 on each of the DAC evaluation criteria. An analysis of the specific focus areas of the regional program – capacity building and partnership – is also carried out along the DAC criteria.

Relevance

The overall rating for the relevance of the RPAP is good. EECARO's activities were in line with UNFPA's Global and Regional Program 2008-2011 (GRP) and its corresponding Action Plan (and revised Action Plan). All in all EECARO's activities were relevant to the needs of country offices and consequently to national priorities. However as regard the level of participation of country offices in EECARO annual planning processes, and the frequency of consultations with EECARO, mixed reactions were revealed by the evaluation team's field interviews. The relevance of EECARO's partners is satisfactory in regard of their actions aiming at contributing to the achievement of relevant MDGs and the ICPD's priorities.

Effectiveness

This good rating reflects a judgment about how effective the regional office and its partners have been in achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. The rating for effectiveness is adequate in part because EECARO scored well on the assessment by the country offices in a survey that was however not anonymous. But the UNFPA GRP has impaired its regional offices by confusing outcomes with outputs and thus placing the responsibility for achieving the "outcomes" on regional offices. Moreover, EECARO's own data reveal mixed and inconsistent levels of effectiveness and achievement for less-demanding indicator targets.

Yet EECARO can point to successes and achievements, made all the more impressive because of the challenges it faced in its formative years. Unfortunately, many of EECARO's indicators do not permit to reliably measure these achievements other than anecdotally and subjectively, as the indicators are not appropriate and do not reflect accurately EECARO's performance. In too many instances what is achieved does not match well the outputs and outcomes that EECARO uses to assess its effectiveness.

Efficiency

The overall rating for efficiency is good. EECARO manages UNFPA's resources efficiently and is commended for doing so. Although there are some exceptions and concerns, they are few in number and have plausible explanations.

Sustainability

Several elements that are likely to improve sustainability and that the RPAP promotes, such as capacity building, partnerships, and improved measurability, are found in EECARO's activities. EECARO has convened NGOs, national and international partners, and country offices to launch and conduct much-appreciated advocacy events, conferences, and consultative meetings. Many of these events though are one-off events with no or limited follow up, and their sustainability is not likely. However some initiatives have the potential to be sustainable but this cannot be asserted with confidence either for lack of follow-up and reliable indicators, or because follow-ups are not yet decided or implemented.

The absence of a long-term perspective in EECARO's programs shows that EECARO has not yet incorporated the means to ensure sustainability of results over time. Consequently the evaluation team cannot demonstrate that the benefits of EECARO's interventions are sustained and owned by institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed. In addition, Annual Work Plans, the main work tool of UNFPA, imply short-term perspectives and short-term vision in contrast to the strategy and long-term vision that sustainability requires. As long as EECARO resorts to short-term planning of development tools, sustainability will remain a concern for performance.

Specific Issues of Interest

The regional program focuses more specifically on the issues, i.e., capacity building initiatives and the establishment of partnerships that are dealt with under development and management results.

Capacity building as a development result

The evaluation of capacity-building initiatives started with the observation that although EECARO has launched a large number of activities, it has been done without having formalized an operational definition of capacity building (CB) and without having developed a strategy for its CB activities. For the past five years, activities have grown without a shared

and operational definition of capacity development, without a strategy or long-term vision, and without clearly defined and measurable goals. The consequence is that the indicators needed to measure the results of CB activities are not adequate, and the important dimensions of CB - the impact of CB initiatives on organizational and institutional capacity- have not been taken into account. The shortfall of the methodological approach prevents an adequate measure of the effectiveness and sustainability of CB activities.

Yet several success stories were collected during field visits in which CB activities turned out to be relevant, effective and likely to be sustainable, but it could not be demonstrated that CB efforts achieved their intended results. Workshops and events focusing on advocacy and knowledge sharing are usually well received as they appear to be relevant and effective, and do foster East-East cooperation.

This leads to the conclusion that capacity building as a development result is viewed as relevant in most cases, and possibly effective but there are important methodological weaknesses that should be solved with the development of a long term strategy.

Capacity building as management results

From a management perspective, capacity-building issues are being examined through EECARO resource mobilization practices and through the approaches of monitoring and evaluation to strengthen program effectiveness and accountability.

Resource mobilization
EECA region comprises many middle-income countries that are not priorities for resource-scarce donors. Funding by bilateral donors declined drastically since 2009. This is compensated by an increase in funding by UNFPA entities. To respond to the need for funding, EECARO defined a resource mobilization strategy in 2011, but which is unclear on the goals to be reached in quantitative terms; this prevented the evaluation team from assessing the extent to which the goals have been achieved. In addition the staff in charge of resource mobilization has other tasks, as there is no advisor for resource mobilization. However sustainability remains a concern because of the challenges that EECARO faces in mobilizing extrabudgetary resources.

Monitoring and evaluation
The analysis indicates that regional M&E activities have been relevant as concerns the needs for developing capacity in M&E of the country offices' staffs and national partners. Activities have also been effective in contributing to develop M&E frameworks, implementing M&E workshops and initiating an effective partnership with IPDET, which enables country offices' staffs and national partners to benefit from a well-regarded training. However it appear that there have been missed opportunities as regard the deficiency of indicators. Also attention to M&E elements of implementing partners is desirable to improve effectiveness, sustainability and accountability.

Partnerships

No rigorous assessment regarding EECARO's partnerships can be made. Field visits indicate that most EECARO partners are effective and have the relevant competencies. There is however concern about the selection procedures, the limited attention to assessing changes in capacity of some of these partners, and the lack of evaluation of their performance.

Recommendations

Seven recommendations are ranked according to their priority: the first three are of the highest priority. The evaluation team is proposing a participatory and bottom-up approach that leads to EECARO's improved effectiveness and that promotes change at the corporate level to facilitate the achievement of results by regional and country offices.

1. *EECARO's priorities should be reviewed and the scope of its activities reduced.* EECARO's activities should be limited to those issues in which it can achieve a meaningful and measurable impact in a timely manner. Given EECARO's human and financial resources, it needs to identify its particular niches and focus on activities that lead to sustainable results that can be reasonably attributed to EECARO's efforts.

2. *EECARO should develop a strategy and a long-term vision for its efforts to strengthen and sustain regional and national capacity.* The strategy should (a) be demand driven; (b) be tailored to the needs of the specific institutions to be strengthened; (c) be based on a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of institutional and organizational gaps and needs; (d) identify clear, specific, and measurable goals for EECARO's efforts to strengthen capacity; and (e) match EECARO's interventions with the gaps and needs identified in the institutions with which EECARO chooses to work.

3. *EECARO could benefit from strengthened results chains to ensure a credible and logical relationship between activities and outputs and between outputs and outcomes.* Therefore EECARO could: (a) start with a clear understanding of the difference between outputs and outcomes; (b) identify realistic outputs and outcomes to be achieved; and (c) select the activities that are necessary to achieve desired results. Concurrent with this process, EECARO could also usefully consider an improvement in its indicators.

Subsequent recommendations should be amenable to attention from a smaller group of EECARO's staff members.

4. *EECARO should consider how best to use the subregional office (SRO) and ensure clarity in its roles and responsibilities.* The parallel activities of both offices bring into question the relevance of the current blurred division of labor.

5. *EECARO should explore means to ensure that the full work potential of staff members is used to increase their efficiency and effectiveness.* EECARO could also usefully consider the proportion of time that its professional staff devotes to regional issues versus support for country offices in order to maximizes achievement of EECARO's priorities.

6. *It is recommended that the regional office position itself vis-à-vis (a) the implementation of UN Delivering as One, which may be extended to additional countries in the region, and (b) the possible phasing out of countries that are increasingly likely to be within the zone of influence of the European Union.*

7. *The resource mobilization strategy should be updated and revised,* particularly in regard to enhanced collaboration with the European Union and UNFPA's office in Brussels. EECARO may wish to consider an approach that identifies the issues that these donors are willing to fund and then to focus on these activities. Common understanding of and shared responsibility for resource mobilization by the staff of EECARO and country offices should be ensured.

8. *In selecting implementing partners, with the exception of partners that are deemed to be unique and strategic, invitations for proposals should be used in every instance possible, thus encouraging competition and the opportunity for improved efficiency.* EECARO should have a clear and explicit exit strategy for all IPs; this strategy should be developed and shared with them.

A detailed timetable over two years is recommended for the implementation of the recommendations.

Management Review and Response to the
"Evaluation of the UNFPA's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Program"
Abridged version

Overall response

1. The comprehensiveness of the evaluation demonstrates the commitment of EECARO to full transparency and to continued improvement of its interventions. The evaluation provides valuable insights and directs management's attention towards focused actions to improve the functioning of the regional programme (RP).

2. It should however to be noted that the evaluation does not fully capture important changes in programme design and implementation which were introduced after the mid-term evaluation of the RP in 2012 and 2013. EECARO has started implementing the mid-term evaluation recommendations where possible and has since strengthened its own profile, its human resource base and moved further to attain tangible results and impact. In addition, the evaluation attributes to the RP certain issues that are determined by corporate policies and approaches and need to be addressed at the corporate level (e.g. regarding recommendation 3 on the results chain or recommendation 6 on DaO).

Specific Management Response to the recommendations of the evaluation report:

3. **Recommendation 1:** EECARO's priorities should be reviewed and the scope of its activities reduced. EECARO's activities should be limited to those issues in which it can achieve a meaningful and measurable impact in a timely manner.

   - Management response: Accepted. Management is already implementing this through the development of the regional programme action plan (RPAP) for 2014-17 in consultation with country offices and HQ units.
   - Specific activities include: i. Development of the RPAP 2014-17 including review of priorities, ii. Establishment of a process to develop more focused AWPs

4. **Recommendation 2:** EECARO should develop a strategy and a long-term vision for its efforts to strengthen and sustain regional and national capacity. The strategy should (a) be demand driven; (b) be tailored to the needs of the specific institutions to be strengthened; (c) be based on a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of institutional and organizational gaps and needs; (d) identify clear, specific, and measurable goals for EECARO's efforts to strengthen capacity; and (e) match EECARO's interventions with the gaps and needs identified in the institutions and implementing partners with which EECARO chooses to work.

   - Management response: Accepted
     Specific activities include: i. Development of a regional capacity building strategy with specific and measurable goals, ii. Define roles, responsibilities, labor division and synergies in capacity development efforts among UNFPA country offices and regional office; iii. Assessment of regional implementing partners using IPCAT tool on a regular basis, iv. Ensure that regional program initiative or activity has a clear

capacity development and sustainability roadmap at the design stage and throughout the implementation.

5. **Recommendation 3:** EECARO could benefit from strengthened results chains to ensure a credible and logical relationship between activities and outputs and between outputs and outcomes.

   - Management response: Accepted
   - Specific activities include: i. Management is implementing this recommendation through the development of a robust results framework for the RPAP 2014-17, ii: EECARO will establish baselines and annual targets against each indicator and will keep track of programme performance.

6. **Recommendation 4:** EECARO should consider how best to use the sub-regional office (SRO) and ensure clarity in its roles and responsibilities. The parallel activities of both offices bring into question the relevance of the current blurred division of labor.

   - Management response: Accepted
   - Specific activities include: Management will further clarify TORs, roles and responsibilities of staff in the regional and sub-regional offices and will inform country offices in the region.

7. **Recommendation 5:** EECARO should explore means to ensure that the full work potential of staff members is used to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. EECARO could also usefully consider the proportion of time that its professional staff devotes to regional issues versus support for country offices in order to maximize the achievement of EECARO's priorities.

   - Management response: Accepted
   - Specific activities include: i. EECARO will proactively engage in the global talent management initiative and train staff to realize their full potential, including the leadership training in 2013, ii. EECARO will conduct an assessment/mapping of regional and country office skills and undertake an initiative to minimize skill gaps, iii. EECARO will carefully review time commitment of its professional staff at least on a half-yearly basis (during PAD review), and increase time devoted to CO support.

8. **Recommendation 6:** It is recommended that the regional office position itself vis-à-vis (a) the implementation of UN Delivering as One, which may be extended to additional countries in the region, and (b) the possible phasing out of countries that are increasingly likely to be within the zone of influence of the European Union.

   - Management response: Partially accepted. Decisions on phasing out are made by countries themselves, the ED and/or by the Executive Board. They are beyond EECARO management decision.
   - Specific activities include: i. EECARO management will fully engaged in UN Delivering as One and will support countries in UNDAF and joint programme development; ii. RO has already developed a strategy to support middle income

countries; iii. RO is in the process of developing modalities to work with countries where aid has phased out (Romania, Bulgaria, and Russia).

9. **Recommendation 7:** The resource mobilization strategy should be updated and revised, particularly in regard to enhanced collaboration with the European Union and UNFPA's office in Brussels. EECARO may wish to consider an approach that identifies the issues that these donors are willing to fund and then to focus on these activities. Common understanding of and shared responsibility for resource mobilization by the staff of EECARO and country offices should be ensured.
   - Management Response: Accepted
   - Specific activities include: 1. EECARO will revise its resource mobilization strategy including strengthening UNFPA position with European Union, accessing neighbourhood and development policies; 2. EECARO will map and engage with the private sector (including foundations) to diversify its resource base; 3. EECARO will further develop its collaboration with emerging and potential donors in the region, building on initial success in resource mobilization with such donors and Russia and Kazakhstan.

10. **Recommendation 8:** In selecting implementing partners, with the exception of partners that are deemed to be unique and strategic, invitations for proposals should be used in every instance possible, thus encouraging competition and the opportunity for improved efficiency. EECARO should have a clear and explicit exit strategy for all IPs; this strategy should be developed and shared with them.
    - Management response: Accepted.
    - Specific activities include: 1. EECARO has already introduced selection of partners through invitation for proposals (except for "unique strategic partners" and will continue this in the future. 2. EECARO will revise its partnership strategy, including exit/engagement modalities and share it with IP's.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents an independent, external evaluation of selected elements of the Regional Program Action Plan (RPAP) of UNFPA's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO), which collaborates with and supports activities in 20 countries. The key goals of the evaluation are to validate what is being done well, to provide information that EECARO's management wants and needs to know, to reduce uncertainty where it exists and can be changed, and to propose recommendations for future programming. The evaluation seeks to identify ways to enhance the EECARO's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. No less important, the evaluation is intended to be forward looking and to provide findings and conclusions that assist the regional office in developing its next RPAP and its future activities.

UNFPA's programming guidelines require evaluation for every country, regional, and global program. The present evaluation responds to that requirement and represents one of five evaluations of each of the agency's regional offices. In accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group's *Norms for Evaluation in the UN System*, the evaluation "focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or lack thereof."

This evaluation report reflects consideration of comments received on the draft evaluation report, both from EECARO and independent reviewers that the evaluation team identified. The report has addressed all factual errors when there was agreement that such errors existed in the draft report. In other instances differences of opinions exist. The evaluation team appreciates UNFPA's emphasis on the independence of the evaluation team and EECARO's commitment to a free expression of the team's opinions even in instances in which they may not coincide with EECARO's preferences.

The report is structured as follows:

The first comprises the program overview; the second section describes the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation; the third section covers the evaluation methodology including methodological and logistic limitations; the fourth section comprises the evaluation findings along the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability; the fifth and sixth sections concern the specific focus areas of the Regional Program, i.e., capacity building and partnerships under the development and management results (with the application of evaluation criteria when relevant) ; conclusions and recommendations compose the last two sections.

1. Program Overview

The UNFPA Global and Regional Program 2008-2011 was approved by the Executive Board in January 2008 along with the agency's Strategic Plan[1]. After the Executive

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[1] The evaluation team appreciates and recognizes that UNFPA's headquarters affect and in many instances determine EECARO's operating environment. This situation is recognized throughout the report, but judgments

Board's approval, the Eastern Europe and Central Asia RPAP was formulated and approved by the Program Review Committee in May 2008, with a total budget allocation of $17.9 million for the four years.

Shortly after the approval of the RPAP, UNFPA's regionalization process began. It merged the functions of the geographic divisions, formerly based in New York, with the Country Support Team in Bratislava, Slovakia. For Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the regionalization process led to the establishment of a separate regional office and hiring of new staff for the regional and subregional offices. This process was not without problems.

As explained in the midterm review of the regional program, "Since its establishment, EECARO has suffered serious disruption, with the first attempt to locate its regional premises in Bratislava reversed in a last-minute decision."[2] After agreeing to host the new regional office in January 2009, the Government of Slovakia withdrew its offer a few months later due to high costs. This decision required UNFPA to search for a new location for offices in the region. EECARO was able to start its operations in Istanbul in January 2011, but did not move to its present location in that city until July of that year.

Finding office space was not the only challenge. Again, as the midterm review observed, "Staffing the regional office was also a significant undertaking, with more than 100 interviews conducted to fill required technical and managerial posts, and almost no support staff in the interim." The midterm report continued: "The disruption of the multiple moves, challenges in recruiting a new team, and the delay in situating EECARO in a regional setting has had important effects on the implementation of the [regional program], particularly with regard to its functions in support of country programmes." In short, understanding EECARO's creation and development are important to note in making judgments about its achievements and in making judgments about these accomplishments relative to UNFPA's four other regional offices, all of which began their operations in their present locations well before EECARO.

Regionalization had implications not only for the structure of the office but also for the way in which the UNFPA regional program functions, which envisages the regional and subregional office's role of a knowledge broker, facilitator of skills transfer, promoter of institutional networks, and south-south cooperation. The personnel component of regional program encompasses technical, program and operations support to UNFPA's Country Offices in the region.

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about the environment that UNFPA has created is beyond the scope of the present evaluation. Nonetheless, readers of this evaluation should be aware of a separate and recent report, *Performance Audit of the Global and Regional Programme (GRP)*, which KPMG completed in February 2013. The audit assessed the GRP's performance as "unsatisfactory." While recognizing that noteworthy results were achieved by some components of the GRP, the audit "identified limitations and weaknesses in programme design; programme governance and management; and programme execution that significantly limited UNFPA's ability to measure and clearly demonstrate collective results for the GRP or its component Global and Regional Programmes since their inception in 2008."

[2] Laura Weeden, *Mid-term Review, Regional Programme 2008-2013, UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office*, March 2011.

The regional program covers the three goals of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan: population and development; sexual and reproductive health and rights; and gender equality and the empowerment of women. In line with the Strategic Plan, EECARO developed its RPAP, which focuses on the four areas with key strategies to: (a) strengthen national capacity to incorporate the priorities associated with the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in national development frameworks; (b) mobilize the potential of United Nations (UN) reform, including the resources available through the UN country teams and the expertise and knowledge available globally, regionally, and locally to provide effective support to countries; (c) develop national capacity through south-south cooperation and intensify efforts to use national, regional, and interregional resources to support national development and country programs; and, (d) to mobilize global and regional technical resources and networks to provide integrated technical and program support. [3] The 2008-2011 Regional Program is delivered across 12 outputs.

UNFPA's Executive Board extended the Strategic Plan in June 2009, and along with it the Global and Regional Program, through 2013. As a result of the Strategic Plan Mid-Term Review, the Executive Board approved a revised Strategic Plan, which included a revision of the Development Results Framework and Management Results Framework. The revision of the results frameworks were guided by: (a) consolidating work by prioritizing; (b) avoiding efforts to try to do everything everywhere; (c) avoiding "silo" thinking; and, (d) improving measurability. The new development and management results framework includes one goal, seven development outcomes, and four management outcomes.

In November 2011, a revised RPAP for EECARO aligned to the new Strategic Plan and the new UNFPA Business Plan was approved by the Program Review Committee for an additional amount of $18 million for the two years. The revised RPAP, which altered many of EECARO's objectives and intended outcomes, focuses on 7 global development outcomes and 12 outputs.

2. Purpose, Objectives, and Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation's purpose is to assess the effectiveness of the regional program with a focus on capacity building and partnerships. The evaluation reviews and analyzes regional program achievements and related strategies over the period 2008-2012 and how the regional program's results have contributed to the outcomes of UNFPA's Strategic Plan. The evaluation is expected to contribute to the development of new regional program, which EECARO will prepare for 2014-2017.

The evaluation seeks to:
- determine the extent to which regional program's development and management results were achieved and the factors that facilitated or hampered achievements;

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[3] UNFPA, *UNFPA Global and Regional Programme*, 2008-2011, DP/FPA/2007/19, July 2007.

- examine the extent to which the regional program's capacity building and partnership initiatives and strategies have been effective; and,
- examine the changing global and regional policy and programming context within which UNFPA operates and provide recommendations focused on prospective elements to inform and guide UNFPA's contribution towards the next regional program.

To ensure understanding and agreement between EECARO and the evaluation team about the scope of the evaluation and the issues and questions to be addressed, the evaluation team prepared, and EECARO accepted and approved, an inception report shortly after the evaluation began. As explained in the inception report, given the limited time available for the evaluation and the limited time available in the countries visited, some of the *indicative* questions and topics identified in the terms of reference (TOR, see annex 1) have not be addressed or addressed as fully as might be desirable. Examples include trust and thematic funds among other topics.

3. Evaluation Methods

The evaluation used multiple methods, including document review, group discussions, key informant interviews, in-depth structured interviews, and system data as appropriate and as feasible. In addition to meetings and interviews with EECARO staff in Istanbul, the evaluation team conducted interviews with UNFPA's Country Office staff and representatives of EECARO's implementing partners (IPs) in ten countries. These countries were selected in an effort to sample as wide a range of countries as possible within the constraints of time and resources. Additional interviews were conducted via telephone and Skype. Annex 2 identifies the people who provided information for the evaluation.[4]

In each country visited the evaluation team drew samples of stakeholders appropriate to the evaluation within the constraints of time, resources, and availability of respondents. Country Offices assisted in the identification of the people to be interviewed. These people represented a wide range of familiarity with EECARO and included government employees and others who had participated in one of more EECARO-sponsored projects or activities, including training.

These methods and sources of data for the evaluation are explained in more detail below.

4.1 Documentation

As part of the inception report the evaluation team prepared an Evaluation Framework that describes the data sources and data-collection methods for each of the evaluation questions.

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[4] In addition to EECARO staff members listed in annex 2, the evaluation team also extended an invitation to meet with everyone in the regional office. Similarly, responses from several IPs were also solicited, but not all responded.

Primary data were collected through interviews either face-to-face or by Skype/phone and group discussions, where feasible and appropriate. Key stakeholders included EECARO management, the regional program team, program management and support team, technical and quality assurance team; management and program staff from selected Country Offices; IPs; and counterparts at the country level. Secondary sources included documents, studies, program reports, and program analyses, including evaluations that UNFPA or its partners had conducted. The evaluation team conducted a thorough assessment of the RPAP, annual work plans (AWPs), EECARO's strategies on gender, partnerships, and resource mobilization, a midterm review of the regional program and EECARO's response to it, evaluations, regional office annual reports, IPs' annual standard progress reports, a sample of Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) forms, and annual summaries of budgets and expenditures.[5] To provide context whenever possible, reference is made to comparable findings from other reports and evaluations, including assessments conducted by UNFPA's Division for Oversight Services (DOS). Other data sources used in the evaluation are typically identified in footnotes. Annex 4 lists the documents reviewed for the evaluation.

4.2 Interviews

The evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews with informants from EECARO, SRO, UNFPA's Country Offices, and other key stakeholders, including representatives of EECARO's implementing partners as well as individuals in public institutions and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who had prior experience with EECARO or who had participated in EECARO-sponsored activities such as conferences and training courses. Annex 4 includes the various interview guides that the evaluation team developed for each audience.

The semi-structured interviews were shaped by the key evaluation questions and utilized a combination of open-ended, closed-ended, and probing questions. Where appropriate, responses were document-verified. The discussions ensured attention to the key question: what is the value added of UNFPA's regional program and what results are being achieved? In particular, the discussions addressed three key sub-questions: (a) is the right thing being done? (b) Is it being done well? (c) Are there better ways of doing it? The first question addresses the rationale and relevance of what UNFPA's regional program does. The second question examines the effectiveness of the results achieved and assesses efficiency, with a view towards optimizing the use of resources, promoting sustainability, and leading to long-term impacts. The third question identifies alternatives including in modalities and suggests recommendations for actions to be taken by EECARO. Respondents were typically asked to suggest or propose recommendations to be included in this report.

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[5] In comments provided on the draft inception report, EECARO provided a list of additional documentation to review. The evaluation team appreciates the identification of this documentation and sought to review it within the constraints of the time available for the evaluation.

4.3 Country visits

To obtain in-depth perspectives at the country level, the evaluation team visited a range of countries in the region. These visits enabled:

- Detailed and ongoing dialogue with groups and individual country office staff, as well as some instances of direct observation of service delivery, where the regional program is intended to build capacity;
- Discussions with counterparts experienced with developing country priorities and related policies and plans to assess the effect of capacity building at the national level; and,
- Building Country Office ownership for the evaluation and then the development of the next RPAP by demonstrating to country offices that this evaluation is not just being conducted in a top-down way but is also looking at issues from the bottom-up and giving Country Offices substantive opportunities to offer inputs and recommendations that will be taken into account.

Given the diversity of country contexts and EECARO's consideration of these contexts, random selection of countries to visit was neither feasible nor appropriate. Accordingly, the evaluation team selected countries to visit in different geographic clusters (as defined by EECARO), countries that have received significant capacity building or technical assistance from EECARO, where the results of this assistance might be apparent, where good practices might be demonstrated, and where visits with country offices could be combined with visits to implementing partners.

Subject to the availability of Country Office staff to meet with the evaluation team, suitable flight schedules, the limited time available to obtain visas in advance of arrival in many countries in the region, the evaluation team visited:

- Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, countries that are in several of EECARO's country clusters;
- Bulgaria, a country that is phased out in 2011 and currently managed regionally by EECARO;
- Moldova, a pilot country that receives technical support through a cluster approach;
- Albania, a "UN Delivering as One" country;
- Kazakhstan, a country that hosts a country and subregional office; and,
- Austria, Belgium, and the United States, countries in which implementing partners are located.[6]

In sum, these country visits permitted the evaluation team to meet face-to-face with people in 7 of the region's 20 countries (plus staff of the sub-regional office in Almaty, Kazakhstan). Interviews via telephone or Skype were also conducted with UNFPA's country directors in Turkey (responsible for that country plus Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) and Uzbekistan (responsible for that country plus Tajikistan and Turkmenistan).

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[6] The evaluation team had intended to visit Russia and Uzbekistan but was unable to obtain visas to do so.

In an effort to promote comparability across the issues assessed, a scoring rubric for making judgments about different levels of performance and relative success is desirable. A rubric is especially important when programs, such as the RPAP, have many partners, multiple components, and disparate interventions. Accordingly, the evaluation team used the rubric shown in table 1 in its assessment of the various components of the evaluation.

Table 1: Scoring rubric for EECARO's performance

Rating	Performance description
Excellent (Always)	Clear example of exemplary performance or best practice in this domain: no weaknesses
Very good (Almost always)	Very good to excellent performance on virtually all aspects; strong overall but not exemplary; no weaknesses of any real consequence
Good (Mostly, with some exceptions)	Reasonably good performance overall; might have a few slight weaknesses but nothing serious
Adequate (Sometimes, with many exceptions)	Fair performance, some serious, but nonfatal weaknesses on a few aspects
Poor: (Never or occasionally with clear weaknesses evident)	Clear evidence of unsatisfactory functioning; serious and widespread weaknesses on crucial aspects
Insufficient evidence	Evidence unavailable or of insufficient quality to determine performance

Source: Adapted from Davidson, E.J. (2010) "Actionable Self-assessment and Evaluation for the Real World." Presented at New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Self-Assessment for Quality, Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, NZ, December 2, 2010.

Whenever possible, UNFPA's policies and procedures also serve as benchmarks or standards against which to evaluate EECARO's performance. Accordingly, the evaluation has elements of a performance audit, which is concerned with relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness, all of which are part of the evaluation.[7] In contrast and to ensure clarity, the evaluation is not a financial audit, which represents an examination of and verification of an organization's financial and accounting records and supporting documents by a professional auditor or accountant. Nonetheless, the TOR instructed the evaluation team to use "UNFPA system data (ATLAS program and financial data) as appropriate and as feasible." Some of these data were used to assess efficiency, value for money, and the achievements associated with EECARO's resource mobilization strategy.

5 Methodological Limitations

Several of the questions in the TOR on capacity building are generic and highlight the fact that the term "capacity building" is not defined in the TOR. The applicable evaluative criteria are also unclear. This is a noteworthy omission; in 2012, 11 of EECARO's 14 overall

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[7] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*.

objectives addressed changes in capacity. Changes in capacity cannot be assessed unless there is both a baseline and a target that permits an understanding of the measurable level of capacity that exists before an intervention and the amount of change that has occurred, if any, as a result of the intervention(s). As Michael Quinn Patton declares:

> It is clear from the literature on evaluation research that most evaluations are aimed at assessing the relative degree of program goal attainment, i.e., how effective is a program in attaining measurable goals? It is also clear that...concrete evaluative criteria for program success should be established; and that the measurement procedures and instruments should be appropriate to the goals.[8]

In the inception report the evaluation team asked EECARO to specify the measurable targets, standards, or benchmarks it uses to assess the quality and effectiveness of its capacity-building initiatives. A benchmark represents a reference point or standard against which EECARO's performance or achievements can be assessed. For example, how much change in capacity does EECARO expect to occur and how will that change be measured? How does EECARO *measure reliably* the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of its capacity-building initiatives (e.g., what are the measurable targets for successful training)? Specification of a means of measurement reduces subjectivity and avoids the need for the evaluation team to impose or develop its own standards on what constitutes successful capacity development. EECARO did suggest some activities that might contribute to changes in capacity (e.g., normative guidance, technical assistance, support for dialogue) but did not provide a benchmark, specify how it measures changes in capacity, or what its targets are for the amount of change in capacity that is expected to occur due to EECARO's efforts. In response to this issue, EECARO agreed that "explicit indicators to support capacity building results are not in hand," but added that

> "capacity building initiatives contributed to establishment of a regional trainers' pool in youth related areas (various aspects in peer education, such as theater-based education, development and management of peer education programs; youth participation; development of proposals; advocacy; sexual and reproductive health services delivery which had led to significantly lower number of cases when international consultants are hired to conduct trainings in the region. Y-PEER related trainings are conducted by trainers previously trained through our programme. With an adequate supervision, mentoring and feedback in the past years we have managed to bring those people to the level on which they can interdependently run a training".

In line with UNFPA's *Evaluation Policy* (DP/FPA/2009/4), the TOR state that "the evaluation will examine the achievement of results," which include outputs, outcomes, and impacts.[9] The TOR also asks whether the RPAP has accomplished its intended objectives and

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[8] *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* (Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications, 1978).
[9] Although UNFPA's *Accountability Framework* (DR/FPA/2007/20) states that "All evaluations will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, where possible, of UNFPA-funded interventions," the TOR for the present evaluation excludes attention to impacts. The *Accountability Framework* directs all agency units, including regional offices, to "measure the impact of UNPFA-funded interventions" and to submit "results-oriented annual reports on the progress and impact of their programmes."

planned results. Consequently, the overarching questions for the evaluation are these: "To what extent has the RPAP reached its goals, and what evidence is available to permit a judgment that it has been a success?"

Answering this question is a challenge. Many of EECARO's and its IPs' annual work plans are incomplete. They do not provide required information that is essential for the evaluation. Some AWPs for implementing partners indicated that baseline data are "to be determined," which compromises the ability to assess change as well as effectiveness. Although the UNFPA requires that the sources of indicator data be provided in AWPs, none are. Monitoring and evaluation activities are another required but missing component of many AWPs.

A key tool within UNFPA for measuring results against targets is its results and resources framework, which is a matrix that articulates and integrates the chain of outcomes, outputs, and indicators with baselines and targets. As UNFPA's *Evaluation Policy* (DP/FPA2009/4) explains:

> A prerequisite for evaluation is a coherent results framework. Results frameworks are developed when interventions are planned; they include statements of the expected results and the logical sequence of those results. They indicate how the activities undertaken lead to the expected results, and identify relevant performance indicators, baselines and targets.

These frameworks typically contain the key components (outcomes, outputs, indicators, and means of verification), but outcomes and output indicators are often at the performance level only, and there are few baseline figures and few targets for outputs and outcomes. A recurring situation with many results frameworks within UNFPA, including EECARO's, is a misunderstanding of the distinction between outputs and outcomes and the inappropriate use of indicators of activities, such as training or data collection, as indicators of outputs or outcomes.

This finding is strikingly similar to what the midterm review of the regional office reported. The review found that the questionable definition of EECARO's indicators hampered reliable monitoring of program progress. In response, the regional office pledged to review all indicators and develop an "indicator manual including data requirements." This manual was not completed. Its absence may provide some explanation for the continuing concern about EECARO's indicators. EECARO informed the evaluation team that the manual was recommended to support countries (preparing a menu of country programme indicators with operational definition and data requirement) to strengthen country programme frameworks. This idea was not discussed, EECARO noted, because there was a global initiative to develop such a manual.

The evaluation team's assessment of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency is influenced by the absence of appropriate definitions of outputs and outcomes. Another key prerequisite for evaluation is the existence of clear, specific, and measurable goals related to outputs and

outcomes.[10] As an illustration, "strengthened national capacity," a term frequently found in AWPs, is not clear, specific, or measurable. Indeed, UNFPA recently used "strengthened capacity" as an example of a concept that lacks "clarity and specificity" and that leaves "considerable room for interpretation by program implementers and managers."[11]

There is an additional consideration. No counterfactual exists so the evaluation cannot assess the relative contribution of EECARO's activities to any outcomes observed with any confidence. Overcoming the limitations associated with the absence of a valid counterfactual is not possible.

A few additional methodological problems exist. First, the evaluation draws heavily on the opinions of key informants and program managers involved in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the RPAP. *As representatives of EECARO stressed to the evaluation team these opinions are subjective and subject to bias especially when people are asked to judge their own performance*. To address this possibility the evaluation team relied on multiple sources of information and, whenever possible, sought to match opinions expressed with evidence from several sources that substantiated these opinions. The evaluation team also appreciates that it heard perceptions and possibly misperceptions from country offices and EECARO's partners about the regional program. Much of this understanding derives from comparison of the needs and expectations of country offices with what the staff of the regional office thinks a regional program can and should deliver. As an illustration, EECARO faced many challenges in its initial years and its staff perceives financial limitations within the regional office.

Second, EECARO has a large and diverse group of stakeholders. Due to the time constraints of the evaluation it was not feasible to interview all of them. In each country visited with a UNFPA country office, that office identified who would be interviewed and then arranged the interviews for the evaluation team. That process was theoretically open to bias, but no bias was evident to the evaluation team. To address this situation, as discussed in more detail below, the evaluation team emphasized to respondents their right to provide information in confidence, that no sensitive information could be traced to its source, and that the information they provided would not be shared with anyone outside the evaluation team.

6   Logistical Limitations

The evaluation team faced a series of unusual and atypical barriers and limitations, many of which were beyond the control of the evaluation team and not surmountable. The original TOR indicated that the evaluation team should have three members.[12] A few days before the evaluation began the third person selected for the team notified EECARO that she

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[10] Carol Weiss, *Evaluation Research: Methods of Assessing Program Effectiveness* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1972).

[11] UNFPA, Programme Division, *Guide for Developing Robust Results Frameworks for Effective Programmes*, April 2011.

[12] EECARO, *Draft Terms of Reference for the Conduct of the Evaluation of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme 2008-2012*: "The evaluation will be undertaken by a team of three senior consultants

would not be able to participate. She was not replaced. Despite the reduced size of the evaluation team, two things did not change: the scope of the evaluation and the level of effort allocated to the two remaining members of the team.

Similarly, the amount of time allocated for the evaluation was considerably less than the average amount of time devoted to country program evaluations.[13] EECARO also required that an inception report be prepared and submitted before any travel to country missions occurred.[14]Although the evaluation team made its best efforts to accommodate EECARO's needs and what the team considers to be an overly ambitious TOR, the constraints imposed on the evaluation team just described required trade-offs. As explained in the revised inception report, attention to some issues and questions necessarily suffered and thus did not receive the attention that EECARO might otherwise have desired and that the evaluation team would have preferred. Likewise, some methods and approaches, such as detailed case studies, were not possible.

The evaluation was also conducted at the least opportune time of the year. It began in December 2012 and was then interrupted for a series of national holidays. Many people took advantage of these holidays to take vacations, with some starting in mid-December and others ending in mid-January. Other potential respondents were travelling for business, and some were ill. For this reason not all "preferred" interviewees were available. More than a third of the countries in the region require a visa in advance of arrival. Given the evaluation's tight schedule and the holiday-related closure of many embassies, only one visa, for Kazakhstan, could be obtained. The delays in obtaining this visa also delayed completion of the evaluation. Furthermore, all the country offices were engaged in end-of-year financial close-outs, so EECARO asked the evaluation team to delay visits to country offices until the close outs had been completed.

Given the diversity of social, cultural, and political differences in the region, breadth was preferred over depth in selecting countries to visit and people to interview. For this and other reasons beyond the evaluation team's control, visits to some countries were limited to a single day of interviews. Several times interviews had to be ended prematurely because of competing obligations of respondents.

Finally and unfortunately, with some exceptions the evaluation team received untimely and insufficient assistance from EECARO related to travel, visas, and meetings with staff of country offices and implementing partners. Despite multiple oral and written requests,

with expertise in programme evaluation within the UN context." While signing contract EECARO provided the final TOR for a team of two senior consultants without any other changes.

[13] According to the UNFPA's Division for Oversight Services, the average duration of country program evaluations is three months. See *Biennial Report on Evaluation, Report of the Director, Division for Oversight Services*, DP/FPA/2012/8, April 2012.

[14] Email from Mahbub Alam, Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, to Richard Tobin and Claudine Voyadzis, December 4, 2012. EECARO scheduled Voyadzis's travel to Albania to start on Sunday, December 9. This meant that an inception report had to be (and was) submitted by Friday, December 7. The inception report exceeded 30 pages.

EECARO also did not provide a considerable amount of information and documentation the evaluation team sought or did not provide it in a timely manner. In some instances EECARO was unable to document information that it had reported to UNFPA's headquarters and that had been included in the regional office's annual reports.

7 Ethical considerations, conflicts of interest, & stakeholder involvement

7.1 Ethical considerations

UNFPA's Division for Oversight Services has provided guidance related to ethical considerations for evaluators. This guidance notes that:

1. Minimum expectations for ethical considerations should include documentation of consent procedures where beneficiaries or members of the public are surveyed;
2. Brief descriptions of confidentiality provisions should be provided where personal information is used in the evaluation or the evaluation report;
3. Institutional review board or research ethics approval as appropriate to the nature of the evaluation and content should also be mentioned. If no such approval was sought or deemed relevant, stating that reduces uncertainty for the reader.

The evaluation adhered to international best practices and was conducted in full compliance with UNFPA's *Evaluation Guidelines* and the UN Evaluation Group's *Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System*. The evaluation team appreciates EECARO commitment to an independent evaluation and for the team members to have, in the words of the *Norms for Evaluation in the UN System*, "the full freedom to conduct impartially their evaluative work." The evaluation team also attempted to: (a) ensure that respondents understood the evaluation's purpose, objectives, and the intended use of findings; (b) be sensitive to cultural norms and gender roles during interactions with all respondents; and, (c) respect their rights and welfare by ensuring informed consent and rights to confidentiality before interviews. Respondents were informed of the evaluation's purpose, rights, and obligations of participating in the evaluation and agreed to participate voluntarily. These respondents, including program beneficiaries, had the right to refuse interview or to terminate an interview at any time.

To ensure respondents' informed consent and their awareness of the scope and limits of confidentiality, respondents were given a written statement (see annex 4) explaining the evaluation process prior to any substantive discussion. The statement, which was attached to the inception report, addressed informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality to ensure that sensitive information could not be traced to its source (without the respondent's approval). In addition, respondents were given the time and information to decide whether they agreed to be interviewed and to make this decision independently without any pressure. The evaluators also ensured privacy during all individual interviews with stakeholders.

The involvement of an external institutional review board was deemed unnecessary because respondents were not asked any sensitive personal questions or information other than their name, position, and prior or present relationship to UNFPA.

Finally, both members of the evaluation team are familiar with and agreed to abide by the *Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System*. They indicated this by signing and submitting to EECARO's M&E advisor the Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form, which is part of the *Code of Conduct*.

7.2 Conflicts of interest

Neither of the evaluation team members has any known or potential conflicts of interest that would affect their judgment or ability to provide a credible and independent evaluation. The team members, both of whom previously worked as evaluators at the World Bank, now work as independent consultants and have no prior involvement with the policy setting, design or overall management of the regional program and do not expect to be in the near future. Likewise, the evaluators have neither any vested interest in the outcome of the evaluation nor any preconceptions or assumptions about the outcome.

7.3 Stakeholder involvement

Consistent with UNFPA's expectations, regional program stakeholders, including Country Offices, were provided with opportunities to participate *meaningfully* in the evaluation process. In its inception report, the evaluation team asked EECARO to share the TOR with all Country Offices and to seek feedback and comments. Stakeholders (and UNFPA staff) were also asked if they have any recommendations that would enhance the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of EECARO's efforts.

EECARO also established an Evaluation Reference Group. The evaluation team trusts that the group incorporated stakeholders' perspectives into the evaluation process.

8. Findings

8.1 Relevance

Relevance addresses the extent to which the regional program's objectives and activities are consistent with UNFPA's mandate, whether they meet the needs of Country Offices and national priorities, and the extent to which the program's contributions are additional to and not simply a replacement of existing resources. This section considers the relevance of: (a) activities to the program's objectives; (b) activities to the needs of UNFPA's Country Offices and governments; (c) the regional program's design; and, (d) institutional arrangements; and (e) regional implementing partners.

Relevance of objectives

The UNFPA's strategic plan for 2008-2011 was established to accelerate progress and national ownership of the ICPD's Program of Action. A development results framework, a management results framework, and an integrated financial resources framework were defined. To address the priorities of UN reform in the region, the RPAP focused on supporting national and regional capacity building, expanding partnerships between UNFPA and development partners, and enhancing knowledge sharing among Country Offices, the regional office, and other units of UNFPA. The RPAP was based on a regional mapping process to identify country program priorities and to cluster countries with similar conditions. EECARO and its sub-regional office in Almaty were to collaborate and cooperate with the European Union to address issues related to the ICPD in the region. The regional needs assessment indicated that advocacy and capacity building should be the core of international assistance to promote the ICPD agenda, taking account of geopolitical and economic changes and considerable sub-regional differences. The preparation studies for the elaboration of the RPAP made the action plan relevant as concerns the mandate and priorities of the UNFPA.

The RPAP was also based on positive lessons learned in the region, i.e., success of youth programs for HIV prevention and the need to strengthen reproductive health commodity security (RHCS). Another lesson drawn was that sustainability had been the main problem in the previous program. The analysis of the previous program noted that as soon as funding in countries ceased, the activities initiated came to an end. To address this issue, the RPAP pointed to the need for developing and expanding partnerships. While expanding partnerships in the region was undoubtedly necessary, and may be conducive to sustainable results, the reason for the previous program's lack of sustainability must also be searched elsewhere. A more in-depth review on the issue of sustainability should have been conducted in view of the elaboration of the RPAP 2008-2011; this may have increased the relevance of the development results framework with outputs and indicators better centered on sustainability.

A review of AWPs for 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 indicates that the initiatives launched by EECARO and its regional partners adhere to the goals of the UNFPA's overall strategic plan (SP) and its outcomes, as illustrated by a few examples:

EECARO's AWPs for 2008 show that the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development's (AFPPD) commitment to implementing the ICPD's program of action was in line with:
- The SP goal 1 for population and development (i.e., Population dynamics and its inter-linkages with gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS incorporated in public policies, poverty reduction plans, and expenditure frameworks).
- SP goal 3 (i.e., Gender equality and the human rights of women and adolescent girls, particularly their reproductive rights, integrated in national policies, development frameworks and laws) with its annual conference on the role and status of women in society in Central Asia.
- Planned activities to be implemented by other partners related to reproductive health

and rights.

An AWP for 2009 included RHCS activities relevant to the SP goal 2, which was related to reproductive and sexual health, such as a regional desk review of RHCS systems, advocacy workshops, procurement trainings, as well as reviews on maternal health, a workshop on health costing, and high-level meetings related to the ICPD and to the MDG.

AWPs for 2010 emphasized youth and family-planning activities that included technical assistance, a conference in Kazakhstan, and training for health managers and health providers in Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

The regional office's 2011 AWP, the last work plan under original RPAP for 2008-2011, proved relevant as well. In the population and development area (census, population projections, and migration statistics) the plan focused on technical assistance in cooperation with other UN agencies. Advocacy for the ICPD 2015 goals in partnership with the other organizations were also planned (e.g., workshops, communication activities, exhibits, videos, etc).

During these years, EECARO undertook activities to promote the ICPD and MDG agendas and addressed RHCS, population and development, reproductive health and rights, and gender discrimination and gender-based violence. EECARO also expanded the number of regional partners. All these initiatives were congruent with the goals of the RPAP.

EECARO's AWPs for 2012 were aligned with the 7 global development outcomes and the 12 outputs defined by the revised RPAP. Among the activities planned was a high-level consultative meeting organized to share data from the survey jointly undertaken by EECARO and the International Planned Parenthood Federation-European Network (IPPF-EN) on family planning and RHCS in seven countries, the strengthening of the regional roll out of the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP), dissemination of evidence on gender-related issues, and meetings with young people and community service organizations. To contribute to the regional gender strategy, activities with several IPs were also initiated. There were also initiatives to enhance program effectiveness, improve the quality of evaluations, and increase the utilization of evaluation findings for evidence-based programming. To implement this large array of activities, data analyses, workshops, training, and high-level political meetings were completed.

In addition, support to parliamentarian networks and advocacy workshops, including those with faith-based organizations, were in the 2012 work plan. Support in collaboration with other UN agencies on population and development was also provided.

In sum, there is considerable evidence of EECARO's relevance. This conclusion is thus consistent with the findings of the MOPAN report[15]. Its respondents identified the relevance of UNFPA's mandate as the agency's greatest strength. These respondents, according to the report, "recognized UNFPA for taking an integrated, culturally sensitive, and rights-based

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[15] *MOPAN Common Approach: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*, January 2011.

approach to working on the issues of reproductive health and rights and population development."

Relevance of the RP to country offices and countries' needs

The preparation studies for the elaboration of the RPAP 2008-2011 were geared towards the needs of county offices and national priorities. A regional mapping and a needs assessment identified country priorities, and countries with similar conditions were clustered. The approach chosen was consistent with the UN General Assembly Resolution 62/208 (December 2007) which underscored that there is no "one size fits all" approach to development and that "development assistance by the United Nations development system should be able to respond to the varying development needs of program countries and should be in alignment with their national development plans and strategies in accordance with its mandates."

In 2011 an assessment of the support provided by all five regional offices indicated that of the 20 Country Offices in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 5 rated the relevance of EECARO's support as "excellent," 13 as "good," 2 as "satisfactory," and none as "poor." Among the five regions, EECARO had the highest percentage of good and excellent ratings for relevance of the support provided.

Overall field interviews confirmed the 2011 assessment, and for example EECARO was very much commended for the high relevance of investing in young people across the region. Some staff from Country Offices however pointed to the fact that countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia present considerable differences in their economic and social development and thus in their levels of income, needs, and progress achieved. These differences require tailored approaches of assistance and an enhanced country-specific strategy. As indicated in the previous section, EECARO launched multifaceted initiatives each year to meet the goals of the RPAP, but the initiatives did not always address specific country needs or consider the differences in the levels of capacity of participants in various training workshops. As some interviewees reported, topics considered relevant in some countries, such as child marriage, are irrelevant and of little practical value in other countries[16]. On the issue of family planning, for example, national priorities are at odds with minority groups in the same country, and the regional program may have overlooked these groups.

The following examples show that population issues require a difference approach whether addressing needs in

- Moldova, where dire demographic problems are linked to the aging of the population combined with substantial brain drain and youth emigration;

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[16] This "child marriage" issue was commented by respondents who pointed to the fact that it was underestimated in some countries, where child marriage is still very widespread among pockets of population (Roma) and considered by Roma experts a serious issue.

- Kazakhstan where the government has pro-natalist policies but an opposite policy regarding family planning among illegal migrants; and,
- Albania, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, where selective abortions in favor of boys continue.

Albania's experience as a pilot country for One UN Program provides another example of a country with needs that differ from the approaches that for EECARO uses elsewhere in the region. Finally, several comments by respondents in the Regional Program Survey on initiatives launched to strengthen national systems for RHCS further confirm that not all initiatives are relevant for all countries. Yet these observations derived from a few interviews and respondents' comments remain minor against the overall satisfaction with EECARO's activities in capacity building and advocacy meeting the needs of national governments.

The evaluation team's interviews revealed mixed reactions to the level of participation of country offices in annual planning processes and to the frequency of consultations between EECARO and country offices. On the positive side, some respondents indicated their satisfaction with EECARO's annual planning processes and the opportunity to participate in their meetings in Istanbul. Participation permitted people to bring their concerns and priorities to EECARO's attention. Several respondents also complimented the "constructive relationship" that exists between EECARO and country offices. In turn, EECARO believes it had a "thorough and collaborative process in place for the development, revision, and implementation of the regional programs" developed in 2008 and 2011. As EECARO commented on the draft evaluation report, the RPAPs that were developed have shared ownership, and country offices had multiple opportunities to contribute to the development of these action plans.

On the other side, respondents in several country offices provided harsh assessments of EECARO's annual planning processes, complaining that the regional planning meetings are ""useless," "top down," and "leave a lot to be desired." Several respondents also expressed their opinion that EECARO does not have a long-term vision or a "coherent or well-defined strategy" that is relevant to the region's needs or that demonstrates a suitable understanding of the differences that exist across the region. To illustrate a concern expressed by several respondents, the evaluation team was told that the country offices do not view the regional program as relevant or complementary to country programs. The evaluation team understands that EECARO does not agree with these statements, but that does not mean the respondents' opinions or perceptions are invalid or do not merit consideration.

Whether the regional program should even attempt to complement country programs is an issue that produces divergent opinions. One respondent argued that EECARO should focus its efforts on regional issues that merit attention rather than country-specific issues –if not, it risks "seeing the trees but not the forest." As this respondent further explained, meeting country-based needs is the responsibility of country offices not EECARO's. A contrasting position is that EECARO needs to improve its awareness of the situation in each country and then develop activities the fill or address the gaps in country programs.

From the perspective of country offices, what is the most effective role for EECARO? Many respondents have strong feelings and expressed a range of sentiments.

About half of respondents found that EECARO,

- Usefully provides coordination with other UN agencies, especially UNAIDS and the World Health Organization;
- Facilitates awareness and replication of best practices across countries
- Serves an important buffering and political role and thus has "clout"
- Provides a valuable and useful function

And about the other half observed that EECARO

- Is often bypassed because country offices can get better information about new policies and agency initiatives directly from UNFPA headquarters
- "does not provide much" in terms of South-South cooperation;
- Serves as an unneeded broker of technical assistance;
- Is engaged in some thematic areas, such as gender and gender-based violence, in which the division of labor between UNFPA and UN Women is unclear;[17]and,
- "hardly" understands the context in the countries.

In any event, the disconcerting responses present challenges to EECARO and its business model, thus suggesting the desirability of determining what EECARO can do best with or for Country Offices. For example, given EECARO's human and financial resources, how can it best demonstrate its utility and relevance to Country Offices? Is EECARO maximizing its strengths vis-à-vis country offices? How well do country offices understand EECARO's roles, responsibilities, and obligations? Whose agendas and priorities should be advanced – those of Country Offices or EECARO's – when these agendas are not completely compatible?

Although respondents expressed divergent opinions about EECARO's role, consensus exists that the regional office should improve the frequency and timeliness of its communications with country offices. In too many instances requests from EECARO arrive at the "last moment" and typically do not provide sufficient time for thoughtful responses. Delays in responding to requests from country offices are reported to be frequent, presumably because of staff shortages in EECARO. Respondents also complained about serving as little more than ticketing offices when they receive requests to arrange travel to conferences or workshops that some of EECARO's implementing partners sponsor.

Referring to the specific recommendations from the 2011 midterm review of UNFPA's Strategic Plan – to focus more narrowly on thematic areas and activities and to prioritize issues – and to the number and range of activities undertaken in 2012, the evaluation team

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[17] As an example, the Government of Macedonia recently announced its participation in a campaign to end violence against women and girls that UN Women has initiated.

found no traces of whether there has been actually a reduced focus and prioritization of issues that receive EECARO's attention. This being said, all activities planned by the EECARO between 2008 and 2012 were relevant to the overall objectives in the RPAP 2008-2011 and to the 2011 revised action plan[18].

Relevance of the RP design and methodology

The methodology defined by the RP needs to be conceptualized rigorously based on a logical framework to enable the assessment of outputs, outcomes, and achievement of objectives. The relevance of the regional program's design and methodology is influenced considerably by the weaknesses in EECARO's results framework discussed earlier and by the deficiencies in its definitions of outputs and outcomes. Well-designed results frameworks make clear the relationship between outputs and outcomes and, in turn, permit assessment of results achieved. The methodology designed in the RP is therefore deficient with respect to relevance because the tools that are used do not enable the monitoring and evaluation of the EECARO's activities.

Relevance of the RP's institutional arrangements

Part of the rationale for the creation and decentralization of EECARO was that the office would be closer to the countries it would support, daily communications, meetings, preparation for and at attendance workshops would be easier and less costly, and jet lag would be lessened. On the program side, staff of the regional office would have more in-depth knowledge of the countries in the region, and the coherence of programs with targeted plans would be enhanced. In contrast to the positive expectations, DOS also observed some undesired results, when it concluded that

> EECARO works in precarious conditions. The ambiguities of the terms of reference of the regional offices ("leadership, guidance, support, coordination, oversight") have contributed to a vacuum in quality assurance (headquarters rejecting accountabilities that regional offices cannot assume and vice versa), blurred lines of responsibilities and accountability, and severed the structural link between headquarters and Country Offices representatives.[19]

DOS also pointed to a high risk of fragmentation. If these concerns are valid, they raise questions about the relevance of the decentralization of the regional office.

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[18] The 2012-13 RPAP framework included a reduction of outcomes and outputs, and the extended RPAP introduced a "focus country", eg, all RP interventions are applicable to countries where there is a need.

[19] UNFPA, *Report of the Director of the Division for Oversight Services on UNFPA Internal Audit and Oversight Activities in 2010*, DP/FPA/2011/5, April 2011. Comments noted earlier about Country Offices going directly to headquarters for information suggests that the "structural link" may not have been broken.

The core functions of EECARO focus on the achievement of the ICPD's Programme of Action and the MDG by providing expertise to strengthen national capacities. This implies the organization of training, workshops and conferences, and capacity-building initiatives for partners and UNFPA staff. They require competency and considerable expertise. The regional office also represents the region politically, oversees Country Offices, and seeks to mobilize additional resources for regional programs. In addition, among the seven priorities of the business plan elaborated after the midterm review of the global strategy, emphasis has been placed on clear communication and programmatic streamlining, as well as on accountability and management.

These requirements mean that EECARO needs high-level experts in its programmatic areas to provide capacity development and to advocate effectively relevant issues with national entities to contribute to the achievement of the ICPD Program of Action and the MDG. High-level staff is also needed to mobilize resources and to communicate effectively with partners, donors, and Country Offices.

Since 2008, the regional office has been understaffed. The office has had to rely on limited-term consultants in several thematic areas. In 2012 there were 27 professional and support staff (18 in the regional office and 9 in the subregional office). In 2013 EECARO employs 31 professional and support staff (20 in RO and 11 in SRO), and 15 short-term consultants, among whom two gender specialists, one youth specialist and one population and development specialist. EECARO has thus only one technical adviser for reproductive health, one for HIV, and one for M&E, and no full-time staff who are technical experts on gender or population and development. This situation indicates that while the RPAP's objectives are in general relevant as regard UNFPA's mandate and the needs of Country Offices and national priorities, the means provided to the regional office are not in line with its mandate and tasks. If EECARO is to play a substantial and significant role rather than being primarily a broker for technical expertise, it is essential that it benefit from high-level experts at least in its core functions. That is not now the case. Moreover, if brokering is seen as a key responsibility, there is no inherent advantage in having EECARO in Istanbul.

These observations are further substantiated by the evaluation team's field visits. Several sources cited the need for professional staff in EECARO to provide suitable guidance and technical assistance, especially in the thematic areas. Respondents in several country offices, including several who have a high regard for the regional office, commented that the amount of technical assistance received from EECARO did not match the needs. This finding affects the relevance of the RPAP. If means and resources are not at the level of an action plan, the action plan loses its usefulness and credibility.

Lastly, the relevance of EECARO's subregional office (SRO) in Almaty, Kazakhstan, is worth reviewing. It is in a unique position with its colocation with the country office. The SRO offers daily interaction with and timely or immediate response to the country office. Field interviews offered different opinions in this regard: some indicate that the SRO's support is vital, timely, and relevant; support from the regional office is also viewed as strong, which challenges the SRO; both offices serve de facto the entire region although the

SRO may be seen as serving mainly Central Asia countries, and both offices are under the same budget. Yet the office in Istanbul has more clout and is more visible. Moreover, the SRO's director (who reports to the RO director) is also the country director for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This raises the issue of the division of labor between the two offices, issue also raised during field visits and skype interviews. An in-depth reflection may be needed on how to explore sound and effective ways to organize the staff of the two offices as to ensure that that there is no overlap in positions and activities and that human resources are used effectively and efficiently.

Relevance of regional partners

EECARO's Regional Program Survey (2012) administered to Country Office staff points to the relevance of partnerships established with NGOs, parliamentary platforms, and other UN agencies. For example, all respondents rated the two IPs that focus on parliamentarians as "relevant" or "very relevant." Only slightly less relevant is the partnership with faith-based organizations. On the whole, respondents rated most of EECARO's initiatives as either relevant or very relevant. It should be noted, however, that the survey did not provide anonymity to the respondents and had a low response rate. Some of the percentages reported are based on as few as six respondents. Nonetheless, the triangulation of data collected during interviews with country office staff provide illustrations of the relevance of several of EECARO's partners, notably with two of its strategic partners, IPPF-EN and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF).

The objectives defined by these two partners correspond to the objectives of the RPAP and the countries' needs. IPPF-EN, one of EECARO's three strategic partners, is a global NGO working to safeguard sexual and reproductive health and rights. IPPF-EN's partnership with EECARO is highly relevant not only because they shared goals but also because of the existence of national IPPF member associations in many countries. IPPF-EN has progressively created a coherent program with UNFPA based on an assessment of access to RH services in the region. The assessment took place in 2010 and was followed the next year by data collection and surveys, regional meetings, and the establishment of a knowledge platform. IPPF-EN and EECARO's subregional office in Almaty launched jointly the inclusion of the MISP initiative. In some instances, however, IPPF-EN's priorities and perspectives differ from UNFPA's, such as on abortion. UNFPA seeks to end abortion and does not support or promote it as a method of family planning. IPPF-EN is in favor of abortion based on a mother's decision. To overcome this difference, the organizations work on commonly agreed issues.

At the country level, the Albanian Center for Population and Development is associated with IPPF-EN with which it has close links. The partnership with IPPF-EN has thus multiplied benefits at the country level and IPPF's knowledge of country needs. Thanks to EECARO's support, the center's director became a member of the EPF, which may help to promote achievement of the ICPD agenda and the MDG in Albania.

The partnership with EPF, which covers Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, appears to be relevant as well. A comment in response to the Regional Program Survey suggests the reason: "The work with EPF is considered as a very important activity for securing communication bridges from research results towards policy dialogue and policy advice though use of evidence-based advocacy." The EPF, the respondent also noted, "brings a value to the development of national legislation and policies in line with international standards." The EPF enables EECARO staff to meet with national parliamentarians, to advocate the causes of gender issues and sexual and reproductive health, to share global trends and perhaps influence these parliamentarians in their political choices. EPF has also supported the creation and strengthening of 20 All Party Parliamentary Groups in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

A major event, the Fifth International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Program of Action took place in Istanbul in 2012. EPF and the regional office organized the conference in collaboration with the other regional parliamentary forums. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey hosted the event. At the end of the two-day event, participants adopted the Istanbul Statement of Commitment whereby they committed to advocate for increased national and external funding for the implementation of the ICPD agenda to achieve access to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning. If implemented effectively, this commitment confirms the relevance of EECARO's partnership with the EPF.

The overall rating for the relevance of the RPAP is very good. EECARO's activities were in line with UNFPA's Global and Regional Program 2008-2011 and its corresponding Action Plan (and revised Action Plan). Overall EECARO's activities were relevant to the needs of Country Offices and consequently to national priorities. However as regard the level of participation of Country Offices in EECARO annual planning processes, and the frequency of consultations with EECARO, mixed reactions were revealed by the evaluation team's field interviews. The means provided to EECARO to implement its activities have been continuously insufficient since 2008, which had an impact on its overall performance, and which diminishes the relevance of the program in terms of the means provided to achieve its objectives - activities were curtailed, delayed, or deleted because of the insufficiency of staff resources. On the relevance of EECARO partners, two strategic partners, EPF and IPPF-EN, have proved to be very relevant as regard their actions aiming at contributing to the achievement of related MDG and ICPD's. Further discussion about the selection and effectiveness of other implementing partners is found in subsequent sections of the report.

8.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness assesses the extent to which EECARO's objectives were achieved between 2008 and the end of 2012. The TOR thus asked the evaluation team to consider (a) whether the regional program had accomplished its intended objectives and planned results and (b) whether the regional program's activities contributed to enhanced results at the country level. Judging effectiveness requires a comparison of what was supposed to be

achieved with what actually occurred in terms of projected results. The ability to make suitable judgments about effectiveness is premised on three basic requirements:

- An understanding of the distinction between outcomes, for which EECARO is expected to *contribute*, and outputs, for which EECARO and its implementing partners are *accountable*;
- The availability of related indicators and their corresponding baseline and targets, which are integral for evaluation. Meaningful targets justify a programme by describing what EECARO's investments are expected to produce; the absence of targets implies that a program has little or no justification in terms of projected or anticipated results.
- A means to monitor progress toward the results expected with EECARO's interventions and those of its implementing partners.

Are these requirements in place in EECARO? If so, to what extent do they facilitate an evaluation of effectiveness? In theory, these requirements should be met, at least if UNFPA's policies and procedures and its commitment to results-based management have governed EECARO's activities and interventions. In practice, in contrast, several factors affect EECARO's efforts to demonstrate its effectiveness.

Outcomes are mislabeled as outputs

A recurring problem within UNFPA is the improper distinction between outputs and outcomes and a lack of clarity in its results chains. As DOS noted in 2012, "outputs are generally formulated at a level that does not correspond to the level of results that are under the control of the UNFPA...."[20] This conclusion reiterates the findings of the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN).[21] The Network assessed the UNFPA's organizational effectiveness in 2010 and concluded that it often confuses and mislabels outputs and outcomes. The distinction between the two is essential if one is to make suitable judgments about a program's effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

As the UNFPA's *Guide for Developing Robust Results Frameworks* explains, outcomes describe the intended effects or changes in development conditions, typically related to institutional performance, that result from interventions. Outcomes are *not* under the direct control of the UNFPA or its implementing partners. These actors are also not accountable for the achievement of outcomes but should be able to demonstrate that their efforts (and outputs) influence or *contribute* to outcomes. Achieving outcomes is a shared responsibility. Outcomes should also follow logically and plausibly from outputs. When that connection does not exist or is problematic, doubts are raised about the value and appropriateness of the outputs and the merits of the results chain (i.e., whether UNFPA is doing the right thing).

Outputs represent products, services, or deliverables and are subject to a high degree of control by UNFPA or its implementing partners. The *Guide for Developing Robust Results Frameworks* emphasizes that when a "result is mostly beyond the control or influence of the

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[20] DOS, *Biennial Report on Evaluation,* DP/FPA/2012/8, April 2012. This statement also presumably applies to all parts of the agency.
[21] *MOPAN Common Approach: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*, January 2011.

program or project, it <u>cannot</u> be an output." Most important, despite some respondents' belief to the contrary, EECARO is fully accountable for achieving outputs; that accountability is not fungible. According to the *Guide*, failure to deliver outputs within the program period is a failure of the program.

Understanding the distinction between outputs and outcomes makes clear that most of EECARO's so-called outputs are actually outcomes, as these examples from EECARO's 2012 AWPs reveal:

- Strengthened national systems for reproductive health commodity security (RHCS)
- Strengthened national capacity for implementation of international agreements, national legislation and policies in support of gender quality and reproductive rights
- Strengthened national capacity to provide comprehensive maternal and child health care.[22]

None of these objectives reflect products, services, or deliverables, and all are beyond the direct control of EECARO and its implementing partners.[23] Despite this situation, EECARO's labeling of outcomes as outputs implies that it has accepted accountability and responsibility for achieving them and is amenable to being evaluated in terms of whether it has achieved them.

The evaluation team is aware and appreciates that EECARO's "outputs" were selected from among those provided by UNFPA's headquarters. EECARO had no choice but to accept them, at least according to several respondents. The absence of a choice and the corresponding assignment of accountability and responsibility for achieving outcomes have clearly created a problem for EECARO (and all regional offices). This is not a problem that the evaluation team can remedy. The team's responsibility is to determine whether EECARO achieved its objectives, however defined. EECARO has few valid indicators of changes in national capacity and, as noted earlier, was not able to provide the evaluation team with (a) benchmarks or standards that would permit assessments of changes in organizational or institutional capacity or (b) a means of measuring the amount of change that may have occurred. There is anecdotal evidence that capacity has changed as a result of EECARO's efforts (and this issue is discussed in detail below), but it is not possible to determine how much change has occurred, whether the change has been achieved efficiently, or whether the change would have occurred in the absence of EECARO's efforts.

Self-assessments of EECARO's effectiveness

In 2009, 2010, and 2011, UNFPA required regional office annual reports (ROAR) to indicate the percentage of outputs in AWPs that had achieved their indicator targets. This requirement was dropped for the 2012 ROAR, but EECARO retained the measure as one of its indicators for that year. In each of the first three years EECARO reported to UNFPA

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[22] Similar examples can also be found in AWPs from prior years.

[23] UNFPA's *Policy and Procedures for Selection and Assessment of Implementing Partners* states that implementing partners are "fully responsible and accountable for successfully…delivering the expected outputs" in their AWPs.

headquarters that 75 to 99 percent of the outputs in AWPs had achieved their indicator targets. These percentages suggest high levels of effectiveness.

UNFPA recognizes that self-assessments "may reduce the perceived credibility of the reporting data."[24] With this thought in mind and in an effort to verify the accuracy of the information in the ROAR, the evaluation team asked EECARO to explain how it had computed the percentages and what indicators were included in the numerators and denominators for each of the four years. EECARO was not able to provide this information for 2009 or 2010, so an independent judgment of the program's effectiveness for those years is not possible. In contrast, EECARO was able to provide information for 2011 and 2012.

There were many changes in 2011 within UNFPA, and one of these changes involved revisions of EECARO's indicators and targets. As an illustration, EECARO's results framework from February 2011 identified 15 indicators and provided the relevant baselines, including the status in 2008, 2009, and 2010, as well as the corresponding targets for 2011. [25] By the end of 2011 most of the indicators used earlier in the year had changed. The relevant AWPs for the regional office identified 21 indicators; a cumulative, year-end summary provided to the evaluation team included 20 of the indicators. The summary noted that 15 of the 20 targets, or 75 percent, had been achieved by the end of 2011.[26] Of the 20 indicators in the year-end summary, only six (or slight variations of them) were also found in the earlier results framework (see table 2).

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[24] UNFPA, *UNFPA Accountability Framework*, DP/FPA/2007/20, July 2007.
[25] *Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme 2008-2011 (2013) Results Framework; 2011 Updates*, February 2011.
[26] *Regional Programme for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, List of Indicators: AWP 2011*, undated. The indicator included in the AWP but omitted from this list was the number of countries involving men in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence. In the discussion that follows and to ensure comparability the evaluation team has replicated EECARO's method of calculating effectiveness in achieving indicator targets.

Table 2: Comparison of EECARO's results framework, targets, and achievements, 2011

Indicator	Results Framework		Annual Summary for 2011		
	Baseline in (2010)	Target for 2011	Baseline (2010)	Target for 2011	Achieve-ment
1. Percent of countries that conducted research on population issues	60%	80%	40%	70%	70%
2. Results framework: Percent of countries that have incorporated *at least two emerging population issues*, as defined in the gap analysis, into the development frameworks and Millennium Development Goal reporting Annual summary: Percent of countries that have incorporated *at least one population issue*, as defined in the gap analysis, into the development network and Millennium Development Goal reporting	74%	60%	35%	60%	60%
3. Number of countries conducting the 2010 round of censuses undertaken on time in the region	6 com-pleted	17	6	12	12
4. Percentage of countries in the region that have a budget line for contraceptives	35%	45%	45%	30%	30%
5. Results framework: Percentage of countries with family planning included in national *priorities or plans* Annual summary: Percentage of countries with family planning included in national priorities	45%	40%	25%	30%	40%
6. Good practices in addressing gender-based violence with male involvement documented and disseminated	5 case studies	None set	Not available	Publica-tion available in region	Publica-tion available in region

Note: Percentages are based on 20 countries.
Sources: *Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme 2008-2011 (2013) Results Framework; 2011 Updates*, February 2011, and *Regional Programme for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, List of Indicators: AWP 2011*, undated.

Based on the cumulative summary, the annual targets were achieved for each of the six indicators, but comparison with the results framework tells a different story. For four indicators, the targets were revised downward; the targets in the results framework were not achieved for three of these indicators. For indicator 2, the baseline at the end of 2010 (i.e., 74 percent) was higher than the target for 2011 (i.e., 60 percent). The lower percentage was achieved but for a less stringent target than the one in the results framework (i.e., one population issue versus two population issues, respectively). The same situation occurred with indicator 5. As indicated in the results framework, the baseline was 45 percent but the target for 2011 in the annual summary was 40 percent.

Two additional targets were found in EECARO's AWPs for 2011 but not in the results framework. In both instances, as shown in table 3, the targets included in the AWPs were higher than the reported achievements. If the original targets had been retained, EECARO would not have been able to claim that they had been achieved.[27]

Table 3: Comparison of EECARO's indicator targets and reported achievements, 2011

Indicator	Target in AWPs	Annual Summary for 2011	
		Target	Achievement
Number of Country Offices in Eastern Europe and Central Asia that produce or facilitate production of written and multimedia content to UNFPA global and regional website	16	14	14
Number of countries implementing strategic communication initiatives addressing demand creation for sexual and reproductive health among vulnerable groups	7	4	4

Sources: EECARO's AWPs for 2011; *Regional Programme for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, List of Indicators: AWP 2011*, undated.

Additional complexity occurred when EECARO subsequently provided the evaluation team with the five Annual Work Plan and Monitoring Tools (AWPMT) that the office's program and thematic managers completed at the end of 2011 (or in early 2012) for gender equality; RHCS; reproductive health; population and development; and advocacy, partnership, and communication. The completed monitoring tools reported on 16 indicators, all of which were included on the cumulative annual summary for 2011 just discussed. This overlap makes it possible to compare the output targets reported as achieved in (a) the annual summary with (b) the five AWPMTs. Of the 16 indicators in the latter, no data were available for one indicator. Of the remaining 15 output targets, the annual summary indicated that 12 of the 15 output targets (or

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[27] For five of the seven indicators related to advocacy, partnership, and communication, the targets in the AWPs were the same as those reported in the annual summary. Regarding these two indicator target, EECARO argued that "revision of AWP is a standard process and was done to adjust program with availability of resources and/or programming context".

80 percent) had been achieved or exceeded. *In contrast, the five AWPMTs for 2011 indicate that only 7 (or 47 percent) of the 15 output targets had been achieved*, and one of the seven is problematic.[28]

To illustrate, the annual summary indicated that 60 percent, or 12 of 20 countries, had incorporated at least one population issue into development frameworks and reporting for the Millennium Development Goals in 2011. This percentage matched the target, so it was counted as having been achieved in the annual summary. The relevant AWPMT, in contrast, indicated that only 45 percent of the countries (versus the target of 60 percent) had incorporated at least one population issue. The annual summary also indicated that 70 percent, or 14 of 20 countries, had conducted research on population issues in 2011; the output target was again claimed as having been achieved. The AWPMT reported that only 50 percent of the 20 countries had conducted such research, which meant that the target had not been achieved.

For 2012, EECARO provided the information on the percentage of AWP outputs achieved after the evaluation team had left Istanbul, so it was not possible to verify onsite the information reported. Based on 20 indicators, EECARO reported that 19, or 95 percent, of the associated output targets had been achieved. This again suggests a high level of effectiveness.

As the next-best alternative to verifying the reported achievements, the evaluation team compared the indicator targets in the regional office's AWPs for 2012 with the year-end summary of achievements for 2012 that EECARO provided to the evaluation team.[29] This comparison identified many of the same concerns that were observed for 2011. The AWPs included 24 indicators, but the year-end summary reported on only 20, one of which had not been included in an AWP. In some instances, as in 2011, the targets noted in the end-of-year summary for 2012 for several indicators were lower than the targets specified in the AWPs at the beginning of 2012, as shown in table 4. In each instance EECARO reported that the output targets had been achieved. Had the original targets been retained, EECARO would not have achieved at least five of the six targets shown in the table. The percentage of output targets achieved for 2012 would have been no higher than 65 to 70 percent compared with the 95 percent that EECARO claimed.

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[28] One indicator was the "percentage of countries with at least one partner trained on gender-transformative programming." The target was 50 percent of the countries with at least one partner trained. Both the annual summary and the relevant AWPMT indicate that this target was achieved. All other indicators that are based on the percentage of countries use a denominator of 20 countries. For gender-transformative programming, however, the denominator used was only 12 countries, i.e., regional participants from 6 countries were trained. EECARO defended with an argument that "Gender-transformative programming is applicable for 12 countries, so there is no reason of taking 20 countries as denominator as argued by EECARO. In addition to this, EECARO felt changing denominator in both baseline and target to 20 will not provide any additional information".

[29] This comparison did not include the AWPs of EECARO's implementing partners.

Table 4: Comparison of EECARO's indicator targets and reported achievements, 2012

Indicator	Target in AWPs for 2012	Annual Summary for 2012	
		Target	Achievement
Number of persons trained through EECARO support in the incorporation of population dynamic issues in relevant national plans and programs	45	30	33
Number (and percentage) of countries supported by UNFPA to design and/or implement age-appropriate sexuality education programs	20% increase; baseline = 11	12 (60%)	12 (60%)
Number of countries supported by UNFPA to strengthen national capacity to produce and disseminate census, survey, and other statistical data including development of databases	18	14	14
Percentage of the regional office resource mobilization plan target reached	90%	40%	42%
Percentage of regional office partners reporting EECARO is a valued partner for their organization	75%	60%	Data not yet available*
Number of UNFPA Country Offices that developed costed communication strategy/plan	15	12	12

* Although data for this indicator are not yet available, EECARO considers the target to have been achieved.
Sources: EECARO's AWPs for 2012 and "EECARO RP Results and Resource Framework 2012-2013."

EECARO's summary also noted that 100 percent of its AWPs, presumably including those for its IPs, had achieved at least 75 percent of their annual targets. This is anomalous considering that the AWPS of at least two IPs had no measurable targets in 2012 (or 2011).

Problems similar to the ones just discussed may occur in 2013. The 2012 summary identified indicator targets for 2013. A comparison of these targets with the corresponding targets in EECARO's AWPs for 2013 revealed many differences. For at least two indicators the targets identified in an AWP for 2013 are lower than the baselines indicated in the 2012 summary. In addition, the 2013 AWPs do not contain any targets for the outcome related to gender equality.

Questions about some of the baseline values are also appropriate. One of EECARO's indicators for 2012 was the percentage of country program evaluations rated at least as "good." The relevant AWP indicated that the baseline for 2011 was 65 percent. There was only one country program evaluation completed in 2010 (in Ukraine), and DOS rated that evaluation as "poor." There were two country program evaluations completed in 2011 (in Kyrgyzstan and Moldova) [30]. Again, DOS rated them both as poor. In

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[30] EECARO and the evaluation team disagree with the ratings assigned to several of these evaluations. EECARO's argued that it used 2009 country program evaluations (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey) of them 2 evaluations were rated "good" by evaluation managers (self-evaluation) to establish baseline as there was no evaluation conducted in 2010 at the time preparing AWP. It also argued that DOS evaluation ratings were generally available after 12 months of completing any country program evaluation and there was no scope of using DOS assessment results in establishing baseline". The DOS Evaluation Database (at http://web2.unfpa.org/public/about/oversight/evaluations/) indicates that the overall quality of the report for Moldova was "poor." Evaluation manager had rated the evaluation in Moldova as "good." EECARO declared that the country program (framework under special security council decision) evaluation for Kosovo was not subject to review by DOS. In Albania, there was an evaluation of the UN's overall efforts (e/.g., *Country Led Evaluation: Delivering as One Albania*) in 2010. Its purpose was to "assess the progress made by the One UN pilot against the strategic intent, and to assess its role and contribution to the support of national policies and strategies for achievement of national development results." Only a small portion of the report focused on UNFPA. For this reason and as the Evaluation Database notes, the report's quality was not subject to review by DOS. EECARO contends that DOS rated the evaluation as "good." EECARO and the evaluation team appear to agree that DOS rated the country program evaluation in Kyrgyzstan as poor.

short, it is not clear how the baseline could be 65 percent when no evaluation was rated as good. There was also a problem with the target value, i.e., 100 percent of country program evaluations to be rated at least as "good" in 2012. The year in which such evaluations will occur is known several years in advance; none were scheduled or completed in 2012, so the reason for having the indicator and specifying a target is unclear[31].

Separate mention of EECARO's attention to the prevention of HIV is also useful because much of this attention has been supported with funds from UNAIDS. Although much of the world has focused on the dire HIV-related situation in sub-Saharan Africa, UNFPA reported in 2007 that Eastern Europe and Central Asia are:

> experiencing the world's fastest growing AIDS epidemic: the number of HIV infections rose from 30,000 in 1995 to 1.4 million in 2004. The majority of reported infections are among young people, especially injecting drug users and sex workers, their clients and partners.[32]

In particular, there are acute problems with HIV in Ukraine and the Russian Federation, and both countries are among the 20 that UNAIDS believes are most in need of attention.

EECARO's HIV-related activities have corresponding indicators and targets, but they were not part of EECARO's calculations of the percentage of output targets achieved in 2011. In 2012, there was hybrid approach; some of the UNAIDS-defined indicators and targets were used to compute EECARO's effectiveness while other indicators were not. For the HIV-related indicators in 2012 there was a mixed level of achievement: some targets were met while others were not.

Part of the explanation for the situation in 2012 is the precipitous drop in resources provided for EECARO's HIV-related activities. The resources that EECARO received from UNAIDS declined by more than 50 percent from 2011 to 2012. Of the funds that were received, many were transferred to Country Offices. The focus has been on achieving results at the country level. Country Offices have some autonomy in selecting their work programs, and these programs do not always align with what EECARO seeks to measure and achieve. A leading example is EECARO's collaboration with the Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network. Some Country Offices prefer not to collaborate with the regional office on this initiative. The legalization, endorsement, or even tolerance of commercial sex is a sensitive issue that many of UNFPA's country-based government counterparts seek to avoid.

A consequence of this situation is that regional results have been more difficult to achieve than otherwise would be the case. Moreover, EECARO has no IPs that focus primarily on the prevention of HIV and no resources allocated to monitor or evaluate the activities that are underway.

In sum, with the exception of attention to HIV, analysis of the data that EECARO provided to the evaluation team reveals levels of effectiveness that are less robust than reported. Values for baselines, targets, and levels of achievements are inconsistent from one EECARO document to another as are the office's own judgments about whether it had achieved the regional objectives included in its work plans for 2011 and 2012.

These findings are not meant to suggest that EECARO's efforts are without some effect. As observed in its current RPAP, for example, the region has experienced an "overall decrease in maternal mortality and substantial reduction in abortion rates due to better services and increased access to these services."

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[31] "EECARO claimed that the final regional program evaluation 2008-2012 is equivalent to a country program evaluation, which is supposed to be completed in 2012, so included in the 2012 target".

[32] UNFPA, *UNFPA Global and Regional Programme*, 2008-2011, DP/FPA/2007/19, July 2007.

Unfortunately, UNFPA's and ECCARO's relative contribution to these improvements is unclear and impossible to measure with any confidence. This finding corresponds with the findings of the midterm review of EECARO's performance in 2011 and at least two external reviews of UNFPA's corporate performance. The MOPAN review concluded that UNFPA "is unable to provide sufficient evidence for UNFPA's contribution to outcomes achieved."[33] AusAID's Australian Multilateral Assessment (March 2012) reached an identical conclusion: "UNFPA has not systematically measured or reported on the extent to which its own work has contributed to [its] development outcomes. This makes it difficult to make an overall assessment of its effectiveness in delivering results."

UNFPA's own research has found "no correlation between the reproductive health status of the countries [in which it works] and the levels of UNFPA investments in reproductive health…"[34] This is clearly a disconcerting finding and suggests that UNFPA's interventions may not be well matched to the problems they are intended to solve.

Inadequate AWPs of EECARO's implementing partners

In addition to the outputs included in the AWPs of the regional office, the evaluation team also reviewed the AWPs and annual standard progress reports of EECARO's implementing partners. The results of this review identified several issues that affect judgments about effectiveness. First, EECARO explained that the activities and outputs in the IPs' AWPs contribute to the outputs and outcomes in the AWPs of the regional office and therefore should not be part of the computation of the percentage of outputs achieved (i.e., the percentages of achievement just discussed).[35] In fact, however, the evaluation team identified instances in which this was not the case. Indicators in some AWPs of IPs for both 2011 and 2012 could not be matched with corresponding outputs in the AWPs of the regional office.

Second, several of the IPs' AWPs had no baselines and no annual targets (e.g., number of parliamentary groups that address population and development issues in domestic and global fora in Eastern Europe). In other instances the output indicators were vague, of limited value, and had low levels of reliability. The indicators were not objectively verifiable, and many were subject to the opinion of those implementing or managing the projects. Weak or inappropriate indicators were especially prevalent in the AWPs of the two IPs that focus on parliamentarians.

Indicators for IPs included such things as news on activities in Central Asia, E-news on Central Asia, and the number of people who attend meetings. There is anecdotal evidence that the parliamentary IPs perform a valuable function for UNFPA, but in neither 2011 nor 2012 did the AWPs for the two organizations provide baseline or annual targets. From 2009 through 2012, EECARO budgeted more than $860,000 for the two organizations, but their weak indicators and the absence of baselines and annual targets compromise efforts to assess the results they have achieved, their actual and relative contribution to EECARO's intended outcomes, or the value they provide to EECARO.[36] The AWPs for the National Center for Public Health and Analyses provide an exception to these concerns.

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[33] *MOPAN Common Approach: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*, January 2011.

[34] UNFPA, *Report of the Direct of the Division for Oversight Services on UNFPA Internal Audit and Oversight Activities in 2010*, DP/FPA/2011/5, April 2011.

[35] According to UNFPA's Program Division, when computing the percentage of indicator targets achieved, EECARO should use the sum of the targets in its AWPs *plus* the targets included in the AWPs of all of its implementing partners. E-mail from Charles Katende, UNFPA Programme Division, to Richard Tobin, December 11, 2012.

[36] The 2011 midterm review of the regional office also noted that UNFPA's relations with the organizations have been "strained" and that "work with parliamentarians at national levels is… not a clearly defined priority" in most country programs.

In some circumstances either baselines or targets may not be available when IPs begin implementation of their AWPS. When this situation occurs, UNFPA requires that there be a "clear indication of a deadline by which the missing data will be available."[37] In no instance for any AWPs was this "indication" provided when baselines or targets were not initially available. As a result, some IPs ended the year without measurable targets, which means that it was not possible to assess their effectiveness in achieving results. AWPs are also supposed to include the source of the indicator data; none did so in 2011 or 2012. Furthermore, if data for indicators are not available from existing sources, data generation should be included in an AWP. No AWP did so in 2011 or 2012.

Third, several of the indicators addressed activities rather than results (e.g., number of countries that undertake follow up activities; three-day training held; M&E system functioning; website adapted or amended), and many activities in AWPs of the IPs were unrelated to the indicators. The former issue was identified as a concern in the midterm review of the regional program in early 2011. To illustrate the latter concern, one of the indicators for the East European Institute for Reproductive Health in 2011 was the percentage of the countries in the region that have a budget line for contraceptives. The unrelated activities that supposedly would lead to this outcome included attendance at a two-day meeting and the development of a training module on methods for the development of clinical protocols. The indicator target for another IP was the percentage of EECARO's partners reporting that it is a valued partner for their organization. While this may be a valid indicator for EECARO it surely is not for a single IP. That IP's success should not depend on the opinions of other IPs over which it has no control or influence.

These examples raise concerns about EECARO's theory of change. There is little relation between attendance at meetings, the development of clinical protocols, and national budgets for contraceptives. In a second but not last example, creation of a database of stakeholders was identified as an indicator of strengthened national capacity for implementation of international agreements. Too often the expected linkages between activities, outputs, and outcomes are missing or implausible. Again, this is exactly what the MOPAN review found: "UNFPA results frameworks do not always demonstrate causal links from outputs through to outcomes and impact…"

Many indicators relate to the completion of activities (e.g., number of people trained; number of countries EECARO has supported). *Many of these indicators are justifiably labeled as SMART, but their weakness lies in their tenuous relationship to the outcomes that EECARO wants to achieve*.[38] This concern applies to the AWPs of IPs as well as those of EECARO. Strengthened national capacity is a common objective of EECARO and many IPs, but *the evaluation team was unable to identify any effort to assess or measure directly changes in organizational or institutional capacity at the national level as a result of EECARO's interventions and funding of IPs*.

Fourth, the locus of responsibility within EECARO for monitoring IPs' performance is unclear. As explained to the evaluation team, the office's program or thematic managers are responsible for this monitoring and for ensuring that AWPs meet the agency's requirements for such things as indicators, baselines, annual targets, and the inclusion of M&E activities in annual work plans.[39] When asked how

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[37] UNFPA, *Global and Regional Programme Guidelines*.

[38] The evaluation team is aware that UNFPA staff from outside of EECARO completed a review of the office's RPAP in November 2011. This review found that the regional program had weak indicators and targets. The evaluation team notes that the template for the review is inconsistent with UNFPA's corporate guidance and confounds outputs and outcomes. As an example, the template asks whether output statements clearly identify a change in capacity. Consistent with UNFPA's *Guide for Developing Robust Results Frameworks*, changes in capacity represent an outcome, not an output.

[39] In its comments on the draft report, EECARO noted that inclusion of specific activities related to M&E in AWPs was not mandatory until June 2012. All the AWPs that EECARO provided to the evaluation team for 2010, 2011, and 2012 include the

this responsibility was addressed, the evaluation team was told that EECARO has no plan or system in place for the routine monitoring of IPs' performance and, more important, managers supposedly have no time to develop such a plan or implement one even if it did exist. This finding parallels a conclusion that DOS presented to UNFPA's Executive Board in 2011 and identified as a "very common" problem: "insufficient monitoring of program implementation and outcomes due to lack of staff, processes and tools."[40]

Fifth, IPs' annual standard progress reports are expected to assess (a) how the UNFPA-funded activities contribute to the outputs in AWPs and (b) progress made towards these outputs. Few of the IPs' standard progress reports addressed either of these reporting responsibilities. The reports typically discuss activities completed and often fail to relate these activities to the output indicators and corresponding targets in their AWPs and that are supposed to be achieved. This was also the case for several of the Annual Work Plan and Monitoring Tools that EECARO completed.

This situation meant that it was not possible to determine whether the activity was a necessary prerequisite for the output, whether the output had been achieved (or whether there had been any progress), whether the IP had been effective, or whether UNFPA's investment had been worthwhile and produced value for money. Moreover, a recurring focus on activities is inconsistent with the UNFPA's commitment to results-based management and compromises EECARO's ability to report the impacts of its investments. In addition, if the IPs' activities are supposed to complement the efforts of the regional office and the results of these efforts are unknown, then EECARO is not able to make a credible case that any changes observed are attributable to the UNFPA or even that the agency's efforts have contributed to the changes.

Finally, AWPs are expected to include specific activities related to M&E. With one exception, none did so.[41] IPs are also supposed to develop M&E plans and to update them update annually. In turn, UNFPA units are instructed to discuss and approve these plans during annual program reviews.[42] EECARO was asked to provide copies of M&E plans for 14 IPs for 2012. EECARO was able to provide two. One was clearly not an M&E plan. The document listed seven activities, none of which were related to monitoring or evaluation. Examples of these activities included "preparation of the course" and "confirmation of the participants." The absence of M&E activities in AWPs and of required M&E plans implies inadequate attention to monitoring and evaluation among IPs. This was not an unexpected finding. DOS has found that insufficient monitoring of project implementation by IPs is a recurring problem throughout UNFPA.[43] In sum, all of the issues just discussed undermine the ability to evaluate reliably and credibly the effectiveness of EECARO's implementing partners.

Enhanced results at the country level

ECARO's relative effectiveness at the country level is tied closely to the results just discussed, but there is additional empirical evidence to consider. This evidence represents an assessment by all UNFPA country offices of their pertinent regional offices in 2011. The country offices were asked to

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following language: "Planned activities: List all activities, incl. M&E activities, to be undertaken during the year towards stated output."

[40] UNFPA, *Report of the Director of the Division for Oversight Services on UNFPA Internal Audit and Oversight Activities in 2010*, DP/FPA/2011/5, April 2011.
[41] Effective June 2012, AWP must include a budget line for costs related to monitoring and evaluation. See UNFPA, *Policies and Procedures for Preparation and Management of Annual Work Plans (AWPs)*, June 2012.
[42] UNFPA, *Guide for Implementing Partners* (May 2008) and *Global and Regional Programme Guidelines*, August 2010.
[43] UNFPA, *Report of the Director of the Division for Oversight Services on UNFPA Internal Audit and Oversight Activities in 2011*, DP/FPA/2012/9, April 2012.

assess their regional offices' support on four dimensions and to indicate whether this support was excellent, good satisfactory, or poor. The results of the assessment, shown in table 5, reveal considerable endorsement of and satisfaction with EECARO's support. Considering and combining the ratings of excellent and good, EECARO was ranked no lower than second among the five regions on all four dimensions.

Table 5: Percentage of Country Offices reporting that the support they received from their regional offices was excellent or good in 2011

Dimension	Africa	Asia and Pacific	Arab States	EECA	Latin America and Caribbean
Relevance of support	80%	70%	86%	90%	88%
Quality of support	77%	70%	100%	85%	84%
Timeliness of support	50%	57%	78%	75%	54%
Impact upon overall quality of country program and program delivery	48%	47%	85%	80%	61%
Number of countries	44	23	14	20	26

Source: UNFPA, *Report of the Executive Director for 2011, Progress in Implementing the Strategic Plan, 2008-2013, Annex 7, Data Supplement on Management Results*.

Compared with other regional offices, EECARO did especially well with regard to the timeliness of the support it provided and the overall impact of the support. For three of the four dimensions, no Country Office rated EECARO's support as poor. On the fourth dimension, timeliness of support, only one Country Office rated EECARO's support as poor.

Based on the discussion above, the overall rating for effectiveness is judged to be adequate. Had EECARO not scored as well on the assessment by the Country Offices, a lower rating would have been appropriate.

The rating reflects a judgment about how effective the regional office and its partners have been in achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. As already noted, UNFPA has handicapped its regional offices by mislabeling outcomes as outputs and thus placing the responsibility for achieving the "outputs" on these offices. Nonetheless, EECARO's own data reveal mixed and inconsistent levels of effectiveness and achievement for less-demanding indicator targets.

The evaluation team also recognizes that EECARO can point to many successes and achievements, made all the more impressive because of the challenges EECARO faced in its formative years. Unfortunately, many of EECARO's indicators do not permit EECARO to capture or reliably measure these achievements other than anecdotally and subjectively. As one of EECARO's staff explained, many of the indicators that EECARO uses are not appropriate and "do not reflect well on what we do." The evaluation team agrees with this conclusion. In too many instances what is achieved does not match well the outputs and outcomes that EECARO uses to assess its effectiveness.

8.3 Efficiency

Efficiency is a measure of how economically resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. Accordingly, the TOR asked the evaluation team to consider how well

EECARO has used its financial and human resources to achieve its contribution.

There are several ways to assess how well EECARO has used its resources. The first way is to consider the office's "administrative" relations with its IPs. The agency's *Global and Regional Programme Guidelines* require that AWPs for IPs be approved and signed no later than January 31 of each year. UNFPA further requires that all funds given to IPs must be spent in the calendar year in which they are provided. If the January 31 deadline is missed, then IPs have less time to use their resources, and activities risk being delayed or bunched inefficiently, especially if approval of the AWP is delayed by several months. The problem is exacerbated when IPs do not know after a new year starts whether their partnership with UNFPA will continue and, if so, how much money they will receive.

To discern whether delinquent AWPs are a problem within EECARO, the evaluation team examined a series of AWPs for 2012 for those IPs that had also worked with EECARO the previous year. Among the AWPs that were dated, several were signed well after January 31. The case-study experience of Bulgaria's National Center of Public Health and Analyses (NCPHA) is illustrative of the problems this situation creates. Among the tasks outlined in its AWP is operation of the Peer Education Training and Research Institute (PETRI), which provides training for the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER). In 2012 EECARO provided $12,000 to NCPHA to hire a coordinator for PETRI for 12 months as well as additional funds for Y-PEER fellows.

The 2012 AWP for the NCPHA was not approved and signed until May 2012, which meant that the $12,000 could not be spent as intended (and the NCPHA does not normally have funds it can advance to PETRI), but these funds were nonetheless reserved for PETRI's use and were not available for other IPs or EECARO activities. As of January 2013, the coordinator was still in her position and expects to be paid, but NCPHA did not yet know when its AWP would be approved and signed. Given this situation the NCPHA limits the coordinator to short-term contracts, thus creating uncertainty and possibly encouraging her to consider other, more secure employment.

The delay in approval of the 2012 AWP also meant that PETRI could hire only a single Y-PEER fellow although two at a time are the norm. These fellows, who typically work at PETRI for four to six months, cannot be hired late in the year because doing so would extend their term beyond the end of the calendar year. Again, without knowing when its AWP will be signed, NCPHA is understandably reluctant to make any commitments to extend fellows' terms beyond December or to allow new fellows to begin early in the year. In other words, delays in signing the AWP mean that PETRI has only a narrow window of opportunity to engage Y-PEER fellows. Moreover, the process of identifying potential candidates and then extending an invitation begins well before the start of the fellowship opportunity.

In EECARO's defense, it should be noted that the agency's country office in Sofia had closed in 2012. This office had provided operational support to the NCPHA. In the absence of the country office, EECARO needed additional time to establish appropriate mechanisms for continuing the partnership with NCPHA. Nonetheless, the experience with the NCPHA is illustrative of the delays that other IPs have faced.

More generally, delays in EECARO's approval of AWPs also compromise IP's ability to plan and initiate activities in a timely manner – and perhaps even their ability to support EECARO's efforts. The large majority of IPs interviewed complained about delays in AWP's approval. For example, representatives of one IP who were interviewed for the evaluation expressed an interest in continuing their work with the regional office in 2013, but as of late January 2013 they had no idea whether this interest was mutual or whether EECARO had any plans for continued collaboration. As a result of this uncertainty, the organization is unsure whether it should (or even can) allocate any of its staff's time to EECARO in

2013. Still other IPs commented on the problems that delayed approval of AWPs causes, and some IPs reported that they were unable to spend the resources provided to them because of delays in receiving approval for their AWPs.

Having noted this situation, the evaluation team also recognizes that late approval of AWPs is not limited to EECARO. The problem, according to DOS, is recurrent and widespread.[44] Furthermore, the January deadline may not be reasonable. UNFPA offices, including regional offices, do not know until late in a year what their budgets will be for the following year. Without this knowledge, the regional office is understandably reluctant to commit resources for its prospective IPs.

Another measure of efficiency focuses on the balance between spending on programs versus spending on administrative or overhead costs. Efficiency emphasizes the desirability of minimizing overhead costs while maximizing expenditures for implementation of programs. In recognition of this preference, UNFPA contributes to the indirect or what are now called support costs of NGOs, with a limit of 12 percent of actual direct expenditures.[45] The precise percentage, which can vary from one IP to another and from one year to the next for the same IP, is noted in the letters of understanding that UNFPA issues to IPs at the beginning of their partnership and, effective June 2012, on the cover page of AWPs. EECARO adheres to the limit, with most indirect cost rates set at either 11 or 12 percent. There are, however, several concerns.

According to UNFPA's policy on indirect cost rates, "little or no indirect cost payments" are appropriate when contributions from the UNFPA to an IP "require little or no management" on behalf of the IP.[46] Examples of such instances include IPs that spend large portions of their UNFPA-provided budgets on travel, personnel, publications, and small-scale workshops, which is the case with most of EECARO's IPs. In 2012, as an illustration, 57 percent of the funds provided to one IP were for travel yet EECARO had agreed to an indirect cost rate of 12 percent. More than 75 percent of another IP's budget was also earmarked for travel.

UNFPA's *Guidance Note on Indirect and Direct Costs* (May 2011) declares that "indirect costs are subject to negotiation with the NGO….When negotiating the *indirect* cost percentage with NGOs, it is the responsibility of the head of office to ensure UNFPA staff has negotiated a favorable rate for UNFPA…" All but one of EECARO's IPs that are NGOs are reimbursed at a rate of either 11 or 12 percent, which suggests that EECARO engages in little or no negotiation with IPs, and when that negotiation does occur the outcome is almost always toward the high end of what is permissible. The indirect costs percentage can also vary from one year to the next, but the evaluation team did not find any examples of this situation.

UNFPA permits *reimbursement* of NGOs' indirect or overhead costs, but not payment of such costs prior to the time the costs are incurred. Despite this distinction, EECARO has approved and provided IPs with advance payment of anticipated indirect costs. These IPs include the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians, the East European Institute for Reproductive Health, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development, the International Center for Human Development, the Moscow Higher School of Economics, and the Transnational Family Research Institute.

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[44] DOS, *Report of the Director of the Division for Oversight Services on UNFPA Internal Audit and Oversight Activities in 2011*, DP/FPA/2012/9, April 23, 2012.

[45] DOS has used indirect costs as an indicator of efficiency. See DOS, *Assessment of A Strategic Management Review of the 7th Country Programme in Indonesia (2006-2010)*.

[46] UNFPA, *Guidance Note on Indirect and Direct Costs*, May 2011.

UNFPA is not permitted to reimburse government agencies, *including state-sponsored or public academic institutions*, for any indirect costs, which include administrative and accounting services and expenses for general management. According to UNFPA's Programme Division, "A state/public university is clearly a government entity, funded by the government and hence, not eligible for UNFPA support cost. State/public universities - funded by governments must be given the implementing agency code of PG in Atlas." [47]

Another measure of efficiency in the use of resources is the implementation rate, which represents total expenses divided by the total budget. An activity with a budget of $100,000 and expenditures of $90,000 would have an implementation rate of 90 percent. Assuming that funds are spent responsibly and linked to results achieved, higher implementation rates are always preferred. Based on budget summaries from ATLAS provided to the evaluation team, EECARO's overall implementation rates were 87.9 percent, 85.5 percent, and 92.7 percent, respectively for 2009, 2010, and 2011. These summaries include all expenditures, regardless of source. Preliminary estimates suggest that the implementation rate for 2012 will exceed 90 percent (and possibly be much higher).

The rates may appear high, but one should appreciate that they also reflect a considerable amount of money that is left unspent at the end of each year. The dollar amount associated with the implementation rates reported above for 2009 and 2010 was over $1.1 million in both years. This amount reflects funds that were budgeted and available for use but that were not spent.

Implementation rates for funds received from sources outside of the United Nations are considerably lower than the overall rates noted above. For the four years from 2009 through 2012, as an illustration, the overall implementation rate for funds from bilateral donors was slightly above 78 percent. If not used in the year these donor funds were budgeted, they usually can be carried over to subsequent years. Nonetheless, donors may conclude that they have provided more funds than EECARO needs or can use efficiently and subsequently be hesitant to provide as much as EECARO might request in the future.

Additional evidence portrays EECARO's efficiency in terms of implementation rates. Through EECARO, UNFPA's headquarters provided information on these rates for each regional office for regular and cofinanced resources (see tables 6 and 7).[48] Among the regions identified, EECARO had the highest implementation rates for regular resources in 2008 and 2009 and was tied for the highest rate in 2011. A similar pattern is evident for cofinanced resources. EECARO's implementation rates for these resources were considerably higher than in all other regions in 2008 and 2009 and considerably higher than all but one other regional office in 2011.

Table 6: Implementation rates (%) of regular resources (program funds), by year and region

Region	2008	2009	2010	2011
Arab States	85	94	87	84
Asia and Pacific	89	89	93	93
EECARO	98	96	94	95
Latin America and Caribbean	92	95	97	95
East and South Africa	91	97	96	95

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[47] E-mail from Nicole Kim, UNFPA Programme Division, to Richard Tobin, February 18, 2013. EECARO appears to have miscoded several public academic institutions (as well as the National Center for Public Health Protection, which is part of Bulgaria's Ministry of Health) as NGOs. EECARO believes that the issue of support costs for public academic institutions should be directed to UNFPA's headquarters. As EECARO explains, "state universities and academia might not be the governmental entity. For instance, the Charles University in Prague has a status of a public university, which does not mean it is a state organization. The university receives only per-head contributions for educating students. The same contributions are provided to the Czech private universities. The Charles University has more than 50 percent of its income from the 'market.'"
[48] The evaluation team was provided with the percentages for the implementation rates, so it is not possible to discern the dollar amounts used for the numerators and denominators.

West and Central Africa	91	92	96	95

Note: Through 2012 UNFPA had only a single regional office for sub-Saharan Africa.
Source: EECARO, with information provided by UNFPA headquarters.

Table 7: Implementation rates (%) of cofinanced resources, by year and region

Region	2008	2009	2010	2011
Arab States	67	74	57	59
Asia and Pacific	52	69	62	67
EECARO	84	85	76	86
Latin America and Caribbean	72	78	85	80
East and South Africa	64	70	75	85
West and Central Africa	42	74	78	73

Note: Through 2012 UNFPA had only a single regional office for sub-Saharan Africa.
Source: EECARO, with information provided by UNFPA headquarters.

Finally, has EECARO used it human resources efficiently? Answering this question is problematic in the absence of benchmarks against which performance can be assessed. EECARO has operated without a fully staffed office for several years. The result, in some people's opinion, is that the office is "severely understaffed," both among the professional and administrative staff. As noted elsewhere in this report, several of the office's positions for midlevel professionals have not been filled (although several are in the process of being filled). Several respondents also noted the inefficiency associated with EECARO's dependence on multiple consultants to provide technical support related to gender. Their turnover and relatively short tenure impeded long-term planning. Several people in EECARO also commented that there was no time for strategic thinking.

The short-handed staffing also means that some of EECARO's responsibilities may not receive the attention they deserve or require. As an example, reproductive health (RH) is a major thrust of EECARO's efforts and a single person within the office is expected to provide technical support to the 20 countries in the region. Given both the need and demand for RH services in the region, placing responsibility on a single person is arguably inefficient. Likewise, in view of the region's population dynamics, including several countries with aging populations and fertility rates below replacement levels, there is an urgent need for attention to population and development issues. These issues represent the rationale for UNFPA's creation. Despite this need, EECARO is operating without a population and development specialist, having tasked a program assistant with the responsibility for overseeing EECARO's activities in this area. EECARO also lacks a deputy director who could focus on the office's daily operations thus freeing the regional director to devote his or her time to external relations, including resource mobilization, and coordination with the Country Offices.

Several EECARO staff members noted that UNFPA headquarters also imposes considerable demands on their time, with some people reporting that they spend as much as one day per week responding to or addressing requests from headquarters. This is not unusual and has been found elsewhere within UNFPA's country, regional, and subregional offices. The frequency of its occurrence does not diminish its negative effects on people's efficiency (or effectiveness) with respect to their primary responsibilities within EECARO.

The evaluation team did not consider the time devoted to and the transaction costs of EECARO's engagement with collaborating partners or other UN or international agencies. Such engagement may have consequences for the efficient use of EECARO's human resources, especially because other UN agencies will soon be establishing regional offices in Istanbul. Concerns about UNFPA's engagement with other partners surfaced in the recent evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office, which concluded that "management and staff in UNFPA questioned the value of involvement in a large number of UN committees, working groups, task forces, etc. and highlighted the need to assess each relationship

and the value of the strategic engagement." If EECARO is typical of other regional offices, similar concerns may soon exist among EECARO's staff.

Finally, the evaluation team is pleased that EECARO devotes resources to M&E. The team is concerned, however, about the financial resources budgeted for that function versus those budgeted for EECARO's core functions. In 2012, as an illustration, excluding salaries, EECARO budgeted $450,000 for M&E activities versus $600,900 for all of its activities related to gender equality and gender-based violence. This disparity exists despite the fact that gender-based violence is main priority for a majority of country programs.[49]

Based on the discussion above, the overall rating for efficiency is good. EECARO manages UNFPA's resources efficiently and is commended for doing so. Although there are some exceptions and concerns, they are few in number and have plausible explanations.

8.4 Sustainability

Sustainability is defined as the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. This includes the probability of continued long-term benefits and the resilience to risk of the net flow of benefits over time.

Achieving sustainability requires a strategy, a long-term vision, and recognition that roles and responsibilities must change and evolve over time. Organizations dependent on UNFPA's support must be weaned from this support and should understand the agency's expectations that responsibilities of national organizations should increase while EECARO's decrease. These expectations have not always been well addressed within EECARO, and the midterm review of the regional program concluded that EECARO's attention to sustainability had not been sufficient. A review of recent initiatives suggests a similar conclusion. Although the current RPAP "aims to ensure continuity of programming and sustainability of its results by the end of the program in 2013," achievement of this ambitious goal is unlikely. EECARO has strategies related to gender, partnerships, and resource mobilization, but none for sustainability. The RPAP mentions sustainability several times but says little about what EECARO will do to achieve it, however defined.

One should also appreciate the sustainability-related challenges that UNFPA imposes upon itself. By definition, annual work plans focus on short-term objectives that must be completed in a year or less. Many of the activities in these work plans are one-off events that are not designed to promote sustainability. Uncertainty also exists with respect to whether funding for IPs will continue from one year to the next.[50] As discussed in the section on efficiency, staff shortages and turnover affect continuity and similarly discourage attention to sustainability. It is difficult to think about the long term when the pressures to accomplish in the short term are intense and unremitting. Similarly, UNFPA staff are assessed in terms of what they have accomplished in the short term rather than on what they might accomplish in the future.

The observation that the regional program for 2004-2007 was not likely to be sustainable was highlighted in the RPAP 2008, which aimed at ensuring the sustainability of its activities. The regional office was decentralized to ensure closeness with Country Offices and better knowledge of countries in the region. The RPAP promoted the strengthening of national capacity through capacity building and encouraged the development of regional partnerships. The revised RPAP 2011 added a focus on measurability. These

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[49] EECARO, *Gender Strategy 2012-2014*.

[50] A subsequent section of this report discusses sustainability in the context of EECARO's partnerships.

elements – decentralization, capacity development, partnerships and improved measurability – were all viewed as likely to improve sustainability. EECARO's activities since 2008 comprise for the most part capacity building, focusing on training and workshops, and advocacy. The midterm review of the regional program did not elaborate on sustainability but recommended that increased attention be devoted to the issue.

The assessment of the sustainability of EECARO's activities should firstly be based on the assessment of their effectiveness and secondly on the extent to which the benefits of these activities are sustainable. Considering the discussion of effectiveness in the above section that concludes that many indicators do not permit reliable measurement of many of EECARO's achievements, it is therefore not possible to make a rigorous assessment of their sustainability in a systematic and objective way.

From a subjective and anecdotal perspective, it remains that some undertakings of EECARO may have been effective and sustainable had they been integrated within a coherent, systematic, and organized framework. In the process of reviewing EECARO's activities, an all-encompassing event launched in late 2009 was the starting point for the draft of a strategy (or several strategies). A carefully defined strategy could have steered the office's work over the subsequent years towards coherent, constructive, and logical steps to achieve its mandate and to contribute to the achievement of the strategic plan goals in a sustainable manner. This event, which EECARO organized in Istanbul, was a high-level Forum ICPD/15 that aimed to build and expand partnerships, to review gaps and challenges, lessons learned, and region-specific and emerging issues in population and development, reproductive health and rights, youth, and gender. The forum was preceded by a high-level meeting on maternal health and universal access to reproductive health. A joint meeting of European and Central Asian parliamentarians followed the high-level forum. EECARO adopted a follow-up plan, and Country Offices were asked to have consultative meetings with governments.

These three major events, displaying advocacy, knowledge sharing, and stocktaking of issues to tackle, encapsulated the main objectives of EECARO's work. A follow-up plan was developed to further the effort at the national level and expand on each thematic area at the regional and national levels. As the 2010 ROAR noted:

> EECARO has formulated the strategy of follow-up to the commitments made during ICPD/15 review in Istanbul. That is: to follow on the political commitments with annual regional technical meetings on specific issues that need to be addressed in the region. Thus, the focus in 2010 was on gender equality and prevention of [gender-based violence]. 2011 will be dedicated to improving access to [sexual and reproductive health] services for vulnerable groups. The themes for the following years would be agreed in due course.

The evaluation team notes that there was one main EECARO activity on gender in 2010 along with multiple activities centered on population and development and reproductive health and rights. In 2011, most activities focused on sexual and reproductive health services while also addressing the other two thematic sectors. It appears that the opportunity to work out general directions, strategies, and guidance along with relevant evaluation tools to address effectiveness and sustainability was not seized after the 2009 event. This would, however, have required a considerable effort in terms of time to be dedicated and appropriate staff for task forces or committees to work on each thematic sector and to review countries' needs. And as noted earlier, EECARO has been understaffed since its creation.

A significant example that illustrates the need for a strategic perspective on sustainability is the one-page summary of 15 events that EECARO organized in 2011. The summary noted that: (a) the events

comprised executive courses, trainings, workshops, conferences, and technical consultative meetings; (b) the events had 461 participants (including multiple attendance by the same participants); (c) the vast majority of data corresponded to the reaction and satisfaction of participants, gathered from surveys with four-fifths rating the events as "very good to excellent" on event quality; (d) pretest and posttests given for two training events indicated an increase in skills and net knowledge gained; and, (e) 8 of the 15 events made 177 recommendations. This descriptive summary of the 2011 events testifies to the efforts that EECARO made to comply with the agency's global strategy, but the summary also testifies to the lack of in-depth analyses to draw lessons and to be able to plan subsequent activities in a coherent and strategic manner. EECARO's activities remained dispersed and on an ad hoc basis just as they were before EECARO's decentralization.

An overview of EECARO's activities over the past five years indicates that in the domain of **population and development** there have been continuous actions in collaboration with well-chosen partners having a high level of expertise, such as the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). In the majority of these activities, however, EECARO served as a broker to provide high-level expertise in the domain. The evaluation team's field visits indicated that EECARO's partners provided technical support to censuses. EECARO's role was overshadowed by the much larger contribution of other development agencies, including the World Bank. In Moldova, for example, the main contributor to technical assistance today is the UN Development Program.[51]

All these activities may have helped participants to acquire demographic skills, but the evaluation team cannot ascertain that EECARO has contributed to develop real capacity of the decision makers – ministries of interior (migration issues), ministries of planning, and national bureaus of statistics as shown in these examples:

- Joint conferences on monitoring of the MDG or emerging population issues were organized yearly. In 2010 two workshops took place: the first on measurement of mortality in five countries of Central Asia, gathering and analyzing official registration and census data, Demographic and Health Surveys, Living Standard Measurement Surveys, and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys to improve the knowledge base. The second conference, in cooperation with UNECE and UNDESA, addressed exchange of knowledge and expertise on migration statistics and building national capacity in census implementation and analyses. Field visits indicated that these were useful events, but a follow-up to these events in the participating countries at the individual and institutional levels on the use of techniques and methods learned would have allowed an assessment on the sustainability of these workshops. Such a follow-up did not occur.

- EECARO's cooperation with the Higher School of Economics in Moscow led to several training courses on population and development in Russian. Their objective was to enhance knowledge of policy makers. In one of these events, however, only four policy makers from Turkmenistan attended, in addition to UNFPA regional and national staff. During field visits mixed views were reported: some participants noted that the training had been useful and had enabled a better grasp

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[51] In Moldova, the National Bureau of Statistics was created in 1999. The World Bank provided technical assistance along with the International Monetary Fund and EUROSTAT for the implementation of the 2004 Census. The Living Standard Measurement Survey was funded by the World Bank and analyses of the survey were supported by bilateral donors.

of demographic methods. Other participants indicated that the necessary skills and knowledge required to attend these courses were higher than expected, which led to frustration among both participants and trainers. Although plans to have systematic assessments of the capacities needed to attend these courses are currently underway, a follow-up to these workshops would have benefited EECARO and allowed it to assess the effects of the workshops individually and institutionally as well as their sustainability.

In the domain of **reproductive health and rights**, EECARO's efforts to organize high-level advocacy meetings are likely to have made a difference on national policies. The number of training events, workshops, study tours, conferences, and meetings is impressive and enabled considerable exchanges of knowledge and experiences among representatives from several countries. In general, however, the same remark as for the population and development sector is applicable, i.e., EECARO acted as a broker to provide high-level expertise in this domain. Many of the activities appear to have been effective, with obvious added value, and their results may be sustained, but a rigorous demonstration of their sustainability is not feasible because of the lack of follow-up and reliable indicators, or because follow-ups are not yet decided or implemented. Here are some examples collected during the field visits.

- Based on the IPPF-EN study, *An In-depth Analysis of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Commodity Security in Seven Middle-income Countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia* (2011), a high-level consultative meeting was organized in June 2012 in Brussels to promote national ownership on RHCS using evidence-based advocacy. High-level representatives from ministries of finance and health attended the meeting, which probably did amplify the possible effects of advocacy on nationally owned strategies on RHCS in participating countries. The ongoing follow-up to this event is expected to provide useful information on its effects and the likelihood of sustainability, but it is too early for the evaluation team to make an assessment in this regard.

- In September 2012, EECARO proposed to the Albania Country Office to provide the opportunity for three national experts from the Ministry of Health and the Health Insurance Institute to participate in a Workshop on Costing of Health Services as applications of the UN One Health Tool in the region. This opportunity was much appreciated by the Albanians considering that they plan to complete a costing exercise of primary health care for a better allocation of resources and for implementing quality- improvement initiatives. The Albanians subsequently organized a discussion with key actors to introduce the costing tool and to generate support for its application in Albania. This initiative is thus very likely to be sustainable if the government assumes ownership of the costing tool. While this possible result cannot be attributed solely to EECARO because its role was just to facilitate the participation of national experts in a useful training organized by UN One Health Costing Tool, it can be safely asserted that both EECARO and the Albanian Country Office did contribute to strengthen national capacity.

- UNFPA's headquarters launched an initiative on the inclusion of MISP in emergency situations. EECARO and the subregional office in Almaty have been active in organizing related events. Kazakhstan and Moldova are among the countries that have adopted the MISP for disaster situations. For example, the National Center for Disaster Medicine in Moldova conducts trainings in regions and districts. Thus it is most probable that this initiative has sustainable impacts in Kazakhstan and Moldova, but it is too early to assess this with confidence. Other countries in the region that present similar vulnerability to disasters may benefit from this initiative, and continuous capacity building and support to be provided by Country Offices and EECARO with

the assistance of implementing partners would extend the benefits of MISP and make it a long term regional endeavor.

- The last example refers to sustainable results that are strengthened by EECARO's activities. The Country Office of Albania has been instrumental in developing an NGO's capacity in undertaking projects related to assistance to vulnerable groups and humanitarian assistance (e.g., Roma, advocacy against child marriage, sex-selective abortion in favor of boys). EECARO organized a workshop in 2012 on best practices in advocacy for national partners (implementers of UN as One) in collaboration with several other UN agencies and the Country Office in Albania. The workshop provided an opportunity to share and exchange lessons and to learn from experiences in advocacy with several NGOs in the region. This is an example in which EECARO organized a well-received workshop but added only a modest element to a UNFPA country program. If the Albanian NGO is able to apply what its staff learned at the workshop (*and if the attendees at the workshop remain at the NGO*), there will be some elements of sustainability.

Several elements that are likely to improve sustainability and that the RPAP promotes, such as capacity building, partnerships, and improved measurability, are found in EECARO's activities. At the same time, however, the role that EECARO has played since 2008 is often that of a broker of services and support. EECARO has effectively convened NGOs, national and international partners, and Country Offices to launch and conduct much appreciated advocacy events, conferences, and consultative meetings. Many of these events though are one-off events with no or limited follow up, and they are not likely to be sustainable, and when they have the potential to be sustainable but their sustainability cannot be asserted with confidence either for lack of follow-up and reliable indicators, because follow-ups are not yet decided or implemented.

The seeming absence of a long-term perspective in EECARO's programs and the examples cited suggest that EECARO has not yet incorporated the means to ensure sustainability of results over time. Attention to sustainability has not been a key focus of EECARO's interventions, and *there has been little effort to assess the likelihood that EECARO's initiatives will be sustainable*. Consequently the evaluation team cannot demonstrate that the benefits of EECARO's interventions are sustained and owned by institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed. In addition, AWPs, the main work tool of UNFPA, imply short-term perspectives and short-term vision in contrast to the strategy and long-term vision that sustainability requires. As long as EECARO resorts to short-term planning of development tools, sustainability will remain a concern for performance. For these reasons, sustainability is rated as poor.

9. Issues of Special Interest

9.1 Capacity Building as a Development result

This section discusses a series of issues related to changes in capacity as a development result and provides an overview of the regional program action plans as they relate to capacity development; a definition of capacity building; an assessment of the relevance of objectives, outcomes, outputs, and indicators; an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability, of some of EECARO's

capacity-related initiatives; and a section on EECARO's reporting on capacity-building initiatives. [52]

A review of RPAPs as related to capacity development

An overview of capacity building within the framework of the two RPAPs provides an understanding of how EECARO has addressed the issue over the last five years.

The first RPAP (2008-2011) notes that:

> The capacity development strategy of the RP targets to strengthen the national capacity. The UNFPA contribution to capacity development will be ensured through transfer of knowledge and skills to individuals, development of national institutions and support to national policies and strategies. The constant information exchange between the [regional program] and country programs and vice versa will provide an opportunity for the country programs to benefit from the regional prospective as well as the regional initiatives to benefit from the country level situations.

The RPAP further notes that:

> As an overarching strategy, the new program will continue to target capacity development and technical skill-building in the region (of both regional and national partners and UNFPA staff) in all three program areas… as an effective approach to leveraging resources, activating partnerships, and enhancing national ownership.

The RPAP identified implementation risks related to capacity building, including regional partners' limited technical and institutional capacity, especially in the area of population and development, and language barriers within the region and subregions. To minimize these risks the RPAP emphasized the process of building regional and national capacity, using a variety of approaches such as training, sharing of knowledge and expertise, and North-South and South-South collaboration.

The current RPAP (2011-2013) identifies the objective of capacity building in the following manner:

> Effective mechanisms in place for continuous transfer of knowledge, skills and good practices between national institutions, south-south partners and UNFPA country offices - all contributing to stronger national capacity to implement MDGs and the ICPD agenda.

Capacity development is identified in the RPAP as:

> An overarching strategy that aims to address the remaining capacity gaps to enable national ownership of the ICPD agenda and commitment of political, technical and financial resources to reproductive health and rights, population dynamics, and gender equality issues, with particular focus on vulnerable groups and young people.

The two RPAPs have been clear and consistent with the need to focus on capacity development and have presented result-based frameworks to guide the activities of the regional office. In line with the two RPAPs, EECARO has conducted many activities intended to strengthen capacity among country offices and national partners. As noted earlier, however, EECARO was unable to provide a specific definition of capacity or a means to measure changes in this capacity. Similarly, EECARO had neither a strategy nor a long-term vision about how to organize and implement capacity-building activities into a coherent and well-structured plan.

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[52] Efficiency cannot be measured on capacity building initiatives because the review of the costs of workshops and conferences is out of the scope of the evaluation.

A definition of capacity building

In the absence of a specific definition of capacity building, the evaluation team adopted the OECD-DAC definition, which matches well with UNFPA's approach to capacity development. According to the OECD-DAC Network on Governance, capacity development is the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. Recent research shows that capacity development is more likely to be effective when:

- Capacity development is treated as a goal in its own right and that increased efforts are made to identify the objectives it seeks to achieve ("Capacity development for what?").
- Support for capacity development addresses three dimensions: human capacity, organizational capacity and broader institutional capacity.
- Capacity development is country owned rather than donor driven.

This broad definition is a good starting point for the review of capacity building. In the following paragraphs, the assessment of EECARO's efforts to develop skills and overall capacity of entities such as country offices and national partners is made within the framework of the DAC definition, i.e., capacity building is more likely to be effective when objectives are clearly identified, when the three dimensions of capacity are addressed, and when the process is country owned.

Assessment of the relevance of EECARO's objectives, outcomes, outputs, and indicators related to capacity building

While it has been demonstrated throughout the report that the large majority of capacity-building activities are relevant vis-à-vis the overall EECARO mandate and vis-à-vis the needs of the national partners and those of country offices' staff, the main issue remains that of the methodological approach to capacity development – clear objectives with appropriate outcomes, outputs and indicators.

Considering the first of the three factors that are required to enhance capacity building, namely increased efforts to identify the objectives it seeks to achieve, the evaluation has already underlined that some outcomes and outputs are not clear, not specific, and not measurable. "Strengthened national capacity" provides an example. This vague objective leaves considerable room for interpretation by program implementers and managers (see section on effectiveness). In addition to the absence of appropriate definitions of outputs and outcomes, the evaluation points to the unreliability of key indicators. As already amply demonstrated, it is not possible to assess rigorously the extent to which EECARO's capacity-building initiatives have been effective. The current RPAP provides an illustration of the challenges that EECARO's outcomes, outputs, and indicators related to capacity building create. Here is an example of a set of EECARO's outcomes and outputs for capacity:

> Outcome:
>
> Population dynamics and its inter-linkages with the needs of young people (including adolescents), sexual and reproductive health (including family planning), gender equality and poverty reduction addressed in national and sectoral development plans and strategies.
>
> Related output:
>
> Strengthened national capacity to incorporate population dynamics and its inter-linkages with the needs of young people (including adolescents), sexual and reproductive health (including family planning), gender equality and poverty reduction in national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and other relevant national plans and programs.

Both the outcome and output have an extraordinarily large scope, under one heading, all activities related to population and development, sexual and reproductive health, youth, and gender, notwithstanding the mislabeled outputs already signaled earlier. There is considerable freedom in implementing such general and broad tasks (i.e., large choice of topics and themes and training approaches), but also considerable stress in trying to cover all issues.

The associated indicators for the outputs include:

- Number of national institutions where EECARO has supported capacity development initiatives to incorporate population dynamics issues in relevant national plans and programs.
- Number of persons trained through EECARO support in the incorporation of population dynamics issues in relevant national plans and programs.

These indicators fail to address whether these national institutions have actually incorporated population dynamics issues in their plans and programs, and if so, whether this is due to EECARO's initiatives. Moreover, there is no indicator to capture the quality of training and activities related to capacity-building initiatives.

Therefore outputs, outcomes, and key indicators that are used to assess capacity-building activities are not relevant for capacity development: with the absence of clear objectives and appropriate indicators, capacity-building initiatives run the risk to remain one-off events rather than well-structured initiatives embedded in a logical framework.

Assessment of the effectiveness and sustainability of EECARO's initiatives related to capacity building

As a consequence of the lack of relevance and appropriateness of the methodological tools, it is not possible to ascertain the effectiveness and the sustainability of capacity-building initiatives. There is no evidence that the persons trained have improved their capacity per se, that is, in addition to skills acquired. Did they gain capacity "to perform in support of their development objectives?"[53] The ability to perform in such a manner is much larger than just acquiring skills. End-of-activity evaluations are often used to judge the success of EECARO's events. These so-called level-1-evaluations, often called "smile sheets," assess how well participants liked an event. As the Zinovieff research[54] has concluded, however, "there may be no relationship between how participants feel about the training and improved individual and organizational performance":

> "just as there is no proven causal link between reaction and learning, there is no such link between learning and behavior change. Just because a participant learned something does not mean anything will be done with the learning – hence the importance of behavior change evaluation…."

As shown in table 8, there are other things that need to be measured to determine whether capacity has been enhanced or strengthened. EECARO has relied almost exclusively on the first level, which means that it has not collected any direct evidence of changes in behavior or achievement of results. Likewise, EECARO has little or no information about whether or how participants in its training, or other capacity-building initiatives, have been able to spread knowledge and capacities within their organizations. These findings mean that the indicators defined in the current RPAP do not take into account the long-term processes that capacity development implies as well as the three dimensions of the DAC definition

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[53] UNFPA, Office of Oversight and Evaluation, *UNFPA's Support to National Capacity Development Achievements and Challenges*, 2003.
[54] Michael A. Zinovieff with the support of Arie Rotem, "Review and Analysis of Training Impact Evaluation Methods, and Proposed Measures to Support a United Nations System Fellowships Evaluation Framework," Prepared for the World Health Organization's Department of Human Resources for Health on behalf of the UN Task Force on Impact Assessment of Fellowships (2008).

(human, organizational, and institutional). In addition, relying on the theory of change, these indicators should include subsequent changes in behavior and performance at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels. In sum, according to the DAC definition, the likelihood that EECARO's capacity-building activities are effective is low.

Table 8: Four levels of evaluation

Level	Measurement focus	Questions addressed
1 Reaction	Participants' perceptions	What did the participants think of the event?
2 Learning	Knowledge and skills gained	Was there an increase in skills or knowledge?
3 Behavior	Implementation at work site	Are the new skills and knowledge being used on the job?
4 Results	Impact on organization	What effect did the event have on the organization?

In spite of the inability to measure reliably and accurately the results of EECARO's capacity-building activities, field interviews of the evaluation team show that some capacity-building initiatives were relevant, effective and had possibly sustainable outcomes, keeping in mind though that this is a subjective assessment as it relies mainly on face-to-face interviews.

Capacity building initiatives for partners

National partners working in the sector of population and development who were interviewed in Moldova found useful the one-week training provided by EECARO in collaboration with UNDESA in Minsk.[55] This training on international migration used a systemic approach, which corresponded to the needs of the participants. Building on this training, workshops were organized by the Vienna Institute of Demography on the "Effects of Migration on Population Structures in Europe," and subsequently in Moscow (Moscow Population Forum) on international migration in the region. More specific workshops in Vienna on demographic forecasting and on the aging of populations were also found to be relevant and useful to the participants.

These initiatives helped the participants to build baseline data on migration flows and develop their demographic skills, which they use in their daily work. These Moldovan examples illustrate that a well-targeted training addressing country needs can have an effect not only on the individuals who benefited from the training but also on the national institutions where the individuals could spread the learned skills and knowledge and institutionalize the newly acquired capacity. This positive outcome was known thanks to the field visits because such outcomes cannot be found in EECARO's documents due to the inappropriate indicators and the absence of in-depth four-level evaluations of workshops.

Another example is that of successful training initiatives on the inclusion of the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) in emergency situations. EECARO organized the workshop in collaboration with the SRO and the IPPF-EN. As a result of the training the governments of Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Ukraine integrated the MISP for disaster situations in governmental agencies.

These examples indicate that these particular initiatives were relevant, effective and are most likely to be sustainable.

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[55] Ministry of Interior - Migration Agency and the Academy of Science- Demographic Section

In spite of these successes, the team's interviews in all countries visited also revealed several weaknesses. First, the large majority of respondents who had attended workshops said that they were relevant in terms of the needs of country offices and of the governments but weak because many were one-off events, and there was no follow-up. When one-off events are organized without follow-up and without continued attention to further knowledge spread and capacity building, momentum can be lost and scarce resources will have been used inefficiently and ineffectively.

Second, a few respondents and few IPs declared that training events were not well adapted to the education level of some participants. Profiles of participants were sometimes too diverse and, consequently, some wasted their time because the training was too easy; others wasted their time and UNFPA's money because the level was too high and they could not follow or absorb the material because they lacked the necessary background.

Third, some respondents noted that they did not have sufficient support to develop their skills and capacity on population and development issues, and in particular on aging population issues. Other respondents, still in the population and development area, pointed to the lack of technical capacity and questioned the relevance of particular topics to country needs -a concern relates to the issue of country ownership and donor-driven training.

Field interviews thus confirm that capacity-building initiatives in most cases are relevant vis-à-vis the country offices' needs and vis-à-vis country priorities. But with the exceptions indicated earlier, most of them are not effective and probably not sustainable because their methodology is not appropriate, and they remain one-off events as they are not followed-up to ensure continuity in capacity building, and they do not benefit from adequate assessment or evaluation.

Capacity-building initiatives for EECARO staff

Interviews with staff from country offices indicate that training and other capacity-building events usually met their needs and were technically sound. The training events, most frequently cited, that were successful are the workshops on reproductive health and rights provided by the IP SOA AIDS Netherlands -Y-PEER training of trainers[56]; gender budgeting for government focal points and country office staff, and workshops on M&E (M&E capacity building activities are discussed in at length in the section Management Results).

Capacity-building activities launched for UNFPA staff are mostly relevant -as they meet the UNFPA staff's needs- effective, and chances are that they are sustainable. Workshops on reproductive health and rights for example were particularly well received as were those on M&E. But capacity-building initiatives in the field of population and development are insufficient mainly because of the lack of staff having the required level of expertise on demographic issues.

The main weaknesses reported include the following concerns:

- Several respondents said that training provided in the area of population and development is insufficient given the considerable needs of country offices;
- Some technical advisers do not have the required background for the position;
- Some staff have to cope with several clusters (sectors) in addition to their administrative work and do not have time to participate in workshops although they said they would like to do so;

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[56] There was also some concern expressed about the Y-PEER training. Some respondents consider it to be outdated, too narrow, and focusing on "making sex a safer sport." Others voices concern that the training includes "middle class, educated kids," while neglecting vulnerable youth, street kids, and drug users.

- The other concern is that many people in country offices would like to participate in training activities, even when these are specialized and not intended for these people; and,
- One respondent stated that the skills and capacity of staff from the country office may have improved, but there has been "little effect" on national capacity.

Reporting of capacity-building activities

Although most CD activities have positive feedback as noted in the previous paragraphs, reporting of capacity-related events in standard progress reports occasionally provides incorrect information in an attempt to be congruent with the RPAP-related outcomes or to meet them in their entirety as shown by several examples below.

In cooperation with the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, EECARO launched a five-day executive course on population and development in Russian. In the annual progress report, the course was said "to enhance the knowledge of national partners on demography/ population and development issues, and to equip them with better understanding of population dynamics and inter-linkages with economic development, gender equality, and SRH/HIV/AIDS issues."

In reality, the course focused on demographic issues including data and analyses, trends in fertility, mortality, and migration trends, population policy and projections, and international cooperation. Interviews indicated that this course was useful for many participants who had the appropriate background. The evaluation team underlines this training because it is a good example in which EECARO initiated a useful course needed by country offices but used it to suggest achievement of an outcome only partially related to that course.[57]

Consequently, policymakers, the targeted participants, were not well matched with the content because they usually do not have a background in demographics. The end result of the course, which could have been rated "very good" on most counts, is mixed mainly because of the heterogeneity of the participants and their different level of preparedness in demography. In the progress report's section on "Capacity Development and Partnership" no reference is made on how the course can contribute to capacity development. The section includes recommendations on how to improve future courses such as extending its duration, checking the background of selected participants, etc.

Standard progress reports include the following requirement on capacity development events: "Describe at which level capacity development activities took place (policy/institutional, organizational, individual)." Almost all EECARO responses start with this sentence: "*Capacity development activities took place at both institutional and individual levels…,*" and are followed by different explanations. Some are acceptable; other explanations note how events have affected individuals, organizations, and institutions separately, without considering the possibility that organizations to which the trainees belong may eventually use the trainees' new skills to strengthen their own systems and policies rather than focusing on individual skills alone. Sometimes there are no explanations at all or inappropriate ones.

EECARO's Annual Standard Progress Report 2009/2010 described the ICPD/15 high-level regional forum in Istanbul and organized in cooperation with UNECE, IPPF-EN, and EPF. In the section on Capacity and Partnership Development, the response to this above-mentioned requirement was this:

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[57] The outcome was "Population dynamics and its inter-linkages with gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS incorporated in public policies, poverty reduction plans and expenditure frameworks."

Most of the capacity development activities were aimed at the policy/institutional and organizational levels. A good example is the landmark ICPD/15 15 high-level regional forum organized in close cooperation with key partners and hosted by the government of Turkey UNECE, IPPF and EPF. The forum brought together over two hundred participants…

Progress reports are in effect standardized but to such an extent that it seems that they prevent a more in-depth reflection on how to ensure that capacity-building activities can extend from the individual to the institutional level and have an impact at the policy level. It does not suffice to convene a large assembly of government officials to announce that capacity development will automatically evolve among the individuals and the organizations they represent.

Several years ago EECARO selected the Yale University Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS to develop an M&E framework for country offices. EECARO subsequently reported that the center had contributed to development of capacity in several country offices. In contrast, the center's standard progress declared that its project "had little in the way of capacity development" and had "no significant capacity development effort." In other instances, although all standard progress reports are supposed to address "progress in implementation of capacity development strategies" (as well as South-South cooperation) some IPs' reports ignore these topics in their reports. Rather than providing evidence that their activities have promoted capacity development, other IPs' progress reports merely state that "project activities increase the capacity of institutional partners," as if there is a causal relationship between an activity and changes in capacity.

These examples point to weaknesses in the preparation and implementation of capacity-building events, weaknesses that may be attributed to the absence of (a) an operational definition of capacity building and (b) of a strategy that would help structure these events within a vision of what is required to build sustainable national capacity. If these absences were remedied, reporting would then be less descriptive and less simplistic in its effort to conform to result-based management and reporting.

South-South cooperation, knowledge sharing, and advocacy

As noted earlier, the RPAP 2008-2011 indicated that to minimize the risks to capacity-building efforts or, in other words, to expand the notion of capacity building, it is desirable to use a variety of approaches such as training, knowledge and expertise sharing, and North-South and South-South collaboration. EECARO has used each of these approaches, and has done this with success. The evaluation team can assert quite safely that EECARO's actions in each of these approaches have been relevant, effective and perhaps sustainable, although none of these criteria can be demonstrated rigorously.

South-South cooperation, which in the case of EECARO should rather be East-East cooperation, has taken place in many workshops and conferences that bring together an average of six to seven countries in the region. One recurrent and very positive feedback from interviews is how much sharing of knowledge and experiences has occurred during workshops and conferences. Nonetheless, and returning to the RPAP 2008-2011, which noted the benefits of information exchange between the regional and country programs, some respondents indicated that there has been insufficient input by country offices into EECARO's annual working plans. It appears thus that in this specific case, knowledge sharing may have been unidirectional rather than to way.

Advocacy is overall successful although this again cannot be rigorously demonstrated. EECARO funded a series of case studies on gender-based violence in Armenia, Romania, Turkey, and Ukraine, which were disseminated with an electronic copy of the report and launched through a webinar. Subsequently the

government of Turkmenistan convened an international conference reaffirming commitment to the ICPD Program of Action and the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. While there is no doubt that these initiatives were useful and may have had an impact on women's status in participant countries, the lack of follow-up does not permit a demonstration of the relative value of these initiatives.

Another interesting example, although a one-off event, is that of a workshop and study tour to Malaysia on family planning that was organized for countries in Central Asia. This predominantly Muslim country has successfully integrated family planning policies in its national policy framework. Interviews indicated that the study tour was much appreciated because it provided useful examples of how family planning could be adopted in countries with a majority of Muslim inhabitants like in central Asia. A follow-up meeting in Kazakhstan was organized for illegal migrants, and the government of Kazakhstan is now committed to the cause and has agreed to lead the follow-up.

The evaluation of capacity building initiatives started with the observation that although EECARO has launched a large number of activities, it has been done without having formalized an operational definition of capacity building, and without having developed a strategy for its CB activities. For the past five years, activities have grown without a shared and operational definition of capacity development, without a strategy or long-term vision, and without a clearly defined and measurable goal. The consequences were that the indicators needed to measure the results of CB activities were not adequate, and the important dimensions of CB - the impact of CB initiatives on organizational and institutional capacity- have not been taken into account. The shortfall of the methodological approach prevents an adequate measure of the effectiveness and sustainability of CB activities.

Yet several success stories were collected during field visits in which CB activities turned out to be relevant, effective and sustainable, but it could not be demonstrated that CB efforts achieved their intended results. Workshops and events focusing on advocacy and knowledge sharing are usually well received as they appear to be relevant and effective, and do foster East-East cooperation.

This leads to the conclusion that capacity building as a development result is viewed as relevant in most cases, effective and sustainable in most cases too, but there are also important methodological weaknesses that need to be dealt with.

9.2 Capacity building as a Management Result

From a management perspective, capacity building issues are being examined through EECARO resource mobilization practices and through the approaches of monitoring and evaluation to strengthen program effectiveness and accountability.

Resource mobilization

In addition to core resources that UNFPA's headquarters provide to EECARO each year, the regional office also depends on noncore or extra-budgetary resources, which include all funds received from non-UNFPA sources -other UN agencies, private enterprises, foundations, universities, and multilateral and bilateral donors.

EECARO realistically recognizes that it works in a difficult environment and in many middle-income countries that do not represent priorities for resource-scarce donors. The data in table 9 show the extra-budgetary funds available to EECARO from 2009 through 2012 based on financial data on project monitoring in ATLAS (UNFPA's enterprise resource management system). Support from bilateral donors

declined precipitously from 2009 to 2012 as did support from other UN agencies. These two sources provided one-quarter of the regional office's budget in 2009 but less than 10 percent in 2012. In contrast to these changes, the regional office increased its dependence on funds from within the UNFPA, namely the ICPD Secretariat and Global Fund to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security.

Table 9: Sources of EECARO's funding, 2009-2012

Source of funds	2009	2010	2011	2012
Bilateral donors	$ 959,725.67	$ 953,742.54	$ 145,547.00	$ 259,194.00
% of EECARO's total budget	14.0%	11.7%	2.0%	3.2%
Other UN agencies				
UNAIDS	$ 760,448.87	$ 862,742.00	$ 974,118.39	$ 473,450.00
UNODC				$ 30,000.00
% of EECARO's total budget	11.1%	10.6%	13.1%	6.3%
Noncore funds from within UNFPA	$ 234,612.00	$ 228,000.00	$ 291,110.00	$ 774,251.00
% of EECARO's total budget	3.4%	2.8%	3.9%	9.6%
Total extra-budgetary funds	$ 1,954,786.54	$ 2,044,484.54	$ 1,410,775.39	$ 1,506,895.00
% of EECARO's total budget	28.4%	25.1%	18.9%	18.7%
Core resources	$ 4,922,998.00	$ 6,100,631.55	$ 6,046,357.73	$ 6,533,691.00
Total budget	$ 6,877,784.54	$ 8,145,116.09	$ 7,457,133.12	$ 8,040,586.00

Note: Total budget excludes in-kind contributions of $74,000 and $80,000 in 2011 and 2012, respectively, and funds transferred to other business units in those years. Using different (and significantly lower amounts) for EECARO's total annual budgets, the regional office computed the resources it mobilized as 50 percent in 2009, 42 percent in 2010, 39 percent in 2011, and 42 percent in 2012. Although EECARO claimed that the evaluation team did not use UNFPA's "corporate standard" to determine the external resources mobilized, EECARO did not respond to two requests from the evaluation team to provide this standard.

Sources: ATLAS reports for all funds, for all implementing agencies, for the years indicated for Department B1900, EECA Regional Office. Amounts for 2012 are as of January 18, 2013. The evaluation team twice asked EECARO to provide the evaluation team with the final budget amounts for 2012, but the regional office chose not to do so.

The regional office cannot rely solely on agency-provided funding if it expects to implement all of its programs. In recognition of this situation, EECARO completed a *Resource Mobilization Strategic Plan 2011-13 and Beyond*. The plan established four priority goals:

- To develop future income generation from the emerging and nontraditional donors in the region securing X% of EECARO's annual budget in additional resources from these sources by 2014.
- To consolidate and "broaden income generation donors base," including national governments, by securing X% of the annual budget in additional resources.
- To strengthen and optimize support to country offices from the regional office so that resource mobilization opportunities are maximized and donors approached in a timely and systematic way.

- Continuously ensure support to the country offices and EECARO and strengthen the capacity to absorb the resources and demonstrate results in a transparent manner, to satisfy the donor requirements for the reporting and accountability.

The "X%" in the first two goals replicates the exact wording from the plan. As a consequence, it is not possible to assess whether the goals have been achieved or how much progress there has been.

The goals for resource mobilization in the regional office's AWPs for 2011, 2012, and 2013 are similarly opaque. For 2011, the verbatim goal was to have an "annual increase with 5% of resource mobilized" by the regional office. For 2012 and 2013, the indicator was changed in EECARO's relevant AWP, but it did not improve clarity: "Percentage of Regional Office Resource Mobilization plan target reached," with a target of 90 percent.[58]

Regardless of whether the goals were achieved, several issues merit attention. First, there is a lack of clarity about what resources should be counted as "mobilized." Within EECARO consensus on this issue is absent. Some respondents believe that all resources other than core resources should be considered as "additional" resource mobilized. This approach counts resources from other units within UNFPA, but this can lead to double counting. All of UNFPA's resources have already been "mobilized" and have already been counted before they are transferred to EECARO. Counting resources acquired from within UNFPA is similar to moving money from one pocket to another in the same pair of pants and counting the money each times it enters a pocket.

Second, some of the resources that EECARO now counts as "mobilized" represent commitments made to UNFPA before EECARO's creation. These resources, which the Government of Japan provides for parliamentary forums on population and development, are likely to continue without any effort on the part of EECARO. In other words, claiming these resources as "mobilized" by EECARO is problematic.

Third, although the mobilization strategy is explicit in declaring that resource mobilization is a responsibility to be shared among all staff within the regional and country offices, acceptance of the strategy and the responsibility are not universally shared. On the one hand, as an example, an event on gender-transformative programming provided an excellent opportunity to meet with staff of the Oak Foundation, which supports exactly the objectives EECARO wants to achieve in the region. Three people from the foundation attended the event; no program or thematic manager from EECARO did. Likewise, no one from EECARO attended the Forum on Transforming Economic Power to Advance Women's Rights and Justice, which the Association for Women's Rights in Development organized in Istanbul in April 2012.

On the other hand, staff in one country office declared the strategy to be "wishy washy", complained that the responsibility for resource mobilization had been "dumped" on country offices, and commented on the absence of "tangible results" from EECARO's efforts to mobilize additional external resources. Several respondents within the regional office also expressed dissatisfaction with the strategy and noted their belief that its implementation is inadequate.

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[58] Some confusion exists about the annual targets for resource mobilization as well as the resources that should be considered when counting the resources mobilized. As just noted, the AWPs for 2012 and 2013 specify a target of 90 percent of the regional office's mobilization plan target reached. In contrast, the regional office also noted that its target is an "annual increase with 5 percent of resources mobilized" by the regional office. Some of EECARO's calculations of resources mobilized include funds from within UNFPA, but neither the evaluation team nor the regional director believe that such funds should be counted as resources mobilized.

Based on these findings, the goals for resource mobilization and the strategy defined to reach these goals have not been made sufficiently relevant to provide a well-defined framework and timetable for this crucial EECARO issue.

However these concerns may not recognize or appreciate the constraints that EECARO faces in its efforts to mobilize extra-budgetary resources from outside UNFPA. EECARO does not have an advisor for resource mobilization; the responsibilities for that task have been given to someone who is responsible for other tasks as well.

Compared with other regions in which UNFPA works, the EECA region has a high proportion of middle-income countries with educated populations. EECA also has the highest proportion, by far, of countries that have "demonstrated significant progress" in achieving the goals of the ICPD. Half of the UNFPA-supported countries in the EECA region are in that category compared with only 4 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. In contrast, EECA has no countries that are deemed to be "in most need of assistance" to reach the ICPD's goals. In sub-Saharan Africa, 41 of 45 countries are in that category. In other words, EECA's characteristics understandably deter donors from devoting their dollars and Euros to the region.

Despite these challenges, resource mobilization is a priority for most country offices. Some of them, such as in Georgia, Moldova and Turkey, have been highly successful in mobilizing external resources. Other country offices find that they have little experience with fund raising or the development of proposals and face a shortage of donors willing to fund the agency's initiatives. EECARO has provided much-appreciated training in resource mobilization to the staffs of country offices. Responses to this training from country offices indicate that far more is both desired and needed.

While it is not possible to assess the efficiency of resource mobilization, sustainability remains a concern because of the challenges that EECARO faces in mobilizing extra-budgetary resources.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation

With UNFPA's creation of its five regional offices in 2008 also came the creation of new positions of regional M&E advisors in the same year. In terms of M&E, regional offices are accountable for:

(i) overseeing evaluation of regional activities; (ii) providing support and technical advice to the monitoring and evaluation activities of country offices through regional monitoring and evaluation advisers; (iii) reporting through Program Division to the Executive Committee on the evaluations and evaluation follow-up in the region; (iv) ensuring that, at the program planning stage, adequate results frameworks are developed for programs, including a national evaluation capacity building component; (v) ensuring the full and active participation of national counterparts in the evaluation process; and (vi) seeking increased involvement in joint evaluations with partners, donors and program countries.[59]

EECARO has an active and largely effective agenda related to M&E. The related activities have contributed to improved effectiveness and accountability, both at the regional and country levels. As an example, in collaboration with one of EECARO's thematic advisors the M&E advisor was instrumental in working with Yale University's Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS to develop an M&E framework for use in eight countries in the region. The framework was intended to measure the commitment of local and national governments to (a) implement sexual education in schools; (b) enable

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[59] UNFPA, *Draft Revised UNFPA Evaluation Policy*, January 2013. Although this draft statement is new, the evaluation team assumes that the M&E-related responsibilities of regional offices have been similar to ones identified here.

young people to utilize youth-friendly services; and, (c) continued youth participation in political decision making. Yale piloted the framework in several countries, revised the framework based on the pilot testing, and completed data collection using the revising framework.

In a second initiative, the M&E advisor organized a five-day workshop on results-based M&E for staff from many of the region's country offices in November 2011.[60] The M&E advisor also assisted in the development, implementation, and oversight of an evaluation of Y-PEER.[61]

The M&E advisor also initiated two other well-received activities. He organized a peer review of the M&E system in the UNFPA country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Staff from UNFPA's country offices in Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine met with the staff in Bosnia's country office to critique and offer suggestions about how to enhance the M&E system. The review, which may be repeated in other country offices, was described as "really useful" and as "a friendly discussion." Other country offices have expressed an interest in having similar reviews, and several are planned for 2013. Such reviews provide exemplary examples of South-South cooperation.

In collaboration with the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET), the regional office has been sponsoring participants from country offices as well as from government ministries. EECARO provides participants with 20 percent of the daily subsistence allowance and covers the cost of their travel to and from Ottawa, where the training occurs. IPDET then provides the training without cost to EECARO or the participants. Depending on the number of weeks in attendance, the cost per participant can be as high as $14,000 for the full four-week program, or $7,200 for the two-week program. These amounts include tuition, room, and board.

Since 2010, EECARO has sponsored more than 30 attendees, with most of the recent attendees attending two-week sessions. Among the former IPDET participants who were interviewed for the evaluation in several countries, there was overwhelming praise for the training, with some saying that the training was "amazing" and "really important." As a result of IPDET, several participants want to provide similar training in their own countries. In Ukraine, for example, a former attendee obtained funding from the Canadian International Development Agency and arranged for two IPDET instructors to present a one-week workshop on M&E in Kiev for more than 30 participants in early 2012. The instructors subsequently invited two of the best participants to attend the full four-week IPDET training in Ottawa at no cost to them. In addition, IPDET proved beneficial when the attendee was asked to prepare an M&E plan for a proposal to the Global Fund to Fights AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

One challenge associated with IPDET is the balance between participation from country offices versus participation from representatives of NGOs or government agencies. Country offices would like to have more of their staff attend but this would mean fewer participants from outside the UNFPA. There are advantages to having both groups attend, but two weeks of training on M&E may be too much for country office staff who are not focal points or in offices that devote (or can afford) few resources for evaluation. The knowledge gained through IPDET is surely beneficial, but country office staff may have few opportunities to apply whatever skills or knowledge they might acquire.

Further challenges associated with IPDET include the location of the training and the cost of getting and staying there and IPDET's direct relevance to the needs of the EECARO-sponsored participants. Questions were also raised about the value for money associated with IPDET, with some participants indicating that the content and quality did not justify the cost to UNFPA. The evaluation team

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[60] Richard Tobin, the team member for the present evaluation, facilitated the workshop.
[61] Ruth Hope, *Y-PEER Network in EECAR Region Evaluation Report*, April 2012.

acknowledges IPDET's reputation but wonders whether its training matches the particular needs of UNFPA staff. Due to the large number of participants (i.e., as many as 150 each year), IPDET cannot tailor the training to UNFPA's needs. Training in the region, specifically designed for UNFPA staff and the agency's counterparts, might be more effective and efficient than is now the case. Nonetheless, EECARO should be applauded for the arrangements it has made with IPDET. Most participants who were interviewed for the evaluation, the reaction was overwhelmingly positive.

These are successful initiatives, but when asked whether there has been any follow up from EECARO about IPDET, only one participant of about a half dozen interviewees reported that she had been asked to submit a report about IPDET to EECARO. But none of the participants interviewed reported having been specifically asked how they had applied what they learned at IPDET.

Although resources for evaluation have been available, none have been used to conduct evaluations of EECARO's implementing partners. Similarly, there have been few country program evaluations (i.e., one completed in 2010, two in 2011, and none in 2012), so there has been little need or opportunity to provide assistance to country offices for evaluations. In contrast, there is a continuing need for assistance on monitoring.

As previously noted many of EECARO's AWPs are deficient in terms of their indicators, the absence of baselines and/or targets, and their overall attention to M&E. IPs are supposed to have M&E plans and have UNFPA review them, but whether they exist and the extent of their robustness is not clear. EECARO was asked to provide the IPs' M&E plans but did not do so. In short, further attention to the M&E elements of IPs and AWPs is desirable. Doing so would increase effectiveness and accountability.

The analysis indicates that the activities of the regional M&E advisor have been relevant as concerns the needs for capacity building in M&E of the country offices' staffs and national partners. Activities have also been very effective in contributing to develop M&E frameworks, implementing M&E workshops and initiating an effective partnership with IPDET, which enable country office's staffs and national partners to benefit from a highly regarded training. There are clearly many commendable initiatives, but there also appears to have been several missed opportunities, including weak review of AWPs, the absence of IPs' M&E plans, the absence of targets in several AWPs for implementing partners, and insufficient attention to the quality of many indicators

9.4 Partnerships

This section comprises a review of the Framework for Strategic Partnerships; an assessment of the relevance of partnerships established by EECARO against the Office's overall mandate and guidelines; of the effectiveness of joint activities; of the efficiency in selecting partners[62]; and of the sustainability of such partnerships, i.e., an assessment of whether joint activities are likely to generate durable development in EECA region.

Framework for Strategic Partnerships

EECARO's *Framework for Strategic Partnerships* was completed in late 2011 and is appended to the regional office's current RPAP: it outlines the critical partners to be mobilized to achieve the goals of the Regional Program Action Plan. The Framework identifies four partnership platforms: Reducing

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[62] Efficiency cannot be measured on joint initiatives because the review of the costs involved in the established partnerships and possible costs incurred with partners selected on the basis of the procurement regulations is out of the scope of the evaluation. An approximate assessment of efficiency can be provided only on the partner's selection method.

Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in Central Asia; Strengthening Cervical Cancer Prevention in Eastern Europe; Young People policy, sexual, and reproductive health services and education; Reducing sexual and reproductive health inequalities including those related to HIV.

The Framework was too ambitious considering EECARO's means in terms of human resources. On the one hand, the Framework's action plan identified a series of activities, nearly all of which were supposed to have been completed by the end of 2012. For example, the action plan identified more than a dozen organizations with which it would establish formal relationships in 2012; some of these were completed while others were not. The action plan also noted that it would establish formal relationships with all of EECARO's existing strategic partners; but these formal relationships already existed with these organizations.

On the other hand, the *Framework* identified relatively new areas of engagement for the regional office, including ageing, migration, and coordination of capacity-building initiatives among international organizations. These may be areas that would benefit from attention, but they are not directly related to the four partnership platforms. The Framework as an operational document also lacks criteria for determining whether results have been achieved.

The action plan also indicated that EECARO would establish a partnership platform on its web site during the fourth quarter of 2011. In February 2013, the relevant web page was "under construction" and contained no information. Exit strategies (see below) are expected to be part of all of UNFPA's engagement with implementing partners, but the *Framework for Strategic Partnerships* does not discuss plans for ending partnerships.

Types of EECARO partnership

EECARO's partnerships are key to its efforts to build, strengthen, or increase national capacity, especially because EECARO implements few activities or projects directly. That responsibility is largely given to EECARO's partners, which include colleges and universities, international NGOs, one government agency, and other UN agencies, including the World Health Organization and the UN Commission for Europe.

EECARO uses a variety of mechanisms to collaborate with these partners. Some organizations are formally designed as implementing partners (IPs) including strategic partners. A first distinction needs to be made between IPs and strategic partners. A strategic partner is "an organization whose work is closely related to UNFPA's mandate and is in a unique position to influence issues that promote UNFPA's mandate while leveraging political support, skills or resources to achieve results for UNFPA."[63] Strategic partnerships are mainly set up to strengthen commitment to ICPD."

IPs including strategic partners (except those that are UN agencies) are required to have letters of understanding (LoU) that specify the "terms of engagement" with UNFPA. These letters identify IPs' financial and reporting requirements. In 2011, 14 of EECARO's 29 partners were implementing partners. Others have contracts, cooperation agreements, memoranda of understanding with EECARO, and what it has labeled "formalized relationships" to access or acquire other organizations' services. These partners do not have LoU or AWPs. In still other instances EECARO has transferred funds to a country office, which then initiated a LoU with an organization with which EECARO wanted to collaborate.

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[63] UNFPA, *Policy and Procedures for Selection and Assessment of Implementing Partners*, June 2012.

The different mechanisms to classify partners have led to some confusion about the nature of the partnership established by that EECARO. The lists of partners were occasionally inconsistent and some identified organizations as implementing partners when they were not. There were also instances in which a LoU may be appropriate but has not been used.

Relevance of partnerships established by EECARO against the Office's overall mandate and guidelines

Strategic partners

UNFPA's *Global and Regional Program Guidelines* (August 2010) identified two options for the selection of implementing partners: (a) invitations for proposals with competitive bidding process and (b) strategic partnerships "to be applied only to expand partnerships in the interest of strengthening commitment to ICPD."

This is further confirmed by the 2012 *Guidelines* noting that invitations for proposals are the preferred method of selection in recognition "that there is a need for competitiveness and innovation with regard to strategies and interventions required to meet UNFPA priorities, needs and strategic directions." The *Guidelines* also note that sole-source selection of strategic partners is discouraged and that implementing partners should be selected competitively "wherever possible." When invitations for proposals are not used, the unit making the selection "must provide justification for not following the competitive process, including the criteria the unit applied for the selection of the strategic partners." As the *Guidelines* further explain, "Since the use of strategic partnerships as a rationale for choosing implementing partners has come under criticism from evaluators, whenever this format is used, sufficient documentation should be put on file explaining the reasons why this type of partnering was in the best interest of UNFPA."

Among the 18 organizations that have been IPs since 2009, EECARO's *Framework for Strategic Partnerships* identified three strategic partners: the European Parliamentary Forum for Population and Development (EPF), the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (AFPPD), and the International Planned Parenthood Federation–European Network (IPPF-EN). The documentation related to the selection of these strategic partners was not available because UNFPA has long-standing relations with the three organizations that predate EECARO's creation.

Although these partnerships with strategic partners (EPF, AFPPD and IPPF-EN) are based on sound and trustfully relationships and on useful activities comprising capacity building and advocacy as demonstrated in previous sections, it remains that to be fully relevant and congruent with UNFPA's guidelines, systematic invitation for proposals should be conducted before contract renewal to encourage fair competition.

Non strategic implementing partners

As noted above in the 2012 *Guidelines* issued, invitations for proposals should be used for the selection for all IPs that are not strategic partners. But before 2012, EECARO heeded the 2010 procedures and adhered also to the procedures defined in the agency's *Guidelines for Management of Quality Assured Technical Assistance* (March 2011). Although the latter may appear somewhat inconsistent, with the 2010 and 2012 *Guidelines*, they all boil down to the fact that nonstrategic partners need to be selected competitively, whether they belong to a roster or whether they get retainer fees.[64]

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[64] Guidelines on technical assistance imply "compiling a roster of institutions to provide technical assistance". Once on this roster, in lieu of retainer fees…UNFPA can consider cooperation with these institutions…" by following UNFPA rules and regulations, which are linked as regard invitations for proposals to the 2010 *Global and Regional Program Guidelines. From an* E-mail from Nicole Kim, UNFPA Program Division, to Richard Tobin, February 18, 2013.

It may be that EECARO misinterpreted UNFPA's corporate requirements for the selection of IPs as it had not used any invitations for proposals and does not have any written justifications for not having used competitive processes. Rather EECARO staff identified prospective IPs and then entered into discussions with the organizations about becoming an IP. Thus in 2013 EECARO will be working with new IPs of which some have been selected without the use of invitations for proposals.

The relevance of the selection method of nonstrategic implementing partners is rather poor given that the method is not in line with the sets of guidelines issued by UNFPA.

The relevance of EECARO's selection method is further eroded when considering the issue of capacity development. The selection for implementing partners has favored several prestigious, well-established and very competent organizations, including some based in the United States and Western Europe, rather than organizations within the region that could benefit from capacity building and contribute to the strengthening of national institutions and governments. With a few exceptions, EECARO's IPs are those whose capacity does not need to be strengthened. This situation reflects a concern identified by DOS: "The most common misunderstanding about capacity development relates to its conceptualization as a unidirectional knowledge transfer from those who have expertise to those who need it."[65]

Nonetheless, reliance on extra regional organizations is inconsistent with UNFPA's requirement that recipient governments and national NGOs must be given first consideration in the selection of IPs and similarly inconsistent with UNFPA's preference for national ownership and execution. Strengthening of countries' *national* capacity is a goal that UNFPA continually emphasizes and one that is found throughout EECARO's stated objectives. The agency's presumption is that enhanced national capacity is best achieved by relying on institutions within these countries.

In response to this concern, one might claim that there are few institutions within the region that have the technical knowledge and institutional capacity to provide the services that EECARO seeks to provide. A counterargument rejects that position, as shown by the conclusions of an earlier evaluation of UNFPA's capacity-building efforts:

> Counterpart organizations [i.e., IPs] must gradually be given increased responsibility to plan and manage activities on their own rather than relying on UNFPA staff and experts for guidance and advice. This means that at times, projects will be implemented less efficiently due to the learning process. Moreover, specific program aims will not be achieved within the desired time frame, in order that the counterpart organization can take full responsibility and learn from its own experiences and mistakes. Yet, there is a tendency for donor organizations, including UNFPA, to sacrifice sustainable capacity development for achievement of other program aims in the short to medium term. This is an unsustainable strategy.[66]

Thus in view of the overall mandate of EECARO and of the set of UNFPA guidelines and procedures, the relevance of the partners' selection method is questioned as it omits the possibility to foster national capacity building within the EECA region.

Effectiveness of joint activities

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[65] UNFPA, *Report of the Director, Division for Oversight Services*, DP/FPA/2010/19, April 2010.
[66] UNFPA, Office of Oversight and Evaluation, *UNFPA's Support to National Capacity Development Achievements and Challenges*, 2003.

The evaluation team and most respondents have no qualms about the quality or technical competence of most of EECARO's IPs, their contributions to UNFPA's agenda in the region, or to the development of capacity within UNFPA's country offices as amply demonstrated in earlier sections of the report.[67]

To have a better grasp on EECARO overall effectiveness as related to IPs' activities, an attempt to assess the "ideal" number of implementing partners, and the "ideal" amount of funding is carried out. Judging the "right" number is problematic because there are no standards or benchmarks. At the global level UNFPA has acknowledged that it has too many IPs, which generate "small projects unable to reach scale and show impact; [lead] to inefficiencies; and [pose] significant financial management challenges."[68] One of these concerns was relevant to EECARO. Over the past few years some IPs have been given as little as $30,000 or less per year to implement their activities.[69] But since 2009 EECARO has been addressing this issue: in 2009, the median budget provided to IPs was about $45,000; by 2012 the median budget had increased to nearly $146,000. A review of the detailed IPs' activities (funded by EECARO) would enable a fuller assessment of the overall EECARO effectiveness but this is not in the scope of this evaluation.

Moreover, EECARO has conducted capacity assessments of some of its IPs, but the evaluation team was unable to discern whether and how these assessments have been used to determine what gaps in their capacity EECARO should address or seek to strengthen.[70] Several IPs acknowledged that EECARO had assessed their capacity but they were not subsequently informed of the results, and some of them did not know why EECARO had chosen them. As noted earlier and testified with some examples during field visits, EECARO's partnerships and related fruitful IPs activities may have increased capacity but it is not possible to assess the extent or magnitude of the changes. EECARO has not attempted to do so in a reliable or methodologically sound manner, so no pertinent data are available to the evaluation team.

It is therefore not possible to provide a rigorous assessment of the results of EECARO's partnerships with IPs and strategic partners or of results derived from the activities implemented by partners on EECARO's effectiveness.

On the relationships between EECARO staff and the IPs, it is worth noting that IPs were unanimously pleased with their relationships with EECARO. Respondents noted the ease with which there are able to

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[67] There is an important caveat associated this statement. Several respondents in country offices said they did not know who EECARO's IPs are. One reason is that the AWPs for the regional office often use acronyms rather than the IPs' full names.

[68] UNFPA, Report of the Executive Director, *Midterm Review of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2008-2013*, FP/DPA/2011/11, July 2011.

[69] Although these amounts may be sufficient for a specific activity, they may not be enough to reach scale, to show impact, or to ensure sustainability. For example, one IP's annual budget was less than $50,000. When asked how much money would be needed to achieve meaningful results, one respondent estimated $250,000. In fact, several respondents, including some within EECARO, commented on the mismatch between the resources provided to some IPs and the expectations for their achievements. In the opinion of the evaluation team, it is inappropriate to expect IPs to produce meaningful results when the resources provided to them are so meagre.

[70] EECARO's comments on the draft evaluation report asserted that prior to 2011 UNFPA had no requirement that there be assessments of prospective IPs' capacity and no method or instrument for doing so. In fact, UNFPA has long required such assessments. The UNFPA's 1998 *Guidelines for UNFPA Collaboration with Non-governmental Organizations* explicitly mention attention to IPs' programmatic capacity. In March 2000, UNFPA's Office of Oversight and Evaluation provided an instrument to assess the general management, technical, and financial capacities of governmental and nongovernmental institutions. UNFPA's *Follow-up to the Report of the Board of Auditors for 1998-1999: Status of Implementation of Recommendations* (DP/FPA/2001/2, 21 November 2000) notes that "The UNFPA Representatives, the Directors of the geographic divisions and the Technical Support Division (TSD) are responsible for ensuring that the project documentation includes a clear assessment of the capacity of executing agencies and that any weaknesses are appropriately addressed." UNFPA's *Global and Regional Programme 2008-2011: Guide for Implementing Partners* (2008) further notes that the UNFPA and the implementing partner should "undertake an assessment of the implementing partner's capacity to deliver towards achievement of outputs." As this *Guide* explains: "A first step ...is to assess the capacities, strengths, weaknesses, and gaps of potential providers."

work with EECARO as well as the staff's dedication, commitment, and professionalism. Here are two examples that express this satisfaction:

> It is not difficult for our organization to work with EECARO. Our organization has had a good partnership with EECARO for a long time. The officers of EECARO know very well the local peculiarities of our work.

> We find it quite easy to work with EECARO. The regional office is always in contact with us. They are very responsive to our needs, especially technical know-how. During the implementation activities, we have almost 24 hours' interactive dialogue with the EECARO team. They are as a team very supportive to our needs.

Consequences of EECARO's methods to select partners on EECARO's efficiency

The absence of invitations for proposals means that organizations that may have exactly the kinds of expertise that EECARO seeks do not have an opportunity to compete in terms of cost or the quality of services provided to EECARO. These organizations may be able to provide the services that EECARO needs at a lower cost than the IPs that EECARO chooses noncompetitively. When asked, three current IPs and several respondents within country offices indicated that there are other organizations that can provide comparable services to UNFPA; these organizations were not given an opportunity to submit competitive proposals to EECARO.

The regional office has conducted internal and informal assessments of performance, but these have not always led to changed relationships with partners. For example, two UNFPA respondents identified one partner as the "worst ever" organization with which the regional office has worked. Poor performance, in the words of the *Global and Regional Program Guidelines*, provides a reason to end a partnership, but EECARO continues to fund it. The training that another IP provided was described as weak, unsuitable for many of the participants, and of poor quality.

While the joint activities with partners are for the most part effective, doubts about their efficiency remain because possible lower costs for similar services in EECA region could have been obtained with the application of procurement guidelines, and also because the monitoring of IP activities lacks consistency.

Sustainability of EECARO partnerships

The continuity of EECARO's relationships with their partners has an effect on the IPs' ability to continue their UNFPA-sponsored activities after EECARO's funding ends, and thus on their sustainable development. Among some of EECARO's extraregional partners there is no doubt about their ability to continue their operations without UNFPA funding, but there are questions about whether they would choose to continue the activities that EECARO initiated. In contrast, there are substantial doubts about the financial ability of several IPs to continue their activities without EECARO's funding. Several of them indicated that financial limitations would prevent them from continuing these activities unless EECARO's support continued.

Also related to the issue of sustainability are the exit strategies that UNFPA expects from all of its units for their IPs, i.e., the agency initiates funding and provides support to IPs, including strategic partners, but when the time is ripe, IPs are expected to continue their activities without that support. The *Global and Regional Program Guidelines* explain:

It is understood that in some situations even the best strategic partnership will come to a natural end. Respective units should avoid maintaining partnerships based solely on historical reasons. It is recommended that heads of units consider exit options when developing partnership strategies.

While EECARO has encouraged some of its IPs to seek funding from other sources, several IPs indicated they had no idea whether EECARO has an exit strategy for their organization. For some organizations, there may be no incentive to seek other funding. In the words of one UNFPA-sponsored evaluation, "UNFPA and virtually all other donors exhibit the same contradictory behavior of exhorting the recipients of their funds to find new sources of income while at the same time continuing to make their own program funding available."[71]

Evaluation of partners' performance would provide a means to decide whether to continue EECARO's relationships with these partners, but EECARO has not sponsored or initiated any external, independent evaluations of its partnerships.

Thus the likeliness that IPs' activities with EECARO's funding are sustainable is questioned because: (i) activities implemented by extra-regional IPs in the EECA region are not sustainable because of the lack of national ownership; (ii) most activities implemented by regional IPs in the EECA region are small and one-off projects with limited funding and in most cases, no continuity over time as to ensure impact; and (iii) exit strategies are not being determined.

To sum up this section, the overall assessment on partnerships corresponds to a "good" rating. The evaluation team appreciates the strengths of many of EECARO's partners but is concerned about the selection procedures, the limited attention to assessing changes in capacity of several of these partners, and the lack of formal evaluation of their performance. Fortunately these concerns can be addressed and remedied without much difficulty.

9.5 EECARO's Transition Strategy

When EECARO was created in 2008 it worked with 21 countries in the region. At the same time, however, UNFPA had already decided that Bulgaria and Romania, countries that had joined the European Union in 2007, would receive only limited financial support in 2008 and 2009 and that financial support would be discontinued after 2009.[72] In both instances UNFPA delayed its departure and the closure of the two Country Offices. Indeed, project expenditures of the Country Office in Bulgaria were more than 35 percent higher in 2011 than they had been in 2009. Nonetheless, project expenditutes by the Country Offices in the two countries were among the lowest in the region in 2009, 2010, and 2011.

UNFPA closed both Country Offices in 2012 but envisages continued collaboration with the two governments and with others who need or can benefit from UNFPA's support. People from Bulgaria and Romania will be invited to attend EECARO-sponsored events, but UNFPA will not cover the costs associated with their travel or participation. As part of the transition to the changed relationship, the TOR asked the evaluation team to assess the extent to which the new modality/strategy of working in the two countries has been effective.

The evaluation team can provide only a limited and nuanced response to this request. When asked about the transition strategy, one respondent within EECARO said that such a strategy exists. Two other

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[71] UNFPA, Office of Oversight and Evaluation, *UNFPA's Support to National Capacity Development Achievements and Challenges*, 2003.

[72] UNFPA, *Review of the System for the Allocation of UNFPA Resources to Country Programmes*, DP/FPA/2007/18, July 2007. The agency's financial support to Poland ended in 2008.

respondents in EECARO were equally insistent that the regional office does not have a transition strategy. To paraphrase the words of one of these respondents, EECARO "pulled out and probably shouldn't have left."

Although the Country Offices have been closed, UNFPA provides the salary of a single person in Bulgaria to serve as a liaison with the government.[73] A respondent in EECARO labeled this responsibility as an "impossible task" and suggested that EECARO could perform many of the liaison functions in Istanbul. In Romania, EECARO intends to have one of its implementing partners, the East European Institute for Reproductive Health, perform the liaison functions. It is premature to speculate how effective this arrangement will be.

10. Conclusion

Since its inception EECARO had to face considerable challenges:

- The uncertainty about the location of the regional office and the ensuing delays in the settlement of the office and in staff recruitment; the office remained understaffed over the five last years;

- Significant heterogeneity in terms of socioeconomic development of EECARO's countries, which also makes EECA differing widely from other UNFPA regions;

- Changes in leadership and organizational procedures that emphasize short-term objectives and that make compliance with some of these procedures difficult or cumbersome;

- Few resource mobilization opportunities with declining and departing interest among donors leading to concerns about insufficient funding;

- Unanticipated claims on staff members' time from the agency's headquarters;

- Shifting priorities at the corporate level, which affected EECARO's achievements.

In spite of all these constraints, EECARO's recent implementation rates have been high. In line with its mandate EECARO managed to implement a large array of activities that are for the most part capacity building and advocacy initiatives. Although a rigorous assessment of the effectiveness and sustainability could not be done, the evaluation team noted that EECARO has been successful in activities related to reproductive health and commodity security, UBW/HIV, gender and equality while results in the sector of population and development are more uneven.

Considering the main guidelines of the revised Strategic Plan - *consolidating work by prioritizing, and avoiding efforts to try to do everything everywhere*- it appears that these guidelines were not heeded for lack of long term vision. Taking into account the necessity to meet the RPAP, the continuous understaffing of EECARO (especially of technical staff) and its dependence on multiple consultants with high turnover and often short-term assignments, the difficulty for EECARO to prioritize and stick to defined priorities could hardly be overcome. As a result, EECARO did try to meet the requests expressed by country offices and the country needs in the sectors for which it had the relevant the staff, but without long-term plans.

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[73] The person providing this support for EECARO was ill at the time of the evaluation team's visit to Bulgaria. The website for Bulgaria's Country Office is still active but has not been updated since early 2009. Nothing on the website indicates that UNFPA's relationship with the country has changed. The website provides an address for UNFPA in Sofia as well as the hours of its operations.

To establish priorities among the multiple EECARO's activities requires stocktaking of results achieved as well as needs assessments, and above all, a long-term vision of how EECARO can better support country offices and contribute to the strengthening of national capacity. Such long-term vision needs to be framed into a general strategy for EECARO's objectives, activities, means to reach its objectives, and measure its results. And to ensure the success of this overall strategy and make it effective and achievable, the participation of all stakeholders in its elaboration would be key.

Congruent with EECARO tackling diverse tasks without having the time for strategic thinking and prioritizing, it has developed regional strategies for gender, partnerships, and resource mobilization, but it has omitted to define and to develop a strategy for one of its main focus, i.e., capacity building activities. As a result, CB activities have grown without a clearly defined and measurable goal, and the important dimensions of CB - impact on organizational and institutional capacity- have not been taken into account. EECARO's approach to enhancing national capacity has depended on one-off trainings of individuals, which is not an effective or sustainable approach. Limited follow up compounds the problem.

Considering the third guideline of the revised Strategic Plan -*improving measurability*- the evaluation team has underlined the RPAP weak results framework, which does not enable such an improvement. The key tool that UNFPA provides for measuring results against targets is flawed because of the often lack of baseline data, the confusion between outputs and outcomes and the absence of counterfactuals that prevents reliable assessments of EECARO's contribution to results. The logical relationship between activities, outputs and outcomes is often indistinct or imprecise. In some instances the presumed relationships are neither credible nor compelling. In other instances what is achieved bears scant relation to the indicators used to judge success.

A results-oriented culture and buy-in to results-based management are not readily evident in EECARO. AWPs provide both a means and an opportunity to emphasize attention to monitoring and evaluation among implementing partners, but few AWPs incorporate elements that address either monitoring or evaluation. Standard annual progress reports from implementing partners focus on completion of activities rather than achievement of results.

Several other issues are underlined by the evaluation team such as the division of labor, the roles and responsibilities of the staff of EECARO and its SRO. They raise the questions as to what extent are the skills and competencies of each staff maximized. Similarly, are implementing partners the best fitted for the activities they are expected to implement? On which grounds are they selected?

These conclusions would not be sufficient without recognition that EECARO can point to some notable accomplishments and achievements. Many of these are well described in the regional office's annual reports and were confirmed during field visits.

Having observed this, it is also incumbent for the evaluation team to note that its task has been to assess progress relative to the goals that UNFPA and EECARO have established, and to address a series of fundamental questions: Has the regional program accomplished it *intended* objectives? How well has EECARO used its human and financial resources to achieve its contributions? Has the sustainability of results been ensured? How has national capacity been strengthened? These are questions that should be addressed prospectively during the development of the next RPAP.

11.   Recommendations

The recommendations reflect the views and opinions of stakeholders and of the evaluation team, and have a clear link to the findings and conclusions. The first three recommendations are of the highest priority.

They should be addressed collectively by a task force composed of EECARO's and the SRO's professional and administrative staff, a range of colleagues from country offices, and one or more senior representatives from UNFPA's headquarters. The evaluation team is proposing a participatory and a bottom-up approach that leads to EECARO's improved effectiveness and that promotes change at the corporate level to facilitate the achievement of results by regional and country offices. Many of the issues raised in this report are relevant to other regional offices.

Subsequent recommendations are of a lower priority and should be amenable to attention from a smaller group of EECARO's staff members. A detailed timetable over two years is recommended for the implementation of the recommendations.

1. *EECARO's priorities should be reviewed and the scope of its activities reduced.* EECARO's activities should be limited to those issues in which it can achieve a meaningful and measurable impact in a timely manner. EECARO is trying to do too much with too little. Given EECARO's human and financial resources, it needs to focus on activities that produce or lead to sustainable results that can be reasonably attributed to EECARO's efforts. EECARO should explore what is its particular niche, which should be significantly narrower than UNFPA's mandate. The questions that need to be addressed relate to the tasks on which EECARO should allocate its limited resources, to the needs of the country offices that it can reasonably fulfil, and to particular tasks that are best left to country offices or left unaddressed due to the constraints EECARO faces.

2. *EECARO should develop a strategy and a long-term vision for its efforts to strengthen and sustain regional and national capacity.* The strategy should (a) be demand driven and recognize the considerable differences among the countries in the region; (b) be tailored to the needs of the specific institutions to be strengthened (as opposed to vague and generic statements about the strengthening of national capacity); (c) be based on a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of institutional and organizational gaps and needs; (d) identify clear, specific, and measurable goals for EECARO's efforts to strengthen capacity; and, (e) match EECARO's interventions with the gaps and needs identified in the institutions with which EECARO chooses to work. The strategy should be explicit in defining what changes in *organizational and institutional capacity* are expected to occur and be sustained as a result of EECARO's support. Changes in this capacity should be measured through the use of appropriate indicators at the organizational and institutional levels.[74] EECARO should also ensure that all of its IPs are familiar with and seek to achieve the goals included in the strategy.

   The strategy should *not* be premised on an assumption that training of individuals is a proxy for or a valid indicator of strengthened national capacity in any of the areas in which EECARO works. The number of people trained should not be used as an indicator of enhanced or strengthened capacity. The strategy should also include a means to measure and objectively evaluate the results, including the quality, of any capacity-building initiatives that UNFPA supports either directly or indirectly through its IPs.

   EECARO should develop and implement a means to monitor and evaluate the mid- to long-term effectiveness and consequences of the events, including conferences and training workshops that it sponsors or for which IPs are responsible.[75] EECARO could consider the use of level 3 or level

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[74] This recommendation parallels one found in the midterm review of the regional program. The review recommended improved attention to the "measurement of realistic and meaningful change attributable" to the regional program.

4 evaluations, especially of events intended to build capacity among national organizations or institutions.

3. *EECARO could benefit from strengthened results chains to ensure that a credible and logical relationship exists between activities and outputs and between outputs and outcomes.* The evaluation team suggests that EECARO could: (a) start with a clear understanding of the difference between outputs and outcomes; (b) identify realistic outputs and outcomes to be achieved; (c) select the outputs that are necessary to achieve these outcomes; and, (d) select the activities that are necessary to achieve the outputs. Concurrent with this process, EECARO could also usefully consider an improvement in its indicators. Although indicators related to the completion of activities are necessary, EECARO would benefit as well from SMART indicators that are better matched with the outcomes it wants to achieve. At the least, everyone in EECARO should believe that its indicators match well with what they are doing.

4. *EECARO should consider how best to use the SRO and ensure clarity in its roles and responsibilities.* The parallel activities (although neither redundant nor overlapping) of both offices bring into question the relevance of the current blurred division of labor. Looking into that issue, an in-depth reflection on how to explore sound and effective ways to organize the two offices is recommended.

5. *To ensure that EECARO staff members use their time as efficiently and as effectively as possible, it is suggested to ask two questions to all staff members: What do you do best? How much of your time do you spend doing what you do best?* With answers to these questions, EECARO can then consider ways to maximize the benefits of its human resources and talents by finding ways to let people do more of what they do best. This recommendation is based on considerable empirical research that finds that "individuals are able to gain far more when they expend effort to build on their greatest talents than when they spend a comparable amount of effort to remediate their weaknesses."[76]   EECARO could usefully consider the proportion of time that its professional staff devotes to regional issues versus support for country offices. These percentages may vary from person to person, but should be clear to EECARO's management and reflect the distribution and allocation of staff time that maximizes achievement of EECARO's priorities.

6. *Considering future trends with UN agencies, the evaluation team recommends to consider how the regional office should position itself vis-à-vis the implementation of UN Delivering as One,* which may be applied to countries in addition to Albania, a pilot country. Similarly within EECA region, it is advised that EECARO position itself vis-à-vis the possible phasing out of its support to countries such as Albania, Moldova, and the Balkan countries that are increasingly likely to be within the zone of influence of the European Union.

7. *For resource mobilization, EECARO may wish to count as mobilized only those resources that are provided from outside of UNFPA rather than counting resources from within the agency as "mobilized."* Rather than trying to convince prospective donors that they should support

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[76] D. O. Clifton and J. K. Harter, "Strengths Investment," In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, and R. E. Quinn (eds.), *Positive Organizational Scholarship* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003) as cited in J. Asplund, S. J. Lopez, T. Hodges, and J. Harter, *The Clifton Strengths Finder, Technical Report: Development and Validation* (2009).

UNFPA's traditional activities, EECARO may wish to consider an approach that identifies the issues that these donors are willing to fund and then to focus on these activities. All such activities would be within UNFPA's mandate, but the relative emphasis on them would change.

The resource mobilization strategy should be updated and revised, particularly in regard to enhanced collaboration with the European Union and UNFPA's office in Brussels. EECARO should (a) ensure that its staff is aware that such mobilization is a fully shared responsibility within EECARO, even if a resource mobilization advisor is hired and (b) work with country offices to ensure a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities for resource mobilization as well as EECARO's.

8. *In selecting implementing partners, with the exception of partners that are deemed to be unique and strategic, invitations for proposals should be used in every instance possible, thus encouraging competition and the opportunity for improved efficiency.* EECARO should have a clear and explicit exit strategy for all IPs; this strategy should be developed and shared with them. Once IPs are selected:

- compliance with the UNFPA's requirements for the content of AWPs is essential. Responsibility for ensuring this compliance, particularly with respect to the validity, merits, and monitoring of the indicators, should be shared between program/thematic managers and EECARO's M&E advisor. The same approach should apply to IPs' M&E plans. Baselines and targets related to outputs and outcomes should be provided in all instances and subsequently used to assess results actually achieved. If targets are changed during the year, a rationale for doing so should be documented in writing.
- EECARO should ensure that (a) support costs are actually negotiated rather than merely continued at the same level from one year to the next and (b) that support costs are not provided to public institutions, including academic ones.
- EECARO should ensure that IPs' annual standard progress reports discuss results achieved, not just activities completed.
- Over the next few years EECARO should initiate formal evaluations of IPs with which the regional office has long-standing relations or those that have received significant amounts of funding from EECARO.
- IPs should be informed as soon as possible during a calendar year whether EECARO intends to continue funding them the following year. This notification can be no more than a tentative intention of support rather than a firm commitment of funding.

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I.   Annex 1: Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

Terms of Reference for the Conduct of the Evaluation of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme 2008-2012

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Istanbul, Turkey

1.   Background

The UNFPA Global and Regional Programme 2008-2011 was approved by the Executive Board in January 2008 along with the Strategic Plan. After the Executive Board approval, the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme Action Plan (RPAP) was formulated and approved by the Programme Review Committee in May 2008, with a total budget allocation of $17.9 million for the four years.

Shortly after the approval of the RPAP, UNFPA's regionalization process began, which merged the functions of the geographic divisions, formerly based in New York, with the Country Support Team (CST) in Bratislava. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the regionalization process began in 2008, with establishment of a separate regional office and hiring of new staff for the regional and subregional offices. Regionalization had implications not only for the structure of the office, but also for the way in which the UNFPA regional programme functions, which envisages the regional and subegional office's role of a knowledge broker, facilitator of skills transfer, promoter of institutional networks and south- south cooperation. The personnel component of regional programme encompasses technical, programme and operations support to UNFPA's Country Offices in the region.

The regional programme covers the three goal areas of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan: Population and Development; Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; and Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In line with the Strategic Plan 2008-2011, the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional office developed it's RPAP focuses on the three goal areas of the Strategic Plan with key strategies to address: (a) strengthen national capacity to incorporate ICPD and Millennium Development Goal priorities in national development frameworks; (b) mobilize the potential of United Nations reform, including the resources available through the United Nations country teams and the expertise and knowledge available globally, regionally and locally, to provide effective support to countries; (c) develop national capacity through South-South cooperation and intensify efforts to use national, regional and interregional resources to support national development and country programmes; and (d) mobilize global and regional technical resources and networks to provide integrated technical and programme support. The 2008-2011 EECA Regional Programme is delivered across 12 outputs.

In June 2009, the UNFPA Executive Board extended the Strategic Plan (SP), and along with it the Global and Regional Programme (GRP), until 2013. As a result of the Strategic Plan Mid-Term Review, the Executive Board approved a revised Strategic Plan, which included a revision of the Development Results Framework and Management Results Framework. The revision of the results frameworks were guided by: i. consolidating work by prioritizing, ii. Avoid doing everything everywhere, iii. Avoid "silo" thinking, and iv. Improve measurability. The new development and management results framework includes one goal, seven development outcomes and four management outcomes. For the first time, the new Strategic Plan (SP) defined outputs against each development outcome and indicator both at outcome and output levels.

In November 2011, a revised EECA Regional Programme Action Plan aligned to the new SP and the new UNFPA Business Plan was approved by the Programme Review Committee for an additional amount of $18 million for the two years. The revised RPAP focused on 7 global development outcomes and defined 12 outputs.

2.   Purpose of Evaluation

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to assess effectiveness of regional programme with specific focus on capacity building and partnerships. The evaluation will review and analyse Regional Programme achievements and related strategies over the period 2008-2012, and how the regional programme results have contributed to the UNFPA Strategic Plan outcomes. The evaluation will contribute to the development of new Regional Programme which will be prepared by the UNFPA regional office for 2014-17.

The evaluation will be guided by the following objectives

- To determine the extent to which regional programme development and management results were achieved and the factors that facilitated or hampered achievements
- To examine the extent have the regional programme capacity building and partnership initiatives and strategies adopted to achieve the programme results been effective
- To examine the changing global and regional policy and programming context within which UNFPA operates and provide recommendations focused on prospective elements to inform and guide UNFPA's contribution towards the next Regional Programme

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will cover the UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme from 2008 to 2012. The evaluation is expected to take place during the period of November 2012- February, 2013.

Evaluation Objectives and Key Questions

The evaluation will examine the achievement of results and identify challenges and strategies for the next RP. The core set of criteria shown below will be applied in assessing the results (indicative evaluation questions identified below to be finalized during the evaluation Inception Report phase).

The evaluation will encompass: the RP, integrated technical and programme support provided by Regional Advisors, regional institutions and other sources of expertise, and Trust/Thematic Funds e.g UBW/ HIV, Reproductive Health Commodity Security (RHCS) etc.

The two main RP focus areas that will be examined are RP capacity building and partnerships under development and management results areas are as follows:

Development results:
- Capacity building:
  - To what extent have capacity building initiatives focused on UNFPA COs, national and regional partners/institutions been effective? Examine this issue according to the 7 development outcomes
    - Do the focus areas respond to the priorities at country level? This should include how RP topics/issues are selected and prioritized.
    - Have the initiatives targeted the appropriate institutions and/or individuals?
    - Was the knowledge and skill set offered by these initiatives appropriate?
    - As a result of the capacity building initiatives, are UNFPA CO's better positioned to:
      - Engage in policy dialogue to ensure ICPD issues are reflected in national and UNDAF priorities?
      - Provide technical leadership in response to national priorities?
    - Are the CB modalities used under the RP appropriate in terms of contributing to CO Capacity Building
      (include when a modality was effective/ineffective and under what circumstance and why, disaggregate by outcomes)? This should also include use of regional versus cluster approach, and country specific technical assistance interventions.
  - To what extent have advocacy capacity building focused on COs and counterparts advocacy been

effective Examine this issue according to the development and management outcomes.

  o To what extent has knowledge management (including south-south cooperation) been effective in CO capacity building?

Partnerships

  o To what extent have the partnerships (strategic and implementing partners) contributed to advance the UNFPA agenda in the region?

  o To what extent have the partnerships (strategic and implementing partners) established through the RP contributed to the capacity development of UNFPA CO and national partners in the development results areas?

Management results:

- Capacity building:
  o To what extent has capacity building initiatives focused on UNFPA COs, national and regional partners/institutions and been effective? Examine this issue according to the management outcomes (M&E, Resource Mobilization, Advocacy and Communication)
  o To what extent has the priority goals of resource mobilization strategy achieved?
  o To what extent has M&E efforts contributed to strengthen programme effectiveness and accountability?

- Partnerships (cross cutting portfolio only)
  o To what extent have the partnerships contributed for advancement of ICPD agenda in the region?
  o To what extent have the partnerships established through the RP contributed to the capacity development of UNFPA CO and national partners in the management result areas?
  o To what extent has the new modality/strategy of working in phased out countries been effective?

- RP Management
  o This will remain an open question where issues of importance to the RP management will emerge from the findings and conclusions. This will not be examined as an independent question by the evaluation team.

Each of these RP Focus Areas will be examined in relation to four of the five DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. This will also affect the organization of the report. Questions will be addressed individually with related DAC discussed under each question.

- *Relevance*: How relevant is the RP to the priority needs of the region and countries? How relevant is the RP to the priorities of UNFPA COs? Has EECARO applied the right strategy within the specific political, economic and social context of the region? What have been the critical gaps in UNFPA RP?
- *Effectiveness*: Has RP accomplished its intended objectives and planned results? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the RP? Should the RP maintain similar strategies and actions for the up-coming cycle? Have the RP activities contributed to enhanced results at country level?
- *Efficiency*: How well did EECARO use its human and financial resources to achieve its contribution? What could be done to ensure a more efficient use of resources in the specific regional context?
- *Sustainability:* Did the RP incorporate capacity development measures to ensure sustainability of the results over time? Are conditions and mechanisms in place so that the benefits of EECARO interventions are sustained and owned by regional/national, institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed?

4. Evaluation Methodology

Data collection and data validation

- The evaluation will use multiple methods that may include document review, group discussions, key informant interviews, in-depth structured interviews, UNFPA system data (ATLAS programme and financial data) as appropriate and as feasible.
- The evaluation team will conduct a stakeholders mapping exercise to prepare a basic map of stakeholders to

identify both UNFPA direct partners as well as stakeholders who do not work directly with UNFPA, yet play a key role in a relevant outcome or thematic area in the regional context. The mapping exercise will include UNFPA country offices, regional programme partners (strategic and implementing partners), national institutions and civil society stakeholders that have participated or benefited from the regional programme, and the other stakeholders which may include the regional economic, social and political commissions and institutions, Governments, civil-society organizations, the private-sector, UN organizations, other multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, and most importantly, the beneficiaries of the programme.

- The evaluation team will draw sufficient samples of stakeholders appropriate to this evaluation
- The evaluation team will draw sample of countries for data collection (country travel maximum 5 countries).
- The evaluation team will justify in their inception and final reports (a) how its methods suitably addressed the evaluation objectives (b) the weaknesses or limitations of the methods and sampling, and (c) how weaknesses and limitations were addressed/minimized.
- The Evaluation team will use a variety of methods to increase the reliability of data and to maximize the validity of findings derived from the data (e.g. applying a mix of data collection methods, using multiple sources for same data for triangulation etc.).

Stakeholders' Involvement

The evaluation will be a participatory process involving UNFPA RO and COs to preserve a sense of ownership and set the stage to openly address issues and challenges and propose solutions or corrective measures to be addressed in the next RP. UNFPA affirms that the success of the evaluation is very much dependent on full stakeholder participation, consultations and participatory evaluation that allows for meaningful participation of all partners and other relevant stakeholders. Broad Stakeholder participation forms a critical component of the evaluation design and planning, information collections, documentation of findings, development of the evaluation report and dissemination of the evaluation results and recommendations through a participatory workshop approach.

The participation of the different stakeholders should be done at different stages of the evaluation process and should also be done separately as their interest and involvement in RP implementation is different. The key stakeholders would be UNFPA COs, other UN agencies and implementing partners. The methodology on how best to capture the input and views of the partners should be discussed during the inception meeting using as a background document the evaluation questions.

Ethics

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG "ethical guidelines for evaluation". Ethical consideration should include:

- Respect to local customs, beliefs and practices; respect to people's right to provide information in confidence and ensuring that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source;
- Informing interviewees in advance on what the interview ground rules are and obtaining their informed consent for participation;
- Right to privacy and minimizing demands on time of the people participating in evaluation

To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators need to be independent, implying that members of an evaluation team must not have been directly responsible for the policy/programming-setting, design, or overall management of the subject of evaluation, nor expect to be in the near future. Evaluators must have no vested interest and have the full freedom to conduct impartially their evaluative work, without potential negative effects on their career development. They must be able to express their opinion in a free manner.

Follow-up and Dissemination

Management Response – the regional office will prepare a management response to the evaluation recommendations in line with UNFPA evaluation procedures. Communication and dissemination – The evaluation report will be shared with Programme Division and Division of Oversight Services at UNFPA headquarters. The evaluation report will be made available to UNFPA Executive Board by the time of approving a new Regional Programme Document in 2013. The report and the management response will be published on the UNFPA website.

5. Composition of the Evaluation Team

The evaluation will be undertaken by a team of two senior consultants with expertise in programme evaluation within the UN context. The evaluation team will comprise a team leader who ideally has experience conducting Programme Evaluation for UN, as well as a team member whose knowledge and skills complement those of the team leader. The Team Leader will liaise with and report to the Evaluation Manager. The team member will report to the Team Leader.

6. Evaluation Management and Oversight – Roles and Responsibilities

The evaluation will be managed by the EECARO Management Team comprising of the following staff:
- (i) EECARO Regional Director
- (ii) SRO Director
- (iii) Team Coordinator
- (iv) M&E Advisor
- (v) Special Assistant to the EECARO Regional Director

The evaluation team will work under the overall guidance of the Regional Director. The ET will work under the supervision and in collaboration with the M&E Advisor on day to day management and coordination, and fulfillment of deliverables. The RO will provide support in logistics. Should a dispute arise within the evaluation team or between the evaluation team and EECARO the process of reconciliation (non-legal) shall be decided by the EECARO Management Team.

The evaluation will be overseen by the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) comprised of the following individuals:
- (i) HQ/Other RO representative
- (ii) CO representatives (2-3 staff at the level of Representative/Assistant Representative)
- (iii) EECARO Programme Staff (2-4)
- (iv) M&E Adviser

The ERG will be responsible for the following roles and tasks:
- (i) Provide overall technical guidance and quality assurance on the evaluation;
- (ii) Review and endorse the evaluation terms of reference;
- (iii) Short list, selection and endorsement of consultants/evaluation team;
- (iv) Review and endorse inception report; and
- (v) Review and approve evaluation report.

The EECARO M&E Advisor will be the Evaluation Manager and will be responsible for the following key roles:

- (i) Responsible for overall quality assurance of the evaluation in accordance with UNFPA and UNEG Evaluation guidelines.

(ii)   Overall coordination of the Consultants/Evaluation Team;

(iii)   Participate in field missions for quality assurance

(iv)   Coordinate UNFPA internal review and ERG processes (CO and EECARO review and comment on ToR, Inception Report, and final report);

(v)   Coordinate with UNFPA management approval of all evaluation deliverables.

7. Evaluation Timeline and Estimated LOE

The evaluation is expected to take place during the three months of October to December, 2012. The number of working days by each consultant is temporarily set at Team Leader (40 days), two Senior Consultants (40 days). The Key evaluation dates in the design, implementation and reporting/dissemination include:

Dates	*Milestones*
October 30, 2012	• Draft terms of reference • Formation of Evaluation Management Group • Formation of Evaluation Reference Group • Finalization of terms of reference
November 2012	• Hiring of evaluation consultants • Finalization of evaluation design • Submission of inception report
December 2012- January 2013	• Data collection including field missions
January - February 2013	☐ Submission of draft report by the evaluation ☐ team Briefing on draft evaluation findings and ☐ Recommendations ☐ Review of draft report by ERG and provide feedaback
February 2013	☐ Submission of final report
March 2013	☐ Preparation of management Response by EECARO

8. Logistical Support

The evaluation will take place with planned visits and consultations in up to five countries of to be named defined in the Inception Report.

The UNFPA RO will be the base for the evaluation team and where the team would meet depending on need, during the evaluation process: at the beginning of the evaluation to clarify role and methodology, agree on the TOR and stakeholders and to prepare the Evaluation Inception Report and also at the end of the evaluation to present the findings and report of the evaluation. During their stay in Istanbul, the evaluation team will visit and meet partners, regional organizations, beneficiaries and stakeholders that are based in Istanbul, The team would also meet with relevant UNFPA RP staff for briefing and discussions on the project and its implementation.

The evaluation team will be supported by the RP and CO Programme Assistant during the duration of the evaluation to provide logistics and administrative support related to the conduct of the evaluation.

The evaluation team will be expected to work five (5) days a week, the sixth (6) day is optional. UNFPA RO and CO's will make available office space. Members of the evaluation team will be expected to bring their own laptops however.

9. Deliverables

Following the review of the proposed TOR and relevant documents project and discussing the evaluation with CO and ERG, the team leader of the evaluation team should submit an Evaluation Inception Report. The inception report describes the conceptual framework the evaluation team will use in conducting the evaluation. It details the evaluation methodology that is how each question will be answered by way of data collection methods, data sources, sampling and indicators. It also provides a clear indication of how the Consultants/Evaluation Team view and understand their tasks and plans to achieve the objectives of the evaluation.

The Evaluation Manager will coordinate the internal review and approval of the inception report from the ERG and the UNFPA CO, and EECARO which will serve as an agreement between CO and the Consultants/Evaluators on how the evaluation will be conducted.

The evaluation team will be remunerated according to the following

schedule: The deliverables for the evaluation team (based on 40 days

LOE) include:

Deliverable	Payment
Inception Report	(40% payment upon EECARO acceptance of Inception Report)
Field visits	Payment is made along with final report (RO to pay travel and DSA)
Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to UNFPA	Payment is made along with final report
Final Report	(60% payment upon RO acceptance of Final Report)

Inception Report: The Consultants/Evaluators will make an oral or a written presentation/briefing of the inception report to RO and its stakeholders. RO's Evaluation Manager will obtain written comments on the inception report from the ERG to the Consultants/Evaluators within 5 days of the report's submission or completion of the oral presentation, whichever comes later. RO reserves the right to modify the TOR in response to the inception report. The outline of the inception report is contained in Annex 3.

Draft Evaluation Report: The evaluators will submit an electronic copy of a draft evaluation report to UNFPA's evaluation manager. The draft report should be thoroughly copy edited to ensure that comments from the UNFPA and other stakeholders on content, presentation, language, and structure can be reduced to a minimum. The ET should review the UNFPA Evaluation Quality Assessment (EQA) Template and Forms to understand a key element of UNFPA's peer review and assessment process of the evaluation it supports (see Annex).

After RO and stakeholders' review of the draft report, the evaluation manager will coordinate written comments on the draft report from ERG, RO, and relevant stakeholders and submit these to the Consultants/Evaluators. Based on these comments, the Evaluation Team will correct all factual errors and inaccuracies and make changes related to the report's structure, consistency, analytical rigor, validity of evidence, and requirements in the TOR.

The Evaluation Team will not be required to make changes to conclusions and recommendations unless they are regarded as qualitative improvements. The recommendation should however be prepared in consultation with the RO and ERG that that they are understood, actionable, and as highly relevant to the RP. After making the necessary changes, the Evaluation Team will submit a revised draft evaluation report, which may lead to further comments from UNFPA. After the second round of review and, if necessary, further revision to the draft evaluation report, the Evaluation Team can then submit the final report for CO approval.

The draft evaluation report will also be shared with EECARO for their review and comments on the quality of the report as per established UNFPA and UNEG evaluation guidelines and standards.

Final Report: The recommended structure of the final report needs to follow UNFPA Evaluation Report Format, with the final format agreed upon by the ET and CO in the Inception Report. The report must contain a self-contained executive summary that provides a clear, concise presentation of the evaluation's main conclusions and key recommendations and reviews salient issues identified in the evaluation. All deliverables must be in English.

Presentation of Preliminary Results: The Consultant/Evaluator will make a presentation to the CO and ERG before the Team Leader leaves the country.

Annex 1: Profile and Tasks of the Evaluation Team Annex 2: List of Documents reviewed for this evaluation Annex 3: Outline of the Inception Report
Annex 4: Structure of Evaluation Report
Annex 5A: UNFPA Evaluation Quality Assessment (EQA) template
Annex 5B: Explanatory notes for Evaluation Quality Assessment (EQA) template

II.   Annex 2: Evaluation Methodology Framework

This framework incorporates the questions asked both in respect to the four DAC criteria and the specific questions asked on capacity building and partnering.

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
Relevance	Does EECARO have a clearly defined strategy for capacity development that specifies (a) what capacity should be strengthened and (b) how changes in capacity will be measured?	Answers to this question are essential in understanding EECARO's goals and objectives	Existence of an explicit definition of organizational capacity, its components, and whether clear, relevant, and measurable performance and target indicators exist	RPAP, EECARO documents	
	Has EECARO conducted baseline assessments of the capacities of its partner to which it provides financial support?	Without baseline assessments it will not be possible to assess reliably whether any change has occurred in capacity	Existence of baseline assessments that address the key characteristics of organizations (e.g., governance, human resources, financial management, procurement, etc.)	Baseline assessment, if they exist	Desk review; interviews with partners
	How relevant is the RPAP's capacity building and partnering strategies to the priority needs of the region and countries?	Very broad question that could form the basis of a study in itself	Degree of concurrence with country and regional priorities	ICPD; Country policy documents; regional statements; strategic briefs	
	How relevant is the RPAP to the priorities of UNFPA country offices? Has EECARO applied the right strategy within the region's political, economic, and social context?	Evaluation needs to take account of diversity in the country office situation and available resources	Degree of concurrence of RPAP with country office priorities as outlined in CPDs	CPDs; country office management and program staff; UNFPA global strategies; strategic briefs	Research and reporting; key stakeholder interviews, document review
	What have been the critical gaps in the RPAP?	It will be important not to fall into the trap of suggesting UNFPA must	Extent to which RPAP does not address critical issues	Key stakeholders including country office management and staff,	Key stakeholder interviews, document review, research

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
		do everything everywhere. Gaps should be assessed in terms of the key interventions that UNFPA can make		EECARO staff; collaborating partners; implementing partners; counterparts	
	Have the capacity-building initiatives targeted the appropriate institutions and/or individuals?	Capacity building needs definition for purpose of evaluation and identifying staff performing key functions	Whether there are other institutions and staff that are essential to performing key functions that are not targeted	Key stakeholders including counterparts, country offices management and staff, EECARO staff; collaborating partners; implementing partners;	Key stakeholder; country office. EECARO staff
	Were the capacity building initiatives offered to counterparts appropriate?	Capacity building concerns more than skills and knowledge and should also cover work systems, staffing structure, resources, etc.	Capacity of institutions and individuals provided with capacity building to perform key functions to appropriate level	Key stakeholders including counterparts , country office management and staff; evaluations of activities and capacity building plans if available	Key stakeholder interviews, capacity building documentation; evaluations
	Are the capacity building modalities used under the RP appropriate in terms of contributing to national capacity development (include when does a modality tend be effective/ineffective and under what circumstance and why)?	A sample of capacity building modalities needs to be drawn on across P&D, RH and GE.	Extent to which particular modalities are successful in improving capacity Identification of factors in particular modalities that inhibit or enhance the improvement of capacity at country level	Key stakeholders including counterparts , country office management and staff, providers; evaluations of capacity building activities	Key stakeholder and provider interviews, document and evaluation review
	Are the capacity building modalities used under the RPAP appropriate in terms for contributing to country office capacity development (include when does a modality tend be effective/ineffective and under what circumstance and why)?	Definition of capacity building needs further consideration. A sample of capacity building modalities needs to be drawn on across several program areas.	Extent to which particular modalities are successful in improving capacity Identification of factors that inhibit the improvement of capacity at country level	Key stakeholders including counterparts, country office and EECARO; documentation on capacity building activities	Key stakeholder, counterpart, and provider interviews, document and evaluation reviews

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
	Do the focus areas respond to the priorities at country level, including how RPAP topics/issues are selected and prioritized?		Extent to which capacity building reflects country priorities	CPAP; country policy documents, plans and reports; key stakeholders including country office management and staff, EECARO staff.	Key stakeholder and provider interviews, capacity building documents on activities conducted, and evaluation reviews; CPAP and annual work plans
	Have capacity-building initiatives targeted the appropriate individuals in country offices?	Capacity building should be defined for purposes of evaluation	Whether there are individuals that are essential to performing key functions that were not targeted	Key stakeholders including country office management and staff, EECARO staff;	Case studies; key stakeholder and provider interviews, capacity building documents on activities conducted, and evaluation review; CPAP and AWPs
	Were the capacity building initiatives offered to country offices appropriate?	Capacity building concerns more than skills and knowledge. Suggest extension to cover work systems, staffing structure and resources	Capacity of institutions and individuals provided with capacity building to perform key functions to appropriate level	Key stakeholders including country office management and staff, EECARO staff	Key stakeholder interviews, capacity building documentation; evaluations
Effectiveness	Has the RPAP accomplished its intended objectives and planned results? What measurable results support this judgment?	A broad question and difficult to answer objectively in the absence of a relevant program results framework	Level of achievements against indicators/targets (as outlined in RPAP monitoring framework) over time. Documentation and analysis of key stakeholder opinions on contributory factors.	Key stakeholders at regional and country levels; regional plan; RPAP; strategy papers;	Key stakeholder interviews, document review, annual reporting
	What are the strengths and weaknesses of the RPAP? Are there clear, specific, and measurable goals and targets? Are there appropriate distinctions between outputs and outcomes?	Answers will emerge from analysis of findings	Documentation and analysis of stakeholder opinions on strengths and weaknesses of RPAP	Key stakeholders including partners at regional and country levels; regional plan; RPAP; strategy papers;	Key stakeholder interviews, document review, case studies, SWOT analysis drawing on cumulative

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
					findings
	Should the next RPAP be more focused?	Answers will emerge from analysis of findings. This involves judgements between having UNFPA interventions achieving necessary depth in work while also establishing appropriate breadth. It also raises issues related to UNFPA's capacity for leverage through partnerships	Documentation and analysis of stakeholder opinions on scope and breadth of RPAP and value of particular interventions	Strategic plan, regional plan, RPAP, strategy papers	Key stakeholder interviews, including with counterparts, document review
	Should the RPAP maintain similar strategies and actions for the next cycle?	Answers will emerge from analysis of findings, including emerging strategic environment facing UNFPA	Documentation and analysis of stakeholder opinions on scope and breadth of RP, the value of particular interventions and gaps identified in particular interventions	Strategic plan, regional plan, RPAP, strategy papers; country office and EECARO staff	Key stakeholder interviews, document review
	Have the RPAP activities contributed to enhanced results at the country level? If so, what measurable evidence supports this judgment?	Answers will emerge from the analysis of findings	Documentation and analysis of stakeholder opinions on level of contribution of RP activities to country level results; extent to which RP activities are highlighted in country program evaluations; counterfactual information Extent to which research under RP is contributing to country office outputs and outcomes. Extent to which	Country program evaluations; regional AWPs; strategy papers; research papers; country office and EECARO staff	Key stakeholder interviews, document review including reports, reviews and evaluations

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
			capacity building activities or knowledge activities under the RP have been value-added to country level		
	As a result of EECARO's efforts, has much capacity has changed among country offices and implementing partners, and how do we know?	It is not possible to analyse all capacity building activities. THE RPAP calendar of events will be used to identify a sample of activities for analysis in P&D, RH and GE.	Documentation and analysis of stakeholder opinions on effectiveness of capacity building initiatives with UNFPA counterparts at country level	Country program evaluations; regional AWPs; country level counterparts; country office program staff; EECARO program and technical staff	Interviews with selected country level counterparts; interviews with selected country office program staff; interviews with EECARO program and technical staff; document review of capacity building activities
	Have regional capacity-building initiatives complemented capacity building efforts by UNFPA or other partners at the country level?	This requires identification of regional activities including related capacity building undertaken by other stakeholders such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNDP	Extent to which capacity building regional initiatives have linked to country level activities Extent to which duplication in capacity building activities has occurred	Capacity building documentation and country program evaluations reports; regional AWPs; country level counterparts; country office program staff; EECARO program and technical staff; partners; strategic briefs	Interviews with selected country level counterparts; interviews with selected country office program staff; interviews with EECARO program and technical staff; document review of capacity building activities; UNDAF materials
	To what extent have capacity building initiatives focused on country offices been effective?	It is not possible to analyse all capacity building activities. THE RPAP calendar of events will be	Documentation and analysis of stakeholder opinions on effectiveness of capacity building	Country program evaluations; regional annual work plans; country level	Interviews with selected country level counterparts; interviews with

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
		used to identify a sample of activities for analysis in P&D, reproductive health, and gender equality.	initiatives with UNFPA counterparts at country level	counterparts; country office program staff; evaluation data	selected country office program staff; document review of capacity building activities
	To what extent have capacity building initiatives contributed to the intended institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?	It is not possible to analyse all capacity building activities. The RP calendar of events will be used to identify a sample of activities for analysis in P&D, RH and GE.	Documentation and analysis of stakeholder opinions on effectiveness of capacity building initiatives at country level	Country program evaluations; regional AWPs; country level counterparts; country office program staff; capacity building survey under RPAP; evaluation data	Interviews with selected country level counterparts; document review of capacity building activities
	To what extent has capacity building related to advocacy focused on country offices and counterparts' advocacy been effective?	A sample of policy advocacy capacity building activities will be identified	Extent to which capacity in policy advocacy has been built at country level and has been put into practice	Country program evaluations; regional AWPs; country level counterparts; country office program staff; capacity building survey under RPAQP evaluation data	Interviews with selected country level counterparts; document review of capacity building activities related to policy advocacy
	To what extent have knowledge management activities contributed to capacity building?	It is not possible to analyse all knowledge management activities. The RP calendar of events and country support plan will be used to identify a sample of activities for analysis in P&D, RH and GE.	Extent to which knowledge management activities have contributed to improved organizational capacity	reports on knowledge management activities; EECARO, country offices, management responses to evaluations	Interviews with country offices and counterparts
	To what extent have monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strengthened program effectiveness and accountability? What are the strengths and weaknesses of EECARO are monitoring and evaluation functions?	Rigorous M&E is a prerequisite for learning and accountability	Extent to which M&E promotes learning and accountability; compliance with UNFPA policies and procedures related to M&E; Evidence of review and feedback on partners'	Country program evaluations, EECARO country offices and partners. Partners' required M&E plans	Interviews with country offices and counterparts and partners; desk review of EECARO feedback on partners' M&E plans

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
			M&E plans		
	To what extent have EECARO's partnerships contributed to the capacity development of country offices and national partners? Were the partnerships established in compliance with UNFPA's policies and procedures? How effective are the partnerships, and how well are they managed?	Up to six partners will be identified, including collaborative and implementing partners.	Quality of performance and reporting of partners. Extent to which partners have worked cooperatively with UNFPA and improved the capacity of country office, implementing partners, civil society organizations, and other key stakeholders Extent to which UNFPA has managed and monitored the relationship	EECARO, country program evaluations and country office reports; regional AWPs and strategic briefs; country level counterparts; country office program staff; capacity building survey under RPAP; evaluation data	Partnership reviews and evaluations; interviews with partners and selected country level counterparts
	To what extent have advocacy efforts under the RP advanced the ICPD agenda?	Effectiveness of advocacy is in part dependent on profile assumed by the UNFPA	Extent to which work of UNFPA is recognized by stakeholders in the region as useful and influential	Stakeholders, including counterparts and collaborating and implementing partners	Interviews with stakeholders
	To what extent has UNFPA's new modality/strategy of working in phased out countries been effective?	Answering this question will best be answered by visiting at least one such country	The answer will depend on the criteria that EECARO uses to define effectiveness of the strategy	Interviews with EECARO staff and counterparts in the countries	Interviews with EECARO staff and in-country counterparts
	To what extent has the priority goal of resource mobilization strategy been achieved?	The strategy provided to the evaluation team has multiple goals and unspecified targets	If possible, matching achievements with the targets in the strategy	Interview with EECARO staff primarily responsible for resource mobilization	Interview with EECARO staff primarily responsible for resource mobilization
Efficiency	How well EECARO used its human and financial resources to achieve its contribution? What could be done to ensure an enhanced use of resources in the specific regional context?	Difficult to address without examining management	Extent of resources used to achieve particular outputs/outcomes, having regard to value of output/outcome achieved Extent to which RP has contributed to selection of technical assistance that	Key stakeholders; Documentation of program inputs by category (human, financial, technical)	Key stakeholder interviews, document review, budget review

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
			have improved the quality of technical support to country offices		
	Has EECARO ensured that (a) its partners understand what indirect costs are and (b) reimbursement of these costs does not exceed allowable limits?	This is an excellent measure of how well UNFPA resources are being used to achieve its objectives	Indirect cost rates of EECARO's implementing partners	FACE forms of partners	Desk review of FACE forms
	Has EECARO approved its AWPs in a timely manner and prior to the annual deadline established in the agency's policies and procedures?	Delayed approval of AWPs contributes to inefficient use of resources	Approval of all AWPs no later than January 31 of each year	AWPs	Desk review of AWPs
Sustainability	Did the RPAP incorporate capacity development measures to ensure sustainability of the results over time?	Need to explore what were those measures. However, depending on extent of documentation, accessing evidence on sustainability may not always be possible	Extent to which measures taken built ownership, capacity and institutionalised change were incorporated in capacity building design	Capacity building documentation; evaluations and reviews; EECARO, counterpart and country office interview	country office and EECARO interview; review of capacity building documentation
	Are conditions and mechanisms in place so that the benefits of UNFPA interventions are sustained and owned by regional/national, institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed?	Ownership goes to the extent to which changes have been institutionalised as part of the way work is conducted	Relevant conditions and mechanisms identified	Capacity building documentation; evaluations and reviews; EECARO, counterpart and country office interview	country office and EECARO interview; counterpart interview; review of capacity building documentation
	To what extent have capacity building initiatives contributed to the intended institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?	Issues of contribution can be difficult where many factors are involved. Need also to explore were capacity building efforts based on an existing capacity building plan, or did they develop a capacity building plan as part of the support provided?	Extent to which contribution by capacity building initiative can be identified	Capacity building documentation; evaluations and reviews; EECARO, counterpart and country office interview	country office and EECARO interview; counterpart interview; review of capacity building documentation

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions related to the TOR and evaluation criteria	Comments	Performance Indicators	Data Sources	Data-collection methods
	s a result of capacity building initiatives, are country offices better positioned to (a) Engage in policy dialogue to ensure ICPD issues are reflected in national and UNDAF priorities? (b) Provide technical leadership in response to national priorities	Selected ICPD issues will be identified for examination, as with four technical issues, in discussion with country offices	Extent to which country offices now having demonstrated capacity in policy dialogue and technical knowledge	Capacity building documentation; evaluations and reviews; EECARO, counterpart and country office interview	Country office and EECARO interviews; evaluations and review documentation
	Does EECARO have an exit strategy for cases of changes in environment, poor performance, or to avoid perpetuating relationships beyond their useful life?	UNFPA's policies and procedures recommend inclusion of such a strategy RPAPs	Existence of an explicit exit strategy that provides criteria for deciding when exit should occur	RPAP; EECARO staff	Desk review and interviews with EECXARO program staff

III.   Annex 3: List of Persons Interviewed

UNFPA, EECARO, Istanbul, Turkey

Werner Haug, Regional Director
Karen Daduryan, Regional Team Coordinator
Rita Columbia, Technical Advisor, RH
Mahbub Alam, Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor
Tim Sladen, Technical Advisor, HIV
Marta Diavolova, Programme Specialist, Partnerships
Marija Vasileva-Blazev, Program Specialist for Youth
Sally Hendriks, Junior Professional Officer, HIV
Blanca Hancilova, Gender Consultant
Pinar Percinel, Program Assistant
Nazli Morel, Program Assistant

UNFPA, EECARO, Sub-regional Office, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Nikolai Botev, Director, Sub-regional Office for Central Asia, and Country Director for Kazakhstan and
    Kyrgyzstan

Ezizgeldi Helenov, RHCS Advisor
Gulnara Kadyrkulova, Program Specialist on Population and Development

Almaty, Kazakhstan

Alexander Kossukhin, UNFPA, Assistant Representative

Ankara, Turkey

Aysegul Esin, Reproductive Health Officer, International Children's Center
Zahidul Huque, UNFPA Country Director for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey

Brussels, Belgium

Vicky Claeys, Regional Director, International Planned Parenthood Federation-European Network
Lena Luyckfasseel, International Planned Parenthood Federation, European Network
Halil Karatas, Senior Finance Advisor, International Planned Parenthood Federation, European
    Network
Neil Datta, Secretary, European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

Chisinau, Moldova

Ian McFarlane, UNFPA Country Director for Albania and Moldova
Boris Gilca, UNFPA Assistant Representative, Program Coordinator
Natalia Cojoharni, UNFPA, RH and Youth Coordinator
Olga Poalelungi, Director, Migration Agency, Ministry of Interior
Olga Gagauzo, Chief of Demographic Section within EU Integration, Academy of Sciences
Radu Ostaficiue, Medical Doctor, National Center for Disaster Medicine
Elena Sajina, Moldovan International Planned Parenthood Federation
Vitalie Valcov, Deputy Director General, National Bureau for Statistics
Natalia Zarbailof
Mircea Buga, Vice Director, National Medical Insurance Company

Louisa Rotaru, Demographics Politics
Diana Doras, Deputy Chief, Direction Policies on Gender, Equality and Violence Prevention, Ministry of Labor
Galina Morari, Deputy Chief, Directorate for Hospital Emergency, Medical Assistance for Mother and Child

Kiev, Ukraine

Nuzhat Ehsan, UNFPA Director, Belarus and Ukraine
Pavlo Zamostian, UNFPA Assistant Representative
Oleg Voronenko, UNFPA National Program Officer
Valentyna Kolomeychuk, Deputy Head of Maternal and Child Health Department, Ministry of Health
Maryna Vorona, Ministry of Social Policy
Iryna Sachkova, participant in UNFPA-sponsored training
Oleksandr Zhyhinas, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, Center for Disease Control, Ministry of Health
Galyna Maystruk, Chair, Women Health and Family Planning Foundation

Moscow, Russian Federation

Mikhail Denissenko, Higher School of Economics

Prague, Czech Republic

Tomas Kucera, Department of Demography and Geodemography, Charles University

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Doina Bologa, UNFPA Country Director, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia
Danijela Alijagić, Program Analyst
Jssmin Panjeta, UNFPA Program Assistant
Sara Calkic, UNFPA Program Assistant
Saliha Djuderija, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees
Zijad Hasic, Parliamentary Group for Population and Development
Adi Kolasevic, former Y-PEER trainer and Youth Advisory Panel Member
Maida Cehajic, former gender advisor at Gender Equality Agency
Nerimana Socivica, Foundation for Local Democracy

Sofia, Bulgaria

Anina Chileva, PETRI Executive and Senior Expert, NCPHA
Radostina Vuteva, PETRI Coordinator
Peter Mladenov, PETRI Fellow
Milena Zaharieva, Y-PEER Alumni
Stefan Bogdanov, Y-PEER Focal Point
Stanisal Dodov, former Focal Point-in-charge of Y-PEER Bulgaria

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Karl Kolessa, UNFPA Country Director for Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

Tirana, Albania

Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun, UN Resident Coordinator
Dorina Toçaj, UNFPA Program Analyst for RH

Flora Ismaeli, UNFPA, Population, Development, and Gender
Halta Koci, Director, Albanian Community Assistance
Alpina QirJazi, IPDET Beneficiary
Elona Gjebrea Hoxha, Executive Director, Albanian Center for Population and Development
Naile Ajazi Management of Hospitals; Hospital Administration and Management, Ministry of Health
Rudina Degjoni Directorate of Hospital, Development, Policies and Health Care, Albanian Health Insurance Institute

Tirgu Mures, Romania

Mihai Horga, Senior Advisor, East European Institute for Reproductive Health

Vienna, Austria

Maria Rösslhumer, Executive Director, Women against Violence in Europe (WAVE)
Angelika Kartusch, Project Coordinator, Women against Violence in Europe (WAVE)

Yerevan, Armenia

Garik Hayrapetyan, UNFPA Assistant Representative
Aida Ghazaryan, UNFPA Programme Analyst
Anna Hovhannisyan, UNFPA Project Officer
Samvel Mkhitaryan, Y-PEER Coordinator
Gayane Avagyan, Head of Maternity and Reproductive Health Protection Unit, Ministry of Health
Tevan Poghosyan, Executive Director, International Center for Human Development
Vahan Asatryan, Research and Development Unit, International Center for Human Development
Armen Galstyan, Project Management and Implementation Unit, International Center for Human Development
Meri Khachikayn, President, Pan-Armenian Family Health Association
Eduard Hovhannisyan, Program Manager, Pan-Armenian Family Health Association
Karine Kuyumjyan, Head of Census and Demography, National Statistical Service
Kristina Mnatsakanyan, Senior Specialist, Public Health Unit, Ministry of Health
Hovhannes Poghosyan, Director. National Institute of Labour and Social Research, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues
Vanik Babajanyan, Head of Demographic Division, National Institute of Labor and Social Research, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues

Washington, D.C., United States

Gary Barker, International Director, Promundo
Joseph Vess, Senior Program Officer, Promundo

IV.   ANNEX 4: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Nine questionnaires were developed for field interviews with the different stakeholders:

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Questionnaire 1

To CO staff

Involved in all sectors

A. Capacity Building - relevance

CB definition and measurability

1.   Does EECARO have a clearly defined strategy for capacity development that specifies (a) what capacity should be strengthened and (b) how changes in capacity will be measured?
2.   If there is a strategy how do you view its relevance and use with regard to measurability?

CB and CO- countries' needs

3.   How do you assess priority needs of the region and countries?
4.   How relevant is the RPAP's CB to the priority needs of the region and countries? How were topics/issues selected and prioritized?
5.   How relevant is the RPAP to the priorities of UNFPA country offices? Has EECARO applied the right strategy within the region's political, economic, and social context?
6.   How relevant is RO support in CB to CO, in term of subject matter and in terms of design/preparation of trainings/workshops?
7.   In the absence of a defined strategy, has CB support been relevant with sufficient integrated follow-up in its design?

CB and partners

8.   Which criteria are applied on the choice/selection of implementing partners?
9.   Which criteria are applied on the choice/selection of collaborative partners?
10. Has EECARO conducted baseline assessments of the capacities of its partner to which it provides financial support?
11. Have the capacity-building initiatives targeted the appropriate institutions and/or individuals?
12. Do you have any examples where the capacity building initiatives offered to counterparts were not appropriate and if yes, why?

General

13. Are the capacity building modalities used under the RP appropriate in terms of contributing to national capacity development. Provide examples of modalities that turned out to be effective/ineffective and under what circumstance and why?
14. Are the capacity building modalities used under the RPAP appropriate in terms of contributing to country office capacity development (include when does a modality tend be effective/ineffective and under what circumstance and why)?

B. Capacity Building - effectiveness

15. In which sectors has the RPAP accomplished its intended objectives and planned results? What measurable results support this judgment?

16. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the RPAP? Are there clear, specific, and measurable goals and targets? Are there appropriate distinctions between outputs and outcomes?

17. Have the RPAP activities contributed to enhanced results at the country level? If so, what measurable evidence supports this judgment?
18. The MTRs of the SP and AP recommended a greater focus on the RH sector: should the RPAP keep this focus, or do you think that it may be too focused now, and some CB possibilities may be lost?
19. As a result of EECARO's efforts, has there been an increase in skills and capacity among country offices and implementing partners, and how do we know?
20. Have regional capacity-building initiatives complemented capacity building efforts by UNFPA or other partners at the country level?
21. To what extent have capacity building initiatives focused on country offices been effective? In Pop & Dev, RH, Gender ? Explain and provide examples?
22. To what extent has capacity building related to advocacy focused on country offices and counterparts' advocacy been effective?
23. To what extent have knowledge management activities contributed to capacity building?
24. To what extent have monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strengthened program effectiveness and accountability? What are the strengths and weaknesses of EECARO's monitoring and evaluation functions?
25. To what extent have EECARO's partnerships contributed to the capacity development of country offices and national partners? Were the partnerships established in compliance with UNFPA's policies and procedures? How effective are the partnerships, and how well are they managed?
26. To what extent have advocacy efforts under the RP advanced the ICPD agenda? The MDG5 targets ?
27. To what extent have capacity building initiatives contributed to the intended institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?

C. Capacity Building - efficiency

28. Who is responsible for resource mobilization? What are the processes? What are the main constraints? What were the main constraints to resource mobilization?
29. Has EECARO approved its AWPs in a timely manner and prior to the annual deadline established in the agency's policies and procedures?
30. Are human and financial resources well utilized? Invitation to proposals - selection of partners – clauses of contracts/LOU on commitment to objectives/achievements, reporting and M&E. What are the main problems identified?
31. Has EECARO ensured that (a) its partners understand what indirect costs are, and (b) reimbursement of these costs does not exceed allowable limits?

D. Capacity Building - sustainability

32. Did the RPAP incorporate capacity development measures to ensure sustainability of the results over time? Which ones ?
33. Are conditions and mechanisms in place so that the benefits of UNFPA interventions are sustained and owned by regional/national, institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed?
34. Can you provide examples of sustainable CB initiatives that contributed to institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?
35. Does EECARO have an exit strategy for cases of changes in environment, poor performance, or to avoid perpetuating relationships beyond their useful life?
36. As a result of capacity building initiatives, are country offices better positioned to (a) Engage in policy dialogue to ensure ICPD issues are reflected in national and UNDAF priorities? (b) Provide technical leadership in response to national priorities.

37. What are the modalities of RO/COs coordination?
38. Are RO and COs ' AWP prepared in consultation with all parties?
39. Are RO AWP supporting or in line with the CO AWP? If not, are there discussions/debates about the differences? How are differences solved?

D. Value added of UNFPA activities

This question will be asked from different angles. The value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors; the value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities; the value added of the funding provided to IP.

40. How would you assess the value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors? Are UNFPA's activities carried out in EECA complementary to these led by other international donors? Do you feel that they (or some of them) may be redundant or overlapping? If yes, what would be your recommendations to remedy this problem?
41. The value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities: is the coordination between all EECA offices well established and smoothly run with enabling procedures? Are all activities carried out in RO and COs complementary or are they (or some of them) redundant or overlapping? If yes, provide examples
42. On the IP funding issue, in your view, could IP get funding from other donors for similar programs? If yes, provide examples

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Questionnaire 2

To Country Offices Staff

A. Capacity Building – relevance

CB definition and measurability

1. Does EECARO have a clearly defined strategy for capacity development that specifies (a) what capacity should be strengthened and (b) how changes in capacity will be measured?
2. If there is a strategy how do you view its relevance and use with regard to measurability?

CB and CO- countries' needs

3. How do you assess priority needs of the region and countries?
4. How relevant is the RPAP's CB to the priority needs of the region and countries? How were topics/issues selected and prioritized?
5. How relevant is the RPAP to the priorities of UNFPA country offices? Has EECARO applied the right strategy within the region's political, economic, and social context?
6. How relevant is RO support in CB to CO, in term of subject matter and in terms of design/preparation of trainings/workshops?
7. In the absence of a defined strategy, has CB support been relevant with sufficient integrated follow-up in its design?

CB and partners

8. How would you assess the relevance of EECARO regional partners? Have regional partners been useful to your work?
9. Have the capacity-building initiatives targeted the appropriate institutions and/or individuals?
10. Do you have any examples where the capacity building initiatives offered to counterparts were not appropriate and if yes, why?

General

11. Are the capacity building modalities used under the RP appropriate in terms of contributing to <u>national capacity development</u>. Provide examples of modalities that turned out to be effective/ineffective and under what circumstance and why?
12. Are the capacity building modalities used under the RPAP appropriate in terms of contributing to <u>country office capacity</u> development (include when does a modality tend be effective/ineffective and under what circumstance and why)?

B. Capacity Building - effectiveness

13. In which sectors has the RPAP accomplished its intended objectives and planned results? What measurable results support this judgment?
14. Have the RPAP activities contributed to enhanced results at the country level? If so, what measurable evidence supports this judgment?
15. The MTRs of the SP and AP recommended a greater focus on the RH sector: should the RPAP keep this focus, or do you think that it may be too focused now, and some CB possibilities may be lost?
16. As a result of EECARO's efforts, has there been an increase in skills and capacity among country offices and implementing partners, and how do we know?
17. Have regional capacity-building initiatives complemented capacity building efforts by UNFPA or other partners at the country level? If yes, were they successful?
18. To what extent have capacity building initiatives focused on country offices been effective? In Pop & Dev, RH, Gender ? Explain and provide examples ?
19. To what extent has capacity building related to advocacy focused on country offices and counterparts' advocacy been effective?
20. To what extent have knowledge management activities contributed to capacity building?
21. To what extent have monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strengthened program effectiveness and accountability? What are the strengths and weaknesses of EECARO's monitoring and evaluation functions?
22. To what extent have EECARO's partnerships contributed to the capacity development of country offices and national partners? Were the partnerships established in compliance with UNFPA's policies and procedures? How effective are the partnerships, and how well are they managed?
23. To what extent have advocacy efforts under the RP advanced the ICPD agenda? The MDG5 targets?
24. To what extent have capacity building initiatives contributed to the intended institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?

C. Capacity Building - efficiency

25. Who is responsible for resource mobilization? What are the processes? What are the main constraints?
26. Has EECARO approved its AWPs in a timely manner and prior to the annual deadline established in the agency's policies and procedures?
27. Are financial resources well utilized? Invitation to proposals - selection of partners – clauses of contracts/LOU on commitment to objectives/achievements, reporting and M&E. What are the main problems identified?
28. In your view are human resources well utilized in RO and SRO?
29. Has EECARO ensured that (a) its partners understand what indirect costs are, and (b) reimbursement of these costs does not exceed allowable limits?

D. Capacity Building - sustainability

30. Are conditions and mechanisms in place so that the benefits of UNFPA interventions are sustained and owned by regional/national, institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed? Did training and workshops incorporate capacity development measures to ensure sustainability of the results over time? Which ones?
31. Can you provide examples of sustainable CB initiatives that contributed to institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?
32. As a result of capacity building initiatives, are country offices better positioned to (a) Engage in policy dialogue to ensure ICPD issues are reflected in national and UNDAF priorities? (b) Provide technical leadership in response to national priorities.

E. Relationships between RO and COs

33. What are the modalities of RO/COs coordination?
34. Are RO and COs ' AWP prepared in consultation with all parties?
35. Are RO AWP supporting or in line with the CO AWP? If not, are there discussions/debates about the differences? How are differences solved?

D. Value added of UNFPA activities

This question will be asked from different angles. The value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors; the value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities; the value added of the funding provided to IP.

36. How would you assess the value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors? Are UNFPA's activities carried out in EECA complementary to these led by other international donors? Do you feel that they (or some of them) may be redundant or overlapping? If yes, what would be your recommendations to remedy this problem?
37. The value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities: is the coordination between all EECA offices well established and smoothly run with enabling procedures? Are all activities carried out in RO and COs complementary or are they (or some of them) redundant or overlapping? If yes, provide examples
38. On the IP funding issue, in your view, could IP get funding from other donors for similar programs? If yes, provide examples

Questionnaire 3

To EECARO Implementing Partners

General questions

1. How was your partnership with UNFPA established? Were you first contacted, or did UNFPA staff contact you? If UNFPA staff contacted you, was it from RO or COs?
2. To which thematic area do your UNFPA activities belong?
3. What kind of activities are you carrying out – capacity development, advocacy, training, etc?
4. According to which procedures/guidelines was the LoU prepared?
5. Have monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes been included in your contract with UNFPA?
6. Did you have any difference in your priorities and those of UNFPA? If yes, could you give an example and how it was solved?
7. Did your skills and competencies correspond to the program requirement? If not, did you benefited from training provided by UNFPA?

A. Capacity Building – relevance

CB and countries' needs

8. How do you assess priority needs of the region and countries?

9. How relevant is the programme financed by UNFPA to the priority needs of the region and countries? How were topics/issues selected and prioritized?
10. How relevant is the programme financed by UNFPA to the priorities of UNFPA country offices? In your view, has EECARO applied the right strategy within the region's political, economic, and social context?

CB and partners

11. Has EECARO conducted baseline assessments of your capacities?
12. Were capacity building and other initiatives offered by UNFPA appropriate and if not, why?
13. Are these initiatives appropriate in terms of contributing to national capacity development. Provide examples of modalities that turned out to be effective/ineffective and under what circumstance and why?
14. Are these initiatives appropriate in terms of contributing to country office capacity development

B. Capacity Building – effectiveness

15. Have your programmes/activities achieved their intended objectives and planned results? What measurable results support this judgment?
16. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the programme/activities? Are there clear, specific, and measurable goals and targets? Are there appropriate distinctions between outputs and outcomes?
17. Have regional capacity-building initiatives complemented capacity building efforts by UNFPA or other partners at the country level?
18. If you benefited from capacity building initiatives, to what extent do you think that it contributed to the intended institutional improvement/change?

C. Capacity Building - efficiency

19. Are disbursements made by UNFPA timely? If not, did this create delays, difficulties and/or additional costs for these initiatives?
20. What are the reporting modalities with UNFPA? What are the processes? What are the main constraints?
21. If you went through invitation to proposals, did you encounter constraints or problems?
22. Are human and financial resources well utilized? Were all costs and procedures well explained?

D. Capacity Building - sustainability

23. Did you incorporate capacity development measures to ensure sustainability of the results of your activities over time? Which ones ?
24. Are conditions and mechanisms in place so that the benefits of UNFPA funded interventions are sustained and owned by regional/national, institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed?
25. Can you provide examples of sustainable CB initiatives that contributed to institutional improvement/change?

D. Value added of UNFPA as an international donor

This question will be asked from two different perspectives. The value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors; the value added of the UNFPA funded activities.

26. How would you assess the value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors? Are UNFPA's activities carried out in EECA complementary to these led by other international donors? Do you feel that they (or some of them) may be redundant or

overlapping? If yes, what would be your recommendations to remedy this problem?

27. On the UNFPA funding issue, in your view, could you get funding from other donors for similar programs? If yes, what are the benefits of going along with UNFPA?

E. Quality and Value of partnership with UNFPA

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28. How would you qualify your partnership with UNFPA in terms of quality, i.e., partnership well defined from the outset with roles and responsibilities well-established and common goals and priorities?
29. How would you qualify your partnership with UNFPA in terms of usefulness, i.e., partnership useful to your organisation business (networking), to the achievement of your goals?
30. How would you qualify your partnership with UNFPA in terms of trust and cooperation, i.e., partnership based on true horizontal cooperation.

Questionnaire 4

To RO and CO staff

Sector: Gender Equality and Empowerment

Introduction – general questions on activities on GEE

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1. What are the different GEE activities carried out at the regional and country levels?
2. Which GEE activities are you involved in and in which countries? Distinguish per CB, Advocacy, Network development
3. Who are your implementing partners and collaborative partners?
4. Do you carry out any GEE activity without partners? If yes, which ones?

A. Capacity Building and Advocacy – relevance

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5. How would you assess the relevance of the outcomes and outputs defined in the strategic plans (2008 and 2011) ?
    a. The regional program 2008 had its 5th Outcome: *advanced GEqual through advocacy and implementation of laws and policies*. Indicator: *number of countries incorporating transformative approaches in their programming* (6 countries in 2011). What is your view on this? Can you establish a correlation between RO/CO GEE work and the countries' gender transformative approach programs?
    b. The regional program 2008 had its 7th Outcome: *Improved data availability and analysis resulting in evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation around population dynamics, SRH and gender equality*. Indicator: *number of countries supported by UNFPA to strengthen national capacity to produce and disseminate census, survey, and other statistical data including development of databases.* What is your view on this outcome and its indicator (in 2011: 18 countries)?
    c. The regional program 2011 had its 4th Outcome: *Access of young people to SRH, HIV and gender based violence prevention services, and gender-sensitive life skills-based SRH education improved as part of a holistic multi-sectoral approach to young people's development.* Indicators: Indicator 1: % of countries with national comprehensive and gender-sensitive educational programs addressing young people's SRH needs and rights (secondary schools) – (15%, 45% 50% and 55% in 2011) , and Indicator 3 % of countries developing/implementing YFHS programs (7% in 2009

and 70% in 2010)

6. Would you have any suggestion on the measurability of the GEE activities?
7. How would you assess the relevance of strategic Plan Goal 3: *Gender equality advanced and women and adolescent girls empowered to exercise their human rights particularly their reproductive rights, and live free from discrimination and violence*, its 3 outcomes and 5 indicators? Does this represent progress compared to the previous Strategic plan? Is it more relevant to the needs of the country and of the COs?
8. Are the capacities and skills of implementing partners selected relevant to the activities to be carried out? Have you had evaluations or supervision reports on their activities?
9. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with implementing partners?
10. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with collaborative partners?
11. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with strategic partners?

B. Capacity Building and Advocacy – effectiveness

12. Do the following indicators measure the effectiveness of UNFPA's activities?

   a. Regional program 2008 5th Outcome: Indicator: *number of countries incorporating transformative approaches in their programming* (6 countries in 2011).
   b. The regional program 2008 had its 7th Outcome:. Indicator: *number of countries supported by UNFPA to strengthen national capacity to produce and disseminate census, survey, and other statistic*
   c. The regional program 2011 had its 4th Outcome:. Indicators: Indicator 1: % of countries with national comprehensive and gender-sensitive educational programs addressing young people's SRH needs and rights (secondary schools) – (15%, 45% 50% and 55% in 2011), and Indicator 3 % of countries developing/implementing YFHS programs (7% in 2009 and 70% in 2010)

13. How do you measure the effectiveness of your GEE activities?
14. How do you measure the effectiveness of your partners on your funding GEE activities? Which are your criteria for performance?
15. Are implementing partners more effective (than strategic or collaborative ones) as regard the achievement of objectives?

C. Capacity Building and Advocacy – efficiency

16. Have you any responsibility in resource mobilization? If yes, what are the main constraints?
17. Has EECARO approved its AWPs in a timely manner and prior to the annual deadline established in the agency's policies and procedures?
18. Are human and financial resources well utilized? Invitation to proposals - selection of partners – clauses of contracts/LOU on commitment to objectives/achievements, reporting and M&E. What are the main problems identified?
19. What are the report modalities with the three different kinds of partners? Are they satisfactory in terms of deadlines and quality?

D. Capacity Building and Advocacy – sustainability

20. Do your activities with partners incorporate capacity development measures to ensure sustainability of the results over time? Which ones ?
21. Are conditions and mechanisms in place so that the benefits of UNFPA interventions are sustained and owned by regional/national, institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed?

22. Can you provide examples of sustainable CB initiatives that contributed to institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?
23. Does EECARO have an exit strategy for cases of changes in environment, poor performance, or to avoid perpetuating relationships beyond their useful life?
24. As a result of capacity building initiatives, are country offices better positioned to (a) Engage in policy dialogue to ensure ICPD issues are reflected in national and UNDAF priorities? (b) Provide technical leadership in response to national priorities.

E. Relationships between RO and COs in the Sector of Gender Equality and Empowerment

43. What are the modalities of RO/COs coordination?
44. Are RO and COs ' AWP prepared in consultation with all parties?
45. Are RO AWP supporting or in line with the CO AWP? If not, are there discussions/debates about the differences? How are differences solved?

D. Value added of UNFPA activities in the Sector of Gender Equality and Empowerment

This question will be asked from different angles. The value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors; the value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities; the value added of the funding provided to IP.

46. How would you assess the value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors? Are UNFPA's activities carried out in EECA complementary to these led by other international donors? Do you feel that they (or some of them) may be redundant or overlapping? If yes, what would be your recommendations to remedy this problem?
47. The value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities: is the coordination between all EECA offices well established and smoothly run with enabling procedures? Are all activities carried out in RO and COs complementary or are they (or some of them) redundant or overlapping? If yes, provide examples
48. On the IP funding issue, in your view, could IP get funding from other donors for similar programs? If yes, provide examples

Please provide some examples that can illustrate best practices in your sector of intervention.

Questionnaire 5

To RO and CO staff

Sector: Population and Development (PD)

Introduction – general questions on activities on PD

1. What are the different PD activities carried out at the regional and country levels?
2. Which GEE activities are you involved in and in which countries? Distinguish per CB, Advocacy, Network development
3. Who are your implementing partners and collaborative partners?
4. Do you carry out any GEE activity without partners? If yes, which ones?

A. Capacity Building and Advocacy – relevance

5. How would you assess the relevance of the outcomes and outputs defined in the strategic plans (2008 and 2011)?

6. How would you assess the relevance of the first outcome of the SP 2008, its outputs and indicators? *Population dynamics addressed in national development plans and strategies*: Output: *Strengthened national capacity to incorporate population dynamics and its inter-linkages with the needs of young people, SRH (including MCH, family planning, HIV,) gender equality and poverty reduction in NDPs, PRSs and other relevant national plans and programs and indicators: (i) Percentage of countries where UNFPA has supported capacity development initiatives to incorporate population dynamics issues in relevant national plans and programs and (ii) Number of persons trained on how to incorporate population dynamics issues in national plans and programs.* These 2 indicators show a steady increase in percentage of countries

7. How would you assess the relevance of the first outcome of the SP 2011, and its indicators?

    Population dynamics and its inter-linkages with gender equality, SRH (including MCH, family planning, HIV), poverty reduction plans and expenditures frameworks. Indicators: *percentage of countries which conduct research on emerging pop issues (with UNFPA support?) and percentage of countries that have incorporated at least 2 emerging pop issues in dev frameworks and MDG reporting*

8. Would you have any suggestion on the measurability of PD activities?
9. In your view, are the changes brought about by the 2011 Regional Program and its focus on SRH more relevant to the countries' and COs needs?
10. Are the capacities and skills of implementing partners selected relevant to the activities to be carried out? Have you had evaluations or supervision reports on their activities?
11. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with implementing partners?
12. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with collaborative partners?
13. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with strategic partners?

B. Capacity Building and Advocacy – effectiveness

14. Do the above mentioned indicators measure the effectiveness of UNFPA's activities in PD issues?
15. How do you measure the effectiveness of your PD activities?
16. How do you measure the effectiveness of your partners on your funding PD activities? Which are your criteria for performance?
17. Are implementing partners more effective (than strategic or collaborative ones) as regard the achievement of objectives?

C. Capacity Building and Advocacy – efficiency

18. Have you any responsibility in resource mobilization? If yes, what are the main constraints?
19. Has EECARO approved its AWPs in a timely manner and prior to the annual deadline established in the agency's policies and procedures?
20. Are human and financial resources well utilized? Invitation to proposals - selection of partners – clauses of contracts/LoU on commitment to objectives/achievements, reporting and M&E. What are the main problems identified?
21. What are the report modalities with the three different kinds of partners? Are they satisfactory in terms of deadlines and quality?

22. Do your activities with partners incorporate capacity development measures to ensure sustainability of the results over time? Which ones ?
23. Are conditions and mechanisms in place so that the benefits of UNFPA interventions are sustained and owned by regional/national, institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed?
24. Can you provide examples of sustainable CB initiatives that contributed to institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?
25. Does EECARO have an exit strategy for cases of changes in environment, poor performance, or to avoid perpetuating relationships beyond their useful life?
26. As a result of capacity building initiatives, are country offices better positioned to (a) Engage in policy dialogue to ensure ICPD issues are reflected in national and UNDAF priorities? (b) Provide technical leadership in response to national priorities.

E. Relationships between RO and COs in the Population and Development sector

27. What are the modalities of RO/COs coordination?
28. Are RO and COs ' AWP prepared in consultation with all parties?
29. Are RO AWP supporting or in line with the CO AWP? If not, are there discussions/debates about the differences? How are differences solved?

D. Value added of UNFPA activities in the Population and Development sector

This question will be asked from different angles. The value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors; the value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities; the value added of the funding provided to IP.

30. How would you assess the value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors? Are UNFPA's activities carried out in EECA complementary to these led by other international donors? Do you feel that they (or some of them) may be redundant or overlapping? If yes, what would be your recommendations to remedy this problem?
31. The value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities: is the coordination between all EECA offices well established and smoothly run with enabling procedures? Are all activities carried out in RO and COs complementary or are they (or some of them) redundant or overlapping? If yes, provide examples
32. On the IP funding issue, in your view, could IP get funding from other donors for similar programs? If yes, provide examples

Please provide some examples that can illustrate best practices in your sector of intervention.

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Questionnaire 6

To RO and CO staff

Sector: Sexual and Reproductive Health

Introduction – general questions on activities on SRH

1. What are the different SRH activities carried out at the regional and country levels?

2. Which SRH activities are you involved in and in which countries? Distinguish per CB, Advocacy, Network development
3. Who are your implementing partners and collaborative partners?
4. Do you carry out any SRH activity without partners? If yes, which ones?

5. How would you assess the relevance of the outcomes and outputs defined in the strategic plans (2008 and 2011) ?
   a. The regional program 2008 had its 2nd Output: *Strengthened national capacity for development of national health policies and plans with integrated SRH services (including FP) to ensure reproductive rights of disadvantaged populations.* Indicator: *Number (and percentage) of countries where UNFPA has supported the development of national health policies and plans with integrated SRH services* What is your view on this? Can you establish a correlation between RO/CO SRH work and the countries' national policies?

   b. The regional program 2008 had its 3rd Outcome: *Improved data availability and analysis resulting in evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation around population dynamics, SRH and gender equality.* Indicator: *number of countries supported by UNFPA to strengthen national capacity to produce and disseminate census, survey, and other statistical data including development of databases.* What is your view on this outcome and its indicator (in 2008: 40% of countries)?

   c. The regional program 2011 had its 4th Outcome: *Access of young people to SRH, HIV and gender based violence prevention services, and gender-sensitive life skills-based SRH education improved as part of a holistic multi-sectoral approach to young people's development.* Indicators: Indicator 1: % of countries with national comprehensive and gender-sensitive educational programs addressing young people's SRH needs and rights (secondary schools) – (15%, 45% 50% and 55% in 2011) , and Indicator 3 % of countries developing/implementing YFHS programs (7% in 2009 and 70% in 2010)

6. Would you have any suggestion on the measurability of the SRH activities?
7. How would you assess the relevance of strategic Plan Goal 3: *Gender equality advanced and women and adolescent girls empowered to exercise their human rights particularly their reproductive rights, and live free from discrimination and violence*, its 3 outcomes and 5 indicators? Does this represent progress compared to the previous Strategic plan? Is it more relevant to the needs of the country and of the COs?
8. In your view, are the priority needs assessed for SRH activities for the countries with which you work relevant to the country's needs?
9. In your view, are the priority needs assessed for SRH activities for the countries with which you work relevant to the CO's priorities?
10. Are the capacities and skills of implementing partners selected relevant to the activities to be carried out? Have you had evaluations or supervision reports on their activities?
11. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with implementing partners?
12. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with collaborative partners?
13. How would you assess the relevance of partnerships established with strategic partners?

14. Do the following indicators measure the effectiveness of UNFPA's activities?

   a. Regional program 2008 5th Outcome: Indicator: *number of countries incorporating transformative approaches in their programming* (6 countries in 2011).
   b. The regional program 2008 had its 7th Outcome:. Indicator: *number of countries supported by UNFPA to strengthen national capacity to produce and disseminate census, survey, and other*

statistic

   c. The regional program 2011 had its 4th Outcome:. Indicators: Indicator 1: % of countries with national comprehensive and gender-sensitive educational programs addressing young people's SRH needs and rights (secondary schools) – (15%, 45% 50% and 55% in 2011), and Indicator 3 % of countries developing/implementing YFHS programs (7% in 2009 and 70% in 2010)

15. How do you measure the effectiveness of your SRH activities? Which are your criteria for performance?
16. How do you measure the effectiveness of your partners on your funding SRH activities? Which are your criteria for performance?
17. Are implementing partners more effective (than strategic or collaborative ones) as regard the achievement of objectives?

C. Capacity Building and Advocacy – efficiency

18. Have you any responsibility in resource mobilization? If yes, what are the main constraints?
19. Has EECARO approved its AWPs in a timely manner and prior to the annual deadline established in the agency's policies and procedures?
20. Are human and financial resources well utilized? Invitation to proposals - selection of partners – clauses of contracts/LOU on commitment to objectives/achievements, reporting and M&E. What are the main problems identified?
21. What are the report modalities with the three different kinds of partners? Are they satisfactory in terms of deadlines and quality?

D. Capacity Building and Advocacy – sustainability

22. Do your activities with partners incorporate capacity development measures to ensure sustainability of the results over time? Which ones ?
23. Are conditions and mechanisms in place so that the benefits of UNFPA interventions are sustained and owned by regional/national, institutions and stakeholders after the interventions are completed?
24. Can you provide examples of sustainable CB initiatives that contributed to institutional improvement/change among national counterparts?
25. Does EECARO have an exit strategy for cases of changes in environment, poor performance, or to avoid perpetuating relationships beyond their useful life?
26. As a result of capacity building initiatives, are country offices better positioned to (a) Engage in policy dialogue to ensure ICPD issues are reflected in national and UNDAF priorities? (b) Provide technical leadership in response to national priorities.

E. Relationships between RO and COs in the Sexual and Reproductive Sector

33. What are the modalities of RO/COs coordination?
34. Are RO and COs ' AWP prepared in consultation with all parties?
35. Are RO AWP supporting or in line with the CO AWP? If not, are there discussions/debates about the differences? How are differences solved?

D. Value added of UNFPA activities in the Sexual and Reproductive Sector

This question will be asked from different angles. The value added of NFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors; the value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities; the value added of the funding provided to IP.

36. How would you assess the value added of UNFPA as compared to the other UN agencies or international organisations involved in similar sectors? Are UNFPA's activities carried out in EECA complementary to

these led by other international donors? Do you feel that they (or some of them) may be redundant or overlapping? If yes, what would be your recommendations to remedy this problem?

37. The value added of the RO in its activities related to COs activities: is the coordination between all EECA offices well established and smoothly run with enabling procedures? Are all activities carried out in RO and COs complementary or are they (or some of them) redundant or overlapping? If yes, provide examples

38. On the IP funding issue, in your view, could IP get funding from other donors for similar programs? If yes, provide examples

Please provide some examples that can illustrate best practices in your sector of intervention.
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V. Annex 4: List of Documents Reviewed

Documents provided by EECARO

Terms of Reference for the Conduct of the Evaluation of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme 2008-2012.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Programme 2008-2011 (2013) Results Framework; 2011 Updates, February 2011.

EECARO RP Results and Resource Framework 2012-2013.

Regional Programme for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, List of Indicators: AWP 2011

Annual work plans for the regional office and implementing partners, 2009-2012

Annual standard progress reports from implementing partners

ATLAS reports for all funds, for all implementing agencies, for 2009-2012 for Department B1900, EECA Regional Office.

Regional annual work plans and monitoring tools

Feedback from 2012 Initiatives under the Regional Programme

Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) forms

Regional office annual reports

EECARO's strategies on gender, partnerships, and resource mobilization

Operationalization of Integrated Programmatic and Technical Assistance Approach in EECA

Performance summaries, 2009-2011

Selected budget revisions for implementing partners

Selected monitoring and evaluation calendars

Selected country office annual reports

IPDET Training: Participants and expenditures

List of EECARO partners

Global and Regional Programme 2012-2013**,** Proposal Review Comments & Feedback for EECARO

Annex 4, Resources 2009-2102 compared

Annotated Format and Guidelines for Reviewers: Review of draft CPDs for the Programme Review Committee

UBRAF Strategic Directions, Goals, Outcomes & Outputs to be Matched with Activities

Guidance for Interview of Institutional Partners

Partner Institutions EECA Region Scoring Sheet

Standard Operating Procedure for TA Provision to Country Offices

Terms of reference: Mapping and Assessment of Regional Institutions for Provision of Technical Assistance in EECA Region

Questionnaire on the Institutional Capacity Assessment for Provision of Technical Assistance in Population, Gender and Reproductive Health

Report Monitoring Table- Regional Programme Implementing Partner

Terms of reference for Vetting Panel
Summary report: Vetting of consultant for Global Consulting Roster
Summary report: Vetting of Institutions for Global IP Roster

United Nations Evaluation Group

Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System
Norms for Evaluation in the UN System
Standards for Evaluation in the UN System

UNFPA

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VI.   Annex 5: Statement of Informed Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the evaluation of UNFPA's regional program. As part of the team that is evaluating the program, I am obligated to comply with the norms and standards for evaluation in the UN system.

These norms and standards require that I respect your right to provide information in confidence, and to ensure that any sensitive information you provide cannot be traced to its source. The information you provide will not be shared with anyone outside of the evaluation team, except in instances of fraud or wrongdoing. For non-sensitive information, it may be desirable to include some of your statements in the evaluation report. However, we will not attribute these statements to you without your express permission.

UNFPA evaluations typically include a list of people interviewed. Unless you object, the evaluation report will include your name and position or title, but no other personal information.

I would like to assume that our discussion will proceed with your informed consent, but with your understanding that you can stop the discussion at any time without any adverse consequences.

I encourage you to offer suggestions about how the evaluation team can best address its tasks, which include attention to the regional program's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. In particular, the evaluation team welcomes any suggestions or recommendations you might have to improve UNFPA's performance.

UNFPA is interested in an evaluation that fairly and objectively discusses the agency's strengths, as well as any weaknesses it might have. For this reason I appreciate your assistance, which will contribute to the team's responsibility to complete an evaluation that is independent, impartial, and accurate.