

SIXTH DRAFT

**UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
FRAMEWORK (UNSDCF)**

-

Guidance

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ACRONYMS

AAAA:	Addis Abba Action Agenda
CEB:	United Nations System Chief Executive Board
CPD:	Country Programme Document
DSRSG:	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
HLCM:	High Level Committee on Management
HLCP:	High Level Committee on Programme
HLPF:	High Level Political Forum
HRBA:	Human rights-based approach
HRP:	Humanitarian Response Plan
IFI:	International Financial Institution
INFF:	Integrated National Financing Framework
INGO:	International non-governmental organisation
IASC:	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ISF:	Integrated Strategic Framework
JSC:	Joint Steering Committee
JWP:	Joint work plans
LNOB:	Leave no one behind
MAF:	Management and Accountability Framework
MAPS:	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
MCO:	Multi-country office
M&E:	Monitoring and evaluation
MDG:	Millennium Development Goals
NGO:	Non-governmental organisations
NRA:	Non-resident agencies
ODA:	Official development assistance
OED:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OOF:	Other official flow
RBM:	Results-based Management
RC:	Resident Coordinator
RES:	Resolution
RRP:	Refugee Response Plan
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SWSD:	System-wide strategic document
ToC:	Theory of change
TT:	Task Team
UN:	United Nations
UN CCA:	United Nations Common Country Analysis
UNCT:	United Nations Country Team
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG:	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF:	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSWAP:	United Nations System-wide Action Plan
VNR:	Voluntary National Review



FOREWORD

What's new?

1. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) has been renamed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF or 'Cooperation Framework') to more accurately reflect the nature of the contemporary relationship between Governments and the UN development system in their collaboration to achieve the SDGs.
2. The new Guidelines emphasize the primacy of the UNSDCF in articulating Government's expectations of the UN development system and in driving major UN development system contributions at the country level. UN development system entity country development programmes are derived from the UNSDCF, and not vice versa.
3. The UNSDCF represents the UN development system's collective offer to support the country in addressing key Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) priorities and gaps. It begins and ends with an analysis of the country's development landscape and SDG priorities, including through the lens of the imperative to leave no one behind.
4. The UNSDCF serves as the core accountability tool between the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the host Government as well as between and amongst UNCT members for collectively owned development results and is supported by independent and high quality UNSDCF evaluation and mandatory evaluation management response.
5. The UN Common Country Analysis (UN CCA) shifts from a one-off event to a "real-time" core analytical function, to be more agile and reflective of the evolving country context. Periodic updating of the UN CCA will also reduce the period for formulating a new UNSDCF.
6. SDG targets and indicators become the default monitoring framework, informed by country-defined and disaggregated baselines. These indicators, in turn, will be tracked online through UN INFO at country, regional and global levels.
7. There is explicit recognition of regional and transboundary elements within the UN country analysis and the UNSDCF.
8. The UNSDCF triggers a review of UNCT configuration to ensure the UNCT has the capacities necessary to deliver on the commitments contained therein. The UNSDCF is signed after this step is completed.
9. The UNSDCF remains at a strategic level. Budgeting of the UNSDCF is now a discrete step that follows the signature of the UNSDCF. Furthermore, the budget is placed in a larger framework of the SDG financing landscape.
10. The timeline for UNSDCF preparation is reduced from current 14.5 months global average to 6-9 months to reduce the transaction costs for Government and other stakeholders. Maintaining a reasonably updated UN CCA will significantly reduce UNSDCF formulation period.
11. The UN Resident Coordinator plays an enhanced leadership role throughout the UNSDCF process in line with the new Management and Accountability Framework (MAF).
12. The UNSDCF contains a clear statement of the UN's commitment and emphasis on the normative role, and to leaving no one behind at the country level.

CHAPTER 1: A PARTNERSHIP FOR ACHIEVING AGENDA 2030

1. This document provides guidance to UN Country Teams (UNCTs) as they plan, finance, deliver and evaluate their efforts in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), typically over a 5-year cycle. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, ('UNSDCF' or 'Cooperation Framework'), is the central step at the core of the cycle, co-designed and co-signed by the UN development system and the Government. In these guidelines, the term 'UNSDCF' refers both to that core document itself and more generally to the key steps and instruments that precede and follow its signature. The guidelines are sequenced to follow the normal steps in formulating a new UNSDCF.

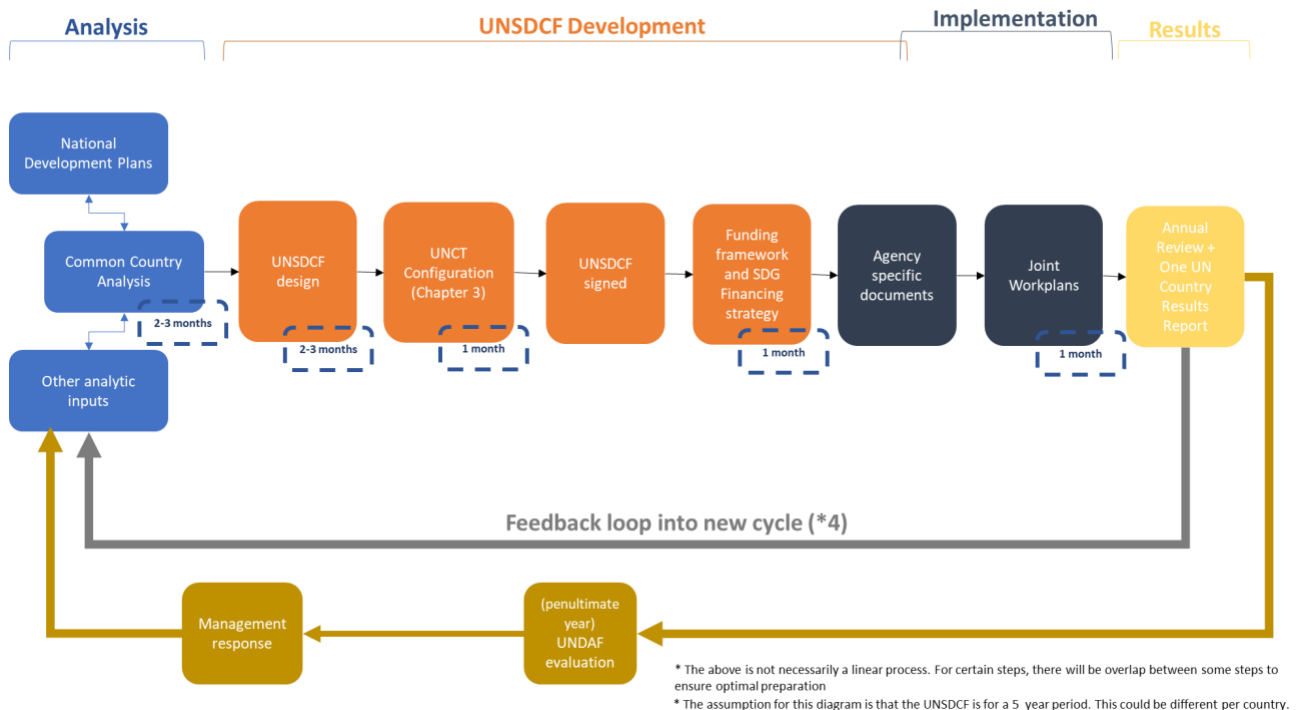


Figure 1: The UNSDCF cycle

1.1. What is the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework?

2. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/72/279](#) elevates the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now renamed¹ as United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework) to be “the most important instrument for planning and implementation of the UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).” Given the ambition of the 2030 Agenda and the urgency of its timeline, this represents a significant shift: the UNSDCF guides the entire programme cycle i.e., it drives the planning, implementing, monitoring, reporting and evaluating of the UN development system’s collectively-owned development results to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

¹ A/74/73-E/2019/4 Report of the Secretary-General -Implementation of the General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system 2019. Advanced unedited version-paragraph 47.

The UNSDCF determines and reflects the UN development system’s contributions in the country and shapes the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside the country.

3. Grounded in national ownership, the UNSDCF is anchored in national development priorities, the 2030 Agenda and the principles of the UN Charter. It outlines the UNDS contributions sought by national stakeholders to support the country’s SDG attainment in an integrated manner, with a commitment to leave no one behind, human rights and other international standards and obligations. The UNSDCF reflects the UN development system’s articulation of the prioritized most sustainable development choices for a country and advises on pathways to maximize synergies across the SDGs and minimize the opportunity costs of leaving people behind. It reflects the shift from the siloed approach of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) paradigm to a more integrated approach for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.
4. Cognizant that achieving the 2030 Agenda and national development goals requires a broad range of stakeholders, the UNSDCF significantly broadens the concept of partnerships. It goes beyond the previous concept of ‘implementing partners’ to one that embraces all entities and individuals identified as critical to forging sustainable development solutions in line with UN values. Based on the UN development system’s policy expertise and its comparative advantage, its normative agenda and its ability to leverage, influence and unlock a broad range of resources for development, the UNSDCF reflects: (a) the expectations national stakeholders have of the UN development system’s contribution to the development task; (b) a shared vision and strategic priorities of the UN, framed within the broader partners’ landscape; (c) the strategic partners with whom the UN will work in pursuit of development solutions; (d) how the UN and partners will contribute to accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda; and (e) the financial and non-financial commitment of the UN and partners in this endeavor and placed in a wider context of the financing required to reach the SDGs in the country.
5. **The UNSDCF is first and foremost a partnership compact², with the Government.** UNSDCF development, implementation, monitoring and reporting is co-led by the Government and anchored in national development priorities and cycles. The UNSDCF is informed by the Government’s prioritization, planning, implementation and reporting vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda, including *inter alia*, through the preparation of evidence-based Voluntary National Reviews (VNR)³ based on SDG indicators.
6. **The UNSDCF is a partnership commitment⁴ to the people in a country, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable.** The commitment and expectation of the UN development system in this regard include: (a) Support to achieving national development goals and targets with a focus on leaving no one behind; (b) helping develop national development indicator frameworks in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Global Indicator Framework; (c) addressing national development needs by including those left behind throughout the UNSDCF cycle, across all processes and programmes; (d)

² A “compact” in this guidance means that there is a formal agreement signed to which both parties are mutually accountable through established mechanisms e.g. the joint national/UN steering committee.

³ This government-led process articulates a country’s progress and performance against the Agenda 2030. It can thus be a primary source of information about national strategies and partnerships in place to address the cross-cutting challenges and potential trade-offs to attain the 2030 Agenda and leaving no one behind.

⁴ A “commitment” - In this context, the parties may not be formal co-signatories to the UNSDCF document. However, the UN development system recognizes them as important for achieving 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in the country and makes clear its intentions and the expected results of working in partnership with them. The parties may hold the UN to account for delivering on these commitments as the UN will also hold itself accountable. The mechanisms for accountability may be formal or informal as appropriate to each country context.

instituting relevant accountability mechanisms as appropriate for different contexts;⁵ and (e) making up-to-date information on the UNSDCF and expected results and progress publicly available. (f) ensuring people’s meaningful participation in development, particularly those left behind.”

7. **The UNSDCF is a partnership commitment⁶ to a broad range of stakeholders** including local authorities, legislative, judicial and other independent state oversight bodies, civil society and community organizations, businesses and philanthropic organizations⁷, trade unions and employers’ organizations, the scientific and research community, volunteer groups, bi- and multilateral partners, including international financial institutions and media. Under national leadership, the UNSDCF – throughout its entire cycle – is a vehicle for identifying development solutions through inclusive dialogue. Looking at development trends beyond national boundaries, the UNSDCF includes and contributes to regional, sub-regional and transboundary strategies and partnerships, both external and internal to the UN. It actively facilitates South-South cooperation⁸ and contributes to Triangular cooperation⁹. Within the UNSDCF, the UN development system pursues all the above partnerships in line with the Common Minimum Standards for Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships developed by the UN Sustainable Development Group. Selected with due diligence, UN development system partners uphold inclusivity, diversity and representation; transparency and accountability; accessibility and safety; and respect for the UN Charter and UN norms and values.
8. **The UNSDCF is a partnership compact amongst the UN development system entities including the UN Resident Coordinator (RC).** It provides the overarching framework for development results from which individual UN development entity programmes and contributions are derived, and drives the UN development system’s contributions, be they implemented individually or jointly. UN development entity country programme outcomes are derived from the UNSDCF, not vice-versa. They are hence developed in parallel to – not ahead of – UNSDCF formulation. The relation between the Resident Coordinator and the UNCT is managed through the Management and Accountability Framework.
9. **The UNSDCF is the central framework for joint monitoring, review, reporting and evaluating of the UN development system’s impact vis-à-vis the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.** Under the leadership of the RC, the UN development system entities are expected to contribute their expertise, tools and platforms in a coherent, integrated and synergistic manner, in line with their respective mandates and as agreed in the UNSDCF. UNDP in particular has the specific role to assist the RC and UNCT to deliver an integrated and multi-dimensional approach to the SDGs using country platforms as well other tools, in line with General Assembly Resolution 72/279 (para 32), which calls on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to be ‘...the support platform of the UN

⁵ This can include support for strengthening national evaluation policies and systems

⁶ A “commitment” - in this context, the parties may not be formal co-signatories to the UNSDCF document. However, the UN development system recognizes them as important for achieving 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in the country and makes clear its intentions and the expected results of working in partnership with them. The parties may hold the UN to account for delivering on these commitments as the UN will also hold itself accountable. The mechanisms for accountability may be formal or informal as appropriate to each country context.

⁷ Working with partners who do not uphold the values of the UN presents reputational, fiduciary and other risks. UN partnership strategies should include due diligence and risk management measures (insert link to common approach).

⁸ “A process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how and through regional and interregional collective actions, including partnerships involving Governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within and across regions. South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation.” (Framework of Operational Guidelines on UN South-South and Triangular Cooperation)

⁹ “Triangular Cooperation involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country(ies)/or multilateral organization(s) to implement development cooperation programmes and projects.” (Framework of Operational Guidelines on UN South-South and Triangular Cooperation)

development system providing an integrator function in support of countries in their efforts to realize the 2030 Agenda'.¹⁰

10. The UNSDCF leverage all sources of sustainable financing and investments towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda. Since the UN development systems' financial contribution to national development is often relatively small, there is henceforth a shift from the UNDAF's traditional focus on channeling donor support to collective UN results towards using the UN development system's incomparable convening power to support Governments in developing and implementing sustainable financing strategies. The UNSDCF hence expands from "funding", i.e., resource mobilization for UN programmes, to "SDG financing", i.e. leveraging and influencing all available financial flows and instruments (largely outside UN accounts) in support of national priorities for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

11. **The UNSDCF is a vehicle for supporting new models of economic transformation.** With countries emphasizing economic growth as especially important to their development, the UNSDCF provides specific guidance on inclusive, diversified and job-intensive economic transformation that leaves no one behind and protects the planet. Economic performance, especially in developing countries, is subject to global shocks and fluctuations that often slow, and sometimes derail, the achievement of key development priorities. The UNSDCF therefore supports the country in strengthening (a) the resilience of the economy through appropriate macroeconomic policies, and (b) individual resilience through social protection and redistributive policies that reduce vulnerability and preserve gains against poverty and inequality. The UN development system's support focuses on fostering patterns of growth that improve the distribution of incomes, increase diversification and take full advantage of appropriate technologies and innovations. This includes valuing properly and fully the many non-monetized activities in the modern economy, such as unpaid care work, informal labour and the provision of essential services. It requires a departure from past practice in production and consumption and the embrace of new technologies and patterns of behavior that sustain low-carbon and resource- and energy-efficient growth.

Contextualizing the UNSDCFs in different country contexts

In order to make the most meaningful contribution to the country-level attainment of the 2030 Agenda, the UNSDCF – based on a strong UN CCA - must be tailored to the UN's role in the specific country context and be flexible to do so. While the UNSDCF document and subsequent UN development activities will differ from country to country - particularly contexts of conflict, disaster and fragility, middle-income status and multi-country office setups - the various elements and steps of the UNSDCF document and the UNSDCF cycle remain - as per good programme management practice - the same, namely (1) conception and initiation, (2) definition and planning, (3) implementation, (4) performance monitoring and reporting, and (5) Evaluation and closure. The Guidance and its companion pieces make reference to and provide links to the necessary tools to carry out these elements, including in the above-mentioned contexts.

12. **The UNSDCF is a framework for supporting prevention strategies.** Prevention is at the heart of the UNSDCF which should enable the UN and partners to contribute to ending and preventing conflict and disaster, address the impact of climate change and mitigate threats to the cohesion and well-being of societies. Prevention protects development gains and provides a conducive environment for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Consequently, while being the framework for all UN development activities in a country, the UNSDCF also reflects on, links to and reinforces the human rights, humanitarian and peace agendas, in order to prevent crisis, build resilience and mitigate risks

¹⁰ see hyperlink for more detailed explanation of UNDP's integrator function and its support the UN CCA and UNSDCF processes.

to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. This reflects the recognition that there will be no peace without development, no development without peace, and neither without respect for human rights, that “peacebuilding encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, and human rights programmes and mechanisms”¹¹ and that “the Agenda for Humanity and its five core principles provide a critical framework that should be taken forward as a contribution to the 2030 Agenda and our collective pledge to leave no one behind (LNOB)”¹².

13. The UNSDCF is thus complementary to and connected with other key policy, programmatic and legal frameworks, such as the country reviews undertaken by the different UN human rights mechanisms¹³, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)¹⁴/Refugee Response Plans (RRP)¹⁵ and the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) in Mission settings. In protracted crises, the UNSDCF reflects the “collective outcomes” that address risk, vulnerability and need across the planning frameworks for human rights, humanitarian, development and peace action¹⁶. While the strategic outcomes of the UNSDCF do not need to be the same as the collective outcomes, they reflect the connections across the human rights, humanitarian, development and peace spectrum. This will help to ensure a stronger focus on prevention, institution-building and resilience before and from the outset of a crisis, and a smoother transition back to long-term sustainable development¹⁷.
14. **Finally, the UNSDCF is a living framework.** The UN development system’s collective results must remain responsive to emerging needs. Annual reviews of progress towards UNSDCF strategic priorities, outcomes and outputs, and assessment of significant changes in the country context, inform the agreement on UN development system’s planned contribution, with the government and relevant development partners. This is reflected in the signed UNSDCF document and/or the periodically updated UN Joint Workplans.

1.2. UNSDCF duration

15. The **UNSDCF period is flexible and allows for a responsive framework in changing country contexts.** The recommended time frame is three to five years with due consideration of (1) the complexity of country context and the imperative to keep the UN response relevant to the evolving development priorities within the national development plan period; and (2) acceptable levels of transaction costs for UN and partners of the UNSDCF formulation process.

1.3. The guiding principles for the UNSDCF

16. The UNSDCF adopts an integrated programming approach. It addresses **core programming principles in a holistic manner**, not as add-on modules. These principles are integrated throughout all stages of the UNSDCF and guide both process as well as content.

¹¹ Security Council Resolution S/RES/2282, 27 April 2016.

¹² ‘Outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit’, SG Report to the 71st General Assembly (A/71/353)

¹³ This includes the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), treaty bodies and special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

¹⁴ The following guidance is without prejudice to GA 46/182 and related resolutions governing humanitarian action and coordination.

¹⁵ Refugee Response Plans in emergencies (<https://www.unchr.org/refugee-response-plans.html>)

¹⁶ Key messages on the humanitarian-development -nexus and its links to peace, adopted at IASC TTin and UNSDG TT4 in March 2019.

¹⁷ Further guidance on linkages between UNSDCF and ISFs will be provided through the integrated assessment and planning policy.

17. By adopting an **integrated and multi-dimensional programming approach** - in line with the ‘five Ps’ (**People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnerships**)¹⁸ - the UNSDCF identifies how working on and advancing one SDG maximizes synergies and positive impact and manages potential trade-offs vis-à-vis other SDGs.

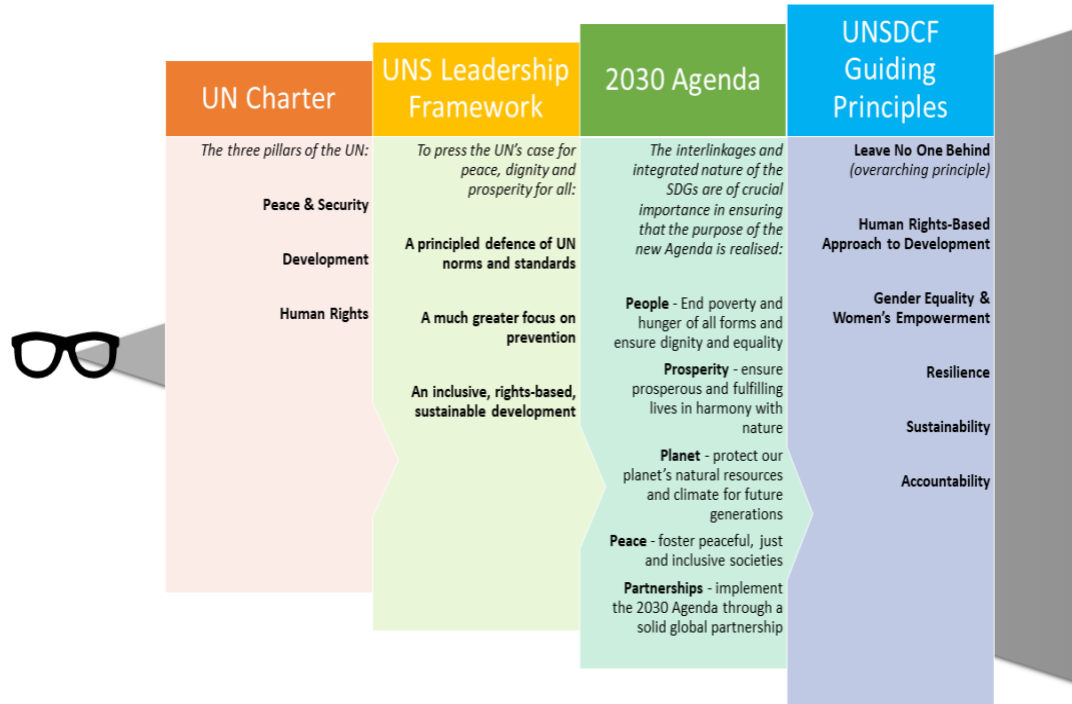


Figure 2: The guiding principles as a lens for the UNSDCF

18. The UNSDCF frames its commitment to leave no one behind as its overarching and unifying principle, underpinned by human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment; sustainability and resilience; and accountability.
19. **Leaving no one behind (LNOB)** is the central transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda and represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities.¹⁹ This means moving beyond assessing average and aggregate progress towards ensuring progress for all population groups²⁰. This requires disaggregating data and qualitative analysis which helps identify who is being excluded or discriminated against, how and why, as well as who is experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities. It entails identifying unjust, avoidable or extreme inequalities in outcome and opportunities, and patterns of discrimination in law, policies and practices. The UNSDCF thus addresses patterns of exclusion, structural constraints and unequal power relations that produce and reproduce inequalities over generations and moving towards both formal and substantive equality for all groups in society. This calls for supporting legal, policy, institutional

¹⁸ People (End poverty and hunger of all forms and ensure dignity and equality), Prosperity (ensure prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature), Planet (protect our planet’s natural resources and climate for future generations), Peace (foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies), and Partnerships (implement the 2030 Agenda through a solid global partnership)

¹⁹ The [UNSDG Operational Guide for UNCTs on Leaving No One Behind](#) supports RC and UN development system in integrating this principle.

²⁰ The LNOB principle is applicable to all population groups in a country, including non-citizens such as refugees or stateless persons

and other measures,²¹ as well as free, active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, particularly the most marginalized, in review and follow-up processes for ensuring accountability, recourse and remedies to all.²² The LNOB principle is applicable to all population groups in a country, including non-citizens, such as refugees or stateless populations. The UNCTs will also need to incorporate the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy which has a clear accountability framework.

20. The **Human Rights-Based Approach to Development (HRBA)** is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and principles and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. Under the HRBA, the plans, policies and processes of development are anchored in a system of rights and corresponding obligations established by international law, including all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and the right to development.²³ HRBA requires human rights principles (equality and non-discrimination, participation, accountability) to guide UN development cooperation, and focus on capacity development of both ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations and ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights.
21. **Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment** is integral to realizing the 2030 Agenda and across all SDGs. To ensure this focus is integrated throughout the UNSDCF, UN development system entities put gender equality at the heart of programming, driving the active and meaningful participation of both women and men, and the empowerment of all women and girls, consistently with the minimum requirements agreed upon by the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) in the UNCT System Wide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard.²⁴
22. In an increasingly uncertain and volatile environment, **resilience** is a key principle to guide the design of integrated and cost-effective approaches to reduce risks and thereby to prevent disasters and crises, informed by the UN Resilience Framework.²⁵ Progress towards sustainable development and peaceful societies is undermined by multiple and intersecting threats that are intensified by persistent risk drivers. These include risks associated with natural and human-induced hazards²⁶, violent conflict, epidemics and pandemics, financial systems and food price fluctuations overlay risk drivers related to poverty, climate change, inequality, discrimination and exclusion, extremism, demographic pressures, unplanned urbanization, ecosystem degradation, weak institutions and declining respect for human rights. Together they can unleash cascading impacts across sectors, causing loss of life and livelihoods and setting back progress towards productive, sustainable and peaceful societies. Making progress towards the 2030 Agenda in such a volatile context will be contingent on the UNSDCF’s ability to identify and address interconnected risks – both **“risks to” and “risks from” UN development system’s development activities** – through **risk-informed programming**.
23. **Sustainability** guides the focus on maintaining and building on development results. The 2030 Agenda has the objective of ensuring the lasting protection of the planet and its natural and cultural resources,

²¹ This includes UN system-wide priorities for action such as the UN system-wide action plans (UN-SWAPs) on gender, youth, indigenous peoples, and for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, among others.

²² ‘LNOB - A Shared UN System Framework for Action’, UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, July 2017

²³ UNDG Common Understanding on HRBA

²⁴ <https://undg.org/document/unct-swap-gender-equality-scorecard>. The UNCT Gender Equality Scorecard establishes performance standards for the definition of gender-related programme results, and the establishment of institutional arrangements needed to achieve them.

²⁵ The HLCP/CEB ‘UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies’ (draft Dec 2018) supports RCs and UN development system in integrating the resilience principle.

²⁶ The practical guidelines on integrating disaster risk reduction into the UNSDCF supports RCs and UNCT’s on enhancing the understanding of main risks in a country and how reducing those risks can be integrated into the UNSDCF.

supporting inclusive and sustained economic growth, ending poverty in all its dimensions and enhancing human well-being. Strengthening the capacities of national and sub-national institutions and communities is essential in this regard. The UNSDCF will, as appropriate, strengthen national and sub-national institution building to help ensure that national institutions are appropriately configured, capacitated and adequately resourced to reinforce UN development system interventions and macroeconomic policies that reinforce the overarching principles of the UNSDCF.

24. **Accountability:** In line with the 2030 Agenda commitments to greater accountability at all levels, the UNSDCF is an instrument for the UN's own accountability to the people in the countries in which it programmes and for the UN development system's promotion of accountable societies. This necessitates: (a) alignment with national priorities and national accountability mechanisms, and support to the further development of those mechanisms; (b) strengthening national and local mechanisms, institutions and processes to monitor and report on the progress of SDG implementation, aligned to international mechanisms, including UN human rights mechanisms, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and Voluntary National Reviews (VNR); (c) measures to build upon and extend greater transparency, and improved measurement and reporting on results, including through joint assessments with target populations; (d) enabling active and inclusive local community engagement and participation in decision-making throughout the UNSDCF cycle; and (e) supporting the development and use of quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data to inform national and UN policy formulation, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as risk management for development results.

1.4. Means of implementing the UNSDCF guiding principles

25. The UNSDCF employs three mutually reinforcing modes of implementation²⁷ that apply in all country contexts.
26. **Results-focused programming:** The SDGs constitute the frame of reference for UNSDCF formulation and implementation. Using results-based management, the UN development system ensures that resources are directed towards improving development conditions for identified populations. This requires the identification of critical assumptions about the programming environment, and a consideration of relevant risks and management measures. Indicators to monitor progress and measure the achievement of outcomes are identified, with attention given to data, evidence generation, and support for national statistical and information systems. Accountabilities are clearly defined and backed by strong reporting mechanisms. UNSDCF outcomes represent changes in institutional and behavioural capacities for development. The focus on results should be maintained throughout the entire UNSDCF cycle, including during monitoring and evaluation.
27. **Capacity development:** Development results need to be sustained and built upon. Capacity development – the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time - is critical to sustaining social, economic and environmental development results. It also maximizes effectiveness, efficiency and country ownership of development by ensuring that country level stakeholders can effectively, efficiently, and self-sufficiently manage and deliver services to their target groups.

²⁷ In addition, the 2017 Guidance listed three other key approaches for integrated programming: risk-informed programming, partnerships and development, humanitarian and peacebuilding linkages. These were mainstreamed throughout this guidance.

28. **Coherent policy support:** The interlinked nature of the SDGs demands policy coherence and more integrated, cross-sectoral approaches. The UN development system combines its diverse and complementary mandates, expertise and technical contributions so that the policy support it provides to national partners is effective, comprehensive and coherent. Policy coherence ensures consistency across national policy and programmatic frameworks, the legal obligations of States under international law, and their alignment in support of development efforts. Accordingly, UNSDCFs (1) align to national priorities and plans, national SDG strategies and targets, and internationally and regionally agreed policy frameworks defining integrated approaches to sustainable development as well as global and regional norms and standards (vertical coherence), (2) enhance synergies between intervention areas (horizontal coherence) and their alignment with national development goals, and (3) strengthen coherence among development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts and human rights mechanisms for the realization and sustainability of peace and development gains.

1.5. Communication strategy for the revitalized UNSDCF

29. The UNSDCF should help the UN development system convey very simply and concretely what the UN is doing to help a country achieve the SDGs: (i) the vision for the country in 2030; (ii) how the UNSDCF expects to contribute to the ‘five Ps’ of the 2030 Agenda and the priority pathways identified to help the country achieve the SDGs; (iii) the UN’s focus, its contribution and how it will measure results that reflect progress in terms of the UNSDCF Guiding Principles; (iv) who is responsible for delivering on what, by when and by what means; and (v) how these are linked to national development, human rights, humanitarian and peace frameworks. Dissemination of this information should be in an accessible language and format, taking into account considerations such as disability, language, literacy levels and cultural background in the dissemination strategy.
30. In line with the commitments in the UN Funding Compact, the UN will also give visibility for core and pooled fund contributions in communicating about the UNSDCF.

CHAPTER 2: UNSDCF DESIGN AND PREPARATION

2.1. Understanding the country’s development landscape

2.1.1. Alignment to the national development strategy

31. The priorities of the UNSDCF are directly derived from the UN’s analysis of the country’s priorities and needs, i.e., national planning and budgetary frameworks and from other analytical inputs.
32. National development plans and frameworks²⁸ are typically participatory processes that evolve from extensive multi-stakeholder consultations and situational analyses. They identify national medium-term strategic priorities that are often situated within a long-term vision document and increasingly, aligned with the SDGs as well as regional and sub-regional development commitments. National development plans can therefore serve as a source of information about **the national, regional and**

²⁸ This includes broader national development plans as well as sectoral plans, and national action plans that help translate international commitments into concrete policies and programmes, like National Human Rights Action Plans, National Youth Action Plans, National Action Plans on Women Peace and Security, National Disaster Risk Reduction Plans and Strategies and others.

global priorities of member states. In this context, the UNSDCF should align its targets and indicators to the extent possible to relevant targets and indicators from national development plans which should in turn be informed by the SDG undertakings of the Government.

33. While national development plans signal the **priorities** of a country, the annual budget and related expenditure frameworks reflect the **country's financial commitments** to achieving such priorities. Annual budgets and expenditure frameworks can therefore inform the UNSDCF prioritization process by identifying **unfunded or underfunded** national development priorities. Furthermore, beyond **national** development plans, **sub-national** development plans provide a **geographic** or spatial dimension to national development priorities and needs. Such information, triangulated with data from the UN Common Country Analysis, will be critical in designing **targeted** interventions to address the needs of groups left behind and the root causes.

2.1.2 UN common country analysis

34. The UN common country analysis (UN CCA) is the UN system's **independent, impartial and collective assessment** (a description of phenomenon) **and analysis** of the country situation (a description of causes and their implications). The UN CCA examines the progress, gaps, opportunities and bottlenecks vis-a-vis the member state's commitment to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, UN norms and standards and the principles of the UN Charter.
35. In line with the UNSDCF's expanded notion of partnerships, it also represents a powerful process to engage with relevant **stakeholders**, through continuous and inclusive **dialogue** to address amongst others complex issues of inequality and exclusion.
36. The UN CCA **draws from and adds to existing data, statistics, analyses, reviews, research, capacities and resources** from within and outside the UN system. This includes *inter alia* national and sector-specific development visions and strategies, national budget allocations, and of development financing from domestic and international, private and public sources towards these international commitments. To leave no one behind, it is equally important to generate evidence and **data disaggregated not only by incomes, gender, geography and age**, but also other grounds of discrimination prohibited under international law and to examine and describe social, cultural, economic, political, legislative, and other systemic drivers of exclusion.
37. The UN CCA will include an analysis of the existing data and data gaps for national SDG indicators. It should go beyond official national statistics to **use new sources of data and diagnostic tools**, including but not limited to the use of big data, national surveys and assessments, targeted surveys using mobile technology and others, in accordance with the human rights-based approach to data, international data protection standards and in particular the UN Principles on Personal Data Protection and Privacy²⁹. Country-specific findings and recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review and other human rights mechanisms will provide an important basis for the analysis, highlighting relevant gaps and corresponding obligations.³⁰ The UN CCA can build on a variety of initiatives and processes such as VNRs, the country-specific findings and recommendations of UN principal organs, or the UNSDG-

²⁹ CEB/HLCM Principles on Personal Data Protection and Privacy, which can be found at www.unsceb.org/privacy-principles

³⁰ Relevant findings and recommendations can be found at: <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en>

endorsed 'Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS)' approach for supporting SDG implementation at the country level.³¹

38. The UN CCA identifies multidimensional risks that could impact the development trajectory of the country across the development, humanitarian, peacebuilding and human rights spectrum. The UN CCA facilitates a common UN understanding of groups left behind, and underlying drivers of risks, vulnerabilities and needs, be they political, social or related to conflict, disasters, the environment or the economy. In-depth analysis on these issues (1) establishes an understanding of root and proximate causes, stakeholders, dynamics, and triggers, as well as the impact on the people, operational environment and the UN system's work and presence, and (2) identifies how UN engagement may influence – positively and negatively – dynamics, manage the negative effects and maximize the positive efforts. Involving all relevant UN entities in this joint analysis, including UN special political missions, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian and human rights entities is essential. Where possible, the UN CCA informs UN Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning (*insert link; currently being reviewed*).
39. The UN CCA also aims to integrate an analysis of relevant regional, sub-regional and trans-boundary dynamics and their impact on achieving the 2030 Agenda in the country context. This may include *inter alia* trends and risks related to economics and trade, climate and natural disasters, conflict and security, migration patterns, health emergencies and animal, food or sanitary emergencies. This also helps identify opportunities for cross-border dialogue and collaboration between countries, including through South-South and triangular cooperation, and UN system-wide regional strategies.³² For this, the UN CCA draws on and assesses linkages between perspectives and expertise from across all levels of the UN system, including non-resident agencies, Secretariat departments, regional offices of UN entities and Regional Commissions.
40. To meet the ambition of the SDGs, the UN CCA examines the country's financial landscape for sustainable development, analyses financial flows and identifies the greatest opportunities to re-orientate all sources of financing - public and private, domestic and foreign. In so doing the UN CCA draws data from the World Bank, IMF and other regional and/or international financial institutions.
41. In order for the UN CCA to adequately serve as the analytical foundation to the UNSDCF, it should: (i) demonstrate a broad, holistic and integrated approach that takes into consideration the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs; (ii) reflect the interlinkages among the three dimensions of sustainable development and all spheres of the UN's work; (iii) reflect the interlinkages between the SDGs and the human rights framework (including treaties and human rights monitoring mechanisms; (iv) build on all sources of data and analysis from a broad range of partners; and (v) focus on prevention and the interlinkages between sustainable development, human rights, sustaining peace, and the shift away from response to preparedness, needed to meet the challenges of the future.
42. For more specific guidance on how to conduct these various elements of the UN CCA, the UN development system is encouraged to refer to the updated companion guidance on UN CCA. It provides an overview of how to do the UN CCA, the analytical tools and practical tips, including a "UN CCA template".³³

³¹ <https://undg.org/document/maps-mainstreaming-acceleration-and-policy-support-for-the-2030-agenda/>

³² For the case of Africa, Middle Income Countries (MIC) strategy, Regional Strategy for Resilience and Great Lakes Peace and Security Cooperation Framework can be mentioned amongst others.

³³ Both under development.

43. The **UN CCA is not a one-off event and static analysis**. Rather, in order to reflect situational developments and to inform the UN's work on a continuous basis, **it is a core analytical function carried out by the UN development system at country, regional and global level**. For this purpose, a Repository for Data and Analysis is established at the country level, that includes SDG data. This repository draws from various analytical resources held, updated and made available by UN entities across the UN system.
44. Periodic updating of the UN CCA is encouraged in order for it to serve as an updated analytical resource as well as to reduce the time required for formulation of a new UNSDCF. The UNCT may organize periodic multi-stakeholder dialogue on the evolving country context.

2.1.3. SDG analytical tool box

45. The 2030 Agenda demands a significant increase in UN development system capacities in terms of coordinated analysis as well as policy and programme design. A focus on *integration* requires the adoption of a systems approach to development that addresses interlinkages across economic, social and environmental dimensions through the lens of the UNSDCF Guiding Principles. For this to become the new normal, the SDGs must be owned at all levels - global, regional, national, city and community levels, with the activation of truly collective action: a “whole-of-government, whole-of-society” approach. Cross-border and regional collaboration assume greater importance than ever before. The ability to consider *longer time-horizons* when programming for the present cycle is essential, i.e., finding solutions for today's most pressing problems while building in risk-attuned processes and solutions for those that are still emerging. The commitment to leave no one behind calls for *greater granularity of data*, quantitative and qualitative analysis, to design evidence-based interventions that identify, empower and support the most vulnerable and address root causes. Similarly, advising countries on transformative economic pathways that are environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive call for leveraging all possible *SDG financing flows* – public and private, domestic and international.
46. UNCTs will be supported by leveraging expertise from across the development system in the UNSDCF process. In addition to knowledge and technical resources available within the UNCT, the UN Sustainable Development Group is committed to create and support a community of practice to support SDG implementation, including through the next generation of MAPS – Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support³⁴. Initiatives such as a MAPS engagement, or the deployment of existing “Cluster” mechanisms at the regional level, can bring together a tailored coalition of UN and other experts to help augment the capacity of UNCTs throughout the UNSDCF process, including addressing gaps and solutions to *inter alia*: enable multi-stakeholder engagement; identify policy accelerators; analyze and utilize all forms of data; analyze SDG financing flows and strengthen financing partnerships. This will ensure that UNCTs benefit from an expansion of their capacities during this critical period, while simultaneously ensuring that such types of country-level engagements do not remain disconnected from the core work of the UNCT.
47. Countries require new policy tools to meet the ambition of the SDGs, ranging from regulatory policies to planning, budgeting and political instruments at all levels that will enable them to pursue policies

³⁴ MAPS – Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support for the 2030 Agenda, <https://undg.org/document/maps-mainstreaming-acceleration-and-policy-support-for-the-2030-agenda/>

that will last beyond relatively short-term planning cycles for deeper transformations for sustainable development. UNCTs will be able to access, in a coordinated and coherent way, the latest tools and expertise available for integrated policy support to address the complex problems facing countries in different settings. These include, SDG Monitoring and Reporting Toolkit for UNCTs³⁵, quantitative and qualitative methodologies to support the identification of SDG “accelerators,”³⁶ action at local, national, and global levels to apply new opportunities of the data revolution for the SDGs³⁷; the use of “Development Finance Assessments” to conduct detailed assessments of a country's development finance flows and link financing with sustainable development results³⁸; new platforms and approaches for sustainability and innovation,³⁹ and ways to address risk and resilience, to mention just a few.

2.2. UNSDCF design process

2.2.1. Theory of change

48. The 2030 Agenda set out an ambitious and transformational vision to be achieved in a relatively short span of time. The path to 2030 is shaped by developments and trends that are inherently unpredictable and possibly unprecedented in their impacts. The UN development system and partners need to embrace change and the inherent uncertainty associated with longer-term strategic planning.
49. With 2030 in sight, the UN development system must thoughtfully design UNSDCFs which will truly make a difference in less than three cycles. Therefore, UN development system vision of its evolving contribution in a country and the design of medium-term support to country must be grounded in a clearly articulated, evidence-based and robust **Theory of Change (ToC)** that describes the interdependent changes necessary for the country to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The ToC is a comprehensive articulation of different pathways and choices that illustrate **how and why the desired change is expected to happen in the country**, and the risks and bottlenecks to be addressed. Understanding the country context in the form of a ToC is critical for forging sustainable development solutions along the identified pathways of a UN Vision 2030 and the UNSDCF.
50. The **ToC is thus based on the needs of the country (demand)**, examined through the lens of the guiding principles, rather than immediately available capacities and resources available (supply) of the UN development system and other partners. It shows where and how development actors need to come together to contribute to the desired change, providing the basis for wider, higher quality and transformational partnerships. Based on a shared understanding of the opportunities, risks and bottlenecks in the country and the inequalities that persist, the UN development system agrees on the development results that the UN development system can contribute to both individually and through partnerships. It also identifies areas of comparative UN advantage for the UN development system's best collective contribution. To leave no one behind, change must challenge structural barriers to equality, unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunities, and any discriminatory laws, social norms and stereotypes that perpetuate inequalities and disparities.

³⁵ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unct-toolkit/>

³⁶ E.g., Sustainable Development Goals Acceleration Toolkit, <https://undg.org/2030-agenda/sdg-acceleration-toolkit/>

³⁷ For instance, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, <http://www.data4sdgs.org/>

³⁸ For instance, Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Era of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda <https://www.climatefinance-developmenteffectiveness.org/achieving-the-sustainable-development-goals.pdf>

³⁹ For instance, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action-platforms/breakthrough-innovation>

51. The UN development system needs to be mindful of the complexity of attaining the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the local context and its evolving nature. Therefore, the **ToC needs to be adaptable, drawing on the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of findings** generated during UNSDCF implementation as well as the 'living' UN CCA.
52. Based on the UN CCA, a visioning exercise is an integral starting point for the UNSDCF formulation. This exercise examines (1) the government's vision of its long-term development trajectory through 2030, where this exists, and the current national development plans, (2) the UN development system's internal and external working assumptions, considering the country's possible long-term development trajectories to 2030 in line with the guiding principles, (3) the UN development system's comparative advantage, positioning and evolving role in the country through 2030, and (4) the new and successive UNSDCF cycles within the overall country trajectory towards 2030.
53. This visioning exercise should be consultative, collaborative and inclusive, that is, truly shared and owned by the UN development system, the government and all relevant stakeholders, including the people furthest left behind. This requires measures to ensure stakeholders are informed, empowered and have access to provide inputs, including geographic outreach if necessary. The UN development system can undertake this exercise in a flexible manner, using a range of tools and processes.

2.2.2 Strategic priorities

54. Underpinned by a robust UN CCA, the UN development system cannot and should not attempt to address all development issues in a country. It must choose strategic priorities and related development results (outcomes and outputs) in which to invest its collective efforts, capacities and resources. These choices must be underpinned by a candid assessment of the comparative advantage of the UN system vis-à-vis other development actors. Such a process will ensure that the UN development system is positioned to respond effectively to national priorities, providing added value from joint UN action while leveraging the contribution of others. In essence, UN support must be catalytic and transformational.
55. UN development system entity contributions in support of national-led efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs should be reflected in the UNSDCF. The following filters are applied to determine UNSDCF strategic priorities: (1) Determine the most pressing and critical **national** development priorities and gaps and related bottlenecks and entry points; (2) Determine the strategic catalytic solutions and strategies to address these; (3) Match these solutions and strategies with the UN development system's mandates, global and sectoral priorities in line with international norms and standards and the priorities of the System-Wide Strategic Document (SWSD)⁴⁰ (4) Test prioritized solutions and strategies with regard to their contribution to the advancement of and alignment with the UNSDCF Guiding Principles; (5) Consider UN complementarity with other stakeholders through mapping and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; (6) Assess the UN development system's human and financial resources, knowledge, technology, networks, and efficiencies – both current and potential; and (6) Reflect on lessons learned and evidence from research and evaluations.

⁴⁰ Currently under development.

56. Typically, a strategic priority comprises a limited number of outcomes and a limited number of outputs. Overall, the number of UNSDCF outcomes and outputs must be realistic, together reflecting the strategic focus of the UN development system in the country during an UNSDCF cycle. The outcome and outputs together must also reflect a shift from MDGs to SDGs by allowing the guiding principles to steer their definition. Outcomes and outputs are developed concurrently during the UNSDCF design stage. This is because outputs help complete the logic for UNSDCF results and they are central to achieving future steps in the UNSDCF cycle, particularly vis-à-vis UNCT configuration and financing requirements.

2.2.3. UNSDCF outcomes

57. In line with UNSDG Results-based Management (RBM) Handbook⁴¹ “outcomes” represent changes in the institutional and behavioural capacities for development. Outcomes should: (1) Make a substantive and measurable contribution to the achievement of the selected priorities of the national development framework and the 2030 Agenda; (2) Directly address key issues/development challenges and bottlenecks identified by the UN common country analysis, including the needs of those furthest behind; (3) Be specific, realistically achievable within the UNSDCF cycle, sustainable and measurable, ensuring accountability and monitoring; (4) Include special measures to address the UNSDCF Guiding Principles as per the findings from the UN CCA; and (5) Reflect the contributions of one or more organizations, clearly highlighted in the UNSDCF results matrix.

58. UNSDCF outcomes should align with the country’s obligations under international human rights law.⁴² In settings comprising development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts, the UNSDCF outcomes incorporate or are coherent with “collective outcomes” that span across the respective planning frameworks (such as the HRP, RRP, and ISF), irrespective of whether these frameworks are managed separately or in an integrated manner.

2.2.4. UNSDCF Outputs

59. The UNSDG RBM Handbook describes “outputs” as changes in skills or the abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of a development intervention. Results at output level are directly attributable to the UN system and contribute to outcomes. The UN development system entity country development programmes flow from UNSDCF outcomes and outputs.

60. Due to their direct attribution to the UN development system, UNSDCF outputs will provide the basis for the RC to lead the formal discussion with government on the UN expertise, capacity and resources required by the UNSDCF, in line with the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/279 and the MAF. The UN development system should develop both outcomes and outputs during the UNSDCF design stage to ensure a clear logic in the results matrix and for transparency and accountability of UN development system contributions. However, UNCTs may opt to place the outputs EITHER in both the UNSDCF document and in the Joint Workplans (JWPs) OR they may place the outputs only in the JWPs.

⁴¹ Include hyperlink.

⁴² This includes recommendations made to the country by UN human rights mechanisms.

61. The UN development system should analyze to what extent its planned contributions are part of the UNSDCF, whether they form part of other frameworks - such as a Humanitarian Response Plan⁴³, Refugee Response Plans (RRPs)⁴⁴/Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework⁴⁵ an Integrated Strategic Framework in integrated mission settings or other – and to what extent these are connected and complementing each other.

2.2.5. Indicators

62. The UNSDCF outcome and output indicators should, by default, be linked to national SDG indicator frameworks, which should ideally be linked to the regional⁴⁶ and global⁴⁷ SDG indicator frameworks. This enables standardization and aggregation to better measure and report on development results against the 2030 Agenda at regional and global levels. This commitment is also included in the 2019 Funding Compact. Other globally accepted indicators can also be included to measure intermediary results. UNSDCF indicators through disaggregation make it possible to see the extent to which the UN has contributed to development results that advance “leave no one behind” and the UNSDCF Guiding Principles.

2.2.6. Completion, review and validation of the UNSDCF

63. Under leadership of the RC, the UNSDCF will be prepared using the standard template (**Annex 3**) with a legal annex (**Annex 4**) as an integral part. Every effort must be made to reduce transactional costs for both the UN development system and partners in the process.
64. In countries with UN missions, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG)/RC must share the draft UNSDCF with the Inter-Agency Taskforce. The latter is expected to provide feedback within seven working days.
65. The regional/global UNSDG will also engage in UNSDCF design and preparation in line with the regional/global MAF. The regional/global feedback on the draft UNSDCF must be provided to the UNCT within seven working days from date of receipt. Thereafter, the UN development system submits a final draft UNSDCF for feedback from government and key stakeholders and other development partners.

CHAPTER 3: UNCT CONFIGURATION IN SUPPORT OF THE UNSDCF

66. A new UNSDCF represents a set of expectations vis-à-vis the Government and a set of undertakings by the UN development system. Rarely is an UNSDCF setting out an *entirely* new agenda, and more typically it contains both familiar results and expectations from the unfinished business of the previous UNSDCF and new support areas for which the Government seeks assistance. It is also inevitable that a certain number of programmes from the previous UNSDCF will continue for a while

⁴³ The following guidance is without prejudice to GA 46/182 and related resolutions governing humanitarian action and coordination.

⁴⁴ Refugee Response Plans in emergencies (<https://unhcr.org/refugee-response-plans.html>)

⁴⁵ Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (<https://www.unhcr.org/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html>)

⁴⁶ Regional indicators might, for example, include indicators of regional inter-governmental strategies, such as the African Unions 2063 Agenda.

⁴⁷ Global indicator framework for SDGs established by the Inter-Agency Expert Group

until completion. Notwithstanding such continuity, it is nevertheless important that the UNSDCF formulation cycle includes a review of the UNCT's assets and its configuration, to see whether this remains aligned to the task at hand. This is intended as an iterative process, fully involving the agencies concerned.

67. A UNCT consists of UN entities both physically present in the country as well as those contributing remotely to UNSDCF. It also includes UN entities that have other mandates beyond the purely developmental. This configuration question addresses specifically the development outcomes for which the development system has committed through the UNSDCF. The review of UNCT configuration entails a look at the capacities needed to deliver on the prioritized outcomes in the UNSDCF, beyond the financial considerations which are addressed under a separate stage in the cycle. Considering the normative and standard setting responsibilities of the UN, the discussion on UNCT configuration should include both an internal analysis and consultation with the Government and donor partners, reviewing *inter alia*:
- a. What kind of expertise and services will need to be provided by the UNCT to deliver on the UNSDCF? From which agencies can that expertise and those services be sourced?
 - b. To what extent would these services need to be delivered by an in-country/resident UN agency presence? What aspects of the operation could be delivered from a regional or global base?
 - c. What kinds of new implementation modalities could be leveraged for the new programming cycle?
 - d. To what extent can some of these services be delivered by local vs. international service providers? Which activities will need to be delivered directly by the UN and which may lend themselves to working through/with implementing partners?
 - e. To what extent does the new UNSDCF imply a major increase in delivery capacity by one or more members of the UNCT and what would that scaling up of capacity require?
68. Such a configuration review responds to Member States' call for a "tailored country-presence" (resolution 72/279 para 2) and the Secretary-General's recommendation that the "United Nations development system move away from a somewhat standardized model of physical presence, which largely reflects the historical evolution of each individual entity" (para 38) to one that ensures "the right system-wide capacities and encourage(s) more integrative, effective and agile ways of working" (para 41). The frame for this process is much larger than which agency needs to be resident or not. Coupled with re-organization and re-deployment of regional assets, and reconfiguration of business models in connection with multi-country offices (MCO), in addition to the ambitious changes planned for common services, implicit in this review is the ability to draw on a much wider palate of options in accessing the full UN development system's capacities to deliver on its commitments in the UNSDCF. A new UNSDCF should trigger such a discussion and the necessary actions that follow to ensure the UNCT can deliver.
69. After determining the UNCT configuration, the final UNSDCF document plus legal annex is signed by Government and UN development system entities. At this point, the UNSDCF is not formally required to be accompanied by a budget⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ A/74/73-E/2019/4 Report of the Secretary-General - Implementation of the General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system 2019. Advanced unedited version Figure 1, Page 12.

CHAPTER 4: FINANCING THE SDGs, AND FUNDING THE UNSDCF

4.1. The financial landscape analysis

70. An in-depth look at the volume and mix of resources required to deliver UNSDCF outcomes and the bigger picture of SDG financing requirements in the country are a key step in the UNSDCF cycle. This analysis is undertaken after UNSDCF priorities, outcomes, outputs and UNCT configuration have been determined. The assessment of the priority development needs drives the resourcing conversation (available resources and resource mobilization needs) and not the other way around.
71. This requires that the UNCT address the connected and mutually reinforcing elements of ‘SDG financing’ vs ‘UNSDCF funding’. On the one hand: (1) the financing landscape and how the UNSDCF is situated within it, (2) financial flows that can be influenced and leveraged by the UNSDCF towards SDG attainment, and (3) potential funding sources (traditional and non-traditional) for the UNSDCF. On the other hand, how available UNSDCF funding can (1) catalyze financing and investment flows towards the SDGs, (2) support the formulation and implementation of financing framework of the Government, and (3) complement and fill strategic gaps of national and other budgetary allocations.

4.2. The UNSDCF funding framework

72. In line with the commitments in the global Funding Compact, the UN development system will develop an UNSDCF Funding Framework (replacing the previous Common Budgetary Framework) that is based on an assessment of the resources required to deliver the UNSDCF. It presents the overall funding needs to achieve the prioritized UNSDCF outcomes, identifies available resources and makes visible the remaining funding gaps. It outlines the strategy for securing needed resources, including an analysis of the various types of resources that can be mobilized (e.g., core funding; global/vertical and country-level pooled UN development system; agency-specific thematic UN development system; and other non-core resources).
73. The UNSDCF Funding Framework is the basis for periodic funding dialogues with the government as well as with donors that recognize the need to better align their funding support to the UN with the needs of the UNSDCF. The Framework is translated and operationalized annually as part of the UN Joint Work Plans.
74. **The funding of the UNSDCF and UN development system entities follows the needs-based logic underpinning the UNSDCF.** This means that UN development system entities development-related budgets and resource mobilization strategies are aligned with the UNSDCF budget, not vice versa.

4.3. Linking UNSDCF funding with SDG financing

75. The UNSDCF must depart from its traditional dominant focus of mobilizing financial resources on funding the UN’s development work. Building on the UN development system’s incomparable leveraging and convening power, it must **expand towards leveraging different sources of financing and investments** flows outside the UN system and towards supporting governments in developing and implementing sustainable financing strategies towards the attainment of national priorities and the SDGs (“i.e., financing”). Beyond its own funding requirements, the UNCT will facilitate a dialogue on the volume and mix of financing required to achieve the SDGs in the specific country context. In

this respect, the UNCT will explore ways to connect more strongly with domestic financing, i.e., engaging with and influencing national budget processes, decisions and priorities.

76. This approach acknowledges that implementing the SDGs requires attracting, leveraging and mobilizing investments from all possible sources to close the global SDG funding gap [estimated in the trillions]. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and lays the foundations for the financing of the SDGs. It highlights the need for “cohesive, nationally owned development strategies supported by **integrated financing frameworks**”.
77. The [UN Secretary-General’s SDG Financing Strategy](#) underscores the UN’s critical role in supporting and accelerating the mobilization of finances for sustainable development from national and international, public and private sources. The UN development system can support the development of regulatory frameworks, financing mechanisms and related partnerships, advise on how to mobilize and leverage necessary financing, and assess possible strengths and disadvantages of financing options. This includes enhancing the country’s capacities in areas such as domestic resource mobilization, quality of public spending, fiscal and debt management, de-risking investments, developing capital markets or fostering investment-grade business environments. The UNSDCF is the central instrument to outline the UN development system’s contribution, in adherence to the Principles for Engagement in SDG financing.

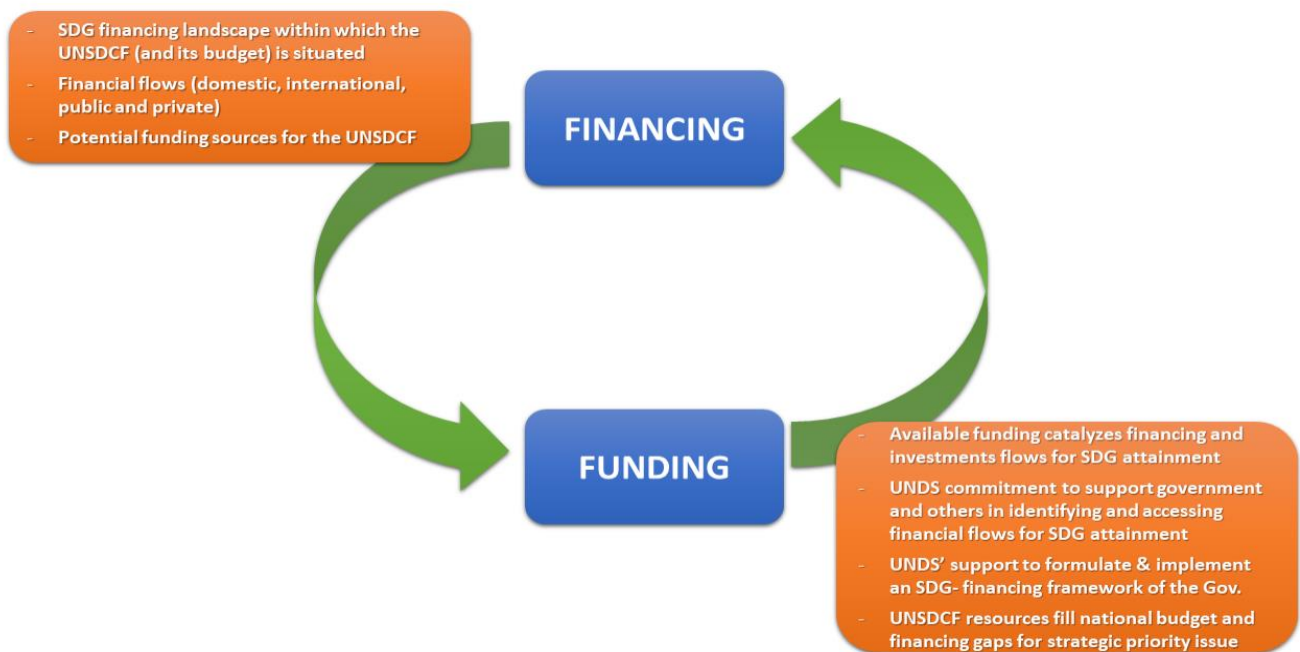


Figure 3: UNSDCF Financing and funding strategy

78. Beyond the UN’s own Funding Framework, the UNCT should:
- a. Map and analyze the financing landscape for the SDGs and outline how to maximize impact through smart investment of existing resources, greater access to additional resources and better leveraging of larger financial flows.

- b. Build on existing data on financial flows as provided by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the OECD and others, and integrated to the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) to the extent possible.
- c. Articulate necessary partnerships among the UN development system entities and between UN development system with external stakeholders, such as *inter alia* the IFIs and the private sector.
- d. Identify (a) Priority SDGs within the country and articulation of country opportunity; (b) Approximate amount of financing needed to achieve (each) SDGs; (c) Domestic, international, public and private financing flows and relevant stakeholders; and (d) Instruments and modalities through which the UN development system’s resource (i.e., flowing through the UN development system accounts) can be paired with other financial flows outside the UN. This could include relevant UNSDCF outcomes (e.g. national window in a country level UN Fund, or UN programme (funding through the UN) designed and implemented as first tranche of larger sector approach (funding outside the UN), etc.).
- e. Identify specific financing opportunities that reduce inequalities and exclusion, such as those that target finance to the poorest areas of a country.

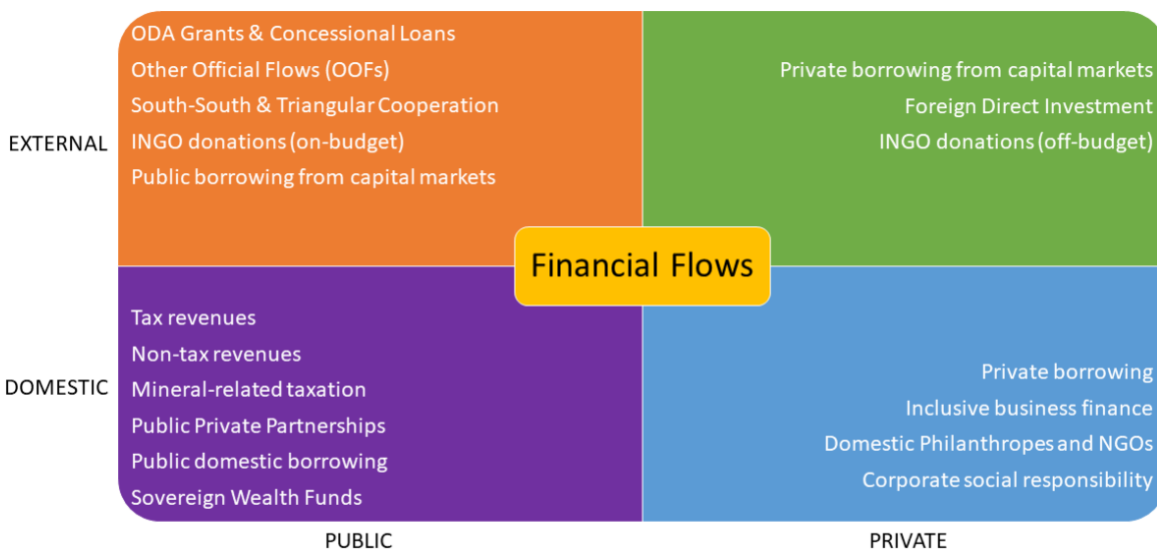


Figure 4: Overview of financial flows

CHAPTER 5: UNSDCF IMPLEMENTATION

79. UN development system entity country programming instruments, UNSDCF results groups, joint work plans (JWP) and the JWP annual reviews are key tools for implementing the UNSDCF.

5.1. Implementing the UNSDCF through UN development system entity country programmes

80. The UNSDCF is implemented through UN development system entity instruments for country development programming. These entities must derive their development programming from the UNSDCF based on three options:

- Option 1: UN development system entities adopt the UNSDCF as their entity country development programme document i.e., they do not prepare a separate entity document;
- Option 2: UN development system entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with UNSDCF outcomes copied verbatim;
- Option 3: UN development system entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with UNSDCF outcomes copied verbatim, plus additional non-UNSDCF outcomes, included only on exceptional basis to capture normative activities for the entity concerned, not prioritized in this UNSDCF.

81. UN development system entities that submit country programming instruments to their governing mechanisms for approval should submit them together with UNSDCF strategic priorities, outcomes and outputs agreed upon by the UN development system. Once a new UNSDCF is approved, UN development system entities will adjust their entity-specific programming documents for development programming for full alignment at the earliest opportunity and no later than the annual review.

82. In line with the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/279 and MAF, the RC coordinates implementation of the UNSDCF and works with UNCT members to ensure alignment of both agency development programmes with national development needs and priorities as well with the UNSDCF and 2030 Agenda. The **RC will be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the UN development system entities' programming documents** before their submission to Boards, with a view to (1) confirm alignment and coherence of UN development system entity programmes with the UNSDCF, (2) identify opportunities for synergies and complementarities, and (3) avoid duplication and overlap across the UN system's development activities.

5.2. Coordinating UNSDCF implementation through results groups

83. Each UNSDCF strategic priority must have a corresponding results group. A results group comprises contributing UN development system entities (resident and non-resident) and is chaired or co-chaired by UN heads of agencies. Result groups enable improved UN internal coordination and ensure a coherent UN system-wide approach for a strategic priority. Therefore, UNSDCF results groups make the UN development system a more effective partner to, and reduce transactions costs for, stakeholders. Results groups must meet at least once every two months.

84. Where possible, results groups are aligned with and feed into existing government-led working structures, such as Sector Working Groups, Clusters etc. This enables UN coherence in both representation and contributions to external mechanisms. If equivalent government-led groups do not exist, the results group should incorporate relevant national and international partners and be co-chaired with the relevant government counterparts.

85. Under the leadership of the RC, results groups develop UN joint work plans to operationalize the UNSDCF, identify opportunities for closer interagency collaboration (e.g., through joint programmes), collectively monitor and report progress towards joint outputs as well as provide periodic inputs to update the UN CCA. UNCTs are encouraged to establish working mechanisms such as theme groups

or advisory capacity to ensure that UNSDCF Guiding Principles are mainstreamed across the work of results groups.

5.3. Coordinating UNSDCF implementation through Joint Work Plans

86. The Joint Work Plans reflect the following: (1) UNSDCF outputs (2) the related key development contribution of UN entities – either entity-specific or jointly with other entities - in their **entirety** with a view to maximize synergies and avoid duplication; and (3) the resources required, available and funding gaps to achieve the output. The Joint Work Plans may be annual or multi-year as appropriate to the country context.

5.4. UN Development system joint programming and joint programmes

87. Joint programming is the collective effort through which UN organizations and national partners jointly prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate development activities aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda and other international and regional commitments.

88. In preparing and reviewing JWPs, UNSDCF results groups may identify the need for increased joint delivery through the development of one or more joint programme(s). A joint programme is a set of activities contained in a JWP and related UNSDCF Funding Framework, involving two or more UN entities contributing to the same UNSDCF outputs. Pooled funding or other funding mechanisms can fund Joint programmes of the UN development system. Other stakeholders can be engaged as implementing partners in a joint programme.

89. UN missions and humanitarian actors also engage in these joint programmes, where appropriate for a country context. Joint programmes can be attractive to funding partners, since the modality provides greater assurance of UN coherence in delivering results and reduces transaction costs for them.

5.5. UN INFO

90. UN INFO is an online planning, monitoring and reporting platform that digitizes each UNSDCF and its corresponding Joint Work Plans. It reflects the UN development system's effort to improve coherence, transparency and accountability to better address the needs and priorities of Member States. Initially conceived and developed at the country level, UN INFO provides an overview of how the UN development system in each country is channeling resources towards national priorities, thematic sectors (including cross-cutting gender, human rights and humanitarian markers) and the SDGs. It encourages a more regular approach to monitoring JWPs to ensure all development activities are on track to deliver results. This also enables the senior leadership to make corrections to programming or shift resources in real-time. The public can also see a full picture of the UN development system activities at the country level by way of UN INFO's public dashboards that are linked directly to the new UNCT websites.

91. UN INFO is being rolled out with the ambition to become the universal tool for joint online planning, monitoring and reporting on the UNSDCF and JWPs, and agency contributions to them. It thus presents a shift to an evidence-based, transparent and accountable approach to UN development

system coordination. The ambition is for UN INFO to draw data from UN development system entities' Enterprise Resource Planning systems, to benefit from already existing and functioning structures.

CHAPTER 6: UNSDCF MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATIONS

6.1. Adaptive programming

92. Development is never linear, as the operational environment and risks at local, national, trans-boundary, regional and global levels are in constant flux. The assumptions the UNSDCF relies on may hence not hold, and actions of partners may not happen as anticipated. This is particularly relevant in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Programming in the context of the UNSDCF thus requires an adaptive approach, based on learning from new information and evidence. This allows for adjustments to achieve expected results in a changing operating environment. This implies that while the UNSDCF outcome-level results may remain stable for the duration of the UNSDCF cycle, the outputs and activities may need adjustment to remain relevant, while maintaining accountability to partners. Meanwhile, at the end of every cycle, an UNSDCF evaluation must happen to draw lessons about UNSDCF design to inform the next cycle.
93. UNSDCF results groups and JWPs are the mechanisms for adaptive programming with the support of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Group. Results groups jointly review UNSDCF outputs, activities and the corresponding budgets in response to new information, lessons and risk identification, emerging from continuous analysis, monitoring (including real-time) and evaluation. Through adaptive programming, the RC and UN development system entities make informed decisions, encourage risk tolerance and management, and foster an appetite for experimentation and acceptance of failure.
94. Therefore, in support of adaptive programming, the UN development system must develop a **costed multi-year joint monitoring and evaluation plan for the full UNSDCF period**. This plan, developed at the UNSDCF design phase, must reflect the coordination of UN development system entity M&E plans with that of the UNSDCF to ensure they are appropriately timed, sequenced and executed to contribute to UNSDCF annual reviews, annual UN country results reporting and final UNSDCF evaluation, to the extent feasible.

6.2. Monitoring and learning

95. **Monitoring and learning is a precondition** for tracking progress of the UNSDCF contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, evolving risks and opportunities, and the adjustment of the programme as part of adaptive management. It is hence a critical function of the UN development system.
96. Being both the end-point of one UNSDCF cycle and the starting point for another, the **UN CCA constitutes the baseline** for monitoring and evaluating the UNSDCF.
97. **Joint monitoring throughout the UNSDCF cycle** will aim to ensure that the UN development system is 1) delivering on the commitment to leave no one behind, and more generally achieving results that align with and advance the UNSDCF Guiding Principles. 2) contributing to developing the capacity of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and rights-holders to claim their rights; 3) enhancing coherence across the development, humanitarian, human rights, and peace spectrum; 4) fostering new and

effective partnerships between national stakeholders and international actors, including through South-South and triangular cooperation; and 5) promoting integrated and coherent policy support to partners.

98. Frequent high-quality (and where possible real-time) monitoring, review and reporting of the UNSDCF is necessary to make it responsive to changing contexts. Therefore, UN development system entities must increasingly synchronize their individual monitoring systems for development results with the UNSDCF M&E system where possible and relevant.
99. More specifically, UN development system entities will monitor and report on the quality of implementation; results achieved; risks, threats and opportunities emerging for achieving SDGs; resources leveraged for financing SDGs in the country; resources mobilized and delivered by the UN development system guided by principles of equitable value added for money; the continued validity of the theory of change and innovations.
100. The UN development system's joint monitoring systems, resources and activities, and their collective planning and investment in monitoring services and technologies should support the strengthening of national data and information systems.
101. The UN Results Groups and UN M&E groups meet at least twice a year to reflect and learn from implementation monitoring reports, including on SDG indicators, issues, synergies and learning that cut across priority areas.

6.3. Reporting

102. The UN development system reports periodically to the RC on progress in achieving outcomes and outputs through UN INFO. This should also include reports on work related to non-UNSDCF outcomes as in paragraph 80. The RC submits the One UN Country Results Report to the Joint National/UN Steering Committee as well as to key partners. This is expected to feed into government thematic/sector reports as well as the voluntary national reviews.
103. It is the responsibility of UN development system entities, with support from the RCO and the UN M&E Group, to regularly update data and analysis from UN development system entity-specific monitoring into UN INFO. UN INFO provides an overview of country level progress as well as regional and global aggregated information, both for the UN development system-wide contributions to the UNSDCF, as well as disaggregated by UN development system entity. The latter are responsible for feeding UN INFO with necessary quality-assured monitoring data.

6.4. Evaluating the UNSDCF

104. UNSDCF evaluation is an independent system-wide evaluation of the UN development system at country-level that contributes to system-wide oversight, transparency, accountability and collective learning.⁴⁹ It is vital for ensuring greater transparency on results achieved, promoting more joint work

⁴⁹ Independent system-wide evaluation is a systematic and impartial assessment of the combined contributions of United Nations entities towards the achievements of collective development objectives. The Secretary General's December 2017 report on the repositioning of the UN development system, the GA Resolution 72/729 and the Funding Compact, position Independent System-wide Evaluations as the instrument for achieving system-wide oversight, transparency, accountability and collective learning.

and efficiencies and generating knowledge that informs and improves development programming in-country.

105. However, independent reviews of past and current UNSDCF evaluations found that they are uneven in adherence to core evaluation norms, standards and principles; lack independence and sufficient system buy-in; are not easily accessible by partners; do not sufficiently inform subsequent planning and programming choices and; are not adequately resourced. Furthermore, UNSDCF evaluation must be of improved quality and credibility for use at higher levels of aggregation and synthesis for regional and global system-wide evaluation processes, including, but not limited to meta-analysis.
106. Given the importance of more robust accountability, it is crucial that the UNSDCF evaluation function be structured in a manner that adheres to international best practices for evaluation and ensures that it can meet the targets set out in the Funding Compact. Therefore, the UNSDCF evaluation must meet the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards⁵⁰ and the core principles contained within such as independence, credibility, effectiveness, utility and human rights and gender equality. UNSDCF evaluation must be conducted in an inclusive manner meeting the UN-SWAP evaluation performance indicator, the evaluation indicator of the Inter-Agency Disability Inclusion Strategy and promote national ownership through meaningful engagement of relevant national partners, where possible those representing the perspectives of marginalized groups, throughout the evaluation process. Evaluation procurement, design and processes should build on and, wherever feasible, strengthen national and regional evaluation capacities in partnership with voluntary organizations for professionalization of evaluation.
107. The interim guidelines of the System-wide Evaluation and UNEG guidance will complement UNSDCF evaluation policy and companion guidance that will include specific and practical steps on the design, conduct, content and use of UNSDCF evaluation, as well as the governance and management arrangements, disclosure and communication policies and roles and responsibilities. Using the UN CCA as a benchmark, the UNSDCF evaluation assesses whether expected results were achieved, if other unintended results are observed, and whether overall the UNSDCF made a worthwhile, coherent, durable and cost-efficient contribution to collective UN system outcomes and national development processes vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda. UNSDCF evaluations should enable UNCTs to assess the extent to which they have conformed with UNSDCF Guiding Principles both in terms of process and results. By identifying synergies, gaps, overlaps and missed opportunities, evaluation provides the basis for critical inquiry as an integral part of efforts to continuously improve performance and results. It will also play a role in supporting safeguarding efforts. The UNSDCF evaluation thus informs the visioning exercise, theories of change, and the strategic prioritization process of the subsequent UNSDCF cycle.
108. An independent UNSDCF evaluation will be commissioned in the penultimate year of the UNSDCF period. Joint UNSDCF-CPD evaluations are encouraged to reduce transactions costs for the UNCT and for partners, and benefit from substantive links, but in cases where this is not possible, the UNCT should explore opportunities, in consultation with UNEG, to establish common components between UNSDCF evaluations and country-level evaluations. To that end, the common costed-UNSDCF monitoring and evaluation plan will include both entity-specific evaluations as well as the UNSDCF evaluation.

⁵⁰ Further technical guidance and quality standards specifically for UNSDCF evaluations will be provided by UNEG

109. The RC and UNCT play a pivotal role in the evaluation process. The RC ensures an independent final and useful UNSDCF evaluation by facilitating and promoting national ownership through involvement of national partners throughout the evaluation process and timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of subsequent UN CCAs and UNSDCFs, as well as that of respective United Nations development system entities. The RC and UNCT facilitate the evaluation process by providing the independent evaluation team with all the required information and access to national stakeholders and coordinating entity-specific evaluations so they are relevant and timely to support UNSDCF evaluation. The RC and UNCT are also responsible for publicly disclosing the final evaluation at country level as part of its overall communications and dissemination strategy. They are also responsible for development of a management response to the final evaluation as a key accountability tool of the UN development system to the country and the international community. The specific roles and responsibilities of the RC and the UNCT will be outlined in the policy and M&E companion guide and will form part of RC/UNCT performance appraisals.

CHAPTER 7: UNSDCF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

110. UNSDCF Governance arrangements are nationally owned and include the following:

111. **Joint National/UN Steering Committee (JSC):** The JSC is co-chaired by the RC and the most senior representative of the central government counterpart for the UN system. Its membership includes key partners identified in the UNSDCF for joint contributions to national priorities and the 2030 Agenda. The JSC: (1) ensures strategic direction and oversight of the UNSDCF processes; (2) ensures that the UNSDCF and its implementation is aligned with national, regional and international development processes, mechanisms and goals; (3) ensures closer alignment, linkages and support between the UNSDCF and other processes, such as the government-led VNR and others; (4) monitors progress, challenges and opportunities in implementation and steers direction; (5) reviews the One UN country results report; and (6) supports the resource mobilization for the UNSDCF and development financing opportunities.

112. A **JSC review takes place at least once a year** during which the RC presents the One UN country results reports, evaluation reports, management responses and progress on the action. This is an opportunity to amend the UNSDCF to ensure continued relevance in the face of evolving national circumstances. The latter may include humanitarian, economic, political or other unexpected situations of a magnitude that demands modified or immediate responses by the UN development system and partners, reallocation of human and financial resources, and other actions. During the review, the JSC co-chairs will determine if a formal revision of the UNSDCF is required or changes can be documented in the annual review report and reflected in the next JWP. UN INFO must be updated to reflect the amendments.

113. The UN development system and/or the JSC may decide to have advisory committees to support their work, such as a civil society committee, youth committee, or a private sector committee.

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