

Executive summary of the final report on the external assessment of the evaluation function of the Multilateral Fund

October 2024

Note: The present document contains the executive summary of the final report on the independent external assessment of the evaluation function of the Multilateral Fund. The report was noted at the 95th meeting of the Executive Committee, as per decision 95/8, where the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer was requested to prepare a management response. All annexes referred to in this document are part of the full report, and can be found in [document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/95/10](#). The present document also contains, after the executive summary, the full text of the above mentioned decision.

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ACRONYMS

CAP	Compliance Assistance Programme
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbon
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HCFC	Hydrochlorofluorocarbon
HFC	Hydrofluorocarbon
IACM	Inter-Agency Coordination Meeting
MLF	Multilateral Fund
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
NOU	National Ozone Unit
SMEO	Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
ODS	Ozone Depleting Substances
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PCR	Project Completion Report
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

External assessment of the evaluation function of the Multilateral Fund

Background and objectives

1. In June 2023, the Executive Committee approved the Terms of Reference (TOR)¹ for an external assessment of the evaluation function of the Multilateral Fund.² These TOR responded to areas for improvement identified in an assessment undertaken by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) which found the evaluation function "insufficiently challenging, formative and analytical. Evaluations tend to present findings rather than providing analysis and explanations for these findings. Lesson learning is tacit rather than explicit and systematic".³ MOPAN micro-indicators for evaluation quality and evidence-based design were rated as unsatisfactory and follow-up systems to evaluations were rated as highly unsatisfactory.

2. The terms of reference defined the objectives of the assessment as follows:

- (a) Report on progress made regarding the areas for improvement which were identified by the MOPAN assessment and identify what areas are still to be addressed for further improvement;
- (b) Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the evaluation function and determine to what extent the current set-up of the evaluation function – including its mandate, structure, accountability, responsibilities, and work processes – is appropriate and effective in responding to the evolving needs of the Fund;
- (c) Prepare a time-bound roadmap for enhanced utility and relevance of the evaluation function, including a proposed action plan and targeted recommendations (e.g. regarding the preparation of the work programme, the selection of evaluation topics, the dissemination of lessons learned, issuance of recommendations and follow-up mechanism to track their implementation); and
- (d) Propose the key elements to be considered for updating the Fund's evaluation policy for further elaboration by the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (SMEO) after completion of the assessment, for future consideration and endorsement by the Executive Committee.

3. The first objective, regarding progress after the MOPAN assessment, was covered in the annual reports presented by the SMEO at the 91st and 93rd meetings.⁴ The recommendations of this assessment aim at continuing improving and strengthening the evaluation function, beyond the efforts already done by the evaluation unit. Reference to these improvements is provided in the assessment in the conclusions, under steps for renewal. The analysis presented in this assessment focuses on the other three above-mentioned objectives.

¹ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/92/8

² Decision 92/7 in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/92/56

³ MOPAN 2019 Assessments, Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, p.8, published in December 2022.

⁴ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/91/11/Rev.1 and UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/93/13/Rev.1

Methodology

4. The assessment was conducted by an external consultant between February and July 2024. The inception phase involved review of extensive Multilateral Fund documentation and a brief inception report. This was followed by an interview phase held online. This involved a total of 31 interviews with 43 interviewees representing key stakeholders (Multilateral Fund Secretariat staff - including the evaluation unit staff, Executive Committee members, representatives of bilateral and implementing agencies, and evaluation consultants). A number of benchmarking interviews were held with heads of evaluation offices in United Nations and non-United Nations organizations.⁵ A brief survey was then undertaken of selected interviewees to follow-up on issues raised during the interview phase.

5. There are three limitations of this assessment. First, the consultant had envisaged undertaking a quality assessment of a sample of evaluation reports using the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation (see annex I), in particular the quality checklist.⁶ This could not be accomplished because the formats and content of evaluation reports varied and particularly as there were no evaluation-specific recommendations in most of the reports from 2013-2019. Secondly, there was little interaction with National Ozone Unit personnel as a survey was considered impractical given the scope of the exercise. Thirdly, there was a limited response to the brief email survey but those who responded provided added depth to the issues raised in interviews conducted prior to the circulation of the survey.

6. There are six major findings of this assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of the Multilateral Fund evaluation function, five conclusions and seven recommendations summarised below.

⁵ See annex IV to the present report.

⁶ United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports, UNEG/G/2010/2.

Findings

Finding 1: A distinctive evaluation function designed with a time-bound expiry date

7. The Multilateral Fund evaluation function evolved in the 1990s as a unique, 'non-traditional' Monitoring and Evaluation system designed to meet the 2010 goals of the Montreal Protocol.⁷ While there was a system of monitoring and evaluation practices that had been developed in the United Nations system in the mid-1980s, these were seen as unsuited for Multilateral Fund's vision of promoting "A new form of international cooperation" where the monitoring and evaluation system would need to be time-bound and target-driven.⁸ This was the "defining assumption which will distinguish the monitoring and evaluation system of the Fund from the traditional models of monitoring and evaluation of development assistance programmes".⁹

8. One of the key drawbacks of this novel approach was that it was not translated into an evaluation policy. Instead, the mandate for evaluation was vested in the job description of a single staff member, to perform as the head of the evaluation function. This arrangement met the short-term need for a time-bound arrangement that did "not engender excessive costs, nor inflate a presently lean and efficient Secretariat".¹⁰ In the longer term, however, the lack of an evaluation policy was a missed opportunity to launch and foster an evaluation culture in Multilateral Fund. Evaluation became identified with the individual chosen for the job of an SMEO rather than as a separate and distinct organizational function.

Finding 2: Absence of an evaluation policy and the commingling of Monitoring and Evaluation functions

9. The absence of an evaluation policy that defined the types of Multilateral Fund evaluation and clarified the distinctions between monitoring and evaluation has had a long-lasting effect. In practice, these two functions are commingled in outputs produced by the SMEO and other Senior Programme staff. Monitoring is a management task conducted by those closely involved in the design and implementation of programmes and does not presuppose independence of the monitoring agent. In contrast, evaluation focuses on impartial assessment by independent external experts with no previous association with the projects or programmes, who analyse and triangulate data on the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency and sustainability of programming and present recommendations for decision-making by managers and stakeholders.

⁷ "In contrast to other organizations ... the Fund has a finite life, in the sense that it will cease to exist after it completes its mandate. Hence the evaluations the Fund conducts acquire additional dimension (sic) in guiding it to accomplish its mandate as free from errors as possible", in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/SCMEF/19/2, Institutional Procedures of Monitoring and Evaluation in Relevant International Financing Institutions, Report from the Consultant, p.20, 7 March 2003.

⁸ UNEP/OzL.Pro/Excom/19/63.

⁹ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/19/63 and UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/4/13/Rev.2, paragraph 13, p.5 - "the Fund was a unique exercise in global partnership because, for the first time, industrial and developing countries were participating as equal partners in financial decision-making."

¹⁰ Decision 20/38 in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/20/72.

10. While the Executive Committee had approved a draft evaluation guide¹¹ which distinguished the difference between evaluation and monitoring, this was not finalized or disseminated to ensure an organization-wide introduction to the new function. This assessment found that the conflation and confusion of the two functions is pervasive. In short, there is no shared corporate understanding of the purpose, role and use of evaluation, and how it differs from monitoring, as well as from other oversight activities of audit and inspection. Examples of this aspect of the Multilateral Fund practice is evident in three products namely, evaluations of the performance of implementing agencies against their annual business plans, consolidated project completion report (PCR) and the review by the Multilateral Fund Secretariat of new tranche submissions for multi-year projects which sometimes include independent verification reporting by external consultants.

Finding 3: Lack of clarity of the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer role and the independent status of evaluation reports

11. The position of the SMEO is unique as the supervisor for this post is the Chief Officer but in terms of the evaluation products "the incumbent reports directly to the Executive Committee of the MLF".¹² These two lines of responsibility have resulted in ambiguity as to the corporate identity and the responsibilities of the SMEO. Organizationally, the head of the evaluation unit (SMEO) is supported by a G-5 Programme Assistant, and functions independently in a siloed manner in the Secretariat. There are no established protocols in place, should the Chief Officer disagree with the content of an evaluation report.

12. This ambiguity in the SMEO's role came under scrutiny in 2003 when there was a disagreement between the consultant, the SMEO and the Chief Officer on recommendations of a report. The Executive Committee sought the expertise of an independent consultant who determined that the head of the Organization reserves the right to express an opinion and agree/disagree with a report. In his report, the consultant indicated that evaluation reports are advisory, they are 'corporate products' and therefore an integral part of the Chief Officer's responsibility and duty to oversee the organization's functioning and carry out its mandates. The report concluded that "The final responsibility rests with the Board (or with the Executive Committee in MLF), accepting/rejecting and implementing any of the recommendations contained in these reports".¹³ This clarification was reiterated in 2009 in a second report from the same independent consultant who indicated that the Chief Officer "has the right to submit a minority report to the Executive Committee in cases where there is disagreement with the SMEO".¹⁴ These significant clarifications of the nature of independence of evaluation reports have not been captured in any official protocols or in the job description of the SMEO.¹⁵

Finding 4: Limited exposure to evaluation among key stakeholders

13. To preserve the independence of evaluation, the SMEO presents the work programmes and evaluation reports to the Executive Committee in line with UNEG norms¹⁶ in this regard. However, the disadvantage is that evaluations are seen by stakeholders as responding chiefly to demands from the Executive Committee and remote from and of limited relevance to their work. Given that

¹¹ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/20/58, Proposed Monitoring and Evaluation System, (Draft) for the Multilateral Fund submitted by Universalia, 24 September 1996.

¹² United Nations Request for Classification Action, Secretariat job description, p.2, internal document, 11 March 1998.

¹³ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/SCMEF/19/2, "Institutional Procedures of Monitoring and Evaluation in Relevant International Financing Institutions, Report of the Consultant". pages 21,24 and 25, 7 March 2003.

¹⁴ UNEP/OzL. Pro/ExCom/57/13, paragraph 80 (e), p. 24.

¹⁵ Annex I in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/57/13 and annex IV in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/58/53.

¹⁶ See Annex I -Summary of UNEG norms and standards.

there is currently no outreach effort to disseminate the findings of evaluation reports beyond the Executive Committee, the findings from interviews suggest that some stakeholders are unaware of evaluations, particularly at the country level in some Article 5 countries and implementing agencies.

Finding 5: *Impact of eliminating Evaluation Reports' recommendations*

14. The elimination of evaluation-specific recommendations in favour of a standardized text conveying recommendations from the Executive Committee which invited stakeholders to note and apply, as appropriate, the findings and recommendations, was a marked departure from established standards.¹⁷ The overall impact was to seriously weaken the utility and effectiveness of evaluation, particularly in terms of report use and follow-up. Suggestions were made at the 89th Executive Committee meeting to revert to pre-2011 practices of taking decisions on relevant recommendations and to introduce management responses. These are initiatives that could help rectify shortcomings in reports to promote the use of evaluation results and restore the credibility of the evaluation function overall.¹⁸

Finding 6: *Diversifying the type and focus of evaluation to include assessment of the social and economic impacts of Multilateral Fund programming*

15. While Multilateral Fund has been recognized as being very successful in establishing a monitoring and verification system for measuring compliance with ODS phase-out targets and the Montreal Protocol, it has been less successful in developing a comprehensive and robust evaluation framework to assess 'softer' kinds of activities like training, capacity building, institutional strengthening, private sector involvement, public awareness and the overall sustainability of Multilateral Fund results after project completion. This has led to the perception among many interviewees, particularly among implementing agencies, that the Multilateral Fund is driven by a 'compliance-based' focus that precludes explicit attention to the social and economic impact of its programmes.

16. However, as early as in 2004, an evaluation case study of the Fund by the World Bank noted that while the Multilateral Fund was not designed to have direct social impact, unintended qualitative sustainable development benefits of the Fund have begun to be recognized such as skills enhancement, reduced health risks, reductions of other environmental pollutants, increased competitiveness and/or enhanced export potential at the national level and networking activities at the regional level.¹⁹ The potential to focus on these aspects has yet to be explored in any depth in Multilateral Fund evaluations.

¹⁷ United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG, Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), New York, Norm 14: Evaluation use and follow-up, see annex I of the present document.

¹⁸ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/89/15, paragraph 16, p.4.

¹⁹ Case study on the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, (32914), p. xi, 2004.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: *Limitations of the Multilateral Fund evaluation function*

17. The unique Multilateral Fund monitoring and evaluation function was designed to meet a shorter-term vision of reaching specific ODS reduction goals by 2010. To facilitate this, conventional norms that distinguished monitoring from evaluation in the United Nations system were adapted to the needs of the Fund and proved successful in setting up a regime that tracked compliance with specific goals. The record of evaluation is less successful with some reports of inconsistent analytic quality and not widely referenced or used. The overall utility of evaluation reports in discharging their accountability and learning objectives is also not discernible since a follow-up mechanism to track the response to recommendations has yet to be developed and the lessons learned database is not user friendly. Most importantly, the Multilateral Fund now has objectives established in the Montreal Protocol and the Kigali amendment that extend into the 2040s.²⁰ The evaluation function needs a fresh vision to meet these longer-term objectives that encompass the broader impact of its programmes and United Nations system priorities of sustainable development goals (SDGs), gender and human rights.

Conclusion 2: *Inward-looking evaluation practice*

18. The involvement of the Executive Committee in overseeing and guiding the conduct of monitoring and evaluation is an important feature. This oversight was crucial since the Multilateral Fund opted to contract out project design and implementation to United Nations bilateral and implementing agencies rather than set up its own project implementation structure. As a financial mechanism, the Fund is therefore not dissimilar to Global Environment Facility (GEF). However, the key difference in terms of evaluation and monitoring is that the GEF forged a close association with the independent evaluation offices of its implementing agencies and developed a regime for project monitoring and evaluation which met GEF needs. In hindsight, one may conclude that the Multilateral Fund missed an opportunity to exploit the monitoring and evaluation infrastructure that had developed within the implementing agencies which may have yielded a stronger portfolio of evaluation products and a more widespread corporate understanding of the value and potential of evaluation overall.

Conclusion 3: *Missed opportunities to clarify the identity of the evaluation function*

19. There were several inflection points in the past thirty years when the Executive Committee considered and revisited options for how to meet Multilateral Fund's monitoring and evaluation needs. The first was in 1997 when it was decided to set up limited in-house evaluation capacity as opposed to sub-contracting external experts.²¹ The second was in 2008 when the Executive Committee revisited the possibility of "cost effective and independent delivery options external to the Fund Secretariat" in decision 56/8.²² While this option was not pursued, the evaluation function continued to be represented by a single professional staff member rather than an established organizational unit. Most tellingly, the move in 2011 to downgrade evaluation-specific recommendations to optional suggestions fundamentally affected the standing of the evaluation

²⁰ MOPAN 2019 Assessments, Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, p.23, published in December 2022.

²¹ UNEP/OzLPro/ExCom/21/30. "Proposed Monitoring and Evaluation System, Revised Draft", Universalia, p. 10, January 1997, and annex VII, in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/21/36, decision 21/36.

²² UNEP/OzL.Pro/56/64

function and the utility of its reports.²³ It reinforced the message that evaluations had little to add to accountability and learning which are keystones of any serious evaluation practice.

Conclusion 4: *Recognizing the difference between monitoring and evaluation*

20. The blurring of monitoring and evaluation functions was practical to start with but over time contributed to the weakening of the identity and relevance of evaluation. This assessment underscores the need to promote a much clearer corporate understanding of the distinction between the two functions that accord with United Nations system norms and standards in this regard. If evaluation is to be recognized as a distinct function, a clear and separate identity should be established through the adoption of an evaluation policy and the reframing of the responsibilities of the post of the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (SMEO) as a Senior Evaluation Officer (SEO) together with the integration of monitoring functions in the Multilateral Fund Secretariat as part of the project management life-cycle, including the preparation of the consolidated project completion report.

Conclusion 5: *Steps for renewal*

21. The 2019 MOPAN assessment conclusion on evaluation has reinvigorated action to ensure a more effective evaluation function. During the past three years, the current SMEO has begun efforts to modernize the evaluation function and adapted UNEG evaluation practices to Multilateral Fund needs. The monitoring and evaluation work programme has been extended from an annual to a biennial format for more efficient planning²⁴ and a comprehensive and participatory reassessment has resulted in the adoption of a new universal format for project completion reports.²⁵ These are reassuring first steps to give evaluation a more substantive profile and elevate its relevance to all stakeholders of Multilateral Fund programming and to be a conduit for sharing evaluations with a wider audience

²³ Decision 89/1, paragraph 26 (b) in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/89/15

²⁴ On a trial basis for 2024 and 2025. Decision 91/9 in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/91/72.

²⁵ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/94/8 and decision 94/5 in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/94/67.

Recommendations for a time-bound roadmap to strengthen the evaluation function

22. The following recommendations constitute the elements for a proposed time-bound roadmap to strengthen the evaluation function and address weaknesses identified by the MOPAN assessment. The timeline for this roadmap may vary but should aim to be implemented during the next three years from 2025 to 2027. As required in the TOR, a draft outline of the evaluation policy is presented in annex II and aligns with UNEG Norms and Standards²⁶ and the United Nations Secretariat instructions on evaluation as set in ST/AI/2021/3.²⁷

Recommendation 1: Finalise a Multilateral Fund evaluation policy using a participatory process - The annexed evaluation policy draft outline proposes a clear and separate identity for evaluation and monitoring, with the responsibilities of the post of Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer reframed as a Senior Evaluation Officer, as the head of the evaluation unit. In consultation with the Chief Officer, the SMEO should arrange for a consultative process to review the proposed evaluation policy outline with the intention of presenting a final draft that has been well vetted to the Executive Committee for consideration.

23. The process should involve Multilateral Fund Secretariat staff and other stakeholders including the Independent Evaluation Office of UNEP given that the Fund is co-located with UNEP. The objective is to benefit from a cross-section of voices familiar with (a) Multilateral Fund programming and (b) expertise in United Nations system evaluation. This should be a brief, well organized brainstorming activity that leads to a polished final draft of the evaluation policy. In addition, the advanced draft should be shared with the heads of evaluation offices in the United Nations implementing agencies to solicit their views as well. These agencies have been approached as part of this assessment and have shown an interest to support Multilateral Fund evaluation.

Suggested timeline and participants: 1st consultation process during first half of 2025 and draft evaluation policy to be finalized and proposed to the Executive Committee in 2025 (meeting to be decided depending on the complexity of consultations and related responses by stakeholders).

- *Chief Officer, SMEO, Senior Multilateral Fund Secretariat Staff, Heads of Implementing Agencies Evaluation Offices.*

Recommendation 2: Use evaluation guidelines as a tool for raising awareness - Once the evaluation policy has been endorsed, the SMEO should translate key elements of the policy into summary guidance targeting key stakeholders who will have roles to play in operationalizing this policy.

24. Briefings should be organized at Inter-Agency Coordination Meeting (IACM) meetings and at Regional Network Meetings where the SMEO and the Chief Officer present the headlines of the new policy and encourage questions to be raised and address concerns. While these sessions would be preferable in person, they could be done on-line. The objective of these brief familiarization sessions would be to demystify what evaluation means in the context of the Fund and to emphasise

²⁶ United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG, Norms and Standards for Evaluation, (2016), New York, Norm 12: Evaluation policy, see annex I of the present document.

²⁷ Administrative Instruction, Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat, ST/AI/2021/3, August 6, 2021, ST/AI/2021/3.

that it is not an additional burden but an opportunity to communicate issues of importance that will be reflected in the evaluation reports that go to the Executive Committee. Once these briefings are completed, succinct guidelines should be circulated and made available on-line in the evaluation section of the Multilateral Fund website.

Suggested timeline and participants: Progress update report at 97th Executive Committee meeting (December 2025) and finalization at 98th meeting (Mid-2026).

- *SMEO, with support from CAP/Regional Networks teams and participants to IACM, championed by the Chief Officer.*

Recommendation 3: Upgrade and standardize the formats of evaluation reports and introduce a system of follow-up to track evaluation recommendations - Thus far evaluation reports have been available only as 'parliamentary' documentation presented to the Executive Committee. In addition, it is recommended that to demonstrate transparency, evaluation reports should be easily readable and publicly accessible as part of the evaluation section of the Multilateral Fund website.

25. With this objective in mind, it is recommended that the SMEO should compile a simple annotated guide for evaluation consultants which standardizes the format and provides illustrative examples of how key sections such as the Executive Summary, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations, should be presented. Recommendations should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) and this guide should develop criteria for what constitutes a lesson learned, by providing specific examples of what does and does not constitute a 'lesson learned'.

Suggested Timeline and participants: Consultations to be performed during 2025 resulting in a proposal for a tracking system on recommendations to be budgeted for in the work programme of 2026.

- *SMEO with relevant support particularly from an informal 'community of practice' of implementing agency evaluation offices (e.g. UNEP) and external expertise (if required). Support from the Multilateral Fund staff involved in Communication and Knowledge-Management is also suggested.*

Recommendation 4: Engaging key stakeholders in the work process of evaluation - Some stakeholders see the 'independence' of the evaluation mandate as a factor that inhibits candid exchange on draft reports and confine themselves to commenting on the factual accuracy of findings and not on the feasibility of suggestions for conclusions and the 'way forward'.

26. Furthermore, to ensure that ground-level realities inform the findings of evaluations, stakeholders have requested more visits to the countries. Considering these views, the following suggestions are made for consideration to make evaluation more animated, active and immediate and less a function that operates in a silo within the Multilateral Fund Secretariat. **The SMEO should consult with the Chief Officer to consider their viability and a possible timeline for sub-recommendations (a) through (e):**

- (a) **Revisit the purpose of desk studies and consider introducing inception reports:** While desk studies were originally conceived of as preparatory activities for country visits by evaluation teams, they often became self-contained studies which reviewed internal Multilateral Fund documentation and extracted conclusions and lessons learned. While desk studies should not be abandoned as a modality, criteria should be developed as to which projects lend themselves to this more limited appraisal. Inception reports should be introduced for evaluations that contain evaluation questions, data collection instruments, and involve evaluation team travel to regions and countries as the norm rather than the exception.
- (b) **Undertake fewer, deeper more strategic evaluations:** To ensure that evaluation topics meet the strategic needs of the Multilateral Fund, it is recommended that the Chief Officer lead senior Multilateral Fund staff in a brainstorming session once every 18 months to explore what issues require evaluation attention for the biennial work programme. It is also recommended that given the limited capacity of the evaluation unit, it should undertake fewer, deeper evaluations that should typically involve more than one external consultant. Furthermore, the possibility of joint evaluations with evaluation offices of the implementing agencies, should be explored. It is also strongly recommended to revive the practice of having Multilateral Fund Secretariat Staff members as part of the evaluation teams as resource persons.²⁸ Implementing agency staff could also be encouraged to join teams in a similar capacity as was done in earlier Multilateral Fund evaluations.
- (c) **Streamline interaction with Executive Committee:** At present, evaluation planning involves four interactions with the Executive Committee: (i) work programme submission; (ii) terms of reference submission; (iii) a report on evaluation progress; followed by (iv) submission of the final report. It is recommended that this process be streamlined to two steps with (i) submission of a biennial work programme that provides sufficient information for Executive Committee approval of the content and number of evaluations, and (ii) the submission of the final evaluation report.
- (d) **Introduce briefing sessions with evaluation consultants:** As part of the finalization of draft reports, the SMEO should organize brief, informal face-to-face sessions with the evaluation consultants, the SMEO and with Multilateral Fund Secretariat staff to discuss draft reports. It would be optimal if the evaluation calendar is timed to ensure draft reports are available during the start of the calendar year, when programme staff are not as busy preparing as they usually are for the second meeting of the year of the Executive Committee. In addition, once the evaluation reports are finalized, the consultants should prepare PowerPoint presentations that they will present in brief on-line meetings, chaired by the SMEO, for interested implementing agency staff and Executive Committee members prior to the Executive Committee meetings.
- (e) **Request evaluation as standing agenda item at key Multilateral Fund meetings with stakeholders (e.g. IACM and Regional Networks Meetings):** To ensure visibility of evaluation as a corporate priority, it is recommended that a half-day session on evaluation is included in the IACM agenda, at the first meeting of the year. These sessions should be interactive and solicit ideas on issues that would merit independent assessment, share key highlights of evaluation results and methods used for data collection ('most-significant-change', 'outcome mapping' for example) and include National Ozone Units (NOUs) as resources for feedback on topics such

²⁸ This view was supported by some of the respondents during the interviews conducted in March- April 2024.

as evaluation plans, topical concerns and data collection strategies and suggestions. The objective is to make evaluation more recognized, familiar and participatory. It builds on Recommendation 4(a) above.

Recommendation 5: Reappraise the evaluation framework used at Multilateral Fund

- More innovative evaluation approaches should also be developed to assess the 'softer' activities in programming involving industry and private sector entities, manufacturers associations, etc.

27. Since the start, evaluation topics have focused on assessments of the Multilateral Fund programming by type/sector such as Chlorofluorocarbon (CFCs), Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFCs) and more recently Hydrofluorocarbon (HFCs) phase-out, ODS disposal and destruction, refrigeration projects, methyl bromide, halon banking to name a few. Interviewees suggested there may be other options for framing evaluations such as a focus on countries that had large programmes as a unit of analysis, as they often involve several implementing agencies.

28. More innovative evaluation approaches should also be developed to assess the 'softer' activities in programming involving industry and private sector entities, manufacturers associations etc. This would support assessment of gender, human rights and the SDGs which are newer priorities for the Multilateral Fund and central to the Norms and Standards of the UNEG.²⁹

29. The SMEO could invite a review group composed of a few of the former Multilateral Fund evaluation consultants who are technical experts as well as experienced in evaluation, to consider the options for reframing the evaluation practice. Including consultants who have evaluated similar programmes for other agencies (e.g. GEF), and representatives from implementing agencies could add value. This exercise could also be used to update and diversify the evaluation roster of consultants qualified to undertake Multilateral Fund evaluations.

Suggested timeline and participants: 2026-2028

- *SMEO and evaluation expert review group and representatives of key stakeholders who are users of Multilateral Fund evaluation reports.*

Recommendation 6: Introduce enhanced quality assurance mechanisms for evaluation reports

- To ensure that evaluation reports are technically sound, credible and easily readable it is recommended that the SMEO consider recruiting a resource person(s) or set up a reference group as required to support framing of the Terms of Reference and quality assuring the final draft reports. It is also suggested that a member of the Programme Management team could act as internal peer reviewer and sounding board to provide quality assurance support as a report is being finalized.

30. In larger offices, evaluation reports are customarily peer reviewed by other evaluation officers who have not been involved in the evaluation. External consultants to provide both technical and assessments of the clarity of report presentation have also been used, particularly when controversial evaluations are to be submitted to executive boards. Given that the Multilateral Fund evaluation unit is small, such expert and peer review support will help assure both the technical and evaluation quality of its reports without entailing costs for additional staff.

²⁹ United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG, Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), New York - specifically Standard 4.7 Human right-based approach and gender mainstreaming strategy, see annex I of the present document.

Suggested timeline and participants: 2025 onwards

- SMEO to use 'community of practice' identified in Recommendation 3 and explore potential for such support.

Recommendation 7: Supplementing evaluation expertise in the short to medium term - It is suggested that temporary measures should be explored for the next three years, such as recruiting a Junior Professional Officer or short-term professional/ consultant expertise with experience in evaluation, to support current PCR reform.

31. Considering the ongoing PCR reform, the related work on lessons learned, and the preparation of the evaluation policy suggested in this assessment, the evaluation unit may require a boost in support for the SMEO, to address the additional work beyond the delivery of evaluations.

Suggested timeline: 2025 onwards.

Decision 95/8: The Executive Committee decided:

- (a) To take note of the final report on the external assessment of the evaluation function of the Multilateral Fund contained in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/95/10;
- (b) To request the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer to prepare a potential management response to the assessment referred to in subparagraph (a) above, including an evaluation policy for the Multilateral Fund, for consideration at the 96th meeting, taking into consideration the discussion and suggestions made by members of the Executive Committee at the 95th meeting and the elements for a draft outline of such a policy contained in annex III to the present report, and the recommendations listed in paragraphs 22 to 31 of that final report referred to in subparagraph (a) above; and
- (c) To invite Executive Committee members to provide submissions to the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer on their views on the assessment referred to in subparagraph (a) above by 28 February 2025 to inform the potential management response referred to in subparagraph (b) above.