

# System-Wide Evaluation:

Country Programme derivation  
from and alignment with UN  
Sustainable Development  
Cooperation Frameworks, and UN  
Country Team configuration

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
FINAL DRAFT



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# 1. Background

## 1.1. Introduction

1. The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Group System-Wide Evaluation Office (SWEO) has been established by the Secretary-General (A/72/684 & E/2018/7) to provide independent evaluation evidence to strengthen learning, transparency, accountability, to incentivize joint work and collective learning, and to conduct and advance system-wide evaluation evidence on the United Nations development system contribution towards implementation of Agenda 2030 and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SWEO aims to work closely with UN evaluation offices to draw on and augment their contributions and capacities, to fill critical gaps, promote collaboration on joint and system-wide evaluations, and improve the quality and usability of UN evaluation evidence in relation to UN reform priorities, the SDGs and Agenda 2030.

2. 'System-wide evaluation' is the systematic and impartial assessment of the collective development results and performance focused on activities that cannot be adequately addressed through existing accountability mechanisms<sup>1</sup>.

3. These Terms of Reference (ToR) are for a system-wide evaluation on UN entity country programme derivation from and alignment with UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (hereafter referred to as "Cooperation Frameworks"), and UN Country Team (UNCT) configuration. They have been prepared by SWEO based upon an initial document review and broad consultation with UN development system stakeholders. Their purpose is to provide information to stakeholders about the proposed evaluation and set out expectations to be fulfilled by the evaluation team. The ToR is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 provides introduction and information on the context;
- Chapter 2 presents the rationale for the system-wide evaluation, its objectives and stakeholders;
- Chapter 3 presents a detailed overview of the evaluation subject and its scope;
- Chapter 4 spells out the evaluation questions, approach, and methodology;
- Chapter 5 indicates how the evaluation will be organised; including management, governance and communication.

## 1.2. UN development system reform

4. The repositioning of the United Nations development system was mandated by the General Assembly (GA) in resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, which delivered on the vision and proposals of the UN Secretary-General as outlined in his report (A/72/124–E/2018/3)<sup>2</sup>.

5. The overarching purpose of the reform is to provide more coherent, accountable, and effective support to help Member States achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. More specifically, the reform aim to deliver:

- a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator (RC) System, de-linked from the United Nations Development Programme, with RCs serving as the highest-ranking representative of the UNDS at country-level and reporting to the Secretary-General;
- clear and more robust lines of accountability between the UN Country Teams (UNCT) and host governments, and RCs and UNCT members;

<sup>1</sup> Definition as per the UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Policy [in draft for publication in late 2024]

<sup>2</sup> <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n17/210/35/pdf/n1721035.pdf?token=ncDBnl0mZRtOnsUF8&fe=true>

- a more coherent and better coordinated utilisation of UNDS regional capacities and resources at country level (e.g. analysis, policy advice and technical assistance);
- a new generation of UN Country teams (UNCT), that deliver shared results in response to the priorities set out in the Cooperation Frameworks that are aligned with national priorities;
- focused support infrastructures for RC system and UNCTs, including the Development Coordination Office (DCO) at HQ and regional level;
- on a commitment by contributing countries to shift towards more predictable and flexible resources that allow the UNDS to tailor its support;
- streamlined operating practices through the consolidation of common premises, back offices and service centres, resulting in both higher quality services and efficiency gains;
- more and better communication on the impact of the UN development system

6. Since its launch, the commitments of the UNDS and Member States have been set out through a variety of processes to support the reform aims, including:

- the “Management and Accountability Framework of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System” (MAF)<sup>3</sup>;
- the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance<sup>4</sup>
- the Business Operations Strategy Guidance;
- reviews of the UNDS regional assets and multi-country RC offices, and
- voluntary, non-binding Funding Compact between the UNDS and Member States<sup>5</sup>

7. Member States’ guidance and mandates on UN development system reform have been reinforced in subsequent resolutions and declarations, for example in the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR - A/Res/75/233) and annual resolutions relating to its implementation adopted by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

### 1.3. Policy framework for derivation, alignment, and UNCT configuration

8. In this context, General Assembly Resolutions 72/279 (on the repositioning of the UN development system) and 75/233 (the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review) recognise UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks as the “most important instrument for the planning and implementation of UN development activities in each country”.

9. Accordingly, the Cooperation Framework guidance, issued in mid-2019, emphasises that “UN 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 guidance offers UN entities three options for derivation:

- A. Adopt the Cooperation Framework as their own country development programme document;
- B. Develop an entity specific country programming instrument with the Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim; and
- C. Develop an entity-specific country programming instrument with the Cooperation Framework outcomes verbatim, plus additional outcomes included only on an exceptional basis to capture normative and standard-setting activities not prioritized in the Cooperation Framework.

10. It is important to note that the derivation options and requirements apply to “development” programming. Dual-mandated (humanitarian and development) entities may also reflect humanitarian

<sup>3</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/management-and-accountability-framework-un-development-and-resident-coordinator-system>

<sup>4</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/united-nations-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-guidance>

<sup>5</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/funding-compact>

activities in country programming instruments. However, there is no requirement for these elements to be derived from / aligned with the Cooperation Framework outcomes.

11. Measures to ensure and certify the **derivation** and **alignment**<sup>6</sup> of UN country programmes with the Cooperation Framework are specified in the 2019 guidance and the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF). According to the MAF, UN country team members align their programme cycles and activities, so they are derived from the Cooperation Framework. They should consult the Resident Coordinator (RC) in developing entity-specific strategic planning documents, and formally solicit her/his feedback on the alignment with the Cooperation Framework. The RC's written confirmation of derivation to the respective entity's Regional Director (or equivalent) is required before the entity proceeds with seeking final approval, including by the respective governing bodies. This was further underscored by A/Res/75/233, which stated that UN entities should prepare and finalize their country programme documents in accordance with the agreed priorities of the Cooperation Framework and make the Cooperation Framework available<sup>7</sup> to governing bodies when the draft country programme document is presented for consideration.

12. UNCT **configuration** seeks to ensure that the UN country team has the right capacities and skills necessary to deliver on the commitments in the Cooperation Framework. A/Res/72/279 requested that the Secretary-General lead the UNDS in realising a more "needs-based, tailored country presence" built on the UNDAF (now Cooperation Framework), finalised through open dialogue with the Government and facilitated by the RC "to ensure the best configuration of support on the ground".

13. Accordingly, a UNCT configuration exercise was included as a mandatory step in the implementation of the Cooperation Framework guidance and recognised by A/Res/75/233. UNCTs are required to internally analyse and consult with the government on how the UNCT should be optimally configured to deliver on the Cooperation Framework, before the Cooperation Framework is signed. This step represents a significant departure from the previous default approach of continuation with the extant UN presence in the country. The exercise may include review of:

- the expertise and services required and the agencies which can provide them;
- which agencies should be present in country, and which could be regionally/globally based;
- new implementation modalities that may be leveraged;
- whether services should be delivered directly by the UN or through partners;
- if the new Cooperation Framework requires a major scale up in the capacity of any UNCT members.

#### 1.4. Evidence/analysis of policy implementation

14. The implementation of the Cooperation Framework guidance and MAF (as it relates to derivation, alignment and UNCT configuration) has been assessed across a range of monitoring mechanisms, official reports, evaluations, and ad-hoc internal analyses, including:

- DCO's Information Management System (IMS)
- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) surveys of the UN development system and programme country governments

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<sup>6</sup> The MAF uses the terms of alignment and derivation somewhat interchangeably, rather than separating the two concepts and providing precise definitions. The CF guidance uses derivation as the predominate term. Working definitions for alignment, derivation, and configuration should be developed by the Evaluation Team in the Inception Phase.

<sup>7</sup> According to 75/233 (GA QCP resolution), **at a minimum**, an outcome-level CF results framework should be made available to governing bodies in the absence of the full, finalized CF document

- Annual reports of the Secretary-General (on the implementation of the QCPR resolution) and the UNSDG Chair (Deputy Secretary-General) on the work of DCO and the RC System
- Annual UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluations of DCO/RC System (including a 2021-22 evaluation of the RC system contribution to country level programme coherence)
- UN development system reform “checklists” for governing bodies of UNSDG entities / entity reporting to governing bodies on UN development system reform implementation
- Independent third-party assessments on the implementation of the reforms
- Light, internal analysis conducted by DCO, upon request from UNSDG Principals (2022)

15. This existing body of analysis suggests that while progress has been made, implementation of the Cooperation Framework guidance remains uneven, with impact on alignment, derivation and UNCT configuration varying by country and UN development system entity.

16. In terms of **country programming instrument derivation from and alignment with Cooperation Frameworks**, the following key issues and challenges have been observed:

- A common approach, understanding and definition for alignment and derivation has not emerged across UNSDG entities, given that they have **varying internal policies and systems for the development of country programming instruments**. Some entities develop multi-year instruments which are approved through governing bodies. Others develop instruments that are subject to internal approvals only, or design country-level interventions as individual projects/programmes (which may be part of regional/global plans and portfolios).<sup>8</sup> As such, the applicability of alignment and derivation guidance varies considerably by entity.<sup>9</sup>
- The **requirements of entities’ governing bodies and the time required reach government approval of Cooperation Frameworks** have been highlighted as impediments to full derivation and alignment. The need to consider entity governing body timeframes in the roadmap for the development of a Cooperation Framework (i.e., so that a final Cooperation Framework can be presented alongside an entity CPD at an governing body session<sup>10</sup> ahead of the implementation of both) has required UNCTs to start Cooperation Framework design processes much earlier than the six to nine months ahead of implementation that was intended by the reform. However, there are also positive examples of instances where entities have extended their programming documents to align with the timing of the Cooperation Framework. The time required for consultation and delays encountered in reaching agreement on the Cooperation Framework with the host government can also contribute to an overall Cooperation Framework design process that considerably exceeds the intended timeframe. These factors may have consequences for the relevance of Cooperation Framework’s to evolving national priorities and the extent to which entity priorities can be fully derived from the Cooperation Framework.<sup>11</sup>
- The **Resident Coordinator’s** ability to ensure UNDS accountability for delivery on the collective UN offer articulated in the Cooperation Framework is inconsistent across different entities and countries<sup>12</sup>. Despite guidance in the MAF, there is mixed feedback on the extent RCs are

<sup>8</sup> DCO survey of UNSDG entities (2022). 12/37 entities responded. Internal approval: IOM, UNHCR, WFP, UN HABITAT, ILO, FAO (6). Governing body: UNFPA, UNICEF, ITU (3). N/A or Other: UNEP, UNODC (2)

<sup>9</sup> UNSDG Chair (E/2022/54); OIOS (E/AC.51/2022); internal analysis by DCO for UNSDG Principals (2022).

<sup>10</sup> Or, at a minimum, a CF Outcome-level Results Framework agreed with the host government, rather than the full CF document (as per the QCPR mandate, GA 75/233)

<sup>11</sup> UNSDG Chair (E/2022/54); Secretary-General (A/79/72-E/2024/12); internal analysis by DCO for UNSDG Principals (2022).

<sup>12</sup> A DCO survey of UNSDG members in 2022 (12/37 response rate) included questions on:

(i.) if entity has a formal requirement for consultation with the RC in country programme design (9 responded “yes”)

involved in agency-specific strategic planning, as it relates to Cooperation Framework agreed priorities (i.e., in design and quality assurance phases), and the extent to which entities formally engage the RC to certify (in writing) the derivation/alignment of the country programming instrument with the Cooperation Framework.<sup>13</sup>

17. There has been no full, systematic assessment of the extent to which country programming instruments are derived from Cooperation Frameworks nor the extent to which country programmes collectively meet the commitments of the Cooperation Framework offer and intended outcomes (in terms of their substance, beyond high level Cooperation Framework outcomes which are adopted or included verbatim in derivation options A, B and C, above). This includes the degree to which budgets and financial resources at the country level align with the priorities and outcomes in the Cooperation Framework. However, the issues set out above and reporting/analysis conducted between 2021 and 2024 point to significant **variation in the substance and content of derivation**.

18. In 2021, an OIOS evaluation of the RC system found that “disparate United Nations country team agency planning processes, authorities and reporting lines...at times favoured United Nations agency priorities over UNSDCF priorities”. 54 per cent of UNCT members responding to a survey conducted by OIOS noted that their “agency’s planning structures were not aligned with the Cooperation Framework cycle for their country of operation”. The evaluation’s review of a sample of programme documents in six countries showed that 10 out of 25 were not fully aligned with the Cooperation Framework or UNDAF.<sup>14</sup> In response to a DCO survey of UNSDG entities in 2022, 5 entities<sup>15</sup> reported that their instruments were developed “after” Cooperation Framework priorities had been agreed, while 4 entities responded that their instruments were developed “in parallel” to Cooperation Framework priorities<sup>16</sup>.

19. In 2022, 88 per cent of UNCT members stated that their country programme is derived from the Cooperation Framework<sup>17</sup>. But, in 2023, only 30 per cent of RCs considered “all” entity country programmes to be aligned with the Cooperation Framework<sup>18</sup>, suggesting that derivation is subject to differing interpretations.

20. The Secretary-General’s reports on the implementation of the QCPR have suggested that clearer policy guidance for UNCTs to align programming is required and called upon the UNSDG to take steps to further align country programmes with Cooperation Frameworks, including through engagement with Member States represented in entity governing bodies.<sup>19</sup> Internally, among the UNSDG, some recommendations for adjustments to processes to facilitate greater derivation and alignment have been made and discussed, including a formal time lag between finalisation of the Cooperation Framework (in agreement with the host government) and the approval of entity-country programme documents (in sessions of governing bodies).

21. The application of the Cooperation Framework guidance on **UNCT configuration** by RCs and UNCT members is also understood to be partial and uneven with variable effects. Analysis by DCO suggests

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(ii.) if the entity requires RC review of the country programming instrument as part of quality assurance (6 responded “yes”) (iii.) if the entity requires the RC to confirm in writing to the Regional Director or equivalent that the instrument is derived from the CF (7 responded “yes”)

<sup>13</sup> 16% of RCs reported that “all” UNCT members involve them in key stages of agency-specific strategic planning in relation to Cooperation Framework agreed priorities and solicit their feedback on the alignment of their country programming instrument to the UNSDCF, 51% reported “most” do [remainder: “some” or “none”]. Source: Secretary-General (A/79/72-E/2024/12)

<sup>14</sup> OIOS (E/AC.51/2022), para. 35.

<sup>15</sup> OHCHR, UNFPA, IOM, WFP, FAO

<sup>16</sup> ILO, UNHCR, UNODC, UNICEF

<sup>17</sup> A/78/72-E/2023/59. Similarly, 8 out of 12 UNSDG entities responding to a DCO survey in 2022 reported that their country programming instruments are developed in line with the Theory of Change of the UNSDCF.

<sup>18</sup> Secretary-General (A/79/72-E/2024/12)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

that most UNCT configuration exercises result in an expanded UNCT membership, which can have positive implications, for example, increased engagement/support from non-resident agencies, better and more integrated UN policy advice to host governments (including in previously weaker areas of the UN collective offer), and some increased interest among UNCT agencies in joint programmes.

However, issues and challenges include the following:

- UNCT configuration discussions can be sensitive, bringing into question longstanding modalities and business models of UNCT entities. The exercise may be more likely to reinforce agency presence, rather than recalibrate resources<sup>20</sup>.
- The configuration exercise encourages collective decision making at country-level (UNCT), however, as per entity management structures and business models, decisions on agency country presence and resources will typically sit with entity regional offices or HQs, that are less involved in the exercise.<sup>21</sup>
- The extent of host government involvement in UNCT configuration discussions varies. The Cooperation Framework guidance requires dialogue with the government (not sign off). Many governments request increased UN presence and support in country, while others seek to use the opportunity to minimize UN engagement in more sensitive normative issues.
- Reviewing UNCT configuration once in each Cooperation Framework cycle (4-5 years) does not allow for flexible response to rapidly evolving socio-political contexts or specific circumstances such as the withdrawal of a UN peacekeeping operation or special political mission.

22. Reports by the Secretary-General and UNSDG Chair have continued to note challenges in relation to the engagement of external/non-resident entities, and the flexible and efficient sharing of expertise and resources across the UN system at country level.<sup>22</sup> The Secretary-General's 2024 report on the implementation of the QCPR (A/79/72-E/2024/12) asks the "UNSDG and resident coordinators to be more ambitious and creative in approaching the issue of country configurations, in dialogue with UNCTs and host governments"<sup>23</sup>.

## 2. Reasons for the evaluation

### 2.1. Rationale

23. UNSDG Principals have requested "an independent system-wide evaluation on good practices and opportunities for improvement on country programmes derivation from, and alignment with, Cooperation Frameworks and UN country team configuration"<sup>24</sup>. The proposed evaluation has been welcomed by the Secretary-General in his reports on the implementation of the QCPR, with the 2024 report noting that "it will provide an important basis for the UN Sustainable Development Group to consider the system changes that may be required to ensure UNCT programmes and priorities are substantively derived from the priorities agreed with Member States in the Cooperation Framework."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Also highlighted in the UNSDG Chair's report on the work of DCO (2023) – para. 54. "growth in the membership of country teams to recalibrate the responses in countries is not equally matched by growth in the ability to share resources differently".

<sup>21</sup> Also highlighted by the 2021-22 OIOS evaluation of the RC System: 36... *the country team configuration exercise did not take account of the regional and Headquarters authorities needed to adjust agency configuration to support the needs of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework* (E/AC.51/2022/2).

<sup>22</sup> E/2023/62, E/2022/54, A/79/72-E/2024/12, A/78/72-E/2023/59, A/77/69-E/2022/47

<sup>23</sup> 'Implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system – Report of the Secretary-General' (A/79/72-E/2024/12)

<sup>24</sup> Minutes - UNSDG Principals Meeting (October 2022)

<sup>25</sup> A/79/72-E/2024/12, para. 66.

24. It is now more than five years since the launch of the UN development system reform. Cooperation Framework guidance has been implemented in more than 100 countries, and many “first generation” cycles are coming to an end, with a raft of second generation of Cooperation Frameworks due to be designed in the coming years. The evaluation is timed to learn lessons from the implementation of the first generation of Cooperation Frameworks and make recommendations to inform the next generation.

25. The evaluation will inform the ongoing process of revision of the Cooperation Framework Guidance with revision of the Cooperation Framework guidance chapters relating to alignment, derivation and UNCT configuration pending until completion of the evaluation.

26. The timing of the evaluation may also inform the forthcoming process for the revision of the MAF.

27. In late 2024 the UN General Assembly will undertake discussions on the QCPR of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The evaluation is timed so that its findings, conclusions, and recommendations may inform the implementation of the next QCPR resolution (2024-2028).

## 2.2. Evaluation objectives

28. The evaluation will have a dual purpose of accountability and learning, with a particular focus on learning lessons from the first generation of Cooperation Frameworks, identifying good practices and opportunities for improvement.

29. The evaluation will:

1. Assess progress against the expected results of Cooperation Framework guidance implementation, specifically in the areas of country programming instrument alignment/derivation and UNCT configuration
2. Seek to understand the reasons why the intended changes have occurred or not, identifying factors that have enabled or constrained progress
3. Identify good practices, lessons-learned, and opportunities for improvement, from the implementation of the first generation of Cooperation Frameworks
4. Make recommendations for consideration by UNSDG Principals and governing bodies on:
  - a. derivation, alignment and configuration processes and oversight;
  - b. revision of the Cooperation Framework guidance; and the Management and Accountability Framework, including its regional and global chapters

30. Findings will be actively disseminated and the SWEO will seek opportunities to present the evaluation results as appropriate. Details will be set out in the evaluation communication plan.

## 2.3. Evaluation users and stakeholders

31. An initial stakeholder mapping exercise has identified the key stakeholder groups that will be involved in the conduct and use of the evaluation. Many stakeholders have an interest in the results of the evaluation, and some will be invited to play active roles in the evaluation process, for example as key informants/participants in data collection, and/or as members of the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).

*Table 1 Summary evaluation stakeholder analysis*

Group	Engagement in the evaluation
UNSDG entities (HQ)	Will use the results of the evaluation to inform the forthcoming agreed revision of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) and the recalibration of the Cooperation Framework guidance. Evaluation recommendations may be addressed to the UNSDG as whole (at the level of Principals/Heads of Programme), which, alongside the respective governing bodies as appropriate, will

	decide whether to accept them, and assign responsibilities and timeframes for their practical implementation. UNSDG entities at HQ level will participate in the conduct of the evaluation as <b>key informants</b> and as members of the <b>reference group</b> .
<b>UNSDG entities (Regional)</b>	Will use and implement revised agreements and guidance that may result from the evaluation's recommendations. They will participate in the evaluation as some of the most important <b>key informants</b> during data collection including interviews/surveys and possibly also more participatory methods (e.g., at global meetings/workshops/retreats). They may also, at the discretion of their entity HQ, be invited to contribute to evaluation design and validation as members of the <b>reference group</b> .
<b>UNSDG entities (country level) UNCTs</b>	Interested UNSDG evaluation office may participate in the evaluation as members of the <b>evaluation management group / through contribution of funds</b> and as important sources of relevant secondary data and by facilitating primary data collection opportunities.
<b>DCO (HQ and regional)</b>	Will use the results of the evaluation to inform the forthcoming agreed revision of the Management and Accountability Framework and the recalibration of the Cooperation Framework guidance (in full consultation with UNSDG members). May be responsible for the practical implementation of evaluation recommendations (if accepted by the wider UNSDG). Will participate as day-to-day focal points (facilitating access to key documentation, existing analysis, and sources for primary data collection), and as key informants themselves. Member of the <b>reference group</b> .
<b>RC System – RC Offices at country-level</b>	Will use and implement revised agreements (MAF) and guidance (Cooperation Framework) that may result from the evaluation's recommendations. They will participate in the evaluation as some of the most <b>important key informants</b> during data collection, including interviews/surveys and possibly also more participatory methods (e.g., at points where RCs and/or RC Office staff come together for global/regional meetings/workshops/retreats).
<b>UN Member States</b>	The evaluation may be presented for consideration in the relevant committees of ECOSOC, and informally presented to interested Member States. It may inform decisions and resolutions related to development system reform (i.e. QCPR). The evaluation may also inform Member States in their capacities as members of UNSDG entity Executive Boards and as donors. Will participate in the conduct of the evaluation as <b>key informants</b> including host/programme country governments, Executive Board members, and donor countries.
<b>Non-UN development actors</b>	Non-governmental development actors (country/regional/global) may participate in the evaluation as <b>key informants</b> during primary data collection. They may provide an important non-UN, non-government perspective on the extent to which policies/guidance have translated into changes on the ground.

## 3. Subject of the evaluation

### 3.1. Subject of the evaluation

#### *Cooperation Framework Guidance and the MAF*

32. The specific requirements for UN entity country programme alignment with and derivation from Cooperation Frameworks and UNCT configuration, as contained in resolutions on UN development system reform and the corresponding sections and passages of the Cooperation Framework Guidance and the MAF are set out above in section 1.3. However, these documents have a broader scope, of which the evaluation will need to be cognisant.

33. The **Cooperation Framework Guidance document** (issued in June 2019)<sup>26</sup> details the key differences compared to the previous UNDAF guidance, outlines some “guiding principles” that are applicable to all Cooperation Frameworks (SDG integration, “Leaving No One Behind”, human rights-

<sup>26</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/UN%20Cooperation%20Framework%20Internal%20Guidance%20-%201%20June%202022.pdf>

based approaches, gender equality and women’s empowerment, resilience, sustainability, and UN development system accountability), the modes of Cooperation Framework implementation (results-focused programming, capacity development and coherent policy support) and a communications strategy in Chapter 1. Its chapters 2 to 7 detail requirements for UNCTs at each stage as they plan, finance, deliver and evaluate support to countries in achieving the SDGs, with a Cooperation Framework at the core of the cycle.

34. The **Cooperation Framework Companion Package** (issued in July 2020) complements the “what” of the 2019 guidance, providing RCs and UNCTs with the “how”. For each stage, “key deliverables” or “milestones” for processes and outputs are provided. The package includes eight chapters, headed by “main ideas” as follows:

- Chapter 1: **Roadmap** - *Advance planning underpins a successful Cooperation Framework cycle*
- Chapter 2: **Common Country Analysis (CCA)** - *The United Nations conducts an independent, collective, integrated, forward-looking, and evidence-based analysis of the country context*
- Chapter 3: **Cooperation Framework Design** - *A Cooperation Framework is prepared that articulates the United Nations development system’s collaboration with the country to achieve the 2030 Agenda*
- Chapter 4: **UNCT Configuration** - *A UNCT that adjusts its capacities and modes of engagements to deliver on the commitment of the Cooperation Framework*
- Chapter 5: **Signature of the Cooperation Framework** - *The Cooperation Framework is signed, signifying approval of and accountability for the new planning and implementation instrument*
- Chapter 6: **Funding the Cooperation Framework** - *Preparing a Cooperation Framework Funding Framework aligned with overall SDG financing*
- Chapter 7: **Implementation, monitoring and learning** - *Ensure United Nations coherence, relevance, effectiveness and agility during implementation*
- Chapter 8: **Evaluating the Cooperation Framework** - *Ensuring the accountability of United Nations country teams and learning for subsequent programming cycles*

35. The **Management and Accountability Framework** provides a framework for management and accountability, within UN Country Teams and at the regional and global levels of the UN development system, aiming to ensure consistent implementation of the GA resolution on the repositioning of the development system (A/Res/72/279) and subsequent GA resolutions on the QCPR. Central to the reform and the MAF is the “dual accountability system” which ensures that country representatives (UNCT members) remain fully accountable to their respective entities on individual mandates, while periodically reporting to the RC on their individual activities and on their respective contributions to collective UN development system results, based on the Cooperation Framework.<sup>27</sup> The MAF seeks to:

- Identify UN development system members, their roles, responsibilities and interrelationships at the country, multi-country, sub-regional, regional and global levels
- Provide an accountability framework to hold members to account and monitor their commitments and contribution towards achievement of the SDGs; and
- Establish an informal mechanism for resolving disputes regarding the implementation of the agreements contained in the MAF

### **Cooperation Framework roll-out**

<sup>27</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/MAF%20-%20Final%20-%202015%20September%202021.pdf>

36. The Cooperation Framework guidance and the MAF apply to the UNCTs coordinated by all 130 Resident Coordinator’s Offices<sup>28</sup>, as well as the regional and global structures that support their work. Roll out of Cooperation Frameworks has been gradual, with new Cooperation Frameworks beginning in the year after the conclusion of the previous UNDAF cycle, as illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Cooperation Framework start dates by region

	AFR	APA	LAC	ECA	ARAB	Cumulative UNSDCF roll out	Notes
2020	8	0	4	0	2	14	Developed in 2019, applying UNDAF guidance initially with limited opportunity to apply the new Cooperation Framework guidance (June 2019)
2021	6	4	4	12	0	40	Developed in 2020 amid disruption of COVID-19 pandemic onset and in parallel to the finalization and issuance of the Cooperation Framework Guidance Companion Package
2022	9	3	5	2	3	62	Developed in 2021-2023, providing full opportunity to apply the new Cooperation Framework guidance, with the accompanying Companion Package, and enhanced support from an strengthened DCO HQ/regional structure
2023	17	8	7	4	3	101	
2024	12	6	0	0	0	119	

37. As of April 2024, a large majority of UNCTs have designed and implemented a first-generation Cooperation Framework. The UNCTs that have the greatest number of years of Cooperation Framework implementation experience (since 2020) are Angola, Republic of Congo, DRC, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Iraq, Kuwait, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, and Paraguay. However, UNCTs beginning a Cooperation Framework in 2020 had a short window of around 5-6 months maximum to apply to new 2019 guidance and may have followed UNDAF guidance processes when developing their framework in earlier 2019, even if the final document was named as a “Cooperation Framework”. Similarly, UNCTs beginning a Cooperation Framework in 2021 might also be considered not to have had the full opportunity to apply the new approach/guidance, given the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic onset, the parallel development of the Cooperation Framework Guidance Companion Package and capacities to support this at DCO HQ and regional level. These phases of the gradual roll out should be considered in the evaluation’s sampling approach.

38. The UNCTs with the most recent experience of first-generation Cooperation Framework design are Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Senegal, Bhutan, Cambodia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Mauritius, and Seychelles, all of which began new Cooperation Framework implementation periods in January 2024. UNCTs in Angola and Madagascar are unique in having started the implementation (in 2024) of second-generation Cooperation Frameworks<sup>29</sup>. 87 other UNCTs started their Cooperation Framework implementation in the years 2021, 2022 and 2023. A further 13 UNCTs are developing Cooperation Frameworks during 2024 to start implementation from 2025.

39. As of 2024, UNCTs that have designed and implemented Cooperation Frameworks include some 17 countries which also host a UN Peacekeeping Operation or Special Political Mission. Cooperation

<sup>28</sup> The UNSDG also recognizes that as a result of “exceptional circumstances” some UNCTs may be unable to fully implement the CF guidance and sign a fully-fledged CF with the host government: <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/UN%20Country%20level%20Guidance%20for%20Strategic%20Planning%20for%20Development%20in%20Exceptional%20Circumstances.1404.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> As noted above, CFs with a 2020 start date had limited opportunity to apply the new guidance in full, and may largely have followed previous UNDAF guidance and processes

Framework-implementing UNCTs also include 24 countries that have an active, OCHA-coordinated Humanitarian Response Plans or Flash Appeals in 2024.<sup>30</sup>

40. The evaluation coverage of Cooperation Frameworks (where the evaluand is the Cooperation Framework, not a pre-2019 UNDAF) is currently low. As of June 2024, five Cooperation Framework evaluation reports are final and published – for Colombia, DRC, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Paraguay; countries that started Cooperation Framework implementation in 2020<sup>31</sup>. A further 35 UNCTs have Cooperation Framework evaluations either “ongoing” or scheduled for the calendar year of 2024<sup>32</sup>. However, some 76 UNDAF evaluations with coverage beyond June 2019 (when the Cooperation Framework guidance was issued) are available.

41. Looking forward, large numbers of UNCTs are due to design second-generation Cooperation Frameworks during 2024 and 2025, to start a new cycle of implementation in 2025 and 2026, respectively. Approximately 50 UNCTs will undertake this process in the calendar years of 2024 and 2025.

### **Entity country programming instruments**

42. The Cooperation Framework guidance and the MAF also apply to all UNCT members in the preparation of their own country programming instruments. However, for the reasons further explained below, the roll out of entity-specific country programming instruments is more difficult to quantify. The below table is based on the results of a preliminary mapping of publicly available country programming instruments produced by UNSDG entities since the issuance of the 2019 Cooperation Framework guidance (instruments with an implementation start date of 2020 onwards). It includes both UNDAF and Cooperation Framework countries and countries without an UNDAF/Cooperation Framework. The data is drawn from public sources (e.g. UNSDG entity websites). Due to the varying processes for approval and publication of such documents, it is known to be incomplete, as some country programme instruments will be internal/unpublished, while many UNCT entities work at country-level through regional programmes and project documents. It will require validation with UNSDG entities during the evaluation. Nonetheless, it provides an indication of some of the available secondary data for a potential systematic desk review.

*Table 3 Publicly available country programming instruments by UNSDG entity and region since 2019 (2020+ start dates)<sup>33</sup>*

	AFR	APA	LAC	ECA	ARAB	Total	#UNCT memberships <sup>34</sup>	#countries where entity has no physical presence <sup>35</sup>
<b>UNDP</b>	37	18	22	17	8	<b>129<sup>36</sup></b>	<b>133</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	49	20	26	16	6	<b>117</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>UNFPA</b>	49	20	20	14	6	<b>109</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WFP</b>	33	15	15	7	7	<b>77</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>4</b>

<sup>30</sup> UN-OCHA FTS - April 2024

<sup>31</sup> As noted above, CFs with a 2020 start date had limited opportunity to apply the new guidance in full, and may largely have followed previous UNDAF guidance and processes

<sup>32</sup> Includes 2 legacy UNDAF evaluations, alongside 33 CF evaluations

<sup>33</sup> Source: UN entity country websites, corporate websites, and governing body websites (compiled April 2024)

<sup>34</sup> Source: UN-INFO - UN Entity Report

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> SWEO’s initial mapping identified 102 UNDP Country Programme Documents during the period. UNDP’s review of the draft ToR amended this total number to 129. As such, the numbers in this table total 102, rather than 129.

<b>ILO</b>	13	10	2	6	0	<b>31</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>IFAD</b>	18	6	6	1	0	<b>31</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>FAO</b>	9	9	0	3	0	<b>21</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WHO</b>	6	8	0	1	3	<b>18</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>UN-Women</b>	5	1	1	2	0	<b>9</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>IOM</b>	3	1	0	0	4	<b>8</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>UNESCO</b>	2	3	0	0	0	<b>5</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>UNODC</b>	1	3	1	0	0	<b>5</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>UNIDO</b>	3	1	0	0	0	<b>4</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>537</b>	-	-

43. The four agencies that require approval of all country programme documents by their governing bodies (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, and WFP) have produced the greatest numbers of (public) country programming instruments since 2019. The other agencies listed in the above table produced far fewer, with the mapping finding the next greatest coverage by ILO and IFAD. For entities not listed, no publicly available country programme documents were identified in the initial mapping.

44. The same mapping exercise also shows the number of public country programming instruments that have been produced by UNSDG entities in each UN programme country (or region, in cases where RCs cover more than one country). The programme country with the most UNSDG programming instruments developed in the period since 2019 was Pakistan (9), followed by Madagascar, Kenya, Tanzania, China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Nepal (8). The majority of UNCTs have produced between 3 and 7 (public) country programming instruments.

45. The initial mapping shows that evaluation coverage (to date) of the country programming instruments with starting years of 2020 or later is currently low, as is the case with the Cooperation Framework evaluations themselves. Of the 537 instruments identified, only 21 have had a final evaluation completed to date<sup>37</sup>. This is because such programmes typically have a 4 to 5-year cycle, with end years varying, but generally falling between 2024 and 2028. There may also be a considerable number of evaluations that are completed but not yet published.

46. However, since 2021, a total of 256 country programme evaluations (or equivalent) have been published by UN entities.<sup>38</sup> While the large majority have pre-Cooperation Framework scope, they are likely to cover issues of alignment with UNDAFs and may cover entity engagement in the design of first-generation Cooperation Frameworks. The countries with the greatest number of country programme evaluations completed between 2021 and 2024 are Sudan (7), Malawi, Ecuador (6), Nepal, Cambodia, Egypt, and Jordan (5)<sup>39</sup>. The entities that have published the greatest number of such evaluations are UNDP (50), WFP (45), UNFPA (42), UNICEF (34) and UN-Women (22).<sup>40</sup>

47. Furthermore, many new and relevant country programme evaluations will be conducted and published in 2024/25, as this system-wide evaluation is ongoing. Information provided by DCO on the status of current/planned Cooperation Framework evaluations and by WFP - Office of Evaluation on planned UN entity country evaluations in 2024/25<sup>41</sup> highlights countries with significant numbers of country programme evaluations ongoing/planned. The countries with the most country-level evaluation

<sup>37</sup> 15 WFP, 1 UNDP, 1 UNFPA, 1 UN-Women, 1 UNODC, 1 UNHCR, 1 UNAIDS

<sup>38</sup> Data from a recently launched SWEQ-led evaluation mapping initiative. 127 Africa, 59 Asia-Pacific, 40 Latin America/Caribbean, 16 Europe/Central Asia and 14 Arab states

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 3 or 4 evaluations were completed in some 40+ countries.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, IFAD, FAO, UNHCR

activity planned in 2024-25 are Lebanon (6), Uganda, Eswatini, Somalia, China, Indonesia, Yemen, and Turkey (5) – see Table 16, Annex 4.

### **UNCT size and composition**

48. Data shared by DCO, shows that as of April 2024, 91 per cent of UNCTs that have developed a Cooperation Framework have also conducted a UNCT configuration exercise.<sup>42</sup> However, not all configuration exercises appear to have been directly linked to the Cooperation Framework process, with some having occurred several years before the new Cooperation Framework. Five configuration exercises were conducted by UNCTs that are yet to develop their first-generation Cooperation Framework. Mapping of the UNCTs that have conducted configuration exercises since 2019 shows that those with the greatest number of years of programme implementation following the exercise are Ethiopia, Senegal, Mauritania, Mexico, and Kosovo (2019). The UNCTs with the most recent experience of the UNCT configuration exercise are Togo, Angola, South Sudan, Kazakhstan, Cabo Verde, Chad, Cambodia, Cameroon, Jordan, Chile, Armenia, Bolivia, and Algeria (completion of the exercise between October 2023 and January 2024).

49. These UNCT configuration exercises have had mixed results in terms of their consequences for UNCT size and composition. However, the trend has been for an expansion in UNCT membership, in particular in the Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, and Europe and Central Asia regions. In the Asia Pacific and Arab States regions the UNCT configuration exercises have more often resulted in no change to the UNCT size. Across all regions, only 3 per cent of UNCT configuration exercises have resulted in a reduction in the membership of the UNCT.

*Table 4 Results of UNCT configuration exercises (changes in size of UNCT) by region – 2021-2024<sup>43</sup>*

	UNCT expanded		No change		UNCT reduced	
<b>AFR</b>	26	72%	10	28%	0	0%
<b>APA</b>	1	13%	6	75%	1	13%
<b>LAC</b>	10	67%	4	27%	1	7%
<b>ECA</b>	12	86%	2	14%	0	0%
<b>ARAB</b>	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3%</b>

50. Overall, the average size of a UNCT has increased between 2021 and 2024, across all regions, from 21 to 23 members.<sup>44</sup> Reporting suggests that the growth of UNCTs is mostly the result of non-resident agencies, regional economic commissions and International Financial Institutions (IFI) signing Cooperation Frameworks. The Secretary-General's 2023 report on the implementation of the QCPR, also noted a continued trend of growth in the number of non-resident specialized agency signatories to Cooperation Frameworks, with an increase from an average of 5.0 in 2021 to 5.4 in 2022, and that the proportion of UNCTs with members from regional economic commissions and the World Bank Group as Cooperation Framework signatories had also increased. In 2020, only 38 per cent of country teams had regional commissions as members, but this figure had grown to 60 per cent by 2022.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> SWE0 analysis of data shared by DCO

<sup>43</sup> SWE0 analysis of data shared by DCO. Includes UNCT configuration exercises with completion dates in from 2021 to 2024 (with the intention to include UNCTs that had full opportunity to use the CF Guidance Companion Package)

<sup>44</sup> SWE0 analysis of UN-INFO data on UNCT composition

<sup>45</sup> A/78/72-E/2023/59

### 3.2. Evaluation scope

51. *Substantive scope*: The evaluand is the UN Sustainable Development Group<sup>46</sup>, including its 37 member entities and secretariat (DCO) at country, regional and global levels, with a focus on the extent to which it is collectively making progress in meeting Member States' development system reform expectations. It includes all UNSDG entities/UNCT members, irrespective of their approach to country programme development; both entities that produce formal country programme documents and those that use other tools and modalities. It will give consideration to the particular circumstances and approaches to country programming by different types of UN entity, including the following overlapping categories:

- Funds and programmes;
- Specialized agencies;
- Entities working on “normative and standard setting activities”;
- Non-resident agencies; and
- Entities with regional/global programmes (as described in Cooperation Framework Guidance paragraph 80<sup>47</sup>)

52. The evaluation scope does not include humanitarian action, which is governed by GA Resolution 46/182.<sup>48</sup>

53. The evaluation will not focus on the “performance” of individual entities or seek to benchmark them in terms of their UN development system reform contributions. It will not duplicate the many evaluations of Cooperation Frameworks and country programming instruments that are recently complete or ongoing. However, it will, where applicable, use country specific or agency specific reports as sources of evidence to be triangulated against other sources gathered in the present evaluation.

54. *Temporal scope*: The evaluation will cover the period from the issuance of the Cooperation Framework guidance (June 2019) to the evaluation's data collection phase (late 2024). However, in its sampling approach, the evaluation will consider the gradual roll out of the guidance, companion package and the MAF. It will tilt its focus toward those UNCTs which had full opportunity to implement the new approach (i.e. Cooperation Framework start dates from 2022 onwards). To answer any questions related to the relevance and quality of approaches, policies and guidance in question, the evaluation may consider the periods during which they were developed.

55. *Geographic scope*: The evaluation is global in scope. It includes UNSDG entities' programming in all countries covered by a UN Country Team and Resident Coordinator's Office (or Multi-Country Office), as well as all regional office and HQ locations. It includes all types of context in which UN development cooperation occurs, including humanitarian-development-peace contexts and “exceptional circumstances” (where a fully-fledged Cooperation Framework is not in place).

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<sup>46</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/about/who-we-are>

<sup>47</sup> 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.

<sup>48</sup> As noted above in para.10. CF derivation options and requirements apply to “development” programming. The humanitarian activities of dual mandated agencies and UN OCHA and configuration/composition of Humanitarian Country Teams are outside of the scope of the evaluation.

## 4. Evaluation approach and methodology

### 4.1. Indicative evaluation questions

56. The draft evaluation questions have been developed with consideration of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. They will be discussed with key stakeholders during inception phase of the evaluation and finalised in the inception report (with more specific sub-questions and indicators in an evaluation matrix).

57. Formative questions: to understand how this aspect of UN development system reform has been implemented/operationalised across the system.

- How has the guidance on country programme derivation and alignment been implemented by the RC system and UNSDG entities (at country, regional and HQ levels)?
- How has the guidance on UNCT configuration been implemented by the RC system and UNSDG entities (at country, regional and HQ levels)?
- What factors explain the variable/uneven implementation of the guidance across entities and countries?

58. Observable outcomes: to understand the emerging results of the reform/approach in terms of the relevance, coherence, and effectiveness of UN development cooperation.

- To what extent are UNSDG entities' country programming instruments derived from and aligned with Cooperation Frameworks?
- To what extent are UN Country Teams more optimally configured (in terms of their skills, footprints, and capacities) to deliver on the intended outcomes identified and agreed with host governments in Cooperation Frameworks?
- To what extent has this aspect of the reform<sup>49</sup> enhanced the contribution of the UN development system to country-level development results and SDG progress?
- Have efforts towards increased alignment, derivation and optimized UNCT configuration resulted in any unintended outcomes or trade-offs?
- To what extent have derivation, alignment and UNCT configuration guidance and processes been effective in promoting the integration of the six "guiding principles"; leaving no one behind (LNOB), a human rights-based approach to development (HRBA), gender equality and women's empowerment, resilience, sustainability, and accountability?

59. Challenges/enablers: to understand the key factors (common across countries) which contribute to or hinder progress (recognizing that progress is uneven).

- What are the key enablers of (and barriers to) strengthened derivation and alignment of country programmes from/to Cooperation Frameworks?
- What are the key enablers of (and barriers to) more optimal UNCT configuration (skills, footprints, and capacities to deliver on agreed Cooperation Framework outcomes)?

### 4.2. Evaluation approach

60. Given the evaluation objectives, nature of the subject, and evaluability considerations, the overall approach should include the following elements:

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<sup>49</sup> A new generation of UN Country teams (UNCT) guided by UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks

**61. Formative/learning dimensions:** To strengthen clarity on what “derivation”, “alignment” and “UNCT configuration” mean and look like in substance, and to more clearly articulate the changes that the application of these concepts is expected to bring about, the evaluation will need to have a formative dimension. It should review how the key concepts have been applied by different UN development system stakeholders. The evaluation should seek to understand and reflect stakeholder perspectives, identify good practices, lessons-learned and opportunities for improvement, rather than to hold stakeholders accountable for their individual “performance” or “compliance”.

**62. Summative/accountability dimensions:** Nonetheless, the collective accountability of the UN development system to Member States and their populations is an important reform intention and should be a focus of the evaluation. The evaluation should seek to build a summative picture of the current alignment, derivation and UNCT configuration situation, in terms of the substance of UN country programmes and the capacities of UNCTs. It should focus on the extent to which, as a result of increased alignment, derivation, and configuration, UNCTs are collectively able deliver the Cooperation Framework offer and intended outcomes, as a basis upon which to identify good practice and key challenges and make forward-looking recommendations.

**63. Utilisation-focus:** In commissioning and conducting an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the findings, conclusions, and recommendations to inform decisions and actions. The utility of system-wide evaluation is manifest when it is used to make relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, decision-making processes and accountability for results. To maximise the utility, the evaluation should be conducted in a transparent and participatory manner with its primary users and stakeholders. Key stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation design (selection of focus/questions), data collection/analysis (participatory workshops/discussions), and review/validation of evaluation products (ensuring relevance/utility of findings, conclusions, and recommendations). A detailed stakeholder engagement plan will be developed during the Inception Phase. The primary evaluation users will provide a management response detailing acceptance of recommendations and actions to be taken in response.<sup>50</sup>

**64. Theory-based approach:** The evaluation will use a theory-based approach in its analysis. A Theory of Change (ToC) will be developed in the Evaluation Inception phase and updated as necessary throughout the evaluation. The ToC will seek to clarify the strategic outcomes or “shifts” intended in the Cooperation Framework approach, in terms of derivation, alignment and configuration, and the internal and external assumptions that underpin them.

**65. Evaluation matrix:** The evaluation will prepare and use an evaluation matrix as its main analytical framework. The matrix will set out how each evaluation question and evaluation criteria will be addressed, breaking down the main questions into sub-questions, and connecting them to appropriate against data collection methods and sources of information. It will provide a clear line of sight from the evaluation questions as defined at the start of the evaluation to the findings as outlined in the final evaluation report.

**66. Mixed-methods and comparative analysis:** In answering each of the evaluation questions, the evaluation should draw on an appropriate mix of data collection methods and a diverse range of sources. Use of mixed methods will ensure that the most appropriate available evidence is used to answer the evaluation questions, and that answers are based on robust triangulation. Given the global and system-wide scope of the evaluation, it should conduct comparative analysis of similarities and differences in contexts, approaches, perspectives, in order to derive conclusions to explain uneven

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<sup>50</sup> Protocols for issuance of the Management Response and follow up reporting on implementation of recommendations will be defined in the forthcoming System-Wide Evaluation Policy.

implementation and results. Use of mixed methods and comparative analysis in a global scope evaluation will require a careful sampling approach.

### 4.3. Data collection methods

67. The evaluation will employ a mix of data collection and analysis methods that are commonly applied in strategic level, theory-based, mixed-method evaluations. As explained above, answers to the evaluation questions will be reached through data collection and analysis and triangulation/comparison across different sources and methods. Data collection methods will include:

68. **Document review** – there is a large body of relevant, existing documentation that can be reviewed and used by the evaluation (see summary in Annexes 3 and 4). The evaluation should design a systematic approach for extraction of data in existing documentation that is relevant and can be used to inform answers to the evaluation questions. The evaluation team may also use the available documentation to draw out specific lines of enquiry for further investigation and triangulation in the present evaluation through other methods.

69. **Key informant interviews** – will be the primary data collection method for the evaluation team to access information and perspectives of key stakeholders and experts/observers, which cannot be found in the available documentation. As noted below, identifying an appropriate sample of key informants for interview (which gives appropriate representation to different stakeholder groups and country, regional and global level perspectives) will be an important consideration in the inception phase. Interview questions/guides will be tailored by stakeholder group.

70. **Surveys** – would provide an opportunity to collect data from a broader sample of respondents, countries, entities etc. than will be possible through interviews alone. However, the evaluation team will need to consider if survey instruments can provide the necessary depth of analysis required by the evaluation questions, and if new surveys can add value to those conducted on a regular basis by UN-DESA and DCO. When considering use of surveys, the evaluation team should also explore opportunities to collaborate with existing surveys of the UN development system<sup>51</sup>.

71. **Participatory methods** – data collection methods such as focus groups/workshops, which bring together individuals from a number of entities or a number of countries to discuss relevant issues, may enable the evaluation to blend data collection with participatory data analysis. The evaluation should explore opportunities to conduct participatory data collection and analysis, with evaluation stakeholders at regional/global staff retreats/annual meetings etc. A detailed stakeholder engagement plan will be developed in the Inception Phase.

72. **Direct observation** – Considering the formative dimensions of the exercise and to enhance the relevance and utility of findings and recommendations, the evaluation should explore the possibility of directly observing interagency meetings and ongoing processes that are relevant to the evaluation subject, such as the ongoing revision of the Cooperation Framework Guidance (and possibly of the MAF) and annual meetings of Resident Coordinators. Such observation would be subject to the agreement of participants and confidentiality protocols.

### 4.4. Evaluability assessment

73. The evaluability of a subject can be considered and measured in three broad dimensions of a) design, b) information availability and c) institutional context<sup>52</sup>. Overall, a preliminary evaluability

<sup>51</sup> For example: DCO's Information Management System (IMS); UN fund and programme (e.g UNDP and UNICEF) annual surveys of their Country Representatives/Directors (UNCT members); and OIOS global RC and UNCT member surveys (as part of annual evaluations of the RC system).

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/An%20Evaluability%20Assessment%20checklist.docx>

assessment conducted in the preparation phase of this evaluation reveals good prospects for evaluability, with some evaluability challenges which will need to be addressed/mitigated by the evaluation design and methodology. See Annex 3 for further details.

**74. Design:** The strategic, high-level aims and ambitions of the reform/repositioning of the UN development system are well known, clearly articulated and endorsed by Member States, and many processes, milestones, deliverables to support reform implementation have been established (e.g. in the Cooperation Framework guidance companion package). However, there has been less articulation of exactly how implementation of new processes will contribute to the higher-level ambitions, including consideration of internal and external assumptions underpinning change. Furthermore, the reform process is collectively owned by the UNDS entities, implemented through the dual accountability model, and requires that entities develop and adopt their own approaches/policies/guidance/systems for implementing or contributing to the reform<sup>53</sup>. Precise definitions of what improved “derivation”, “alignment” and “configuration” look like in content and substance have not necessarily emerged system-wide, leaving these concepts open to some differing interpretations by stakeholders. The main implication of this absence of an explicit, agreed Theory of Change for the evaluation approach is that it will need to have a formative dimension, including questions/lines of inquiry which seek to understand the reasons for uneven implementation of the policy/guidance across different contexts and entities.

**75. Information availability:** A large body of documentation relevant to the evaluation subject is available for analysis. This body includes all documentation that relates to Cooperation Frameworks and country programming instruments themselves (described in section 3), as well as other secondary documentation and analysis (detailed in section 1.4 and Annex 3). The data-rich nature of the subject should allow for elements of triangulation (across diverse sources), comparative analysis, and trend analysis (looking at situations before and after reform). The main evaluability challenge associated with data availability is the large subject and scope of the evaluation, which covers all programme countries and the programming of all 37 UNSDG entities within them, as well as their regional and global support structures, and governing bodies. The feasibility and utility of the evaluation is thus dependent on the identification of samples which provide an appropriate balance of breadth and depth. The evaluation team should define appropriate sample sizes and purposive selection criteria for each data collection method and each evaluation question. Sampling approaches will be geographic in many cases but should also consider other criteria such as ‘stakeholder group’.

- *Geographic sampling* – There are various criteria that can be used to define an appropriate sample of countries, including both Cooperation Framework guidance rollout/implementation, and criteria to ensure broad representation of the different contexts in which UNCTs work. These criteria are further detailed in section 3 above and Annex 4 below.
- *Stakeholder sampling* – Sampling of stakeholders for consultation/interview should include several types of UN entity and their different circumstances. Furthermore, the title of the evaluation and the draft evaluation questions imply a focus on the country-level outcomes and country-level activities/relationships of UN entities. This will indeed be a key focus of the evaluation; however, context and stakeholder analysis show that regional and global level UN system stakeholders have interest in and influence over how the Cooperation Framework guidance and MAF are applied. Furthermore, stakeholders outside of the UN system (notably Member States, both in their capacity as host governments and as members of governing bodies) have an interest in the processes/outcomes in question. Sampling of key informants should balance country-level actors with regional/HQ actors and include Member States.

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<sup>53</sup> 9 out of 12 entities responding to a DCO survey in 2022 reported having such guidance: ILO, OHCHR, UNFPA, UNHCR, IOM, UNODC, WFP, UNICEF, FAO

76. **Institutional context:** The institutional context in which the evaluation will be conducted is favourable. The timing of evaluation allows for coverage of the first generation of Cooperation Frameworks and recommendations that may inform the second generation. The evaluation has also been requested by its users, who intend to use it to inform upcoming decisions. There is significant overlap between evaluation stakeholders and key informants, suggesting that a participatory process is possible. The evaluation team can expect that key informants will be available (often remotely), that participatory data collection and analysis may be possible, and that a broad evaluation reference group will engage in the process. The evaluation will, however, need to recognise and consider the different capacities and presence of entities at country-level. The representation and participation of smaller entities with more limited presence at country-level will need to be promoted and facilitated throughout the evaluation process.

#### 4.5. Ethical considerations

77. In line with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation<sup>54</sup>, system-wide evaluations must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for: the beliefs, manners, and customs of all social and cultural environments; human rights and gender equality; non-discrimination, disability inclusion and 'do no harm' principles. They must ensure that sensitive data are protected, ensure anonymity as appropriate, and they must validate statements made in the report with the sources of the relevant information. They must ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to their source, while ensuring that evaluation findings are triangulated so as to avoid being based solely on evidence that cannot be disclosed or verified. System-wide evaluations are not expected to evaluate the performance of individuals. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of privileged information from those who provide it. The evaluation manager and the evaluation team will sign the UNEG Pledge of Commitment to Ethical Conduct in Evaluation (Annex 5). When evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered (such as financial mismanagement, sexual exploitation, abuse and/or harassment), it must be reported to a competent body in line with guidance from SWEO.

#### 4.6. Quality assurance and assessment

78. Quality assurance will take place throughout the evaluation process at all levels. The key features of system-wide evaluation quality assurance are:

- Adherence to UNEG Norms and Standards
- Establishment of evaluation management and/or reference groups to review the evaluation products from Terms of Reference to Final Reports;
- Recruitment of evaluators, based on proof of qualifications, skills, and experience;
- Use of standard UNEG checklists and quality criteria for review of evaluation products

79. The quality assurance process does not interfere with the views or independence of the evaluation team but ensures that the report provides credible evidence and analysis in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions on that basis.

80. The evaluation team, under the leadership of the Team Leader will have primary responsibility for quality assurance subject to the guidance of the Evaluation Management Group. The Executive Director of the UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office will be responsible for secondary quality assurance and approval of all deliverables.

81. Quality assessment by independent external assessors will take place once the evaluation report is finalized. The quality assessment will be made public for transparency purposes.

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<sup>54</sup> <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

## 5. Organisation of the evaluation

### 5.1. Evaluation team

82. The evaluation will be conducted by an independent team comprised of UNSDG-SWEO staff and consultants, the team will work under the guidance and supervision of an inter-agency evaluation management group and the UNSDG-SWEO Executive Director. The core team will include, at a minimum, an Evaluation Team Leader, a Technical Specialist (in UN Reform), and an Evaluation Manager (who will also serve as a substantive team member). The team will have the following collective skills and experience:

- Extensive experience leading/conducting complex, strategic-level, mixed-method evaluations
- Extensive experience of evaluation and oversight in the multilateral system, for example with UN entity independent evaluation offices, the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) or others
- Knowledge of UN development system reform/repositioning issues; the RC system; interagency mechanisms for development coordination at HQ, regional and country levels; governance structures/processes of various categories of UN/multilateral entities (fund/programme, specialised etc.); and UN development system entities' business/funding models and programming approaches.
- Geographic experience covering different regions and types of context in which UN development cooperation occurs (including humanitarian assistance/mission settings, multi country offices, high/middle income countries etc.)
- Understanding of cross-cutting issues (gender, human rights, disability) and experience in mainstreaming them in evaluations
- High-level skills in qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis, and visualisation
- Experience facilitating workshops involving a wide range of organizations and participants
- Excellent written communication and report writing skills in English

83. The Team Leader is responsible for the overall conduct of the evaluation in accordance with the ToR, including: refining the evaluation approach and methodology, as described above and in consultation with the Management Group; technical management of the Evaluation Team, ensuring efficient division of tasks between team members and taking responsibility for the quality of their work; representing the Evaluation Team in meetings; ensuring the quality of all outputs; and submitting all deliverables in a timely manner.

84. The Team Leader will have no fewer than 15 years of professional experience in the international development sector (UN, bilateral agencies/donors, IFIs, INGOs), and previous experience as Team Leader for evaluations of UN entities at both country and global level. All team members must have working knowledge of English. At least one team member must have excellent speaking, reading and, preferably, writing skills in another official UN language (for example, French, Spanish or Arabic).

85. The Team Leader and Technical Specialist will be independent consultants selected and contracted by the System-Wide Evaluation Office. The third team member will be a staff member of the System-Wide Evaluation Office (Evaluation Officer), serving as the day-to-day manager of the evaluation process/workplan, as well as a substantive team member.

86. Following full evaluation design, to be presented in the Inception Report, the core evaluation team may be augmented with additional capacities for the data collection, analysis and reporting phases. For example, the team may be supported in the subsequent phases of the evaluation by an evaluation analyst or data scientist.

## 5.2. Evaluation management and governance

87. The below table summarises the management and governance model and arrangements for the system-wide evaluation, including the composition, roles and responsibilities of the evaluation management and reference groups. Terms of Reference are provided in Annex 1.

*Table 5 Management and governance model for the system-wide evaluation*

	Roles and Responsibilities	Composition
UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office (SWEO)	SWEO has overall responsibility for steering the system-wide evaluation from start to completion in a credible, transparent, and utilization-focused manner, in adherence with UNEG norms and standards. This begins with the preparation of the draft ToR, followed by day-to-day management/delivery of the evaluation in line with the agreed ToR.	Executive Director (supported by an Evaluation Officer)
Evaluation Management Group (EMG)	The EMG, chaired by the Executive Director of the SWEO, will provide expertise and advice on appropriate evaluation design, data collection and analysis methods, advice on secondary data sources and primary data collection opportunities, and first-level quality assurance of evaluation deliverables (ToR, Inception Report, Draft Evaluation Report and Final Evaluation Report).	Evaluation Officers from independent Evaluation Offices of UNSDG entities, Chaired by SWEO Executive Director
Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)	The main purpose of the ERG is to ensure the relevance, quality and utility of the evaluation's findings and recommendations. The ERG will be engaged at key points in the evaluation process to comment on the approach, validate findings, and participate in the development of recommendations, ensuring that the evaluation is relevant and useful to its intended users. The ERG participates in an advisory capacity, with final decisions taken by the EMG to safeguard the independence of the evaluation.	Drawn from the UNSDG Interagency Group on Programme Development and Results (PDR) Chaired by SWEO Executive Director
Expert Advisory Group (EAG)	An EAG will be engaged at various stages of the evaluation process to provide thought leadership and external viewpoints (e.g. on evaluation design, as external key informants during data collection, and as possible panel speakers for evaluation dissemination events).	Individuals with extensive research or professional experience in relevant UN development system reform issues, who are (currently) fully independent from the UN system

### 5.3. Phases and deliverables

88. The evaluation will be conducted in the phases set out in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Evaluation timeline

Phase	Tasks and <u>deliverables</u>	Timeline
Preparation and scoping phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations with evaluation users / UNSDG evaluation offices</li> <li>• <b><u>Final Terms of Reference</u></b></li> <li>• Selection and onboarding Evaluation Team</li> </ul>	<b>April-July 2024</b>
Inception phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary document review</li> <li>• Inception interviews</li> <li>• Draft Inception report</li> <li>• Consultation on Inception Report</li> <li>• <b><u>Final Inception Report</u></b></li> </ul>	<b>July-October 2024</b>
Data collection/analysis phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured document review</li> <li>• Key informant interviews / Focus Group Discussions</li> <li>• Country / regional office / HQ visits</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Internal analysis workshop(s)</li> <li>• <b><u>Data collection and analysis report</u></b></li> </ul>	<b>October 2024 - January 2025</b>
Reporting phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report drafting</li> <li>• <b><u>Draft evaluation report(s)</u></b></li> <li>• <b><u>Validation workshop(s)</u></b></li> <li>• <b><u>Final evaluation report</u></b></li> </ul>	<b>February – May 2025</b>
Dissemination/use phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Response</li> <li>• Online publication of reports</li> <li>• <b><u>Presentations to UN fora</u></b></li> <li>• <b><u>Presentations to Member States</u></b></li> </ul>	<b>May 2025 -</b>

89. The evaluation team will be responsible for the deliverables set out in Table 7 below, which also details their expected content and review process.

Table 7 Evaluation deliverables

Deliverable	Description/content	Review process
Inception Report	<p>The inception report should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation team understanding of the context/scope, including additional issues to be evaluated identified in Inception Phase consultations and any suggested deviations from the ToR.</li> <li>• Detailed evaluation timeline</li> <li>• Updated stakeholder analysis and detailed stakeholder engagement plan</li> <li>• A Theory of Change highlighting intended outcomes and internal/external assumptions to be tested through data collection</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internal review by the EMG</li> <li>2. Review and approval by SWE0 ED for external circulation</li> <li>3. Shared for comment with the ERG (and EAG)</li> <li>4. Finalised incorporating feedback.</li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed methodological approach including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Final set of evaluation questions</li> <li>○ Evaluation matrix – including sub questions, indicators, and data sources</li> <li>○ Sampling strategies for each data source/evaluation question – including identification of case study countries and/or countries for in-depth desk review</li> <li>○ Draft data collection tools – e.g. survey instruments, semi-structured interview guides</li> <li>○ A statement on the limitations/risks of the methodology and how these will be addressed/mitigated</li> <li>○ A detailed workplan for data collection, analysis, reporting and consultation/validation (including the responsibilities of each team member and quality assurance arrangements)</li> <li>○ Outline for the Evaluation Report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	The Inception Report will not be published.
Data collection and analysis report	<p>The report, in PowerPoint presentation format, should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of data collection activities undertaken – documents reviewed, persons interviewed, survey responses etc.</li> <li>• Assessment of data and evidence reliability and strength for each evaluation question, including any areas where further data collection is required.</li> <li>• Preliminary findings</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internal review by EMG</li> <li>2. Review and approval by SWE0 ED</li> </ol> <p>Not published or shared with Reference Group.</p>
Evaluation report	<p>The Evaluation Report is the primary deliverable of the evaluation. It should be written in a clear and concise manner that allows the reader to understand the main evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The report should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Executive Summary</i></li> <li>• <i>Introduction</i> – background/context analysis</li> <li>• <i>Methodology</i> – brief summary (more detailed Annex)</li> <li>• <i>Findings</i> – detailing the evaluation findings against the agreed Evaluation Questions, as well as sections/boxes to highlight good practices in specific locations</li> <li>• <i>Conclusions</i> – drawing from multiple findings/EQ answers to highlight key lessons learned</li> <li>• <i>Recommendations</i> – which should be specific, realistic, and clearly identify stakeholders responsible for implementation (with timeframes)</li> <li>• <i>Annexes</i>: ToR, methodology, list of persons interviewed, bibliography</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internal review by the EMG</li> <li>2. Review and approval by SWE0 ED for external circulation</li> <li>3. Shared for comment with the ERG (and EAG)</li> <li>4. Finalised incorporating feedback.</li> </ol> <p>EMG and SWE0 ED verify that comments have been satisfactorily addressed/responded to and that report meets quality standards before final approval by SWE0 ED and report publication.</p>
Validation workshops	<p>The Evaluation Report and its recommendation should be finalised in close consultation with its ultimate users. Accordingly, the evaluation team is responsible for holding validation workshops to collect views on the emerging findings and recommendations. The number of workshops and stakeholders</p>	<p>Internal review by EMG and approval by SWE0 ED before use.</p>

	<p>involved should be discussed with the Reference Group during the Inception Phase and finalised in the Inception Report.</p> <p>It could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HQ/Global level validation workshop – with Reference Group</li> <li>• Regional validation workshops with regional and country level stakeholders – alongside 2025 Regional Sustainable Development Forums</li> </ul> <p>The evaluation team will prepare presentations and background papers for such workshops, in addition to the draft report.</p>	
Other dissemination products	The Evaluation Management Group will prepare a communication plan for the evaluation. The evaluation team will be responsible for the producing presentations, background papers, briefing notes, talking points to support dissemination as required.	Internal review by EMG and approval by SWEO ED before use/publication

## 5.4. Communication, dissemination and follow up

90. The Evaluation Manager will prepare a communication plan for the evaluation, in consultation with the Evaluation Management Group. Feedback will also be sought from the Evaluation Reference Group. It will outline how evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations will be disseminated to all relevant audiences, through what channels and with what products.

91. The evaluation team will be responsible for delivering or supporting the presentations, as requested, including inter alia:

- Exit briefings to the Resident Coordinator Office and UNCT following any in-person data collection missions
- Presentations of emerging findings to the UNSDG Principals or other interagency bodies (if requested, prior to finalisation of the report)
- Presentations of the final, published report to various UN fora
- Presentations of the evaluation requested by Member States (e.g. through ECOSOC or entity governing bodies)

92. The Terms of Reference and Final Evaluation Reports (including any supplementary products identified as necessary in the communications plan) will be made publicly available.

93. The recommendations of the evaluation will be addressed through a formal Management Response. The preparation of the Management Response will be facilitated by the UNSDG Secretariat (DCO) for final approval by the Chair of the UNSDG, developed in consultation with UNSDG Principals. Management responses to global system wide evaluations are presented alongside the evaluation report.

## 5.5 Security considerations

94. The evaluation team must observe applicable United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) rules including taking security training (BSAFE & SSAFE) and attending in-country security briefings in the case of travel for evaluation data collection.

## **5.6. Budget**

95. The evaluation will be financed through voluntary, pooled contributions from UNSDG entities to the Trust Fund in Support of System-Wide Evaluation.

## Annex 1: Interagency management and governance structure

96. An interagency management and governance structure will be established for the system-wide evaluation. The structure is designed to ensure that the evaluation adheres to the guiding principles of the UNSDG System Wide Evaluation Policy (forthcoming), in particular utility, independence, and transparency, as well as principles of particular importance to system-wide evaluation: complementarity, subsidiarity, and collaboration.

### ***UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office (SWEO)***

97. SWEO has overall responsibility for steering the system-wide evaluation from start to completion in a credible, transparent, and utilization-focused manner, in adherence with UNEG norms and standards. This begins with the preparation of the draft ToR, followed by day-to-day management/delivery of the evaluation in line with the agreed ToR. The main responsibilities of SWEO are to:

- Draft the terms of reference and ensuring (1) consultation with the ERG (2) review by the EMG;
- Identify a team of external consultants and contract the evaluation team following consultation with EMG, while ensuring that the evaluation team is an impartial, independent, objective third party;
- Chair the EMG and convene review meetings with the evaluation team;
- Supervise and guide the evaluation team throughout the evaluation process, provide background information and context to the evaluation, and monitor the performance of the evaluation team;
- Provide quality assurance of all evaluation deliverables:
  - Review and approve “zero draft” products before their circulation to stakeholders/users.
  - Facilitate stakeholder discussion and feedback on draft products.
  - Ensure that the evaluation team gives consideration to stakeholder feedback in revised versions.
  - Approve the final evaluation products for publication in consultation the EMG;
- Lead the implementation of the evaluation’s communication plan.

### ***Evaluation management group (EMG)***

98. The EMG, chaired by the SWEO Executive Director, will provide expertise and advice on appropriate evaluation design, data collection and analysis methods, advice on secondary data sources and primary data collection opportunities, and first-level quality assurance of evaluation deliverables (ToR, Inception Report, Draft Evaluation Report and Final Evaluation Report). The main responsibilities of the EMG are to:

- Review, provide input, and approve the evaluation terms of reference
- Review and approve the selection of the evaluation team
- Review and quality assure the inception report
- Provide advice to the evaluation team throughout the evaluation process
- Provide oversight of the evaluation and ensure its independence and impartiality
- Review and provide inputs on the draft and final evaluation reports
- Contribute to the dissemination of evaluation findings

99. The management group will work through virtual meetings, electronic exchanges, and reviews. Key decisions on the design and implementation of the evaluation are taken by consensus by the group, and by majority in cases where it is not possible to reach consensus. In exceptional circumstances, decisions may be referred to the heads of the respective agencies' evaluation offices.

100. The EMG will be composed of representatives of UNSDG entity evaluation offices, at the level of senior evaluation officer or above. The EMG will have a maximum of five members (including SWEO) to ensure that the evaluation management is collaborative but also adheres to the necessary timeframes. Organisations participating in the EMG contribute staff time and financial resources (on a voluntarily basis). All evaluation offices within the UNSDG were invited to express interest in participation in the EMG. The following entities expressed interest in forming management group and have been appointed:

- UNDP Independent Evaluation Office
- WFP Office of Evaluation
- UNICEF Evaluation Office
- UNODC Independent Evaluation Section

### ***Evaluation reference group (ERG)***

101. The main purpose of the ERG is to ensure the relevance, quality and utility of the evaluation's findings and recommendations, by engaging with the evaluation's primary users and stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. The ERG will be engaged at key points in the evaluation process to comment on the approach, validate findings, and participate in the development of recommendations, ensuring that the evaluation is relevant and useful to its intended users. The ERG participates in the process in an advisory capacity, with final decisions taken by the EMG and SWEO to safeguard the independence of the evaluation. The responsibilities of the ERG include:

- Review documents and participate in (virtual) meetings:
  - Review the inception report and provide inputs to the evaluation questions to make these as utilization oriented as possible, considering what key decisions, actions and processes might be meaningfully informed by the evaluation
  - Review the draft and final reports and provide feedback to ensure the soundness of the findings and adequacy of the recommendations. This includes considering the operational implications of the recommendations and that they are actionable and consistent with ongoing and planned developments
- Act as a source of knowledge for the evaluation:
  - Facilitate access to information and documentation
  - Identify and suggest key internal and external stakeholders for consultation
  - Contribute to the dissemination of evaluation findings and the preparation of the Management Response.

### ***UNSDG inter-agency group on Programme Development and Results (PDR)***

102. The PDR will serve as the primary reference group for the evaluation, given its broad system-wide membership and regular (monthly and ad-hoc) meetings. The group is composed of senior-level programme staff involved in decisions on system-wide approaches to development planning. It is an established forum through which inter-agency guidance on programming, such as the Cooperation Framework Guidance, has been developed/revised, before UNSDG Principal consideration and sign-off.

103. Each UNSDG entity represented in the PDR group will nominate a single individual (e.g. at Director level) as its ERG member for the evaluation (noting that in the case of some larger entities

many different staff participate in the PDR group), and a technical level focal point to facilitate their participation in the evaluation. The ERG member and focal point are responsible for ensuring that the evaluation team, management group and SWEO receives a consolidated set of comments/inputs on each deliverable from their entity.

104. The UNSDG PDR group includes HQ-level representatives of UNSDG entities. The use of this group as the primary reference group for the evaluation, should not prevent its members from also involving regional and country level stakeholders in reference group activities (e.g. review of reports). However, as noted above, each entity should provide a single consolidated input to SWEO when deliverables are reviewed.

105. To ensure that all evaluation offices of the UNSDG (not only those in the EMG) are kept informed on the progress of the evaluation and to facilitate entity engagement and input, draft reports and meeting invitations sent to the PDR group (ERG) will be copied to the **Directors of Evaluation** (or equivalent) in all UNSDG entities.

#### ***Expert advisory group (EAG)***

106. The purpose of the EAG is to provide thought leadership, external perspectives, and a source of independent advice to the evaluation team throughout the process. The group will be convened by SWEO and participate a voluntary capacity. Responsibilities of EAG members include:

- Interviews/discussions with the Evaluation Team at several points through the evaluation process to provide external review of evaluation design, emerging findings, and advise on the development of recommendations
- Review and commenting on draft evaluation products
- Facilitating access to external research/analysis, experts, and key informants for consultation
- Contribution to the dissemination of evaluation findings

107. The EAG will be composed of a small number of individuals (3-5) with extensive research or professional experience in relevant UN development system reform issues, who are (at the time of the evaluation) fully independent of the UN system. EAG members may include retired senior officials and/or staff of academic institutions/think tanks.

## Annex 2: Evaluation stakeholder analysis

Table 8 Evaluation stakeholder analysis

	Stakeholder / group	Interest in the evaluation	Engagement in the evaluation
UN Secretariat	<b>[Internal]</b> <b>UN Development Coordination Office (DCO)</b> including:  DCO in New York – ASG and Policy and Programming Branch  DCO Regional Offices (Africa, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean)	<p>Secretariat of the UNSDG - functions relevant to Cooperation Frameworks and UNCT configuration are at three levels and as follows:</p> <p><i>Global:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management and oversight of the RC System</li> <li>- Issues guidance to RCs and UNCTs on country-level development planning, including the CCA and Cooperation Framework</li> <li>- Monitoring/reporting on Cooperation Framework implementation</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support to RC Offices on operations, knowledge management/sharing etc.</li> <li>- Directorate of regional inter-agency Peer Support Groups that provide quality support/assurance to RC Offices and UNCTs throughout the Cooperation Framework design process</li> <li>- Co-Secretariat (w/UNDP and Regional Commission) of the Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCP)</li> </ul> <p><i>Country:</i> (see below)</p> <p>In late 2022, UNSDG Principals tasked DCO to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- [on Cooperation Framework derivation and alignment] (1) reach system-wide understanding of ‘derivation’ and ‘alignment’, (2) re-visit the Cooperation Framework design vis-à-vis entity programme timelines, as well as standard target duration, and identify ways to reduce process, and (3) re-calibrate guidance on RC involvement in design, review, and confirmation of alignment/derivation both in the MAF and in the Cooperation Framework guidance.</li> <li>- [on UNCT configuration] conduct an interagency review of UNCT configuration guidance and methodology to (1) clarify accountabilities between the RC system and UN entities at country, regional and global level, anchoring the exercise in the MAF; (2) frame as an iterative process from the design start throughout the implementation period to ensure continued fitness for purpose; (3) lighten the process, while strengthening accountabilities of UN entities; and (4) enable a more tailored/modular approach for different country contexts.</li> </ul>	<p>Primary user – will use the results of the evaluation to inform the forthcoming agreed revision of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) and the recalibration of the Cooperation Framework guidance.</p> <p>DCO may be responsible for the practical implementation of some evaluation recommendations (if accepted by the wider UNSDG).</p> <p>DCO to participate in the evaluation as day-to-day focal points (facilitating access to key documentation, existing analysis, and sources for primary data collection), as key informants themselves.</p> <p>Member of the Reference Group</p>
	DCO at country-level:	RCs / RC Offices:	RCs will be key downstream users of the evaluation. They will use and

	<p>~130 Resident Coordinators/Offices (RC / RC Office / Multi-Country Office ) in programme countries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lead and support UN Country Teams (UNCT) in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting on the Cooperation Framework, in full consultation with the government</li> <li>- provide feedback on alignment of entity-specific CPDs with Cooperation Frameworks and confirmation of derivation from the Cooperation Framework to the entity Regional Director before sign-off (as per the MAF and Cooperation Framework guidance)</li> <li>- convene and oversee the UNCT configuration exercise to support/optimize operationalization of the Cooperation Framework</li> <li>- participate in the management/administration of joint/pooled funds at country level and the approval/governance of joint programmes</li> </ul>	<p>implement revised agreements (MAF) and guidance (Cooperation Framework) that may result from the evaluation’s recommendations.</p> <p>They will participate in the evaluation as some of the most important key informants during data collection, including interviews/surveys and possibly also more participatory methods (e.g., at points where RCs and/or RC Office staff come together for global/regional meetings/workshops/retreats).</p>
<p>UNSDG</p>	<p><b>[Global] UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)</b> (37 entities) – global level.</p> <p>Chair: Deputy Secretary-General. Vice-chair: UNDP</p> <p>Core group: DESA, FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, WHO and the rotating chair of the Regional Economic Commissions</p> <p>Other members: DPPA, IFAD, ITC, ITU, OCHA, Regional Economic Commissions, PBSO, UN-Habitat, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDRR, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UNRWA, UNV, WIPO, WMO.</p>	<p>The UNSDG serves as a high-level forum for joint policy formation and decision-making. It guides, supports, tracks, and oversees the coordination of development operations in programme countries. It deliberates on, agrees, and issues system wide policies, SOPs, and guidance, including for development planning and coordination at country levels and UNCT configuration.</p> <p>The Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) for the Resident Coordinator System – the document that presents the respective roles and responsibilities of RCs/RC Offices, UNCT members, the regional level etc. in planning and delivering development cooperation at country level – is negotiated and agreed among the UNSDG Principals.</p> <p>UNSDG principals are also signatories to the Funding Compact between UNSDG entities and Member States.</p> <p>UNSDG Principals agreed (in late 2022) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b><u>commission a system-wide evaluation of the derivation of country programming from the Cooperation Framework across all UNSDG entities</u></b></li> <li>- reconfirm the commitment to a system-wide approach of deriving entity country programmes from the Cooperation Framework</li> <li>- [CPD entities] to consider using the first Governing Board session of the first year of Cooperation Framework implementation (e.g., February 2023 rather than September 2022 for a 2023 start year) as the default session for approval of CPDs by Member States</li> <li>- reaffirm the stated intent and spirit of the UNCT configuration exercise</li> <li>- issue a coordinated message on the intent of, and support to, the UNCT configuration exercise, and ensure it is implemented systematically within their entities</li> </ul>	<p>Primary user(s) – will use the results of the evaluation to inform the forthcoming agreed revision of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) and the recalibration of the Cooperation Framework guidance.</p> <p>The evaluation recommendations may be addressed to the UNSDG as whole, which will decide whether to accept them, and assign responsibilities and timeframes for their practical implementation.</p> <p>UNSDG entities at HQ level will participate in the conduct of the evaluation as key informants and as members of the reference group.</p> <p>UN-DESA will administer surveys of UNSDG entities/Member States to report against the QCPR monitoring framework in 2024. The evaluation should take this data in to account.</p>

	<p>UNSDG priorities for 2023 (rolled over into 2024) include the following deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2.1. <i>The implementation of the recommendations of the independent evaluation on good practices and opportunities for improvement on derivation and alignment of UNCT configuration by the independent system-wide evaluation office are effectively driving greater integration, better alignment of skillsets and footprints, to support countries’ needs and priorities for sustainable development</i></li> <li>- 2.1.2. <i>Necessary revisions to UNCT configuration and derivation guidance are agreed by UNSDG Principals</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>[Regional] UNSDG Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCP)</b> – membership varies but generally reflects the global UNSDG. Chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and co-chaired by two Vice-Chairs, the Executive Secretary of the Regional Economic Commission, and the Regional Director UNDP</p> <p><b>Regional level offices/bureaux</b></p>	<p><b>RCPs</b> bring together UNSDG entities at regional level to ensure collaboration and coordination of UN assets in addressing development issues that transcend national borders.</p> <p>RCPs are relevant to and have an interest in Cooperation Framework derivation and alignment and UNCT configuration insofar as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- they are the intended mechanism for bringing together and deploying regional level resources and expertise to pursue country-level Cooperation Framework outcomes (especially for integrated policy advice/support to governments)</li> <li>- UNCT configuration exercises have resulted in the addition of new entities to UN Country Teams, both non-resident and in-country</li> </ul> <p><b>UNSDG entity Regional Offices/Bureaux</b> develop/implement entity-specific regional organizational strategies/policies/guidance, house deployable thematic expertise/surge resources, manage/oversee country offices (possibly including review/approval of country programme documents and line management of Country Directors/Reps). Regional office/bureaux locations and country groupings vary by UNSDG entity. The greatest consistency is in the LAC (Panama) and Asia-Pacific (Bangkok) regions with much more inconsistent alignment in Africa, Europe, and the Arab States.</p> <p><b>Regional Peer Support Groups (PSG)</b> – anchored under the RCP, PSGs engage UNSDG staff at regional levels on a voluntary basis as “a strategic planning expert team that brings an integrated, system-wide rather than “agency-specific” support to the CCA/Cooperation Framework processes at the country level.”<sup>55</sup> Their responsibilities are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide strategic planning support to CCA/Cooperation Framework cycle to increase likelihood of high-quality roadmap, CCA and cooperation frameworks.</li> <li>2. Review of drafts of UNCT Roadmap, CCA and Cooperation Framework products to provide advice for increasing their quality.</li> </ol>	<p>UNSDG entities and coordination mechanisms at regional and country levels will be downstream users of the evaluation. They will use and implement revised agreements and guidance that may result from the evaluation’s recommendations.</p> <p>They will participate in the evaluation as some of the most important key informants during data collection including interviews/surveys and possibly also more participatory methods (e.g., at global meetings/workshops/retreats).</p> <p>They may also, at the discretion of their entity HQ, be invited to contribute to evaluation design and validation as members of the reference group.</p>

<sup>55</sup> UNSDG, Standard Terms of Reference for Regional Peer Support Group (PSG) - May 2021

	<p>3. Promote regional level experience exchange on good practice and examples in advancing the 2030 Agenda through the Cooperation Framework.</p>	
<p><b>[Country] United Nations Country Teams (UNCT)</b></p>	<p>UNSDG entities in country are responsible (with the RC Office and the government) for the design, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation of the Cooperation Framework. In addition to this, some UNSDG entities also develop Country Programme Documents, Country Strategic Plans, Strategic Notes or similar to connect activities development results at country-level over multi-year periods. These may be approved by governing bodies or through processes internal to the entity. Some entities routinely commission independent evaluations of these frameworks.</p> <p>The 2019 Cooperation Framework guidance (and A/Res/75/233) emphasizes that “UN 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.” DCO understands that the application of this principal varies. Some entities have developed guidance on CPD alignment and derivation from the Cooperation Framework.</p> <p>The UNSDG Cooperation Framework Companion Package (2020) offers three options for derivation of CPDs from the Cooperation Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (a) Adopt the Cooperation Framework as their own country programme document (the most explicit option for derivation, essentially removing the parallel process/document altogether)</li> <li>- (b) an entity specific CPD with the Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim; and</li> <li>- (c) Develop an entity specific CPD with the Cooperation Framework outcomes verbatim, plus additional outcomes included only on an exceptional basis to capture normative and standard setting activities not prioritized in the Cooperation Framework.</li> </ul> <p>DCO analysis has indicated that the so-called exceptional ‘Option C’ is in fact the most used amongst UNSDG entities at country level.</p>	

Other	<p><b>UNSDG evaluation functions</b></p> <p>UN Regional Evaluation Groups – Latin America/ Caribbean and Asia-Pacific</p>	<p>Some UNSDG evaluation offices/units conduct entity specific evaluation of Country Programme Documents (or similar). Many have also engaged in joint evaluations of Cooperations Frameworks, UN joint programmes and some UN Development Reform themes.</p> <p>In the Asia-Pacific and Latin America/Caribbean regions, the evaluation functions of multiple UNSDG entities (Regional Evaluation Officers/Specialists/Advisors) come together in regional groups/networks, through which they have overseen and supported joint evaluations of Cooperation Frameworks at country level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP)</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">RCP LAC - Evaluation Working Group</a></li> </ul>	<p>Interested UNSDG evaluation office could participate in this evaluation as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Members of the Evaluation Management Group</li> <li>- Providing funding and/or staff time to support the management of the evaluation</li> <li>- Providing secondary data (entity and joint evaluations) and facilitating primary data collection opportunities</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Multi-partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O)</b> (UNDP)</p>	<p>MPTF-O is the UN entity dedicated to the design and administration of multi-stakeholder pooled financing instruments – a “system-wide asset hosted by UNDP”. It administers country, regional, global, and thematic UN pooled funds. Pooled funding is key enabler UNSDG activity/programme alignment with Cooperation Frameworks, as set out in the Funding Compact between UNSDG entities and Member States.</p>	<p>MPTF-O will be a key source of data for the evaluation on Cooperation Framework related pooled funds and their possible effect on UNSDG alignment and derivation.</p>
	<p><b>[External]</b></p>		
UN Member States	<p><b>Member States</b> – as host/partner governments of the UN development system in “programme countries”</p>	<p>Governments in programme countries are primary stakeholders in UN development system planning and operations at country-level. Cooperation Frameworks are agreed and signed in full cooperation with the government, who, depending on context, may also play major roles in their implementation. As such, the extent to which country programmes of individual UN entities are derived from and aligned with the Cooperation Framework is of significant interest to governments – it is a key indicator of the extent to which UN development system activities on the ground are responding to national development priorities (as articulated in the agreed Cooperation Framework outcomes). Similarly, programme country governments are interested in the extent to which UNCTs are being optimally configured to pursue the agreed Cooperation Framework outcomes.</p>	<p>Member States will be users of the evaluation. It may be formally presented for their consideration in the relevant committees of ECOSOC, and informally presented to interested Member States. This, in turn, will inform deliberations on resolutions related to the development reform (i, e. QCPR.). The evaluation may also influence the approaches that individual Member States adopt in their membership of UNSDG entity governing bodies and as donors to the UN development system.</p> <p>Depending on evaluation design, Member States may participate in the conduct of the evaluation as key informants including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Host/programme country governments (on alignment</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Member States</b> – as represented in intergovernmental bodies:</p> <p><b>ECOSOC</b> - Operational Activities for Development Segment</p> <p><b>General Assembly</b></p>	<p>Through their membership and participation in key intergovernmental bodies (ECOSOC and GA committees), Member States guide and oversee the UN development system as a whole and the reform thereof (i.e., through the QCPR).</p> <p>A smaller number of Member States are also major donors to the UN development system, using a mix of funding modalities, ranging from tightly earmarked entity-specific non-core resources to flexible, multi-agency country/global pooled funds. It is well understood that these funding modalities (and coordination between donors) can either enable or constrain the UN development system in terms of its alignment with country</p>	

	<p>- Second Committee (Economic and Financial) - Committee for Programme and Coordination (also a subsidiary organ of ECOSOC)</p> <p><b>Governing bodies of UNSDG entities</b></p> <p><b>OECD DAC / MOPAN</b></p>	<p>priorities and UNCT collaboration. This includes the extent to which CPDs are derived from and aligned with Cooperation Frameworks.</p> <p>Member States are signatories to the Funding Compact (with UNSDG entities), which includes commitments to better align funding behaviour (and the incentives this creates) with UN development system reform priorities.</p> <p>Member States are also represented in the individual governance structures of many UNSDG entities. In these roles, they approve and oversee the implementation of organizational policies on country-level planning and coordination. This includes the approval and sign-off of CPDs (and similar) through EB sessions, in some entities.</p> <p>The OECD (representing many of the major donors to the UN development system) also conducts monitoring/evaluation/research/analysis of UN development system reform progress and effectiveness and may take interest in the findings and recommendations of this evaluation.</p>	<p>of UN development system with national development priorities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- governing body members</li> <li>- Donor countries</li> </ul>
<p>Non-UN development actors</p>	<p><b>Non-governmental implementing partners</b> (in programme countries)</p>	<p>Many activities under Cooperation Frameworks and UN entity country programmes are implemented at local levels by cooperating/implementing partners (e.g., INGOs, national NGOs, local government etc.). These organizations will have a lower level of interest in UN entity CPD derivation and alignment / UNCT configuration as a <i>process</i>, but a high level of interest in the <i>intended results</i> (a UNCT that is better equipped to respond to national development priorities and make progress against the SDGs). UNCT engagement with civil society and representatives of rights holders also often goes beyond implementing partner arrangements; these organizations also have an interest in the intended results.</p>	<p>Non-governmental development actors at country-level may participate in the evaluation as key informants during possible country-level primary data collection. They may provide an important non-UN, non-government perspective on the extent to which policies/guidance have translated into changes on the ground.</p>
	<p><b>Non-UN development partners in programme countries</b> (IFIs, private sector etc.)</p>	<p>International Financial Institutions (IFIs), bilateral development agencies etc. work on similar goals to the UN development system but outside or at greater distance from its development planning processes. They may have some indirect interest in the evaluation, particularly given UN intentions to work more closely with IFIs/the private sector and transition from UN development system “funding” to SDG “financing”.</p>	

## Annex 3: Evaluability assessment / summary of data availability

Table 9 Preliminary evaluability assessment

Evaluability dimension	Preliminary assessment	Approach/methodology implications
<p><b>Design</b>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the extent to which the intended outcomes of the policy/guidance are clearly defined with a Theory of Change for how they are expected to be achieved</li> <li>- the extent to which there is agreement among different stakeholders regarding the intended outcomes of the policy and how they will be achieved</li> </ul>	<p>The Cooperation Guidance, MAF and other key documents which describe and aim to operationalize the intentions of UN development system reform/repositioning, describe at a broad and strategic level the changes they intend to bring about, i.e. more coherent, accountable, and effective support to help Member States achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This is often expressed in summaries of “what’s new” compared to the UNDAF approach/guidance for example in the introduction to the Cooperation Framework guidance document and the Cooperation Framework Guidance “in brief”<sup>56</sup>.</p> <p>These documents also set out some clear processes, expectations, milestones, and deliverables that the UN development system is expected/had agreed to follow to support the implementation of reform efforts and ultimately contribute to the intended, high-level results. For example, in the Cooperation Framework Guidance Companion Package.</p> <p>However, this articulation of some high level intended outcomes and processes do not constitute a Theory of Change as such. There has been less articulation of the exactly <b>how</b> the implementation of the new policies/guidance will contribute to the higher-level ambitions, including the internal and external assumptions that also have an impact on delivery/progress (perhaps with the exception of funding, as detailed in the Funding Compact).</p>	<p>The evaluation will need to have a strong <b>formative</b> dimension. It should include evaluation questions / lines of inquiry which seek to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how the key concepts are understood by different UN development system stakeholders</li> <li>- the reasons for uneven implementation of the policy/guidance across different contexts and entities</li> <li>- the extent of agreement regarding the changes that the Cooperation Framework guidance and MAF are intended to bring about and how</li> </ul>

<sup>56</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/In-Brief-UN-Sustainable-Development-Cooperation.pdf>

	<p>Furthermore, the reform process is collectively owned by the UN development system entities, and implemented through the dual accountability model. It requires that entities develop and adopt their own approaches/policies/guidance/systems for implementing or contributing to the reform. Existing analysis and scoping work conducted for this evaluation suggest that precise definitions for improved derivation, alignment and configuration have not yet emerged across all entities and are subject to some differing interpretations by stakeholders.</p>	
<p><b>Information availability,</b> including:          - availability of relevant documentation          - existence documents/data that can provide baseline/endline or before/after information</p>	<p>As set out above, there is a large body of documentation available that is relevant to the evaluation subject at the country-level. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More than 115 Cooperation Framework documents (plus associated CCAs, Joint Work plans etc.)</li> <li>- More than 500 entity-specific CPDs (or equivalent)</li> <li>- Smaller numbers of recent Cooperation Framework evaluations and CPD evaluations. (UNCT annual self-reporting on results is available for a majority of countries)</li> </ul> <p>Beyond this, at global levels, the following is available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A number of indicators informed by regular DESA/DCO surveys of RCs, UNCT members and governments (see below)</li> <li>- UNSDG entity strategic plan evaluations (and a small number of evaluations on country programming and UN reform contributions)</li> <li>- UNSDG entity-level policies/guidance/updates on country-programming (produced since 2019)</li> <li>- Some reporting against the <i>UN development system reform – checklist for UN entities’ governing bodies</i></li> <li>- Partially relevant independent studies/reports, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MOPAN assessments of entities</li> <li>- OIOS evaluations of the RC System/DCO</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The available body of documentation suggests that the evaluation will be able to gather relevant data with which to build a <b>summative</b> picture of the current alignment/derivation/configuration situation.</p> <p>The documents are from diverse sources, including some independent evaluations and studies, allowing for a certain amount of evidence triangulation. As such, systematic document review can constitute a significant part of the evaluation methodology and level of effort, limiting the requirement for extensive, time-intensive, and costly primary data collection.</p> <p>The global scope of the evaluation, covering all programme countries and the programming of all 37 UNSDG entities within them, as well as their regional and global support structures, and governing bodies, will require <b>sampling approaches</b> to make desk review and data collection manageable. The evaluation team should define appropriate sample sizes and purposive selection criteria for each data collection method and each evaluation question. For example, in answering certain questions, a review of documentation from all UNSDG entities may be feasible and appropriate (e.g. global strategic plans / UN development system reform checklists), while for other sources and questions a much narrower sample of documents or informants will be necessary to achieve the required depth of inquiry (e.g. country programme documents / interviews with UNCT members). Criteria for geographic sampling are detailed in Annex 4 below.</p>

	<p>- Studies on UN development system capacities and funding (produced for EOSG)</p> <p>A “before and after” comparison of policy changes at the global level may be included in the above. At the country-level, the evaluation can also draw on the large body of UNDAF and CPD evaluations which cover periods before Cooperation Framework guidance roll-out.</p> <p>A more detailed summary of available secondary data is provided in Table 10 below.</p>	<p>Primary data collection can and should be designed and targeted to focus on understanding stakeholder perspectives, good practices, lessons-learned and opportunities for improvement, rather than to measure extent of alignment/derivation/configuration with an accountability lens.</p> <p>More than 400 of the 500+ identified/public CPDs come from four agencies (those which require signed off CPDs through governing bodies). The evaluation will naturally focus on these (larger) agencies but should consciously strive for an equal focus on agencies that develop and approve country programmes through different processes, including through primary data collection, if/when country-level documentation is not available.</p>
<p><b>Institutional context,</b> including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- whether the primary users of the evaluation can be identified</li> <li>- if the evaluation is timed both to cover a sufficient period of implementation and to align with timeframes for decision-making</li> <li>- accessibility/availability of key stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>Initial consultations and background literature review points to a favourable institutional context in which to conduct the evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The evaluation’s primary users are clearly identifiable through initial stakeholder analysis</li> <li>- The timing allows the evaluation to look back on a period which covers the roll out of 100+ first generation Cooperation Frameworks, make recommendations which can inform planned revisions of Cooperation Framework guidance and MAF, and influence the development and roll out of a large number of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Cooperation Frameworks in the coming years</li> <li>- There is a high level of interest in the evaluation among its key users and stakeholders, significant overlap between the likely sample of key informants and key users, and good prospects for their availability. This suggests that a participatory evaluation process is possible.</li> </ul>	<p>The institutional context has the following implications for approach/methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The evaluation team can expect the appointed Reference Group (composed on evaluation users) to actively engage in reviewing the design of the evaluation and in discussions on preliminary findings and final recommendations.</li> <li>- A significant amount of primary data collection (interviews) will be possible to carry out remotely and online (with UN staff available and familiar with such interactions)</li> <li>- The evaluation should explore opportunities to conduct participatory data collection and analysis, for example, focus group discussions/workshops with evaluation stakeholders at regional/global staff retreats/annual meetings etc. It should also seek to directly observe relevant ongoing policy discussions, such as the review of the Cooperation Framework Guidance and the MAF.</li> <li>- The interest, availability, and potential for key evaluation users (UN entity staff) to participate in the evaluation process has positive implications for evaluation utility. However, the evaluation should consciously seek to include the important external</li> </ul>

		stakeholder perspective in data collection (most notably Member States and non-UN development actors).
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108. Relevant information on UN development system reform responses/contributions and country programming approaches may be found in the bodies of documentation described in the table below.

Table 10 Summary of available documentation and secondary data

Category	Notes
<b>Evaluations</b>	<p>Relevant existing evaluations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual OIOS evaluations of DCO/Resident Coordinator System</b> conducted in 2021, 2022, 2023, with a further evaluation ongoing in 2024. Areas of focus of these evaluations have been programme coherence (2021), DCO regional support (2022), integrated policy advice (2023) and the RC system in complex settings (multi-hatted RCs - 2024). A Triennial Review of recommendation implementation for the 2021 evaluation will commence in 2024.</li> <li>• <b>Evaluations of UN development system reform, 2030 Agenda and country programming approaches by UNSDG entity evaluation offices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ WFP/IFAD/FAO, Evaluation of Rome-based Agency Collaboration (2021)</li> <li>○ IOM, Evaluation of contribution to Agenda 2030 (2022)</li> <li>○ UNIDO, Evaluation of contribution to Agenda 2030 (2022)</li> <li>○ UNFPA, Evaluation of contribution to UN development system reform (2022)</li> <li>○ UNAIDS, Evaluation of Country Envelopes (2023)</li> <li>○ UNIDO, Country Partnerships Evaluation (2023)</li> <li>○ WFP, Country Strategic Planning Policy Evaluation (2023)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• UNSDG entities may conduct <b>global strategic plan evaluations</b>, which may include analysis of the entity's response/contribution of UN development system reform processes. Since 2019, such evaluations have been published by: FAO, UNCDF, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNV and WHO. As mentioned above, several are ongoing in 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>Secretary-General / Deputy Secretary-General reports</b>	<p>The annual reports of (a) the Secretary-General on the implementation of the QCPR and (b) the Deputy Secretary-General/UNSDG Chair on the work of DCO/Resident Coordinator System report on the implementation of UN development system reform, including comments/passages on the current state of country programme derivation from Cooperation Frameworks and UNCT configuration exercises and their possible results. These reports draw on indicators in the QCPR Monitoring Framework and RC System Results Framework, which are informed primarily by annual surveys of the UN development system/host governments conducted by UN-DESA and DCO. The QCPR MF indicators on CPDs-Cooperation Frameworks and UNCT Configuration are summarized in the Table 11 below.</p>

<p><b>UNSDG entity country programming guidance</b></p>	<p>UNSDG entity approaches to country programmes (including alignment, derivation, and criteria for decisions on presence and capacities) may be included in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Global Strategic Plans</b> (or equivalent) – current strategic plans identified for 30 entities</li> <li>• <b>Policies/statements/updates on country programming produced in the context of UN development system reform</b> – identified for FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, joint UNDP/UNFPA/UN Women/UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, WFP and WHO</li> <li>• <b>CPD evaluation policies/guidance</b> – identified for WFP, UN-Women and UNFPA</li> <li>• <b>Training materials for entity Country/Regional offices</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>UN development system Reform Checklists</b></p>	<p>In response to Member States request in General Assembly resolution 76/4 on the review of the functioning of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, including its funding arrangement, the Chair of the UNSDG developed a checklist for the consideration UN development system entities, to “facilitate their oversight role, including monitoring alignment and entity adherence to the dual reporting model.” It covers the elements of the repositioning of the UN development system, as set out in A/RES/72/279. For each question, entities are requested to briefly explain how the entity is implementing the reform requirement, or, if it is not implemented, briefly set out the plans and timeline to do so. The first two sections of the checklist cover “country programmes and UNSDCFs” and “UNCT configuration”.</p> <p>With assistance from DCO, SWEO has to date gathered checklist reports from: UNFPA, UN-Women, UNICEF, FAO, UN-Habitat, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and UNOPS.<sup>57</sup> WFP will commence reporting on the full reform checklist in the 2024 Annual Session of its governing body.</p>
<p><b>MOPAN assessments</b></p>	<p>The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) conducts assessments of multilateral organizations on behalf of its 22 member governments. Assessments cover four areas of organisational effectiveness: strategic management, operational management, relationship management and performance management, and results. The MOPAN Assessment Methodology used from 2020 onwards (3.1) includes <i>‘integrated measures related to important new agendas in the multilateral system: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, and the reform of the United Nations development system.’</i> As such, the following recent MOPAN assessments of UNSDG members may provide useful secondary information for this evaluation.</p> <p>2021: UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, UNOPS, ILO, OCHA                  2022: UNAIDS                  2023: IOM                  2024: IFAD, UNHCR</p>

<sup>57</sup> Secretary-General’s Report on QCPR 2024: *In 2023, five UNSDG entities reported on the full checklist on the implementation of the reform of the UN development system, using it as an annex to regular reporting, namely UNESCO, UNAIDS, UNEP, UN Habitat and FAO. Eight UNSDG entities have reported partially on the checklist by integrating specific checklist elements in their regular reporting – UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and the Regional Economic Commissions. Four entities have not changed yet their regular way of reporting on the implementation of the reform and have indirectly reported on the checklist through their regular reporting on reform (UN Women, ILO, IOM, and UNRWA). Twelve UNSDG entities have not reported on the checklist. These include WHO, UNHCR, ITU, WMO, and UNOPS, as well as UN Secretariat entities that do not have separate governing bodies such as UNDRR, OHCHR, ITC, and OCHA, and entities that are part of UNDP, such as UNCT and UNV. UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women, and WFP will commence the reporting on the full reform checklist in the 2024 Annual Sessions of their Executive Boards, as requested by their Executive Boards in 2023*

<b>JIU reports</b>	<p>One recent UN Joint Inspection Unit report may be of relevance to this evaluation, insofar as it will include examination of the role of UNSDG entity governing bodies in country-level development planning:</p> <p><i>Review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2023)</i></p>
<b>Internal analysis</b>	<p>Upon request from UNSDG Principals, DCO conducted several light analytical exercises on derivation, alignment and to a lesser extent UNCT configuration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Background analytical paper on country programme derivation</b> (April 2022) – based on data reported by RC Offices to DCO IMS up to 31/12/2021. Found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the role of the RC in confirming CP derivation was very inconsistent across agencies and countries</li> <li>○ derivation Option C (verbatim use of Cooperation Framework outcomes in the country programming instrument plus additional outcomes that are not in the Cooperation Framework) was the most common option used</li> <li>○ the Cooperation Framework design process was starting an average of 19 months ahead of implementation (rather than the intended 6-9 months), planned early starts were attributed to a need to finish in time to align with governing body timelines</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Survey of UNSDG entities on country programme derivation</b> (August 2022): 12 of 37 UNSDG entities responded to questions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Type of country programming instrument used</li> <li>○ Decision process for country presence/country programme establishment</li> <li>○ Country programme length / flexibility</li> <li>○ Approval process</li> <li>○ Corporate guidance on alignment/derivation</li> <li>○ Country programme timeframe alignment with Cooperation Framework</li> <li>○ Use of the Cooperation Framework ToC in derivation</li> <li>○ Timing of country programme development (before or after Cooperation Framework priorities)</li> <li>○ Involvement of the RC in CP design, quality assurance and confirmation of derivation (sign off)</li> <li>○ Possibility of a formal time lag between Cooperation Framework and country programme finalization</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Deep dive on Cooperation Framework – country programme instrument derivation and alignment and UNCT configuration</b> (October 2022). Building on the above survey, DCO conducted “deep dives” on the country programme development process by five agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Women) in four countries (Jamaica, Moldova, Tanzania, Zambia). These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mapping of Cooperation Framework and country programme design roadmaps in the four countries</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o DCO findings/recommendations on (i) timeframes for the Cooperation Framework process and CPD entity governing body sessions, (ii) clarification of RC involvement in alignment/derivation, (iii) clarifying the intent of the UNCT configuration exercise</li> </ul> <p>EOSG’s Sustainable Development Unit also commissions analysis of progress made in the implementation of UN development system reforms. This includes a <b>recently finalized study on the “capacities and functions of the UN development system to accelerate progress on the SDGs” (May 2024)</b><sup>58</sup>.</p>
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Table 11 QCPR monitoring framework indicators which address CPD derivation/alignment and UNCT configuration “asks”<sup>59</sup>

Ask	#	Indicator	Baseline value	Baseline yr.	Target, if any	SGR 2022 value	Year	SGR 2023 value	Year	SGR 2024 value	Year	Data Source
CPDs are prepared in accordance with Cooperation Framework’s agreed priorities (OP74)	3.1.13b	Average percentage of UNCT members (of UNSDG entities) that shared their country programme document with the resident coordinator for review and confirmation by letter, on derivation from the Cooperation Framework (countries with a CF only) <sup>7</sup>	28%	2021	100% (2021)	20%	2021	19%	2022	20%	2023	DCO
	3.1.13c	Percentage of Resident Coordinators that: i. were consulted in key stages of entity specific strategic planning ii. provided formal written confirmation on alignment/derivation to/from the Cooperation Framework iii. were not involved in the derivation of the entities’ country level programming								i. 36.2% ii. 17.3%	2023	DCO
	3.1.14	Percentage of resident coordinators that state that: i. All ii. Most iii. Some iv. Zero UNCT members involve them in key stages of agency-specific strategic planning in relation to Cooperation Framework agreed priorities and formally solicit their feedback on the alignment of their Country Programme Documents to the UN Cooperation Framework	i.9% ii. 20% iii. 57% iv. 15%	2019	..	i. 14% ii. 39% iii. 43% iv. 3%	2021	i. 14% ii. 52% iii. 32% iv. 2%	2022	i. 13% ii. 53% iii. 31% iv. 3%	2023	DESA (RC survey)
UNCT configuration built on the	3.4.5	Percentage of Cooperation Frameworks (that began implementation in the last 12 months) where the RC led a discussion on UNCT configuration (current or in design	71%	2021	95% (2024)	71%	2021	67%	2022	87%	2023	DCO (IMS)

<sup>58</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/updated-study-capacities-and-functions-un-development-system-accelerate-progress-sdgs>

<sup>59</sup> Source: 2023 data: <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/what-we-do/oas-qcpr/un-secretary-generals-reports-qcpr/2023-secretary-generals-report>  
2024 data: Available in due course at: <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/what-we-do/oas-qcpr/quick-links/2024-secretary-generals-report-implementation-qcpr>

Cooperation Framework (OP 95)		phase ) for which a review of UNCT configuration was conducted										
	3.4.6	Percentage of Cooperation Frameworks (current or in design phase ) for which a review of UNCT configuration was conducted	79%	2020	95% (2024)	74%	2021	66%	2022	89%	2023	DCO (IMS)
	3.4.7	Percentage of resident coordinators who indicate that the UN country team has: i. held a needs-based tailored country presence dialogue between the Government and the UNDS, facilitated by the resident coordinator ii. reconfigured its presence on the basis of this dialogue	i. 23% ii. ..	2019	..	i. 42% ii. 52%	2021	i. 58%	2022	i. 61%	2023	DESA (RC survey)
	3.4.8	Percentage of programme country Governments in countries where a Cooperation Framework was developed in the last year that state a dialogue on country presence configuration was held between the Government and the UNDS, facilitated by the resident coordinator	87%	2019	..	89%	2021	94%	2022	87%	2023	DESA (PCG survey)

## Annex 4: Evaluation subject analysis / sampling criteria

109. The evaluation team should define appropriate sample sizes and purposive selection criteria for each data collection method and each evaluation question. For **geographic sampling**, there are various criteria that can be used to define an appropriate sample of countries, including both Cooperation Framework guidance rollout/implementation, and criteria to ensure broad representation of the different contexts in which UNCTs work. Cooperation Framework guidance implementation criteria that can be used to define such samples are as follows:

- **Cooperation Framework implementation start year** – to include UNCTs that have the most recent experience of Cooperation Framework design or the greatest number of years of Cooperation Framework implementation experience (or both). Consultation with UNSDG entities on the evaluation scope has found general consensus that Cooperation Frameworks with start years of 2022 and later, will be most representative of the new Cooperation Framework approach. As explained in section 3 above, Cooperation Frameworks which began implementation in 2020 and 2021, had limited opportunity to fully implement the new guidance.
- **Number of Cooperation Framework cycles** – to include UNCTs that have designed more than one Cooperation Framework and had the greatest opportunity to learn from the experience
- **UNCT configuration exercises** – to include UNCTs that have (recently) conducted the UNCT configuration exercise
- **UNCT size and composition** – including consideration of the number of CPDs that have been developed alongside/derived from the Cooperation Framework, the presence of non-resident agencies in the UNCT, entities working on normative and standards setting activities etc.
- **Cooperation Framework evaluation coverage** – to include (or exclude) UNCTs that have recently or are currently undertaking an evaluation of the Cooperation Framework

110. It is also important that any geographical sample is broadly representative of different contexts in which UNCTs work. Samples should aim to include:

- **Programme country regions** – Africa, Arab States, Latin America/Caribbean, Asia/Pacific, and Europe/Central Asia.
- Countries at different **income levels** (as classified by the World Bank) – Low Income, Lower-Middle Income and Upper-Middle Income - as well as countries recognized by the UN as **least developed (LDC)**, **landlocked developing (LLDC)** and **small island developing (SIDS)**
- Countries with an ongoing **UN-coordinated humanitarian response** (OCHA Humanitarian Response Plan of Flash Appeal) and countries with a **UN Peacekeeping Operation or Special Political Mission** – where the Cooperation Framework is coordinated by a double- or triple-hatted Resident Coordinator.
- **Multi-country office settings** – where the RC Office/Cooperation Framework and UN entities/CPDs cover more than one programme country

111. The tables below complement the data and analysis contained in section 3 of these Terms of Reference, including Cooperation Framework roll out by country, region, and year; country programming instruments by country, UNCT configuration exercises by country/region/year;

country programming instrument evaluations; and planned/ongoing UN evaluations to be considered.

112. Sampling should also consider and represent distinct categories of **stakeholder**. As explained above in the scope and methodology sections of these ToR, three dimensions are of particular importance in this system-wide evaluation.

- **Type of UN entity:** Sampling should give appropriate representation to the different categories/types of UN entity within the UNSDG and their different institutional circumstances and approaches to programming. It should include the following overlapping categories:
  - Funds and programmes.
  - Specialized agencies.
  - Entities working on “normative and standard setting activities”
  - Non-resident agencies; and
  - Entities with regional/global programmes (as described in Cooperation Framework Guidance paragraph 80<sup>60</sup>)
- **Country, regional, and global levels:** the title of the evaluation and the draft evaluation questions imply a focus on the country-level outcomes and country-level activities/relationships of UN entities. This will indeed be a key focus of the evaluation; however, context and stakeholder analysis show that regional and global level UN system stakeholders have interest in and influence over how the Cooperation Framework guidance and MAF are applied. Sampling should balance country-level, regional and global level stakeholders.
- **UN system and external stakeholders:** stakeholders outside of the UN system (notably Member States, both in their capacity as host governments and as members of governing bodies) have an interest in the processes/outcomes in question. Sampling of key informants should balance internal UN and external stakeholders. It should include Member States (e.g., governing body).

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<sup>60</sup> 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.

Table 12 UNSDCFs by country, region, and first year of implementation

	AFR	APA	LAC	ECA	ARAB	# countries
2020	Angola, Congo, DRC, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, South Africa		Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay		Iraq, Kuwait	14
2021	Cote d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Madagascar, Somalia, Tunisia, Uganda	China, Indonesia <b>Malaysia (Brunei, Singapore)</b> , Timor-Leste	Argentina, Panama, Uruguay	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Bahrain	40
2022	Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe	Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Maldives, Thailand, Viet Nam	Ecuador El Salvador <b>Caribbean region</b> Honduras Peru	Albania, Ukraine	Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen	62
2023	Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Libya, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan, Togo, Zambia	India, Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, <b>Pacific region</b> , Pakistan, Sri Lanka	Bolivia, Brazil, Chile Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Venezuela	Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Moldova, Tajikistan	Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine	101
2024	Angola, Madagascar, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Senegal, Mauritius, Seychelles	Bhutan, Cambodia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines				119
2025 (under design)	Angola, Madagascar, DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, Rwanda		Colombia, Paraguay	Ukraine	Iraq, Bahrain	

Table 13 Number of publicly available country programming instruments documents by country (2020-)

# CPDs	AFR	APA	LAC	ECA	ARAB	# countries
9		Pakistan				1
8	Madagascar, Kenya, Tanzania	China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal				7
7	Angola, Zimbabwe, Egypt	Lao PDR, Philippines			Jordan	6
6	Sierra Leone, Mali, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Togo, Burundi, Morocco, Nigeria	Timor-Leste, Thailand	Colombia, Bolivia	Türkiye		13
5	DRC, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Somalia, Uganda, Libya, Eritrea, Central African Republic, Zambia, Malawi	Viet Nam, India, Iran, Cambodia	Cuba, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras	North Macedonia, Uzbekistan, Albania, Tajikistan, Moldova	Lebanon	25
4	Tunisia, Ghana, South Sudan, Congo, Botswana, Cameroon, Guinea Bissau, Benin, Chad, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe	Maldives, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Bhutan,	Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Haiti	Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan	Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Palestine	29
3	South Africa, Comoros, Algeria, Cabo Verde, Gabon, Mauritania, Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Senegal	Malaysia, Papua New Guinea	Paraguay, Panama, Uruguay, Costa Rica	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Montenegro	Kuwait	25
2	Equatorial Guinea, Sudan		Brazil, Chile, Nicaragua		Saudi Arabia	6
1	Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Mauritius	Myanmar			United Arab Emirates, Bahrain	6
0	Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles	Afghanistan, DPR Korea		Kosovo		6
15			English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean region <sup>61</sup>			1
5		Pacific region <sup>62</sup>				1

<sup>61</sup> Includes instruments covering **either** (a) whole region, (b) a sub-set of countries, or (c) individual countries: Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, BVI, Curacao, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Lucia, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago

<sup>62</sup> Includes instruments covering **all** of: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu

Table 14 UNCT configuration exercises by country, region, and year (2019-2024) <sup>63</sup>

	AFR	APA	LAC	ECA	ARAB	Total
2019	Ethiopia, Senegal, Mauritania		Mexico	Kosovo		5
2020	Somalia, Gambia, Mali, Uganda, Eritrea, Lesotho, Seychelles	Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal, Lao PDR	Paraguay, Haiti, <i>English- &amp; Dutch-speaking Caribbean region</i>	Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova	Palestine, Kuwait, Iraq	22
2021	Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Congo, Kenya, Niger	Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam, China	Uruguay, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Panama, Honduras	Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Albania, Turkmenistan	Saudi Arabia	22
2022	Sierra Leone, Comoros, South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Guinea, Malawi, Madagascar, Ghana, Sudan, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tunisia	India, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Mongolia	Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guatemala	Montenegro, Georgia, Serbia, Tajikistan, North Macedonia	Yemen, Lebanon, Syria	36
2023	Angola, South Sudan, Cabo Verde, Chad, Cameroon, Algeria, Burundi, Botswana, Benin, Central African Republic, Egypt, Mauritius	Cambodia, Bangladesh, Bhutan	Chile, Bolivia	Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus	Jordan	23
2024	Togo					1
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>109</b>

<sup>63</sup> Year defined by the completion date of the configuration exercise, rather than the start date. Data shared by DCO shows that two UNCTs (Djibouti and Eswatini) conducted UNCT configuration exercises before this period (in 2017)

Table 15 Country programme document evaluations (and equivalents) published between 01/2021 and 04/2024, by entity and region<sup>64</sup>

	AFR	APA	ARAB	ECA	LAC	Total
UNDP	30	11	1	3	5	50
WFP	21	12	3	2	7	45
UNFPA	17	12	3	4	6	42
UNICEF	13	11	3	2	5	34
UN Women	8	6	1	2	5	22
FAO	10	2	1	1	3	17
IFAD	6	2		1	2	11
UNHCR	6	1			3	10
UN-OIOS	5			1	1	7
PBSO	5				1	6
WHO	1	1	2			4
ILO	2	1				3
OHCHR	2				1	3
UNIDO	1				1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>256</b>

<sup>64</sup> The table captures published evaluations only. Some evaluations that are ongoing, may be largely complete but unpublished at the time of writing, and due for publication during the course of the evaluation.

Table 16 Mapping of ongoing and planned Cooperation Framework and country programme evaluations (Source: data shared with SWE0 by UN-DCO, WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF)<sup>65</sup>

Country	UNSDCF evaluation year	UNSDCF evaluation - status (04/24)	UNDP	WFP	UNFPA	UNICEF <sup>66</sup>	UNHCR	FAO	IFAD	Region	Total
Burkina Faso			2024							AFR	1
Cote d'Ivoire	2024	Not started	2024	X						AFR	3
Djibouti	2023	Ongoing								AFR	1
DRC	2023	Complete	2023	X				2023		AFR	4
Egypt									2024	AFR	1
Eswatini	2024	Not started	2024	X	X			2024		AFR	5
Ethiopia	2024	Ongoing	2024	X	X					AFR	4
Ghana								2023	2024	AFR	2
Liberia	2024	Ongoing	2023	X						AFR	3
Libya			2024	X						AFR	2
Mali	2023	Complete					2024			AFR	2
Rwanda	2023	Ongoing								AFR	1
Sierra Leone				X						AFR	1
Somalia	2024	Not started	2024	X	X		2024	2023		AFR	6
South Africa			2024							AFR	1
South Sudan	2024	Ongoing	2024							AFR	2
Sudan			2024							AFR	1
Tunisia	2024	Not started	2024	X						AFR	3
Uganda	2024	Not started	2024	X	X			2025		AFR	5
Afghanistan			2024							APA	1
China	2024	Not started	2024	X	X			2024		APA	5
Indonesia	2024	Ongoing	2024	X	X			2024		APA	5
Iran				X	X					APA	2
Laos								2024	2024	APA	2
Malaysia (Brunei, Singapore)	2024	Not started	2024							APA	2
Myanmar			2024							APA	1
Timor-Leste	2024	Ongoing	2024							APA	2
Iraq	2023	Ongoing					2025?			ARAB	2
Lebanon	2024	Not started	2024	X	X		X	2025		ARAB	6
Yemen	2024	Not started	2023	X	X			2024		ARAB	5

<sup>65</sup> This table is based on information shared with SWE0. It may not capture all ongoing evaluations. It will be updated during the evaluation Inception Phase.

<sup>66</sup> Data from LACRO only

Country	UNSDCF evaluation year	UNSDCF evaluation - status (04/24)	UNDP	WFP	UNFPA	UNICEF <sup>66</sup>	UNHCR	FAO	IFAD	Region	Total
Armenia	2024	Not started	2024	X						ECA	3
Azerbaijan	2024	Ongoing	2024							ECA	2
Belarus	2024	Not started	2024							ECA	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2024	Not started	2024							ECA	2
Georgia	2024	Ongoing	2024							ECA	2
Kazakhstan	2024	Ongoing	2024							ECA	2
Kosovo	2024	Ongoing	2024							ECA	2
North Macedonia	2024	Ongoing	2024							ECA	2
Serbia	2024	Ongoing	2024							ECA	2
Türkiye	2024	Ongoing	2024	X	X		2025?		2024	ECA	6
Turkmenistan	2024	Ongoing	2024							ECA	2
Uzbekistan	2024	Not started	2024							ECA	2
Argentina	2024	Not started	2024			2024				LAC	3
Brazil							2024			LAC	1
Cuba	2023	Ongoing								LAC	1
Dominican Republic								2023	2024	LAC	2
Guatemala	2024	Not started	2024	X		2024				LAC	4
Mexico	2024	Not started	2024			2024				LAC	3
Panama	2024	Ongoing	2024			2024				LAC	3
Paraguay	2023	Complete								LAC	1
Uruguay	2024	Not started	2024			2024				LAC	3

113. The evaluation should also take account of relevant ongoing regional/global evaluations being conducted by UNSDG evaluation offices, in order to draw on their findings. The following exercises are potentially relevant:

- UNSDG entity **Global Strategic Plan evaluations** – currently being conducted by UNDP, UNFPA and WFP
- **MOPAN assessments**<sup>67</sup> – including FAO (ends 09/2024), OHCHR (ends 2025), UNESCO (ends 10/2024), UNFPA (ends 2025), UN-HABITAT (ends 12/2024), UN-Women (ends 12/2024), WFP (ends 06/2024), WHO (ends 05/2024).
- **OIOS evaluation of the Resident Coordinator System (DCO)** – January to December 2024, with data collection mid-year

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/ongoingassessments/>

- WHO-led joint evaluation of the **Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (GAP)** – to be published during the proposed evaluation timeframe<sup>68</sup>
- UNICEF LACRO Evaluation Team **Assessment of UNICEF Strategic Programmatic Relevance in Latin America and Caribbean** - proposes to assess the strategic relevance of UNICEF country programmes and capacities to national development priorities (SDG bottlenecks). Data collection in July and August 2024.

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<sup>68</sup> <https://www.who.int/initiatives/sdg3-global-action-plan/joint-evaluability-assessment>

## Annex 5: Code of conduct and norms for evaluation in the UN system



ANNEX 1:

### PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION



By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.



#### INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- **Honest and truthful** in my communication and actions.
- **Professional**, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- **Independent, impartial and incorruptible**.



#### ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- **Transparent regarding evaluation** purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- **Responsive** as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- **Responsible** for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.



#### RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Access** to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- **Meaningful participation and equitable treatment** of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- **Fair representation** of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).



#### BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Explicit and ongoing consideration of risks and benefits** from evaluation processes.
- **Maximum benefits** at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- **No harm**. I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- **Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution** to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature and Date)

## Annex 6: Evaluation timeline

Phase	Activity / deliverable	Dates/deadline
Inception	Inception briefings/interviews	August/September 2024
	Desk review/Inception Report drafting	
	Inception Report – Draft 0 – internal	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
	Inception Report – Draft 1 – circulation for comments	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
	ERG meeting/feedback	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
	Inception Report – Draft 2 (Final) – Circulation for information	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Data collection/analysis	Data collection activities (as above)	October-December 2024
	Data analysis – inc. team workshops	December 2024/January 2025
	Data collection/analysis report (detailed PPT)	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
	Presentation of emerging findings/conclusions and areas for recommendations to ERG	31 <sup>st</sup> January
Reporting	Evaluation Report – Draft 0 – internal	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
	Evaluation Report – Draft 1- circulation for comments	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
	ERG feedback meeting	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
	Regional level – Validation Workshops	February – April 2025 (TBC)
	Recommendations Workshops (ERG – Director-level)	April 2025 (TBC)
	Evaluation Report – Draft 2	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
	Evaluation Report – Draft 3 – Final – issuance by SWEO ED	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
	Publication of final report products following editing, design and summary evaluation report drafting	June/July 2025

## Annex 7: Acronyms and abbreviations

CCA	Common Country Analysis
CPD	Country Programme Document
DCO	UN Development Coordination Office
DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EAG	Expert Advisory Group
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
GA	General Assembly
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMS	Information Management System
MAF	Management and Accountability Framework of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
OIOS	UN Office of Internal Oversight Services
PDR	UNSDG Interagency Working Group on Programme Development and Results
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RC	Resident Coordinator
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SWEO	UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDS	United Nations development system

UNSDCF United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework  
UNSDG United Nations Sustainable Development Group