
**UNITED
NATIONS
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
FRAMEWORK**

FINAL

**UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
FRAMEWORK**

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Internal Guidance

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ACRONYMS

JSC:	Joint Steering Committee
MAF:	Management and Accountability Framework
MAPS:	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
M&E:	Monitoring and evaluation
MDG:	Millennium Development Goals
NGO:	Non-governmental organization
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBM:	Results-based management
RC:	Resident Coordinator
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
UN:	United Nations
UN CCA:	United Nations Common Country Analysis
UNCT:	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF:	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG:	United Nations Evaluation Group
UN JSC	United Nations Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration
UN-SWAP:	United Nations System-wide Action Plan

FOREWORD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development demands a UN development system that is agile, cohesive and responsive to a country's priorities and people's needs. It requires rights-based programming for the Agenda 2030 that is underpinned by robust national analysis, a renewed push for collective action and partnerships, and a laser-like focus on helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leaving no one behind.

That is the spirit embedded in the new Internal Guidance for the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, a centerpiece of our reform process.

Our new Cooperation Frameworks are rooted in four key objectives.

First, they must clearly articulate the United Nation's collective response to help countries address national priorities and gaps in their pathway towards meeting the SDGs. The Cooperation Framework is a vehicle for supporting economic transformation, offering options to reframe economic policies and practices around sustainability for inclusive, diversified and job-intensive economic transformation that advances the rights and well-being of all citizens, strengthen economies and protects the planet.

Second, the Cooperation Framework must embody the spirit of partnerships that are at the core of the 2030 Agenda. That means partnerships with host governments -- but also partnerships with all stakeholders -- civil society, academia, parliaments, the private sector, bilateral partners - to leverage strengths and drive transformative change.

Third, the Cooperation Frameworks must help turn our collective promise to leave no one behind into tangible action for people on the ground, especially those furthest behind. UN country teams will need, more than ever, to move beyond national averages to look at more specific data, with a strengthened focus on inclusion and tackling inequalities.

Finally, the Cooperation Framework must provide UN country teams with the tools to tailor responses to a Member State's specific needs and realities, ensuring that all entities, whether present on the ground or not, can effectively support national implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

I am grateful to colleagues from across the UN development system for helping to shape this Guidance.

We know that achieving the 2030 Agenda for everyone, everywhere is humanity's best chance of ensuring the progressive realization of human rights and a future of peace and prosperity for all. The new UN Cooperation Frameworks offer a tremendous opportunity to scale up implementation of the 2030 Agenda and demonstrate concrete results on the ground.

Together, as a UN family, let us harness the full capabilities and assets of the UN development system to make it happen.

Amina J. Mohammed

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General
Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group

What's new?

1. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) has been renamed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework ("Cooperation Framework") to more accurately reflect the contemporary relationship between Governments and the UN development system in collaborating to achieve the SDGs.
2. The new guidelines emphasize the primacy of the Cooperation Framework in articulating government expectations of the UN development system and in driving major UN development system contributions at the country level. United Nations entity-specific country programmes are derived from the Cooperation Framework, not vice versa.
3. The Cooperation Framework represents the UN development system's collective offer to support countries in addressing key Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) priorities and gaps. It begins and ends with an analysis of the national development landscape and SDG priorities, including through the lens of the imperative to leave no one behind.
4. The Cooperation Framework serves as a core accountability tool between the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the host Government, as well as between and among UNCT members for collectively-owned development results. It is supported by mandatory independent, high-quality evaluation and management responses.
5. The UN Common Country Analysis (UN CCA), which underpins the Cooperation Framework, shifts from a one-off event to a "real-time" core analytical function. It is intended to be more agile and reflective of evolving country contexts. Periodic updating of the UN CCA will reduce the period for formulating a new Cooperation Framework.
6. SDG targets and indicators become the default monitoring framework, informed by country-defined and disaggregated baselines. These indicators will be tracked online through UN INFO at country, regional and global levels.
7. There is explicit recognition of regional and cross-border elements within the UN CCA and the Cooperation Framework.
8. The Cooperation Framework triggers a review of the UNCT configuration to ensure it has the capacities to deliver on stipulated commitments. The Cooperation Framework is signed after this step is completed.
9. Budgeting follows the signature of the Cooperation Framework. The budget is positioned in the larger context of SDG financing.
10. The timeline for preparing the Cooperation Framework decreases from 14.5 months, on average globally, to 6 to 9 months. This should reduce transactions costs for Governments and other stakeholders. Maintaining a reasonably updated UN CCA will significantly reduce the period for formulating the Cooperation Framework.
11. The UN Resident Coordinator (RC) plays an enhanced leadership role throughout the Cooperation Framework process, in line with General Assembly resolution 72/279 and the new Management and Accountability Framework (MAF).
12. The Cooperation Framework contains a clear statement of the United Nations' commitment to its normative role and to leaving no one behind in implementing the 2030 Agenda.
13. The Cooperation Framework is linked to new tools for coordination and accountability established as part of the repositioning of the UN development system, in line with General Assembly resolution 72/279.

CHAPTER 1: A PARTNERSHIP FOR ACHIEVING THE 2030 AGENDA

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

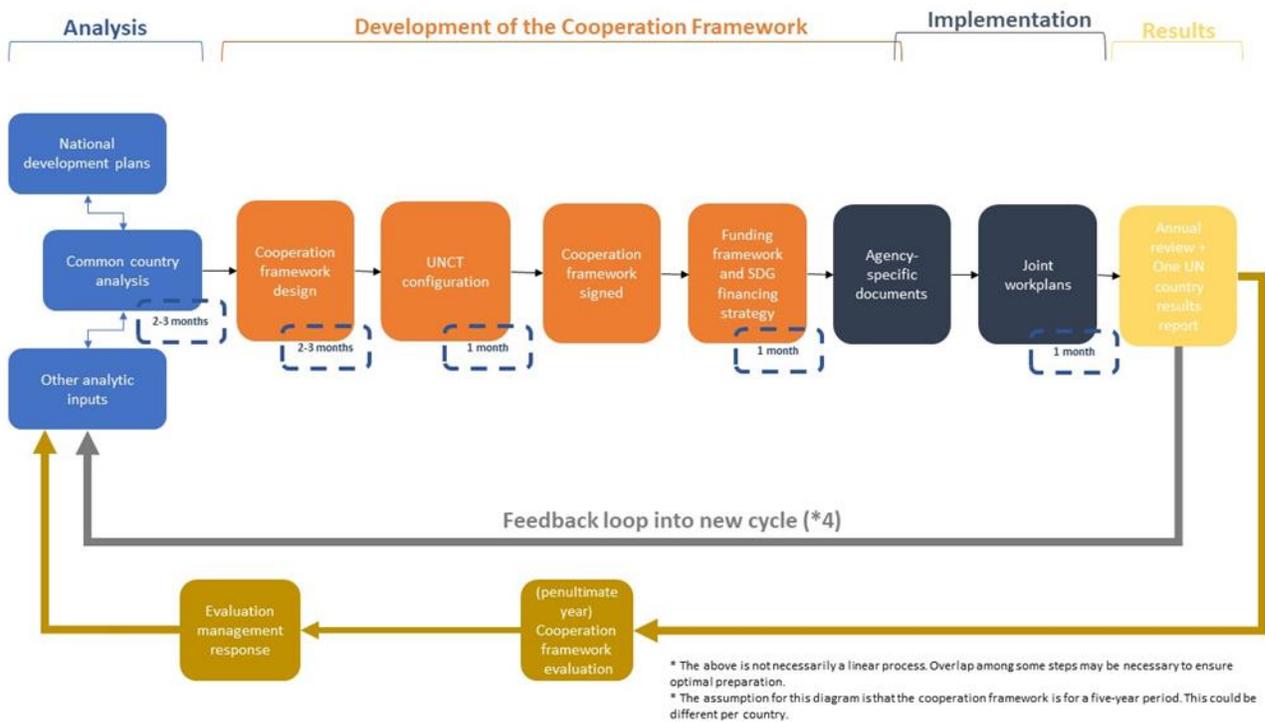


Figure 1: The Cooperation Framework cycle

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

2. General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) elevates the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now renamed¹ the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework) as “the most important instrument for planning and implementation of the UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)”. Given the ambition of the 2030 Agenda and the urgency of its timeline, the resolution represents a significant shift. The Cooperation Framework now guides the entire programme cycle, driving planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of collective UN support for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Cooperation Framework determines and reflects the UN

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

development system's contributions in the country and shapes the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside the country.

3. The Cooperation Framework is nationally owned, and anchored in national development priorities, the 2030 Agenda and the principles of the UN Charter. It outlines the UN development system's contributions sought by national stakeholders to reach the SDGs in an integrated manner, with a commitment to leave no one behind, human rights and other international standards and obligations. Through the Cooperation Framework, the UN development system articulates the highest priority and most sustainable development choices for a country. It advises on pathways to maximize synergies across the goals and minimize the opportunity costs of leaving people behind. It shifts from the siloed approach of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to a more integrated approach under the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
4. Since achieving the 2030 Agenda and national development goals requires a broad range of stakeholders, the Cooperation Framework significantly broadens the concept of partnerships. It goes beyond the previous notion of "implementing partners" to embrace all entities and individuals identified as critical to forging sustainable development solutions in line with UN values. Based on the UN development system's policy expertise and its comparative advantages, its normative agenda, and its ability to leverage, influence and unlock a broad range of resources for development, the Cooperation Framework reflects: (a) the expectations national stakeholders have of the UN development system's contribution to national development; (b) a shared vision and strategic priorities of the United Nations, framed within the broader landscape of partners; (c) the strategic partners with whom the UN system will work in pursuit of development solutions; (d) how the UN system and its partners will contribute to accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda; and (e) the financial and non-financial commitments of the UN system and partners in the wider context of the financing required to reach the SDGs in the country.
5. **The Cooperation Framework is first and foremost a partnership with the Government.** Development, implementation, monitoring and reporting are co-led by the Government and anchored in national development priorities and cycles. The Cooperation Framework is informed by Government prioritization, planning, implementation and reporting vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda, including the preparation of evidence-based Voluntary National Reviews² based on SDG indicators.
6. **The Cooperation Framework represents a commitment to the people in a country, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable.** It calls on the UN development system to: (a) support achieving national development goals and targets with a focus on leaving no one behind; (b) help develop national development indicator frameworks in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Global SDG Indicator Framework; (c) address national development needs by including those left behind throughout the Cooperation Framework cycle, across all processes and programmes; (d) address accountability mechanisms as appropriate for different contexts;³ (e) make up-to-date information on the Cooperation Framework and expected results and progress publicly available; and (f) ensure people's meaningful participation in development, particularly those left behind.

² This Government-led process articulates a country's progress and performance against the 2030 Agenda. It can thus be a primary source of information about national strategies and partnerships in place to address the cross-cutting challenges and potential trade-offs in attaining the 2030 Agenda and leaving no one behind.

³ This can include support for strengthening national evaluation policies and systems.

7. **The Cooperation Framework is a commitment⁴ to a broad range of stakeholders.⁵** Under national leadership and throughout its entire cycle, the Cooperation Framework is a vehicle for identifying development solutions through inclusive dialogue. In looking at development trends beyond national boundaries, it includes and contributes to regional, subregional and cross-border strategies and partnerships, both external and internal to the UN development system. It actively facilitates South-South cooperation⁶ and triangular cooperation⁷, in complement of official development assistance. Under the Cooperation Framework, the UN development system pursues all partnerships in line with the Common Minimum Standards for Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships developed by the UN Sustainable Development Group. Selected with due diligence, UN development system partners uphold inclusivity, diversity and representation; transparency and accountability; accessibility and safety; and respect for the UN Charter and UN norms and values.
8. **The Cooperation Framework is also a compact among UN development entities, including the UN Resident Coordinator (RC).** It provides the overarching framework for development results delivered collectively and by individual entities. Entities derive country programme outcomes from the Cooperation Framework, not vice-versa. Outcomes are hence developed in parallel to, not ahead of, the Cooperation Framework. The relation between the RC and the UNCT is managed through the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF).
9. **The Cooperation Framework is the central framework for joint monitoring, review, reporting and evaluation of the UN development system's impact in a country in achieving the 2030 Agenda.** Under the leadership of the RC, UN development entities are expected to contribute their expertise, tools and platforms in a coherent, integrated and synergistic manner, in line with their respective mandates and as agreed in the Cooperation Framework. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has a specific role in assisting the RC and UNCT to deliver an integrated and multidimensional approach to the SDGs, using country platforms as well as other tools, in line with General Assembly resolution 72/279 (paragraph 32). The resolution calls on UNDP to be "...the support platform of the UN development system, providing an integrator function in support of countries in their efforts to realize the 2030 Agenda".⁸
10. **The Cooperation Framework leverages all sources of sustainable financing and investments towards attaining the 2030 Agenda.** Since the UN development system's financial contribution to national development is often relatively small, the UNDAF's traditional focus on channelling donor support to collective UN results has shifted to using the UN development system's convening power to support

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

⁵ Including local authorities; legislative, judicial and other independent state oversight bodies; civil society and community organizations; businesses and philanthropic organizations; trade unions and employers' organizations; the scientific and research community; volunteer groups; bi- and multilateral partners, including international financial institutions; and media.

⁶ "A process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how and through regional and interregional collective actions, including partnerships involving Governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within and across regions. South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation" (Framework of Operational Guidelines on UN South-South and Triangular Cooperation).

⁷ "Triangular Cooperation involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country(ies)/or multilateral organization(s) to implement development cooperation programmes and projects" (Framework of Operational Guidelines on UN South-South and Triangular Cooperation).

⁸ See: <https://www.2030agenda.undp.org/content/sdg-integration/en/home/> for a more detailed explanation of UNDP's integrator function and its support for the UN CCA and Cooperation Framework processes.

Governments in developing and implementing sustainable financing strategies. The Cooperation Framework hence expands from “funding” (i.e., resource mobilization for UN programmes) to “SDG financing”, (i.e. leveraging and influencing all available financial flows and instruments in support of national priorities for achieving the 2030 Agenda).

11. **The Cooperation Framework is a vehicle for supporting economic transformation.** With countries emphasizing economic growth as especially important to their development, the Cooperation Framework provides specific guidance on reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability for inclusive, diversified and job-

intensive economic transformation that leaves no one behind, protects the planet and strengthens the ecological foundations of economies. Economic performance, especially in developing countries, is subject to global shocks and fluctuations that often slow, and sometimes derail, the achievement of key development priorities. The Cooperation Framework therefore supports the country in strengthening the resilience of the economy through appropriate macroeconomic policies, and individual resilience through social protection and redistributive policies that reduce vulnerability and preserve gains against poverty and inequality. The UN development system’s support focuses on fostering patterns of growth that improve the distribution of incomes, increase economic diversification, and take full advantage of appropriate technologies and innovations. This

includes valuing properly and fully the many non-monetized activities in the modern economy, such as unpaid care work, informal labour and the provision of essential services. It requires a departure from past practices in production and consumption, and the embrace of new technologies and patterns of behaviour that sustain low-carbon and resource- and energy-efficient growth.

Contextualizing the Cooperation Framework in different countries

To make the most meaningful contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda, the Cooperation Framework must be based on a strong UN common country analysis. It should be flexibly tailored to the UN system’s role in a specific country – in particular in countries facing situations of conflict, post-conflict or humanitarian emergency. While the Cooperation Framework and subsequent UN development activities will differ from country to country, a cycle of common elements includes: conception and initiation, definition and planning, implementation, performance monitoring and reporting, and evaluation and closure. The Cooperation Framework guidance and its companion pieces refer to the necessary tools to carry out these elements.

12. **The Cooperation Framework is a vehicle for supporting peaceful societies through sustainable development strategies specific to diverse country contexts.** Putting the SDGs at the heart of the Cooperation Framework should enable the UN development system and its partners to contribute to ending and preventing conflict and disaster, addressing the impact of climate change, and promoting the cohesion and well-being of societies. An enhanced focus on the prevention of vulnerabilities and crises protects development gains and provides a conducive environment for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

13. The Cooperation Framework thus complements - and is informed by - other key policy, programmatic and legal frameworks, such as the country reviews undertaken by the different UN human rights mechanisms,⁹ the Humanitarian Response Plan¹⁰/Refugee Response Plan¹¹ and the Integrated

⁹ This includes the Universal Periodic Review, treaty bodies and special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

¹⁰ The following guidance is without prejudice to General Assembly resolution 46/182 and related resolutions governing humanitarian action and coordination.

¹¹ Refugee Response Plans in emergencies (<https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-response-plans.html>).

Strategic Framework in UN mission settings. In protracted crises, the Cooperation Framework reflects the “collective outcomes¹²” that address risk and vulnerability.

14. **Finally, the Cooperation Framework must remain responsive to emerging and unforeseen needs.** Annual reviews of progress towards strategic priorities, outcomes and outputs, and assessment of significant changes in the country context inform agreement with the Government and relevant development partners on UN planned contributions. This is reflected in the signed Cooperation Framework document and/or periodically updated UN joint workplans.

1.2. Cooperation Framework duration

15. **The Cooperation Framework period is flexible to allow for alignment to national cycles and ensure a responsive framework in changing country contexts.** The recommended time frame is three to five years. Due consideration should be given to the complexity of the country context and the imperative to keep the UN response relevant to evolving development priorities within the national development plan period. Acceptable transaction costs for UN development entities and partners in the Cooperation Framework formulation process are another factor.

1.3. Guiding Principles for the Cooperation Framework

16. The Cooperation Framework adopts an integrated programming approach. It addresses **core programming principles in a holistic manner**, not as add-on modules. These principles are integrated throughout all stages. They guide process as well as content.
17. By adopting an **integrated and multidimensional programming approach**—in line with the “five P’s” of the 2030 Agenda (**people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnerships**) —the Cooperation Framework identifies how working on and advancing one SDG can maximize synergies and positive impacts, and manages potential trade-offs.
18. **Leaving no one behind** is the central transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda, a rights-based framework that represents the unequivocal commitment of all United Nations Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities including to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.¹³ This means, inter alia, moving beyond assessing overall average and aggregate progress for the general population towards ensuring progress for all population subgroups¹⁴. It requires disaggregated data and qualitative analysis to identify who is being excluded or discriminated against, how and why, as well as who is experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities. It entails identifying unjust, avoidable or extreme inequalities in outcomes and opportunities, and patterns of discrimination in law, policies and practices. To address patterns of exclusion, structural constraints and inequality in all dimensions, the Cooperation Framework calls for supporting legal,

¹² A collective outcome is a concrete and measurable result that humanitarian, development and other relevant actors want to achieve jointly over a period of 3-5 years to reduce people’s needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increase their resilience. <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2018/Apr/OCHA%20Collective%20Outcomes%20April%202018.pdf>

¹³ The [UNSDG Operational Guide for UNCTs on Leaving No One Behind](#) supports RCs and the UN development system in integrating this principle.

¹⁴ The principle of leaving no one behind is applicable to all population groups in a country, including non-citizens such as refugees or stateless persons.

policy, institutional and other measures,¹⁵ and for ensuring the free, active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, particularly the most marginalized.

19. The **Human Rights-Based Approach to Development** is a conceptual framework for the process of sustainable development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and principles and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. Under the HRBA, the plans, policies and processes of development are anchored in a system of rights and corresponding obligations established by international law, including all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and the right to development. HRBA requires human rights principles (equality and non-discrimination, participation, accountability) to guide UN development cooperation, and focus on capacity development of both ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations and ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights.
20. **Gender equality and women’s empowerment** are integral to realizing the 2030 Agenda and all of the SDGs. To integrate a focus on these issues throughout the Cooperation Framework, UN development entities should put gender equality at the heart of programming, driving the active and meaningful participation of both women and men, and consistently empowering women and girls, in line with the minimum requirements agreed upon by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) in the UNCT System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard.¹⁶
21. In an increasingly uncertain and volatile environment, **resilience** is a key principle to guide the design of integrated and cost-effective approaches that reduce risks and help prevent disasters and crises. Approaches should be informed by the UN Resilience Framework.¹⁷ Risks comprise those associated with natural and human-induced hazards,¹⁸ violent conflict, epidemics and pandemics, financial systems and food price fluctuations. Drivers of risk stem from poverty, climate change, inequality, discrimination and exclusion, extremism, demographic pressures, unplanned urbanization, ecosystem degradation, weak institutions and declining respect for human rights. These negative factors acting together can unleash cascading impacts across many dimensions, causing loss of life and livelihoods, and setting back progress towards productive, sustainable and peaceful societies.
22. **Sustainability** guides the focus on maintaining and building on development results. The 2030 Agenda calls for ensuring the lasting protection of the planet and its natural and cultural resources, supporting inclusive and sustained economic growth, ending poverty in all its dimensions and enhancing human well-being. Strengthening the capacities of national and subnational institutions and communities is essential. The Cooperation Framework will, as appropriate, help to strengthen these institutions so that they are appropriately configured, capacitated and resourced to advance the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
23. **Accountability**: the Cooperation Framework strengthens the UN development system’s accountability for the collective support it provides to countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda. This necessitates: (a) alignment with national priorities and national accountability mechanisms, and

¹⁵ This includes UN system-wide priorities for action such as the UN system-wide action plans (UN-SWAPs) on gender, youth, indigenous peoples and for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, among others.

¹⁶ See: <https://undg.org/document/unct-swap-gender-equality-scorecard>. The UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard establishes performance standards for gender-related programme results and institutional arrangements to achieve them.

¹⁷ The “UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies” of the High-Level Committee on Programme of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (draft of December 2018) supports RCs and the UN development system in integrating the resilience principle.

¹⁸ Practical guidelines on integrating disaster risk reduction into the Cooperation Framework support RCs and UNCTs in understanding the main risks in a country and how to integrate measures to reduce them in the Cooperation Framework.

support to their further development where warranted; (b) strengthening national and local mechanisms, institutions and processes to monitor and report on SDG implementation, including through the High-level Political Forum and Voluntary National Reviews; (c) measures to build upon and extend greater transparency, and improved measurement and reporting on results, including through joint assessments with target populations; (d) enabling active and inclusive local community engagement and participation in decision-making throughout the Cooperation Framework cycle; and (e) supporting the development and use of quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data to inform national and UN policy formulation, and programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as risk management for development results.

1.4. Implementing the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles

24. The Cooperation Framework employs three mutually reinforcing modes of implementation¹⁹.

25. **Results-focused programming:** The SDGs constitute the frame of reference for formulating and implementing the Cooperation Framework. Therefore, SDG targets should be reflected in priority outcomes that represent changes in institutional and behavioural capacities for development. Using results-based management, the UN development system ensures that resources are directed towards improving development conditions for target populations. This requires the identification of critical assumptions about the programming environment, and a consideration of relevant risks and management measures. Indicators to monitor progress and measure the achievement of outcomes are defined, with attention given to data, evidence generation, and support for national statistical and information systems. Accountabilities are clearly stipulated and backed by strong reporting mechanisms. The focus on results should be maintained throughout the entire Cooperation Framework cycle, including during monitoring and evaluation.

26. **Capacity development:** Development results need to be sustained and built upon. Capacity development—the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time—is critical to sustaining social, economic and environmental development results. It also maximizes effectiveness, efficiency and country ownership of development by ensuring that national stakeholders can effectively, efficiently and self-sufficiently manage and deliver services to target groups.

27. **Coherent policy support:** The interlinked nature of the SDGs demands policy coherence and more integrated, cross-sectoral approaches. The UN development system must combine its diverse and complementary mandates, expertise and technical contributions so that it provides effective, comprehensive and coherent policy support to national partners. Policy coherence ensures consistency across national policy and programmatic frameworks, their alignment with development commitment and adherence to international law. Accordingly, Cooperation Frameworks (a) align to national priorities and plans, national SDG strategies and targets, and internationally and regionally agreed policy frameworks defining integrated approaches to sustainable development; (b) enhance synergies between intervention areas (horizontal coherence) and their alignment with national development goals; and (c) strengthen coherence among development, humanitarian and

¹⁹ In addition, the 2017 United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidance listed three other key approaches for integrated programming: risk-informed programming, partnerships, and development, humanitarian and peacebuilding linkages. These were mainstreamed throughout this guidance.

peacebuilding efforts and human rights mechanisms in relevant contexts for the realization and sustainability of peace and development gains.

1.5. Communications strategy for the revitalized Cooperation Framework

28. A communications strategy prepared for the Cooperation Framework should help the UN development system convey very simply and concretely what the UN development system is doing to help a country achieve the SDGs. It should reflect: (a) the vision for the country in 2030; (b) how the Cooperation Framework expects to contribute to the “five P’s” and priority pathways to achieve the SDGs; (c) the UN development system’s focus, contributions and measurement of results in line with the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles; (d) who is responsible for delivering on what, by when and by what means; and (e) how these activities are linked to national development, human rights, humanitarian and peace frameworks. Dissemination of this information should be in an accessible language and format, and consider issues such as disability, language, literacy levels and cultural background.
29. In line with the commitments in the UN Funding Compact,²⁰ the UN development system will give visibility to core and pooled fund contributions in communicating about the Cooperation Framework.

CHAPTER 2: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK DESIGN AND PREPARATION

2.1. Understanding the country’s development landscape

2.1.1. Alignment to the national development strategy

30. The priorities of the Cooperation Framework are directly derived from the UN development system’s analysis of country priorities and needs, as expressed, for example, in national planning and budgetary frameworks, and from other analytical inputs.
31. Preparing national development plans and frameworks²¹ are typically participatory processes that evolve from extensive multistakeholder consultations and situational analyses. They identify national medium-term strategic priorities that are often situated within a long-term vision document, and increasingly are aligned with the SDGs as well as regional and subregional development commitments. In this context, the Cooperation Framework should align its targets and indicators to the extent possible to relevant targets and indicators in national development plans, which should in turn be informed by the SDGs. The UN development system has a role in supporting the Government to prepare a national SDG indicator framework.
32. While national development plans signal the **priorities** of a country, the annual budget and related expenditure frameworks demonstrate **financial commitments** to achieving such priorities. The

²⁰ The Funding Compact is an agreement by Member States and the United Nations development system to match the boldness of the 2030 Agenda with decisive action on the way funds are allocated to and disbursed by the system (Repositioning the United Nations Development System to deliver on the 2020 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet, Report of the Secretary-General, A/72/684–E/2018/7).

²¹ This includes broader national development plans as well as sectoral plans, and national action plans that help translate international commitments into concrete policies and programmes, such as national human rights action plans; national youth action plans; national action plans on women, peace and security; national disaster risk reduction plans and strategies; and others.

Cooperation Framework prioritization process should be informed by annual budgets and expenditure frameworks to identify **unfunded or underfunded** national development priorities. Furthermore, **subnational** development plans provide a **geographic** or spatial dimension to national development priorities and needs. Such information, triangulated with data from the UN common country analysis (UN CCA), will be critical in designing **targeted** interventions to reach groups left behind and tackle the root causes of exclusion.

2.1.2 UN common country analysis

33. The UN CCA is the UN system's **independent, impartial and collective assessment** (i.e., a description of a country situation) **and analysis** (i.e., a description of causes and their implications) of a country situation for its internal use in developing the Cooperation Framework. It examines progress, gaps, opportunities and bottlenecks vis-à-vis a country's commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda, UN norms and standards, and the principles of the UN Charter, including as reflected in the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles.
34. The Cooperation Framework's expanded notion of partnerships offers a powerful opportunity to engage with relevant **stakeholders** in the UN CCA process through continuous and inclusive **dialogue** to address complex issues, such as inequality and exclusion, among others.
35. The UN CCA will **draw from and add to existing data, statistics, analyses, reviews, research, capacities and resources** from within and outside the UN system. These include national and sector-specific development visions and strategies, national budget allocations, and development financing from domestic and international, private and public sources. To leave no one behind, it is important to generate evidence and **data disaggregated not only by income, gender, geography and age**, but also other grounds of discrimination prohibited under international law. Social, cultural, economic, political, legislative and other systemic drivers of exclusion should be examined and described.
36. The UN CCA will analyse existing data and data gaps for national SDG indicators. It should go beyond official national statistics to **use new sources of data and diagnostic tools**, including but not limited to big data, national surveys and assessments, targeted surveys using mobile technology and others. This should be done in accordance with the human rights-based approach to data, international data protection standards and the UN Principles on Personal Data Protection and Privacy.²² Country-specific findings and recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review and other human rights mechanisms will provide an important basis for highlighting gaps and corresponding obligations.²³ The UN CCA can build on processes such as the Voluntary National Reviews, the country-specific findings and recommendations of UN principal organs, and/or the UNSDG-endorsed Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) approach supporting SDG implementation at the country level.²⁴
37. The **UN CCA will identify multidimensional risks that could impact the development trajectory of the country, covering a full spectrum of development, humanitarian, peacebuilding and human rights issues**. It should foster common UN system understanding of groups left behind, and underlying drivers of risks, vulnerabilities and needs, including those that are social or related to conflict,

²² See: www.unsceb.org/privacy-principles.

²³ Relevant findings and recommendations can be found at: <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en>.

²⁴ See: <https://undg.org/document/maps-mainstreaming-acceleration-and-policy-support-for-the-2030-agenda/>.

disasters, climate change, the environment or the economy. In-depth analysis on these issues establishes an understanding of root and proximate causes, stakeholders, dynamics and triggers, as well as the impacts on people, the operational environment and the UN system's work and presence. This analysis should also clarify how UN engagement may influence dynamics, positively and/or negatively, and how to manage negative effects and maximize positive ones. Involving all relevant UN entities, including UN special political missions, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian and human rights entities, where relevant, is essential. Where possible, the UN CCA informs the UN Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning.

38. **The UN CCA will integrate analysis of relevant regional, subregional and cross-border dynamics, and their impact on achieving the 2030 Agenda in the country.** This may include trends and risks related to economics and trade, climate change and natural disasters, environmental degradation and ecosystem services, conflict and security, migration patterns, health emergencies, and animal, food or sanitary emergencies. Such analysis also helps identify opportunities for cross-border dialogue and collaboration between countries, including through South-South and triangular cooperation, and UN system-wide regional strategies.²⁵ **The UN CCA should tap perspectives and expertise from all levels of the UN system,** including non-resident agencies, Secretariat departments, regional offices of UN entities and the UN regional commissions.
39. To meet the ambition of the SDGs, the **UN CCA should examine the country's financial landscape for sustainable development, analyse financial flows, and identify the greatest opportunities to re-orient all sources of financing.** It can draw on data from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and other regional and/or international financial institutions.
40. In order for the UN CCA to adequately serve as the analytical foundation of the Cooperation Framework, it should: (a) demonstrate a broad, holistic and integrated approach that takes into consideration the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs; (b) reflect the interlinkages among the three dimensions of sustainable development and all spheres of the UN system's work; (c) reflect the interlinkages between the SDGs and the human rights framework, including treaties and human rights monitoring mechanisms; (d) build on all sources of data and analysis from a broad range of partners; and (e) focus on prevention and the interlinkages between sustainable development, human rights, sustaining peace, and the shift from response to preparedness to meet the challenges of the future.
41. For more specific details, refer to the updated companion guidance on the UN CCA. It provides analytical tools and practical tips, including a UN CCA outline.²⁶
42. **The UN CCA is not a one-off event.** It should track situational developments and inform the UN system's work on a continuous basis. It is now a core analytical function carried out by the UN development system at country, regional and global level. A repository for data and analysis should be established at the country level. It should include SDG data, and combine various analytical resources held, updated and made available by UN entities across the UN system.

²⁵ For the case of Africa, the Middle-Income Countries (MIC) Strategy, the Regional Strategy for Resilience, and the Great Lakes Peace and Security Cooperation Framework can be mentioned, among others.

²⁶ The companion guidance on UN CCA is under development.

43. The UN CCA should be updated periodically to serve as a current analytical resource and to reduce the time required for formulating a new Cooperation Framework. The UNCT may organize multistakeholder dialogues on evolving country contexts.

2.1.3. SDG analytical toolbox

44. The 2030 Agenda demands a significant increase in UN development system capacities in terms of coordinated analysis, as well as policy and programme design. A focus on *integration* requires the adoption of a systems approach to development. It addresses interlinkages across economic, social and environmental dimensions in line with the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles. Further, the SDGs must be owned at all levels—global, regional, national, sub-national, rural and urban. Progress depends on truly collective action: a “whole-of-government, whole-of-society” approach. Cross-border and regional collaboration assume greater importance than ever before. The ability to consider *longer time horizons* is essential in finding solutions for today’s most pressing problems while anticipating risks that may still be emerging. The commitment to leave no one behind calls for greater granularity of data, quantitative and qualitative analysis, to design evidence-based interventions that identify, empower and support the most vulnerable and address root causes. Similarly, advising countries on transformative economic pathways that are environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive call for leveraging all possible SDG financing flows – public and private, domestic and international.
45. UNCTs should leverage expertise from across the development system in the Cooperation Framework process. In addition to knowledge and technical resources within the UNCT, the UN Sustainable Development Group is committed to creating a community of practice to support SDG implementation. Initiatives such as a MAPS engagement²⁷ or regional “cluster” mechanisms can bring together a tailored coalition of UN and other experts to help augment UNCT capacity. They can provide support and solutions for such issues as enabling multistakeholder engagement; identifying policy accelerators; analysing and utilizing all forms of data; analysing SDG financing flows and strengthening financing partnerships. This will ensure that UNCTs expand capacities at a critical point while better connecting regional-level engagements to the core work of the UNCT.
46. Countries require new policy tools to meet the ambition of the SDGs, ranging from regulatory policies to planning, budgeting and political instruments that last beyond relatively short-term planning cycles and can propel deeper transformations for sustainable development. UNCTs will be able to access, in a coordinated and coherent way, a number of tools for integrated policy support. These include: the SDG Monitoring and Reporting Toolkit for UNCTs;²⁸ quantitative and qualitative methodologies to support the identification of SDG “accelerators”;²⁹ action at local, national and global levels to advance the data revolution for the SDGs³⁰; the use of Development Finance Assessments to link financing with sustainable development results³¹; new platforms and approaches for sustainability and innovation;³² and new ways to address risk and resilience, to mention just a few.

²⁷ See: <https://undg.org/document/maps-mainstreaming-acceleration-and-policy-support-for-the-2030-agenda/>.

²⁸ See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unct-toolkit/>.

²⁹ For example, the Sustainable Development Goals Acceleration Toolkit. See: <https://undg.org/2030-agenda/sdg-acceleration-toolkit/>.

³⁰ For instance, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. See: <http://www.data4sdgs.org/>.

³¹ For instance, Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Era of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. See: <https://www.climatefinance-developmenteffectiveness.org/achieving-the-sustainable-development-goals.pdf>.

³² See: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action-platforms/breakthrough-innovation>.

2.2. Cooperation Framework design process

2.2.1. Theory of change

47. The 2030 Agenda set forth an ambitious and transformational vision to be achieved in a relatively short span of time. With the path to 2030 shaped by developments and trends that are inherently unpredictable and possibly unprecedented in their impacts, the UN development system and its partners need to manage change and uncertainty through longer-term strategic planning.
48. A visioning exercise is an integral starting point for formulating the Cooperation Framework. This exercise examines: (a) the Government's vision of its long-term development trajectory through 2030, where this exists, and current national development plans; (b) the UN development system's internal and external working assumptions, considering the country's possible long-term development trajectories to 2030 in line with the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles; (c) the UN development system's comparative advantage, positioning and evolving role in the country through 2030; and (d) successive Cooperation Framework cycles along the overall country trajectory towards 2030.
49. This visioning exercise should be consultative, collaborative and inclusive so that it is truly shared and owned by the UN development system, the Government and all relevant stakeholders, including people furthest left behind. This requires measures to ensure stakeholders are informed, empowered and can provide inputs, including through geographic outreach if necessary. The UN development system can undertake this exercise in a flexible manner, using a range of tools and processes.
50. With 2030 in sight, the UN development system must design Cooperation Frameworks that will truly make a difference in less than three cycles. Therefore, the vision of its contribution and the design of medium-term support must be grounded in a clearly articulated, evidence-based, robust **theory of change** that describes the interdependent changes necessary for the country to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The theory of change is a comprehensive articulation of different pathways and choices that illustrate **how and why the desired change is expected to happen**, and the risks and bottlenecks to be addressed.
51. The **theory of change should be based on the needs of the country (demand)** and examined through the lens of the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles, rather than just the immediately available capacities and resources available (**supply**) of the UN development system and other partners. The theory of change shows where and how development actors need to come together to contribute to the desired change, providing the basis for wider, higher quality and transformational partnerships. Based on a shared understanding of opportunities, risks and bottlenecks, and the inequalities that persist, the UN development system agrees on results that it can contribute to through the UNCTs own resources and through leveraging those of other stakeholders. It also identifies areas of comparative advantage for the UN development system to make its best collective contribution. To leave no one behind, the theory of change must address structural barriers to equality, resources and opportunities, and any discriminatory laws, social norms and stereotypes that perpetuate inequalities and disparities.
52. The UN development system needs to be mindful of the complexity of attaining the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the local context, which will evolve over time. Therefore, the **theory of change needs to**

be adaptable, drawing on the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of findings generated during the implementation of the Cooperation Framework as well as the “living” UN CCA.

2.2.2 Strategic priorities

53. Underpinned by a robust UN CCA and vision, the UN development system contributions in support of national-led efforts to achieve 2030 Agenda should be reflected in the Cooperation Framework. The UN development system cannot and should not attempt to address all development issues in a country. It must choose, in consultation with national partners, strategic priorities and related development results (outcomes and outputs) in which to invest its collective efforts, capacities and resources. These choices must be underpinned by a candid assessment of the comparative advantage of the UN system vis-à-vis other development actors. Such a process will ensure that the UN development system is positioned to respond effectively to national priorities and provide added value from joint UN action while leveraging the contributions of others. In essence, UN support must be catalytic and transformational.
54. The following filters are applied to define strategic priorities: (a) determine the most pressing and critical national development priorities and gaps, and related bottlenecks and entry points; (b) determine strategic catalytic solutions and strategies to address these; (c) match these solutions and strategies with the UN development system’s mandates, and global, regional and sectoral priorities in line with international and regional norms and standards, and the priorities of the System-Wide Strategic Document,³³ (d) test prioritized solutions and strategies with regard to advancing and aligning with the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles; (e) consider UN complementarity with other stakeholders through mapping, and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; (f) assess the UN development system’s human and financial resources, knowledge, technology, networks and efficiencies, both current and potential; and (g) reflect on lessons learned and evidence from research and evaluations.
55. Typically, a strategic priority comprises a limited number of outcomes and outputs. Overall, the numbers must be realistic, together reflecting the strategic focus of the UN development system during a Cooperation Framework cycle. The outcomes and outputs must also reflect a shift from the MDGs to the SDGs by allowing the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles to steer their definition. Outcomes and outputs are developed concurrently during the Cooperation Framework design stage. Outputs help complete the logic for Cooperation Framework results, and ensure the transparency and accountability of UN development system contributions. They are central to future steps in the cycle, particularly vis-à-vis UNCT configuration and financing requirements.

2.2.3. Cooperation Framework outcomes

56. In line with the UNSDG Results-based Management Handbook,³⁴ “outcomes” represent changes in the institutional and behavioural capacities for development. Outcomes should: (a) make a substantive and measurable contribution to the achievement of the selected priorities of the national development framework and the 2030 Agenda; (b) directly address key issues/development challenges and bottlenecks identified by the UN common country analysis, including the needs of

³³ Currently under development.

³⁴ <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>

those furthest behind; (c) be specific, realistically achievable within the Cooperation Framework cycle, sustainable and measurable, ensuring accountability and monitoring; (d) Include special measures to address the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles as per the findings from the UN CCA; and (e) reflect the contributions of one or more organizations as clearly highlighted in the Cooperation Framework results matrix.

57. The Cooperation Framework should be consistent with international human rights law.³⁵ In settings comprising development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts, outcomes incorporate or are coherent and mutually reinforcing with those of other UN planning frameworks in a given country, irrespective of whether they are managed separately or in an integrated manner.

2.2.4. Cooperation Framework outputs

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

59. Due to their direct attribution to the UN development system, Cooperation Framework outputs will provide the basis for the RC to lead the formal discussion with the Government on the UN expertise, capacity and resources required by the Cooperation Framework, in line with General Assembly resolution 72/279 and the MAF. The UN development system should develop both outcomes and outputs during the Cooperation Framework design stage to ensure a clear logic in the results matrix and for transparency and accountability of UN development system contributions. UNCTs may opt to place outputs *either* in both the Cooperation Framework document and joint workplans *or* only in the latter.

60. The UN development system should analyse to what extent its planned contributions (outputs) are part of the Cooperation Framework, and whether they form part of other frameworks, such as a Humanitarian Response Plan,³⁶ Refugee Response Plans³⁷/Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework,³⁸ an Integrated Strategic Framework in integrated mission settings or others. The system should assess how these may connect to and complement each other.

2.2.5. Indicators

61. The Cooperation Framework outcome and output indicators should, by default, be linked to national SDG indicator frameworks, which should ideally be linked to regional³⁹ and global⁴⁰ SDG indicator frameworks. This enables standardization and aggregation to better measure and report on development results against the 2030 Agenda at the regional and global levels. This commitment is part of the 2019 Funding Compact. Other globally accepted indicators can be included to measure

³⁵ This includes recommendations made to the country by UN human rights mechanisms.

³⁶ The following guidance is without prejudice to General Assembly resolution 46/182 and related resolutions governing humanitarian action and coordination.

³⁷ Refugee Response Plans in emergencies. See: <https://unhcr.org/refugee-response-plans.html>.

³⁸ Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. See: <https://www.unhcr.org/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html>.

³⁹ Regional indicators might, for example, include indicators of regional intergovernmental strategies, such as the African Union's 2063 Agenda.

⁴⁰ The global indicator framework for the SDGs was established by the Inter-agency Expert Group.

intermediary results. Disaggregation of indicators makes it possible to see the extent to which the UN has contributed to development results that “leave no one behind” and uphold Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles.

2.2.6. Completion, review and validation of the Cooperation Framework

62. Under the leadership of the RC, the Cooperation Framework will be prepared using the standard outline in **Annex 3**, with a legal annex (**Annex 4**) as an integral part. Every effort must be made to reduce transactional costs for both the UN development system and its partners.
63. In countries with UN missions, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/RC must share the draft Cooperation Framework with the Integrated Taskforce. The Task Force is expected to provide feedback within seven working days.
64. Respective regional/global platforms will engage in Cooperation Framework preparation in line with the regional/global MAF. Regional/global feedback on the draft Cooperation Framework must be provided to the UNCT within seven working days from date of receipt. Thereafter, the UN development system should submit a final draft for feedback from the Government, and other key stakeholders and development partners.

CHAPTER 3: UNCT CONFIGURATION IN SUPPORT OF THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

65. A new Cooperation Framework represents a set of expectations of the Government matched with a set of undertakings by the UN development system. Rarely is a Cooperation Framework setting out an *entirely* new agenda. More typically, it contains both familiar results and the unfinished business of the previous Cooperation Framework, as well as new support areas. A certain number of programmes from the previous Cooperation Framework will inevitably continue until completion. Nonetheless, formulating it should include reviewing the UNCT’s assets and configuration for the task at hand. This should be an iterative process fully involving all concerned entities.
66. A UNCT consists of UN entities both physically present in the country and contributing remotely. It also includes UN entities with mandates beyond the purely developmental. The review of UNCT configuration entails a look at capacities needed to deliver on the prioritized outcomes in the Cooperation Framework, beyond financial considerations, which are addressed separately. The discussion on UNCT configuration should include both an internal analysis and consultation with the Government and donor partners, reviewing inter alia:
 - a. What kind of expertise and services will the UNCT need to provide to deliver on the Cooperation Framework? From which agencies can these be sourced?
 - b. To what extent would these services need to be delivered by an in-country/resident UN agency presence? What aspects could be delivered from a regional or global base?
 - c. What new implementation modalities could be leveraged?
 - d. To what extent can some services be delivered by local service providers? Which activities should be delivered directly by UN entities and which ones through working with implementing partners?

- e. To what extent does the new Cooperation Framework imply a major increase in delivery capacity by one or more members of the UNCT, and what would that scaling up require?
67. A review of UNCT configuration responds to United Nations Member States' call for a "needs-based tailored country-presence"⁴¹. This call followed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the "United Nations development system move away from a somewhat standardized model of physical presence, which largely reflects the historical evolution of each individual entity"⁴² to one that ensures "the right system-wide capacities and encourage(s) more integrative, effective and agile ways of working"⁴³. This process is much larger than the question of which agency needs to be resident or not. Coupled with the re-organization and redeployment of regional assets, the reconfiguration of business models in connection with multicountry offices, and the ambitious changes planned for common services, implicit in a configuration review is the ability to draw on a much wider palate of options in accessing the full UN development system's capacities. Preparation of a new Cooperation Framework should trigger a discussion on these issues and related actions to deliver on commitments.
68. After determining the UNCT configuration, the final Cooperation Framework document plus its legal annex are signed by the Government and UN development entities. At this point, the Cooperation Framework is not formally required to be accompanied by a budget.⁴⁴

CHAPTER 4: FINANCING THE SDGs AND FUNDING THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

4.1. Financial landscape analysis

69. An in-depth look at the volume and mix of resources required to deliver Cooperation Framework outcomes and the bigger picture of SDG financing requirements is a key step. This analysis is undertaken after Cooperation Framework priorities, outcomes, outputs and the UNCT configuration have been determined. The assessment of priority development needs drives conversation about available resources and resource mobilization needs, not the other way around.
70. The UNCT should address the connected and mutually reinforcing elements of SDG financing and Cooperation Framework funding. One set of considerations involves: (a) the financing landscape and how the Cooperation Framework is situated within it, (b) identification of financial flows that can be influenced and leveraged by the Cooperation Framework towards SDG attainment, and (c) potential funding sources (traditional and non-traditional) for the Cooperation Framework. Another set of factors comprises how available Cooperation Framework funding can (a) catalyse broader financing and investment flows towards achieving the SDGs, (b) support the formulation and implementation of the financing framework of the Government, and (c) complement and fill strategic gaps in national and other budgetary allocations.

⁴¹ UN General Assembly resolution 72/279, paragraph 2.

⁴² A/72/684-E/2018/7, paragraph 38.

⁴³ A/72/684-E/2018/7, paragraph 41.

⁴⁴ A/74/73-E/2019/4, figure 1.

4.2. The Cooperation Framework funding framework

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

4.3. Linking Cooperation Framework funding with SDG financing

74. The Cooperation Framework must depart from its traditional dominant focus on mobilizing financial resources for the UN system's development work. The UN development system should seek to **leverage different sources of financing and investment** flows outside the UN system that support Governments in financing national priorities to achieve the SDGs. Beyond its own funding requirements, the UNCT should facilitate a dialogue on the volume and mix of financing required to achieve the SDGs. It should explore ways to connect more strongly with domestic financing, such as by engaging with and influencing national budget processes, decisions and priorities.
75. This approach acknowledges that implementing the SDGs requires attracting, leveraging and mobilizing investments from all possible sources to close the global SDG funding gap, which is estimated in the trillions. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and lays the foundations for financing the SDGs. It highlights the need for "cohesive, nationally owned development strategies supported by **integrated financing frameworks**"⁴⁵.
76. The [UN Secretary-General's SDG Financing Strategy](#) underscores the UN system's critical role in supporting and accelerating the mobilization of finance for sustainable development from national and international, and public and private sources. The system can support the development of regulatory frameworks, financing mechanisms and related partnerships; advise on how to mobilize and leverage necessary financing; and assess possible strengths and disadvantages of financing options. This process may include enhancing national capacities in areas such as domestic resource mobilization, assuring the quality of public spending, fiscal and debt management, de-risking investments, developing capital markets or fostering investment-grade business environments. The Cooperation Framework should be the central instrument outlining UN contributions in line with the Principles for Engagement in SDG Financing.

⁴⁵ Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, 2015, paragraph 9.

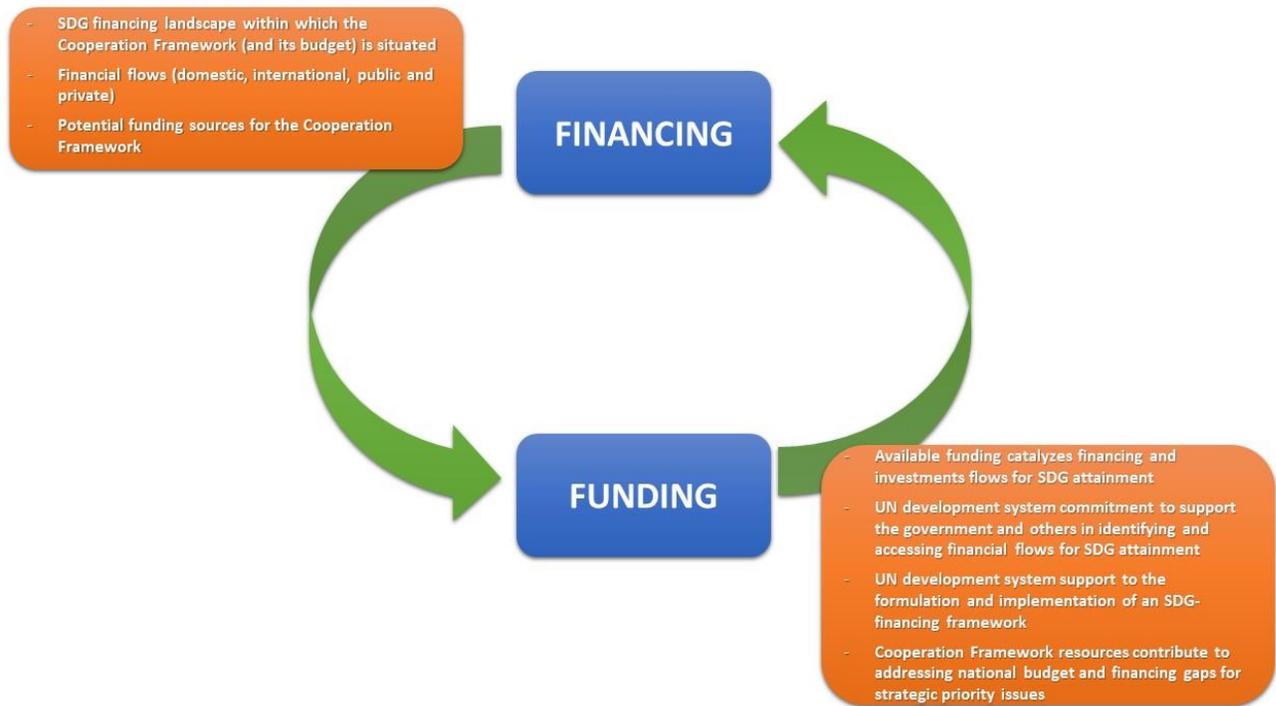


Figure 2: Cooperation Framework financing and funding strategy

77. Beyond the UN’s own Funding Framework, the UNCT should:

- a. Map and analyse the financing landscape for the SDGs and outline how to maximize impact through smart investment of existing resources, greater access to additional resources and better leveraging of larger financial flows.
- b. Build on existing data on financial flows as provided by the international financial institutions, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and others, and the Integrated National Financing Framework, to the extent possible.
- c. Articulate necessary partnerships among UN development entities and between them and external stakeholders, such as the international financial institutions and the private sector.
- d. Identify (a) priority SDGs within the country; (b) the approximate amount of financing needed to achieve (each) SDG; (c) domestic, international, public and private financing flows, and relevant stakeholders; and (d) instruments and modalities through which the UN development system’s resources can be paired with other financial flows. In line with Cooperation Framework outcomes, the last could include, for example, a national window in a UN fund or programme designed and implemented as a first tranche of a larger sectoral approach drawing on funding outside the UN system.
- e. Identify specific financing opportunities that reduce inequalities and exclusion, such as those that target finance to the poorest areas of a country.

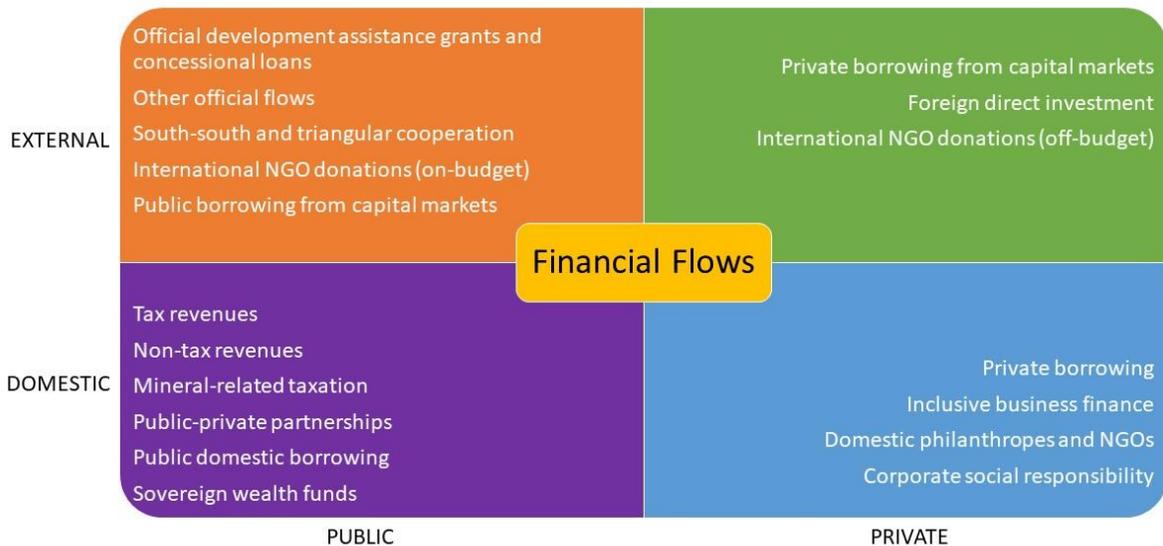


Figure 3: Overview of financial flows (source UNDP 2016)

CHAPTER 5: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

78. UN development entity country development programming instruments, Cooperation Framework results groups, joint workplans and joint workplan annual reviews are key tools for implementing the Cooperation Framework.

5.1. Implementing the Cooperation Framework through UN development system entity country development programmes

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

- **Option A:** UN development system entities adopt the Cooperation Framework as their own country development programme document; they do not prepare a separate entity document.
- **Option B:** UN development system entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim.
- **Option C:** UN development system entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim, plus additional outcomes that are not in the Cooperation Framework, included only on an exceptional basis to capture normative and standard-setting activities not prioritized in the Cooperation Framework.

80. UN development entities with global or regional programmes or without specific country programme documents should pursue any additional activities not directly relating to the Cooperation Framework in line with the MAF.
81. UN development entities that submit country development programming instruments to their governing mechanisms for approval should do so together with the Cooperation Framework strategic priorities, outcomes and outputs. Once a new Cooperation Framework is approved, entities will align specific country development programming documents at the earliest opportunity and no later than the annual review.
82. In line with General Assembly resolution 72/279 and the MAF, the RC coordinates implementation of the Cooperation Framework and works with UNCT members to align UN development system entity country development programmes with the Cooperation Framework and the 2030 Agenda. The **RC will have the opportunity to review and comment on entities' country development programming documents** before their submission to governing mechanisms, with a view to confirming alignment and coherence with the Cooperation Framework, identifying opportunities for synergies and complementarities, and avoiding duplication and overlap.

5.2. Coordinating Cooperation Framework implementation through results groups

83. Each Cooperation Framework strategic priority must have a corresponding results group. A results group comprises contributing UN development entities (resident and non-resident) and is chaired or co-chaired by UN heads of agencies. Results groups improve internal coordination and ensure a coherent UN system-wide approach to a strategic priority. They make the UN development system a more effective partner and reduce transactions costs for stakeholders. Results groups must meet at least once every two months.
84. Where possible, results groups are aligned with and feed into existing Government-led working structures, such as sector working groups, clusters, etc. This enables UN coherence in both representation and contributions to external mechanisms. If equivalent Government-led groups do not exist, results groups should incorporate relevant national and international partners, and be co-chaired with relevant Government counterparts.
85. Under the leadership of the RC, results groups develop UN joint workplans to operationalize the Cooperation Framework, identify opportunities for closer inter-agency collaboration (e.g., through joint programmes), collectively monitor and report on progress towards joint outputs, and provide periodic inputs to update the UN CCA. UNCTs are encouraged to establish working mechanisms such as thematic groups or advisory capacity to mainstream Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles across the work of results groups.

5.3. Coordinating Cooperation Framework implementation through joint workplans

86. **Joint workplans reflect:** Cooperation Framework outputs; all related key UN development contributions delivered jointly or by individual entities, with a view to maximizing synergies and avoiding duplication; and resources that are required and available as well as funding gaps. Joint workplans may be annual or multi-year as appropriate to the country context.

5.4. UN development system joint programming and joint programmes

87. Under joint programming, UN organizations and national partners collectively prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate development activities aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda and other international and regional commitments.
88. In preparing and reviewing joint workplans, Cooperation Framework results groups may identify the need for increased joint delivery through one or more joint programmes. A joint programme is a set of activities contained in a joint workplan and related Funding Framework, involving two or more UN entities contributing to the same Cooperation Framework outputs. Pooled funding or other funding mechanisms can fund joint programmes. Other stakeholders can be engaged as implementing partners.
89. UN missions and humanitarian actors also engage in joint programmes, where appropriate, for a country. Joint programmes can be attractive to funding partners, since the modality provides greater assurance of UN coherence in delivering results and reduces transaction costs.

5.5. UN INFO

90. UN INFO is an online planning, monitoring and reporting platform that digitizes each Cooperation Framework and its corresponding joint workplans. It reflects the UN development system's effort to improve coherence, transparency and accountability, and to better address the needs and priorities of United Nations Member States. Initially conceived at the country level, UN INFO provides an overview of country level progress as well as regionally and globally aggregated information, both for the UN development system under the Cooperation Framework and individual entities. This includes how the UN development system in each country is channelling resources towards national priorities, thematic issues (including based on cross-cutting gender, human rights and humanitarian markers) and the SDGs. It encourages more regular monitoring of joint workplans so that all development activities are on track to deliver results. This enables senior leadership to make corrections to programming or shift resources in real-time. The public can also see a full picture of UN development system activities through public dashboards linked to UNCT websites.
91. UN INFO is being rolled out as a universal tool. As an evidence-based approach to UN development system coordination, it will eventually integrate data directly from entities' enterprise resource planning systems. UN development system entities, with support from the RC and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) group, should regularly update the system with quality assured, entity-specific data and analysis.

CHAPTER 6: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATIONS

6.1. Adaptive programming

92. Development is never linear, as the operational environment and risks at local, national, trans-boundary, regional and global levels are in constant flux. Cooperation Framework assumptions may

not hold, and the actions of partners may not happen as anticipated. This is particularly relevant in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Programming thus requires an adaptive approach, based on learning from new information and evidence. This allows for adjustments to achieve expected results in a changing operating environment. While the Cooperation Framework outcomes may remain stable for the duration of the cycle, outputs and activities may need correction to remain relevant, while maintaining accountability to partners. At the end of every cycle, a Cooperation Framework evaluation must draw lessons to inform the next cycle.

93. Cooperation Framework results groups and joint workplans are mechanisms for adaptive programming and should be supported by the M&E group. Results groups jointly review outputs, activities and budgets in response to new information, lessons and risks emerging from continuous analysis, monitoring (including real-time) and evaluation. Through adaptive programming, the RC and UN development system entities make informed decisions, encourage risk tolerance and management, and foster an appetite for experimentation and the reasonable acceptance of failure.
94. To support adaptive programming, the UN development system should develop a **costed multi-year joint monitoring and evaluation plan for the full Cooperation Framework period**. This plan should be formulated at the Cooperation Framework design phase. UN development system entity M&E plans should be coordinated with and reflected in the Cooperation Framework M&E plan. They should be appropriately timed, sequenced and executed to contribute to Cooperation Framework annual reviews, annual UN country results reporting and the final Cooperation Framework evaluation, to the extent feasible.

6.2. Monitoring and learning

95. **Monitoring and learning are preconditions** for tracking progress of the Cooperation Framework contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, evolving risks and opportunities, and the adjustment of the programme as part of adaptive management.
96. As both the endpoint of one Cooperation Framework cycle and the starting point for another, the initial **UN CCA report⁴⁶ constitutes the baseline** for monitoring and evaluating the Cooperation Framework.
97. **Joint monitoring throughout the Cooperation Framework cycle** should ensure that the UN development system is (a) delivering on the commitment to leave no one behind, and achieving results that uphold the Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles; (b) helping national partners develop capacities; (c) mitigating drivers of conflict, disaster risks, humanitarian crises and complex emergencies, including through greater cooperation and complementarity among activities related to development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace; (d) fostering new and effective partnerships between national stakeholders and international actors, including through South-South and triangular cooperation; and (e) promoting integrated and coherent policy support.
98. Frequent high-quality (and where possible real-time) monitoring, review and reporting on the Cooperation Framework are necessary to make it responsive to changing contexts. UN development entities must increasingly synchronize individual monitoring systems for development results with the Cooperation Framework M&E system, where possible and relevant.

⁴⁶ The first CCA report on the basis of which the Cooperation Framework was initially designed.

99. More specifically, UN development entities should monitor and report on the quality of implementation; results achieved; risks, threats and opportunities emerging in achieving the SDGs; resources leveraged for financing the SDGs; resources mobilized and delivered by the UN development system, guided by principles of equity and value added for money; the continued validity of the theory of change and; innovations.
100. The UN development system’s joint monitoring systems, resources and activities, and collective planning and investment in monitoring services and technologies should support the strengthening of national data and information systems.
101. The UN results groups and M&E groups should meet at least twice a year to reflect on and learn from implementation monitoring reports, including on SDG indicators, issues and synergies across priority areas.

6.3. Reporting

102. The UN development system reports periodically to the RC on progress in achieving Cooperation Framework outcomes and outputs through UN INFO. It should also provide updates on work related to outcomes not in the Cooperation Framework, as in Option “C” under paragraph 79 above. The RC should submit the One UN Country Results Report to the host Government and key partners at least once a year. This can feed into Government thematic/sector reports as well as Voluntary National Reviews at the High-level Political Forum.

6.4. Evaluating the Cooperation Framework

103. Evaluation of the Cooperation Framework is an independent system-wide process at the country level that contributes to system-wide oversight, transparency, accountability and collective learning.⁴⁷ It is vital for ensuring greater transparency on results achieved, promoting joint work and efficiencies, and generating knowledge that informs and improves development programming.
104. Using the initial UN CCA report as a benchmark, the Cooperation Framework evaluation assesses whether expected results were achieved, if other unintended results are observed, and whether the Cooperation Framework made a worthwhile, coherent, durable and cost-efficient contribution to collective UN system outcomes and national development processes to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Cooperation Framework evaluations should enable UNCTs to assess the extent to which they have conformed with Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles in terms of both process and results. By identifying synergies, gaps, overlaps and missed opportunities, evaluations provide the basis for critical inquiry as an integral part of efforts to continuously improve performance and results. They also play a role in supporting social and environmental safeguarding efforts. The Cooperation Framework evaluation informs the visioning exercise, theories of change and the strategic prioritization process of the subsequent Cooperation Framework cycle.

⁴⁷ Independent system-wide evaluation is a systematic and impartial assessment of the combined contributions of United Nations entities towards the achievements of collective development objectives. The Secretary General’s December 2017 report on the repositioning of the UN development system (A/72/684–E/2018/7), General Assembly resolution 72/729 and the Funding Compact position independent system-wide evaluations as instruments for achieving system-wide oversight, transparency, accountability and collective learning.

105. Independent reviews of past and current Cooperation Framework evaluations found that they are uneven in adherence to core evaluation norms, standards and principles; lack independence and sufficient system buy-in; are not easily accessible by partners; do not sufficiently inform subsequent planning and programming choices; and are not adequately resourced. Quality and credibility must improve for use at higher levels of aggregation and synthesis in regional and global system-wide evaluation processes, including, but not limited to meta-analysis.
106. Given the importance of robust accountability, the Cooperation Framework evaluation must adhere to international best practices for evaluation and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards.⁴⁸ It should also aim to reflect the evaluation indicators in the Funding Compact, the UN-SWAP and the United Nation Disability Inclusion Strategy. Evaluation procurement, design and all other processes should build on and, wherever feasible, strengthen national and regional evaluation capacities in partnership with voluntary organizations for the professionalization of evaluation.
107. Interim guidelines for system-wide evaluation⁴⁹ and UNEG guidance will complement Cooperation Framework evaluation companion guidance.⁵⁰ Guidance will include specific and practical steps on design, conduct, content and use. It will outline governance and management arrangements, disclosure and communication policies, and roles and responsibilities.
108. An independent Cooperation Framework evaluation should be commissioned in the penultimate year of the Cooperation Framework period. Joint Cooperation Framework-country development programme document evaluations are encouraged to reduce transactions costs for the UNCT and partners, and to benefit from substantive links. In cases where this is not possible, the UNCT should explore opportunities to establish common components between the two kinds of evaluations. To that end, the common, costed Cooperation Framework monitoring and evaluation plan will include both entity-specific evaluations as well as the Cooperation Framework evaluation.
109. The RC and UNCT play a pivotal role in the evaluation process. The RC ensures an independent final and useful Cooperation Framework evaluation by facilitating and promoting national ownership, through involvement of national partners throughout the process and through the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into decision-making around subsequent UN CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, as well as within the country development programming of respective United Nations development entities. The RC and UNCT should provide an independent evaluation team with all required information and access to national stakeholders, and coordinate entity-specific evaluations so they are relevant and timely in supporting the Cooperation Framework evaluation. The RC and UNCT must issue an evaluation management response and action plan as a key accountability tool. They are responsible for publicly disclosing the final evaluation at the country level as part of an overall communications and dissemination strategy. Specific roles and responsibilities of the RC and the UNCT will be outlined in the forthcoming M&E companion guide and will form part of RC/UNCT performance appraisals.

⁴⁸ The UNEG will provide further technical guidance and quality standards specifically for Cooperation Framework evaluations.

⁴⁹ These interim guidelines were developed in March 2019 in collaboration with UNEG and are yet to be finalised).

⁵⁰ Currently under development.

CHAPTER 7: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

110. Cooperation Framework governance is nationally owned. It could include the following mechanisms.
111. **National/UN Joint Steering Committee (JSC):** The JSC is co-chaired by the RC and the most senior representative of the central Government counterpart for the UN system. Its membership includes key partners identified in the Cooperation Framework for joint contributions to national priorities and the 2030 Agenda. The JSC ensures strategic direction and oversight of the Cooperation Framework; alignment with national, regional and international development processes, mechanisms and goals; and links with other processes such as the Voluntary National Reviews. The JSC monitors progress, challenges and opportunities, and steers the direction of implementation; reviews the One UN Country Results Report; and supports resource mobilization for the Cooperation Framework as well as development financing opportunities.
112. **A JSC review takes place at least once a year.** The RC presents the One UN Country Results Report, evaluation reports, and evaluation management responses and action plan. This is an opportunity to amend the Cooperation Framework to ensure continued relevance in the face of evolving national circumstances. These may include humanitarian, economic, political or other unexpected situations of a magnitude that demands modified or immediate responses by the UN development system and its partners, reallocation of human and financial resources, and other measures. During the review, the JSC co-chairs will determine if a formal revision of the Cooperation Framework is required or changes can be documented in the annual review report and reflected in the next joint workplan. UN INFO must be updated to reflect the amendments.
113. The UN development system and/or the JSC may decide to have advisory committees to support their work, such as a civil society committee, youth committee or private sector committee.

ANNEXES [*UNDER DEVELOPMENT/WILL BE ADDED WHEN AVAILABLE*]

ANNEX 1: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK ROAD MAP

ANNEX 2: UN COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS FOR THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

ANNEX 3: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT OUTLINE

ANNEX 4: GUIDANCE ON THE LEGAL ANNEX TO THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

ANNEX 5: INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTEGRATING PROGRAMME AND RISK MANAGEMENT CLAUSES INTO THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK