

# Formative evaluation of the UNFPA innovation initiative



UNFPA Evaluation Office

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## Acronyms

DCS	Division of Communication and Strategic Partnerships
DMS	Division of Management Services
EO	Evaluation Office
ET	Evaluation Team
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
GPS	Global Programming System
GSS	Global Staff Survey (at UNFPA)
HQ	Headquarters
IDWG	Inter-divisional Working Group on innovation
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OED	Office of the Executive Director
PD	Programme Division
PAD	Performance Appraisal and Development (for UNFPA staff)
PSB	Procurement Service Branch
TD	Technical Division
TORs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIN	United Nations Innovation Network
WFP	World Food Programme

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## 1. The Innovation Initiative

### Summary box

In 2013 UNFPA began exploring **corporate approaches to innovation**. It became a member of the United Nations Innovation Network, endorsed the 9 United Nations Open Innovation Principles and, in February 2014, “innovation and creativity” were announced as one of UNFPA’s 2014 Corporate Priority Projects. That same year, an Innovation Inter-Divisional Working Group (IDWG) was set up, the first UNFPA Innovation Concept Paper outlined how to approach innovation as a way of doing business, and an **Innovation Fund** with financial support from the Danish government was established. The Innovation Fund, implemented through two streams, a project and a culture stream, was conceived as a tool for generating a cultural shift towards innovation within UNFPA. As of July 2016, the Innovation Fund has received 148 proposals and selected 18 for funding. In April 2015 the IDWG produced an **“Updated Vision of Innovation at UNFPA.”** This document delineates the transition from the UNFPA Innovation Concept Paper of 2014 to a new 8-prong Innovation Vision for the period 2015-2017.

### 1.1 Context and background

With world changes occurring at an ever increasing speed, innovative and creative approaches to respond to complex and interconnected development challenges beyond “business as usual” have become key for the international development community. The Agenda 2030 recognizes innovation instrumental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting new paths to sustainability.

UNFPA embraces the importance of innovation and acknowledges the need to develop a culture that nurtures innovation and allows it to emerge.<sup>1</sup> UNFPA began exploring corporate approaches to innovation in 2013. Later that year UNFPA became a member of the currently called United Nations Innovation Network (UNIN), an informal network of innovation staff from several United Nations agencies. In February 2014, the UNIN drafted the 9 UN Open Innovation Principles. The principles were implicitly endorsed by the organization,<sup>2</sup> which used them as a benchmark in drafting the UNFPA Innovation Concept Paper in September 2014.

UNFPA announced “innovation and creativity” as one of its 2014 Corporate Priority Projects in February 2014 with the aim of encouraging actions within the organization that generate and reward innovation. Once innovation work became a corporate priority, a working group was established to draft the previously mentioned Concept Paper. The document outlines how to approach innovation as a way of doing business in UNFPA, paving the way for a corporate innovation initiative. Briefly after, in June 2014, the Danish government signed a financial agreement for approximately USD 4 million over two-years (2014-15) for the implementation of an Innovation Fund. The final version of the UNFPA Innovation Concept Paper, titled “nurturing innovation at UNFPA”, was presented in September 2014, endorsed by the UNFPA Executive Committee and shared with the Government of

#### Box 1. Dr. Babatunde, the Executive Director of UNFPA, on innovation:

*“A culture of innovation brings the right people together in the right space to work on the right issues, without micromanaging the process or imposing any particular outcome. The key is to create physical, organizational and cultural structures that promote innovation, while ensuring that such structures do not suffocate innovation in its infant stages”*

*Source: Innovation in the UN – Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards (JMB) 2015*

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<sup>1</sup> UNFPA Innovation Concept Paper (September, 2014)

<sup>2</sup> Official endorsement was communicated in May 2015.

Denmark to outline the terms of implementation for the agreement. Following the Concept Paper, an Innovation Inter-Divisional Working Group (IDWG) was established in UNFPA. Regional directors and division directors at headquarters (HQ) were asked to nominate innovation champions to be part of the group. The twenty-two innovation champions, members of the group, represent all regional offices, one country office per region, and from HQ they represent the Technical Division (TD), the Programme Division (PD), the Division of Management Services (DMS), the Office of the Executive Director (OED), the Division of Communication and Strategic Partnerships (DCS), Management Information Services (MIS), and the Procurement Services Branch (PSB). The IDWG is entrusted with the task of examining and developing ideas to foster and manage innovation within UNFPA.

In April 2015 the IDWG organized a retreat to conduct the first internal review of the Innovation Initiative and provide recommendations for a way forward. The result of the exercise was an “Updated Vision of Innovation at UNFPA for the period 2015-2017”. The vision, which includes an 8-prong strategic approach to innovation, represents a transition from the UNFPA Innovation Concept Paper of 2014 to a new 8-prong Innovation Vision for 2015-2017. The Executive Committee endorsed this new vision in April 2015 and the Innovation IDWG began operationalizing this vision in its 2016 workplan.

In December 2015, a paper was produced containing the position of UNFPA in the global landscape of innovation, partnerships and communication. This paper, drafted as an input to the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, presents some recommendations on innovation both for the current and the forthcoming Strategic Plan 2018-2021.<sup>3</sup> Currently, the Innovation Fund Team is contributing to the inter-divisional working group for the new Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

The Innovation Fund has evolved and at the time of the present evaluation stands at a juncture. The Innovation Fund Team aims to significantly restructure the initiative to move from a project-based approach set out in the first few years to one that permeates across UNFPA, and aligns and is fully integrated within the next Strategic Plan. As of today, UNFPA continues working to operationalize the 2015-2017 strategy that includes the adaptation and scaling of successful initiatives, further calls for proposals, public crowdsourcing, and advancing a culture of innovation in UNFPA through targeted learning, training and capacity development activities.<sup>4</sup>

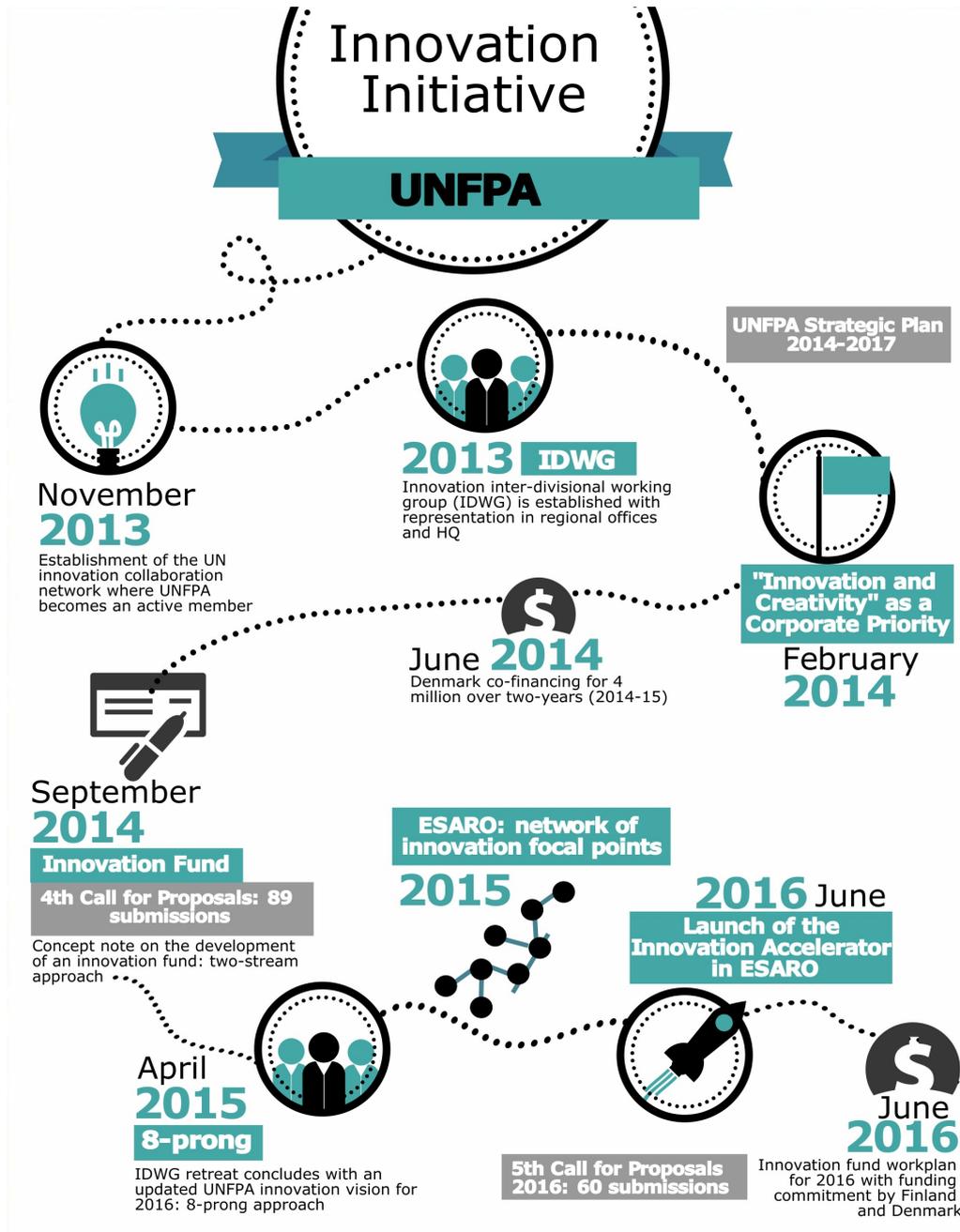
Innovation activities in UNFPA are funded through a “Pooled UNFPA Innovation Fund”. To date, the Danish Government has allocated \$3,891,705 to the Innovation Fund.

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<sup>3</sup> Positioning UNFPA in the global landscape of innovation, partnerships and communication.

<sup>4</sup> UNFPA proposal to Finland Innovation Fund.

Figure 1. Innovation Initiative at UNFPA: Timeline<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Sources for the infograph: UNFPA Innovation Concept Paper September 2014; DRAFT Concept Note for Centrally-Led Innovation Activities\_Stream II Innovation Fund; UNFPA Innovation IDWG Retreat Report and Recommendations for an Updated Innovation Vision, 2015-17; UNFPA Proposal to the Finland Innovation Fund; Kenya Innovation lab, and Transition to a New Innovation Vision.

## 1.2 The Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund<sup>6</sup> was launched following the announcement of “promoting innovation and creativity” as a corporate priority in 2014. As set out in the Innovation Concept Paper the Innovation Fund is expected to have a catalytic nature and is conceived “as a tool for generating a cultural shift within UNFPA by providing motivation and a mechanism for staff to generate, fund and implement innovative ideas”.

The implementation of the Innovation Fund, financed with Danish resources to date, follows a two-stream approach. Stream One, also called *project stream*, was set to test innovation projects sourced from country, regional, and headquarter teams through regular Calls for Proposals (CFP). Project proposals are managed through a participative process engaging all UNFPA staff in voting, the IDWG and the Innovation Strategy Body<sup>7</sup> in a technical and strategic review respectively, and the Executive Director in the final endorsement. Stream Two, also called *culture stream*, was devised to promote a culture of innovation within and across UNFPA. Initial activities in this area included supporting country offices to host innovation days, developing internal and external communication platforms, and developing partnerships and networking.<sup>8</sup>

Four calls for proposals, open to all UNFPA staff were launched during the period 2014-2015. In total, 89 proposals were submitted, receiving 4,400 unique staff votes. Of these 89 proposals 18 were selected for funding. These projects span across world regions and scope of UNFPA mandate, addressing areas like mobile health (mHealth), youth entrepreneurship and empowerment, big data, humanitarian innovation, and technology to promote access to sexual and reproductive health, among others. A fifth call for proposals was launched at the time of the inception mission for this formative evaluation, in June 2016. Sixty new projects were submitted under a new framework of regionally focused calls for proposals: each region was encouraged to submit by their respective regional IDWG focal points, and all submissions were reviewed by regional IDWG sub-committees. Proposals from HQ and regional offices (RO) were reviewed by the full IDWG.

The activities of the Innovation Fund are coordinated and managed by the Innovation Fund Secretariat, endowed with three staff: an Innovation Project Sponsor, an Innovation Project Manager, and an Innovation Technical Specialist. The latter is a new full-time temporary appointment whereas the two former are pre-existing UNFPA staff members who were appointed to these positions in addition to their current responsibilities. Human resources devoted to Innovation also include the 22 members of the IDWG and the 5 members of the Innovation Strategy Review Body (5 UNFPA Executive Committee members, inclusive of the Innovation Sponsor). In both cases time contributions to the innovation activities are done on a volunteer basis.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Note that the “Pooled UNFPA Innovation Fund” is the financial instrument through which donors contribute to Innovation in UNFPA, whereas the “Innovation Fund” is an implementation mechanism in charge of carrying out, managing and supervision innovation activities linked to the *culture* and *project* streams.

<sup>7</sup> The Strategy Body is a group of 5 UNFPA Executive Committee members nominated by the Executive Director.

<sup>8</sup> In innovation days, colleagues come together in a different venue, using methodologies drawn from design thinking and creative problem solving, to brainstorm opportunities and challenges that could benefit from innovation.

<sup>9</sup> With only one exception, the innovation and knowledge management specialist (member of the IDWG) at the East and Southern Africa Regional Office.

## 2. The Formative Evaluation

### Summary box

**The purpose** of the formative evaluation is to conduct an evidence-based, highly consultative and participative analytical reflection on the Innovation Initiative at UNFPA. **Formative evaluations**, conducted during program development or at early stages of implementation, aim at improving the design with a view to improve performance. The evaluation is formative, external (counts with the support of two external consultants) and highly participative. Consultations during the design stage resulted to **adjustments** in the scope of the exercise. The evaluation will have **four components**: the review of the implementation of the Innovation Fund (C1), the set up of an M&E framework for the Innovation Initiative (C2), a benchmarking exercise of innovation approaches across UN agencies (C3), and a baseline survey for the Innovation Initiative's M&E framework (C4). The **scope of the evaluation** varies depending on the evaluation component. The scope for component 1 coincides with the Innovation Fund. The scope of the evaluation for components 2 and 3 is the Innovation Initiative, and the scope for component 4, the baseline survey, is the situation of innovation in UNFPA Offices worldwide.

### 2.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the exercise is to conduct an evidence-based, highly consultative and participative analytical reflection on the Innovation Initiative at UNFPA (including the Innovation Fund)<sup>10</sup>. This includes looking at past performance as well as structuring and framing the building blocks of the initiative so that it may be systematically monitored and evaluated.

The formative evaluation has three objectives, as set out in the terms of reference (ToR);

- Provide key learning and inputs to managers regarding the implementation of the first phase of the Innovation Initiative;
- Improve programme design, processes, and systems (including the monitoring and evaluation plan) for the operationalization of the 2015 Innovation Vision and its future evaluability, and;
- Inform the next UNFPA Strategic Plan and UNFPA strategies in the area of innovation.

### 2.2 What is a formative evaluation?

Evaluations may be classified into two main types: summative and formative. When implementers and donors refer to “an evaluation”, they usually refer to a summative evaluation. Final evaluations, impact evaluations and mid-term evaluations are summative evaluations.<sup>11</sup> This type of evaluations focus on the effects of the intervention on the target groups and on what the intervention has achieved.<sup>12</sup> Most evaluations at UNFPA are summative e.g. program-level evaluations, country programme evaluations and thematic evaluations.



<sup>10</sup> The Innovation Fund is an implementation mechanism of the Corporate Innovations Initiative at UNFPA.

<sup>11</sup> Although summative evaluation may take place during project implementation (mid-term evaluations), are often undertaken at the end (final evaluations) or beyond (impact or ex-posts evaluations)

<sup>12</sup> It could be argued that mid-term evaluations place less emphasis on outcomes than final and impact evaluations. Indeed, they focus on implementation aspects. However, it is a focus on how implementation delivers results.

Conversely, formative evaluations are typically conducted either during program development or at early stages of implementation. Used mostly in pilot projects and new programs, formative evaluations aim at improving the design of the intervention and focus the attention on understanding what works, what does not work and the factors behind performance. The results of formative evaluations are generally used to revise or modify program design with a view to improve performance.

Formative evaluations also have an important organizational learning component, which makes them highly participative. Formative exercises require a **high degree of engagement**, intense consultation and direct interaction with internal stakeholders during the inception phase. This explains the intense consultative approach adopted during the design of the present evaluation (See Annex 2). Summative evaluations usually do not feature such high-intensity of consultation.

This is an **independent formative evaluation**. A team of two external specialists have been recruited to conduct the exercise. Moreover, the Independent Evaluation Office at UNFPA manages the evaluation. The added value of including external specialists is the provision of an independent assessment in the review of the Innovation Fund, perform a facilitation role in framing the main elements of the Innovation Initiative and bring in specific expertise in the design of the evaluative framework.

### **Consultation with relevant stakeholders**

The inception phase, which took place between June and August of 2016, was highly participatory and consultative. During the process of designing the evaluation, the team counted on the inputs and opinions of 42 people interviewed either face-to-face or remotely and involved two group discussions (see Annex 2): a workshop with internal members of Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)<sup>13</sup> and the first meeting of the ERG. Annex 6 and 7 contain the presentations used to stir the discussion in these two joint exercises.

Stakeholders in the process included the Secretariat of the Innovation Fund, the Evaluation Office, several members of the Inter-divisional Working Group on Innovation (IDWG), relevant UNFPA staff nominated from across the organization, donors, UN agencies and Academia.<sup>14</sup> The design of the evaluation as presented in this inception report has inputs and viewpoints from these stakeholders. The evaluation matrix (Annex 4) for example, was developed with substantial inputs from stakeholders interviewed in the inception (Annex 2).

This highly consultative note is not an exclusive feature of the inception phase; it will continue throughout the exercise. A workshop with the ERG to present, discuss and validate the preliminary results of the exercise is planned in November.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the final results will be presented in a joint working session in November that will incorporate inputs and considerations from the ERG. Moreover, ad-hoc working groups combining UNFPA staff and members of the evaluation team will be established to design the exploratory and the baseline surveys,<sup>16</sup> with the objective of ensuring that survey questions are feasible and fit for purpose within the organizational UNFPA context.

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<sup>13</sup> The members of the Inter-divisional Working Group on Innovation (IDWG) were also invited to the workshop.

<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing the report the ERG was already counting on the invaluable contributions of a member of the D-Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the evaluation team was in contact with the MIT Innovation Initiative and Faculty specialised on organizational management to explore options for collaboration.

<sup>15</sup> Preliminary results will feature answers to the evaluation questions of the review of the Innovation Fund, and a first proposal for a Theory of Change of the Innovation Initiative, including progress markers and indicators.

<sup>16</sup> These are two different surveys. The exploratory survey will cover a few selected offices and will be used to inform the review of the implementation of the Innovation Fund (component 1) and the M&E framework for the Innovation Initiative (component 2). The baseline survey (component 4) will cover all UNFPA offices worldwide (country, regional and HQ) and focus on the situation of innovation throughout the organization.

## Adjustments to the original Terms of Reference

The scope and contents of the formative evaluation depicted in the ToRs was adjusted as a result of consultations carried out during the inception phase. The expanded scope of the exercise presented below, reflects the especially high uptake, expectations and ownership of the evaluation by IDWG members, UNFPA staff participating in the ERG, donors and other UN agencies.

### Adjustment 1 – Inclusion of brief case studies

The ToRs stipulate that the final report should include lessons learned from the implementation of the Innovation Initiative as one of its elements.

During the consultations of the inception phase, the need to showcase the process, experiences and learning of the funded projects in detail was quickly revealed as a very important aspect. There is a clear need to communicate what the Innovation Fund has achieved in terms of generating innovative solutions; a need that is felt both internally within UNFPA and externally. Therefore, more than summarising lessons of the implementation, the assignment required to showcase the stories and the processes behind the projects. With this aim in mind, the evaluation will produce two-to-three page case studies (brief knowledge products) showcasing the specifics of particularly relevant projects/innovations. Case studies will be produced showcasing 5 of 18 projects funded to date. Annex 5 provides details on the selection process.

### Adjustment 2 - Focus on outcomes as much as possible

The ToRs present a distinctive focus on implementation aspects of the Innovation Fund.<sup>17</sup>

Consultations during the inception phase revealed a widespread interest in finding out about the actual effects, changes (or the lack of them) brought about by the innovation solutions supported by the Innovation Fund. This, in terms of data collection, means expanding the coverage of interviews from implementers to a particular focus on final users and /or beneficiaries of the innovation solutions (the outputs of the supported innovations projects), whenever feasible. This expanded scope on outcomes will be adopted in the review of those projects (of the 18 projects funded to date by the Innovation Fund) that have already delivered effects on the intended users / target groups.

### Adjustment 3 – The benchmarking exercise

The original ToRs include a comparative documentary review of UN agencies innovation programmes.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of inception phase consultations, the scope of this component has expanded from a documentary review (desk study) providing a snapshot of what other agencies are doing, to a benchmarking exercise featuring also in-depth interviews with other UN agencies' staff. In addition, the scope of the benchmarking exercise will be more comprehensive than that of a documentary review in terms of the number and depth of the variables analysed. Whereas the results of the documentary review were conceived as a complementary picture to frame the Innovation Initiative at UNFPA, the results of the benchmarking will be actively used as inputs to the review of the Innovation Fund as well as to the development of the evaluative framework for the Innovation Initiative.

### Adjustment 4 – The baseline survey and the baseline study

The original ToRs included a survey to collect data, but did not foresee the conducting of a baseline survey.

The possibility of conducting a baseline survey is linked to the development of a proposal for an M&E Framework for the Innovation Initiative, one of the two main outputs of the formative evaluation that will enable the initiative to be appropriately evaluated in a 4-year period. A baseline survey is the first step in the implementation of an M&E Framework, as it provides relevant data on target indicators at the onset of the intervention. This allows measuring change. In this context it was recognized that a baseline survey followed by a baseline study on the situation of innovation at UNFPA (including the organizations' organizational culture on

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<sup>17</sup> See pages 3 and 4 of the section on objectives and scope.

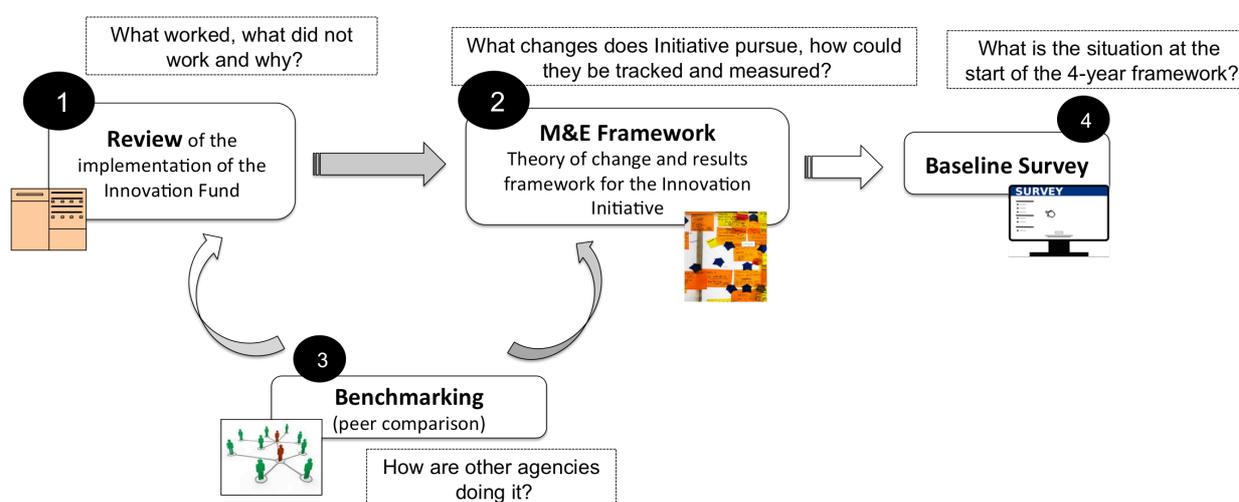
<sup>18</sup> Note that there have been several versions of the ToRs throughout the inception phase. Those following the original version mentioned here already include the term benchmarking and the need for interviews.

innovation, and innovations beyond the scope of the Innovation Fund) would much better complete / accomplish the task of developing an M&E Framework allowing to measure change over time. Moreover, the baseline survey will contribute to the development of the corporate definition of innovation by reflecting how offices are innovating and how they think about innovation.

## 2.4 The components of the evaluation

The evaluation will have four components: the **review** of the implementation of the Innovation Fund, the set up of an **M&E framework** for the Innovation Initiative, a **benchmarking** exercise of innovation approaches across UN agencies, and a **baseline survey** for the Innovation Initiative’s M&E framework. The review and the M&E Framework are the core components of the formative evaluation. The four components are interlinked as shown in the figure.

**Figure 2. Evaluation components**



### Component 1 – Review of the implementation of the Innovation Fund

The review will focus on assessing the performance of the Innovation Fund in terms of achieved results and proper functioning. It will also look at what worked and what did not work, identifying enabling and hindering factors to the achievement of innovation outcomes.

The review will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability criteria and the analysis will be structured around an evaluation matrix (see section 3.2). Annex 4 presents the proposed matrix with the ten evaluation questions and twenty-eight dimensions that will be addressed. Table 1 summarises the ten evaluation questions by evaluation criteria.

The review will be informed by the results of the benchmarking exercise. In turn, the results of the review will be a main input to develop the theory of change and associated indicators included in the M&E Framework of the Innovation Initiative (component 2).

**Table 1. Evaluation questions by evaluation criteria**

RELEVANCE	
<b>EQ1</b>	<b>Relevance towards the needs of the users.</b> To what extent did the Innovation Fund correspond to the innovation needs of its intended users?
<b>EQ2</b>	<b>Internal and external coherence.</b> To what extent was the Innovation Fund coherently designed and aligned with the main strategic frameworks of UNFPA?
EFFECTIVENESS	
<b>EQ3</b>	<b>Organizational culture.</b> To what extent has the Innovation Fund contributed to develop a culture that nurtures innovation within UNFPA?
<b>EQ4</b>	<b>Impact on mandate.</b> To what extent has the Innovation Fund contributed to develop solutions with chances of impact and furthered progress towards UNFPA’s mandate through innovative solutions?
<b>EQ5</b>	<b>Organizational efficiency.</b> To what extent has the Innovation Fund contributed to increase organizational efficiency?
EFFICIENCY	
<b>EQ6</b>	<b>Management processes and structure.</b> To what extent did management processes and structures allow for a satisfactory implementation of the activities of the Innovation Fund?
<b>EQ7</b>	<b>Use of resources.</b> To what extent were resources adequate, made available and used in a timely manner to support the implementation of the activities of the Innovation Fund?
SUSTAINABILITY	
<b>EQ8</b>	<b>Sustainability of organizational changes.</b> What is the likelihood of the organizational changes (or processes of organizational change) generated by the Innovation Fund to be sustainable?
<b>EQ9</b>	<b>Sustainability of solutions.</b> What is the likelihood of the solutions implemented to consolidate, be replicated and scaled up?
<b>EQ10</b>	<b>Sustainability of changes in organizational efficiency.</b> What is the likelihood of the changes in organizational efficiency being sustained?

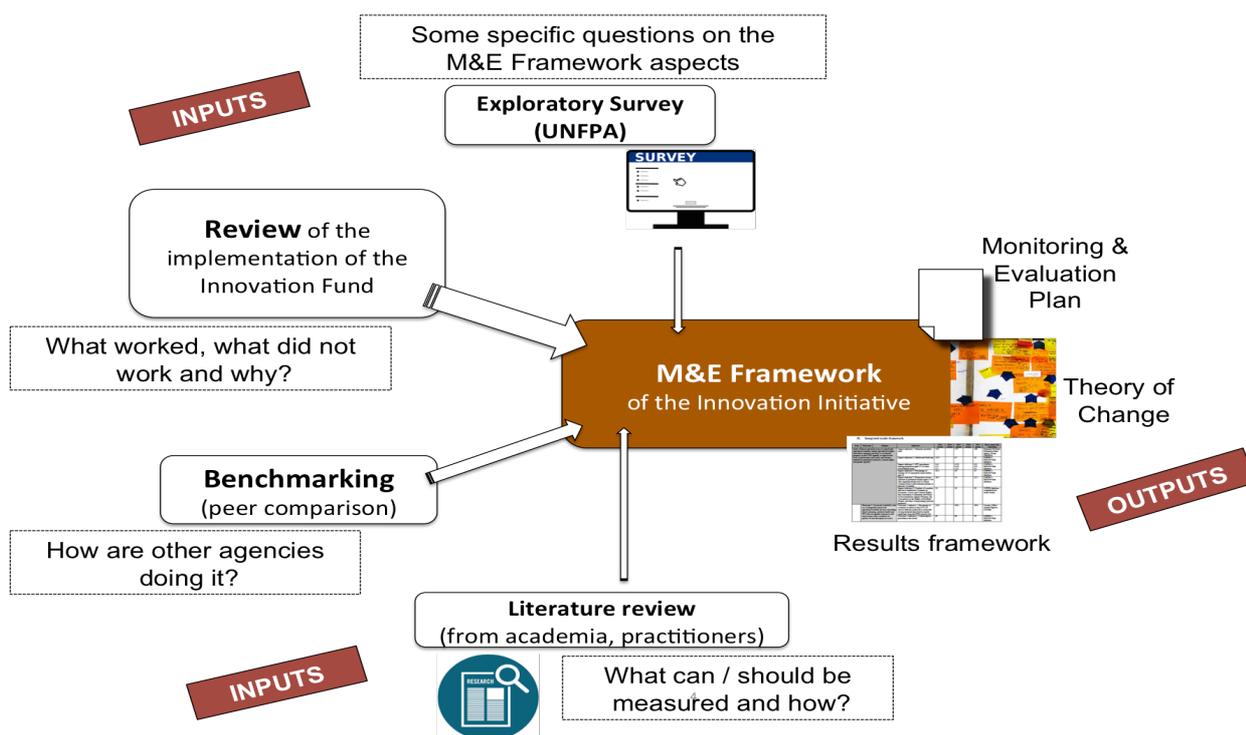
### Component 2 – Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for the Innovation Initiative

This component, a proposal for a 4-year M&E Framework of the Innovation Initiative, is at the core of the formative evaluation. The elements of the evaluative framework will be a theory of change; a results framework and a monitoring and evaluation plan for the 4-years period. This time span will be aligned with that of the UNFPA Strategic Plan.

Drawing a proposal for an M&E Framework for the Innovation Initiative will involve a scoping exercise on what innovation is and what it is not at UNFPA. The starting points for this analysis are the Concept Note for the Innovation Fund, the Updated Vision on Innovation at UNFPA 2015-2017 and the ensuing Work Plan for 2016, which covers actions implementing aspects of the vision. There is a *missing middle* between these activity-level actions and the vision and principles of innovation for UNFPA reflected in the mentioned documents. The evaluative framework, which will be based on a theory of change, will provide a proposal for this *missing middle* by outlining the pathway of change of the Innovation Initiative.

Developing the M&E Framework proposal will also involve an analysis of what is considered desirable and feasible by UNFPA staff across the institution in light of the evidence gathered through the formative evaluation.

Figure 3. The M&E Framework: inputs and outputs



Inputs coming from the evaluation to draw up the theory of change and the results framework will consist of: data and results generated by the review and the benchmarking (components 1 and 2), the results of the exploratory survey, and academic literature review on innovation, organizational culture change and on how to measure both variables.

The **theory of change** will encompass the logic model (flow diagram) as well as the narrative, featuring assumptions (internal and external), the logic of the preconditions and indicators.

The theory of change will place a particular emphasis on making **assumptions** explicit. Often, assumptions are presumed and tacit, which makes it very difficult to monitor them. Yet, assumptions are beliefs about conditions that must be met for changes to be generated and outcomes to be achieved. A theory of change works well as long as its assumptions are valid (they explain why the chain of changes can/should work). The theory of change of the Innovation Initiative will attempt to identify and make main assumptions explicit, showing whenever possible the origin of the assumptions e.g. academic research, proven good practices from other agencies, organizational beliefs as reflected in the survey.

A concern that appeared during inception phase consultations was that theories of change using output and outcome indicators often overlook measuring what happens between outputs and outcomes. However, UNFPA achievements are located in this interface between outputs and outcomes for the most part. As a consequence, not capturing these intermediate levels of change results in staff de-motivation and lack of identification with the results framework.

**Box 3. What is a theory of change?**

“Theory of change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or “filling in” what has been described as the “missing middle” between what a program or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved.”

Source: <http://www.theoryofchange.org>

To avoid these undesired effects, the ToC will include two specific elements: **outcome mapping** techniques and **progress markers**. Outcome mapping will be applied to map out the pathway of change, making explicit the various levels of change and the links between them – as opposed to only

showing outputs and final outcomes, without intermediate levels of change. Progress markers are indicators of process and complement the indicators of final outcome by measuring progress in the pathway of change.

Three outcome areas for the theory of change of the Innovation Initiative were agreed during the inception phase: (i) organizational efficiency and effectiveness, (ii) changes in innovation culture and (iii) impact on users through innovative solutions (users being final beneficiaries at mandate level). What is yet to be determined is how these three areas will interact and in which sequence e.g. whether they will operate in parallel, in a succeeding sequence, etc.

### Component 3 - Benchmarking exercise

The benchmarking exercise will provide input on how other agencies have designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated innovation, taking stock of their experiences to date.

The results of the benchmarking exercise will inform the review of the Innovation Fund (component 1) by providing references and evidences on a number of aspects e.g. profiling of and resourcing of the staff, governance mechanisms, types of innovations promoted, role and management of partnerships and monitoring systems amongst others. Furthermore, the benchmarking will provide inputs and evidence to aspects of the M&E Framework, such as the definition of innovation, how to frame it, how to measure it, and what is realistic to expect. The output of the benchmarking will be presented in a way it is also useful for UNFPA and its innovation partners, in particular those who have contributed to this benchmarking with their information to the exercise. If desired by the larger UN Innovation Network, the benchmarking in this formative evaluation could be the basis for a more comprehensive exercise across United Nations agencies (such exercise would be outside of the scope of the present evaluation).

Some of the areas of analysis that will be included in the benchmarking for the formative evaluation are presented in table 2.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 2. Tentative areas of analysis for the benchmarking exercise across United Nations agencies**

<b>Area 1: Definition and institutional vision and scope</b>
<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Definition of innovation in the organization: why innovation? What for?</li> <li>○ Scoping of what innovation / the innovation process is (phases, main elements, how areas for innovation are decided upon, the mechanisms to decide the areas for innovation)</li> <li>○ What is not innovation, that is, what is considered out of the scope of what innovation is (rationale)</li> <li>○ How is the scoping process (of what is/what is not innovation) managed? Who makes the decision?</li> <li>○ How are specific issues in need of innovation selected and prioritized?</li> <li>○ How are appropriate solutions to those issues designed, tested and scaled up? Who has responsibility for these decisions?</li> </ul>
<b>Area 2: Organizational structure</b>
<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How and where is the innovation function housed (rationale)? (Pros and cons of flexibility, integration aspects)</li> <li>○ Innovation and geographical scope (central, regional, local): organization, resource allocation</li> </ul>
<b>Area 3: Profile of staff and staff resourcing</b>
<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Background and profile of the staff, the number of people and the contractual arrangements.</li> <li>○ Working arrangements and workload distribution for innovation specific staff</li> <li>○ Balance and interaction between expertise in innovation and expertise in thematic areas</li> <li>○ Type of actions adopted spur innovation more broadly across the organization (including actions related to behaviour change)</li> </ul>

<sup>19</sup> These areas were identified during the inception mission and will be expanded / fine-tuned during data collection.

# Inception Report: Formative Evaluation of the UNFPA Innovation Initiative

<b>Area 4: Programmatic integration and measurement</b>
<b>Issues:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ How innovation is integrated in strategic and programmatic frameworks (An Initiative? A Program? Mode of intervention? Way of doing things? Principle?)</li><li>○ How innovation is integrated in the organization's M&amp;E systems (measuring "innovativeness" vs. monitoring thematic impact)</li><li>○ Measurement dimensions (is innovation measured in terms of input, output, outcomes)</li><li>○ How does "reporting results on innovation" function?</li><li>○ Monitoring systems and mechanisms (for identification of failure/success in ideas, tests, scale ups); who does what and when; reporting mechanisms</li><li>○ Innovation projects versus mainstream programmatic projects in terms of audit and control</li><li>○ What are the mechanisms of scaling up (successful) innovations in the organization / programme</li><li>○ Evaluation of innovation initiatives: when, how are they evaluated; are they evaluated separately or as part of country programme evaluations/ other wider evaluations</li></ul>
<b>Area 5: Funding structure</b>
<b>Issues:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ How is innovation funded (rationale)</li><li>○ Core and non-core aspects (rationale followed)</li><li>○ Difference with mainstream project funding (rationale)</li><li>○ Eligibility and scope for innovation financing (open, targeted? Rationale)</li><li>○ Sources of funds for ideation, proof of concept and scale up</li></ul>
<b>Area 6: Innovation Funds (if any)</b>
<b>Issues:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Governance mechanisms in place (minimum standards), including transparency and accountability systems, conflict of interest and ethical aspects</li><li>○ Project selection criteria (rationale) and project selection system (involvement and engagement across different levels of the organizational)</li></ul>
<b>Area 7: Partnerships</b>
<b>Issues:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Who are the main partners in innovation and in what sectors?</li><li>○ When are partnerships used and what for? (Development of solutions, scale ups, etc.)</li><li>○ Resources devoted to developing partnerships (staff, financial)</li><li>○ Partnership arrangements. Are they innovation-specific or are they within the organization's general partnership portfolio? Are they contract-based? MoU-based? Project-specific? Challenge-specific?</li></ul>
<b>Area 8: Organizational learning</b>
<b>Issues:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ How learning from innovation projects/ activities is extracted and incorporated in the organizations (especially for failed projects / solutions) - especially in the organizations' knowledge sharing functions.</li><li>○ What are the linkages between innovation and the policy and knowledge management areas of the organization?</li><li>○ How does cross learning occur across the organization (between countries, regions, headquarter units)?</li></ul>
<b>Area 9: Specific considerations</b>
<b>Issues:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Proprietorship aspects of innovative solutions</li><li>○ Promotion of an innovative culture within the organizations (ways, views and considerations)</li><li>○ Private sector involvement policies</li><li>○ Practices that were abandoned at some point and the reasons why</li></ul>

## Component 4 – Baseline Survey

Lack of baseline data hinders the usefulness of M&E frameworks (results frameworks), as they are not used to monitor progress or as a frame to evaluate results.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the absence of baseline (and end line) data is one of the factors hindering the quality of evaluations at UNFPA. Without baseline data on the values of indicators, it is difficult to measure progress in a reliable manner, which often compromises the validity of the findings.

Baselines are needed to measure change over time. Comparing data at the onset of an intervention (baseline data) with data at the end (end-line survey) change may be measured by comparing, in fact, the situation *before* and *after* the intervention. It is still possible to measure change without a baseline, but it implies using proxies, reconstructing processes and making estimates, which are less accurate overall.

### Box 5. Why are baseline surveys important?

- Baselines serve as a reference point to measure progress and achievements.
- Baselines render evaluations useful by providing a quantified/qualified reference frame with which to compare data from the intervention.
- When followed by end-line surveys, contribution lines are much clearer and attribution lines may be eventually measured.

The baseline survey and the ensuing baseline study complement the M&E framework, and are the first steps to make the framework operational and useful. The baseline survey will focus on the situation of innovation at UNFPA, including the state of the organizational culture on innovation. Annex 8 presents some preliminary considerations on particular aspects of the survey.<sup>21</sup> The baseline survey will be followed by a survey study, structuring and presenting the results of the analysis of the data collected through the survey.

The final design of the baseline survey will be the result of a collaborative effort. A working group for the baseline survey will be set-up for that purpose, including the formative evaluation team, the Evaluation Office, and staff from country and regional and headquarters levels. The formative evaluation team will design the first version of the survey and coordinate the consultation process. The survey will be launched and administered by the Evaluation Office. The evaluation team will also be responsible for the quality assurance of the data processing and the baseline study.

## 2.5 The scope of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation varies depending on the evaluation component and on the data collection tools. The scope of the review, component 1, is the Innovation Fund. The scope of the benchmarking, component 2, and the scope of the M&E framework, component 3, is the Innovation Initiative, as described in the document “Updated vision of innovation at UNFPA 2015-2017”.<sup>22</sup> The scope of the baseline survey will include: (i) the M&E Framework of the Innovation Initiative that will be proposed by the evaluation team and approved by the ERG at the end of the formative evaluation; and (ii) all innovation activities carried out across all UNFPA offices worldwide.

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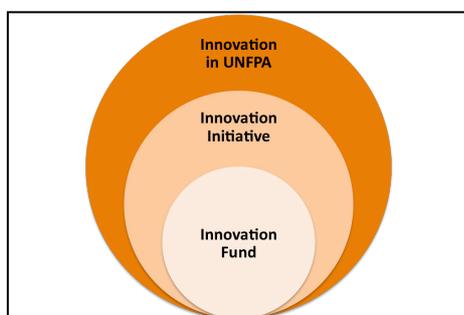
<sup>20</sup> The quality assessment of UNFPA decentralised country programme evaluation (February, 2012) points out that country programme evaluation (CPE) reports “frequently mentioned the absence of key data necessary for the evaluation, particularly baseline data”, a concern that remains. The CPE Turkmenistan 2010 – 2015 (February 2015) and the more recent published (March 2016) evaluation of the UNFPA 8th Country Programme of Assistance to the Government of Vietnam (2012-2016) in march 2016 point out the absence of baseline data as a major limitation.

<sup>21</sup> Annex 8 will be further developed through the formative evaluation. It constitutes the starting point to develop the specifications framework of the baseline survey.

<sup>22</sup> The benchmarking will also take the broader framework of innovation in the UN system as part of the context.

The distinction and overlaps between the Innovation Fund, the Initiative and innovation at large are not clearly specified in any document. The evaluation will provide inputs in this regard. At the time of writing this report, and following inception phase consultations, the understanding of the evaluation team is that these three levels, as of today, overlap as presented in Figure 3.

Figure 4. The scope of the evaluation



According to figure 4 the Innovation Initiative includes (i) the Innovation Fund, as both a funding mechanism and the initial 2-streamed approach it established (ii) activities linked to the implementation of the 8-prongs of the Updated Innovation Vision, (iii) and other activities on innovation ongoing at UNFPA such as work on drones, supply chain and tech initiatives, the innovation accelerator recently launched by the UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office, among many others that fall beyond the scope / funding of the UNFPA Innovation Fund. Figure 4 assumes that there might be innovation activities

within UNFPA that are not necessarily included, as of yet, in the Innovation Initiative.<sup>23</sup> This hypothesis will be rejected or confirmed through the exploratory and baseline surveys and through the semi-structured interviews.

Therefore, the scope of component 1, the review of the performance of the Innovation Fund, is the 18 projects selected for funding to date, the 148 proposals submitted over the five calls for proposals launched in 2014-16, and the activities related to the *culture stream*.<sup>24</sup> The latter includes innovation days conducted to date as well as events, communications and partnerships Innovation Fund stakeholders have participated in. The scope of components 2 and 3, the benchmarking and the M&E framework, will include the Innovation Fund and the activities and actions linked to the 8-prong approach described in the Updated Vision document.<sup>25</sup>

#### Box 7. Scope by evaluation component

The scope of the review is the performance of the Innovation Fund.

The scope of the M&E Framework and the Benchmarking exercise is the Innovation Initiative (as of today)

The scope of the Baseline Survey is the situation of innovation in all UNFPA Offices worldwide (at the start of the new Strategic Plan)

<sup>23</sup> Understanding the Initiative today, as the drive promoted from the management of the organization and channelled through the Inter-divisional Working Group, to drive innovation at a corporate level in UNFPA.

<sup>24</sup> At the time of writing this inception report, 60 proposals had been submitted under the fifth call for proposals and the results in terms of awarded proposals had yet to be announced.

<sup>25</sup> This document is, at times, referred to as Innovation Strategy. The evaluation team understands, however, that the document is not a corporate strategy on innovation, but the result of a retreat that puts forward a corporate vision on innovation by reviewing strategies to drive innovation.

### 3. Evaluation methodology

#### Summary box

The evaluation will follow a **mixed, multi-method approach**. Data collection and analysis methods will be both quantitative and qualitative, yet the approach will be mostly qualitative due to the exploratory nature of a formative evaluation. **Comparison groups** will be used systematically to examine the relevance of the Innovation Fund and understand how innovation works in the absence of the Innovation Fund. The evaluation is **based on an analytical framework**, including retrospective (evaluation matrix) as well as prospective elements (theory of change). Different **sampling** methods will be used depending on the component, from purposive sampling to stratified random sampling. Census approaches (no sampling) will also be used, for example, for the projects of the Innovation Fund and for some stratum in the exploratory survey. **Data collection methods** include semi-structured individual interviews, group discussions, online group consultations, an exploratory survey, and desk study. **Data analysis methods** include content analysis, comparative analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics, case studies and the use of evidence tables. The evaluation integrates **gender, human rights**, particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights, and youth aspects. Similarly, the evaluation design integrates ethical considerations in accordance with the stipulations of the United Nations Evaluation Group. A number of **risks and limitations** in sampling, data collection and in the evaluation approach have been identified and a number of mitigating measures proposed. To ensure the **reliability and credibility** of the findings, triangulation and internal and external validation mechanisms will be used.

#### 3.1 Evaluation approach

##### Overall approach

The evaluation will follow a mixed, multi-method approach. While the approach will be mostly qualitative, data collected will be both qualitative and quantitative and the methods of analysis will include both qualitative (e.g. content analysis) and quantitative methods (e.g. descriptive and inferential statistics).<sup>26</sup> The approach will be mostly qualitative because of the formative and exploratory nature of the exercise: understanding what worked and what did not work, how, why and in what circumstances. Moreover, an important part of the evaluation is understanding the processes of organizational change generated to date, identifying variables associated with these processes and finding out how they can be measured and the type of data required.

The rationale of a multi-method approach lies in the fact the evaluation incorporates exercises of very different natures. The review is a retrospective assessment that involves a judgement, the benchmarking involves a qualitative comparative analysis, and the setting up of an M&E framework is a prospective exercise involving structuring methods such as the theory of change or the results framework.

##### The use of the comparison groups

Throughout data collection the use of comparison groups will be given special attention. A comparison group would be, for example, a UNFPA country office in Central America that has not been involved in innovation days or in implementing Innovation Fund projects, in a context where other Central American offices have. The members of the comparison group will not be part of the intervention but

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<sup>26</sup> Qualitative data will include, for example, descriptive narratives of impact collected from users of innovative solutions through open interviews.

will be very similar (in characteristics) to the members of the groups taking part in the intervention. In this context, examining what happened in comparison groups will help understanding key aspects of the relevance and effectiveness of the Innovation Fund as well as how innovation works in the absence of the Innovation Fund.

The evaluation will identify comparison groups to the extent possible when sampling for the survey and for interviewees. Using comparison groups will be particularly relevant identifying the effects of the Innovation Fund in terms of change in organizational culture. Comparison groups may be also applied to analyse other aspects such as the difference made by innovation focal points at country level (by comparing county offices with innovation focal points with country offices without them) or finding out what factors hinder or enable innovation in specific situations.

### 3.2 Analytical framework

Analytical frameworks for summative evaluations are generally built around an evaluation matrix that includes the scope of the assessment (evaluation criteria, questions and indicators) and the data collection and analysis tools applied to provide credible, evidence-based answers to those evaluation questions. This formative evaluation follows this sequence and expands it further, as some of the issues to respond to (the M&E Framework and the baseline survey) fall beyond the evaluation matrix, which is confined mostly to the review of the Innovation Fund including some aspects of the benchmarking.

Figure 5. Analytical framework

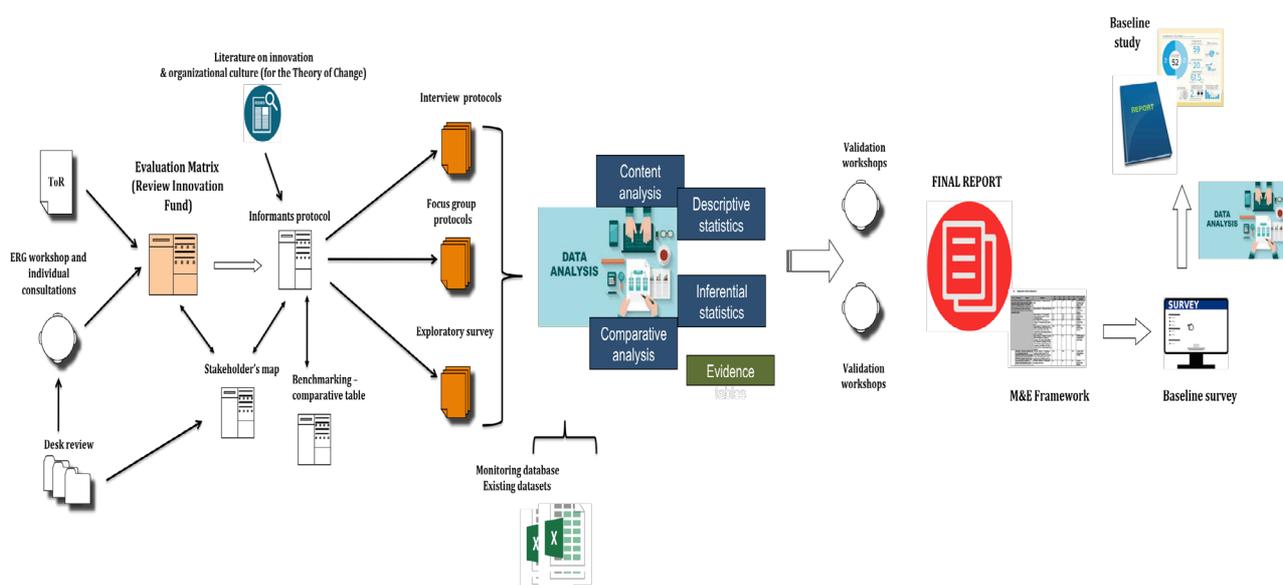


Figure 5 illustrates the entire analytical framework of the formative evaluation. This framework is the combination of the analytical frameworks of the evaluation components.

The **analytical framework for the review of the Innovation Fund (component 1)** resembles that of a summative evaluation, briefly described above. The reason for this is that the review involves a retrospective assessment, similar to a mid-term review.

When results frameworks exist evaluation matrices reflect the assessment of what happened in comparison to what was expected to happen. In the case of the Innovation Fund there was no

structured results framework,<sup>27</sup> and the evaluation team reconstructed the analytical framework for the review during the inception mission. The reconstruction was based on the Innovation Concept Paper (UNFPA September, 2014), relevant UNFPA staff, external stakeholders, individual interviews with IDWG members, and the results of group discussions in the two workshops held in New York (see Annex 2).<sup>28</sup>

The result of this process is summarized in the **Evaluation Matrix for the review of the Innovation Fund**, in Annex 4. This matrix is the backbone of the analytical framework for the review. It features a number of evaluation questions by evaluation criteria, namely, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Each question is then divided in a number of dimensions (sub-areas within the scope of the question), which in turn, are complemented by a number of pointers, an interface between the question-dimension and the data sources needed to answer it. Pointers are both qualitative and quantitative.

Dimensions and pointers narrow evaluation questions further down by specifying what to look at precisely when answering the questions, and thus, the type of data that should be collected. Data collection will focus on gathering evidence (and counter-evidence) linked to the pointers. The answers to the questions will be based on triangulating this body of evidence by dimension and question and interpreting the results. Pointers in the evaluation matrix are tentative and indicative. New pointers may be added and others removed depending on data availability.

#### Box 9. Using *pointers* instead of indicators

Evaluation matrices use (evaluation) indicators as reference benchmarks to answer evaluation questions positively or negatively. We use the term *pointer* to emphasise a sense of direction, and away from evaluation indicators understood as judgement criteria. This responds to the fact the Innovation Fund does not have a results framework with clear, quantified (or qualified) objectives and targets that could be used to develop indicators as judgement criteria.

The column on sources of information in the matrix links the evaluation questions for the review with the stakeholder mapping, feeding into the **Informants Protocol**. This protocol determines the topics that will be covered in interviews by type of stakeholder (what to ask to whom). It links the evaluation matrix with the data collection methods, and it will be developed following approval of the evaluation matrix. As shown In Figure 5, the Informants Protocol does not only cover informants for the review; it also covers the areas of comparative analysis for the benchmarking, and aspects of the theory of change and how to measure organizational culture change (identified through literature review) that we would like to know more about. All these aspects will also feed into the Informants Protocol.

Once the Protocol contains the inventory of all aspects to be enquired about by type of stakeholder, the list will be broken down by data collection tool and type of stakeholder. For example, a protocol for individual interviews with UNFPA country office's resident representatives, a protocol for interviews with other UN agencies, a protocol for online group discussions with users of innovative solutions supported by the Innovation Fund, the template for the exploratory survey (for offices having benefited from Innovation Fund resources and for comparison groups).

The **analytical framework for the M&E framework of the Innovation Initiative (component 2)** is less complex than the previous one. This is because the focus of the analysis is to structure the information collected (inputs) into an evaluative framework (outputs), rather than answering a set of

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<sup>27</sup> This is not necessarily a flaw for two reasons. First, the Innovation Fund (IF) was intentionally conceived as learning-by-doing experience. Framing it into a results framework would have not been appropriate. Second, the establishment of a results framework was not a requirement of the donor of the IF (due to the first reason).

<sup>28</sup> There is a brief mention to innovation in the Strategic Plan 2014-201, output 3 of organizational effectiveness and efficiency. However, this cannot be considered a formal framework for the Innovation Fund.

evaluation questions. This input-output sequence is described in Figure 3, in section 2.4 (The M&E Framework: Inputs and outputs). This process of structuring relevant information (on outcomes, outputs, indicators, assumptions) into an evaluative framework will be done using techniques and tools such as the theory of change, flow diagrams and results frameworks. Building up the evaluative framework will also imply analysing the input data and for that, tools such as content analysis, case studies and comparative analysis will be used.

The **analytical framework for the benchmarking exercise (component 3)** will consist of collecting relevant information on the areas of analysis for the benchmarking exercise (see Table 2) through in-depth interviews and documentary review, identifying relevant practices and their rationale, and examining possibilities for improvement in the Innovation Initiative in light of the findings of the comparative review across UN agencies.

The outline of **analytical framework for the baseline survey and the baseline study (component 4)** will be determined by the indicators and progress markers in the M&E Framework in component 2. Annex 8 contains some preliminary considerations on aspects of the survey, but the complete details of the analytical framework will not be developed until the ERG provides feedback on the M&E Framework in the final inception report.

### 3.3 Tools for data collection

#### Desk Study

This will include a study of internal and external documentation and of secondary data sources such as monitoring datasets and results of institutional surveys. Internal documentation will cover UNFPA related documents both innovation-specific and generic (strategic and programming documents). External documentation will include seminal as well as state-of-the-art academic literature and practitioners manuals and guides on how to measure the effectiveness of innovation interventions, on innovation ecosystems, on innovation and organizational culture, and on how to measure organizational culture change.

The UNFPA global staff survey (GSS)<sup>29</sup> is an example of an existing dataset that may be used to collect data on organizational culture aspects. The monitoring datasets from the Innovation Fund will be key to collect data on submission and selection of project proposals, on qualitative and quantitative features of the innovation days, and on quarterly updates provided by the project teams against their work plans. Secondary data will also be collected from existing datasets from Atlas (2008-2013) and the GPS (2014-2016), the Global Programming System, capturing UNFPA expenditure at country, regional and HQ levels.

**Semi-structured individual interviews** will be the main tool used for primary data collection. Unstructured interviews will be used in the case studies to collect narrative descriptions of impact (storytelling). The team has estimated that individual interviews will cover a cohort of, at least, 140 people throughout the exercise. This type of interviews will follow differentiated protocols by type of stakeholder<sup>30</sup> i.e. for every type of innovation focal point (IDWG, project level, innovation days, ESARO), for operations and administrative staff, for Resident Representatives, for users and beneficiaries of innovative solutions, for other UN agencies and public sector organizations implementing innovation initiatives, for donors and private sector stakeholders (partners, potential partners, trend setters). Innovation focal points and UNFPA staff will cover country, regional and headquarter levels. The results of interviews will be registered in interview logbooks (see Annex 10)

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<sup>29</sup> The survey covers several aspects related to human resources, autonomy, emotional intelligence, leadership and supportive management that could be use for the analysis of organizational culture aspects.

<sup>30</sup> Protocols will feature a basic sequencing of the interview and a list of core and complementary aspects that should be covered in the interviews. These aspects will be based in the evaluation matrix and the informants' protocol sheet.

**Group discussions** will consist of interviews conducted with more than one person simultaneously, generally to a group of people from the same organization. The protocols and logbooks for group discussions will be the same as for the semi-structured interviews.

**Online group consultations** are a particular type of group discussions foreseen for this evaluation. These consultations will be conducted through Google Groups and target participants to innovation days, different stakeholders involved in the same innovation project or, when possible, users of innovative solutions.

The **exploratory survey** will be an online survey and the results will be used to inform the review (component 1) and the M&E framework (component 2).<sup>31</sup> The term *exploratory* is used to emphasise the exploratory research nature of the survey, as opposed to a descriptive research nature – which will be the case for the baseline survey (see section 5 on deliverables).<sup>32</sup> The exploratory survey will complement the findings of semi-structured and group interviews. The survey will also be used for triangulation purposes and to obtain quantifiable estimates on the magnitude of specific variables when the representativeness of the response rates so allows it.

### 3.4 Tools for data analysis

**Content analysis** will be applied by coding (standardising raw data) the content of interviews and open questions in the exploratory surveys in order to identify patterns and evidence linked to the pointers in the evaluation matrix and aspects related to the M&E Framework.

**Comparative analysis** using a peer-review table will be applied in the benchmarking exercise. Well-functioning practices, practices that were abandoned at some point and practices presenting caveats will be identified (whenever possible) by area of analysis. The table will feature a section on conclusions to inform the review component and the M&E framework of the Innovation Initiative.

The five **case studies** showcasing different lessons from the implementation of innovative solutions will also constitute a method for analysing data on the performance of the Innovation Fund. The data obtained from case studies will inform aspects of the review matrix and eventually, the M&E framework. The main goal of the case studies is to generate knowledge products that support communicating what the Innovation Fund does by showcasing successful processes in detail, as well as experiences that did not work so well, if/when they become available. Annex 5 describes the process and criteria followed for the selection of the five cases.

**Descriptive statistics** will be applied to the results of the online survey, to the assessment of monitoring datasets from the Innovation Fund and to the analysis of the datasets from Atlas (2008-2013) and GPS (2014-2016). The latter will consist of a search of selected key words associated with innovation programming and the analysis of the resulting data (see annex 9).

### Inferential statistics

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<sup>31</sup> The baseline survey is not included in this section because it is not a data collection tool for the formative evaluation. It is the first step in the implementation of the M&E Framework, a main output of the evaluation.

<sup>32</sup> The survey is exploratory because one of its main purposes is to collect insights from the organization to inform the definition of organizational aspects of innovation, identify outcomes of organizational culture change or classify the effects of innovation practices. In contrast, the baseline survey (descriptive), will be structured around variables of the M&E Framework, will be statistically inferable and will attempt to describe innovation behaviour at UNFPA.

When the quantity, quality and comparability of the data allow it, simple correlation techniques may be applied such as Chi-square analysis for categorical variables and correlation analysis and simple regression analysis for quantitative variables.

**Evidence tables** will be used to reinforce the validity of the findings in the analysis. The tables will relate pieces of evidence to one another in relation to findings of the evaluation. These findings may be related to answers to the evaluation questions, to conclusions of the benchmarking exercise or to the causal links and assumptions in the theory of change. Documents containing evidence associated to pointers in the evaluation matrix will be codified, as well as interviews in the logbooks, to identify specific pieces of information linking the three types of findings above. Table 3 links the components and their scope with the data collection and analysis methods that will be used in each of them.

**Table 3. Scope, components and methods for data collection and analysis**

COMPONENT	SCOPE	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	ANALYSIS METHODS
<b>Component 1</b> Review	The Innovation Fund	In-depth interviews Online group consultations Study of documentation (UNFPA, benchmarking) documentary review) Monitoring data (Innovation Fund) Existing datasets (GPS, Atlas) Exploratory survey	Content analysis Comparative analysis Case studies Descriptive statistics Inferential statistics (if feasible)
<b>Component 2</b> M&E framework	The Innovation Initiative	Study of documentation (academic journals, UNFPA documents) Exploratory survey Validation workshops with the ERG	Content analysis Comparative analysis Case studies <i>Structuring tools:</i> Theory of change Result Framework
<b>Component 3</b> Benchmarking	The Innovation Initiative	In-depth interviews Documentary review	Comparative analysis Content analysis
<b>Component 4</b> Baseline survey and baseline study	Situation of innovation within UNFPA (country, regional, country)	Survey	Descriptive statistics Inferential statistics Content analysis

### 3.5 Sampling

The main sampling method will be purposive sampling. However, other methods will be adopted depending on the component and the unit of analysis (see below).

**For Innovation Fund projects**, for example, no sampling will be conducted. A census approach will be adopted i.e. the totality of the 18 projects funded to date will be analysed. The reason for this being the high profile of the intervention: the first corporate innovation initiative at UNFPA in a context where innovation is a corporate priority.



**Sampling for informants (interviews)** will follow **purposive sampling**, a non-probability sampling method used when evaluators chose specific people to interview who have specific characteristics of particular interest for the evaluation – given the analytical framework (evaluation questions, aspects to be assessed). Whereas probability methods are mostly concerned with representativeness and generalization, non-probability approaches fit in-depth qualitative evaluations, with a focus on *how* and *why* interventions work or do not work. Given the formative nature and the objectives of the evaluation (understanding how the Initiative works, capturing learning and improving the design), and the fact that sampling for proportionality is not the main concern, purposive sampling is considered to be a suitable and appropriate method.

The sample of country offices interviewed will not be statistically representative but in each geographical region offices will be selected in a way that illustrates the different situations, circumstances and cases being analysed as much as possible e.g. offices implementing innovation fund projects; offices that never submitted any proposal or implemented any innovation day; offices that submitted proposals that were not approved (in one single call for proposal or in more than one); offices not involved with the Innovation Fund, that implement innovation activities; etc. The objective is to gather relevant and accurate data on all viewpoints and situations. Stakeholder mapping and the exploratory survey will play a key role in identifying as many cases as possible. Fairness and equal access will be ensured throughout the exercise.

With the objective of making the sample as complete and illustrative as possible, **pairing** and snowball sampling will be applied. *Pairing*, a tool linked to the comparison groups, means that for every country office showing a particular case (e.g. an office implemented an innovation fund project) the team will attempt identifying a country office with similar characteristics but without the feature that makes the case (implementing an Innovation Fund's project in the example).

**Snowball sampling**, a purposive sampling technique also known as referral sampling, is used when informants refer evaluators to other informants of interest for the purpose of the evaluation. Snowball sampling was already used systematically for the inception phase interviews. The question "who else do you think we should talk to" was systematically asked at the end of each interview. Given the relatively moderate size of the Innovation Initiative and provided the evaluation team has access to an adequate critical mass of interviewees, snowball sampling can be a sound method to guarantee most views are represented.<sup>33</sup>

Other types of purposive sampling that will be applied when selecting key informants, in addition to snowball sampling, are maximum variation sampling and homogeneous sampling.

**Maximum variation sampling**, also known as heterogeneous sampling, will be applied at country level. It consists of selecting interviewees across a wide spectrum to obtain a complete view. This would imply that once an office has been selected, the team will not only interview the implementers of innovation activities but also senior management, colleagues not involved in innovation activities but indirectly affected (programme and finance) and whenever possible, users of the innovative solutions and other agencies operating in the country (to obtain their perceptions).

Conversely, **homogenous sampling** will be applied to make sense of informant samples across countries. This type of sampling, involves choosing a homogeneous group of informants, and is used when the objective is to understand or describe a specific group in depth. It will be applied with innovation focal points, project implementers, organizers of innovation days, etc. In practical terms, it will mean that focal points (for example) will not be selected in isolation; instead, the entire group of focal points in region will be interviewed to the extent possible.

The following approach and criteria has been applied for the **purposeful selection** of the sample of five case studies among the 18 projects selected for funding to date. The case studies have been chosen based on the following five criteria:

- 1) The sample had to be illustrative of the three types of outcomes of the Innovation Initiative (see component 2 in section 2.4);
- 2) The cases chosen should depict as many stages of the innovation value chain as possible (the more the better);
- 3) There should be cases of success and cases of failure among the five innovation solutions chosen for the sample;
- 4) The thematic areas of the sample should be illustrative of the UNFPA mandate areas; and

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<sup>33</sup> Sample saturation will be used as one of the indicators that most views are represented. Saturation would occur when interview after interview the names of the informants referred to by interviewees were people already interviewed or already referred to by others.

5) The five selected cases should reflect certain balance between geographical regions. Annex 5 explains the process in more detail and presents the names of the five projects that include the innovative solutions selected.

For the **exploratory survey** either a **census approach** or **stratified random sampling** will be applied. The population of UNFPA offices will be divided into three groups for the purpose of the survey: (1) offices that have submitted proposals that have not been selected; (2) offices that have conducted innovation days (but not submitted project proposals); and (3) offices that have not participated in the Innovation Fund.<sup>34</sup> The survey will be sent to all the offices from the first and the second group (census approach). Stratified random sampling will be applied to the third group. The group will be divided by geographical region and the survey will be sent randomly to a percentage of offices coinciding with the proportion of country offices in that region (over the total of country offices in UNFPA).

A **census approach** will be attempted for the **baseline survey**.<sup>35</sup> As with all surveys, the baseline survey is subject to self-selection bias; therefore support from senior management at the Technical Division will be sought to ensure full coverage of the respondents (a census). In case full coverage is not achieved, a goodness of fit test (Chi-square) will be applied to the response dataset for the baseline survey to check the representativeness of the distribution of respondents (by strata) compared to the population.<sup>36</sup> These aspects will be explained in further detail in the survey methodology, which will be developed once the proposal for an M&E Framework in the final report is approved.

### 3.6 Integration of cross cutting issues and ethical aspects

**Gender, human rights** - particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights - and **youth** aspects will be integrated in the evaluation in two ways. First, the evaluation will look at how these areas have been incorporated into innovation activities. Second, the evaluation will collect disaggregated sex data to enable such analysis, and will also pay particular attention at gender and youth features when selecting interviewees.

The review of the innovation fund will assess to what extent the selection of projects took account of gender, youth and human rights perspectives as well as the extent to which the projects selected for funding have incorporated these elements in their innovation work. Basic aspects such as the balanced participation by women and men in the Innovation Initiative activities will also be examined to the extent available data allows so.

The analysis of changes in the UNFPA's innovation organizational culture will also include specific questions on gender and youth. These questions will go from basic demographic data to allow for disaggregation (on gender and age range), to questions on how gender and youth variables relate with innovation processes in the organization. Additionally, gender, sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as youth are aspects that will be duly included in the theory of change of the Innovation Initiative for the next four-year period.

As far as **ethical aspects** are concerned, the design and implementation of this formative evaluation will be in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and

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<sup>34</sup> Note that the exploratory survey will not cover offices implementing Innovation Fund projects because they will all be interviewed.

<sup>35</sup> Probabilistic sampling could ensure the representativeness and generalization of the results of the survey. However, a census approach is much preferred because the survey will include a comprehensive mapping of innovations across UNFPA, an aspect that cannot be based on only a representative sample.

<sup>36</sup> Strata-defining variables will include, for example, geographical region and the country quadrant classification ,

the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System.<sup>37</sup> The close working interaction between the Evaluation Office and the evaluation team is a safeguard in this regard.

The evaluation will be intensive in primary data collection through semi-structured individual interviews, many of which will cover aspects of organizational culture. This makes respect for informant confidentiality an essential aspect to be ensured. To guarantee confidentiality survey data will be used only in aggregate form, keeping the confidentiality of individual answers. Pull quotes may be used in case studies to illustrate particular experiences. These quotes will only be included once relevant informants have granted permission.

Stakeholder mapping will be used to ensure that all relevant voices, opinions and views are heard. The evaluation team will work in close consultation with the Innovation Fund Secretariat to identify relevant players. Snowball sampling (referral sampling) will also be used, among other reasons, to increase the likelihood of wide coverage identifying relevant players.

The planning of data collection periods through surveys and remote interviews has been done in a way that informants not available in the first round may still express their views in a second round. In addition, timelines for responding to surveys and interviews will be further expanded if necessary, to ensure those through the two rounds can still express their views. A considerable number of informants to the evaluation are UNFPA internal staff. The Evaluation Office will announce internally that the evaluation is taking place. This will make it possible for those willing to express their views but who have not been reached directly (through interviews or the exploratory survey) to contact the evaluation team to provide input.

Absence of conflict of interest has been guaranteed at the evaluation design stage, as none of the evaluation team members have been involved in the design and implementation of any activity linked to the Innovation Initiative being assessed.

### 3.7 Risks, limitations and quality assurance

#### **Risks in terms of scope and approach**

The first risk in terms of scope is that some areas of the formative evaluation intersect with design features of the Innovation Initiative. What innovation is in UNFPA and what is the scope of the changes pursued by the Innovation Initiative are aspects of strategic importance. These aspects are part of the proposal for an M&E framework as well as part of a broader, internal, strategic debate at UNFPA. If the development of the proposal goes alongside the debate, there is a risk that the formative evaluation becomes an on-going protracted process. To avoid this from happening, it is hereby agreed that: 1) The final report, including the proposal for an evaluative framework, is a one-time input for discussion in the process of development and design of the Initiative; and that 2) the report will be approved on the basis of its technical quality, and independently from corporate decisions to be made in relation to specific strategic aspects contained in the report.

The second risk could emerge as a consequence of the highly participatory and consultative evaluation approach and the involvement of a considerable number of people. While these two features are intrinsically positive and undoubtedly necessary, they could result in difficulties reaching consensus and on expectations not being fulfilled. Should this happen, it will be considered a necessary trade-off. That said, the team will do its best to ensure all (reasonable) expectations are met.

The third is a risk in terms of general scope. The scope of the original Terms of Reference has evolved considerably throughout the inception phase. This has been matched with additional resource and time allocations. Having said that, some of the newly incorporated elements, like the baseline survey

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<sup>37</sup> See <http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines> and <http://www.unevaluation.org/uneqcodeofconduct> both from March 2008.

or the benchmarking, with newly incorporated agencies, could result in an unforeseen workload. Should this occur and be justified, the ERG would immediately be briefed and the possibility of adjusting the scope would be discussed.

### **Sampling limitations**

The main sampling method for interviews will be purposive sampling, a method that may suffer from evaluator bias, as the sample depends mostly on the decision/judgement of the evaluator.

The evaluation will use three approaches to mitigate these potential effects. First, decisions on who to interview will be grounded in the analytical framework, by means of the Informants Protocol, in turn linked to the sources of information in the evaluation matrix. Second, the use of snowball sampling, asking at the end of each interview who else should the evaluators talk to, ensures that views other than those of the evaluators may be incorporated. Third, the Evaluation Office, and the Secretariat of the Innovation Fund will be informed on progress throughout the data collection phase, including what informants have been covered. Moreover, the presentation of preliminary findings to the ERG at the end of the data collection phase will include the list of informants. Should there be concerns on biases or gaps in informants, these can be flagged and data collection will resume or adjust to address them.

### **Risks with data collection**

To overcome restrictions in access to informants due to time constraints and accessibility issues, the evaluation will introduce a certain degree of flexibility. This will include rescheduling meetings and expanding data collection cut off dates if required.

If low response rates to the exploratory survey occur, the period to respond will be expanded and reminders sent to insist on the importance of the exercise (the first formative evaluation at UNFPA). Regions with particularly low rates would be offset with remote interviews (telephone or Skype interviews).

Overlaps between interviews, the exploratory survey and the baseline survey will occur. To mitigate unintended worn out effects of individuals contacted to participate in multiple phases, the team will anticipate and communicate with the offices concerned, emphasising that the three exercises are different in scope.

### **Quality assurance**

Triangulation and internal and external validation mechanisms will be used to ensure the reliability and credibility of the findings. Triangulation will imply crosschecking findings and pieces of evidence from different sources and from different data collection methods. Internal validation will take place through internal revisions among team members and between them and the Evaluation Office. External validation will consist of working sessions with the Evaluation Reference Group or sub-sets of it.

As a general rule, data will be disregarded as a means to back up findings whenever low levels of data quality and accuracy become a risk for the validity of the analysis.

## 4. Outputs, deliverables, timeline and resource requirements

### 4.1 Outputs and deliverables

The evaluation will generate eleven outputs. Most of them will be stand-alone documents and a few of them, parts of the final report (the main deliverable). The **thirteen outputs** are:

- 1) The inception report (including PowerPoint presentations in the inception mission)
- 2) The review of the implementation of the Innovation Fund
- 3) The M&E framework for the Innovation Initiative (including a theory of change, a results framework and a monitoring and evaluation plan)
- 4) The benchmarking exercise (comparative tables with findings)
- 5) The five brief case studies (knowledge products)
- 6) The overall conclusions and forward-looking recommendations
- 7) The baseline survey questionnaire
- 8) The baseline survey methodological brief
- 9) The baseline study for the Innovation Initiative
- 10) The methodological brief of the formative evaluation (knowledge product)
- 11) The PowerPoint presentation on the preliminary results (November 2016)
- 12) The PowerPoint presentation on the final results (December 2016)
- 13) The PowerPoint presentation on the baseline survey and study (February 2017)

These outputs will translate into **ten stand-alone deliverables**: the inception report, the final report (including draft versions), the five case studies, the benchmarking, the baseline survey design, the baseline study, and the formative evaluation methodological brief. The three PowerPoint presentations will also be deliverables (preliminary results, final results, and results of the baseline survey and study). Table 3 shows the relationship between deliverables and outputs. It also indicates who takes the lead responsibility for the production of each output.

**Table 4. Outputs and deliverables of the evaluation**

DELIVERABLES	OUTPUTS	TYPE OF OUTPUT	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>Inception Report</b>	Inception report	Stand-alone document	Evaluation team (ET)
<b>Final Report</b>	Review of the Innovation Fund	Part of the final report (section)	Evaluation team
	M&E Framework Innov. Initiative	Part of the final report (section)	Evaluation team
	Benchmarking	Part of the final report (section) and stand alone document	Evaluation team
	<b>Five brief case studies*</b>	Part of final report and stand-alone	Evaluation team
	Conclusions and Recommendations	Part of the final report (section)	Evaluation team
<b>Baseline survey design</b>	Survey questionnaire	Part of the design document	Evaluation team
	Methodological brief for the survey	Part of the design document	
<b>Baseline study</b>	Baseline study report	Stand-alone document	Evaluation Office with ET supervision
<b>Methodological Brief</b>	Brief with the methodology and process of the formative evaluation	Stand-alone document	Evaluation Office with input from the ET
<b>PPT preliminary</b>	PPT with preliminary results	Stand-alone document	Evaluation team
<b>PPT final</b>	PPT with final results	Stand- alone document	Evaluation team
<b>PPT baseline</b>	PPT with results of baseline survey	Stand-alone document	Evaluation team

\* The five showcase case studies are both an output included in the final report and a deliverable which will be presented in stand-alone format (as knowledge products).

### 4.2 Team and resources

The core evaluation team is composed of a senior evaluation specialist, a social innovation specialist and an evaluation manager from the Evaluation Office.

A research assistant from the Evaluation Office and an external survey expert will support the core team. The research assistant will have a supporting role throughout the exercise and play a particularly key role analysing baseline survey data for the baseline study. The survey expert will play a central role in quality assuring the design and implementation of the exploratory and the baseline survey, and in drafting the methodological brief for the baseline survey.

### 4.3 Quality assurance

The quality assurance process for the outputs of the formative evaluation will be as follows:

- 1) The evaluation manager at the Evaluation Office will review all outputs,
- 2) The ERG will also review all outputs and provide feedback, and
- 3) The Director of the Evaluation Office will approve the final evaluation report.

### 4.4 Timeline

Table 4 presents the timeline by evaluation phase and task. The proposed timeline is tentative. There may be adjustments, which will be duly communicated to the ERG.

**Table 5. Tentative timeline by evaluation phase**

TASK	TIMELINE
<b>INCEPTION PHASE (June - August 2016)</b>	
Initial documentary review and mission preparation	June 13 – June 24
Inception mission to Headquarters. Individual interviews, and workshops with relevant UNFPA staff and members of the ERG	June 27 – July 1
Remote interviews with IDWG members and other relevant informants not based in New York	July 11 – July 22
Draft Inception Report 	August 31
Comments from ERG/IDWG	September 15
Final Inception Report  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	September 23
<b>DATA COLLECTION PHASE (September - October)</b>	
Informant Protocol Matrix, design data collection protocols including survey	Sept. 26 - Sept. 30
Remote interviews, including group interviews and online group discussions	Oct. 3 – October 31
Secondary data collection and analysis (Academic and practitioner literature, existing datasets, monitoring databases)	Oct. 1 – October 31
Exploratory survey	Oct. 17 – November 7
<b>DATA ANALYSIS PHASE (November)</b>	
Aggregate analysis of data collected and team validation	Nov. 7 – November 18
Presentation of the preliminary findings in New York	Nov. 21 – November 25
<b>REPORTING (December - January)</b>	
Draft Final Report 	December 12
Comments from the ERG	December 23
Final Report  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	January 16
Quality Assurance Panel Review	January 16 – January 31
<b>RESPONSE &amp; FINAL DISSEMINATION (January - February 2017)</b>	
Management response	February 15
Approach to baseline survey design	January 15 – February 1
Presentation of the final report	End of February
Evaluation Quality Assessment	End of February
<b>BASELINE SURVEY &amp; STUDY (February- March 2017)</b>	
Design of the baseline survey	January 23 – February 1
Implementation of the survey (15 to 30 days)	February 7 – February 28
Baseline Survey 	March 1 – March 31

## Annex 1. Evaluation reference group

<b>Internal members:</b>
Guillem Fortuny, Regional Desk Specialist, Programme Division
Mauricio Saavedra, Strategic Information Specialist, Programme Division
Bruce Campbell, Director, Pacific Sub-Regional Office
Charles Katende, Chief, St. Info. & Knowledge Management Branch, Programme Division
Clara Rodriguez Ribas, Special Assistant, Technical Division
Davide Piga, Innovation and Knowledge Management Specialist, Johannesburg, ESARO and Innovation IDWG member
Edilberto Loaiza, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Technical Division
Henia Dakkak, Technical Adviser, Human. and Fragile Cont. Branch and Innovation IDWG member
Howard Friedman, Technical Specialist, Sexual & Reproductive Health Branch
Jan Weidmann, Planning/Coordination Specialist, DHR and Innovation IDWG member
Klaus Simoni Pedersen, Chief, Resource Mobilization Branch, Division of Communication and Strategic Partnerships
Laura Laski, Chief, Sexual & Reproductive Health Branch, Technical Division
Leslie Berman, Innovation Technical Specialist, Technical Division (Innovation Secretariat)
Marcela Suazo, Global Director, South South Cooperation
Mariarosa Cutillo, Chief, Strategic Partnership Branch, Division of Communication and Strategic Partnerships
Martin Akerman, Coordinator, Transparency & Enterprise Risk Management, Division for Management Services
Michael Herrmann - Manager of Innovation Fund, and Adviser on Population and Economics, Population and Development Branch, Technical Division
Neema Mgana, Strategic Partnerships Specialist, Strategic Partnership Branch, Division of Communication and Strategic Partnerships
Oliver Buder, Policy Adviser, Programme Division
Piyoo Kochar, Strategic Planning Specialist, Programme Division
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Sylvia Wong, Technical Specialist, Sexual & Reproductive Health Branch, Technical Division
Tunga Tuzer, Special Assistant to Deputy Executive Director, OED and Innovation IDWG member
Sam Gichuru, CEO of NaiLab Kenya
Ruben Vellenga, Programme Specialist, External Relations and Private Partnerships, Kenya and Innovation IDWG member
Ziad Yaish, Assistant Representative West Bank, Palestine CO and Innovation IDWG member
<b>External members:</b>
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Inception Report: Formative Evaluation of the UNFPA Innovation Initiative

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