NIGERIA UNSDPF (2018 – 2022) EVALUATION

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Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AOP	Annual Operational Plan
AU	African Union
BACATMA	Bauchi State Agency for the Control of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Leprosy and Malaria
BAY	Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe
CAF	Community Alliance Forum
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CTP	Cash Transfer Programme
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DaO	Delivering as One
DCO	Development Coordination Office
DHS	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
EM	Evaluation Manager
EMR	Electronic Medical Record
EQ	Evaluation Question
ER	Evaluation Report
ERGP	Economic Recovery and Growth Plan
ESP	Economic Sustainability Programme
ESPAT	Education Sector Performance Assessment Tool
EU	European Union
EWERS	Early Warning and Early Response Systems
FBOs	Faith-Based Organisations
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
G4G	Girls4Girls
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEEW	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GF	Global Fund
GTG	Gender Technical Group
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HDI	Human Development Index
He4She	HeForShe

HRH	Human Resources for Health
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPs	Implementation Partners
iSDG	Integrated Sustainable Development Goals
JWP	Joint Work Plans
KII	Key Informant Interview
KM	Knowledge Management
KP	Key Populations
LASCODA	Lagos State Coconut Development Authority
LGAs	Local Government Areas
LNOB	Leaving No One Behind
LNU	Legislative Network for Universal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBNP	Ministry of Budget and National Planning
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MFBNP	Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Microsoft
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTNDP	Medium-Term National Development Plan
MTSS	Medium Term Sector Strategy
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NDHS	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
NDR	National Data Repository
NEC	National Executive Council
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
NGN	Nigerian Naira
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NLTP	National Livestock Transformation Plan
NSAGs	Non-State Arms Group
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NSS	National Statistical System
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's

OMT	Operations Management Team
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PF	Partnership Framework
PHC	Primary Health Care
PMT	Programme Management Team
PTF	Presidential Task Force
PWDs	People with Disabilities
RAG	Results Area Groups
RA	Results Area
RBM	Result-Based Management
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
RSSH	Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health
SAP	State Action Plans
SBCC	Social Behavioural Communication Change
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	Sector Development Plan
SERP	Socio-Economic Response Plan
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SH	Stakeholder
SLWG	State Logistics Working Group
TaRL	Teaching at the Right Level
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TI	Transparency International
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UN	United Nations
UNCG	United Nations Communication Group
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNHF-PSI	United Nations Nigeria Humanitarian Fund—Private Sector Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UNSDPF	United Nations Strategic Development Partnership Framework
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WDC	Ward Development Committees
WFP	World Food Programme
WOPELS	Women Participation in Election Support
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security

Executive Summary

Background

The purpose of this evaluation was to undertake an independent assessment of the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the United Nations Strategic Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) (2018 – 2022), the management and coordination mechanisms to support the achievement of national development priorities and review the status of UNSDPF budget. It covers the period 2018 – 2021. The primary intended uses of the evaluation are accountability for performance regarding commitments, generating lessons and good practices to inform the design of the next strategy, and support evidence-based decision-making.

EVALUATION KEY FACTS

Evaluation undertaken over the course of **8** weeks

80+ **Documents** Reviewed

Interactions at Federal and 6 State (5 DaO and 1 Non-DaO) levels

372 **People** (about **70% were women**) consulted through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions

Desk Reviews and Analysis – including Remote Interviews – of information from Government Partners, Civil Society, Donor Agencies and the UN System

Financial Analysis – Budget and Expenditure trends

Developmental shortfalls persist in Nigeria and take several forms including reduced earnings for individuals, poor social indicators, wide income gaps, gender inequalities and a huge infrastructural disparity between the rural and urban locations. Environmental, ecosystem and natural resources management remains a challenge given the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources which exposes the population to climate change vulnerabilities. The development problems have been worsened by increased conflict and the attendant humanitarian challenges.

The Nigerian Government approved a medium-term strategy, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017–2020, to restore macroeconomic stability, good governance, and growth through economic diversification, investing in people and building a globally competitive economy. The plan has three strategic objectives: restoring growth, investing in people, and building a globally competitive economy. Meanwhile, the ERGP 2017-2020, is aligned with the country's Vision 20: 2020, African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To respond to Nigeria's priorities, the UN system signed the UNSDPF in 2017 with Government of Nigeria. The UNSDPF has three strategic pillars (also called Result Areas – RAs): i) Governance Human Rights, Peace, and Security; ii) Equitable Quality Basic Services; and iii) Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth and Development. The rationale for their choices includes the need for geographical spread of the Framework, weaknesses exhibited by the states across the three RAs, SDGs, and their engagements with UN agencies. The coordination mechanism across these states is designed in line with the spirit of "Delivery as One "(DaO)." In addition, the DaO principle was applied across 4 states (Bauchi, Cross River, Lagos and Sokoto) and FCT.

Evaluation approach

The overall approach to the evaluation was theory based – looking at how the UNSDPF interventions contribute to the three strategic objectives, with a utilization focus, building ownership of the evaluation process and recommendations and ensure timely and actionable learning, moving forward. The evaluation was guided by United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards (2016)[1]

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[1] http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787
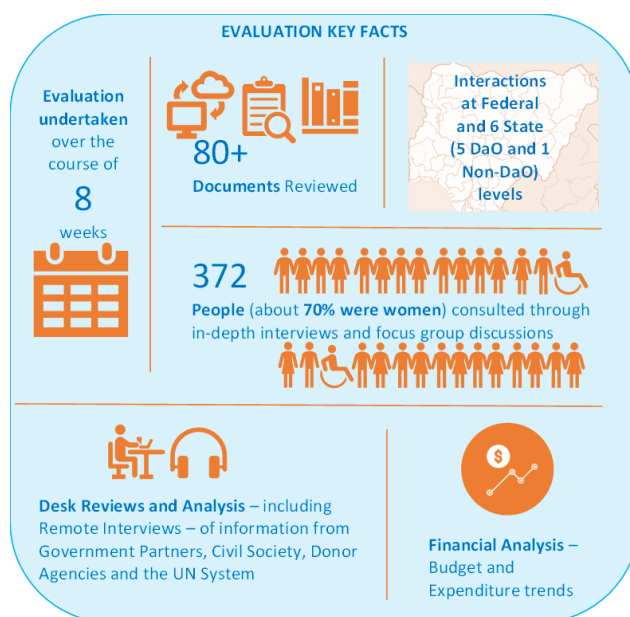
and adhered to UNEG ethics standards. It used a mixed-methods design including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, desk review, and qualitative comparative analysis to generate and triangulate evidence connecting UNSDPF interventions to the observed achievements.

The evaluation was guided by a set of evaluation questions which were clustered around the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD)- Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria around relevance including adaptability, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) programming principles of gender and social inclusion, human rights and leaving no one behind. Following a stakeholder analysis and mapping of intervention partners, purposive sampling was used to identify respondents from three levels: UN system, federal and five DaO and one non-DAO States.

Main findings

Relevance and adaptability
Drawing on the lessons of the previous UNDAFs and adopting a programmatic/results-oriented approach, ensured that the UNSDPF interventions are relevant and firmly align with and contributes to Nigerian policies and frameworks (in both process and substance). Three Result Areas and nine Outcomes were identified in the Partnership Framework (PF) which aligned with national priorities including the SDGs. The PF design adopted a programmatic and results-oriented approach, while priority needs of most vulnerable groups, SDG goals and targets were examined against key policy documents. There is evidence of United Nations Country Team (UNCT) adaptability to ensure continued relevance – the implementation responded to emerging trends in the country including the deepening humanitarian crisis, COVID-19, global spotlight initiative and UN reforms. While the UNSDPF articulated theories of change (ToCs) for each of the results areas at the design stage, these also included very many outputs with a plethora of indicators (192 in all), and non-clarity about how individual UN entities will contribute to the outputs. This scenario created difficulties in measuring progress against the indicators many of which had no baseline information.

The UNCT comparative strength in addressing the priority needs of Nigeria is based on: (1) leveraging diversity of skillset/expertise to adapt approaches to programming; (2) convening power to facilitate inter-sector relationships; and (3) having field presence combined with catalytic interventions. The diversity within the UN system provides complementarity and broad coverage: with practically all the specialised UN agencies present in Nigeria, any issue requiring response and support can be covered. The UN also brings best practices from other places – drawing on the wealth of experience from other regions and continents, and ability to coordinate across disciplines and to come together and raise funds are a clear comparative advantage of the UN. The UN has convening power, and the ability to bring several stakeholders together – government, civil society, and the private sector to forge a common front in responding to critical issues. However, Nigeria is big and there are too many states – often presenting a challenge of choosing where to implement, which tends to reflect more federal level UN support.

Coherence
The Delivering as One (DaO) approach has helped to ensure the coherence of UNSDPF interventions by bringing together UN entities as well as through broad-based partnerships with governments and civil society at state levels. The DaO state approach with the corresponding Joint Work Plans (JWPs) around the RA and Outcome areas, as well as co-financing and joint implementation of activities have contributed to ensuring coherence. However, while the JWPs are aligned with Nigeria's priorities, it seems that the implementation of the JWPs was at individual UN entities' discretion. In addition, non-UN entities within the partnership framework have a major influence on delivery - DaO states, donors, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), private sector, also

have special interests which drive them to concentrate more on certain aspects of the work plan than the other.

Efficiency

While resource allocation and implementation rates have varied across the years from 2018 to 2020, funding of the UNSDPF Result Areas have responded to the development and humanitarian trends in the country. The yearly implementation rates were 98%, 81%, and 111% for 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. The 2020 expenditure outturn was due to the additional resources mobilised for the COVID-19 response.

The annual joint workplans with DaO partners creates the opportunity for efficient resource allocation and delivery of the RAs, but the workplans can sometimes be cumbersome and activity-heavy which can create operational challenges with activity reporting. Overall, there was agreement across the DaO states that resources were well spent based on the financial plans with the states and human resource personnel benefitted immensely from capacity building because of collaboration with UN agencies. An analysis of the DaO state joint workplans by the evaluation team however revealed that they can be quite cumbersome with too many activities, which are written in complicated sentences.

The UNCT has provided robust leadership and coordination in driving results through the Resident Coordinator's Office (**RCO) and** Programme Management Team **(PMT), supported by the Results Group as well as the** Monitoring and Evaluation (**M&E), Comms, and Gender Technical Working Groups** (GTG)**.** As envisaged in the UNSDPF guidelines, the PMT has been a good rallying point for coordinating implementation and reporting results against the PF. The PMT has interfaced with the result area and outcome leads to drive implementation – thus ensuring the smooth management and implementation of the PF and to report annually the achievements, which forms an integral part of the RCO annual reporting. While a results-based management system is in place, there are challenges to its optimal implementation and use for UNSDPF because of issues related to data collation. For instance, the RA and Outcome Leads often submitted data/results late to the M&E Group. The M&E, Comms and GTGs have been effective especially in working with Implementation Partners (IPs) to enhance capacity and understanding and supporting initiatives on to report against the SDGs, but not all nominated staff on the various groups participate meaningfully.

Effectiveness

There is progress being made in meeting the UNSDPF results, while the UNCT has been effective in aligning the three result areas with national targets, as well as the SDGs among the national and sub national partners including government and civil society. Under the Result Area 1, the UNCT made big steps forward in the scale of humanitarian action with direct support in emergency and humanitarian action reaching more than five million people in North- East Nigeria since 2018. **The UNCT also provided support to the 2019 general elections,** reaching 10 million women and men **with** voter education on citizens' voting rights, and holding high-level dialogue with political parties' leadership with the signing of a comprehensive charter for increased participation of women in the elections. During the election, the UNCT supported the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to deploy 900 domestic electoral observers in all the 36 states of the federation. The UNCT promoted peaceful coexistence and enhance security through among other things i) deployment of Early Warning and Early Response Systems (EWERS) in 6 states; ii) mediation and dispute resolution of 14,586 cases iii) support to government to recover 37,896 arms and ammunition and iv) re-integration of 826 low risk Non-Arm groups into the society and providing them with basic social services.

Under Result Area 2, the efforts of the UN have led to better trends in the delivery of basic services. The UNCT has continued to support the school enrolment drive**.** In 2019 for example, the UNCT support led to the enrolment of close one million children (914,025 – 47% of which were

females) in schools across 11 states. The advocacy efforts of UN and partners in 2018 led to a presidential declaration of a state of emergency in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector and the launch of a National WASH Action Plan. About **661,127 persons** were reached with basic water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services, while hygiene messages and hygiene kits were delivered to over 1.5 million people, mostly women and children (target: 530,000 -135% target reached). With support from UNCT, the Nigerian government in 2020, secured a Global Fund grant of US$ 890 million for HIV, TB & malaria, the building of Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH) for the period 2021 to 2023, and US$ 70 million to assist with COVID-19. The country also secured $371 million through U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) for commodity procurement, HIV care and treatment, and a national EMR/NDR platform and KP service package. The support from UN resulted in over 21 million children benefiting from immunization, care, and treatment services, over 4 million pregnant women reached with skilled birth attendance and 14 million adolescents and young people reached with adolescent friendly health services. Also, over 120,000 adults were screened for elevated blood pressure, In the area of nutrition, the advocacy efforts of UN resulted in the release of domestic funds of USD 4.8 million in 2019, USD 1.6 million in 2020 and USD 2.5 million in 2021 with over 28 million children and adults reached with nutrition services. For social protection, with UN support, i) Violence Against Persons Prohibition law domesticated in 31 states; ii) Child Act rights adopted in 30 states; iii) National GBV data situation room established; 4) National social register consolidated and v) National Social Protection Policy passed into law. UN facilitated access to social protection services for over 2.1 million people.

Notable achievements under the Result Area 3 include the UNCT support in 2018, to federal and state emergency management institutions on disaster risk and emergency response planning skills to ensure sustainable food security for vulnerable population which resulted to the **feeding of about 1.1 million people in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states monthly, reaching almost 1.3 million people at the peak**. The UNCT has also provided continuous capacity strengthening for MDAs in the country on food and nutrition security including social protection and school feeding related issues. In the area of empowerment and employment, 1,380 women farmers transitioned from less formal to decent and sustainable work, over 10,000 people gainfully employed, and the Jubilee Fellowship programme launched in 2021 to provide opportunities for 20,000 youths annually to reduce youth unemployment.

There is evidence that in the communities, UNSDPF interventions resulted in positive changes including demand for, and provision of various services (health, education, livelihood, etc.), stigma reduction and inclusion of women, girls, young people, and people living with disabilities.

UNDAFP Principles
There is evidence of the mainstreaming of UNDAF programming principles in the UNSDPF interventions as exemplified by gender and social inclusion initiatives, disability inclusion and a focus on youth by UN entities. Gender, including Gender-Based Violence (**GBV) emerged as a key area of UNSDPF contributions thanks to the Spotlight Initiative.** UNSDPF interventions uphold human rights principles by design and while it may not be very explicit, the focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), are geared towards meeting the rights of women, youths and PWDs.

Sustainability
Working through government and local CSOs and building capacity, as well as supporting the development and implementation of relevant policy documents and guidelines, sustainability measures are being implemented. Core sustainability measures adopted include implementing initiatives through government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and advocacy for government to take ownership, capacity building at all levels, providing catalytic interventions such as strengthening data systems and supporting the development and implementation of relevant policy documents and

guidelines. There are some examples of government ownership in integrating initiatives into plans and budgets, or some sector initiatives now being driven by government such as immunization, HIV response, meteorological services etc.

Conclusions

The approach to the design of the UNSDPF interventions and the adaptability of the UNCT has ensured the relevance of the PF and sync with the needs, priorities, and policies of Nigeria. Three Result Areas and nine Outcomes were identified in the UNSDPF strategy which aligned with Nigerian national and regional priorities including SDGs, while the UNCT demonstrated adaptability by drawing on opportunities to ensure continued relevance.

The diversity of skills and expertise as well as its convening power gives the UNCT a unique comparative advantage in responding to the priorities of Nigeria. This has also contributed to its resilience and adaptability. The UNCT's catalytic support as well as capacity to deploy skills and funding support to respond across all sectors in the country provides a comparative advantage. Initiatives such as the COVID-19 response plan and basket funds, as well as the humanitarian response plan, allowed the UNCT to quickly adapt to changing contexts in the country.

Strong leadership from the UNCT (through the RCO, PMT and other coordination groups), as well as the DaO approach and Joint Programmes were prerequisites for improving the coherence, implementation, and the achievements of UNSDPF results. The RCO coordinates the PF implementation, supported by several groups such as the Results Area and Outcome Group, the M&E Working Group, the Gender Technical Group, and the UN Communications Group. The PMT interfaces with the result area and outcome leads to drive implementation. In addition, using such mechanisms as the DaO and Joint Workplan approach as well as Joint Programmes, UN agencies and implementing partners appear to be clear about the coherence and intended impacts of projects, programmes, and policies. However, the extent to which these have been jointly executed as planned were challenging because of weak coordination among UN entities.

While implementation rates have varied across years, resources were well spent based on financial plans, thus ensuring value for money. Yearly implementation rates (available resources vs expenditure) were 98%, 81%, and 111% for 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. The 2020 expenditure outturn was due to the additional resources mobilised for the COVID-19 response. There is technical efficiency and efficient resource utilisation. Also, there was a general feeling among stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation that resources were well spent based on the financial plans with the states and human resource personnel benefitting immensely from capacity building because of collaboration with UN agencies.

The UNCT is making valuable contributions through the progress being made in meeting the UNSDPF results, facilitated by partnership opportunities, with good lessons to be learned from implementation. There is progress being made in meeting the UNSDPF results as planned, with the UNCT contributing to priorities in the result areas. There is evidence that in the communities, UNSDPF interventions resulted in positive changes including demand for, and provision of numerous services (health, WASH, education, protection, etc.), stigma reduction and inclusion of women, girls, young people, and people living with disabilities. There were opportunities that facilitated the progress towards the achievement of results – enabling policy environment, good understanding, and availability of government staff who are committed resulting in good collaboration with government and other partners for effective delivery of interventions.

The integration of UNDAF programming principles was evident in the design and implementation of the UNSDPF. Gender, human rights, and a focus on youths has been strong; and disability is also picking up, as part of UNSDPF implementation. Additionally, the focus on the North-East, Nort-West, and other specific areas like the Niger Delta, represents the principle of Leaving No

One Behind (LNOB). Initiatives such as the Spotlight and the deliberate focus for example on adolescent girls (specific projects on education, health, or nutrition), and GBV are helping to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Integration into government systems and building IP capacity, are strategies adopted for the sustainability of UNSDPF interventions. The concept of sustainability has been embedded in the PF Theory of Change. Both government and UN entities have put in place measures to ensure the sustainability of the interventions, such as training and capacity building at all levels, and the development and implementation of relevant policy documents and guidelines.

Recommendations

The following suite of recommendations is made:

1. **The next UNSDPF/CF results framework should be streamlined, with fewer outcomes and outputs and accompanying indicators.** This should bring about better integration of the humanitarian response to complete the development-humanitarian-peace/security nexus. It is also recommended for the UNCT to streamline the DaO work planning process to make it less cumbersome, reduce the number of activities and better align with state priorities.

2. **The UNCT to commission an evaluation of the DaO State approach.** This should look at the continuum from planning to coordination and implementation phases as well as that of the reporting phase.

3. **This evaluation endorses the recommendation from the 2019 UN country result report that suggested a focus on more joint programmes, partnership, and joint implementation to deliver on UN mandate in Nigeria and recommends that this suggestion is taken forward building on the existing joint programme initiatives.** The 2019 UN country report reiterated the need for UN agencies to work together to leverage resources and comparative strengths to have more reach – by doing situation analyses together, planning together and implementing together.

4. **The PMT working with agency leads, to consider including the activities of the M&E group and RA and outcome leads into their performance benchmarks.** If staff members know that they will report their group activities as part of their performance, it will function as an incentive for meaningful participation going forward.

5. **The UNCT through the PMT should progressively strive to improve the collaboration between the various UN working groups.** The evaluation found satisfactory progress and value in the support provided to the UNCT through the PMT by the various groups such as the M&E, gender, and communications groups.

6. **Knowledge management and lesson learning should be systematized in the next CF.** There are good lessons related to joint work planning in terms of coordination, capacity building and sustainability. There are also lessons on working through government and having a coordinating MDA at the federal and state levels which showed that this has been helpful in ensuring direction and efforts towards sustainability.

7. **The UNCT should reiterate the UN corporate priority of mainstreaming UNDAF programming principles as well as sustainability plans into the design and implementation of the next CF.** The evaluation observed that UNSDPF interventions uphold HR principles by design while GESI interventions focus on meeting the rights of women, youths and PWDs, as well as leaving no one behind. Building the capacity of implementing partners, as well as those of state

government and local community should continue to be prioritized in the next phase of the PF. This will help to strengthen the system, build individual technical and managerial skills towards contributing to the sustainability of the interventions.

1 Introduction

This Evaluation Report (ER) presents the analysis and findings of the joint evaluation of Nigeria United Nations Strategic Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) 2018 – 2022), which was conducted between October and December 2021. The evaluation was commissioned by the Office of the Resident Coordinator. The evaluation of the UNSDPF was a joint UN process, and was conducted with national partners, to assess the progress made towards Nigeria's development priorities selected within the UNSDPF. It took stock of the environment within which the UN is operating and assessed the effectiveness of UNSDPF as a tool of support to the achievement of national priorities and enhanced coordination and harmonization among all UN agencies.

1.1. Purpose and Specific Objectives of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to undertake an independent assessment of the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the UNSDPF (2018 – 2022), the management and coordination mechanisms to support the achievement of the Partnership Framework (PF) and its contribution to national development priorities, including a review of the status of PF budget. The evaluation is meant to serve accountability and learning purposes. Accountability, to assess the outcomes and outputs achieved at the state and federal levels, and how the portfolio of interventions as well as collaboration and partnerships have contributed to the observed results. The evaluation not only explored whether outcomes have happened, but also how they happened. Learning, to identify lessons learned, capture good practices, and make recommendations that can inform the design of the next strategy.

To achieve the purpose, several broad questions have been examined based on the primary intended uses of the evaluation and the specific objectives established in the terms of reference (see Table 1).

Table 1**: Primary intended uses and objectives from the terms of reference**

Intended use	Broad question	Specific objectives from the terms of reference
Ensure accountability	What is the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of UNSDPF interventions during the period under evaluation?	• To provide an independent appraisal of the UNSDPF 2018-2022 performance regarding initial UN commitments and expected results as agreed within the results framework related to impact outcomes and outputs.
Improve decision-making	How has the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) effectively positioned itself as a key player among national partners and the broader development community in Nigeria?	• To assess the UN's strategic position in line with the evolving humanitarian/development needs, economic situation (UN Common Country Assessment (CCA)), government priorities and the changing national development context and global agenda.
Support learning	How has the UNCT leveraged existing knowledge and good practice from past and current partnerships to generate greater complementarity and alignment?	• To identify the key success factors as well as the key setbacks of the implementation of the UNSDPF including appropriateness of agreed result areas, outcomes, and outputs against current and emerging developmental challenges. • Identify and document good practices, innovative approaches and draw lessons and forward-looking recommendations to support and adjust the UNSDPF implementation and the preparation of the next framework document.

The primary and secondary intended users of the evaluation are identified in Table 2, below. The evaluation has been designed to be directly relevant to decision-making for primary users, and to contribute to a wider body of evidence for secondary users. The evaluation provides inputs to inform the strategic positioning of the UNCT at the national and sub-national levels; reflecting the diversity of settings within which the UNSDPF was implemented, the changing development and humanitarian environment, UN reform, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Table 2: **Intended users and uses of the evaluation**

	Accountability	Decision-making	Learning
UNCT (**Programme Management Team** (PMT), including the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO))	Primary	Primary	Primary
UNCT (Delivering as One (DaO) States and Others)	Secondary	Primary	Primary
Partners (Government, Civil Society)	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
Donors	Secondary	Secondary	Primary
Key: Primary intended users/uses are the main audience for the evaluation, and these needs define the key requirements for utilization; Secondary intended users/uses are important stakeholders who are intended to derive value from the evaluation, and whose needs influence the design of the evaluation process and report.			

1.2. Scope and Subject of the Evaluation

Scope

As indicated in the evaluation ToR, the evaluation covered the implementation of the 2018-2022 PF, with a primary focus on the achievements up to the end of the September 2021. Of particular importance, is the 2019-2021 period which has been (and is still) characterized by rapid changes in the global health architecture because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted strategic direction and is likely to continue to do so in the future. In addition, the evaluation is timed to coincide with the processes for preparing the next UN strategic cooperation framework and it is expected that the evaluation findings will feed into this process. While the evaluation considered the implications of internal factors within the UN system and external factors on interventions – including the policies and performance of partners – it does not evaluate the work of individual UN entities. Furthermore, it excludes the collection of representative primary data on interventions and results.

In terms of geographical scope, the ToR suggested that the evaluation should happen at the federal and DaO state levels (FCT, Sokoto, Bauchi, Lagos, and Cross River). While there was a push during the inception period from government partners for the inclusion of Anambra and Nasarawa states into the sample, it was only possible to undertake limited data collection in Nasarawa – the timing and decision to undertake remote interviews made this challenging. Indeed, data collection in Nasarawa was possible only because a team member visited the state.

Evaluation Subject

The main subject of the evaluation is the performance related to the UNSDPF result area outcomes and their contribution to Nigeria's national priorities. The UNSDPF interventions were clustered into three broad result areas; (1) Governance Human Rights, Peace, and Security; (2) Equitable Quality Basic Services; and (3) Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth and Development. **Result Area 1** has two associated outcomes: i) good governance and rule of law and ii) humanitarian response,

peacebuilding, and security. **Result Area 2** has four associated outcomes; i) health, nutrition; and HIV/AIDS; ii) learning and skills development; iii) water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and iv) protection. Finally **Result Area 3** has three (3) associated outcomes; i) inclusive and diversified economic growth; ii) population dynamics; and iii) environmental stability and food security.

1.3. Evaluation questions

We have streamlined the original 10 evaluation questions in the ToR, into eight overarching questions and are shown in Table 3 below, which were grouped under the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria.

Table 3**: Evaluation questions, based on OECD-DAC criteria and others**

Evaluation Criteria	Streamlined Evaluation Question (EQ)
Relevance	EQ1: To what extent has the UN system responded to the Nigerian national priorities?
	EQ2: What is the comparative advantage of the UN system in Nigeria, and is the value addition of the UN system well understood and recognised among national and state level stakeholders?
Coherence	EQ3: To what extent has the UN system leveraged strategic partnerships to plan and deliver the UNSDPF outcomes?
Efficiency	EQ4: To which extent were the UNSDPF outcomes achieved compared to the amounts of resources, maintenance of minimum transaction costs (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs etc.) and the planned time-framed?
	EQ5: To what extent did UNCT's leadership, interagency coordination mechanisms, and systems enable sufficient resources to be made available in a timely manner to achieve planned results?
Effectiveness	EQ6: To what extent has the UNSDPF contributed to progress made towards Nigeria's development priorities as espoused in the plan?
	EQ7: To what extent have human rights principles, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion been effectively mainstreamed in the implementation of the UNSDPF?
Sustainability	EQ8: To what extent has the UNSDPF interventions contributed (or likely to contribute) to the sustainability of results including through capacity, funding, coherence, and partnerships?

1.4. Structure of the report

The report is structured into two main volumes. This document (volume 1) is the main report, and volume 2 contain the annexes. The annex document contains the terms of reference for the evaluation, the evaluation matrix and tools, the list of people and documents consulted for the evaluation, as well as the summaries of the field notes and achievements of the UNSDPF in 2018, 2019, and 2020.

In this document, the previous section is the **executive summary** which provides an overall synopsis of the evaluation. This section (**introduction**) details the purpose, subject and scope of the evaluation, evaluation questions, and the report structure.

Section 2 highlights the **country context**, which provides a country status update as context to the evaluation findings.

Section 3 (methodology) details the evaluation design and data collection methods, including data sources, data analysis. The section also details the steps taken to comply with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) programming principles of gender and social inclusion, and leaving no one behind, as well as the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards to ensure best practice in the management, exercise, and use of the evaluation. The section also highlights the challenges, limitations, and lessons for future evaluations.

Section 4 (findings) elucidates the findings and assessments, which are organized like the evaluation questions and explains 'why' things are happening as well as 'what' is happening, including the lessons learned that can feed into the future framework.

Section 5 (conclusions) reflects evaluative judgements based on the findings and substantiated with evidence.

Section 6 (recommendations) provide actionable points drawing from the results and conclusions.

2 Country context

2.1. Context

Nigeria is a Federal Republic, with 36 states, a Federal Capital Territory (FCT) (see Figure 1) and 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The country is also divided into six geopolitical zones for political and administrative purposes. With an estimated population of 206.1 million and an average family size of 5.8 people per household and a growth rate of 2.6 per cent, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world. The country's population is projected to grow by 30 per cent (60 million people) between 2020 and 2030 and then double to about 400 million by 2050[2] Women of childbearing age account for 22.5 per cent of the population and the total fertility rate (TFR) is 5.3[3]. Most of the population is young with 45.7 per cent under 15 years and 31.7 per cent between age 10-24 years, contributing to the high dependency ratio of 98 per cent. One in five households are headed by women, and one-third of households have a head of household with no education[4]

Figure 1**: Nigeria: States and geo-political zones**

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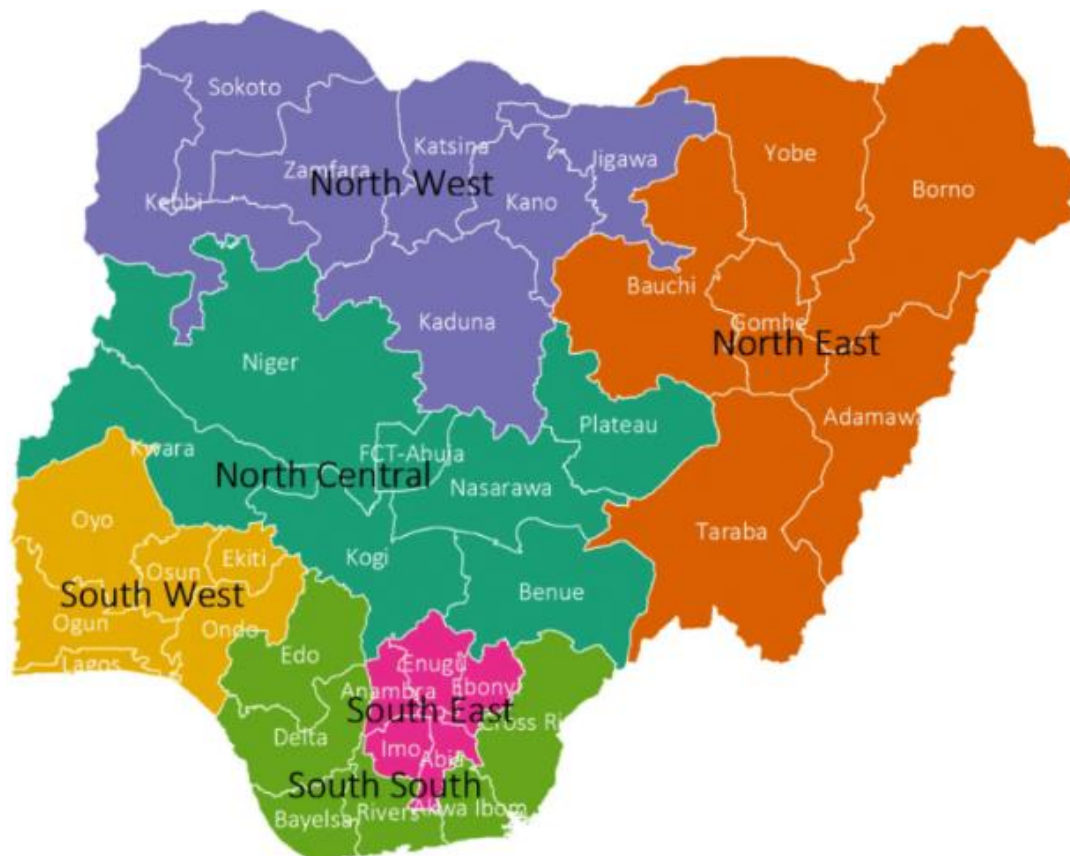
[2] Nigeria's 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) on Sustainable Development Goals
[3] Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2018
[4] *WASH_NORM 2019;16*

Nigeria has the largest economy in Africa with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of $429.91bn as of 2020[5]. In 2017, when the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) was developed, the gross domestic product per capita was US$ 1,966.74 but rose to US$2,359.14 in 2019 but declined to U.S.$2,084.05 in 2020. In 2016, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) revealed that 64% of the population lived below the poverty line of $1.90 per day. As of 2019, updated data generated with a new methodology (1week survey instead of 4 weeks)[6] indicated a poverty rate of 47.6%[7]. Besides, the Nigerian economy is recovering from two major recessions including the 2016 recession which ended in 2017 and the 2020 recession entered in the 3rd quarter of 2020 and exited in the fourth quarter of 2020.

The Nigerian economy officially exited the 2020 recession with growth of 0.11%[8]. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB)[9], the Nigerian economy is projected to grow by 1.5% in 2021 and 2.9% in 2022, based on an expected recovery in crude oil prices and production. Stimulus measures outlined in the Economic Sustainability Programme (ESP) and the Finance Act of 2020 could boost nonoil revenues. Improved revenues can narrow the fiscal deficit to 4.6% and the current account deficit to 2.3% of GDP in 2021 as global economic conditions improve. Reopening borders will increase access to inputs, easing pressure on domestic prices and inflation, projected at 11.4% in 2021. Downside risks include reduced fiscal space, should oil prices remain depressed. In addition, flooding and rising insecurity could hamper agricultural production. Further depletion in foreign reserves from $35 billion (7.6 months of import cover) could lead to sharp exchange rate depreciation and inflationary pressures. A potential relapse in COVID–19 cases could exacerbate these risks. High unemployment (27%), poverty (40%) and growing inequality remain a major challenge in Nigeria.

In 2017, Nigeria with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.527, ranked as the 152nd among the qualifying countries in the world. This index has however dropped to 161 in 2020 with a score of 0.534[10]. The low HDI continues to place Nigeria in the category of countries with a low human development performance. Nigeria also continued with a low ranking in the Gender Development Index at 158 with no significant improvements between 2018 and 2019. Nigeria showed some decline in the Human Capital Index with a score of 0.36, down from 0.4 in 2019.

Developmental shortfalls persist in Nigeria and take several forms including reduced earnings for individuals, poor social indicators, wide income gaps, gender inequalities and a huge infrastructural disparity between the rural and urban locations. As of 2017, only 5% of Nigerians were covered under the National Health Insurance scheme making most of the populace having limited access to health insurance. For health indices, there was a slight decrease from 2013 to 2018 (Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS) in infant mortality rate from 69 deaths per 1000 live birth to 67 deaths per 1000 live births, maternal mortality rate from 576 per 100,000 to 512 per 100,000, under 5 wasting from 18 per cent to 7 per cent, underweight from 29 per cent to 22 per cent while the under 5 stunting remains at 37 per cent for both time periods. The under 5 mortality rates however increased from 128 deaths per 1,000 live births to 132 deaths per 1,000 live births. The 2013 NDHS indicated that access to education remains a challenge with a national primary school attendance ratio of 64% which slightly increased to about 70% in 2018. With a Gender Development Index of 0.881 for 2019, and a global gender gap index of 0.635 in 2020, Nigeria has made considerable progress in gender equality from

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[5] https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/

[6] www.nigeriastat.gov.ng

[7] 2020 SDG report and SDG Index Dashboard

[8] National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

[9] https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-west-africa-nigeria/nigeria-economic-outlook

[10] http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-report

2017. However, gender gaps remain widely reflected in the political, economic, and social life of the country.

Environmental, ecosystem and natural resources management remains a challenge given the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources which expose the population to climate change vulnerabilities. In 2017 when the partnership framework was developed, Nigeria had one of the highest rates of forest depletion in the world (0.72%- 2.38%) Justice, peace, and security identified as a major challenge during the preparation of the partnership framework continued to pose significant challenges to Nigeria's inclusive economic growth and development aspirations. The humanitarian situation in parts of Nigeria especially in the North-East and recently in the North-West and North-Central remains a challenge with attendant crises arising from insurgency, farmer/herder clashes, and issues of kidnaping across the nation.

According to the Voluntary National Review of 2020[11], good strides have been made in the domestication process of the SDGs in Nigeria. First, there is an ongoing realignment of the National Statistical System (NSS) with the requirements and indicators of the SDGs. Second, Nigeria has developed its home-grown 'Integrated Sustainable Development Goals (iSDG Model) - an analytical framework for assessing how policy making can better address the indivisible nature of the SDGs. Third, the Nigeria's 2020 VNR report has drawn on past evaluations across the seven priority SDGs and has an ongoing evaluation of the country's performance in SDGs 3 & 4. This attempt to systematically use evaluations is an innovation in the VNR context. Nigeria should strengthen the evidence-based planning and accountability mechanisms at state level for accelerating the SDG decade of action. The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) and National Development Plan (2021-2030) will be pivotal in advancing the achievement of the SDGs in Nigeria.

2.2. UN Strategic response and Country Programme

The Nigerian Government approved a medium-term strategy, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017–2020, to restore macroeconomic stability, good governance, and growth through economic diversification, investing in people and building a globally competitive economy. The plan has three strategic objectives: restoring growth, investing in people, and building a globally competitive economy. Meanwhile, the ERGP 2017-2020, is aligned with the country's Vision 20: 2020[12], African Union's Agenda 2063[13] and the UN SDGs.

The successor to ERGP (2017-2020) is the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP)- 2021-2025. It is expected that overtime, the country's priorities and need will be dictated by the MTNDP (2021-2025) whose strategic objectives are to (i) establish a strong foundation for a diversified economy, with robust micro, small and medium Enterprises (MSME) growth, and a more-resilient business environment, (ii) invest in critical physical, financial, digital and innovation infrastructure, (iii) build a solid framework and enhance capacities to strengthen security and ensure good governance, and (iv) enable a vibrant, educated and healthy populace. The cross-cutting issues to be addressed are investing in the social infrastructure and services required to alleviate poverty, driving inclusive economic empowerment, and reducing poverty, and promoting development opportunities across states to minimize regional, economic, and social disparities.

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[11] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26210Main_Messages_Nigeria.pdf

[12] Identified six interwoven pillars: good governance and an efficient state, skilled human capital, vibrant private sector, world class physical infrastructure and modern agriculture and livestock, to launch Africa prospering in national, regional, and global markets

[13] Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future

The UN system in Nigeria signed a common strategic framework, the UNSDPF 2018-2022, with the federal and four state governments and the FCT. The four states and FCT were selected, while their coordination mechanism is designed in line with the spirit of "Delivery as One (DaO)." The rationale for their choices includes the need for geographical spread of the Framework, weaknesses exhibited by the states across the three Results Areas (RAs), SDGs, and their engagements with UN agencies.

The 2018-2022 UNSDPF comprises three strategic objectives/ result areas and nine outcomes summarized in table 4 below.

Table 4: **UNSDPF strategic objectives and outcomes**

Strategic Objectives/Result Area groups	Outcomes
1) Governance Human Rights, Peace, and Security	**Outcome 1: Good Governance and Rule of Law:** By 2022, governments at all levels apply principles of good governance, equity, non-discrimination, and rule of law in public service delivery and citizen engagement
	Outcome 2: Humanitarian Response, Peacebuilding and Security: By 2022, citizen coexist peacefully, enjoying increased resilience, higher state capacity for humanitarian response, and reduced incidence of armed and violent conflicts in the country /cross border
2) Equitable Quality Basic Services	**Outcome 3: Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS:** By 2022, Nigerians, with focus on most disadvantaged, have access and use quality health, nutrition, and HIV&AIDS services
	Outcome 4: Learning and Skills Development: By 2022, Nigerians, with a focus on the most disadvantaged children and adults, access and complete quality education which provides relevant skills and knowledge for lifelong learning.
	Outcome 5: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): By 2022, Nigerians with a focus on the most disadvantaged, have sustainable access to and use safe and affordable water and sanitation services, adopt good hygiene practices, and live in an open defecation free environment.
	Outcome 6: Protection: By 2022, the National and State Protection Policies are implemented and adequately financed with protection system and services strengthened to effectively prevent and respond to violence, abuse exploitation (including trafficking) and harmful social norms, with a focus on the most disadvantaged**.**
3) Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth and Development	**Outcome 7: Inclusive and diversified economic growth:** By 2022, Nigeria has an inclusive and diversified economic growth driven by science, technology and innovation, investment in infrastructure and job creation
	Outcome 8: Population Dynamics: By 2022, Nigeria's population dynamics becomes a strong basis for national development and resource management through better use of demographic intelligence
	Outcome 9: Environmental Stability and Food Security: By 2022, Nigeria achieves environmental sustainability, climate resilience and food security through efficient management of its cultural and natural resources

Under each outcome, the UNSDPF outlines corresponding outputs (28 in total) which are used in the preparation of the annual JWPs for the three Results Area Groups (RAGs) and nine associated outcome

groups to ensure the effective and coordinated implementation of the UNSDPF. In addition, the UNSDPF include result framework used by the M&E group to track the consistency, completeness and accuracy of the indicators outlined in the framework. Currently the UNSDPF is tracking 47 outcome indicators and 192 output indicators. Figure 2 below shows how the RA and associated outcomes are aligned with the 17 SDGs and the ERGP pillars.

Figure 2**: UNSDPF framework overview**[14]

3 Methodological Approach

3.1 Overall Approach

The overall approach to the evaluation is summarised in the Figure below.

Figure 3: **Overall evaluation approach**

	To undertake an assessment of the relevance, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness of the UNSDPF (2018-2022) and UNCT Coordination model

Approach

Accountability and Learning
To assess the overall UNSDPF performance and achievements against the planned results and document lessons/good practices to inform future strategic plan

Theory based
Looking at how interventions contribute to the three strategic objectives

Utilisation focused
Building ownership of the review process and recommendations and ensure timely and actionable learning

Conceptual framework and questions

Workstream 1: Right topics

To what extent is the UNSDPF focusing on the right topics?

What lessons/recommendations for strategic repositioning to improve relevance of PF?

Relevance, flexibility, and adaptability: EQ ① ②

Appropriate selection of strategies, activities, outputs, and outcomes to be delivered, and responsiveness to changing context

Workstream 2: Right ways

To what extent is the UNSDPF being implemented as planned?

What lessons/recommendations for the UN system comparative advantage within the aid architecture in Nigeria?

Coherence: EQ ③

Coordination, collaboration, complementarity, and additionality of UNSDPF interventions with those of other actors

Efficiency: EQ ④ ⑤

Funding model, partnerships, resource mobilization

Workstream 3: Right results

To what extent is the UNSDPF achieving the right results?

What lessons/recommendations on what has worked or not, including missed opportunities, to feed into the next strategy?

Effectiveness: EQ ⑥

Achievements of the strategic objectives including against the UNSDPF results framework

Sustainability: EQ ⑧

The likelihood of the sustainability of the results achieved including ownership by country partners

Crosscutting issues: EQ ⑦

Exploring how UNDAF programming principles have been reflected in the design and implementation of interventions (Gender and social inclusion, Leaving no one behind)

Interrogation of Theory of Change

- Governance, human rights, peace, and security
- equitable quality basic services
- sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development

Assessment of performance, good practice at:

UN Level
Literature review, KIIs with UN staff at HQ and State levels, assessment of relevant EQs

Country Level
5 DaO and 2 non-DaO States, and Federal level assessment of EQs based on KIIs, FGDs and beneficiary feedback

The assessment was based on a **conceptual/analytical framework** of three workstreams (the "rights") – the *right things* being done in the *right ways* to deliver the *right results*. These were clustered around the OECD-DAC criteria as follows:

1. **The right things** (looking at **relevance, flexibility, and adaptability**): how relevant is the UNSDPF in responding to Nigerian national priorities and how well is the UNCT positioned in facilitating the achievement of the strategy?

2. **The right ways** (looking at **coherence**, **efficiency**, **gender equality and social inclusion** and **leaving no one behind**): to what extent is the UNSDPF being implemented as planned and how efficient are interventions delivering value for money for the UN system; partner governments (federal and state), and other partner organisations while ensuring robust internal governance and accountability.

3. **The right results** (looking at **effectiveness**, **sustainability**): how effective is UNSDPF at meeting the objectives of the strategy, and how sustainable are the results?

In line with the provisions of the Terms of Reference, there were four main aspects to our approach:

Firstly, the evaluation was underpinned by a **theory-based** approach, assessing the extent to which the UNSDPF interventions, have contributed (or not as the case may be) to the achievement of the expected results and outcomes. This involved surfacing the Theory of Change (ToC) embedded in the framework for assessing the existing evidence of results for each of the three strategic objectives; governance, human rights, peace, and security; equitable quality basic services; and sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development.

Secondly, there was a focus on **accountability and learning: accountability,** to assess the outcomes and outputs achieved at the state and federal levels, and how the portfolio of interventions as well as how collaboration and partnerships have contributed to the observed results. Explored whether outcomes have happened, but also **how** they happened. **Learning,** to identify lessons learned, capture good practices, and make recommendations that can inform the design of the next strategy.

Thirdly, the evaluation was **utilisation focused:** implemented in such a way that built ownership of the review process and recommendations and ensure timely and actionable learning, moving forward. As part of the inception activities, we engaged with different stakeholders – the RCO, evaluation manager, PMT, results areas leads and government partners. This process helped to build awareness of what questions will be answered, with what type of evidence. Also, it shaped the overall design, including the focus of the assessments in the DaO- and a non- DaO State. After the data collection phase, we also engaged with the Evaluation Management Group and the PMT to review and discuss the evaluation findings and conclusions, and then compiled the synthesis report.

Lastly, the evaluation was based on the **UNDAF programming principles** of gender and social inclusion, human rights and leaving no one behind. These principles were systematically mainstreamed throughout our approach and methods. We have refined the evaluation questions to ensure complementarity with this approach. In answering the EQs, we elucidated how the rights of women and other socially excluded groups such as young people and persons with disabilities, are being promoted by the UNSDPF interventions and what outcomes have been achieved.

3.2. Overview of the evaluation process

In line with the TOR, we structured the evaluation according to three phases: inception, data collection, synthesis, and reporting. We merged the dissemination and use into the synthesis and reporting phase. We sought to keep to the timeline detailed in the TOR, as demonstrated below in Figure 4.

Figure 4**: Overview of the evaluation process**

Inception Phase November 2021	Data Collection and Analysis November 2021	Synthesis and Reporting November – December 2021
Key Activities • Kick-off meetings • Preliminary desk reviews • Approach refinement /development of tools • Internal design meeting • Refine evaluation questions and compile evaluation matrix • Draft and submit inception report	Key Activities • Extended desk review (document, secondary data mining) • KII and FGDs at the UN system, Federal and State levels • Review and synthesis of data to identify emerging themes • Cross case analysis • Discuss preliminary findings with EM	Key Activities • Draft preliminary synthesis findings • Present preliminary findings to PMT • Compile draft final report • Integrate feedback received • Submit final report
Deliverables PPT and Inception report with elaborated methodology and evaluation timelines	Deliverables PPT and preliminary findings report	Deliverables Draft and final synthesis report

Given the nature and timing of the evaluation, the inception phase was very critical. The purpose of the inception phase was to gain clarity and ensure mutual understanding of the scope and objectives of the evaluation, the evaluation questions, and finalizing the specifics of the design. Details of the inception phase, are highlighted below:

- Held a kick-off meeting with RCO, evaluation manager (EM) and Development Coordination Office (DCO) to help build awareness of what questions will be answered – elaborating on the evaluation questions with what type of evidence and in shaping the overall design.
- Agreed an elaborated list of intervention partners with results area leads in collaboration with the EM and RCO and finalised the sampling of respondents from the stakeholder list.
- Revised the draft evaluation questions included in the ToR and elaborated an evaluation matrix through refining evaluation questions, including the data collection tools, interview guides, templates, and protocols, as well as indicators, sources of information and methodology to guide the analysis and triangulation.
- Made a presentation of the inception period to the PMT and drafted this inception report

Details of the other two phases are provided in sections 3.4 and 3.5.

3.3. Stakeholder Analysis and Sampling

Determining the sample was through interactions with the evaluation manager, the RCO and result area leads, to arrive at a comprehensive list of stakeholders at various levels and by PF result areas. Two categories of stakeholders were identified namely i) primary stakeholders – the UNCT including the RA and outcome groups, the PMT and the evaluation steering committee whose main interests are accountability and transparency as well as learning, and ii) secondary stakeholders – the IPs, government partners, CS, and donors. We have presented an elaborated stakeholder matrix in Annex 6. The matrix also highlights how stakeholders participated in the evaluation.

Sampling covered the federal level, five DaO states and one non-DaO state. A multi-stage purposive sampling process was adopted to allow a widespread of the final sample and ensure that data are collected to allow national geographical spread. The additional rationale for a purposive sampling was to align the sample with the UNSDPF results areas and associated outcomes in terms of the type and intensity of interventions.

The multistage approach to sampling was done as follows:

Selection of UN entities: to include the RCO, PMT, UNCG, Operations Management Team (OMT), Gender Technical Group (GTG), the UN M&E and disability working groups. Finally, we selected all the results area leads and participating agencies within each result area.

Selection of implementing partners including primary stakeholders: From each of the results areas, the implementation partners at federal and state levels were selected. In each state, we will undertake up to eight Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with women, men, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). Table 5 below shows the categories of the final sample and the numbers in each sample. The full list of respondents can be found in Annex 7.

Table 5**: Final Sample of respondents interviewed**

Entities	Federal/ National	States					
		Bauchi	Cross River	FCT	Lagos	Sokoto	Nasarawa
UN	17	4	2	N/A	7	4	
Donors	1	N/A					
MDAs	16	7	16	9	11	9	1
Other IPs/CSOs	3	4	16	2	11	6	
FGDs	N/A	5 (2M, 1W, 1Y, 1PWD W)	5 (2 M, 1 Y, 1W, 2 PWD W)	2 (1W, 1Y)	1 (1 Y/W)	4 (1 M, 1W, 1PWD, 1Y)	

3.4 Data collection

We used mixed method approaches for data collection, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, literature reviews as well as triangulation of data from various sources and methods to compile a robust and credible evidence base. Data collection was guided by the evaluation matrix that was elaborated as part of the inception period (lease see Annex 3). Quantitative data were derived from largely secondary sources particularly from the UN system including financial information such as funding flows, including, but not limited to, agencies' Country Programme Evaluations and thematic/outcome/programme evaluations and research. Primary data was qualitative in nature and complemented information from extensive desk review of programme and partner documents. Evaluation applied six main methods to collect primary and secondary data as evidence (see Table 6 below). Semi-structured interview guides were developed to aid data collection (please see Annex 4).

Table 6: **Data collection tools used by the evaluation**

Tool		Description	Integrating human rights and gender equality
	Group interview	One-to-many facilitated discussion based on guiding questions (focus groups at the community level in the DaO states)	• Confidentiality • Informed verbal consent • Same-sex facilitators • Comparable power and status • Use of translators to local languages
	Key informant interview	One-to-one confidential interview with a key informant (UN, federal, DaO) based upon guiding questions	
	Observation	Site visits to projects and programmes to witness interventions and their effects (community level in the DaO states)	
	Secondary data review	Desk review including text coding of documented sources	• Mapping of evidence to human rights norms and standards • Use of human rights language • Application of gender analysis
	Workshop	Facilitated event in which participants work through a series of activities designed to support reflection and elicit feedback	• Informed verbal consent • Comparable power and status • Range of stakeholders represented • Collective and participatory analysis on contributions
	Validation	Virtual or in-person processes including debriefs and mini-presentation (feedback to stakeholders (SH) on the field and the evaluation group)	

Secondary data collection

During the inception phase, we undertook a scoping desk review and examined the quantity and type of programme and other UN system documentation and secondary data available to inform the evaluation findings. We designed a tool that enabled a structured approach to ensure that all relevant data are assembled against each of the EQs and therefore allow users of the final report to trace back from recommendations to the data upon which they are based.

Primary data collection

Primary data collection commenced on November 8 with UN and federal level interviews, and on November 15 at State level: Bauchi, Cross River, FCT, Lagos, Sokoto (with attempts at Nasarawa and Anambra). The consultant team and government partners conducted these, with UN staff as interlocutors. Data collection was based on the tools developed during the inception period – KII and FGD guides as well as observations, and in line with the evaluation questions. For this analysis, we have interviewed all the UN stakeholders (except the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), close to three-quarters of the federal, and all the DaO state stakeholders, but Anambra and Nasarawa have been challenging. Only one interview was possible in Nasarawa – with the Coordinator, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Interventions, Office of the Secretary to the State Government. At the federal level, donor agencies were unresponsive, and the team could only hold interviews with the European Union (EU).

3.5. Data Analysis

We have undertaken the analysis and synthesis of information using the evaluation questions as an overall framework – aggregating the evidence from across the different assessments to generate an overall synthesis. An evidence assessment framework (Table 7 below) was used to organise and analyse all data gathered from the full range of primary and secondary data sources.

Table 7**: Evidence assessment framework**

Core evaluation questions/ sub-questions	Indicators	Data sources				Emerging findings
		Desk review	KIIs		FGDs with primary SH women, men, youth, PWD	
			UN (HQ and other levels)	Implementation Partners (IPs) (federal and state)		
EQ1						

Through triangulating findings from various sources, we have been able to build up a picture of why change happened (or did not) in certain ways for certain levels, and what some of the important support factors were. Triangulation in our analysis took place at the level of:

- data (drawing on multiple sources of information from implementing partner reports)
- respondent types (for example, government partners, other donors, implementing partners)
- various reports produced during the PF implementation such as DaO state annual reports and individual agency and partner reports.

All these then fed into the final overarching qualitative and quantitative synthesis to inform the findings and recommendations of the final evaluation report.

3.6. Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

The evaluation was always guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.[15] and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations

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[15] Available from the UNEG website: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866

system. Specific commitments included: (1) independence and impartiality; (2) credibility and accountability; (3) rights to self-determination, fair representation, protection, and redress; (4) confidentiality; (5) avoidance of harm; (6) accuracy, completeness, and reliability; and (7) transparency.

As part of the recruitment process, all the evaluation team members signed up and committed to adhere to the UN Code of Ethics. The data collection procedures adhered to international best practice and standards of ethical conduct in evaluations. Before data collection processes began, informed consent was obtained from participants after ensuring that they had understood the information. Participants were also informed about the confidentiality of the data collected, the length of the interview sessions and their right to withdraw from the studies at any time.

The confidentiality of information, privacy and anonymity of study participants were ensured – all interviewees were notified at the beginning of interviews that any information they provide is confidential. All information has been stored in general data protection regulation compliant systems, using Microsoft (MS) Teams, while data remains confidential unless explicitly authorised for sharing by the client and the relevant partners concerned. Documents and data sharing are protected in such ways that only team members for whom it is of direct relevance can access this material. This is managed by the team leader in concert with the RCO.

3.7. Evaluation governance including quality assurance

The RCO engaged a multidisciplinary team of experts to undertake this evaluation. Details of the evaluation team members including roles and responsibilities are included in Annex 2. The evaluation was managed by the Evaluation Committee under the leadership of the evaluation manager, who functioned as the main contact between the UN system and the evaluation team. We saw quality assurance as critical processes that will lead to concrete actions throughout the evaluation. These are summarized below.

Set the preconditions for successful delivery	All team members have been assigned clear technical roles and responsibilities based on their respective areas of expertise
Selection of the most appropriate and robust methodology and tools	During the inception phase, the evaluation team refined the methodology under the EM's direction, with additional support from the DCO.
Realistic planning	The evaluation design (KIIs sample size, depth of analysis etc.) will be tailored to ensure delivery within deadlines.

As highlighted in the stakeholder analysis, the evaluation steering committee's role was to ensure the evaluation team's independent verification of performance & results by providing robust governance for the evaluation. In line with the utilisation focus of the evaluation, the evaluation team had interactions with the steering committee at key intervals: e.g., post-inception, post-data collection check-ins, post-data collection and findings report /presentation and post-final evaluation report/presentation

A sizeable amount of the data that was analysed for this evaluation came from secondary sources. As part of quality assurance procedures, it was necessary to judge the quality of secondary data before its inclusion in the synthesis. Given the wide range of sources of such data, it was not possible to specify a single set of quality standards which can be used for assessing the quality of the secondary data.

Instead, we used a two-step approach. What we did was to check whether those producing the data have applied credible quality standards in a transparent manner. The bulk of the documents for secondary data sources came from the UN system and it is our assumption that the data in such sources were collected using high quality standards. Other data and information sources came from the National Bureau of Statistics, and we again assumed that the information from that source was collected using high quality standards.

3.8. Risks, challenges, limitations, and lessons

There were several risks and challenges encountered during the evaluation process. While these created some logistics problems, the key issue for the team was to maintain professionalism and ensure that the quality of data collection was maintained at remarkably lofty standards.

Risks

The team identified potential risks as part of the inception period, and designed mitigation strategies. Table 8 below provides a summary of the risks and mitigation strategies.

Table 8**: Risk categories and mitigation strategies**

Risk Category	Mitigation measures deployed
The potential for Corona virus pandemic to disrupt the evaluation	• Contingency and scenario planning, drawing on local knowledge and following the national and state guidelines in the conduct of the field data collection. • The team deployed a mix of remote and face to face interviews
The subject of the evaluation is large in terms of coverage and underlying subjects, which makes it difficult to capture and prioritise the most important findings.	• The team used a robust tool to facilitate observing common issues and trends, as well as strong validation and triangulation between various variables to identify the common issues and reliable findings
Unavailability or limited time availability of respondents or lack of interest in the evaluation. Many respondents are overburdened with work as it is approaching end of the year and additionally get many requests for interviews and information collection.	• The team worked with the RCO and government partners to ensure interview request were sent timely, and tried to accommodate the wishes of the respondent, including the flexibility to conduct remote interviews, and convincing the respondents (with the RCO) on the importance of the evaluation, and for the respondent's own engagement
Delays to the timeline caused by delays in receiving comments on reports or contradictory comments.	• The evaluation was utilisation focused, building stakeholder commitment (including the PMT) throughout the evaluation process. We engaged in consultations with the Evaluation Manager and the PMT to comment on draft reports, including early consultation and engagement around draft findings and recommendations to support with the delivery of a solid first draft of all deliverables.
Potential for safeguarding risks and harm to evaluation participants especially at the community level.	• The team undertook training on UN systems prior to the evaluation on safeguarding and committed to report any safeguarding issues. The team also adhered to UNEG guidelines and code of ethics for conducting evaluations

Timeframe

Overall, the timeframe for the evaluation given the scope and depth of investigations required, was clearly ambitious. The ToR specified the period from October 21 to December 10 for the evaluation; and while the evaluation team requested an extension to December 20, an evaluation of this scope requires up to 16 or more weeks to execute. With this tight timeframe, the sequencing of activities and available time to execute them (the inception period and finalising assessment tools, organising meetings at federal and state levels, securing stakeholder participation, etc.) ran against each other and flexibility in sequencing and merging of various components was limited. Furthermore, during the data collection phase, there were parallel evaluation missions by other donors in several locations (e.g., EU-UN monitoring in Bauchi and Sokoto and similar mission in Lagos). These missions were interacting with the same respondents as the UNSDPF evaluation. This created logistics and scheduling challenges, often leading to postponement of interviews. Notwithstanding these challenges, the central aim of the evaluation team was to ensure that this did not affect the quality of the data collected.

The key lesson for timeframe is for the UNCT to allocate enough time and budgets for undertaking partnership/cooperation framework evaluations.

Securing interview appointments

While interview invites were sent well ahead of the interview dates to government MDAs, as well as to CSOs and donors, a few of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), many MDAs and almost all the donors did not honour the invitation on time. We had to undertake a lot of follow-ups, and in the end, some still did not honour the invitation to participate in the interviews. Some MDA anchors responded quite late, and we had to reschedule several times, with some interviews eventually undertaken over phone calls. While it was envisaged that the team will undertake remote interviews for Anambra and Nasarawa states, this was impracticable. As mentioned earlier, in fact data collection was only possible in Nasarawa because a team member visited the state.

The key lesson for securing interviews is for the UNCT to plan PF/CF evaluations well ahead of the implementation and secure appointments long before the implementation of the field data collection. The evaluation team may be familiar with the country context, the fact that they are independent and are broadly "unknown" by the UN partners could lead to non-response to appointments. UN anchor staff and PMT members as well as staff from the coordinating MDA proved effective in helping to secure appointments.

Other Operational Limitations

The brief time available for the note FGD facilitators and note takers to internalise evaluation questions/materials and reproduce such in local language inhibited to some extent proper responses to interviews and it is not in doubt that further detailed attention would have revealed much more qualitative information.

4 Findings from the Evaluation

The findings from the evaluation are arranged according to the three conceptual workstreams as follows:

- Workstream 1 (right topics), covering the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, including flexibility and adaptability
- Workstream 2 (right ways), covering the OECD-DAC criteria of coherence and efficiency
- Workstream 3 (right results) covering the OECD-DAC criteria of effectiveness and sustainability.

4.1 Focussing on the Right Topics (Relevance and Alignment)

This workstream covered evaluation questions 1 and 2 with an overarching frame: To what extent is the UNSDPF focusing on the right topics and what lessons/recommendations for strategic repositioning to improve relevance of the PF? Key issues explored included the appropriate selection of strategies, activities, outputs, and outcomes to be delivered, and responsiveness to changing context.

4.1.1. Relevance and Normative alignment

EQ1	To what extent has the UN system responded to the Nigerian national priorities?

Relevance of UNSDPF interventions, outputs, and outcomes to Nigerian national priorities.

Finding 1: UNSDPF interventions are relevant and firmly aligns with and contributes to Nigerian policies and frameworks (in both process and substance).

The conceptual frameworks guiding the strategies and investments of the UNSDPF closely mirror the framing of the Nigerian high-level policies and priorities. The framework design was informed by the information on needs and priorities gathered through the joint Common Country Analysis (CCA) via participatory processes as well as from experience and lessons learnt from the previous UNDAFs. To design the UNSDPF, priorities were determined through the following: (i) drawing on lessons and experiences of the MDGs as well as from the implementation of the last three UNDAFs; and (ii) a consultative government-led process with the active participation of line ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at federal and state levels, and other development partners, including bilateral partners[16].

Drawing on lessons from the implementation of the previous UNDAFs: The previous United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), particularly UNDAF III, has helped significantly in the formulation of this country strategic framework by way of informing the new, high impact strategies and interventions for Nigeria. Notable lessons learnt from the past experiences

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[16] UNSDPF (2018 – 2022)

include the need to emphasize stronger partnerships; the effective optimization and utilization of UN convening power and advocacy platform as a critical resource at all levels of the government; and the imperative of enhancing coherence and greater coordination of UN activities as these have the potential to increase partners' overall interest in the UN support and in reducing duplication of efforts and unnecessary competition among agencies at all governmental levels[17].

The UNSDPF (2018-2022) proposed a paradigm shift in UN partnership for enhanced and robust support to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) "to reach those furthest behind first" and "to leave no one behind", reflecting concerns with equity and inclusiveness, respectively. The shift integrates national development objectives with international trends and commitments in developing programmes and interventions to systematically support the national authorities in addressing development challenges.

A consultative government-led process: The process of identifying, analysing, selecting, and finalizing the UNSDPF results framework was extensive, comprehensive, interactive, and inclusive. It was led by the Ministry of Budget and National Planning (MBNP), key government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), some DaO states, development partners and the civil society. The UN system also worked through the Programme Management Team and the Resident Coordinator's Office to manage the implementation of the UNSDPF formulation roadmap, which included the conduct of an extensive gap analysis, a comprehensive Common Country Analysis, and consultations in the six geo-political zones targeting the civil society, and the private sector. Other activities included the visioning exercise based on development history, trajectory and Agenda 2030, technical capacity building activities, strategic prioritization workshop, results formulation, as well as monitoring and evaluation framework development[18].

Selecting the strategies and outcomes to be delivered by the UNSDPF: The programmatic approach in this framework departs from earlier models by adopting a more result-oriented method which emphasizes implementable interventions in several priority areas. These priority areas include (i) the common root causes of major development challenges as revealed largely in the CCA and other sector analysis and reports; (ii) the priority needs of the most vulnerable groups and capacities of state bodies to meet their commitments; and (iii) the goals and targets of the SDGs, UN human rights instruments and other declarations. These needs were examined against the current developmental goals as contained in key policy documents and blueprints. These were then reviewed against the overarching aspirational goals set in SDGs and by noting where the country is on implementation.

The Nigerian Government approved a medium-term strategy, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017–2020, to restore macroeconomic stability, good governance, and growth through economic diversification, investing in people and building a globally competitive economy. The plan has three strategic objectives: restoring growth, investing in people, and building a globally competitive economy. Meanwhile, the ERGP 2017-2020, is aligned with the country's Vision 20: 2020, African Union's agenda 2063 and the UN SDGs.

To respond to Nigeria's development priorities, three result areas and nine outcomes were identified with headline indicators for each outcome. The result areas have been explicitly linked to Nigeria's national, regional, and international development aspirations and commitments, notably the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, African Union Agenda 2063, the Agenda 2030, and the SDGs, thus

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[17] Ibid
[18] UNSDPF (2018 – 2022)

ensuring full alignment of national priorities with the continental and global imperatives which the UN system sought to support under the UNSDPF[19].

The UNSDPF articulated theories of change for each of the results areas at the design stage, and these included outputs as part of the change pathways. There is also an accompanying results framework as part of ensuring proper measurement of the progress of the partnership framework contributions to Nigeria's priorities. Figure 5 below depicts the higher-level theory of change of the UNSDPF, which shows that the framework was indeed aligned with the national priorities. Discussions with stakeholders at the federal and state levels showed that they are agreed that the PF interventions are aligned with the national priorities and by extension, to the SDGs because the framework according to them, was developed using the Vision 20:2020 and ERGP as the basis. In addition, the implementing partners at various levels translate the regular joint planning and implementation between them and UN entities as reflecting national priorities.

Figure 5**: Higher level UNSDPF Theory of Change**
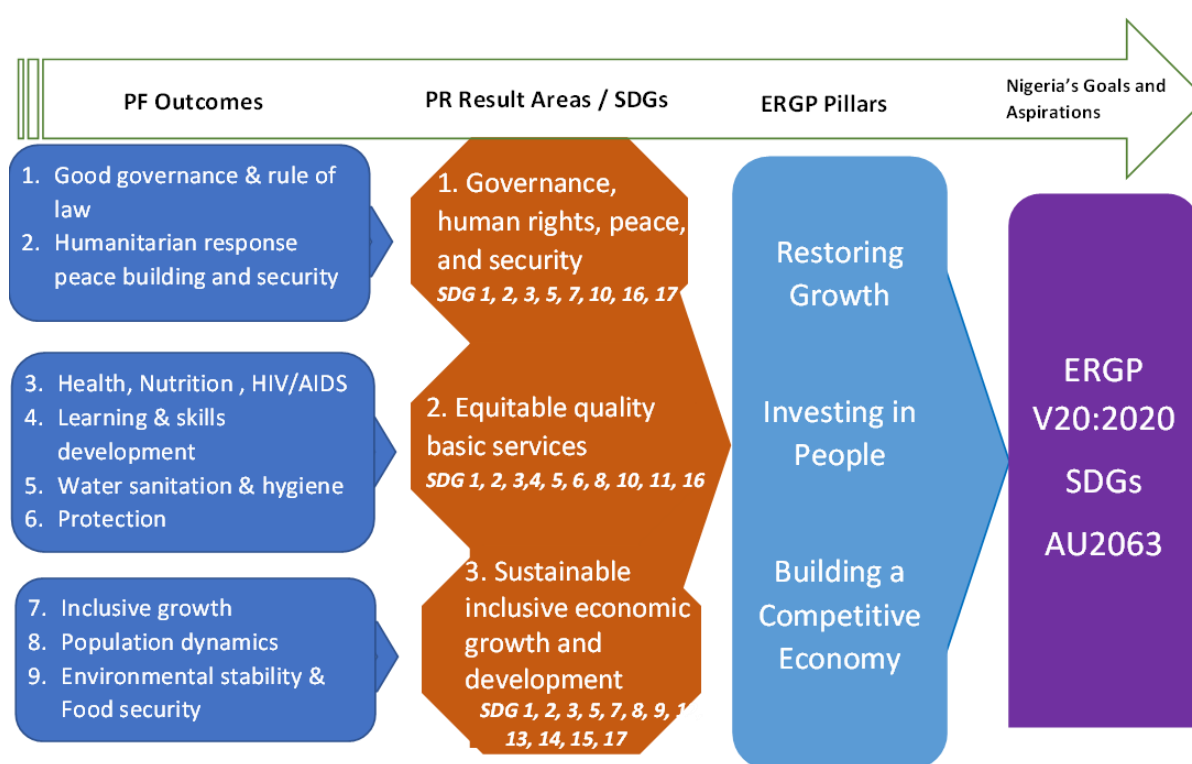
Finding 2: The UNCT draw on a wide range of situation analyses, studies, and mapping of emerging and emergency issues in the country to adapt and ensure the continued relevance of the UNSDPF to both rights holders and duty bearers in development and humanitarian contexts.

The relevance of the UNCT over time focuses on responsiveness throughout the period of UNSDPF implementation. This also includes adaptability and responsiveness to emerging needs and changing contexts from 2018-2022, which is the implementation period. Positive programme

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[19] Ibid

adaptation over the implementation period is evident, and the adaptations can be conceived in two principal areas: (i) transitionary phase from UNDAF III (period of UNSDPF set up in 2017/18); and (ii) during the implementation which witnessed the deepening of the humanitarian crises in Nigeria as well as the global COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the global Spotlight Initiative and the UN reforms. At each of these stages, emerging needs were identified, and responsive actions were taken to address the situation. Summary of the guiding documents informing adaptations at respective stages are indicated in Table 9 below.

During implementation, several activities were conducted to ensure adaptability and relevance: It was mentioned earlier that the annual joint workplans under each of the PF result areas have helped to ensure relevance. On an annual basis since 2018, there have been progress reports produced which assessed the implementation of the PF. These reports, including DaO state reports, usually contain recommendations for ensuring the continued relevance of the PF including adaptations.

Table 9**: Guiding documents informing UNSDPF adaptation**

Transition and design	During implementation
• UNDAF III end of cycle report, 2018 • Common Country Assessment 2016 • Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 • ERGP (2017 – 2020)	• UNSDPF 2018, 2019, and 2020 Joint Workplans • UN Entity CPD documents • One UN response plan to COVID-19 • Humanitarian response plan • DaO workplans and assessments 2018 – 2020 • UNSDPF Annual Review Reports 2018, 2019 and 2020 • National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) (2019 – 2028) • Global spotlight initiative

The outbreak of COVID-19 affected the UNSDPF implementation, and subsequently adjustments and adaptations were made. Focus in 2020 was concentrated on supporting the Government of Nigeria's plans in addressing the health and socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, UN agencies adjusted programming and resources to assist the government in activities implemented against the COVID-19 pandemic. This was presented as the UN Offer, a collective effort to support the Presidential Task Force to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby minimizing the risk of duplication of efforts by UN entities.

The UNCT coordinated the COVID response through a pioneering UN "Basket Fund" approach which mobilized approximately USD 73.3 million from UN, international development partners, and private sector partners and provided a vehicle for a coordinated UN response to the pandemic. To provide strategic guidance and oversight on the direction and execution of the Basket Fund, a board

Box 1: Covid-19 Basket Fund

In the wake of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the UNCT responded by adopting a coordinated response like the HIV and AIDS response – one strategy, one (basket) fund and one UN response mechanism. The UNCT through the RCO mobilised an initial internal funds up to $2 million. This was used to provide medical equipment, as well as supporting the government's logistical capacity to deliver supplies.

The initial mobilisation and coordination were pivotal in the response as most donors saw this as a commendable initiative and either provided funds to the UN or undertook their own initiatives.

The UN Basket Fund has mobilized a total of USD 73.3 million from various sources including the European Union (USD 54.6 million); USD 10.44 million from bilateral donor governments - United Kingdom, Canada, Norway & Switzerland; USD 5.27 million from private philanthropic foundations (Aliko Dangote, Bill and Melinda Gates, and MacArthur); USD 200,000 from the private sector (Maersk)

which comprises the funds donors and representatives of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 was set up with the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and Chairperson of Presidential Task Force (PTF) co-chairing the fund.

The UNCT has also responded to the spike in humanitarian crises in the country. Although the humanitarian response plan evolved slightly earlier than the UNSDPF, the UNCT has nonetheless sought avenues to ensure synergies between the two strategies - the response plan is prepared yearly which would enhance flexibility, agility, and adaptability. In 2016 when the response plan was initiated, there was an estimated 4.6M people affected by the crisis in the North-East of Nigeria, and this has grown to 8.7 in 2021. The response has consistently reached between 5 and 5.32 million people since 2018. The UN initiatives have also averted near-famine situations in the last two years at least. In 2020 for example, the UN contributed to addressing food insecurity of conflict-affected persons by providing a total of 83,472MT of food commodities to 1,195,463 unique individuals and about $67.1 million of cash transfer to 1,252,594 affected population in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.

Elsewhere especially in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, there has been crises initiated by the farmer-herder conflicts resulting in displacement of people. Apart from supporting the finalisation of the National Livestock Transformation Plan (2019-2028), the UN has sought to strengthen economic interdependence between farmers and herders through training on integrated agro-production value chains (seeking opportunities for crop farming and animal production as mutually beneficial value chains). The NLTP is helping to pilot pasture/ranches through land preparation, provision of water harvesting structures for irrigation and animal consumption for farmer-herder communities in participating states – Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau. There was also the Cameroonian refugee response in the South (Cross River, Akwa Ibom etc.) and most recently, the ongoing response in the North-West.

Use of coherent theories of change that can adapt to evolving situations and contexts

> **Finding 3: The UNSDPF logic model was coordinated with national priorities and SDGs but too many outputs and indicators created alignment challenges for individual UN entities at the outset. The introduction of some flexibility regarding Joint Programmes and the use of Joint Workplans facilitated more nuanced implementation.**

It was mentioned earlier that the UNSDPF specified RA ToCs. However, there were many outputs in the ToC, and the document did not necessarily clarify how individual UN entities will contribute to these outputs. It would have been important to define these outputs through consultations with UN entities at the very beginning. Mapping individual UN entity outcomes and higher-level objectives onto these outputs with selected few numbers of indicators, could have helped to streamline the outputs. Indeed, an examination of the UNSDPF results framework showed that the extent to which the UN entities were able to map their interventions onto the PF at the outset, was challenging because of the plethora of output indicators. In addition, there were difficulties in monitoring and reporting against the 192 indicators, because many did not have baselines or targets.

The evaluation team is of the view that the outputs included in the PF should have been pitched at a higher level and far fewer – some of the current output statements are long and sometimes look like activities. Another strategy that could have helped is "turning" the current outputs into

Figure 6: Streamlined UNSDPF Results Chain
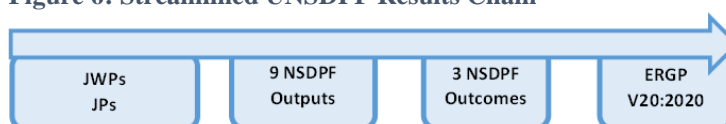
activities and the current outcomes into outputs, while the result areas are the PF outcomes that contribute to Nigeria's priorities (depicted in Figure 6). Doing this would have meant having 47 output indicators and a few numbers of outcome indicators.

Internally, many UN entity country programme document (CPDs) were not necessarily aligned with the PF at the outset and discussions with result area and outcome leads confirmed this observation. It was also stated however, that several changes have happened during implementation especially around how individual agencies contribute to the result area outcomes, particularly through joint programmes like the Spotlight Initiative and the DaO joint workplans. These created the opportunities to improve alignment as the PF implementation progressed over the years. With the development of joint workplans, it was easier to "situate" the outputs and outcomes of the joint plans within the broad frames of the PF outcome areas. This also improved measurement since these JWPs also drew from the individual agency plans.

> **Finding 4: Operationalising a strategic division of labour is challenging and inter-agency coordination and cooperation between entities is often fraught with or undermined by unpredictable and disjointed donor funding.**

There are, in principle, many complementary strengths between UN entities especially around thematic areas – as exemplified by the likes of the Spotlight Initiative, and other joint initiatives. Examples of these strengths are provided in Box 2. However, strategies governing the division of labour and working relationships to realise these complementary strengths are amorphous and aspirational; and this is exacerbated by overlapping mandates between entities.

These challenges between the UN entities were observed by stakeholders especially in the DaO States, as well as by interviewees at the national level. The evaluation heard evidence of multiple cases of secrecy, aggressive and disparaging fundraising, and general suspicion and distrust. Deeper assessment of interviews indicates that apart from the joint workplans or joint programmes, there is an absence of formal structures for agreeing division of labour, and conflict is generally centred around resource mobilization because:

Box 2: Examples of joint working

- UN-EU Spotlight Initiative – UNDP/ UNICEF/ UN Women/ UNESCO/ UNFPA: supporting Nigeria to tackle gender-based violence
- Middle Belt Humanitarian Project – UNDP/ UNCHR/ FAO: supporting Nigeria to address the herdsmen-farmer conflict with a focus on Benue and Nasarawa states
- Peace Building Project – UNDP/ UN Women/ FAO/ OHCHR: supporting an integrated approach to building peace in the farmer-herder crisis with a focus on Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba states
- Social Protection for SDG – UNICEF/ ILO/ UNDP/ WFP/ WHO: supporting Nigeria to improve social protection policies and systems

- UN entities are underfunded and increasingly reliant on non-core funds mobilized at the country-level.
- UN entities are increasingly largely reliant on Official Development Assistance.
- Donors continue to fund programmes bilaterally and not through pooled or joint mechanisms.

Additional challenges include reporting lines of individual UN entities – to HQ and Regional priorities, as well as "partner loyalty" by donors, often creating reporting issues.

4.1.2. UNCT comparative strengths and unique mandate

EQ2	What is the comparative advantage of the UN system in Nigeria, and is the value addition of the UN system well understood and recognised among national and state level stakeholders?

Alignment of UN interventions with its comparative strengths

Finding 5: UNCT comparative strength in addressing the priority needs of Nigeria is based on: (1) leveraging on diversity of skillset/expertise to adapt approaches to programming, (2) convening power to facilitate inter-sector relationships, and (3) having field presence combined with catalytic interventions.

Overall, there was significant consensus across interviews and discussions with stakeholders at all levels, that the diversity and breadth of the UN coverage in Nigeria is unequalled. This is manifested in the unmatched skillset, good practices, convening power and the capacity to work in all contexts; and in responding to the broad spectrum of what needs to be addressed in the country.

The diversity within the UN system provides complementarity and broad coverage. Key informant interview and focus group discussion findings revealed that the specialised UN agencies present in Nigeria can respond to any issue requiring support. The findings made clear that the UN technical expertise in practically all thematic areas such as governance, health, education, gender, HIV and AIDS, WASH, climate change as well as humanitarian and emergency responses in the North-East, Middle Belt, and the Niger Delta region; including services-based field presence addressing these issues provide the qualifications and critical entry points to efficiently address both policy and practice. At the same time, UN capacity to work in every context, from the northern part of the country with fragility to youth restiveness in the Niger Delta, provides unique opportunities to address topical issues and those that are of priority to Nigeria. Beyond effective access to decision makers and practitioners, the UNCT experience in navigating and negotiating the political, cultural, and religious sensitivities across contexts, has also enabled it to engage productively around other topics which even stakeholders addressing these areas fail to address adequately.

As a result of the expertise within the system, the UN has the capacity to adapt approaches to fit the complexity of Nigeria's socioeconomic circumstances. In low-income circumstances, the UN adopts Official Development Assistance (ODA) type activities (project specific activities), while in mid- to high-income circumstances, the UN deploys technical assistance as well as tools and capacity). The UN also brings best practices from other places like the wealth of experience from other regions and continents, and the ability to coordinate across disciplines and to come together and raise funds are a clear comparative advantage of the UN.

The convening power of the UN system and the ability to bring several stakeholders together: the UN system has the capability to bring government, civil society, and the private sector together to forge a common front in responding to critical issues. There is the added advantage of the ability to influence which is linked to its credibility, and the perception of creating an agenda for others to follow and be associated with it. Convening power leverages UNCT positioning and legitimacy both inside and outside the UN system. Within the humanitarian sector for example, UNCT was uniquely placed to lead through leveraging its experience with multisectoral approaches, its capacity to straddle the

development-humanitarian divide, and the legitimacy derived through its leadership in the sector. Stakeholders alluded to the UN's significant contributions to the emergence of the Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs. The UNCT contributions to fostering linkages and nurturing relationships with and between government and civil society actors in the humanitarian response and within other thematic areas such as health, education and HIV/AIDS are widely acknowledged and appreciated by other stakeholders.

The UN is seen as a neutral player: with the capacity to "judge in the interest of others." The UN perceived as honest and objective and is trusted by government and the community and CSOs; so, it is easy to leverage high level partnerships. The UN system is, therefore, able to collaborate with stakeholders who often see other players as biased and hence will only work with the UN. This has the added advantage of donors channelling funds through the UN system.

The share size of Nigeria including the number of states presents a challenge for the UN in choosing where to implement, which tends to reflect more federal level UN support. Institutionally there is the issue of the HQ treating Nigeria as you would other smaller countries. Some government partners also spoke about recent UN reforms in some agencies resulting in a perceived shortage of UN staff.

4.2 Delivering interventions in the Right Ways (Coherence and Efficiency)

This workstream covered evaluation questions 3, 4, and 5, with an overarching frame: how well does the UNSDPF fit and is it being implemented as planned? Key issues explored included coordination, collaboration, complementarity, and additionality of UNSDPF interventions with those of other actors, as well as funding model, partnerships, resource mobilization.

4.2.1. Operational Coherence

EQ3	To what extent has the UN System leveraged strategic partnerships to plan and deliver the UNSDPF outcomes?

According to OECD (2021)[20] the assessment of coherence seeks to answer the question: how well does the intervention fit? For this evaluation, the assessment of coherence sought to answer the question: During the UNSDPF design phase and period of implementation, to what extent has the UN sought collaboration and synergy with interventions of other stakeholders and national policies and to what extent did the collaboration contribute to increased UN relevance?

Coherence of UNSDPF interventions

Finding 6: The Delivering as One (DaO) approach has helped to ensure the coherence of UNSDPF interventions, by bringing together UN entities as well as through broad-based partnerships with governments and civil society at state levels.

As observed under the previous section on relevance, the UNSDPF design is aligned with Nigerian priorities. In the joint statement of commitment within the UNSDPF, it is observed that framework applies the new standard operating procedure for UN coherence, the emphasis on partnerships, the focus on Sustainable Development Goals as the foundation, and its participatory formulation approach with the Nigerian Government and key stakeholders through an elaborate consultative process that upholds the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Under this Partnership Framework, the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the United Nations system are committed to working together in partnership under a fully-fledged 'Delivering as One' modality to implement UNSDPF to contribute essentially to the achievement of the development goals and aspirations of Nigeria[21].

Box 3: Delivering as One

The Delivering as One (DaO) principle are based on the programming focus of enhanced division of labour among UN entities. It has provided an opportunity for UN agencies, government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) and other stakeholders to work together to achieve the UNSDPF in the five DaO states (Bauchi, Cross River, FCT, Lagos & Sokoto). To actualize this collaboration in each state, a joint workplan and budget, aligned with the UNSDPF developed and implemented. Joint annual reports are also presented to the state government to show the results achieved through the DaO mechanism.

Working together in the DaO states strengthened coordination mechanisms in the states, minimized risk of duplication of efforts and resources thereby providing for efficient and effective service delivery by UN to the state government.

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[20]OECD (2021), Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en.
[21] UNSDPF (2018 – 2022)

In consonance with the guidelines for UNSDPF, activities at state levels and where more than one UN agency is providing assistance in a particular state, the Annual Work Plan between the UN and the state has followed the "Delivery as One" modality with a joint work plan to replace agency specific annual work plans. The DaO principles are based on the programming focus of enhanced division of labour for better UN *coherence* and improved outcomes through the UNSDPF for Nigeria[22]. Operationally, therefore, a main purpose of the DaO approach is to ensure coherence for improved UNSDPF outcomes. Coherence can be through three levels of coordination activities: i) avoiding duplications and overlaps and addressing gaps within state-level response; ii) ensuring consistency of services and quality across state level responses; and iii) leveraging the comparative skills of UN entities present in the state to strengthen delivery and policy change.

It was reported to the evaluation team that there has been considerable progress especially in joint work planning with state partners. Indeed, major evidence of collaboration between UN agencies and other implementing partners is the joint workplans which highlight the UN agencies that collaborate with different Implementing/ Responsible Partners to execute different activities jointly identified to bring about the expected outcomes (nine) in respective Result Areas (1 – 3) groups. Working together in the DaO states strengthened coordination mechanisms in the states, minimized risk of duplication of efforts and resources thereby providing for efficient and effective service delivery by UN to the state government. Furthermore, the inclusion and participation of governments, partners and beneficiaries in the design and implementation of activities have been helpful. Engaging closely with Government and supporting their everyday work processes through advisory and technical inputs has yielded excellent results, built trust, and promoted ownership and continuity.

Finding 7: While Joint Workplans are coherent with Nigeria's priorities, it seems that the implementation of the JWP was at individual UN entities' discretion. Non-UN entities within the framework also have a profound influence on planning and delivery of the UNSDPF outcomes

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Findings from the DaO state interactions revealed that UN entities still tended to work in silos and seemed that the extent to which the JWPs were implemented was at the discretion of individual entities. There are several issues that could be responsible for this. Figure 7 tries to depict the implementation arrangements of UN entities. At the lower levels are three sets of potential activities: 1) activities in the DaO states; 2) activities in a non-DaO state, and 3) activities within joint programmes with other entities. There is clarity in how the activities in the DaO states link to the JWP and, hence the PF outcomes and result areas, and by design, joint programmes are aligned to the PF. There is, however, some non-clarity on how the activities outside of the DaO states contribute to the PF. While it is understandable that there will be

Figure 7: **UN entity implementation arrangements**

activities outside the PF, but this can create a perception of lack of coherence within the UN system, and in relation to the PF itself.
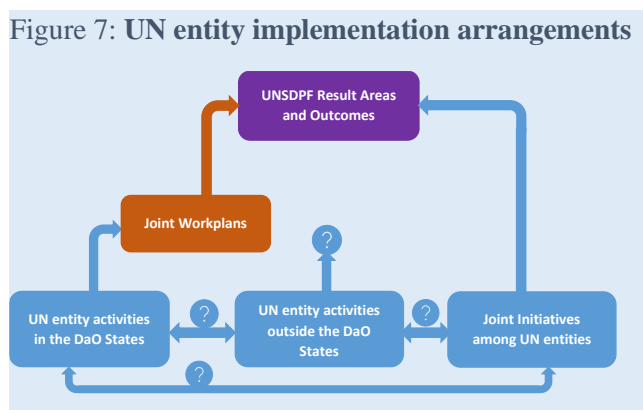
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[22] UNSDPF Implementation Guidelines

The DaO and JWP approach is the ideal, however, non-UN entities within the partnership framework have a major influence on the extent to which the UN System have so far leveraged strategic partnerships to plan and deliver the UNSDPF outcomes. Respondents believed the DaO states themselves, donor agencies, civil society organisations, the private sector, also have special interests which drive them to fund or concentrate more on certain aspects of the work plan than others. Some even have other work plans which they implement in parallel with the joint work plan. The interactions with some UN agencies, implementing partners and beneficiaries of projects, suggest that every statement in the JWPs about collaboration is only partly true. It was observed that working with other organizations either at the same time or in sequence to bring about the intended changes is still a challenge for UN entities because some are still working in silos, while some others have different agendas for involvement. According to a respondent, *"while there is "One Fund purse" into which each UN agencies will mobilise resources, it has not really worked as planned. In DaO states, each agency is still going about implementing its individual work plan."*

Overall, the UN has developed strategic partnerships with several stakeholders in the efforts to ensure operation coherence in implementing the UNSDPF with governments at national and subnational levels, civil society actors, the private sector as well as bilateral and other donors. At the overall national level, the Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning (MFBNP) is the anchor partner and acts as an important interlocutor with the state level agencies. The ministry has a dedicated development coordination office that serves as the interface between the government and development partners.

4.2.2. Operational Efficiency

EQ4	To which extent were the UNSDPF outcomes achieved compared to number of resources, maintenance of minimum transaction costs (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs etc.) and the planned time-framed?

This evaluation question is the first of two efficiency questions and considered the extent to which the UNSDPF strategy is fit-for-purpose, fast and agile enough to seize key opportunities and deliver in a timely manner.

Prioritising funding of UNSDPF RAs

> **Finding 8: While resource allocation and implementation rates have varied across the years from 2018 to 2020, funding of the UNSDPF Result Areas have responded to the development and humanitarian trends in the country.**

Figure 8 below shows the financial outlay for the UNSDPF between 2018 and 2020. The yearly implementation rates were 98%, 81%, and 111% for 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. The 2020 expenditure outturn was due to the additional resources mobilised for the COVID-19 response. In terms of the Results Areas, the bulk (95%) of the expenditure in 2018 was on Equitable Quality Basic Services (RA-2) while the expenditures on Governance, Human Rights, Peace & Security (RA-1), and Environmental Stability & Food Security (RA-3) accounted for 2% and 3% respectively (please see Figure 9 below). The expenditure outlay for 2018 reflected a need to support Nigeria to rapidly make progress towards SDG 3 (health) and SDG 4 (education).

Figure 8**: UNSDPF Financial Summary 2018 - 2020**[23]

Financial Summary 2018-2020

	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020
■ Available Resources	$767,318,011	$559,437,381	$523,153,130
■ Expenditure	$753,629,186	$455,502,807	$582,867,014
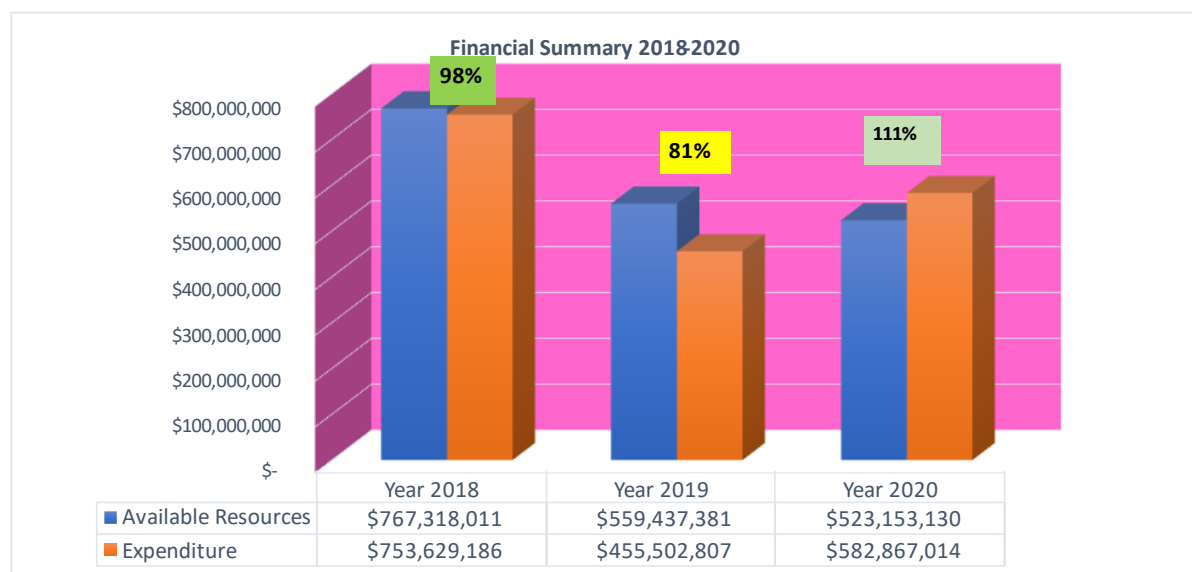
The expenditure distribution for 2019 was more even in 2019 compared to 2018. While Result Area 2 still accounted the highest percentage (52%), RA-1 and RA-3 accounted for 33% and 15% respectively. This trend reflected the UN response to spike in humanitarian crises in the country occasioned by continued insurgency in the North-East and the farmer-herder crisis especially in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. The upward trend in spending for RA-1 continued in 2020. It accounted for 43%, while RA-2 and RA-3 accounted for 52% and 6% respectively.

Figure 9**: Proportion (%) of UNSDPF expenditure by Result Areas, 2018 - 2020**
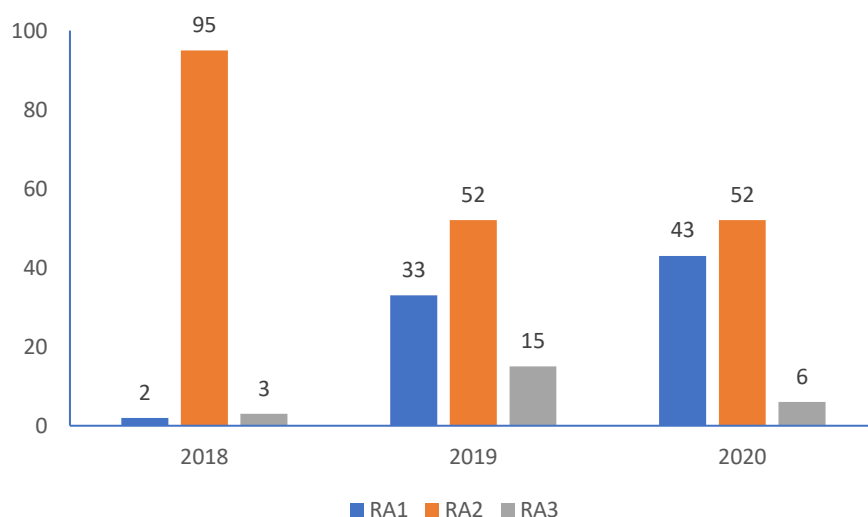

Figure 10 below shows that there has always been a shortfall in the planned versus available resources. As stated in the framework document, an estimated $4.2 Billion is required to deliver the plan, which translates to an annual average of $800 million. In 2018, $767 million was pledged, while $559 million

[23] UN-Nigeria (2020) 2020 UN Annual Results Report, Figure 5

and $523 million were respectively available in 2019 and 2020. As observed earlier, the 2020 expenditure was significantly higher than the originally available funds because there were additional resources available from the COVID-19 funds.

Figure 10**: Planned versus available resources for UNSDPF implementation, 2018 - 2020**
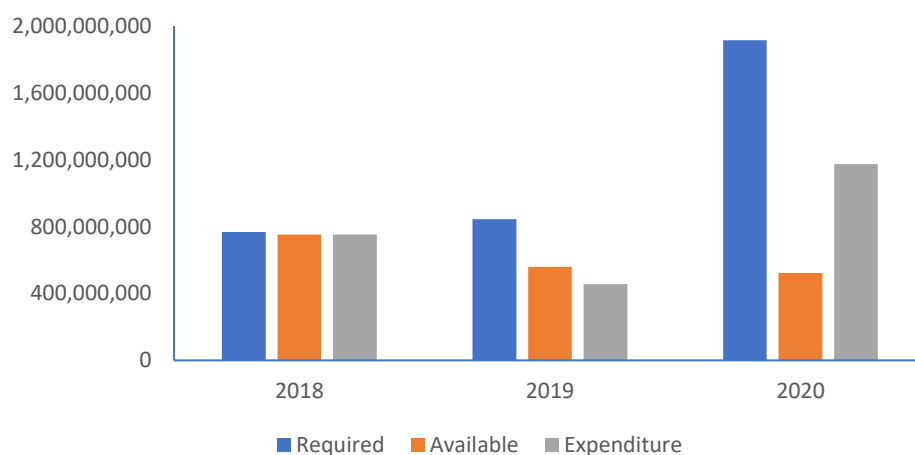
Finding 9: The annual joint work plans with DaO partners creates the opportunities for efficient resource allocation and delivery of the RAs, but the workplans can sometimes be cumbersome and activity-heavy, which can create operational challenges and activity reporting.

Several IPs especially in the DaO States believe that there is technical efficiency and efficient resource utilisation. Overall, there was agreement across the DaO states that resources were well spent based on the financial plans with the states and human resource personnel benefitted immensely from capacity building because of collaboration with UN agencies. According to a respondent, *"funds were used in accordance with government financial protocol and for peoples' needs."*

There was some perception among some stakeholders that there is still a lot of duplication of effort and waste in terms of the interventions between UN agencies, and between UN agencies and other donors, due to overlapping mandates. Some partners also see the UN as very bureaucratic and not so agile or fast – internal processes are slow and sometimes delays occur as things must pass through regional or even global HQ levels. The absence of counterpart funding from government in some instances, also created implementation challenges.

An analysis of the DaO state joint workplans by the evaluation team reveal that they can be quite cumbersome with too many activities, which are written in complicated sentences. For example, the Cross River 2021 workplan has a total of 245 activities and FCT has 126 activities. Whereas Bauchi has 74 activities, the statements are complicated, unclear, or written as indicators within the same work plan. Box 3 provides examples of statements extracted from the Bauchi and Cross River States 2021 joint workplans. The evaluation team believes that the inconsistencies in the joint workplans and the

fact that they are activity-heavy can create operational efficiency challenges as well as for monitoring and evaluation especially for gathering data and reporting against the UNSDPF results framework.

Box 3: Examples of complicated workplan activity statements

Inconsistencies in the way activities are stated in Bauchi State 2021 Joint Workplan are exemplified in the three statements below

3.3.7 Conduct consultative engagement with youths and adolescents form state and LGAs on making primary health care (PHC) facilitates to the adolescent friendly for utilization by youths and adolescents, also youths and adolescent's involvement in Ward Development Committee (WDC) activities

4.2.4 Support the scaling up of foundational literacy and numeracy models (Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), Regio EMILIA) for pre-primary teachers and primary school teachers (Ensure gender parity, targeting female participation (up to 30-50%) for capacity development B2, A3)

5.2.2 Number of schools and health centre's (clinics, hospitals etc.) with Gender sensitive water and sanitation facilities that meet national standards and have been installed in the reporting year only, with UNICEF direct support.

Long and unclear statements in the activity statements of the Cross River State 2021 Joint workplan are exemplified in the two statements below

3.2.29 Support activities targeted at improvement of immunization supply chain data quality and use (supply chain maturity assessment at state level, support monthly data triangulation sessions (programmatic, DISC indicators, standalone EVM assessments) between LIOs, LCCOs and LGA M&E officers for 1 year, capacity building of State Logistics Working Group (SLWG) on data use for action including incorporation of preventive actions into annual state EPI work plans. Select and deploy TSS compliant EPI Logistics Management Information System.

3.3.8 Support the design, dissemination, and implementation of innovative pilots/initiatives to promote AYP participation (adolescent boys and adolescent girls) and other forms of community engagement (Adolescent Kit, Gen U, AYP support groups, gender sensitive AYP friendly spaces, AYP community dialogues etc.)

Finding 10: While the COVID-19 pandemic diverted attention and funds away from the delivery of other UNSDPF outputs/outcomes, the reprogramming, re-budgeting, and resource mobilisation efforts of the UNCT demonstrated the agility of UNSDPF in responding to Nigeria's priorities

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Reprogramming and re-budgeting occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic obviously "diverted" resources away from the delivery of some PF outputs, but the response nonetheless fits into the higher levels of the PF relevance to Nigeria's priorities. The COVID pandemic and the restrictions/lockdown immensely affected the level of implementation of activities especially in 2020. Some activities had to be cancelled, some postponed or shifted to 2021 as mitigation against the spread of COVID 19 and funds re-programmed for COVID 19 related activities. Also, government who are a major UN stakeholder had priorities diverted to address the impact of the pandemic and this affected

the implementation of non-COVID-19 related activities. Nonetheless, re-programming was undertaken to assist the government in activities implemented against the COVID-19 pandemic, and this was presented as the UN offer, a collective effort to support the Presidential Task Force to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby minimizing the risk of duplication of efforts by UN entities.

4.2.3. UNCT leadership and coordination

EQ5	To what extent did UNCT's leadership, interagency coordination mechanisms, and systems enable sufficient resources to be made available in a timely manner to achieve planned results?

This evaluation question is the second of the two efficiency questions and considered how well the UNSDPF implementation has been managed by the UNCT including coordination of the Delivering as One (DaO) states. An additional issue considered was the extent to which the UN interagency coordination mechanisms, including Results Groups, Working Groups, Joint Programmes and the RCO contribute to the achievement of UNSDPF results and their effectiveness in delivering results.

Robust leadership and coordination

Finding 11: The UNCT has provided robust leadership and coordination in driving results through the RCO and PMT, supported by the Results group as well as the M&E, Comms, and Gender technical working groups.

Figure 11**: UNSDPF implementation arrangement structure[24]**

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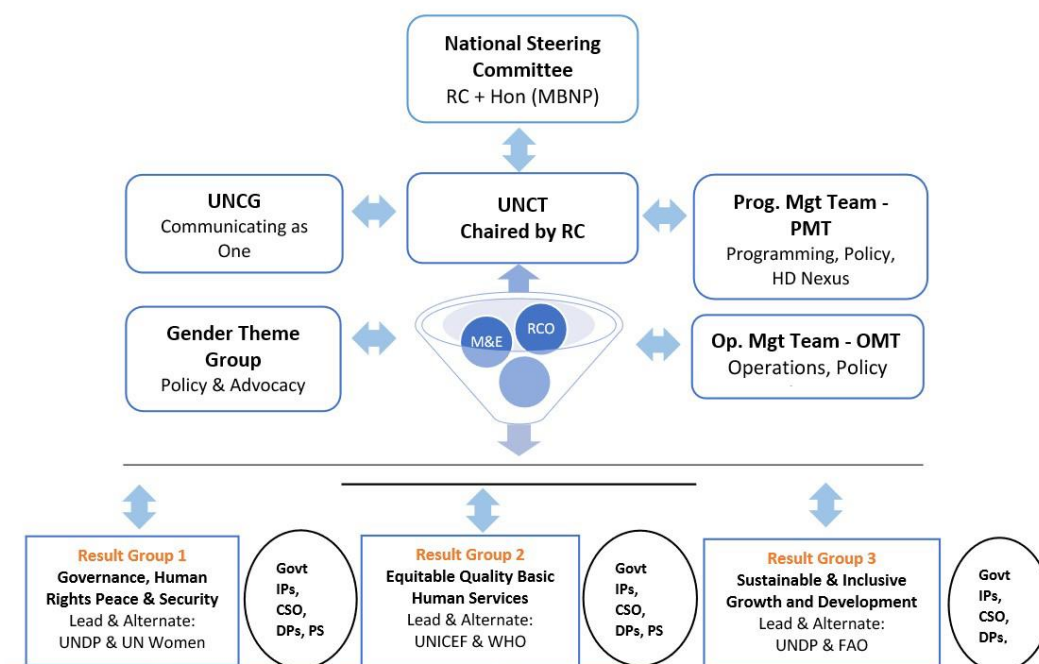
[24] UNSDPF implementation arrangement guide

As envisaged in the UNSDPF arrangement guidelines (Figure11), the PMT has been a good rallying point for coordinating implementation and reporting results against the PF. The PMT has interfaced with the result area and outcome leads to drive implementation – thus ensuring the smooth management and implementation of the PF and to report annually the achievements, which forms an integral part of the RCO annual reporting. On a yearly basis, the UNCT, through its three results area groups, develops three joint workplans to operationalize the UNSDPF. This is cascaded into the DaO workplans.

The RCO has been pivotal in managing relationships within and outside the UN system including resource mobilisation, but also in driving the UN reforms especially around joint programmes, climate change and managing UN Info which measures the PF results. In terms of coordination, the RCO coordinates all UNCT activities. One lead and alternate UN agency is assigned to coordinate the activities within each of the result areas, including in each of the DaO states. The RCO is supported by several groups within the UN system such as the Results Area and Outcome group, the M&E Working Group, the Gender Theme Group, and the UN Communications Group.

The M&E technical working group comprises of M&E staff from the different agencies, and a senior staff from an agency leads the group on a rotational basis. The M&E group manages UN Info, a Management Information System (MIS) platform which tracks the PF and JWP targets. The group regularly produces reports and factsheets to PMT/UNCT on the achievements of the PF targets including financial expenditure and budgets. Beyond this, there are capacity sessions held on specific topics such as gender and human rights within the group, but also bilaterally with IPs – which helps capacitate these partners – for example, the community led monitoring systems by UNAIDS, which has helped in easing the feedback mechanisms from end users of services.

Although there are no formal mechanisms, the group (through individual entities) tries to position strategically beside government for example as part of their annual work plans, and through discussions with the MFBNP and NBS. Often there are national surveys in many parts, agencies within the groups takes part in such surveys, including providing support to the government as well as other partners to evaluate and report against the SDGs but there is no collective support to government as the M&E TWG.

Another important group that has played a key role achieving and delivering on the UNSDPF is the Gender Technical Group (GTG) which comprises focal persons from different UN agencies and the RCO. The GTG actively conducts the annual 16 days of activism to end violence against women and girls, and provides technical guidance to the UNCT, including conducting a gender score card assessment with clear recommendations for improving the integration of gender in implementation of the UNSDPF. Ultimately, this is contributing to the successes being recorded by the UNCT in moving the agenda of the Nigerian Government forward in the actualization of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality).

The United Nations Communication Group (UNCG) also supports UNCT in all communication activities. The group was highly active in supporting UNCT response during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the group developed a crisis communication plan which had four major components: a) Risk communication on non-pharmaceutical interventions; b) Communication of UN support to the country, especially on the one UN response; c) Communication about the consequences of the pandemic & lockdowns; d) Communication to UN staff on the pandemic and response. The group showcased the leadership and solidarity of the UN with Nigeria in the COVID-19 pandemic response through provision of regular updates on the pandemic, wide media coverage of the Basket Fund and

the shipments of equipment into the country as well as supporting the development of policy briefs. Messages were delivered on the importance of building back better.

Additionally, the UNCG produced daily updates on the COVID-19 response which included information about pandemic trends & patterns and specific information on UN intervention for staff. In addition, UNCG produced 12 editions of the UN Nigeria Newsletter to communicate to the public on UN work in Nigeria.

In the interactions with stakeholders, it was generally observed that joint workplans as was conducted as part of DaO state activities and joint programmes such the Spotlight Initiative, were important in projecting the UN activities and providing necessary funding for critical initiatives. With the outbreak of COVID-19, the UNCT mobilised funds to support the government response, and this was praised by partners. The joint analysis and advice to government and the spearheading critical initiatives created opportunities for donors to see the UNCT as a group that can work together, which was helpful in crowding in funds.

Following the UN Secretary General's launch of the global framework for immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, the UNCT collaborated with key partners to produce the Nigeria COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP). The Nigeria SERP document was launched in November 2020 and since then UNCT Nigeria has reported twice (Q3 & Q4 2020) on its contribution to the global SERP indicators through UNIFO which is available on the global COVID-19 data portal. In 2020 UNCT, through the nomination of focal persons from each agency, worked together to produce 25 diagnostic CCA papers as a prelude to producing the CCA document.

Finding 12: A results-based management system is in place, but there are challenges to its optimal implementation and use for UNSDPF because of issues related to data collation.

UN Info, the Management Information System (MIS) managed by the RCO to track the PF and JWP targets represents a robust Result-Based Management (RBM) system. The platform integrates workplans and targets, with the regular production of reports and factsheets on the achievements of the PF targets including financial expenditure and budgets, which made available to the PMT/UNCT. To enable all of these to happen, the system relies on data that is collated and made available by the RA and outcome leads, which should happen annually. There are, however, some challenges:

- The plethora of indicators in the UNSDPF results framework (239 in all) and the absence of baseline data for many of these indicators makes collating information and reporting progress a bit challenging. Part of the challenge stems for deciding which sets of indicators to collate data and report against.
- RA and Outcome leads often submitted data/results late, and not all nominated staff on these groups participate meaningfully. Non-participation is partly attributable to "incentives" because such staff tend to see these as add-ons to their normal activities

4.3. Delivering the Right Results (Effectiveness and Sustainability)

This workstream covered evaluation questions 6, 7, and 8, with an overarching frame: how effective is the UNSDPF at meeting the expected results of the strategy, and how sustainable are the results? This workstream assessed what has worked and what has not worked, missed opportunities, lessons learnt and recommendations, to feed into the next strategy. Issues that were explored included achievement of strategic objectives including against the UNSDPF results framework, and the likelihood of sustainability of results achieved including ownership by country partners. The extent to which UNDAF principles were mainstreamed into implementation, was also considered.

4.3.1. Contribution to results

EQ6	To what extent has the UNSDPF contributed to progress made towards Nigeria's development priorities as espoused in the plan?

This evaluation question explored several interrelated issues as follows: i) What progress has been made in meeting the results defined in the UNSDPF at outcomes and outputs levels? ii) To what extent did these results contribute to the achievements of the SDGs? iii) What are the challenges and opportunities (external or internal, including COVID-19) that have hindered or facilitated progress towards the achieving the expected results? iv) Are the UNSDPF outcomes and outputs still relevant or require a review? and v) What lessons can be learnt/drawn for future programming and implementation? We have provided a detailed synopsis of achievements in Annex 8.

Contribution to result area outcomes and outputs

Finding 13: There is progress being made in meeting the UNSDPF results, while the UNCT has been effective in aligning the three result areas with national targets, as well as the SDGs among the national and sub national partners including government and civil society.

There is progress being made in meeting the UNSDPF results as planned. The Nigeria 2020 UN Country Results Report[25] showed that out of the 47 outcome indicators, 28% of the indicators fully achieved/surpassed the targets for the year, 13% achieved between 76 – 99% of the target while another 10% of the targets were partially achieved at (26 – 75%) (please see Figure 12 below). The report also showed that out of the 192 output indicators, 42% of the indicators fully achieved/surpassed the targets for the year, 13% achieved between 76-99% of the target while another 9% of the targets were partially achieved at (26-75%). Furthermore, 2% of the indicators recorded low achievement of between (1-25%) while another 2% did not record any achievement.

In addition, the financial expenditure rate was 111% for 2020 because of the additional funds that were mobilized for COVID-19. The performance in terms of the indicators (28% achieved/surpassed) seems low compared to the high expenditure rate (111%) and this may be because of insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic, which hinder implementation.[26] Other challenges that have been identified include inadequate funding including government counterpart funding, low capacity of some

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[25] Nigeria 2020 UN Country Results Report. Pages 7-8
[26] Nigeria 2020 UN Country Results Report. Pages 30 – 31

government partners, government bureaucracy, and the sociocultural environment especially concerning gender issues.

Figure 12**: Percent achievement rates for the NSDPF Outcome and Output Indicators, 2020**
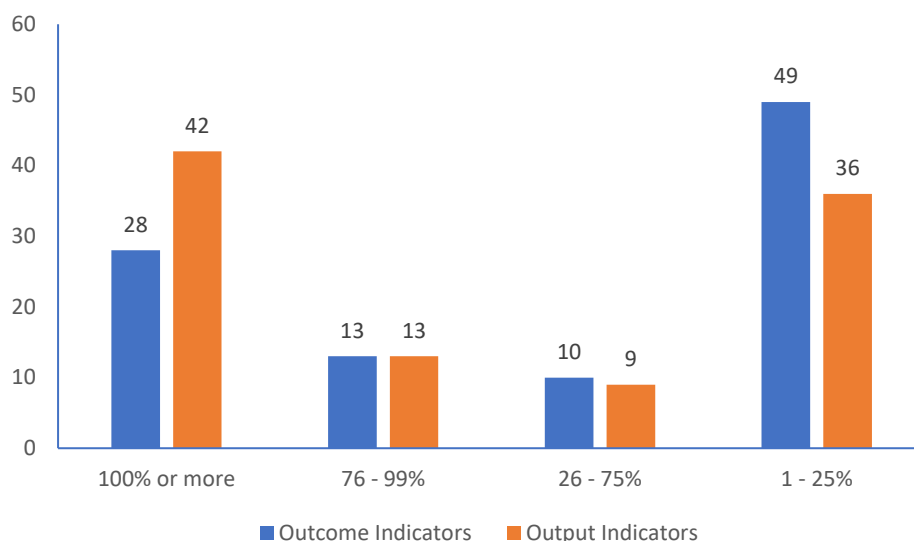
The UNCT has been effective in building and consolidating partnerships and aligning the three result areas, national targets, as well as the SDGs among the national and sub national entities, civil society groups, donors, IFIs and the private sector. The effectiveness of the UN in building partnerships to respond to national needs is demonstrated in the response of the UNCT in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the establishment of a Basket Fund for a One UN Response in support the Nigerian Government's Response. The UN Basket Fund for COVID-19 Response has mobilized a total of USD 73.3 million from various sources including the EU (USD 54.6 million); USD 10.44 million from bilateral donor governments - United Kingdom, Canada, Norway & Switzerland; USD 5.27 million from private philanthropic foundations (Aliko Dangote, Bil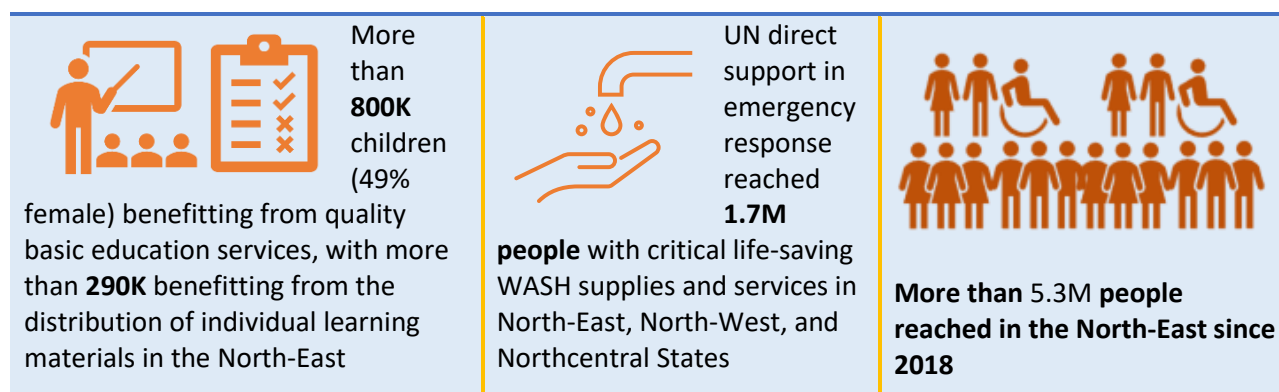l and Melinda Gates, and MacArthur); USD 200,000 from the private sector (Maersk); and USD 2.8 million from the UN System.[27] The One UN COVID-19 Response Basket Fund is a good example of effective joint UN programming for resource mobilization, implementation of interventions, and collaboration with the private sector in line with national priorities.

Under the Result Area 1, the UNCT made big steps forward in the scale of humanitarian action during the scope of the evaluation, with UN direct support in emergency and humanitarian action reaching more than five million people in North-East Nigeria since 2018 (see figure 13 below). In 2020, UN action reached more than 800,000 children with quality basic education in the North-East, and 1.7 million with water, sanitation and hygiene supplies and services in the North-East, North-West, and North-Central states. In 2019, approximately 129,000 people (56,760 males and 72,240 females) were reached in **Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states with resilience building and asset creation activities.** These include individual and communal asset creational activities derived from a **"bottom up" community based participatory planning process (CBPP)** conducted across operational locations.

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[27] One UN COVID-19 Response for Nigeria Basket Fund Project. Annual Progress Report May 2020 to April 2021. Page 76

Figure 13: **UNCT Humanitarian and emergency response, 2020**

More than **800K** children (49% female) benefitting from quality basic education services, with more than **290K** benefitting from the distribution of individual learning materials in the North-East

UN direct support in emergency response reached **1.7M** **people** with critical life-saving WASH supplies and services in North-East, North-West, and Northcentral States

More than 5.3M **people reached in the North-East since 2018**

In 2019, the UNCT supported the Humanitarian Coordinator in leading the **United Nations Nigeria Humanitarian Fund—Private Sector Initiative (NHF-PSI)** led by a Steering Group of fourteen Nigerian business leaders whose companies have elected to 'Invest in Humanity' as NHF-PSI founder donors. The UNCT also established a multi-partner coordination forum to support the implementation of the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP). One of the outcomes was a decision to conceptualize a dashboard dedicated to the **implementation of programmes to ensure harmonious relationship between farmers and herders in Nigeria**, particularly in the front-line states in the Middle Belt and North-Central regions of the country. Through strategic partnerships and engagements with Government, NGOs, and communities at various levels, the UNCT **influenced policies, institutions, and processes on the protection of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees in Nigeria**, including the provision of 100 hectares of land by the Benue state government and 500 hectares by the Cross Rivers state government for use as settlements and farming for Cameroonian refugees.

Also in the Result Area 1, the UNCT provided support to the 2019 general elections. In addition to conducting voter education on citizens' voting rights reaching 10 million women and men, the UN held high-level dialogue with political parties' leadership and the signing of a comprehensive charter for increased participation of women in the 2019 general elections as well as an agreement of good conduct to ensure violence-free elections. The UN supported the establishment of **a network of 1,665 affiliates of women groups** to foster collective leadership and increase women's participation in political governance and, engagement in peace and security and sustainable development in all sectors and at all levels and supported the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to develop a bill on Women Participation in Election Support (WOPELS). During the elections, the UNCT supported the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** to deploy 900 domestic electoral observers in all 36 states of the federation. In Bayelsa and Kogi state, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were provided to engender women's participation and promotion of women's image in the elections. The UN also supported election observation and early warning systems in Ekiti and Osun states during their 2018 gubernatorial elections. With UNCT support 50 young women joined political parties in Kogi state.

In addition, under result Area 1, the UNCT provided support to peace building and security. In a bid to reduce violence, 6 states (Benue, Ekiti, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Osun and Taraba) were supported to deploy Early Warning and Early Response Systems (EWERS) with 248 women groups Network on peacekeeping established, 5 national institutions (the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, the Nigerian Police Force, the Nigeria Defence Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) have their capacities to resolve dispute increased and at the end of the day 14,586 disputes were resolved. With UN support, 37,896 arms and ammunitions were recovered with 826 re-integrated minimal risk Non-State Arms Group (NSAGs) provided services.

UNCT facilitated an enabling environment for the actualization of good governance and rule of law, the support provided resulted in the development of a law marker's guide in the adoption of gender sensitive laws and performance of oversight functions in line with the provision of UNSCR 1325. Also, seven policies and plans were developed with UNCT support. These include:

- Women Participation in Elections Support Bill
- Nigerian Suppression of Piracy and other Maritime Crimes Offences Bill
- Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Bill
- National Strategy to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime in Nigeria 2022-2026.
- National Anti-Corruption Strategy, NACS (2017-2021)
- National Drug Control Master Plan
- National Policy and Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour

On gender issues, with support from UNCT, five government institutions developed and implemented their gender policies. These institutions include the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, the Nigerian Police Force, the Nigeria Defence Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). Also, gender desks were established in NSCDC across the 36 states of the federation, including Abuja.

On Human Rights, UNCT facilitated the establishment of human rights desks in five states (Adamawa, Borno, Nassarawa, Kogi, and Lagos) and FCT and the release of 2,060 children and juveniles from military detention and correctional facilities.

In terms of the trends in achievements under Result Area 1, annex 9B1 shows that despite the UNCT efforts and those of the FGN, the targets in the UNSDPF Results Area 1 indicators were largely unmet. Nigeria is rated as partially free on the freedom in the world index (4.5 index) as it banned the use of Twitter social media in the country in 2021. Nigeria ranked 120 out of countries in terms of press freedom. Public corruption is still high; Nigeria has dropped five places in the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) index, according to Transparency International (TI). It is Nigeria's second consecutive year of a downward spiral on the TI's CPI ranking, the country's score has dropped from 26 in 2019 to 25 in the 2020 assessment, and further to 24 in the latest 2021 record.

Gender inequality is rife in Nigeria. The country ranked 139th on the Gender Gap Index in 2021. Despite strong advocacy and appeals for the adoption of legislative reforms and temporary special measures to address the low representation of women in politics, the resistance by male politicians and gatekeepers remains fierce. Thus, representation of women in parliament remains extremely low (4%).

Table 2 in annex 9B1 shows that between 2018 and 2022, **Nigeria's democracy index** overall score has remained within the range of 4.10 and 4.44 placing it under the "hybrid regime". The trend in the scores in each of the five governance components shows that between 2018 and 2021, the only component that showed improvement was "political participation". There has been a decline in the "electoral process and pluralism," "functioning of government," and "civil liberties," while the index for "Political culture" has remained the same.

Under the Result Area 2, the UNCT's sustained advocacy in 2018 led to the institutionalization of the nutrition budget which contributed to **budget releases totaling NGN 886 million in 20 states**. Similarly, the UN facilitated the development of an investment case for health and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health care in two states and in the Federal Ministry of Health.

In 2020, with the UN's support, a draft planning tool, Education Sector Performance Assessment Tool (ESPAT), was developed in collaboration with the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and other state officials like Commissioners, Permanent Secretaries, Secretaries of State Government and House Committee Members on Education. The tool is expected to be used as a self-assessment tool for states on the holistic coverage, implementation, and compliance with sector plans. It is planned that the tool will launch in 2022.

The UNCT has continued to support the school enrolment drive. In 2019 for example, the UNCT support led to the enrolment of close one million children (914,025 – 47% of which were females) in schools across 11 states.

Figure 14**: UNCT support to education, 2019**

| More than **13K children** benefitted from the Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) which resulted in the increase of girls' attendance by 35.5 per cent in two focus states (Kebbi and Zamfara) | More than **800K children** provided with individual education/ learning materials and close to **400K school aged children** received psychosocial support | **The** establishment of **2,475 Girls4Girls (G4G) and HeForShe (He4She) groups** enabled over **135,080 children** to participate and raise their voices on school related issues that affect girls. |

Also in 2019, close to 14,000 (13,797) children benefitted from the Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) which resulted in the increase of girls' attendance by 35.5 per cent in two focus states (Kebbi and Zamfara), while 10,200 girls were supported to attend schools in Sokoto state (see Figure 14 above). 835,871 children were provided with individual education/ learning materials while 369,446 school aged children received psychosocial support. In addition, the establishment of 2,475 Girls4Girls (G4G) and HeForShe (He4She) groups enabled over 135,080 children to participate and raise their voices on school related issues that affect girls.

For the trends in the achievements under Result Area 2, annex 9B2 draws from several data sources including the National Demographic Surveys (NDHS, 2013, 2018), the National Education Information Management System (NEMIS, 2018) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS, 2016 and preliminary 2021 results); and **shows that the collective efforts of FGN, the UN and other players have led to good trends in the delivery of basic services (Result Area 2).** Figures 1 – 4 in the annex show that in the education related indicators:

- Gross enrolment rates for pre-primary for both boys and girls, and nationally are progressing towards set targets from 2016/17 till 2018/19, whereas for primary education there is a decline within the same period. Gross enrolment rates at the junior secondary level for girls has already attained the set target of 53% for 2022, while it declines for boys within the same period.

- Gender parities increased at the primary and junior secondary levels of education between 2016/17 and 2018/19 and have already superseded the targets for 2022, respectively.
- Completion rates at the primary level decreased for boys, girls and nationally between 2016/17 and 2018/19 and picked up in 2022 for boys, though did not reach the national set target of 91%
- Adult literacy rates nationally and for males progressed towards 2022 target, while the rate for females declined, moving further from the 2022 target. For youth literacy, the gain in result in 2018/19 over the baseline year was lost and a decline of approximately 9 points from 2018/19 to 2020/21 for males, females and nationally was observed.

The health-related indicators show that (Figures 5 – 9 in Annex 9B):

- The percentage of livebirths attended by skilled health personnel improved from 38% at baseline in 2017 to 50.7% in 2021
- Percentage of children 12-23 months that are fully immunized improved from 25% at baseline to 35.6% in 2021
- Percentage of women with a live birth who received a postnatal check-up in the first two days after giving birth improved from about 48% in 2017 to more than 60% in 2021.
- The adolescent childbearing and pregnancy rates have reduced from 22% in 2017 to 11% in 2021

Available results on the nutritional status of children under 5 (Annex 9B2, Figure 10 - 11) shows that stunting reduced only by 0.2% between 2016 and 2018/2019, and childhood wasting also reduced marginally from 7.5% to 6.8% in the same period. In the same period, anaemia rate among pregnant women reduced from 67% to 57.8%.

Further achievements under the Result Area 2 include the advocacy efforts of UN and partners in 2018 that led to a presidential declaration of a state of emergency in the WASH sector and the launch of a National WASH Action Plan. About **661,127 persons** were reached with basic water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services, while hygiene messages and hygiene kits were delivered to over 1.5 million people, mostly women and children (target: 530,000 -135% target reached).
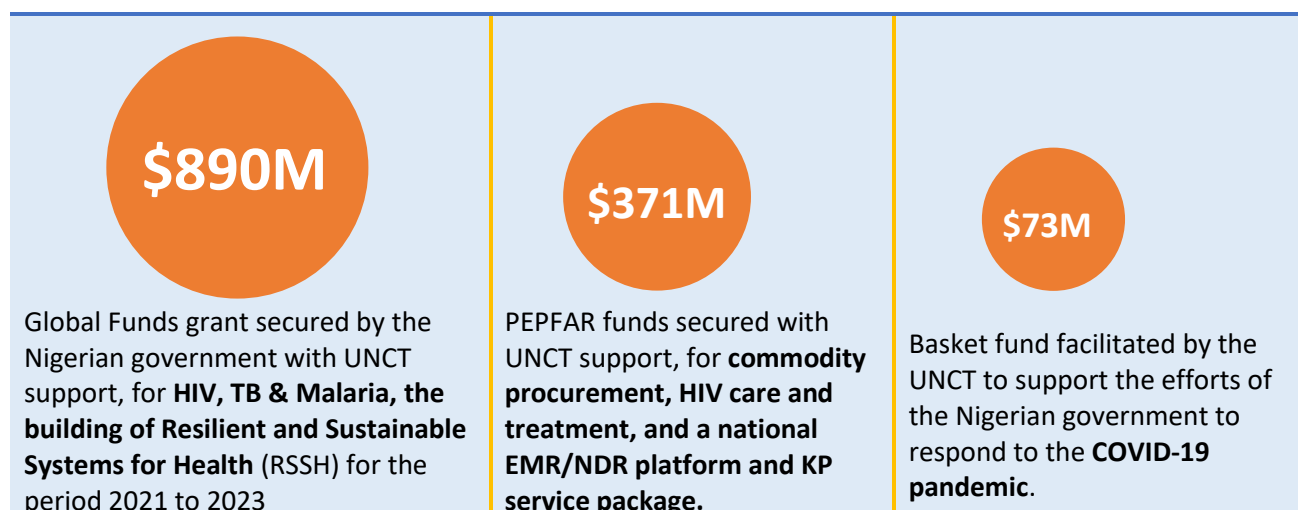
WASH indicators (Annex 9B2, Figure 13) show that at baseline in 2016/17, the proportion of households with improved source of drinking water in rural areas was 57%. This rose to about 76% in 2021. During the same period, the proportion of the population practicing open defecation reduced from about 25% to 22% and the proportion having an improved sanitation facility improved from 29% to about 58%.

Additional notable achievement under the Result Area 2 is the UNCT support towards the development of 5th generation National Malaria Strategy plan 2021-2025. Also, with support received, 23 states finalized their Annual health Operational Plans (AOP) for 2021. **Through support provided to the Legislative Network for Universal (LNU) health coverage to advocate for legislation of policy and plans, five health laws were drafted/reviewed** including i) the National Health Insurance Authority Bill, ii) Mental Health Bill, iii) Pandemic Response Bill, iv) Infectious Diseases Bill and v) Six Months Maternity Bill. Approval of the developed National Multi-Sectoral Policy for Aging by National Executive Council (NEC) for implementation and establishment of senior citizen centres.

Annex 9B2 (Figure 12) shows that the proportion of states with HIV anti-stigma laws passed and national policies put in place and national tools reviewed and adopted addressing the vulnerability of populations at risk increased from 22% at baseline in 2016/17 to about 28% in 2018/2019.

With support from UNCT, the Nigerian Government secured a Global Fund grant of US$ 890 million for HIV, TB & malaria, the building of resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH) for the period 2021 to 2023, and USD $ 70 million to assist with COVID-19. The country also secured USD $371 million through PEPFAR for commodity procurement, HIV care and treatment, and a national Electronic Medical Record (EMR)/ National Data Repository (NDR) platform and key populations (KP) service package (please see figure 15 below).

Figure 15: **Funds mobilized/secured by the Nigeria government with UNCT support, 2020**

$890M

Global Funds grant secured by the Nigerian government with UNCT support, for **HIV, TB & Malaria, the building of Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health** (RSSH) for the period 2021 to 2023

$371M

PEPFAR funds secured with UNCT support, for **commodity procurement, HIV care and treatment, and a national EMR/NDR platform and KP service package.**

$73M

Basket fund facilitated by the UNCT to support the efforts of the Nigerian government to respond to the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

In addition, because of the support provided by UNCT to government, Nigeria committed USD $12 million to the Global Fund (GF) and the commitment resulted in 30% in efficiency gains, guaranteeing value for money as well as ensuring a reliable supply of quality antiretroviral medicines and other HIV health products. Commitment to continued domestic resource mobilization was further illustrated through the development and launch of the National Blueprint for Integration of HIV into state health insurance schemes.

In the area of social protection, with UN support, i) Violence Against Persons Prohibition law domesticated in 31 states; ii) Child Act rights adopted in 30 states; iii) National GBV data situation room established; iv) National social register consolidated and v) over 2.1 million people provided social protection services. UN Advocacy efforts resulted in strengthened Legal and policy framework for social protection as follows:

i) National Social protection Policy

ii) The Disability Right Law

iii) national policy and plan of action on FGM

iv) Prevention, Prohibition, & Redressal of Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Educational Institutions

Notable achievements under the Result Area 3 include the UNCT support in 2018, to federal and state emergency management institutions on disaster risk and emergency response planning skills to ensure sustainable food security for vulnerable population which resulted to the **feeding of about 1.1 million people in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states monthly reaching almost 1.3 million people at the peak**.

Figure 16: **Outcomes of UNCT support to innovations to boost agricultural production, 2019**

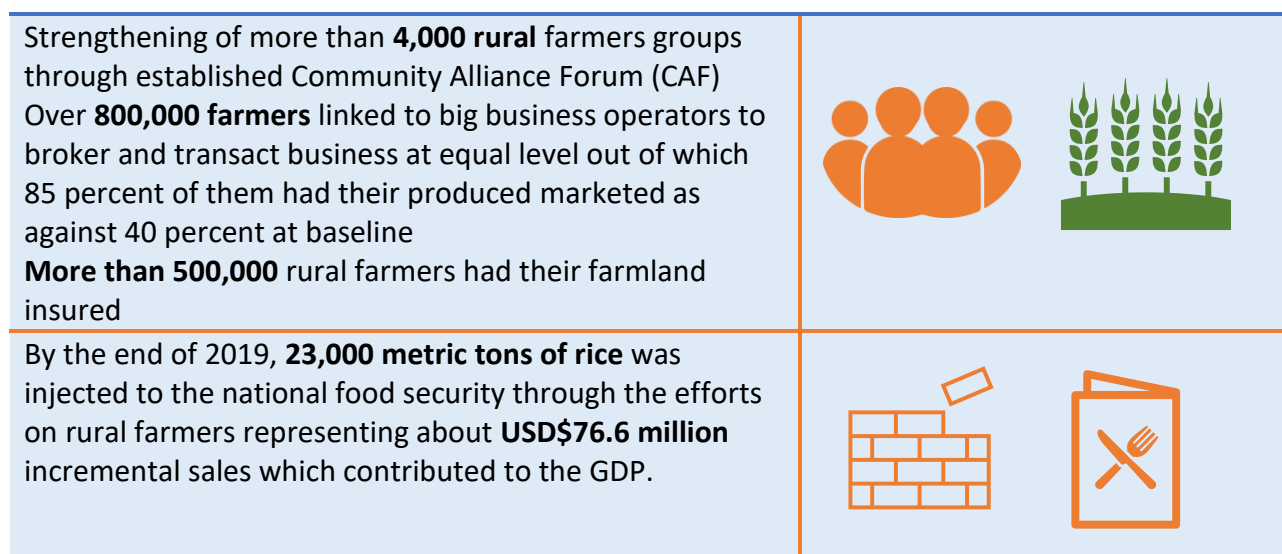|	
Strengthening of more than **4,000 rural** farmers groups through established Community Alliance Forum (CAF) Over **800,000 farmers** linked to big business operators to broker and transact business at equal level out of which 85 percent of them had their produced marketed as against 40 percent at baseline **More than 500,000** rural farmers had their farmland insured	
By the end of 2019, **23,000 metric tons of rice** was injected to the national food security through the efforts on rural farmers representing about **USD$76.6 million** incremental sales which contributed to the GDP.	

Figure 16 above shows some of the results of the UNCT support through the introduction of innovative ways to boost agricultural support and improve livelihood. Some of the outcomes of innovations introduced in 2019 include:

- 4,000 rural farmers groups through established Community Alliance Forum (CAF)
- Over 800,000 farmers linked to big business operators to broker and transact business at equal level out of which 85% of them had their produced marketed as against 40% at baseline
- Significant drop in post-harvest losses and doubling of farmers income
- Big private produce buyers patronizing supported farmers to secure raw materials for their agro-industries, adaptation of climate reader by smallholder farmers
- Enhanced farmers' resilience against climate change through irrigation facility provide to smallholder farmers
- More than 500,000 rural farmers had their farmland insured
- By the end of 2019, 23,000 metric tons of rice was injected to the national food security through the efforts on rural farmers representing about USD $76.6 million incremental sales which contributed to the (GDP).

In terms of the trends in the achievements under Result Area 3, annex 9B3 shows that in relation to the % share of targeted sectors in real GDP growth, the figures shrunk in the agriculture sector since baseline and moved farther away from the 2022 targets. Increased insecurity has particularly hit the agriculture sector as many farmers have now deserted their farms for fear of kidnapping. While ease of doing business has improved across the country, power (Electricity) continues to restrict the extent to which industries can operate, and the figures also shrunk for industries.

In terms of population dynamics, while there was no census conducted in 2020 as stipulated, all processes are in place for the conduct of the census in 2023 including institutional capacity building, trainings, review of tools and pilots. Three socio-economic and demographic surveys (Landscape analysis, UNFPA supplies surveys and MICS) were conducted.

In the area of empowerment and employment, 1,380 women farmers transitioned from less formal to decent and sustainable work, over 10,000 people gainfully employed, and the Jubilee Fellowship

programme launched in 2021 to provide opportunities for 20,000 youths annually to reduce youth unemployment.

There is evidence that in the communities, UNSDPF interventions resulted in positive changes including demand for, and provision of various services (health, education, livelihood, etc.), stigma reduction and inclusion of women, girls, young people, and people living with disabilities. In **Sokoto state**, stakeholders told the evaluation team that the recent enactment of the Child Protection Act which had been stalled for the past 20 years is a big achievement to the UN interventions. Another achievement is the establishment of the Disabled Commission and its funding, provision of skills acquisition centres for women and young people. Stakeholders also spoke of improvements in women attendance at ante-natal and post-natal immunization clinics. Religious leaders have participated actively in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and other harmful practices in the state (see Annex 11). For instance, people are now speaking openly about sexual harassment/violence in communities, with evidence of follow up on violence cases, with reported reductions in the neglect on victims of sexual abuse and rights. There was also reported reduction in child hawking and improvements in school enrolment with children being allowed to pursue education.

Evidence from **Bauchi state** shows that it is the only state in the country that has an agency to address key infectious diseases which follows the WHO recommendations to combine HIV, malaria, leprosy, and tuberculosis. Called the Bauchi State Agency for the Control of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Leprosy and Malaria (BACATMA), the agency uses a multi-sectoral approach for interventions including traditional and religious leaders, Ward Development Committees (WDC), media, other MDAs (e.g., education, sports, LG, finance, etc.). The First Lady is the chairperson for advocacy and community social mobilisation. There is also evidence of increased awareness on GBV and provision of services through GBV referral networks. Networking and partnerships with Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and relevant ministries like women affairs, health, education, etc., as well as engaging women development officers in all LGAs are reported to be contributing to these results from UNFPA.

In **Lagos state**, the Spotlight Initiative has enabled the provision of professional medical and psychosocial services to survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), while the capacities of service providers such as police officers, medical practitioners, counsellors and social workers, community leaders etc. have been built on prevention, response, and provision of professional support services to survivors of SGBV. It was also observed that the UNCT partnership with Lagos State Coconut Development Authority (LASCODA) in developing the Coconut Value Chain has contributed to:

 i. Development of the up-, mid-, and down- stream sector of the Coconut value chain

 ii. Capacity building for LASCODA and value chain actors

In **Cross Rivers state**, it was reported that the UNCT intervention as part of the DAO strategy in the state has been most effective and greatly contributed to the achievements of the SDGs goals; pointing out that the intervention assisted in the progress made in the state's 30-year economic development plan through capacity development programmes. The UNCT support has also been instrumental to building the capacity of the state's Forestry Commission for effective M&E.

In the **Federal Capital Territory (FCT)**, community people from Tukuruwa Community, Pai Ward of Kwali Area Council told the evaluation team that it took them between 2-3 hours to get water from a pond until the UN through UNICEF provided a borehole for them. Now, women do not fetch water

from the pond, and residents no longer go to the bush to ease themselves and they wash their hands after using toilet to prevent infections. It was also reported that because of collaboration with UN, the institutional capacity of the FCT Universal Basic Education Board has been built to the extent that they developed their Strategic Basic Education Plan (2020 – 2023). Respondents also mentioned that because of the success of the school gardening interventions being implemented in five Junior Secondary Schools in Abuja Municipal and Kuje Area Councils, there is growing interest from other schools and area councils.

In **Nasarawa state**, it was reported that through technical and financial support being provided by UN, there is good collaboration among relevant government agencies. It was mentioned that stakeholders such as Ministry of Health, Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency, State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Ministry of Finance, Budget and Planning, National Orientation Agency, State Agency for the Control of AIDs; participate in the planning and end of the year review of interventions in the state.

There were opportunities that facilitated the progress towards the achievement of results. At national and state level, there is enabling policy environment, good understanding, and availability of government staff who are committed resulting in good collaboration with government and other partners for effective delivery of interventions. The UN has access to government at the highest level and has access to key donors which provides an opportunity for advocacy and mobilization of resources. The fact that there are also many donors supporting government provides an opportunity to leverage resources and collaborate on projects. In addition, there are civil society and faith-based organisations that are in touch with the grassroots and community structures such as religious and traditional leaders who are willing to collaborate with the UN. Under the Delivering as One initiative, the development of joint workplans has provided an opportunity for strong collaboration with government.

There have been **several challenges** that have hindered the progress towards achievement of the expected results. **Inadequate funds and human resources**, as well as low capacity of available human resources in government are key challenges to the achievement of UNSDPF results. In particular, the resources needed to implement the workplans are usually far higher than the available resources within the UN resulting in a low implementation rate. The UNSDPF looks more like a resource mobilization tool for the UN and in situations where the resources cannot be mobilised, the activities are not implemented. There are also insufficient resources for supervision including poor data management systems as well as bureaucratic bottlenecks in government. Inadequate funding has resulted in delayed or non-implementation of planned interventions by UN agencies and a tendency for UN to be more effective at the upstream (national) level.[28] Stakeholders were also of the opinion that the UN deals more with policy work and less with technical work. In addition, the UN processes are bureaucratic which slows down their ability to respond quickly.

The widespread insecurity constituted a key challenge to implementation and monitoring of interventions, a situation that has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic response that further restricted movement of people, goods, and services. In addition, COVID-19 resulted in funds being diverted from other activities to the pandemic response.

Other challenges include **political interference** in delivery of projects resulting in appointment of inappropriate personnel, difficulty in mainstreaming gender, and the perception that the UN is working

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[28] Mid-Term Review of UNDP Nigeria Country Programme Document 2018 – 2022, Final Report February 2020. Pages 16 and 29

to destroy the norms and culture, all of which contribute to lack of ownership of projects by the communities. In some instances, the selection of local government areas for UN interventions is done in Abuja and sent to the states for implementation, which oftentimes leads to friction.

Relevance of UNSDPF Outcomes and Outputs

The evaluation team is of the view that the UNSDPF outcomes and outputs still relevant but require revisions to refocus on the emerging priorities of the country. There should be a thinking through on whether to include outputs in the next CF, and if so, to consider joint outputs. Figure 17 depicts the overarching results chain going forward. As observed previously, the UN entities CPD outcomes/objectives are currently not well aligned to joint outputs in the UNSDPF. In line with the suggestions under coherence, the evaluation suggests that the current outcome areas of the PF should be turned into "joint outputs" to which individual UN entities will contribute.

Figure 17: **Suggested UNSDPF results chain – going forward**
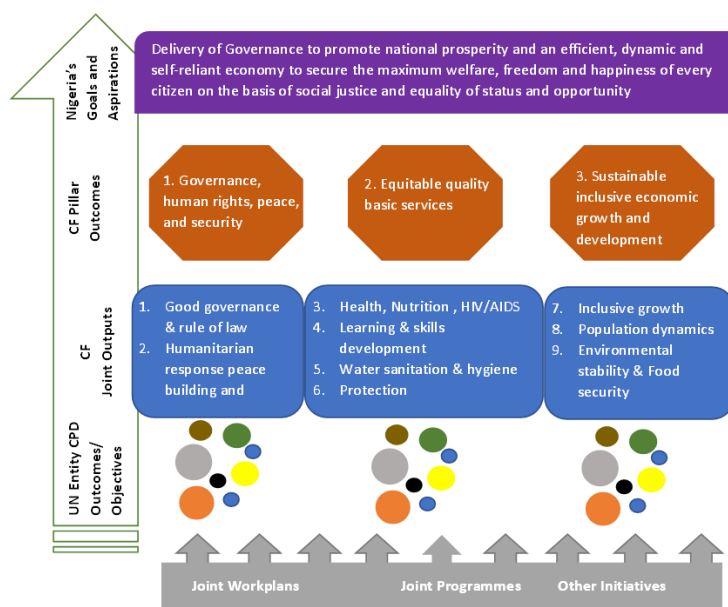
Lessons Learned

While the evaluation was unable to obtain enough data from non-DaO states to allow comparison, the evidence from the DaO states suggest that the approach has been beneficial, especially in planning and reporting. There are good lessons related to joint work planning in terms of coordination, capacity building and sustainability. The experience from coordination and joint work planning is that when interventions are better coordinated to address the needs of the state, there is better synergy, relevance, and coherence. This will also ensure a departure from the current situation where each agency seems to be implementing separately and integrating their activities into the joint plans and reporting together – this seems to be more of reporting as one rather than delivering as one. In addition, when planning is bottom-up so that the states are involved right from the stage of developing ideas and prioritization of issues, this will ensure that interventions are more effective in addressing the needs of the people and will also ensure that interventions are more sustainable.

Joint programmes have been helpful in ensuring collaboration and coordination, with positive effects on the achievements of the PF results. There are good lessons from joint planning occasioned by joint programmes, multisectoral response and working groups. By design, the objectives and results of the joint programmes align with the UNDPF results, as well as those of the participating entities. This not only ensures better results, but it also ensures relevance and coherence of support.

Working through government and having a coordinating MDA at the federal and state levels have been helpful in ensuring direction and efforts towards sustainability. However, clear, and timely communication and more frequent strategic engagements and involvement of ministers and commissioners in other thematic areas is also important and will ensure political will at the higher level to ensure ownership.

While several stakeholders have praised the manner of funds release, there is still a tendency for delays at the beginning of the budget year which then delays the implementation. This has very often led to a rush in completing planned activities towards the end of the year, the with the potential of affecting the quality of delivery.

4.3.2. UNDAF programming principles

EQ7	To what extent have human rights principles, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion been effectively streamlined in the implementation of the UNSDPF?

This question explored how UNDAF programming principles (gender and social inclusion, Leaving No One Behind) have been reflected in the implementation of interventions

Mainstreaming UNDAF Principles into Implementation

> **Finding 14: There is evidence of the mainstreaming of UNDAF programming principles in the UNSDPF interventions as exemplified by gender and social inclusion initiatives, disability inclusion and a focus on youth by UN entities. Gender, including GBV emerged as a key area of UNSDPF contributions thanks to the Spotlight initiative**

During this evaluation, MDAs report positive developments towards the mainstreaming of the various aspects of the UNDAF principles into the PF interventions. It was observed that overall, there is increasing awareness on gender equality and improved representation in appointments of women, and the involvement of youths and people with disabilities in activities that affect them. According to some stakeholders, "**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)** presents new opportunities" and "Gender mainstreaming has never been this good." There is increased awareness on the need to mainstream gender adequately, and projects focused on girls' education has facilitated increased enrolment and retention of girls in school significantly, while gender and GBV are getting lots of attention especially through the Spotlight Initiative. Non-state actors also report that advances have been made on GESI through the implementation of the PF interventions with notable results: (i) improved spousal relationships through improved hygiene facilitated by the availability of water; (ii) improved self-defence and self-control of girls in relation with the other sex leading to less rape issues.

There is an example of an Emirate Council in Sokoto state providing an office for the LGA GBV referral network – the Emir is interested and is briefed on all cases of GBV. This has resulted in an influential person being displaced from the community after raping a woman. Beyond this action, the involvement of the Emir has given the Spotlight project more visibility and acceptance in the LGA.

Box 4: Spotlight Initiative

The Spotlight Initiative is a joint UN and EU global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The initiative brings focused attention to this issue, moving it into the **spotlight** and placing it at the centre of efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On **disability and inclusion**, government officials alluded to satisfactory progress made. For instance, during the public hearing on the 2022 proposed budget in one of the DaO states, issues about reactivating the learning centres for people with disabilities and improvement in the curriculum to respond to the needs of the labour market were extensively debated and there was agreement on the need for government to facilitate the employments of the graduates of these learning centres into the public and private sector. Other stakeholders reported that (i) evidence that PWDs are being increasingly included in the decision- making process in households and communities; (ii) financial assistance to PWDs and the less privileged; and (iii) Women with disabilities are now more confident to seek health services at facilities and are given priority when they go to a health facility.

Focusing on young people is topical among UN entities, as part of education, health, governance, peace, security social protection and climate change initiatives. There is also evidence on the intersectionality of the UNDAF principles These include: (i) gender and social inclusion being mainstreamed in state policies and plans, with state teams being trained on gender mainstreaming, and leadership; ii) a focus on the "Age-Gender and Diversity Principle" as part of projects, including projects targeted at young women and women with disabilities.

Over the last three years of the UNSDPF implementation, the UNCT has provided support for the development of relevant GESI policies. In 2018 for example, the UNCT support the government of Nigeria to develop gender-sensitive policies and strengthening institutional mechanisms through drafting of the "Women Participation in Elections Supports Bill" to further galvanize women's participation in elective offices in Nigeria. In Adamawa, Gombe, and Plateau states, the UN Local Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security were produced in local languages, including a braille version for the visually impaired.

In 2019, the UNCT provided financial and technical support for the development and implementation of policies and guidelines that protect children from school-related gender-based violence. These documents include a) National Policy on Violence-Free Schools for Children in Nigeria; and b) National Policy on Adolescent Health and Development, their implementation guidelines/plans and M&E Tools and supervisory checklist for Adolescent Health programming. The Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and other stakeholders were supported to initiate the review and update of 2013-2017 national policy and Plan of action on elimination of FGM in Nigeria which was validated in December 2019 and is in the process of being finalized for printing and dissemination. In addition, the Ministry was assisted to update and finalized the national protocol for addressing the complications of FGM in line with the 2018 WHO global guidelines. The protocol is now the recognised tool for training health workers to provide girls and women with appropriate quality and timely services for FGM prevention, protection, and care. In Osun and Oyo State Houses of Assemblies, 60 legislators were sensitized on FGM, and they pledged their support for the abandonment of FGM interventions, expressed their commitment to increase allocation for FGM activities and the application of stiffer penalties for perpetrators.

In 2020, UNCT supported the evaluation of national policy on the elimination of child labour and implementation of its National Action Plan (NAP) 2013-2017, as well as a review of the Social Behavioural Communication Change (SBCC) strategy for the elimination of child labour. National stakeholders validated these. The UNCT also promoted and strengthened State Action Plans (SAP) on gender in Bauchi, Benue and Nasarawa states, with strong commitment by government and other stakeholders. The SAP Implementation and Monitoring Committees, a 200-Member Women Mediation Networks, Women Peace Mentors, Gender Desk Units in security institutions, Government MDAs were set up for the advancement of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda.

Some challenges have been reported in mainstreaming the UNDAF programming principles. These include: (i) outdated gender policies in some states; (ii) cultural barriers which affects girls' retention and completion rates especially at the secondary school level the inadequate number of women to fill vacant positions in government MDAs; (iii) the stigma attached to PWDs and the non-adaptation or lack of infrastructural facilities that will enable easy access for PWDs in many states.

4.3.3. Sustainability

EQ8	To what extent has the UNSDPF interventions contributed (or likely to contribute) to the sustainability of results including through capacity, funding, coherence, and partnerships?

According to OECD (2021)[29] the sustainability assessment to answer the question: will the benefit last[30]? For this evaluation, the assessment of sustainability sought to answer the following questions: (a) How did the UNSDPF design and implementation address the sustainability (institutional, financial, etc.) of the interventions? (b) To what extent do national stakeholders demonstrate commitment and ownership over the results achieved? (c) Is there any exit strategy for implemented interventions?

Sustainability of UNSDPF Interventions

Finding 15: Working through government and local CSOs and building capacity, as well as supporting the development and implementation of relevant policy documents and guidelines are sustainability measure being implemented

The UNSDPF is designed with the assumption that political will and national ownership of interventions will not only lead to the achievement of the objectives of PF but also to the sustainability of its results over time. The literature on the sustainability of interventions suggests the following as the factors which could either enhance or pose as barriers to the sustainability of interventions: (a) community ownership and capacity development are vital for the sustainability of interventions[31]; (b) training of key stakeholders in interventions (government officials, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, etc.) is a major factor to strengthen skills transfer and ensure sustainability of the project[32]; (c) coordination and collaboration are important for sustainability when two or more donors or partners offer the same intervention or target the same demography[33]; (d) lack of political will (exemplified by government initiative, mobilisation of stakeholders, public commitment, and allocation of resources, learning and adaptation)[34], and poor leadership constitute major challenges to sustainability of interventions in Nigeria[35]; and (e) poor

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[29]OECD (2021), Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en.

[30] This will include examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time

[31] Amazigo, U., Okeibunor, J., Matovu, V., Zoure, H., Bump, J. & Seketeli, A., (2007), 'Performance of predictors: Evaluating sustainability in community-directed treatment projects of the African programme for onchocerciasis control', *Social Science & Medicine* 64, 2070–2082. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.01.018

[32] Burlew, R., Puckett, A., Bailey, R., Caffrey, M. & Brantley, S., (2014), 'Assessing the relevance, efficiency, and sustainability of HIV/AIDS in-service training in Nigeria', Human Resource Health 12, 20. https://doi.org/10.1186/1478-4491-12-20

[33] Ishola, F. & Cekan, J., 2019, 'Evaluating the sustainability of health programmes: A literature review', African Evaluation Journal 7(1), https://aejonline.org/index.php/aej/article/view/369

[34] Brinkerhoff, D.; (2010) Unpacking the concept of political will to confront corruption. Bergen: U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Chr. Michelsen Institute (U4 Brief) **https://www.u4.no/publications/unpacking-the-concept-of-political-will-to-confront-corruption**

[35] Ajayi IO, Jegede AS, Falade CO (2012) Sustainability of Intervention for Home Management of Malaria: The Nigerian Experience. J Community Med Health Educ 2:175. doi:10.4172/2161-0711.1000175

funding for post-project continuation is a major challenge for sustainability in Nigeria[36]. However, where additional financial support was secured from the federal government the sustainability of a health intervention was guaranteed[37].

There have been core measures implemented to ensure sustainability. Principal among these measures is implementing initiatives through government MDAs and advocacy for government to take ownership; capacity building at all levels, providing catalytic interventions such as strengthening data systems and supporting the development and implementation of relevant policy documents and guidelines. There are a few examples of government ownership in integrating initiatives into plans and budgets, or some sector initiatives now being driven by government such as immunization and the HIV response, as well as meteorological services. According to a respondent, "*The UN has contributed immensely through the drive for policies in needed areas, capacity building of stakeholders and sets policy directions, goals and sees to the implementation through synergy with stakeholders.*"

During this evaluation, MDAs reported efforts towards the sustainability of the PF interventions. These include: (i) promoting government ownership by mainstreaming interventions in the thematic areas; (ii) sensitizing the communities on ownership; (iii) sensitizing traditional rulers on what they can do to advocate for continuity of interventions; (iv) mobilization of government resources to include the interventions in the main budget to continue the interventions and scale them up to other locations; (v) planning to hold an investment summit to develop a sustainability plan in collaboration with the UN. There is also evidence of bilateral initiatives with IPs leading to sustainability such as the community-led monitoring systems.

The UN entities also report progress in ensuring sustainability. Efforts are on to ensure that state governments are driving the process, Indigenous CSOs are working to support the interventions/programmes, the integration of stakeholders has helped with ownership of the interventions. Efforts are also being made to ensure the inclusion of community structures, sustainability strategies are being developed, as well as ensuring that interventions are included in state budgets and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)/ Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSS).

Challenges towards sustainability of the PF interventions have also been reported/observed. Even though states have agreed to the Abuja declaration of the 15% minimum allocation to the health sectors, unfortunately the allocation is not matched by the release (in some cases fund release is about 2%). In some instances, there are no sustainability plans. For the Human Resources for Health (HRH) Project, the annual operational plans have stopped since the project ended (database has not been updated since the project ended), and government machinery not been put in place to ensure continuity.

On their part, the IPs have raised concerns on issues which could jeopardise the sustainability of the PF interventions. These include the absence of post-program monitoring, limited capacity building programs at the local community level, as well as low level of advocacy to stakeholders on the long-term impact of the interventions. They also call for the need to include training of non-state actors as part of the design phase of subsequent PFs, the need for prioritizing feedback mechanism in communication strategies as well as addressing the issue of state counterpart funding as part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

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[36] Mbanefo, E.C., Eneanya, C.I., Nwaorgu, O.C., Oguoma, V.M., Otiji, M.O. & Ogolo, B.A., 2010, 'Onchocerciasis in Anambra State, Southeast Nigeria: Clinical and psychological aspects and sustainability of community directed treatment with ivermectin (CDTI)', Postgraduate Medical Journal 86, 573–577.
https://doi.org/10.1136/pgmj.2010.100248
[37] Ibid, 2

5 Conclusions

The following conclusions draw on the key findings under the multiple evaluation questions and criteria

Conclusion 1: Adopting a programme- and results-oriented approach, while drawing on the lessons of previous UNDAFs ensured that the UNSDPF interventions are relevant and responded to the needs, priorities, and policies of Nigeria [drawn from EQ1, EQ3, EQ6]

The evaluation found evidence that three Result Areas and nine Outcomes in the UNSDPF strategy aligned with Nigerian national and regional priorities including SDGs. These needs and priorities were determined through participatory processes led by the Nigerian government but also drawing from the lessons from the implementation of previous UNDAFs and these informed the development of PF interventions to effectively address those needs. Additionally, the PF framework interventions and focus on Nigerian priorities are coordinated as well as aligned to the global SDGs. However, stakeholders observed that the UN entities (i) have areas of interest that they tend to focus on regardless of the perceived priority by the government, and (ii) support similar interventions across states regardless of the context and usually provide 'pre-planned' interventions to the states.

There is evidence of UNCT adaptability, drawing on opportunities to ensure continued relevance. In addition to drawing from the lessons of previous UNDAFs, the UNCT responded to the deepening humanitarian crisis in the country, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of annual DaO workplans and joint programmes such as the global Spotlight Initiative, as well as building and consolidating partnerships and aligning the three result areas, national targets, as well as the SDGs among the national and sub national entities, civil society groups, donors, and the private sector. An important observation is that the focus of UN interventions tends to be more on the public sector and there is a need to engage the private sector more strategically.

The interrogation of the UNSDPF ToC by the evaluation team showed that the outcomes and outputs are still relevant but may require revisions to refocus on the emerging priorities of the country based on available evidence, including a thinking through on whether to include outputs in the next CF, and if so, to consider joint outputs and sector-wide approaches.

Conclusion 2: The diversity of skills and expertise as well as its convening power gives the UNCT a unique comparative advantage in responding to the priorities of Nigeria. This has also contributed to its resilience and adaptability [drawn from EQ1, EQ2, EQ5].

The overarching narrative that emerged from the interactions with stakeholders at the federal and state levels posits that the diversity within the UN system provides complementarity and broad coverage, and that with practically all the specialised UN agencies present in Nigeria, any issue requiring response and support can be covered. Initiatives such as the COVID-19 response plan and basket funds, as well as the humanitarian response plan, demonstrate the resilience of the UNCT, and demonstrated the capacity of the UNCT to come together and mobilise funds. Also, the evidence from donor funding trends suggests that the UNCT has good absorptive capacity. The joint analysis and advice to

government and the spearheading critical initiatives created opportunities for donors to see the UNCT as a group that can work together, which was helpful in crowding in funds.

The UN's other advantages include: (i) bringing best practices from other places; (ii) drawing from the wealth of experience from other regions and continents; (iii) ability to coordinate and raise funds; (iv) ability to bring several stakeholders together – government, civil society, and the private sector to forge a common front in responding to critical issues; and (v) perception of being neutral thus creating trust and ability to work with SH who see others as biased as well as being a catalytic supporter and a trusted partner in the sustainable development of Nigeria across all sectors.

Bureaucracy poses a major challenge to the responsiveness of the UN by making processes slow, which is undesirable especially when there is an emergency. It also affects the timely release of funds for regular development interventions with funds often being disbursed to implementing partners late in the year leading to a rush to implement activities in the last quarter of the year. Furthermore, the crowding of interventions towards the end of year may have unwanted effects on the quality of interventions.

> **Key Challenges**
>
> Nigeria is big and there are too many states – presenting a challenge of choosing where to implement, which tends to reflect more federal level UN support.
>
> Because the UN provides catalytic support, for interventions to have the desired impact, there is a need for government support to scale-up and this is often lacking

Conclusion 3: Strong leadership from the UNCT (through the RCO, PMT and other coordination groups), as well as the DaO approach and Joint Programmes were prerequisites for improving the coherence, implementation, and the achievements of UNSDPF results [drawn from EQ2, EQ3, EQ5].

The RCO's robust management of relationships within and outside the UN system including resource mobilisation has been instrumental in the achievements of UNSDPF results. Internally, the PMT's interface with the result area and outcome leads improved the capacity to drive implementation.

The evaluation found out that joint programmes, as well as DaO work planning, have been pivotal in focusing on the achievement of the PF results and that coordination of the DaO States has been highly effective with regards to development of workplans and reports.

The evaluation is of the view that while the DaO and JWP approach is the ideal, non-UN entities within the partnership framework have a major influence on delivery, the increasing reliance on Official Development Assistance by UN entities, and the fact donors continue to fund programmes bilaterally and not through pooled or joint mechanisms are contributory factors.

The evaluation also observed that while planning at the central level is coordinated, planning and coordination at the field level can be fragmented especially at the community level branding of initiatives by UN entities is often an issue and creates tensions within the system. SHs in DaO States also feel that for the actual delivery of interventions, UN agencies still operate as separate entities and not as one UN. Thus, while joint workplans are aligned with Nigeria's priorities, it seems that the implementation of the JWP was at the individual UN entities' discretion.

> **Key Challenge**
>
> RA and Outcome leads often submitted data/results very late, and not all nominated staff on these groups participate meaningfully, and it would seem there are not enough "incentives" because such staff tend to see these as add-ons to their normal activities

Finally, the DaO workplans tend to plan beyond the available capacity and resources even within the UN thus making it difficult to achieve planned targets.

Conclusion 4: While implementation rates have varied across years, resources were well spent based on financial plans, thus ensuring value for money [drawn from EQ1, EQ4].

An assessment of the financial trends showed that overall, resource allocation and implementation rates have varied across the years from 2018 to 2020. Yearly implementation rates (available resources vs expenditure) were 98%, 81%, and 111% for 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. The 2020 expenditure outturn was due to the additional resources mobilised for the COVID-19 response.

Several Ips, especially in the DaO states believe that there is technical efficiency and efficient resource utilisation. There was a general feeling that resources were well spent based on the financial plans with the states and human resource personnel benefitting immensely from capacity building because of collaboration with UN agencies. However, it is evident that technical efficiency and efficient utilisation of resources are not optimal due to poor collaboration between UN agencies for joint planning and implementation.

Result Area ToCs were helpful in providing implementation direction, but too many output/ indicators may have hampered the extent to which UN entities could report achievements. The evaluation observed that the DaO state joint workplans also appear to be quite cumbersome with too many activities. For example, the Cross River 2021 workplan has 134 activities under output 3.2 alone. This scenario can create a challenge of deciding which sets of activities to implement.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions/lockdown immensely affected the level of implementation especially in 2020. Some activities had to be cancelled, some postponed or shifted to 2021 as mitigation against the spread of COVID-19 and funds re-programmed for COVID-19 related activities. Also, government had priorities diverted to address the impact of the pandemic and this affected the implementation of non-COVID-19 related activities.

> **Key Challenge**
>
> The absence of counterpart funding from government in some instances, created implementation challenges. The restrictions and lockdowns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic affected the level of implementation especially in 2020

Conclusion 5: The UNCT is making valuable contributions through the progress being made in meeting the UNSDPF results, facilitated by partnership opportunities, with good lessons to be learned from implementation [drawn from EQ1, EQ3, EQ6].

Desk review results as well as the interactions with stakeholders, showed that there is progress being made in meeting the UNSDPF results as planned. In 2020 for example, out of the 47 outcome indicators, 28% fully achieved/surpassed targets and out of the 192 output indicators, 42% fully achieved/surpassed the targets for the year. However, there was still a high proportion achieving less than 25% of the targets probably because of planning interventions beyond available capacity and resources.

Notwithstanding the missing of certain targets, there are positive linear trends in the various indicators under the basic services except for the ones related to nutrition (stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age and anaemia in women) and the indicator for state HIV laws. These suggest that sustaining and scaling up interventions may result in progressive positive change in the indicators.

There flexible intervention design and partnerships is resulting in positive changes at the community level including the demand for, and provision of assorted services (health, WASH, education, protection, etc.), stigma reduction and inclusion of women, girls, young people, and people living with disabilities. The capacity to capitalize on opportunities such as enabling policy environment, good understanding, and availability of committed government staff resulted in good collaboration with government and other partners for effective delivery of interventions. The development of joint workplans under the DaO initiative provided opportunities for strong collaboration with government. Partnerships with CSOs and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) that are in touch with the grassroots as well as community structures such as religious and traditional leaders contributed to the achievements of results.

> **Key Challenge**
>
> Inadequate funding, low capacity of some government partners, and political interference in delivery of projects, often resulting in appointment of inappropriate personnel constituted challenges. Widespread insecurity as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions in movement affected implementation and monitoring.

There are good lessons from DaO approach related to joint work planning in terms of coordination, capacity building and sustainability. There are also good lessons from joint planning occasioned by joint programmes, multisectoral response and working groups. By design, the objectives and results from joint work plans and joint programmes align with the UNDPF results, as well as those of the participating entities. This not only ensures better results, but it also ensures relevance and coherence of support.

Conclusion 6: The integration of UNDAF programming principles was evident in the design and implementation of the UNSDPF [drawn from EQ6, EQ7].

There was multiple evidence to show that UNSDPF interventions uphold HR principles by design and while it may not be very explicit, the focus on GESI, are geared towards meeting the rights of women, youths and PWDs, as well as leaving no one behind.

Evidence from the evaluation suggest that gender, human rights, and a focus on youths has been strong; and that disability is also picking up. Additionally, the focus on the North-East Nigeria and other specific areas like the Niger Delta and the North-West, represents the principle of leaving no one behind. Initiatives such as Spotlight and the deliberate focus for example on adolescent girls (specific projects on education, health, or nutrition), and GBV have helped to promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW).

Government officials alluded to satisfactory progress being made on disability inclusion with evidence of increased voice of PWDs in decision-making in communities including financial assistance. The involvement of community structures such as traditional and religious leaders have facilitated the achievement of results.

Focus on youth is topical among UN entities – as part of education, health, governance, peace, security social protection and climate change initiatives. There is evidence of intersectionality - a focus on the "Age-Gender and Diversity Principle" as part of projects, including projects targeted at young women and women with disabilities

> **Key Challenge**
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> Outdated gender policies in some states
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> Social-cultural barriers (religion, culture) tend constitute obstacles to ensuring inclusion – affecting women's voices, girls' education, and there is stigma attached to PWDs including the non-adaptation or lack of infrastructural facilities that will enable easy access for PWDs in many states

Conclusion 7: Integration into government systems and building IP capacity, are strategies adopted for the sustainability of UNSDPF interventions [drawn from EQ1, EQ8].

Core sustainability measures include implementing initiatives through government MDAs and advocacy for government to take ownership; training and capacity building at all levels, providing catalytic interventions such as strengthening data systems and supporting the development and implementation of relevant policy documents and guidelines.

There are challenges towards sustainability of the UNSDPF interventions, principal being non allocation or non-release of government budgets to sectoral initiatives. Sustainability is also hampered by bureaucratic government procedures and processes that delay the scaling-up of interventions. In some instances, there are no sustainability plans in place. SHs also alluded to the absence of post-programme monitoring, limited capacity building programs at the local community level, as well as low level of advocacy to stakeholders on the long-term impact of the interventions as issues that affect sustainability of interventions.

6 Recommendations

The evaluation team opines the following recommendations based on the conclusions. These have developed and validated with the evaluation manager and the PMT. The recommendations have been prioritised using three variables as follows:

- **Urgency** *of implementing the recommendation –* **high** (immediate), **medium** (next 3 - 6 months), **low** (next 12 months)
- **Impact** *of implementing the recommendation on PF/CF delivery* – high, medium, low
- **Difficulty** *of implementing the recommendation by the UNCT* – high, medium, low

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the next UNSDPF/CF results framework should be streamlined, with fewer outcomes and outputs and accompanying indicators. This should include a consideration of how individual entities higher level objectives map onto the outcomes of the UNSDPF/CF, and better integrating the humanitarian response to complete the development-humanitarian-peace/security nexus. By extension, the DaO work planning process should also be streamlined to make it less cumbersome, reduce the number of activities and better align with state priorities.	**Urgency:** High **Impact:** High **Difficulty:** Low

The evaluation observed that the while there were result areas ToCs articulated for the UNSDPF, there were too many outputs and indicators, which tended to create a burden on reporting. In addition to this, there is a humanitarian response plan that currently sits outside the UNSDPF. Nonetheless, the UNSDPF outcomes and outputs are still relevant but require some revisions. While the DaO work planning process was beneficial to state partners, the finalised workplans appear to be quite cumbersome with too many activities and complicated statements.

Actions To Be Taken:
- Consider turning the current UNSDPF outcomes into outputs, while the result areas are the PF outcomes that contribute to Nigeria's priorities. Doing this would mean having 47 output indicators and a few numbers of outcome indicators.
- As part of this process, UN entities should map their higher level CPD objectives onto the PF outcomes. This way, all their activities including those that may be outside the DaO/JWPs would be aligned with the PF.
- The revision/development of the next SDPF/CF should integrate the humanitarian response plan into to complete the development-humanitarian-peace/security nexus
- Undertake a comprehensive mapping of initiatives especially of non-UN entities, to see how these align with the PF and feed these into the JWP to ensure better coherence.
- Conduct strategic mapping of UN interventions in relation to the state development plans or similar document to ensure that these feed into the JWP processes.
- Ensure that the JWPs have fewer activities which can be clustered around specific interventions. Perhaps consider only including interventions into the joint workplans and let the IPs develop implementation plans for specific initiatives that will then include the detailed activities.

- Ensure prompt release of funds at the beginning of the implementation year to ensure that there is no rush towards the end of the year.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended for the UNCT to commission an evaluation of the DaO state approach, to look at the continuum from planning to coordination and implementation as well as reporting.	**Urgency:** Medium **Impact:** High **Difficulty:** Medium

Given the overall time available for this evaluation, it was not possible to collect enough information from non-DaO states included in the sample, to enable a comparison and elucidate any differences. Nonetheless, evaluation found out that the DaO approach has been pivotal in focussing on the achievement of the PF results. Furthermore, coordination of the DaO states has been highly effective with regards to development of workplans and reports.

Actions To Be Taken:
- Develop terms of reference for conducting the DaO state evaluation and secure interagency funding for the exercise. The evaluation should include a sample of non-DaO states where the UNCT has presence.
- The evaluation should consider the effectiveness of the joint workplans, as well as coordination of planning, implementation, and reporting, including joint working among UN entities.
- Consider including Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states as part of DaO states given the huge humanitarian focus on these states.

Recommendation 3: The evaluation endorses the recommendation from the 2019 UN country result report that suggested a focus on more joint programmes, partnership, and joint implementation to deliver on UN mandate in Nigeria. It is recommended that this suggestion is taken forward building on the existing joint programme initiatives.	**Urgency:** Medium **Impact:** High **Difficulty:** High

In line with the with the UN reforms, the 2019 UN country report reiterated the need for UN agencies to work together to leverage resources and comparative strengths to have more reach – by doing situation analyses together, planning together and implementing together.

Actions To Be Taken:
- Undertake a stocktake of the lessons from the current joint programmes around joint working, including any joint resource mobilisation
- Develop a position paper on joint working and joint resource mobilisation, drawing on the experiences of the COVID-19 response plan and basket funds. This should hopefully set the scene for better integrating joint working into the next CF.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended for the PMT working with agency leads, to consider including the activities of the M&E group and RA and outcome leads into their performance benchmarks.	**Urgency:** Medium **Impact:** Medium **Difficulty:** High

The evaluation observed that while the various coordination groups within the UN system have been effective in driving UNSDPF results, not all nominated staff on these groups participate meaningfully, and it would seem there are not enough "incentives" because there is a tendency for such staff to see these as add-ons to their normal activities.

Actions To Be Taken:
- The RCO/PMT should have frank discussions with agency heads about including coordination activities into the performance benchmarks of the staff members concerned

- Work with HR and line managers to decide how to incorporate these benchmarks
- Discuss these with staff in a way that complements their skills and how these maps onto the UN staff members' competency framework.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the UNCT through the PMT should progressively strive to improve the collaboration between the various UN working groups.	**Urgency:** Medium **Impact:** Medium **Difficulty:** Medium

The evaluation found satisfactory progress and value in the support provided to the UNCT through the PMT, by the various groups such as the M&E, gender, and communications groups. There is scope for better collaboration between groups, for example, the M&E and UNCG, which should lead to more programme information and hard data being presented, with the added advantage of further projecting the image of the UN.

Actions To Be Taken:
- The PMT regularly push for a common product that the groups will collectively produce. For example, there could be a "spotlight" on the COVID basket fund which is an example of a good practice all over the world. Focus could go beyond the funds mobilised, to include the impacts of the funding which will showcase the added value of the UN support to government. For example, the number of people reached, deaths averted, people supported to be more resilient.
- On their part, the groups can brainstorm on common initiatives or products, and share with PMT for approval.
- The results groups should work better with the M&E group and aim to produce quarterly progress reports if this becomes the norm, then producing annual reports become easier.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that knowledge management and lesson learning should be systematized in the next CF.	**Urgency:** High **Impact:** High **Difficulty:** Medium

There are good lessons related to joint work planning in terms of coordination, capacity building and sustainability. There are also lessons on working through government and having a coordinating MDA at the federal and state levels, which showed that this has been helpful in ensuring direction and efforts towards sustainability. However, clear, and timely communication and more frequent strategic engagements and involvement of ministers and commissioners in other thematic areas is also important and will ensure political will at the higher level to ensure ownership.

Actions To Be Taken:
- Develop a Knowledge Management (KM) and shared learning strategy for the next CF, which, is linked to the activities of the UN communications group. This should include clear channels of communication with all stakeholders (especially feedback loops to communities) including what will be communicated.
- It can include a series of learning exchanges between the DaO states to share lessons from implementation around what is working or not, and strategies for overcoming challenges
- It could also include clear statements on what to share such as:
  - The effectiveness of the DaO approach, based on the results deriving from CF-supported processes and initiatives.
  - The practical aspects through which the UNCT supports partners in this way (i.e., how different partners are engaged and empowered).

Recommendation 7: It is recommended for the UNCT to reiterate the mainstreaming of UNDAF programming principles as well sustainability plans into the design and implementation of the next CF.

Urgency: High
Impact: High
Difficulty: Low

The evaluation observed that UNSDPF interventions uphold HR principles by design while GESI interventions focus on meeting the rights of women, youths and PWDs, as well as leaving no one behind. There are core measures in place to promote sustainability of UNSDPF interventions such as implementing initiatives through government MDAs and advocacy for government to take ownership; training and capacity building at all levels, providing catalytic interventions such as strengthening data systems and supporting the development and implementation of relevant policy documents and guidelines. There are challenges towards sustainability of the PF interventions, principal being non allocation or non-release of government budgets to sectoral initiatives.

Actions To Be Taken:
- There should be a strategy in place in the next CF, for increased involvement of traditional and religious leaders in the delivery of interventions as this has been shown to facilitate the progress on GESI
- The UNCT should ramp up PWD-related initiatives, focusing on the provision of technical skills and tools to support the needs of the PWDs. This is to address the physical, economic, and psychosocial aspects of their disabilities and build their capacities.
- Building the capacity of implementing partners, as well as those of state government and local community should continue to be prioritized in the next phase of the PF. This will help to strengthen the system, build individual technical and managerial skills towards contributing to the sustainability of the interventions.
- Capacity building initiatives beyond training to include mentorship, coaching, provision of equipment, supervision, study opportunities e.g., government staff can join UN to learn systems, while the UN should continue the practice of embedding technical assistance into ministries to improve the transfer of knowledge.
- The UNCT should continue advocacy efforts for government partners to not only make budgetary provisions for the interventions but to secure long-term funding through the incorporation into their medium-term sector strategic plans.
- The UNCT should support initiatives towards medium term planning such as MTSS and Sector Development Plans (SDPs) and link up with other partners or partner projects that support these initiatives.