

MOPAN
2019 ASSESSMENTS

Organisational Performance Brief
**United Nations Office on Drugs
and Crime (UNODC)**

UNODC's performance at a glance

UNODC has a clear understanding of the new and evolving challenges related to drugs, organised crime, corruption and terrorism. It has gathered the international community behind action to tackle these challenges and continuously aligns its programme activities to address emerging threats. At the same time, the 2019 MOPAN assessment concludes that UNODC could become more effective and better positioned for the future by focusing on two inter-related issues.

First, UNODC should clarify its vision and define how it will deliver its mandate strategically. It has not yet articulated which elements within its broad mandate it will prioritise, nor how it will support them. The absence of a clear corporate vision of the priorities limits UNODC's potential to increase the strategic focus and impact of its work.

Second, UNODC will need to align financing to its new vision. This is a major challenge as much of the organisation's funding is tightly earmarked. While the growing global attention to the agendas UNODC tackles has brought an increasing volume of voluntary funds to specific projects or programmes, the share of flexible funding has declined. UNODC was created as a multilateral organisation with a normative and operational mandate, but the shrinking core funding risks turning it into a donor-driven implementation office. More flexible funds are urgently required for the organisation to operate strategically and coherently, continue to drive norms and help member states implement them.

The MOPAN assessment finds that UNODC is effective at carrying out programmes. It highlights many mature and satisfactory delivery systems UNODC has in place and concludes from evaluations that its programmes and projects largely meet the varied needs of its target groups. Yet the lack of monitoring data makes it difficult for UNODC to report its achievements with confidence.

Evaluations of the organisation report inefficiencies in co-ordination, procurement, and budget allocation, which affect timeliness and efficiency. Many of UNODC's ongoing initiatives to strengthen its operational performance are, however, setting UNODC on the right path. But they continue to require resources and active support.

The general conclusion of the assessment is that, for UNODC to be an effective multilateral organisation, it would need a clear overarching vision and long-term strategy, to which it could align its financing. In this, UNODC faces a strategic choice. If it continues unchecked along its current trajectory, its ability to strategically lead international responses to global problems will further diminish. However, with a clearer vision and a refreshed UNODC-specific Funding Compact, the organisation will be well-positioned to deliver its complex and critical mandate in the coming years.

UNODC KEY FACTS

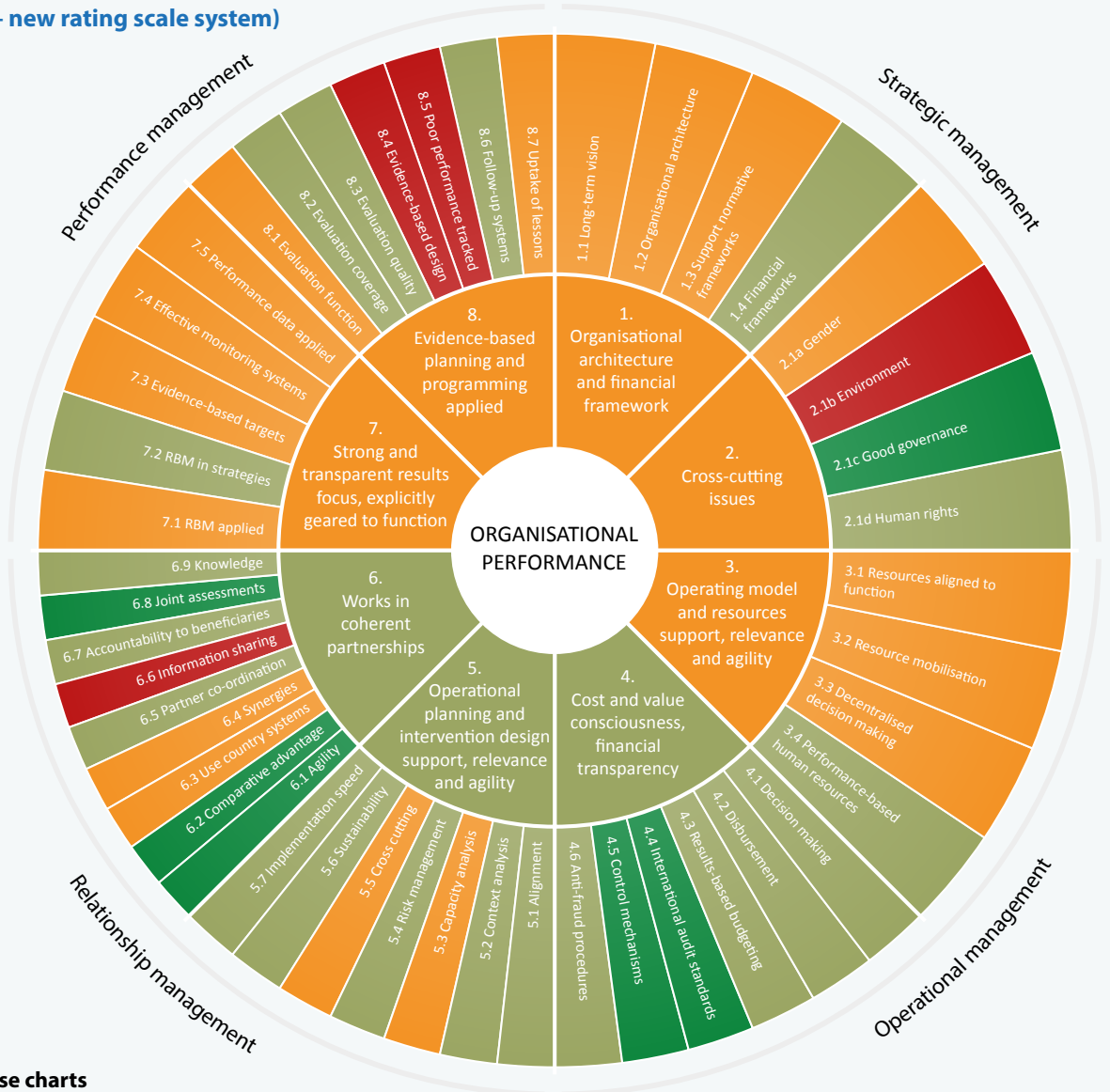
MISSION AND MANDATE: Created in 1997, UNODC is the United Nations Secretariat office mandated to assist member states in tackling illicit drugs, organised crime, corruption and terrorism. Its normative work, technical co-operation, and research reach across the peace and security, human rights, and development pillars of the UN.

GOVERNANCE: UNODC is the only UN Secretariat office with two policy-making organs: the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ). In 2009, FINGOV was created as a third, informal, body to improve the governance, financial situation, performance and effectiveness of UNODC.

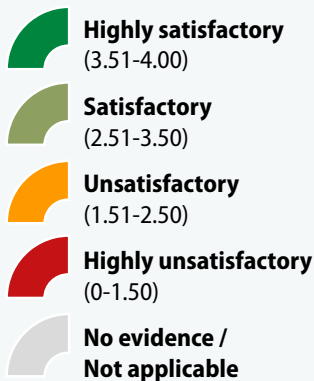
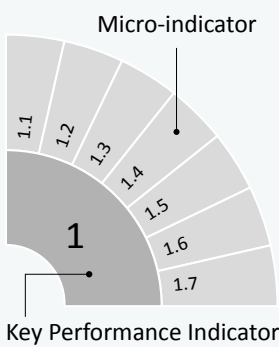
STRUCTURE: UNODC has its headquarters in Vienna and has liaison offices in New York and Brussels. It operates worldwide through a network of field-based entities: 8 regional offices, 7 country offices, 17 field offices, and approximately 87 programme/project offices. The Executive Director is appointed by the UN Secretary-General. UNODC is organised into four divisions: Operations; Policy Analysis and Public Affairs; Treaty Affairs; and Management.

FINANCE: UNODC's latest biennial budget (2018-19) was USD 752 million. Voluntary contributions make up 94% of its budget. Its regular budget – 6% of its total budget – constitutes its core, unearmarked resources and is approved by the General Assembly.

PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY FOR UNODC
(MOPAN 3.0* – new rating scale system)



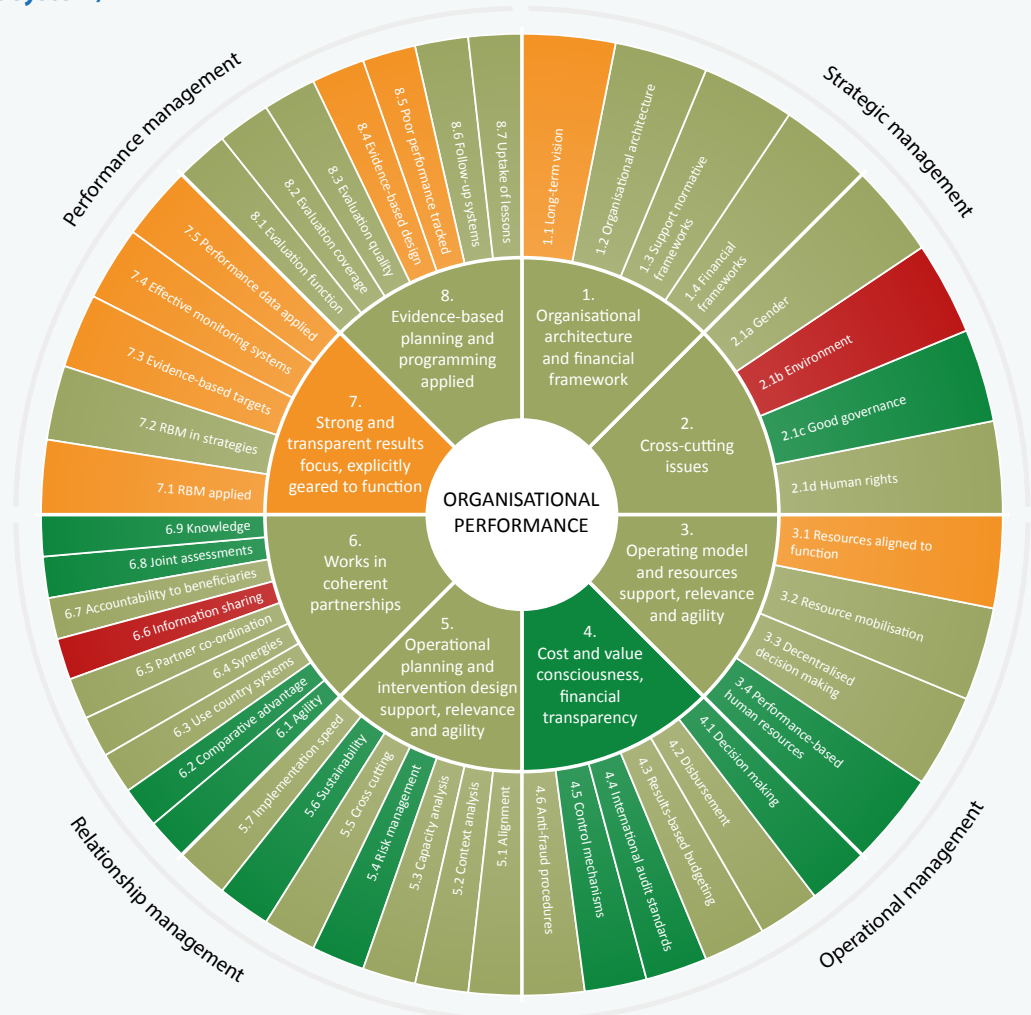
How to read these charts



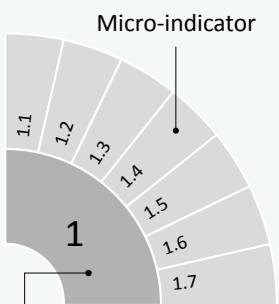
PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY FOR UNODC (MOPAN 3.0 – old rating scale system)

Changes to MOPAN rating system (MOPAN 3.0* scales)

The 2019 Assessment Cycle under MOPAN 3.0* includes a notable change on how ratings (and their corresponding colours) are applied based on the scores at MI and KPI level. Compared to previous cycles, the threshold for a rating has been raised to reflect the increasing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring are unaffected. Further information can be found in the MOPAN 3.0* methodology manual.



How to read these charts



Key Performance Indicator

- **Highly satisfactory** (3.01-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.01-3.00)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.01-2.00)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.00)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**



Key findings

UNODC plays a leading role in combatting ever-changing issues around drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism, as well as in adapting global responses to them. It keeps abreast of changes in the threats posed by the global ills it tackles. The organisation is nimble and responsive and adapts its normative and programmatic responses to keep them targeted, effective and relevant. Its current work on migration, human trafficking, terrorism, anti-money laundering and cyber-crime are strong examples of this. UNODC also leads in generating highly respected knowledge and research with a broad reach. Several of its reports have the status of global flagship publications in their fields, and maintaining the integrity of this work is crucial. UNODC has a central position in delivering seven Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and plays a key role in developing policy and support in otherwise neglected areas, such as drug use prevention and treatment.

UNODC combines its normative and programmatic roles in mutually reinforcing ways; this is the case where it is properly resourced and where planning is integrated across technical areas. UNODC often mobilises a range of mutually reinforcing normative and programmatic interventions to solve complex problems. Its work to fight organised crime exemplifies how UNODC can effectively combine multiple tools at different levels: global, regional and country. Its interventions often provide technical assistance to states to strengthen their capacities (e.g. prevention, investigation and prosecution), develop appropriate strategies and train agencies involved in the work, ranging from law enforcement to the judiciary or to financial intelligence units. UNODC also promotes and strengthens international co-operation among law enforcement and judicial practitioners through regional networks and anti-organised crime units, and it has developed software tools and databases to facilitate information sharing. The organisation has taken similar multifaceted approaches to address cyber-crime and terrorism and to positively influence government attitudes towards drug dependence and the spread of HIV/AIDS in prisons.

Establishing dynamic, innovative and influential multi-stakeholder partnerships is one of UNODC's strengths. Through its strong field network and its Vienna-based Thematic Branches, UNODC works with a broad range of partners, including governments, non-governmental organisations and UN agencies, and can collaborate with government entities to which others do not have access. UNODC has established joint projects and co-ordination groups on a spectrum of subjects involving a broad range of partners within and outside the UN system. It uses these partnerships to good effect, building on its comparative advantages: technical knowledge, convening power, policy dialogue and advocacy. UNODC also mainstreams governance effectively; this part of its mandate is mainstreamed throughout all it does.

The steady increase in extrabudgetary support testifies to its donors' confidence in the value of UNODC's work. The clearest evidence is that developing country partners themselves fund UNODC programmes in their own countries. One example is UNODC's lasting partnership with the Colombian government in support of the peace process, funded up to 90% by the country itself. UNODC also has the right planning and approval processes in place to be an agile partner. For instance, its proportionate controls for higher- and lower-value revisions to projects make it nimble and allow changes within a reasonable time frame.

UNODC has robust financial corporate systems.

Its strong financial management systems fully meet international standards. UNODC responds to audits and tracks its performance in implementing recommendations. It has solid systems for managing the grants it makes to partners and for enabling implementing partners to adapt to changing circumstances. Across the organisation, allocated resources are generally disbursed as planned, with clear targets and a system to continuously track disbursements and transparently report variances. The organisation also takes a serious approach to risk management. UNODC has created its own risk register, and an interdivisional team is developing risk mitigation plans.

However, UNODC also faces a number of challenges, such as needing a clear strategic vision for the future. UNODC has a clear mission statement, repeated in successive programme and budget documents: to “contribute to the achievement of security and justice for all by making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism”. Yet its current strategic documents do not articulate a clear overarching vision and long-term strategy, except insofar as they refer to the organisation’s role in supporting international instruments for which it acts as “guardian and advocate”, the SDGs and relevant UN resolutions. UNODC’s leadership has yet to identify – within its broad mandate – where it sees the most urgent priorities, where it thinks it can make the biggest impact and how it will do so. The lack of such a vision and strategy is probably the single most important gap that UNODC needs to fill to be well-positioned for the future. Interviews carried out for the assessment also indicate tension relating to the extent to which UNODC should prioritise a law enforcement or a developmental, people-oriented approach to implementing its mandate. The conventions and protocols for which it is a guardian give primacy to the former but allow both. UNODC’s vision and strategy will need to determine its future operating model and structure.

Lack of flexible funds curtails UNODC’s ability to deliver value and invest strategically and weakens its management practice. The low share of regular budget resources and general purpose funds (unearmarked voluntary funding) that UNODC receives limits its capacity to allocate resources in line with its current organisational priorities and goals and to deliver its mandate effectively. Without donors’ willingness to provide finance, the organisation is limited in its ability to strategically commit resources to thematic areas of its mandate or to target groups that it considers priorities. The prevalence of tightly earmarked, often short-term, donor contributions makes UNODC “donor driven” in the eyes of many of its staff, because UNODC’s ability to deliver value to beneficiaries depends on what its donors are willing to finance. Its current funding model is also responsible for many of the areas of weak management practice that this assessment identifies. Some core functions must be “projectised”, including results-based management (RBM), gender and evaluation.

The financing of a significant share of activities and staff costs is secured only on an ad-hoc and short-term basis. This hampers UNODC’s capacity to plan sustainably or achieve long-term objectives. In short, this funding model has a pervasive and significant organisational impact on the fabric of all UNODC is and does. It has contributed to the fragmentation of UNODC’s engagement and underlies a harmful culture of internal competition for resources. UNODC is seeking to introduce incentives to encourage donors to provide more flexible funding at global and country levels and has secured such contributions from Australia, Germany, Norway, Qatar, Sweden and the United Kingdom. But overall, efforts to gain more support for initiatives UNODC considers its “fundamental roles” have yet to yield results.

Programme performance management systems – such as results-based management, monitoring and evaluation – are not yet mature. Recent investments in RBM have been positive; for instance, in 2018, UNODC produced an Annual Results-Based Report for member states, as well as a handbook on RBM and the 2030 Agenda. However, efforts in RBM largely rely on voluntary programme funding. To implement RBM across the organisation, in normative and programmatic work, resources and strong backing from UNODC’s leadership are needed.

Monitoring projects and programmes also requires more attention, as the RBM Peer Review and UNODC’s Meta-Synthesis of Evaluations (2017-18) revealed. Currently, monitoring is largely absent. The organisation lacks a system to identify interventions against their objectives, one that would feed into a strategic dashboard or other regular reporting and delineate responsibility to act. Monitoring has yet to graduate from being perceived as a donor requirement to becoming a genuine management and accountability tool.

UNODC’s evaluation function has greatly improved and strengthened the quality of evaluations. But the Independent Evaluation Section, which is part of the Office of the Executive Director, needs further de facto structural and operational independence, as well as budgetary autonomy. Limitations in the number of staff, and evaluation function’s dependence on

unpredictable, extra-budgetary funding compound the challenge. They make it difficult to manage the 100% coverage that UNODC's evaluation policy expects and to track the status and implementation of evaluation recommendations, let alone bring lessons learned to the attention of programme managers.

Although UNODC now has a clear and robust gender strategy and action plan in place, its work on gender equality is rated as one of the issues requiring improvement. UNODC's Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, approved in December 2017, is being rolled in line with its Action Plan, adopted in December 2018. The organisation has

established a system of gender focal points, is training staff, is beginning to use gender screening checklists for new interventions and has added gender equality indicators to UNODC's strategic plan and corporate objectives. But all of this work is still in the early stages. At the time of the assessment, it was too early to witness the consistent use of these tools and to report on their expected positive impact.

The success of UNODC's gender equality and mainstreaming work hinges on future earmarked donor funding. Staff and activities of this work, framed as a "global programme", are financed by extrabudgetary funds, and therefore its sustainability is not guaranteed.

Main strengths identified in the MOPAN 2019 assessment

- UNODC plays a leadership role in combatting and adapting global responses to ever-changing crises related to drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism.
- UNODC combines its normative and programmatic roles in mutually reinforcing ways.
- Based on a strong field network, it has a track record of building influential partnerships.
- Robust financial corporate systems underpin project delivery.
- UNODC mainstreams governance effectively and now has a robust gender strategy and action plan in place.
- UNODC is a global leader in knowledge generation.

Main areas for improvement identified in the MOPAN 2019 assessment

- UNODC lacks a clear strategic vision and strategy.
- The low proportion of unearmarked funding UNODC receives limits its ability to be effective.
- Programme performance management systems are not yet mature.
- A lack of trust between the Division for Management and the rest of the Office undermines the potential for operational effectiveness.
- Political concerns challenge the integrity of the Research and Analysis Branch's outputs.
- UNODC suffers from its thin representation with the United Nations in New York.

About this assessment

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is a network of 19 countries¹ that share a common interest in assessing the effectiveness of the major multilateral organisations they fund, including UN agencies, international financial institutions and global funds.

The Network generates, collects, analyses and presents relevant and credible information on the organisational and development effectiveness of the organisations it assesses. This knowledge base is intended to contribute to organisational learning within and among the organisations, their direct clients and partners, and other stakeholders. Network members use the reports for their own accountability needs and as a source of input for strategic decision-making.

The MOPAN 3.0* methodology employed in this assessment uses a framework of 12 key performance indicators (KPIs) and associated micro-indicators (MIs). It comprises standards that characterise an effective multilateral organisation. As part of MOPAN's efforts to ensure its assessments remain relevant to stakeholders and aligned to international best practice, the MOPAN methodology is continuously evolving. The methodology used in the 2019 Assessment Cycle includes two notable changes from the previous iteration. The first is that the threshold for the ratings (and their corresponding colours) applied based on the scores at KPI and MI levels has been raised to reflect the increasing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring are unaffected. The second is greater flexibility in the selection of partners and geographies for the survey line of evidence.

This approach allows for more relevant sampling of organisations' external partners and geographic coverage. More details are available in MOPAN's methodology manual 3.0*.²

This was the first MOPAN assessment of UNODC. It was championed by Sweden on behalf of the Network. The assessment addresses organisational systems, practices and behaviours, as well as results achieved during the period 2017 to mid-2019. It relies on three lines of evidence: a document review, interviews with staff at both headquarter-level and country/regional-level, and an online partner survey.³ The assessment covers UNODC's headquarters and regional and country presence, with the exception of the International Narcotics Control Board.

MOPAN's evidence lines for UNODC

- Review of 153 documents
- 63 interviews with staff at headquarters and at country and regional levels
- 191 partner survey results across 10 countries

This brief accompanies the full assessment which can be found on MOPAN's website at www.mopanonline.org. UNODC's management response will be made available on that website as well.

Organisations assessed by MOPAN in 2019-20:

- CGIAR
- UNCTAD
- UNODC
- MLF
- UNIDO

1: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

2: Available at www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/2019assessmentcycle/

3: The online survey was conducted among partners of UNODC from ten countries: four from those surveyed for the 2019 MOPAN cycle (Egypt, Lebanon, Mexico and Turkmenistan) and six targeted by UNODC activities (Afghanistan, Colombia, Kenya, Myanmar, Nigeria and Thailand).