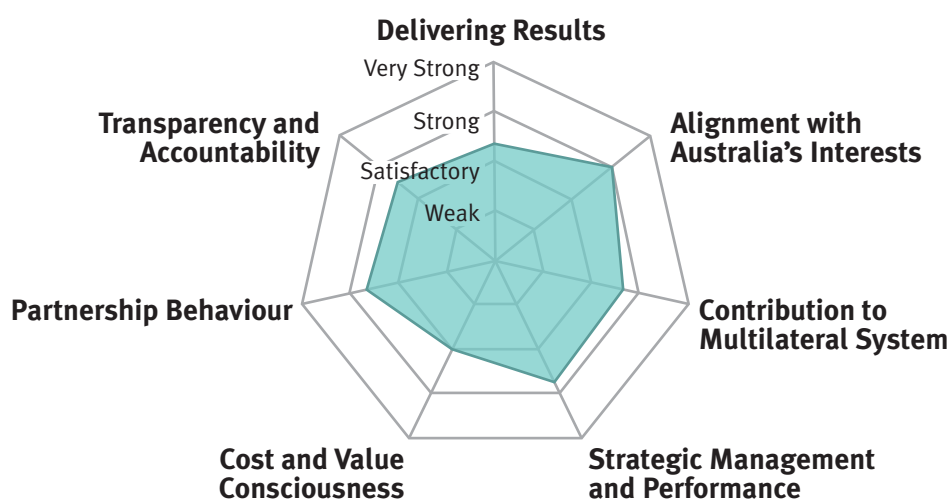




Australian Multilateral Assessment March 2012

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATION RATINGS



ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) assists countries in collecting, analysing and disseminating population data and supports developing policies and programs on gender and maternal health, particularly in reproductive health, including family planning, safe motherhood, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender-based violence and promoting gender equality.

UNFPA began as a trust fund in 1967 and began operating in 1969. It is one of the Funds and Programmes of the United Nations General Assembly and reports to the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Populations Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services' executive board. Australia was represented on the board in 2008 and 2009, and will again assume a seat in 2012.

UNFPA's budget in 2010 totalled US\$870 million. Australia provides UNFPA with core financial contributions through a multi-year partnership agreement (2009–13). Under this framework AusAID will provide UNFPA with \$38.5 million over four years in core

funding and \$4 million over four years to UNFPA's Pacific Multi-Country Programme. In 2010–11 Australia provided \$33.8 million to UNFPA, comprising \$11.5 million in voluntary core contributions and \$22.3 million in non-core funding.

RESULTS AND RELEVANCE

1. Delivering results on poverty and sustainable development in line with mandate

SATISFACTORY

During the Australian Multilateral Assessment field visit to the Philippines stakeholders were positive about the results UNFPA was delivering despite a sometimes sensitive operating environment. Overall, however, Australian overseas missions reported a mixed picture on how well UNFPA was delivering tangible results on the ground.

In reporting on its results, UNFPA points to substantial achievements in reproductive health such as the proportion of births attended by a skilled health professional increasing to 65.7 per cent in 2009 from 63.1 per cent in 2007 and the proportion of crisis situations where a basic sexual and reproductive services package were available, increasing to 72.2 per cent in 2009 from 57.9 per cent in 2007. However, UNFPA has not systematically measured or reported on the extent to which its own work has contributed to these development outcomes. This makes it difficult to make an overall assessment of its effectiveness in delivering results.

UNFPA has recently instituted a development results framework designed to provide more comprehensive measuring and reporting of its own contribution to development results. This framework may help overcome current limitations in UNFPA's use of performance information and better position it to effectively inform management decisions at country and organisation levels. At the country-level, the focus on results is more advanced. The 2010 Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) report, found UNFPA to be effective with key strengths being performance oriented programming and focus on results at the country-level.

Most of UNFPA's activities are implemented in low income countries. At country-level, UNFPA has a substantial focus on poor communities and targets those most in need of reproductive health services.

a) Demonstrates development or humanitarian results consistent with mandate

SATISFACTORY

UNFPA contributes to important global health and development results.

Key development outcomes which UNFPA's work has contributed to include:

- > proportion of births attended by a skilled health professional increased to 65.7 per cent in 2009 (from 63.1 per cent in 2007)
- > percentage of pregnant HIV-positive women who received treatment to reduce the transmission of HIV to their child increased to 45 per cent in 2009 (from 33 per cent in 2007)

- > proportion of crisis situations where basic sexual and reproductive service package were available increased to 72.2 per cent in 2009 (from 57.9 per cent in 2007), and
- > proportion of countries with reproductive rights incorporated in national human rights systems increased to 69.2 per cent in 2010 (from 61.7 per cent in 2007).

While UNFPA can reasonably claim some credit towards these development results, they are clearly results from a much wider range of actors and UNFPA has not systematically measured or reported on the extent to which its own work has contributed to these development outcomes.

UNFPA has recently instituted a revised Development Results Framework designed to more systematically measure and report on the extent of its own contribution to these development results (further information is provided in Section 1(b)).

Australian posted officers reported a mixed picture in terms of how well UNFPA was delivering tangible results on the ground in developing countries. During the field visit to the Philippines, the Australian Multilateral Assessment team heard a generally positive view from stakeholders about the positive impact that UNFPA was making on development results despite a sometimes sensitive operating environment. By contrast Australia's overseas mission in Ramallah reported UNFPA has not made substantial progress delivering results in the Palestine Territories.

b) Plays critical role in improving aid effectiveness through results monitoring	SATISFACTORY
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UNFPA has recently revised its development results framework to more coherently capture the impact of its work. This should make a contribution to filling the gap in UNFPA's capacity to measure and aggregate outputs in a systematic way to provide a global picture of impact. UNFPA will begin implementing this system in 2012 and time will tell if it adequately fills the void in current results monitoring and reporting information.

An example of the current problem is reporting for the UNFPA Pacific Multi-Country Programme, which contains significant level of output detail but limited synthesis, analysis or articulation of development outcomes.

At country-level, the focus on results appears to be more advanced. The 2010 Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) report, found UNFPA to be effective with key strengths being performance oriented programming and focus on results at the country-level.

UNFPA management also took steps in 2010 to enhance evidence-based programming, such as requiring that country program evaluations take place earlier in the programming cycle so that they can inform subsequent country programs.

c) Where relevant, targets the poorest people and in areas where progress against the MDGs is lagging	STRONG
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UNFPA's budget is targeted towards Sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific with around 64 per cent of funds allocated to those regions, targeting poor countries. Within countries, UNFPA has a substantial focus on poor communities with poor reproductive health services and poor development indicators.

MDG 5 on reducing maternal mortality and ensuring universal access to reproductive health is not on track to meet its 2015 target. Support for maternal health and family planning is a key focus of UNFPA's work, including expanding access to reproductive health commodities, and as such UNFPA plays a critical global role in leading efforts to achieve MDG 5.

2. Alignment with Australia's aid priorities and national interests	STRONG
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UNFPA's work is closely aligned with the Australian aid program's strategic goal of 'saving lives' and 'promoting opportunities for all'. Its key role as a global partner in progressing health and gender related MDGs supports Australia's broader interests in global economic and social development, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Senior management at headquarters and regional level have been responsive to concerns raised by Australia since the establishment of the partnership agreement.

UNFPA performs strongly in progressing gender equality and it addresses issues of disability in its programs.

UNFPA has shown leadership in the UN system regarding the linkages between population dynamics and climate change but there is scope for climate change and environmental issues need to be more formally embedded in UNFPA's overall operational approach.

UNFPA's performance in fragile states appears to be mixed and there may be scope to strengthen its organisational approach when operating in situations of conflict and fragility.

a) Allocates resources and delivers results in support of, and responsive to, Australia's development objectives	STRONG
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UNFPA's mandate is well aligned with Australian priorities, in terms both of public health policy and broader development objectives including gender equality.

AusAID has a commitment to meet annually with UNFPA headquarters for high level consultations to examine progress against the objectives of the Partnership Framework that was signed in 2009. UNFPA senior management has been responsive to issues and concerns raised by Australia at these partnership meetings. For example, UNFPA has improved its communications efforts in highlighting the partnership with Australia during the last year.

AusAID also meets with the Asia-Pacific Regional Office (APRO) in Bangkok, sometimes as a trilateral meeting between AusAID, UNFPA, APRO and NZAID to identify opportunities for development cooperation in the Pacific. UNFPA have also been responsive to Australia's interests at the regional level. Whilst the Pacific Sub-Regional Office has been responsive to AusAID requests for information, currently there is no formalised relationship with the office and meetings are of an ad hoc nature.

Most Australian overseas missions report that UNFPA has been responsive to Australia at country-level, although in a few countries a lack of institutional flexibility and cumbersome processes were cited as barriers to cooperation.

b) Effectively targets development concerns and promotes issues consistent with Australian priorities

VERY STRONG

'Saving lives' is the first core strategic goal of Australia's aid program. Investing in health is critical to alleviating poverty and saving lives. UNFPA is a key global partner in progressing the health related MDGs. The UNFPA mandate supports achievement of MDG 4 (reducing child mortality), MDG 5 (improving maternal health) and MDG 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases). 'Promoting opportunities for all' is also a core strategic goal of Australia's aid program. Promoting gender equality is essential for the achievement of opportunities for all. UNFPA's plays an important global role in progressing MDG 3 on gender equality.

UNFPA has a particularly critical global mandate in advancing MDG 5. UNFPA plays an important role in promoting reproductive health and ensuring access to reproductive health commodities. Australia recently became a contributor to UNFPA's Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security fund, with an objective of increasing access to reproductive health commodities in high need countries. AusAID will be monitoring the performance of the fund closely, particularly in regards to increased support to the Asia-Pacific region.

c) Focuses on crosscutting issues, particularly gender, environment and people with disabilities

STRONG

UNFPA performs very strongly in terms of promoting gender equality. The 2010 MOPAN report rated UNFPA very highly in terms of its promotion of gender equality and mainstreaming of gender across its operations.

A key component of UNFPA's mandate within the UN system includes that of advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls. However, additional work is required regarding the emerging implications of UN Women for UNFPA's role regarding gender.

UNFPA has been particularly instrumental in mobilising support for the passing of gender equality policies and of legislation on violence against women and girls, female genital mutilation and child marriage. It has also worked to address gender based violence in communities in crisis. For example, the proportion of countries that are implementing policies in line with the UN Security Council resolution on women, peace and security in conflict and post-conflict situations has increased from 62 per cent in 2007 to 86 per cent in 2009.

UNFPA performs strongly in terms of disaggregating data in terms of gender, although this is more evident in the annual State of the World Population Reports than in the UNFPA Annual Reports or the Annual Reports of the executive director to the Executive Board.

The UNFPA survey on violence against women in the Pacific and the *Swimming Against the Tide* report had a major impact on the promotion of national policies on this issue in Pacific Island Countries—most notably Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

Climate change and environmental issues need to be more formally embedded in UNFPA's overall operational approach. However, UNFPA has shown leadership in the UN system regarding the linkages between population dynamics and climate change. UNFPA is committed to the UN 'Greening the Blue' initiative and has its own staff training plan and policy on environmental issues. UNFPA has also signed up to the UN Carbon Neutral Strategy which ensures that environmental issues are considered in their programming.

The Partnership Agreement between Australia and UNFPA acknowledges the commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and commits AusAID and UNFPA to working towards improving the ability to monitor the inclusion of the needs of persons with disabilities in our sexual reproductive health programs. The indicators for this are reporting on efforts relating to improved access and inclusion of people with disability at annual consultations. UNFPA does not have a specific disability policy or focal point, but it is actively supporting awareness-raising and ratification of the CRPD and has developed the 'Promoting sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities' guidance note in conjunction with WHO.

d) Performs effectively in fragile states

SATISFACTORY

Australia's experience of UNFPA's performance in fragile states is mixed.

UNFPA does not have a specific policy for engaging in fragile states and in Iraq, for example, much like the rest of the UN system operating there, UNFPA runs programs behind schedule and does not deliver intended results. However, it is taking steps to address this gap by developing a new policy regarding working in fragile states.

Australia has provided earmarked funding to UNFPA for innovative activities including the 'SPRINT' initiative to increase access to sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian settings as well as for an initiative in Southern Sudan to improve the skills of birth attendants and the provision of reproductive health services.

3. Contribution to the wider multilateral development system

STRONG

UNFPA engages as a partner in the UN's Delivering as One pilot phase as well as in UN joint program arrangements. Senior management have pushed hard on the importance of Delivering as One, including by building this into staff appraisal systems.

The results of Australian Multilateral Assessment field visits support evidence from the 2010 MOPAN report that suggests UNFPA is a strong contributor to promoting coordination in the UN system.

UNFPA plays a critical role in global health architecture on reproductive health and this is recognised by donors and other stakeholders.

The ability to influence partner government policies and programs has magnified UNFPA's impact.

A range of useful publications and knowledge products are available on its website but UNFPA's executive director recognises that knowledge sharing and communication are areas that need to be improved. Reforms are underway to advance this.

a) Plays a critical role at global or national-level in coordinating development or humanitarian efforts

STRONG

UNFPA engages actively as a partner in One UN and UN Joint Program arrangements working towards improved reproductive health. UNFPA senior management have pushed hard on the importance of a One UN approach and the perceptions of staff from other UN agencies is built into the staff appraisal system. These measures appear to have been successful in promoting a collaborative approach from UNFPA with other UN agencies at a country-level. The H4 initiative by the UN agencies on health is also a good example UNFPA's engagement in efforts to strengthening coherence and coordination among UN agencies.

The results of Australian Multilateral Assessments field visits support evidence from the 2010 MOPAN report that suggests UNFPA is a strong contributor to promoting coordination in the UN system.

b) Plays a leading role in developing norms and standards or in providing large-scale finance or specialist expertise

STRONG

UNFPA plays a critical role in the global health architecture with regards to reproductive health. The scale of UNFPA's own service delivery work is generally too small to make a significant difference on the ground, but its ability to influence partner government policies and programs has magnified its impact.

Reproductive health is one of the most sensitive and difficult areas to work in across developing countries, often encountering concern, misunderstanding and sometimes opposition from government and religious/community based organisations. UNFPA has clearly defined and consistent positions and approaches on reproductive health, and this is recognised by donors and other stakeholders.

UNFPA hosted the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that agreed on a rights-based approach to population issues and established that empowerment of women is a necessary step towards eradicating poverty and stabilising population growth. The ICPD has ongoing resonance in informing development norms for work on reproductive health. UNFPA continues to carry forward this message which, by and large, is well understood and appreciated by stakeholders.

c) Fills a policy or knowledge gap or develops innovative approaches	SATISFACTORY
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A range of useful publications and knowledge products are available on UNFPA's website but its executive director recognises that knowledge sharing and communication are areas that need to be improved. Reforms are underway to advance this.

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR	
4. Strategic management and performance	STRONG

The 2010 MOPAN report on UNFPA concluded that it had a good organisational strategy based on a clear mandate. UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2008–2013 is an overarching planning document that directs organisational decision making. Feedback from Australian overseas missions suggests this translates into focused activities on the ground in areas of UNFPA's comparative advantage.

The executive board provides oversight of programs, budgets, audits, new policies and corporate issues. The executive board has supported efforts to improve strategic and performance management, including through the recent mid-term review process. However, UNFPA's ability to provide strategic direction is weakened at times by the need to find compromise positions to bridge political divisions between developing countries and traditional donors and reach consensus.

MOPAN assessed UNFPA as generally adequate on monitoring and evaluation but identified a number of weaknesses. UNFPA has introduced a number of improvements recently, including an Evaluation Policy and increased coverage of Country Programme evaluations. But weaknesses exist that require further attention. For example, UNFPA provides minimal program-level performance information to its governing body and other stakeholders. Again, its executive director has identified this as an area for improvement.

The executive director is leading important reforms. While it is too early to judge success, initial signs in areas such as improved communications are promising. UNFPA has been improving its staff performance management system.

a) Has clear mandate, strategy and plans effectively implemented	VERY STRONG
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MOPAN found that UNFPA was seen to perform reasonably well on aspects of strategic management. Survey respondents viewed UNFPA's key strengths to be its organisational strategy based on a clear mandate, its senior-level leadership on results management, and its mainstreaming of crosscutting priorities that are integral to its mandate: gender equality; human rights-based approaches; and HIV/AIDS.

UNFPA recently undertook a midterm review of its strategic plan 2008–13. Australia supports the outcomes of the midterm review process, particularly its focus on strengthening results at country-level and improving monitoring and evaluation systems.

b) Governing body is effective in guiding management	STRONG
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UNFPA's executive board functions well and works effectively at guiding UNFPA's strategic direction and overseeing the implementation of its work. It provides oversight of programs, budgets, audits, new policies and corporate issues. The executive board has supported efforts to improve strategic and performance management, including the recent midterm review process.

However, due to the joint executive board arrangements with UNDP and UNOPS there is a danger that UNFPA's executive board may become more politicised and less effective.

c) Has a sound framework for monitoring and evaluation, and acts promptly to realign or amend programs not delivering results	SATISFACTORY
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MOPAN assessed UNFPA as generally adequate on monitoring and evaluation. But weaknesses exist that require further attention, as highlighted in the 2010 MOPAN report. For example, UNFPA provides minimal program-level performance information to its governing body and other stakeholders. The executive director has identified this as an area for improvement.

UNFPA is aware of these weaknesses, many of which have been addressed in the midterm review of the strategic plan. This includes a significant refocusing and streamlining of UNFPA's results framework via a revised development results framework, the introduction of an evaluation policy and increased coverage of country program evaluations.

Furthermore, UNFPA Bangkok was also able to cite a range of programs that have been halted when monitoring and evaluation showed they were ineffective or changed circumstances made them redundant. Similar views were shared by the Australian overseas mission in Manila, which stated that UNFPA reacts quickly when projects are found to be lagging.

d) Leadership is effective and human resources are well managed	SATISFACTORY
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UNFPA performs well in terms of leadership and human resource management.

The executive director of UNFPA has committed to continue reform efforts to improve UNFPA's effectiveness. This comes on the back of strong reforms under the previous leadership that included change management initiatives, strengthened global field presence, improved staff performance, a stronger accountability system and the establishment of a regional presence.

In response to the 2008 staff survey UNFPA drafted a new policy on rewards and recognition, revised its work-life policy and personnel policy. MOPAN reports that this is a positive step for UNFPA while recognising that the UN system has limitations in linking pay to performance. UNFPA does have a performance management system in place that allows for other members of UN country teams to comment on UNFPA country representatives' performance.

However, UNFPA faces several human resource challenges. The organisation is in danger of being overloaded with new initiatives; there are ongoing challenges with results reporting and UNFPA's new structure is still being institutionalised. UNFPA senior management has tried to improve UNFPA's in-country leadership through training and development. This remains an ongoing challenge.

5. Cost and value consciousness

SATISFACTORY

UNFPA's management is making some progress on value for money issues. For example, its procurement strategy requires value for money to be considered. However, more needs to be done.

UNFPA has a good track record on commodity pricing and quality, negotiating better prices and higher quality with suppliers of reproductive health commodities. The 2010 MOPAN report rated UNFPA as adequate overall on the timely and efficient management of contracts.

The MOPAN report also found that the structure of UNFPA's current budget only links aid allocations to expected management results and not development results. This reduces the capacity to consider value for money in decision making. However, at the request of the executive board, UNFPA is moving towards using a single integrated budget for 2014. This would link budgeted amounts to the results presented in the UNFPA's strategic plan. This initiative is intended to improve the direct link between budgeting and results.

UNFPA has taken measures to promote better value for money through promoting competition between its suppliers. For example, by promoting price competition between companies supplying condoms, UNFPA realised savings of US\$750 000 per year.

a) Governing body and management regularly scrutinise costs and assess value for money

SATISFACTORY

UNFPA's management is making some progress on value for money issues. For example, UNFPA's procurement strategy requires value for money to be considered. However, areas of weakness remain. For example, UNFPA's executive board could do more in challenging UNFPA's management on cost control and value for money choices.

b) Rates of return and cost effectiveness are important factors in decision making

SATISFACTORY

UNFPA has a good record in procurement and its procurement strategy requires consideration of value for money related principles. However, the MOPAN report found that the structure of UNFPA's current budget only links aid allocations to expected management results and not development results. This reduces the capacity to consider value for money in decision making. At the request of the executive board, UNFPA is moving towards using a single integrated budget for 2014. This would link budgeted amounts to the results presented in the UNFPA's strategic plan. This initiative is intended to improve the direct link between budgeting and results.

c) Challenges and supports partners to think about value for money	SATISFACTORY
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UNFPA has a good track record on commodity pricing and quality, negotiating better prices and higher quality with suppliers of reproductive health commodities. For example, by promoting price competition between companies supplying condoms, UNFPA realised savings of US\$750 000 per year. The 2010 MOPAN report rated UNFPA as adequate overall on the timely and efficient management of contracts.

6. Partnership behaviour	STRONG
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UNFPA generally works well with partner governments and has been effective in ensuring population issues are included in national and local government plans. UNFPA is among the most committed UN agencies to working effectively other parts of the UN development system. UNFPA also has strong partnerships with civil society organisations.

MOPAN's 2010 report concluded that governments are generally happy with UNFPA's alignment with its priorities. UNFPA works with partner countries to ensure policies and programs are nationally-owned and developed. However, MOPAN reports that donors rate UNFPA as inadequate on alignment with partner government systems and use of project implementation units.

UNFPA has set up a global-level advisory board to ensure the voice of beneficiaries is heard.

At country-level UNFPA has partnerships with civil society organisations to ensure their views are built into its programs.

a) Works effectively in partnership with others	STRONG
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UNFPA generally works well with partner governments and has been effective in ensuring population issues are included in national and local government plans. In the Philippines the Australian Multilateral Assessment team found that UNFPA worked closely with local governments, using the League of Municipalities to help distribute reproductive health commodities.

UNFPA has stated it is committed to working effectively with other parts of the UN development system. UNFPA also has strong partnerships with civil society organisations. Feedback from Australian overseas missions was generally very positive about UNFPA's partnership behaviour at the country-level.

b) Places value on alignment with partner countries' priorities and systems	SATISFACTORY
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UNFPA works with partner countries to ensure that policies and programs are nationally owned and developed. It encourages the use of national expertise and works through national institutions and seeks to avoid parallel structures.

According to MOPAN survey respondents, UNFPA's strengths in relationship management lie in its support for national plans and strategies and its contributions to policy dialogue.

MOPAN donors, however, rated UNFPA as inadequate on alignment with partner government systems due to heavy use of project implementation and use of project implementation units.

c) Provides voice for partners and other stakeholders in decision making	STRONG
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UNFPA has set up a global level advisory board to ensure that the voice of beneficiaries is heard. At the country-level, UNFPA has partnerships with civil society organisations that helps to ensure beneficiaries' views are built into programs.

Partner countries participate in UNFPA decision making through the executive board. The Board consists of 36 UN member states that are elected for three-year terms. Twelve countries from the largest donor grouping and 24 countries from other groups, who are mostly program countries, sit on the board. Each member has equal voice and voting rights.

Feedback from stakeholders in the Philippines was positive about the participatory approach to programming adopted by UNFPA including (to the extent possible in a sensitive context) providing a voice for poor women who require contraception and cannot access it.

7. Transparency and accountability	STRONG
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UNFPA publishes a range of useful information on its website. While UNFPA has an information disclosure policy it is not yet a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

UNFPA has clear, published criteria for allocating core budget resources and MOPAN suggests this is adequately applied at country-level.

The 2010 MOPAN report rated UNFPA strongly on indicators related to internal and financial audit. It was considered weaker with risk management. UNFPA is developing an enterprise risk management system to strengthen its performance in this area.

UNFPA's accountability framework outlines clear processes and responsibilities in the management of its programs and has used the framework to undertake dialogue with partner countries on the importance of accountability of funds.

a) Routinely publishes comprehensive operational information, subject to justifiable confidentiality	SATISFACTORY
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UNFPA publishes a range of useful information on its website. While UNFPA has an information disclosure policy it does not operate under a presumption of disclosure and is not yet a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative. UNFPA does have procedures in place for certain types of disclosure including financial disclosure for

senior staff and a mechanism in place for governing board members to gain access to UNFPA's internal audit reports.

UNFPA is not a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

A range of documents, including the Annual Report, UNFPA's Strategic Framework, policy guidance, and country program evaluation data are made publicly available on the UNFPA website.

b) Is transparent in resource allocation, budget management and operational planning	STRONG
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UNFPA's resource allocation, budget and planning processes are mostly transparent and soundly based. The organisation has clear criteria and practices for allocating core funding resources.

MOPAN gave UNFPA a strong rating for publishing its criteria for allocating core budget resources. Survey responses suggested that its allocations adequately follow those criteria.

c) Adheres to high standards of financial management, audit, risk management and fraud prevention	STRONG
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UNFPA received notably strong ratings in the MOPAN survey on indicators related to internal and financial audit. In risk management (the only financial accountability area in which it received weaker ratings) UNFPA is engaged in the development of an Enterprise Risk Management system, which should help to strengthen its performance in this area.

d) Promotes transparency and accountability in partners and recipients	SATISFACTORY
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UNFPA's management has prioritised the need to improve the auditing of nationally executed projects and programs. They have focused on implementing the UN's Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers modality that aims to improve the accountability for funds that are transferred to national partners. UNFPA has undertaken intense dialogue with partner countries on this issue.