

System-wide evaluation on progress towards a 'New Generation of United Nations Country Teams':

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

INCEPTION REPORT – FINAL DRAFT
NOVEMBER 2024

Contents

Consultation and review process.....	4
Introduction	5
Updates to the Terms of Reference	5
Update to the ToR Stakeholder Analysis	7
Theory of Change.....	8
Definitions of Derivation, Alignment, Configuration and Implementation.....	12
Evaluation questions.....	15
Sampling strategies	19
Data collection methods.....	22
Analytical approach	23
Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues.....	24
Ethical considerations	25
Risks and limitations.....	25
Evaluation timeframe / workplan.....	26
Annex 1: Terms of Reference	27
Annex 2: Stakeholder analysis	28
Annex 3: List of people consulted in Scoping and Inception Phases	35
Annex 4: Evaluation matrix	37
Annex 5: Country sampling	44
Annex 6: Data collection plan.....	46
Annex 7: Stakeholder engagement plan.....	50
Annex 8: Draft data collection tools.....	54
Annex 9: Terms of Reference for interagency governance of the evaluation	54
Annex 10: Final report structure.....	58
Annex 11: Inception report review process.....	59

Consultation and review process

This Inception Report was produced by a UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office team under the management and supervision of an interagency evaluation management group and the SWEO Executive Director. It builds on a Scoping Paper and Terms of Reference that incorporated feedback from UNSDG members between June and July 2024. The consultation and review process for the Inception Report is presented in detail in Annex 11.

Introduction

1. The purpose of this Inception Report is to update the original evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) following the evaluation team's Inception Phase work. The Inception Report develops the ToR evaluation focus, indicative questions, data collection and analysis methodology. Except in very limited ways, the Inception Report does not repeat the information and analysis presented in the ToR and so this document assumes some familiarity with the content of the ToR. The background on the rationale for the evaluation, the context of the UN development system reforms, and the mandate of the SWEO, are set out in the ToR (Annex 1).
2. The evaluation team tested and validated the evaluation topic and approach during the Inception Phase in August and September 2024. The team interviewed 24 stakeholders¹ representing various parts of the UN development system as well as external analysts (see Annex 7 for a list of persons met), and reviewed available literature.² The team used these inputs to: reconstruct the theory of change that underpins how the reforms to the UNDS are supposed to drive more impactful UNCTs; and to generate working definitions of the key processes that are supposed to facilitate this change (i.e. derivation, alignment and configuration). The team then refined the evaluation questions and developed the other key tools that will help ensure this evaluation meets the norms and standards of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG).

Updates to the Terms of Reference

3. Overall, the scope and focus of the evaluation remain as set out in the ToR: there are no significant departures. This section identifies several key issues that emerged during the Inception Phase, which were not fully captured in the ToR, and states how the evaluation will address them.

Broader analyses and influences on the effectiveness of UNDS reform

4. There have been a series of insightful studies that seek to assess how the reforms of the UN development system are playing out. Most of these have assessed reform progress from a macro perspective and a few have been informed by a limited number of country case studies.³ This evaluation will draw on and benefit from the findings and recommendations of these studies. For example, they have commented on financing of the UNDS, and the continued use and dependence on earmarked funding, and how entities' financial and operating models do not facilitate the deployment of expertise. The perspective they provide, and the approach of this evaluation are complementary. Whilst their analyses are relevant to the issues of derivation, alignment and configuration, their scope is broader, and they do not focus on the specific processes and outcomes that are our priority. In that sense these exercises are complementary.

¹ 12 male and 12 female (including some consultations held in the Scoping/Preparation Phase)

² These in-depth consultations were in addition to a broader consultation process on the evaluation Scoping Paper and Terms of Reference with UNSDG entity programme staff and evaluation offices between May and July 2024.

³ This includes: studies in 2023 and 2024 undertaken by Dalberg - 'Study of Capacities & Functions of the UN Development System to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs'; John Hendra, Max-Otto Baumann (2020) Towards More Policy Advice: Maximising the UN's Assets to Build Back Better. Briefing Paper 24; Baumann, Max-Otto (2024) How Effective is the UN's Development Support?; Weinlich, Silke / Max-Otto Baumann et al(2024) New Rules, Same Practice? Analysing UN Development System Reform Effects At the Country Level.

5. Inception interviews and our review of the literature show that the relationship between how the UNDS is funded globally and at country levels is critical. This is an important contextual, and enabling, factor and there is strong macro level analysis of the impact of funding volume and quality on the broader reforms.⁴ This evaluation will take these issues into account but focus at a country level on whether there is a relationship between the availability of core and flexible resources (for example pooled funding) and the effectiveness of UNCTs reforms. It will also seek to understand how country-level donor behaviour creates incentives for and against derivation, configuration and effective alignment.

Support for reform of the UN development system: member states and entities

6. To understand the impetus for and sustainability of the reforms requires some degree of insight into the interests and incentives of member states and UN entities. This evaluation will seek to understand these at a general level but will not focus on them.
7. Inception interviews indicated that some member states have been strong drivers for the reforms. Interviews also indicate that the stance of member state governments at national level, as partners to the Cooperation Framework, can be a key factor underpinning the effectiveness of the reforms. The evaluation should shed light on the stance of member states at country level and how their positions may have influenced how the UNCT has implemented the reforms. But it will not seek to systematically analyse broader pressure for reform from member states above this level, as this will be beyond its scope.
8. Likewise, in a limited way the evaluation will seek to understand the incentives, disincentives and structural issues that inform how key UN development entities engage with the UNDS reforms. Entities' official and informal stances inform how effective the reforms can be, and, where there are clear findings related to this, the evaluation will reflect them. It will also be important to identify whether positions within an entity vary between HQ, regional and country level representatives, and whether this is also a factor. The evaluation will also consider the stance of non-resident entities. The evaluation will examine this area sensitively and without 'pointing the finger' at particular entities. The study will seek to identify helpful entity practices/behaviours.

The Resident Coordinator system at country and regional levels

9. The capacity and resourcing of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, the Resident Coordinator's Office and the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) at regional level are likely to be key factors in the effectiveness of the UNDS reforms at country level. The evaluation will consider the contribution of these 'driver' systems to the effectiveness of the reforms. However, it will not overtly focus on their capabilities because successive OIOS evaluations have produced insights into this, which the evaluation will draw on.⁵ Our evaluation will contribute some observations drawn from country findings, but this is not our focus. There will also be very limited overlap between this evaluation and those undertaken by OIOS: the latter focus on the resident coordinator system itself (as it is part of the UN Secretariat) rather than on the joint work with UN entities.

⁴ For example, Hendra, John, 'Reductions, Reallocations and Replenishments – Will This be the Year of the Big Squeeze on the UN Development System?'; Dalberg 2023 and 2024 'Study of Capacities & Functions of the UN Development System to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs'

⁵ This includes several evaluations on various aspects of the Resident Coordinator system between 2020 and 2024 and on the Development Coordination Office regional support system (2023)

Sampling and remote/in-person data collection

10. The ToR proposed some parameters for geographic sampling but did not define the size of the sample nor the precise modalities for primary data collection. During the inception phase, following consultation with evaluation stakeholders and users, the team decided that it is necessary to conduct country-level data collection in a wider sample of countries than may be typical in an evaluation, so as to provide sufficient opportunities for the identification of “good practices and opportunities for improvement”⁶. The sampling criteria and a proposed sample of 21 focus countries are presented below and in Annex 5. Coverage of this number of countries/UNCTs requires that primary data collection is conducted remotely and travel for data collection at the country level is not foreseen. In-person data collection and stakeholder engagement will take place in New York, other UNHQ locations, and at regional levels, often seeking to take advantage of existing meetings/gatherings (including gatherings of country-level stakeholders, such as Resident Coordinators).⁷

Evaluation team composition

11. The ToR (para. 86) noted that the core evaluation team may be augmented by additional capacities for the data collection, analysis and reporting phases. Additional capacities identified as necessary during the inception phase are as follows:

- a. Junior analyst – to provide logistical and administrative support in the organisation and coordination of a large quantity of remote data collection (interviews and focus groups), note-taking, data cleaning, database management, and visualisation
- b. Senior analyst – to conduct a systematic desk review of the large quantity of available secondary data, including re-analysis of survey data (from DCO, DESA, OIOS and others) against the evaluation questions, cooperation frameworks and entity country programming instruments, and governing body documentation.

Update to the ToR Stakeholder Analysis

12. The stakeholder analysis annexed to the Terms of Reference provided a comprehensive overview of the evaluation’s key stakeholders, their interest in the evaluation and how they will be engaged. Consultations with internal stakeholders during the inception phase have not resulted in significant changes to this stakeholder analysis but have highlighted additional nuances and considerations that the evaluation needs to factor into its data collection and stakeholder engagement approaches (set out in detail below). These include:

- a. The unique ‘vantage point’ of managers of UN interagency pooled funds as the stakeholders in the UN development system who engage the most in the independent facilitation of joint programming
- b. The centralised or decentralised nature of many of the UNSDG entities; decisions on how entities operate at the country level, may be taken through differing combinations of country, regional and HQ-level decisions, depending on the entity

⁶ UNSDG Principals request for the evaluation – meeting minutes.

⁷ For example, the global meeting of Resident Coordinators will be an important opportunity for in-person meetings in New York. The evaluation team may also conduct in-person data collection in Geneva, Rome, Vienna or Nairobi. During early 2025, Regional Sustainable Development Forums/Regional Collaborative Platforms, provide opportunities for in-person engagement of RCs, regional UN staff and Member States representatives in the evaluation’s later stages.

- c. Neither donor governments, nor programme country governments “speak with one voice” on UN development cooperation at country level or reform issues. Their behaviours and perspectives at HQ and intergovernmental levels may be different to those at country level.

13. Minor updates to the ToR stakeholder analysis are reflected in Annex 2.

Theory of Change

14. The central premise that underpins the theory of change (ToC) reconstructed by the evaluation team is that to meet the requests of member states to deliver better results and to effectively support accelerated progress towards the 2030 Agenda, the UN development system must act in a more coherent, effective, efficient, and accountable manner, at the global, regional and country level. As elaborated in a UN Development Group paper outlining a ToC for the UN development system⁸, a global “division of labour” for the SDGs is not considered to be sufficient to enable the system to effectively deliver an integrated 2030 Agenda that very clearly underscores intersectionality and interlinkages. If UN entities focus only on their own mandates and priorities, and not on how the system can really maximize synergies at all levels, or do not sufficiently consider how individual entity contributions affect implementation of all SDG goals and targets, it will be less likely to succeed.
15. The overarching relationship framing the theory of change is that the mandates provided through the Secretary-General’s report on repositioning and the subsequent General Assembly resolutions on the repositioning of the UN development system (primarily 72/279 and 75/233) form the vision for the reform. The operationalization of the reforms, if done in accordance with the vision, will lead to a more coherent, effective, efficient, and accountable UN development system, which will be better positioned to support Member States in accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs. The overall theory of change was developed based on expanding this simple model and focusing it on the reforms related to the emergence of a ‘new generation of UN country teams’.
16. A cornerstone of the UNDS reform is the emergence of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) as “most important instrument for the planning and implementation of United Nations development activities in each country, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to be prepared and finalized in full consultation and agreement with national Governments”⁹. Cooperation Frameworks should be a partnership document with national governments, present a clear, action-oriented United Nations response to national development priorities, and be a comprehensive and integrated approach in responding to the national context and relevant regional dynamics as articulated in the Common Country Analysis.
17. For the Cooperation Framework to be the single most important country planning and implementation instrument, UN entities must engage in the design process meaningfully. Individual UN entity country programming instruments must be derived from and fully aligned to the Cooperation Framework. The aim is to shift from the previous model driven by entity presence to a model that provides a more tailored and integrated response to national priorities.

⁸ A “Theory of Change” for the UN Development System to Function “As a System” for Relevance, Strategic Positioning and Results. Summary Paper Version 1.0 26 January 2016

⁹ A/RES/72/279

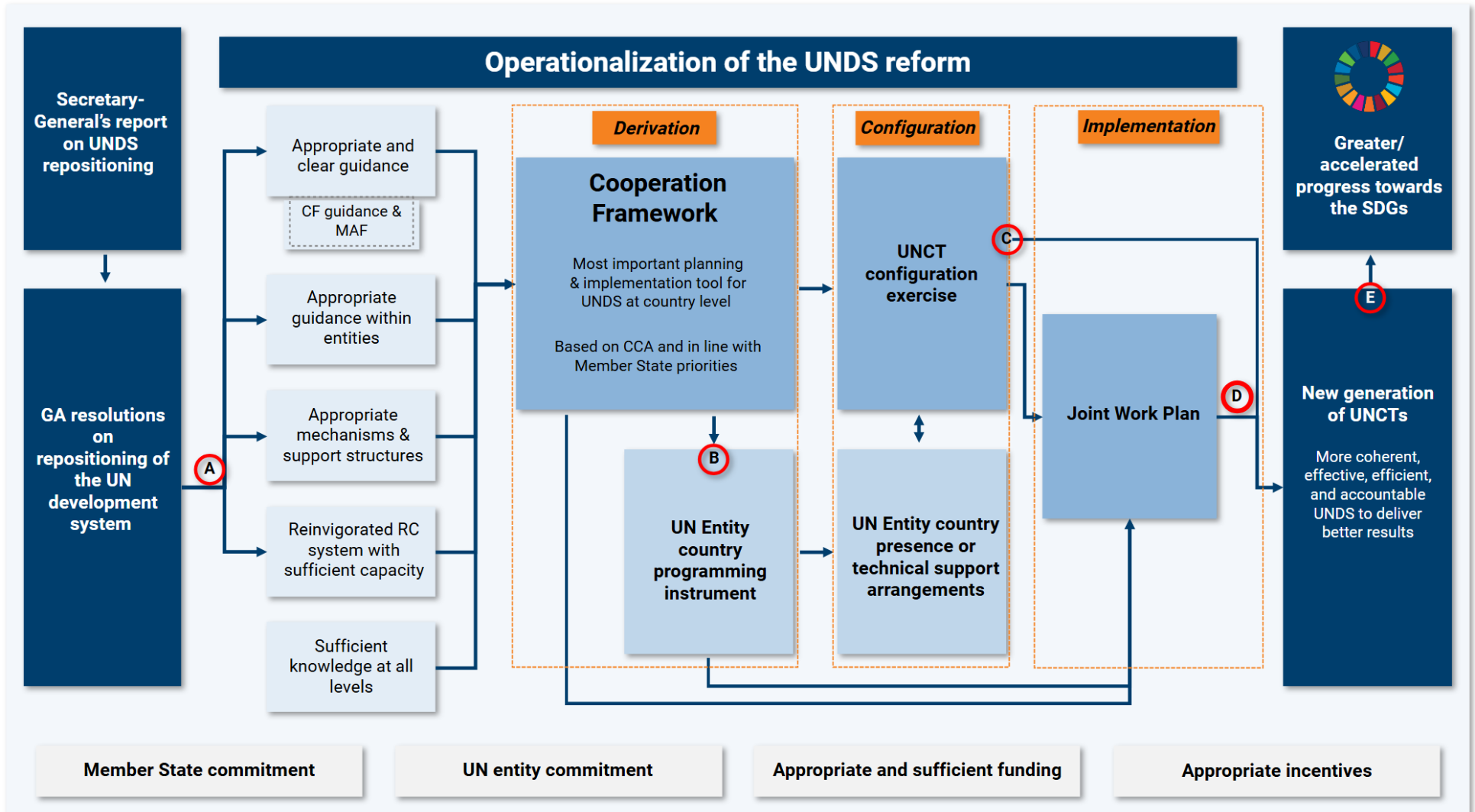
18. A Cooperation Framework designed together with and agreed upon by the respective government, will be the point of departure in rethinking the activities, presence and composition of each United Nations country team. The vision is that the composition of the UNCTs membership should be defined after Cooperation Framework design, in an open and inclusive discussion between the host government and the United Nations development system, facilitated by the Resident Coordinator and updated as necessary throughout implementation. The concept of configuration is to ensure the best configuration of support on the ground, as well as enhanced coordination, transparency, efficiency and impact of United Nations development activities, in accordance with national development policies, plans, priorities and needs.
19. This would result in a new generation of United Nations country teams where the composition, skill sets, programmatic focus, business models, internal/external coordination better reflect the conceptual paradigm shift, universality and multidimensional nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. A more coherent, effective and efficient and accountable UN development system will be able to deliver better results and remain a relevant partner to all countries in their path towards the Sustainable Development Goals.
20. Figure 1 depicts the theory of change focused on the reforms related to the emergence of a new generation of country teams. Key processes and relationships within this are marked as **A, B, C, D** and **E**, which will also be the focus of the evaluation.
 - A.** Key to this transformation of how the UN development system works is that the vision set out in the Secretary-General's report and the General-Assembly resolutions on repositioning of the UN development system be (i) reflected in appropriate and clear guidance, (ii) reflected in strategic direction and guidance within the relevant UN entities, (iii) supported by appropriate mechanisms and support structures, (iv) supported by a reinvigorated resident coordinator system with sufficient capacity, and (v) that all levels have sufficient knowledge of these elements to be able to engage and advance these processes.
 - B.** For the Cooperation Framework to be the most important tool for the planning and implementation of United Nations development activities in each country, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it must form the basis for individual entity country programming instruments (CPIs). CPIs must be derived from the Cooperation Framework, in addition to being informed by each entity's individual mandate, strategic priorities and comparative advantages.¹⁰
 - C.** The Cooperation Framework is the point of departure for the configuration of UN country teams, which is also informed by the existing capacities, skill sets and comparative advantages of the respective entities.
 - D.** UN joint work plans to operationalize the Cooperation Framework. Joint workplans should reflect Cooperation Framework outputs, all related key UN

¹⁰ CPIs include all programming documents of all entities. As the ToR explains, the evaluation scope 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" – para. 51.

development contributions delivered jointly or by individual entities, with a view to maximizing synergies and avoiding duplication and resources that are required and available as well as funding gaps. Joint work plans are the tool where the UN entity mobilisation of assets and resources to the priorities collectively set in the Cooperation Framework is clearly articulated. It is a key instrument to ensuring the emergence of new generation of country teams.

- E.** The last step in the overarching relationship is where one would expect to see a more coherent, effective, efficient and accountable UN development system in form of the new generation of country teams actually delivering better results and supporting their respective counterparts making greater progress towards the SDGs

Figure 1 Reconstructed Theory of Change. Source: Evaluation Team



Definitions of Derivation, Alignment, Configuration and Implementation

21. The ToR noted that the Evaluation Team would develop working definitions for the key terms, derivation, alignment and configuration, that underpin the evaluation. This is necessary because there is some inconsistency in how the terms are used, but it also requires us to frame how we will assess these key features of the reformed UNDS. There is no ambiguity about the use of the term ‘implementation’ – it is simply the phase/period when a finalised Cooperation Framework is collectively implemented by the UNCT. However, in the light of comments on the consultation draft of the Inception Report, this term is also defined below.

Derivation

22. The concept of derivation, as used by the UNSDG, refers to the process by which UN entities create their country programming instruments directly from the overarching Cooperation Frameworks. It means that the planning and design of entities’ country-specific programs are supposed to stem from, and be fully integrated with, the outcomes outlined in the Cooperation Framework.
23. The formal standards that entities are supposed to meet to demonstrate derivation appear clear and offer limited latitude/flexibility. Closer inspection shows that they do allow a very large degree of variation in the practice of ‘derivation’. The 2019 Cooperation Framework Guidelines and the complementary 2020 Cooperation Framework Companion Package gives entities three options for how they demonstrate they derive their country programming instruments from the Cooperation Framework. These are set out in the Table 1 below, with a commentary.

Table 1 Options for country programming instrument derivation. Source: Cooperation Framework Guidance (2019), Companion Package (2020) and Evaluation Team commentary.

UNSDG Guidance (verbatim)	Comment
Option A: UN development system entities adopt the Cooperation Framework as their own country development programme document; they do not prepare a separate entity document.	If entities adopt Option A, it can be assumed that they will ‘derive’ the outputs under each outcome. If followed, logically, derivation should be to a high degree.
Option B: UN development system entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim.	Option B requires entities to adopt outcomes only; there is not an obligation to ensure that the entity subscribes to the Cooperation Framework outputs, which require more specific aligned interventions. Entities subscribing to Option B, whilst obliged to share outcomes, therefore have a lot of <i>de facto</i> flexibility on the degree to which they align their outputs and programmes.
Option C: UN development system entities develop an entity-specific country development programme document with Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim, plus additional outcomes that are not in the Cooperation Framework, <u>included only on an exceptional basis to capture normative and standard-setting activities not prioritized in the Cooperation Framework (original emphasis).</u>	Option C offers entities the same latitude as Option B, by requiring entities to only “copy verbatim” the outcomes – with no reference to outputs.

24. As the table outlines, entities subscribing to Option A should have a high degree of correlation between their programmes and the Cooperation Framework. However, because derivation is set at the level of 'outcome', it is not possible to identify the extent to which entities subscribing to Options B or C do in practice derive their programmes ('outputs') from the Cooperation Framework. The evaluation will need to identify the extent to which this is the case in each of the focus countries.
25. To illustrate, the Cambodia Cooperation Framework (2024-2028) has just four outcomes and Outcome 1 is: 'By 2028, people in Cambodia, especially those at risk of being left behind, are healthier and benefit from improved gender-responsive education and social protection.'¹¹ This single outcome potentially encompasses a very wide variety of different interventions – it could include any health, education or social-protection related intervention.
26. According to the 2021 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. The MAF (p.14) states that the "RC's feedback is limited strictly to alignment to the UN Cooperation Framework priorities and should not be a technical review of the CPD". The MAF does not explicitly say how the Resident Coordinator should form this judgement and does not state explicitly what constitutes a "technical review".
27. The task for the evaluation with respect to derivation is therefore to understand the extent to which entities derive their programming from Cooperation Frameworks in a substantive way, and to comment on the degree to which the guidance supports what the reforms are aiming for (e.g. is the focus on outcomes rather than more concrete deliverables such as outputs, effective?). The evaluation will look at the way derivation has been interpreted and applied in different country contexts and by different country teams. The extent to which entities derive their priorities from Cooperation Frameworks can be plotted on a continuum, with 'minimal derivation' to 'maximum derivation'.

Alignment

28. The evaluation team has not found an explicit definition of what is meant by alignment. When used alongside derivation, 'alignment' has been used in several ways in UNSDG documents. Stakeholders interviewed during the inception period also understood the term in different ways. Some interviewees used the term to signal a 'weaker' form of derivation – i.e. as though alignment is on the 'weaker' end of a derivation continuum. The table below shows how the term alignment has been used in the Cooperation Framework guidance, and how we have drawn on selected aspects of it:¹²

¹¹ United Nations, (2024) United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Cambodia 2024-2028

¹² United Nations Sustainable Development Group, (2019) Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: Internal Guidance, : p.14

Table 2 Uses of “alignment” in the Cooperation Framework Guidance (2019) with Evaluation Team emphasis and commentary

Category	Use
<p>Alignment of the content of the Cooperation Framework – to be considered in the context of derivation by the evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cooperation Framework should be aligned with the national development strategy, national SDG strategies and targets (p.14-15) national accountability mechanisms (p.13), internationally and regionally agreed policy frameworks (p.14); it should be flexible to be aligned with national planning and implementation cycles (p.12). • The Cooperation Framework ‘should align its targets and indicators to the extent possible to relevant targets and indicators in national development plans, which should in turn be informed by the SDGs’. • Resident Coordinators are required to comment on whether entities CPDs ‘align’ with the Cooperation Framework – but this appears to be limited to assessing the extent to which entities’ CPDs have adopted the Cooperation Framework outcomes, and is therefore shallow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Once a new Cooperation Framework is approved, entities will align specific country development programming documents.... [T]he RC coordinates implementation of the Cooperation Framework and works with UNCT members to align UN development system entity country development programmes with the Cooperation Framework and the 2030 Agenda. The Resident Coordinator will have the opportunity to review and comment on entities’ country development programming documents before their submission to governing mechanisms, with a view to confirming alignment and coherence with the Cooperation Framework, identifying opportunities for synergies and complementarities, and avoiding duplication and overlap (p.27)</i>
<p>How entities implement their programmes in relation to the Cooperation Framework</p> <p>–In the context of examining Cooperation Framework implementation the evaluation will look at the whether budgets and resource mobilisation strategies are aligned with the Cooperation Framework budget as part of our review of Cooperation Framework implementation (first bullet point). We will not address the second bullet point.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding follows the needs-based logic underpinning the Cooperation Framework. The budgets and resource mobilization strategies of UN development entities should be aligned with the Cooperation Framework budget, not vice versa. (p.24) • Where possible, results groups are aligned with and feed into existing Government-led working structures, such as sector working groups, clusters, etc. (p.27)

29. The consultation/first draft of the Inception Report said that the evaluation would use the term 'alignment' to refer to 'aligned implementation'. A combination of feedback and further interviews have indicated that we should not delimit the term in this way – 'alignment' is used in too many ways for this to be viable. To avoid confusion, we therefore now do not propose circumscribing our use of the term in this way. As set out in the evaluation questions below (see Question 4) the evaluation will examine aspects of Cooperation Framework implementation but without calling this an examination of 'aligned implementation'.

Configuration

30. The conceptualisation of 'configuration' in UNDS guidance is relatively clear and well defined and does not require reformulation. 'Configuration' is used to refer to a time-bounded exercise that is supposed to take place as part of a Cooperation Framework. It is a two-step process; first, an internal UNCT analysis agreed upon by UNCT members, followed by a dialogue with the government. A review of UNCT configuration 'entails a look at capacities needed to deliver on the prioritized outcomes in the Cooperation Framework'.¹³ It requires the UNCT to optimise its ability to deliver the Cooperation Framework effectively and efficiently. The guidance notes that it is an iterative process – and therefore reconfiguration can be an ongoing process that allows the UNCT to adapt and change to respond to emerging needs in the country.

31. The evaluation will focus on how UNCTs have structured themselves to meet the needs identified in the Cooperation Frameworks. This includes examining whether configuration exercises have been carried out collaboratively, mapping existing capacities against those needed, and identifying additional required capacities or redundant ones. The evaluation will assess the extent to which configuration exercises have resulted in a tailored and needs-based country presence. It will look at how well UNCTs have matched their operational models to the specific contexts and capacities required by the Cooperation Frameworks. It will seek to identify how the UNCT has adapted itself over the course of the Cooperation Framework period – and not treat it only as a single time-bound exercise.

Cooperation Framework Implementation

32. In line with UNDS guidance, Cooperation Framework implementation covers the activities carried out by the UNCT following the finalisation of the Cooperation Framework. As noted above, the evaluation will still seek to identify the extent to which entities implement interventions in alignment with the Cooperation Framework and Joint Work Plan. Looking at this phase of the cycle also entails looking at procedures, and monitoring and reporting of the implementation phase.

Evaluation questions

33. This section sets out the final evaluation questions and how they differ from the indicative evaluation questions in the ToR. The evaluation questions in the ToRs give a broad foundation for assessing the reform of the United Nations development system (UNDS); they focus on how guidance for country programme derivation, alignment and UN Country Team (UNCT) configuration is implemented across different levels. The goal is to

¹³ Ibid.: p.22

understand the variability in implementation and evaluate the reforms' overall impact on development results and SDG progress. The revised questions keep the same substantive focus but are more detailed and require more context-specific analysis. This should help generate practical and targeted recommendations. The revised evaluation questions address the following broad areas and differ from the questions in the ToR in the following ways:

EQ 1: Relevance and integration of guidance:

34. This set of questions addresses the adequacy and clarity of the Cooperation Framework Guidance and the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF). They focus on how these tools help Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN entities deliver Cooperation Frameworks and reconfigure UNCTs. This adds to the general queries in the ToRs about guidance implementation.

EQ 2: Execution of guidance on derivation:

35. This examines how RCs and UNCTs have applied the guidance on derivation in different contexts. This provides a more granular look at variability and execution than the questions in the ToR.

EQ 3: Execution of UNCT configuration guidance:

36. These questions assess how effectively UNCTs are configuring themselves to meet country needs. They look at how the exercises were executed, and explore factors influencing implementation, like entities' policies and practices, and the role of national governments. Again, this is more focused and specific than the guidance queries in the ToRs.

EQ 4: Outcomes of derivation and configuration exercises:

37. This focuses on measurable outcomes from Cooperation Framework implementation, such as the extent to which entities' programmes reflect Cooperation Frameworks, structural changes in UNCTs, and contributions to the agreed development results. It also looks at unanticipated results. It seeks to flesh out the ToRs' overarching aim of evaluating the impact on SDG progress.

38. Table 3, below, sets out the full set of evaluation questions and sub-questions. The evaluation matrix table, which includes lines of enquiry, indicators and sources of information, is presented in Annex 4.

Table 3 Evaluations questions (EQs) and sub-questions

EQ1 FOCUS: RELEVANCE AND INTEGRATION OF GUIDANCE:

EQ 1: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION PROVIDED ADEQUATE AND RELEVANT TO THE OBJECTIVES OF A NEW GENERATION OF UN COUNTRY TEAMS?

1.1. To what extent do the Cooperation Framework Guidance and the MAF reflect the strategic intent of the reforms, in particular in relation to derivation, configuration and aligned implementation?

1.2. How useful is the guidance in providing RCs and UN entities with the tools to deliver Cooperation Frameworks, encourage meaningful derivation, aligned implementation, and support the reconfiguration of UNCTs?

1.3. To what extent have UN entities adapted their processes and provided their staff with the necessary capabilities to support the new generation of UNCTs?

EQ2 FOCUS: EXECUTION OF DERIVATION GUIDANCE

EQ 2: HOW HAVE RESIDENT COORDINATORS AND UNCTS EXECUTED THE GUIDANCE ON COUNTRY PROGRAMME DERIVATION?

2.1. How have RCs and UNCTs executed the guidance on Country Programme derivation in different contexts?

2.2. What factors explain the variable implementation of the guidance across entities and countries?

EQ3 FOCUS: EXECUTION OF UNCT CONFIGURATION GUIDANCE:

EQ 3: HOW EFFECTIVELY HAVE RESIDENT COORDINATORS AND UNCTS EXECUTED GUIDANCE ON THE UNCT CONFIGURATION PROCESS?

3.1. To what extent have UNCT configuration exercises sought to collaboratively put in place a needs-based tailored country presence?

3.2. To what extent have the UNCT configuration exercises mapped existing capacities against those needed to deliver the Cooperation Framework?

3.3. What factors explain the variable implementation of the configuration guidance across entities and countries?

EQ4 FOCUS: OUTCOMES OF DERIVATION, RECONFIGURATION AND ALIGNMENT

EQ 4: WHAT ARE THE OBSERVABLE OUTCOMES OF UNCT DERIVATION, RECONFIGURATION AND ALIGNMENT?

4.1. To what extent do entities' interventions derive from Cooperation Frameworks and to what extent are they implemented in alignment with Joint Work Plans?

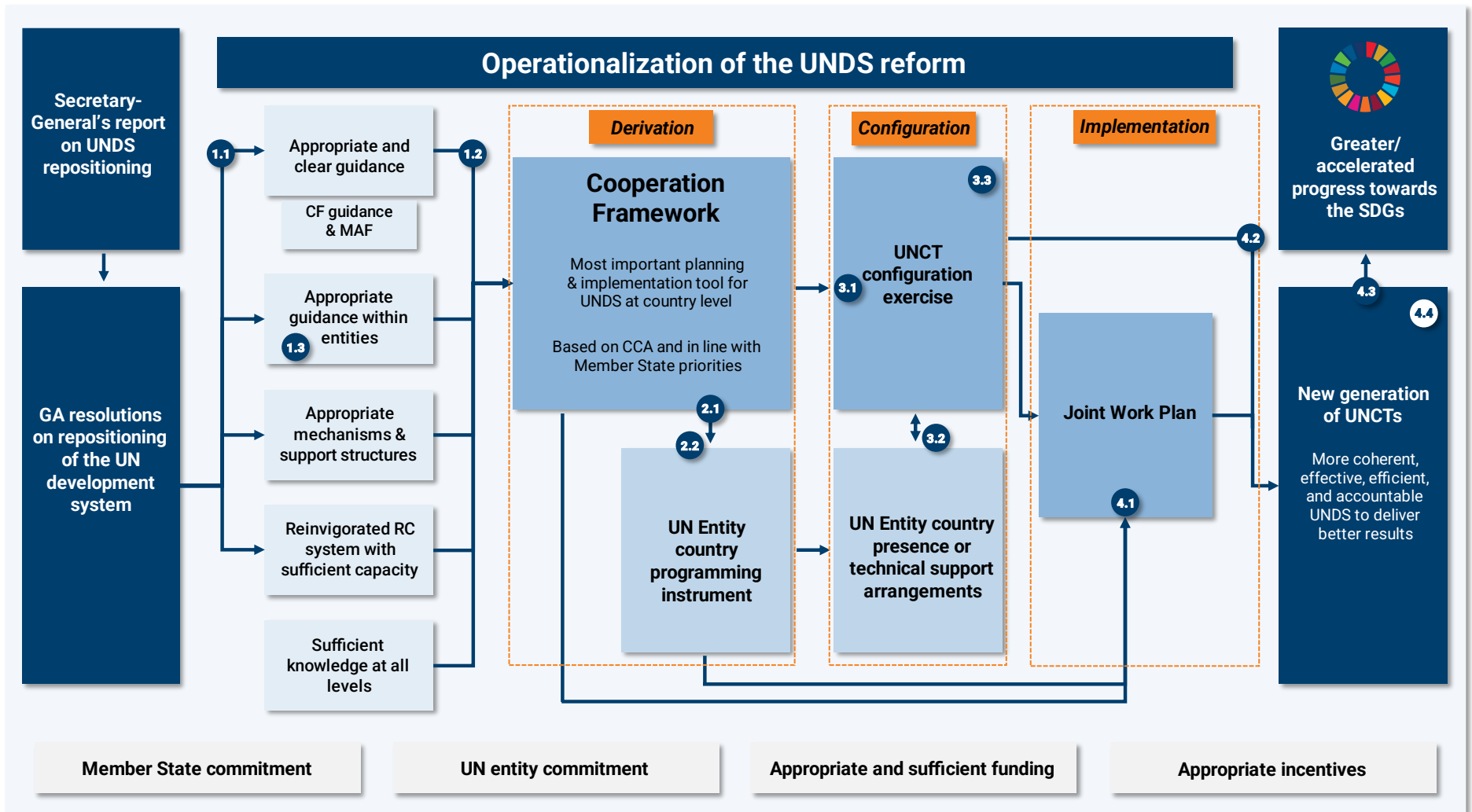
4.2. To what extent have UN Country Teams been reconfigured so that they are in line with needs identified in the Cooperation Framework/configuration exercise?

4.3. To what extent have UNCTs been able to deliver the Cooperation Framework development results?

4.4. Have derivation, and UNCT configuration exercises and Cooperation Framework implementation led to unanticipated results (positive or negative)?

Figure 2 below provides an illustration of how the evaluation questions interrogate the key processes and relationships in the Theory of Change.

Figure 2 Evaluation questions mapped against the reconstructed Theory of Change (Source: Evaluation team)



Sampling strategies

40. As detailed in the ToR (para 75) the broad subject and scope of the evaluation, covering all 37 UNSDG entities and all UN programme countries, as well as regional and global support structures and entity governing bodies, necessitates a careful approach to sampling, which can provide an appropriate representation and a balance of breadth and depth. During the inception phase, the evaluation team has developed the below sampling strategy for data collection at country level.
41. Given the time and resources available to the evaluation, the team has determined that it is possible for the country-level component of the evaluation's data collection to remotely cover 21 countries. This is in deliberate contrast to global/thematic evaluations in the past which have conducted more in-depth country case studies with field visits in approximately 4-5 countries. A wider sample of countries has been deemed appropriate to provide sufficient opportunities for the identification of best practice and lessons-learned across different contexts. While the number of data collection "events" or "engagements" in each country will be limited by this approach, the evaluation team will maximise the number of country level stakeholders that participate in the evaluation through reliance on focus group discussions in addition to one-to-one interviews.
42. The primary criteria for the selection of focus countries is the Cooperation Framework 'roll out status' (specifically the Cooperation Framework implementation start date). In sampling countries by Cooperation Framework start date, three important factors were considered:
 - a. **Full opportunity to develop/implement a Cooperation Framework in accordance with the new guidance.** As detailed in the ToR (para 37), UNCTs that began Cooperation Framework implementation in 2019, 2020, and 2021, are not considered to have had full opportunity to apply the new guidance/approach. As such, only UNCTs that began the implementation of a Cooperation Framework from January 2022 onwards are considered.
 - b. **Implementation maturity.** The requirement for enough time to have elapsed following the CF and country programme design process, for possible outcomes to be observed, in terms of the substance of alignment/derivation, effects of the UNCT configuration exercise, and the potential contributions to national development results.
 - c. **Institutional memory/stakeholder availability.** The requirement for the evaluation to collect data from stakeholders that have most recently applied the new guidance on Cooperation Framework design, country programme derivation and UNCT configuration, given turnover of UN/government staff, current interest in / salience of the issues.
43. These considerations combined suggest that a sample of focus countries should include a balance across three categories (7 countries per cohort):
 - (i) 2022 Cooperation Framework start dates – with the greatest implementation maturity
 - (ii) 2024 Cooperation Framework start dates – with strong institutional memory
 - (iii) 2025 Cooperation Framework start dates – with ongoing processes providing opportunity for observation and learning in real time
44. 54 UNCTs began Cooperation Framework implementation in 2022, 2024 or are preparing to begin implementation in 2025. The breakdown across regions and start years is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Number of UNCTs starting Cooperation Framework implementation by year (2022, 2024 and 2025) and region.
Source: Evaluation analysis of DCO data.

Year	AFR	APA	LAC	ARAB	ECA	Total
2022/23	9	5	5	4	1	24
2024	12	5	1	0	0	18
2025	8	0	1	2	1	12
Total	29	10	7	6	2	54

45. From the initial sample of 54 countries, 21 have been purposively selected using a combination of secondary criteria, as follows:
- a. **Number of Cooperation Framework cycles:** UNCTs that have begun implementation of a second cycle (or are in advanced stages of preparation) are prioritised. Several 2025 Cooperation Frameworks are second cycles.
 - b. **Recently concluded/upcoming processes:** UNCTs that have recently concluded key Cooperation Roadmap milestones (especially the UNCT configuration exercise) or have them planned during the period of evaluation data collection (October to December 2024) are prioritised.
 - c. **Other evaluation coverage:** coverage of a UNCT by other evaluations (UNDAF/CF evaluations, entity country programme evaluations, and previous system-wide evaluations) is used both to prioritize or de-prioritize countries. *Completion* UNDAF/CF evaluations and a body of country programme evaluations is used as a reason to prioritise – allowing the system-wide evaluation to draw on and build upon the existing evaluation work of the UN system. *Ongoing* evaluations are used as a reason to deprioritise or exclude a country from the sample – due to risk of evaluation fatigue and/or overlap/duplication of data collection activities.
 - d. **Pooled funding**¹⁴: UNCTs with a country-level pooled fund (for development) aligned to the Cooperation Framework are prioritised, especially if the fund is significant in size.
 - e. **Member State participation in key UN development system governing bodies:** countries that currently serve in leadership roles within governing bodies (e.g. as Chair/President or Bureau Member of the Executive Boards of the UN funds and programmes and ECOSOC, especially) are prioritised, as their inclusion may provide opportunities to understand Member State perspectives *both* as a host government that has agreed a Cooperation Framework and as a member of the bodies that approve CPIs (CPDs) for certain entities.
 - f. **Resident Coordinator term:** countries where the incumbent Resident Coordinator was in post throughout the Cooperation Framework design process and remained during implementation are prioritised for reasons of complete institutional memory. Countries with a new Resident Coordinator that arrived after the design process are de-prioritised

¹⁴ A **Country-level pooled fund (development)** is often referred to as SDG country fund; this inter-agency pooled fund is used by a UN country team, under Resident Coordinator leadership, to consolidate and leverage financing towards country priority SDGs as per the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). - <https://mptf.undp.org/page/un-pooled-funding-key-concepts-and-terms>

g. To ensure balance across regions, special situations (LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS), humanitarian/mission contexts, country income status

46. Humanitarian/mission (or multi-pillar) settings are included in the sample for the purpose of examining the different contexts in which the UN country teams, including their “dual-mandated” members, operate. However, the presence and configuration of humanitarian action, mandated by General Assembly resolution 46/182, is not within the scope of the evaluation.
47. The most significant and complex of the multi country office (MCO) settings, in the Pacific (3 RCs) and Caribbean (5 RCs) sub-regions, have not been included in country level sampling. This is due to extensive recent evaluation and review coverage of the Caribbean, recent reorganisation of RCOs in the Pacific, and the additional complexity of conducting data collection across multi-country settings with a small evaluation team. However, selected MCO stakeholders (Caribbean and Pacific) will be included in regional level sampling. See Annex below.
48. Based on the above sampling criteria, the following focus countries/UNCTs have been selected:

Table 5 Focus countries selected by the evaluation team

AFR	APA	LAC	ARAB	ECA
Angola Botswana Ethiopia Kenya Malawi Mali Mauritius* Rwanda Sierra Leone	Bangladesh Bhutan Papua New Guinea Philippines Vietnam	Colombia El Salvador* Honduras Paraguay	Iraq Jordan	Albania
* Multi-country office (MCO)				

49. Further detail on the countries selected and criteria used is provided in Annex 5. As the purpose of the evaluation is to identify best practices and lessons learned, the sequencing of country level data collection activities will allow for the sample of countries to be adjusted. Data collection for country 1 categories will be initiated at the start of the data collection phase. Category 2 countries may be substituted for other countries in response to evidence or examples of good practices or opportunities for improvement that emerges in early global and regional level data collection activities. Most notably, the global meeting of Resident Coordinators in New York (14-18 October 2024) will provide the evaluation team with an opportunity to interact with RCs and identify further suitable countries for primary data collection.
50. The sampling of key informants for interview at the global/HQ and regional levels will be purposive, following the categories of the stakeholder analysis. Categories of key informant for interview and documents for review at global and regional levels are set out below and in Annex 6.

Data collection methods

51. The evaluation will follow a mixed-method approach to data collection, mostly relying on qualitative sources of information which will be quantified as relevant. Sources of information will include stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions at HQ and regional levels, review of administrative, monitoring and survey data, document review, country studies, and a possible validation survey. The overall approach and sequencing of data collection at all levels is in Annex 6. Data collection tools are detailed in Annex 8.

Stakeholder interviews at HQ and regional levels.

52. Semi-structured interviews will be undertaken with key informants at HQ and regional levels (country level interviews are covered by the country studies described below). Where feasible, especially at the regional and country level, the evaluation team will seek to conduct focus group discussions in the interest of collecting feedback from as wide a range of relevant stakeholders as possible. In as far as possible, the evaluation team will seek to ensure a gender balance and disability inclusion in the selection of key informants to be interviewed and included in focus group discussions.

53. Informants have been selected from the following groups at headquarters:

- Executive Office of the Secretary General
- Member State representatives, including in bureaus of UN entity governing bodies
- UNSDG Senior Management
- Development Coordination Office
- Joint funding mechanism secretariats

54. Informants have been selected from the following groups at the regional level:

- UN entity regional directors
- DCO regional offices
- Regional economic commissions
- Peer support groups

Administrative, monitoring and survey data

55. The evaluation will, as much as possible, rely on existing data and surveys administered by United Nations entities. The following sets of data will be reviewed, and relevant sections analysed:

- Administrative and survey data (e.g., DCO IMS and UN-Info)
- Monitoring data (e.g., UN-DESA QCPR questionnaires)
- Surveys conducted by UN entities of their staff¹⁵ on the issue of engagement with UNDS reform, in particular the Cooperation Framework cycle
- Surveys conducted by previous evaluations (e.g., OIOS-IED RC surveys)

Document review

56. This will include a desk review of key documents related to UNDS reform and the emergence of new country teams. This includes General Assembly resolutions, SG reports, related guidance, country level strategic and programmatic documents, UN entity strategic and

¹⁵ The evaluation team is aware of surveys conducted internally by UNICEF and UNFPA, which include relevant questions.

programmatic documents, and governing body documents. An initial list of documents can be found in Annex 8.

57. Documents will be systematically reviewed in line with the relevant evaluation questions as set out in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 4). Past evaluation evidence will be collated for each evaluation question to contribute to the evidence base and ensure data collection methods complement and do not duplicate previous and on-going efforts.

Focus countries

58. As explained in the previous section on sampling, the evaluation will look at 21 countries in more detail using document and data review methods, interviews and focus group discussions.
59. To make the most use of interactions with key informants, the evaluation team will first assemble a country information note (see Annex 8 for the template) which contains key UNCT and Cooperation Framework-related information extracted from existing data and documentation.
60. Key informants at the country level include: government counterparts, resident coordinators, RCO staff, UNCT members- with and without physical presence, and key partners (e.g. bilateral donors and IFIs). Key informant interviews and focus group discussions will be sequenced¹⁶, where possible, and lines of questioning adapted in accordance with emerging evidence. In as far as possible, the evaluation team will seek to ensure a gender balance in the selection of key informants to be interviewed and included in focus group discussions.
61. The evaluation will seek to determine the spectrum of alignment in current practice through systematically mapping CPI alignment in the subset of focus countries that have completed Cooperation Framework design, through a review of key documents, including the Cooperation Framework, participating entity CPIs and, where available, joint workplans. The exact framework and criteria to seek to determine the point on the spectrum of alignment will be determined once relevant documentation has been assembled.

Validation survey

62. Once a critical mass of data collection has been undertaken, the team may wish to design and conduct a targeted survey covering the issues emerging from other areas of data collection that have been difficult to triangulate with other evidence or where an issue has been identified in during data collection, such as the country studies, but it is difficult to assess the breadth of the issue. The need for a validation survey will be kept under review.

Analytical approach

63. The evaluation's analytical approach is in line with the expectation set out in the Terms of Reference (section 4.2).
64. **Theory-based:** Following preliminary document review and consultation of key stakeholders during the Inception Phase the evaluation team has reconstructed a simple Theory of Change for the aspect of the UN development system reforms under evaluation – country programme derivation/alignment and UNCT configuration and the theory underpinning their contribution to a “new generation of UN country teams” and accelerated SDG progress. The

¹⁶ See Annex 6 - Data collection plan

final evaluation questions and sub-questions are developed to “test” the relationships between inputs, processes and outcomes implied by the Theory of Change and the key assumptions that underpin them.

65. **Mixed methods/triangulation:** The evaluation matrix is the principal framework for the organisation and analysis of data relating to each evaluation question and sub-question. It connects questions to sources of information and data collection methods. For each sub question a variety of relevant and appropriate data sources and data collection methods will be used, enabling robust triangulation of data. The evaluation’s data collection tools are designed to gather information required to answer the evaluation questions in the matrix and are tailored to the different sources/stakeholders that can provide that information.

Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues

66. In line with the *UNEG Guidance on Integrating Gender Equality and Human Rights in Evaluation*¹⁷, the evaluation will treat the UN guiding principles, in particular gender equality, human rights and Leaving No One Behind, as lines of enquiry that cut across all relevant evaluation questions as follows:

67. **Evaluation questions and lines of enquiry:** the evaluation will aim to consider the extent to which the policies and guidance on derivation, configuration and alignment, their implementation, and their emerging results, facilitate or impede the application of the guiding principles by UNCTs. Specific lines of enquiry on results gender equality, human rights and LNOB results/outcomes are included in the Evaluation Matrix under EQ4.

68. Data collection:

- a. *Consulting experts:* the evaluation will consult UN stakeholders with normative and system-wide mainstreaming mandates – in particular UN Women and OHCHR at country and global levels – to draw on their expertise and informed perspectives regarding the extent to which efforts to ensure derivation, configuration and alignment promote the guiding principles
- b. *Key informant gender balance and disability inclusion:* The evaluation team will seek to ensure a gender balance and disability inclusion in the selection of key informants to be interviewed and included in focus group discussions. Number of participants by gender will be monitored and tracked.
- c. *Secondary data:* gathering of documents and data for focus countries will include UNDIS and UN-SWAP scorecards/reports by UNCTs, normative questions in existing survey data, and UNCT gender mainstreaming/disability inclusion plans (if available).
- d. *Primary data collection tools:* interview and focus group discussion guides will include questions on the guiding principles

69. **Data analysis:** Desk-based analysis of derivation, configuration and alignment will consider the extent to which guiding principles are mainstreamed in the Cooperation Framework, country programming instruments, Joint Work Plans and configuration exercise reporting and identify any important differences in the attention they receive across the separate but connected planning documents. Re-analysis of survey data will disaggregate by gender

¹⁷ <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/3526>

where possible and include re-analysis of data relating to mainstreaming of guiding principles by UNCTs.

70. The core evaluation team (three) includes two men and one woman. Additions to the evaluation team for the data collection and analysis stages will seek to improve the gender balance.

Ethical considerations

71. The evaluation will conform to the *UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation*. The evaluation team will ensure that sensitive data are protected, ensure the anonymity of participants, and will validate statements made in the report with the sources of the relevant information. The evaluation team will 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. The evaluation will not evaluate the performance of specific individuals. The evaluation team will obtain informed consent for the use of privileged information from those who provide it.

Risks and limitations

72. This section sets out the primary risks and limitations and how the evaluation team will mitigate them. There are four primary concerns:
73. **Uneven data availability:** Different countries are at varying stages of implementation of Cooperation Frameworks. This variation undermines the extent to which the evaluation will be able to draw on a broad and comparable data set in relation to how UNCTs have handled derivation, configuration and alignment. This is unavoidable but its significance is somewhat limited by the fact that the evaluation takes a qualitative analytical approach.
74. **Difficulty accessing documentary evidence from country teams and entities:** Document needs with respect to each focus country will be extensive. It may be difficult and take time to receive the documents needed from RCOs and country-based entities. The team will access UN-INFO and seek the assistance of entity representatives on the reference group if needed.
75. **Difficulty in obtaining national government perspectives:** Reliance on remote meetings may make it difficult to obtain views from national government representatives. Where this is the case, we will seek to triangulate views from other stakeholders with close knowledge of government views.
76. **Key informant 'fatigue':** Inception interviews and previous evaluations indicate that Resident Coordinators and UNCT representatives have high transaction costs related to implementing Cooperation Frameworks – with frequent reporting, and numerous surveys. There is a risk that stakeholders are reluctant to engage with the evaluation due to this. To the extent possible we will minimise the burden on key informants (and we have avoided countries that have been the subject of case studies recently). We will only use a survey instrument in a targeted manner.


Evaluation timeframe / workplan

77. The section provides additional detail to the overall evaluation timeline presented in the Terms of Reference (Annex 6). Figure 3 below presents a short summary of the overall timeframe and workplan for the data collection phase. Annex 6 provides a more detailed data collection plan at country, regional and global levels. Annex 7 details the evaluation’s stakeholder engagement strategy, including the timeline for delivery and consultations on the evaluations main deliverables, including the final report.

Figure 3 Data collection phase workplan

		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Country-level	Gathering documentation	█				
	Desk review	█	█			
	Country information notes		█			
	Interviews/FGDs		█	█	█	
Regional-level data collectio	Desk review	█	█			
	Interviews/FGDs			█	█	
Global-level	Desk review	█	█			
	Interviews/FGDs		█	█	█	█
	Mapping of existing survey data against EQs		█	█		
	Validation survey (if necessary)			█	█	
Analysis/Reporting Phase						> > > >

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Link:  [Final Terms of Reference \(ToR\)](#)

Link:  [Summary Terms of Reference](#)

Annex 2: Stakeholder analysis

	Stakeholder / group	Interest in the evaluation	Engagement in the evaluation
	[Internal]		
UN Secretariat	<p>UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) including:</p> <p>DCO in New York – ASG and Policy and Programming Branch</p> <p>DCO Regional Offices (Africa, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean)</p>	<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"> • Management and oversight of the RC System • Issues guidance to RCs and UNCTs on country-level development planning, including the CCA and Cooperation Framework • Monitoring/reporting on Cooperation Framework implementation <p><i>Regional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to RC Offices on operations, knowledge management/sharing etc. • Directorate of regional inter-agency Peer Support Groups that provide quality support/assurance to RC Offices and UNCTs throughout the Cooperation Framework design process • Co-Secretariat (w/UNDP and Regional Commission) of the Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCP) <p><i>Country:</i> (see below)</p> <p>In late 2022, UNSDG Principals tasked DCO to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [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. • - [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. 	<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), and as key informants themselves.</p> <p>DCO will administer the annual IMS survey during the evaluation.</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"> • lead and support UN Country Teams (UNCT) in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting on the Cooperation Framework, in full consultation with the government • 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) • convene and oversee the UNCT configuration exercise to support/optimize operationalization of the Cooperation Framework • participate in the management/administration of joint/pooled funds at country level and the approval/governance of joint programmes 	<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>
UNSDG	<p>[Global] UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) (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"> • <u>commission a system-wide evaluation of the derivation of country programming from the Cooperation Framework across all UNSDG entities</u> • reconfirm the commitment to a system-wide approach of deriving entity country programmes from the Cooperation Framework • [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 • reaffirm the stated intent and spirit of the UNCT configuration exercise 	<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 into account.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issue a coordinated message on the intent of, and support to, the UNCT configuration exercise, and ensure it is implemented systematically within their entities <p>UNSDG priorities for 2023 (rolled over into 2024) include the following deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2.1. 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> • <i>2.1.2. Necessary revisions to UNCT configuration and derivation guidance are agreed by UNSDG Principals</i> 	
	<p>[Regional] UNSDG Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCP) – 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>Regional level offices/bureaux</p>	<p>RCPs 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: 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)</p> <p>UNCT configuration exercises have resulted in the addition of new entities to UN Country Teams, both non-resident and in-country</p> <p>UNSDG entity Regional Offices/Bureaus 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>Regional Peer Support Groups (PSG) – 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</p>	<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>

		<p>the CCA/Cooperation Framework processes at the country level.”¹⁸ Their responsibilities are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic planning support to CCA/Cooperation Framework cycle to increase likelihood of high-quality roadmap, CCA and cooperation frameworks. • Review of drafts of UNCT Roadmap, CCA and Cooperation Framework products to provide advice for increasing their quality. • Promote regional level experience exchange on good practice and examples in advancing the 2030 Agenda through the Cooperation Framework. 	
	<p>[Country] United Nations Country Teams (UNCT)</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"> (a) Adopt the Cooperation Framework as their own country programme document (the most explicit option for derivation, essentially removing the parallel process/document altogether) (b) an entity specific CPD with the Cooperation Framework outcomes copied verbatim; and (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. 	

1. ¹⁸ UNSDG, Standard Terms of Reference for Regional Peer Support Group (PSG) - May 2021

		DCO analysis has indicated that the so-called exceptional 'Option C' is in fact the most used amongst UNSDG entities at country level.	
Other	<p>UNSDG evaluation functions</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> <p>United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP)</p> <p>RCP LAC - Evaluation Working Group</p>	<p>Interested UNSDG evaluation office could participate in this evaluation as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Evaluation Management Group • Providing funding and/or staff time to support the management of the evaluation • Providing secondary data (entity and joint evaluations) and facilitating primary data collection opportunities
	<p>UN inter-agency pooled fund secretariats:</p> <p>Multi-partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O) (UNDP)</p> <p>Peacebuilding Fund (UN-PBSO)</p> <p>Joint SDG Fund (UNDP/DCO)</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.</p> <p>The Peacebuilding Fund and the Joint SDG Fund are among the largest global-level inter-agency pooled funds managed by the UN.</p> <p>Pooled funding is potentially a 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>Pooled fund staffed have an important neutral, inter-agency and system-wide perspective to be considered during data collection.</p>
	[External]		
UN Member States	<p>Member States – 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</p>

			membership of UNSDG entity governing bodies and as donors to the UN development system.
	<p>Member States – as represented in intergovernmental bodies:</p> <p>ECOSOC - Operational Activities for Development Segment</p> <p>General Assembly - Second Committee (Economic and Financial) - Committee for Programme and Coordination (also a subsidiary organ of ECOSOC)</p> <p>Governing bodies of UNSDG entities</p> <p>OECD DAC / MOPAN</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 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>Depending on evaluation design, Member States may participate in the conduct of the evaluation as key informants including:</p> <p>Host/programme country governments (on alignment of UN development system with national development priorities) governing body members Donor countries</p>
Non-UN development actors	<p>Non-governmental implementing partners (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>Non-UN development partners in programme</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</p>	

	countries (IFIs, private sector etc.)	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”.	
--	--	--	--

Annex 3: List of people consulted in Scoping and Inception Phases

78. The evaluation directly consulted the following people during the scoping and inception phases. Many others participated in broader consultation processes (UNSDG meetings) and provided written comments on the Scoping Paper and ToR.

Development Coordination Office	
Oscar Fernandez-Taranco	Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination
Helena Fraser	Chief of Branch, Policy and Programming
Julie Morizet	Senior Advisor (UNSDG Secretariat)
Joerg Schimmel	Senior Programme Officer - Inter-agency Programme Facilitation
Janine Chase	Programme Officer - Inter-agency Programme Facilitation
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	
Michelle Gyles-McDonnough	Director, Sustainable Development Unit
Jean-Phillipe Bernardini	Senior Advisor, Repositioning the UN development system
Kelly White	Political Affairs Officer
UNSDG entities	
Achim Steiner	Administrator, UNDP
Francine Pickup	Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP
Brian Williams	Chief, Financing for Peacebuilding, PBSO
Christian Salazar Volkmann	Director of the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, OHCHR
William Affif	Chief, Programme Cycle Management Unit, WFP
David Branco	Programme Policy Officer, WFP
Ongoing UN evaluations	
Natalie Neil	Evaluation Officer, OIOS (RC System evaluations)
Ana Rosa Soares	Chief Evaluator, UNDP IEO (UNDP Strategic Plan Evaluation)
Tina Tordjman-Nebe	Senior Evaluation Specialist, UNDP IEO (UNDP Strategic Plan Evaluation)
Katrina Rojas	Universal Management Group (UNICEF Strategic Plan Evaluation)
Mike Reynolds	Independent (UNFPA Strategic Plan Evaluation)
Expert Advisory Group (see details below)	
John Hendra	Independent
Coumba Mar Gadio	Independent
Suzanne Steensen	Head of Secretariat, MOPAN
Max- Otto Baumann	Project Lead, IDOS
Martin Kimani	Director, Center for International Cooperation, NYU

79. The evaluation team will arrange consultations on the evaluation with members of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Annex 4: Evaluation matrix

Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions	Lines of Enquiry	Data sources and analysis
<p>EQ1: <i>RELEVANCE AND INTEGRATION OF GUIDANCE:</i> EQ 1: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION PROVIDED ADEQUATE AND RELEVANT TO THE OBJECTIVES OF A NEW GENERATION OF UN COUNTRY TEAMS?</p>		
<p>1.1. To what extent do the Cooperation Framework Guidance and the MAF reflect the strategic intent of the reforms, in particular in relation to derivation, configuration and aligned implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder perception of degree to which guidelines require action that is robust enough to drive the required transformation (e.g. adequacy of mandatory elements). - Degree to which guidance is sufficiently comprehensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of key resolutions and SG reports related to UNDS Reform - Review of Cooperation Framework guidance and related materials and the MAF - Review of SG and Chair of UNSDG reports to ECOSOC/GA - KIIs with EOSG, UNSDG members and DCO at global level - Member State feedback through KIIs and ECOSOC documentation
<p>1.2. How useful is the guidance in providing RCs and UN entities with the tools to deliver Cooperation Frameworks, encourage meaningful derivation, aligned implementation, and support the reconfiguration of UNCTs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholders perception of strengths/weaknesses - Levels of implementation ease in focus countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with DCO (global and regional), RCs and UNSDG members global level - FGDs with UNCTs and RCOs - FGDs with UNSDG members at the regional level - Feedback through global and entity-specific surveys - Review of past evaluations and DCO reviews - Feedback from review exercises (UNCT workshops)
<p>1.3. To what extent have UN entities adapted their processes and provided their staff with the necessary capabilities to support the new generation of UNCTs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity of direction entities have given to their staff and at what levels. - At what organizational levels have these principles been adopted in UN entities? - Training and capacity-building measures implemented in entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - global UNSDG KIIs - Review of strategic documents (e.g. Strategic Plans, governing body documentation) of key UN entities - Review of key UN entity internal guidance related to engagement in Cooperation Frameworks and CPIs

Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions	Lines of Enquiry	Data sources and analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal incentives and accountability mechanisms established by UN entities to drive implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with DCO global - KIIs and FGDs UNSDG members at regional and country level - Feedback through global and entity-specific surveys - Review of past evaluations and DCO reviews
<p><i>EQ2: EXECUTION OF DERIVATION/ALIGNMENT GUIDANCE</i> EQ 2 HOW HAVE RESIDENT COORDINATORS AND UNCTS EXECUTED THE GUIDANCE ON COUNTRY PROGRAMME DERIVATION?</p>		
<p>2.1. How have RCs and UNCTs executed the guidance on Country Programme derivation in different contexts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Variability in execution across different country contexts - Adaptation strategies employed in varying contexts - Degree to which are UNSDG entities' Country Programme Instruments are derived from the Cooperation Frameworks - Extent to which entities derived the outcomes or their entire programme activities and timelines from the Cooperation Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs and FGDs in focus countries - Review of key Cooperation Framework documentation in focus countries - Review of SG and Chair of UNSDG reports to ECOSOC - Responses to administrative, monitoring and internal surveys - Spectrum of alignment review in focus countries
<p>2.2. What factors explain the variable implementation of the guidance across entities and countries?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence of entity internal guidelines/policies and their established practices. - Relationship between entities' Country Programme Instrument approval processes and their derivation/alignment commitments. - Nature of engagement by entities with sensitive normative mandates (i.e. those with concerns national government may 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with Resident Coordinators - FGDs with UNCTs - KIIs with representatives of national governments and other development actors (e.g., international financial institutions, bilateral donors, foundations, civil society). - KIIs and FGDs with DCO at regional and global level - FGDs with UNSDG members at the regional level - KIIs with UNSDG members (HQ)

Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions	Lines of Enquiry	Data sources and analysis
	<p>want to exclude normative issues from a Cooperation Framework).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence of national governments on implementation (e.g. degree of influence, unified positions) - Influence of other development actors, in particular: bilateral donors, international financial institutions, bilateral donors civil society. - Impact of other contextual factors (e.g., national, regional) on implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responses to administrative, monitoring and internal surveys - Review of UN entity CPI approval processes - Review of past evaluations and DCO reviews - Review of UNCT, inter-agency group minutes in focus countries
<p>EQ3: EXECUTION OF UNCT CONFIGURATION GUIDANCE: EQ 3: HOW EFFECTIVELY HAVE RESIDENT COORDINATORS AND UNCTS EXECUTED GUIDANCE ON THE UNCT CONFIGURATION PROCESS?</p>		
<p>3.1. To what extent have UNCT configuration exercises sought to collaboratively put in place a needs-based tailored country presence?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree of collaboration among UNCT members during configuration exercises - Degree to which planned country presence matches identified needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with RCs - FGDs with UNCTs, RCO staff and Cooperation Framework results group - KIIs with representatives of national governments and other development actors (e.g., international financial institutions, bilateral donors, foundations, civil society). - Review of configuration exercise documentation in focus countries - Review of past evaluations and DCO reviews - Responses to administrative, monitoring and internal surveys - Review of SG and Chair of UNSDG reports to ECOSOC
<p>3.2 To what extent have the UNCT configuration exercises mapped existing capacities against those</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views on the degree to which capacity mapping was strategic and forward looking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of configuration exercise documentation in focus countries

Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions	Lines of Enquiry	Data sources and analysis
needed to deliver the Cooperation Framework?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of capacity gaps and duplication - Perception of stakeholders on degree to which identification of required and redundant capacities was focused primarily on delivery of Cooperation Framework commitments (degree to which it was influenced by entities' institutional considerations)? - Degree of satisfaction of national government representatives with resultant configuration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responses to administrative, monitoring and internal surveys - KIIs with RCs in focus countries - KIIs with national governments in focus countries - FGDs with RCOs and UNCTs in focus countries - Review of past evaluations and DCO reviews - Review of capacity assessments conducted
3.3. What factors explain the variable implementation of the configuration guidance across entities and countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have entity policies, guidance, internal communication, capabilities, and resources affected implementation. -The engagement and influence of national governments. - The influence of other development actors (bilateral donors, MDBs/IFIs, civil society). - other contextual factors affecting implementation. - Degree to which entities' can make in-country staffing responsive to Cooperation Framework configuration needs. - Resource availability and utilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with RCs in focus countries - KIIs with national governments in focus countries - FGDs with RCOs and UNCTs in focus countries - KIIs and FGDs with DCO at regional and global level - FGDs with UNSDG members at the regional level - KIIs with UNSDG members (HQ) - Responses to administrative, monitoring and internal surveys - Review of past evaluations and DCO reviews - Review of UNCT, inter-agency group minutes in focus countries
EQ4: OUTCOMES OF DERIVATION, CONFIGURATION AND COOPERATION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION EQ 4: WHAT ARE THE OBSERVABLE OUTCOMES OF UNCT DERIVATION, RE-CONFIGURATION AND COOPERATION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION?		

Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions	Lines of Enquiry	Data sources and analysis
<p>4.1. To what extent do entities' interventions derive from Cooperation Frameworks and to what extent are they implemented in alignment with Joint Work Plans?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of interventions derived from Cooperation Frameworks - Degree to which entities implement commitments made in the Joint Work Plan (indicating derivation of priorities at output as well as outcome level). - Stakeholder perceptions of the relevance and strategic alignment under the Cooperation Framework approach - Extent to which entities continue to implement projects not derived from/aligned with Cooperation Framework outcomes - Relevance of the degree to which Cooperation Framework joint work plans are funded (i.e. have a small or very large funding gap) - Extent to which UNCTs and Results Groups jointly monitor, report on, and are accountable for delivering results outlined in the Cooperation Framework versus their own entity planning instruments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responses to administrative, monitoring and internal surveys - KIIs with RCs in focus countries - KIIs with national governments in focus countries - FGDs with RCOs and UNCTs in focus countries - Review of past evaluations and DCO reviews - Review of results reporting in focus countries - Spectrum of alignment review in focus countries - Review of Cooperation Framework Steering committee minutes/reports in focus countries
<p>4.2. To what extent have UN Country Teams been reconfigured in line with the needs identified in the Cooperation Framework/configuration exercise?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of implementation of configuration exercise decisions that are in line with analysis presented in the Cooperation Framework - Views of key stakeholders on how the reconfigured UNCT is better able to implement Cooperation Framework outcomes and outputs. - Structural changes made to UNCTs - Evolution of roles and responsibilities within UNCTs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with RCs in focus countries - FGDs with RCOs and UNCTs in focus countries - KIIs and FGDs with DCO at regional and global level - FGDs with UNSDG members at the regional level - KIIs with representatives of national governments and other development actors (e.g., international financial institutions, bilateral donors, foundations, civil society).

Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions	Lines of Enquiry	Data sources and analysis
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of past evaluations and DCO reviews - Responses to administrative, monitoring and internal surveys - Review of results reporting in focus countries - Review of SG and Chair of UNSDG reports to ECOSOC
<p>4.3. To what extent have UNCTs been able to deliver the Cooperation Framework development results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Extent to which derivation, reconfiguration and implementation have contributed to effective delivery of development results. - Delivery of Cooperation Framework results in relation to the UN guiding principles, namely: gender equality, LNOB, and Human Rights-Based Approach. - Extent to which derivation/reconfiguration/implementation facilitated partnerships that strengthen results delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with representatives of national governments and other development actors (e.g., international financial institutions, bilateral donors, foundations, civil society). - Specific reporting on the implementation of guiding principle commitments. - Review of past evaluations and global reviews - Review of results reporting in focus countries - Responses to administrative, monitoring and internal surveys - Review of SG and Chair of UNSDG reports to ECOSOC - Member State feedback through KIIs and ECOSOC documentation
<p>4.4. Have derivation, and UNCT configuration exercises and Cooperation Framework implementation led to unanticipated results (positive or negative)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of unanticipated results including with respect to UN guiding principles (e.g., gender equality, LNOB, HRBA) - Positive and negative impacts of these results (e.g. in relation to new programmes, different ways of working, new partnerships). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with representatives of national governments and other development actors (e.g., international financial institutions, bilateral donors, foundations, civil society). - KIIs and FGDs with DCO at regional and global level - KIIs and FGDs with UNSDG members at the regional and global level

Evaluation Questions and Sub-questions	Lines of Enquiry	Data sources and analysis
	- If negative, how have they been managed or mitigated?	- Review of past evaluations and global reviews

Annex 5: Country sampling

80. This annex presents the 21 focus countries selected by the evaluation and the criteria used to select them, with accompanying explanation and analysis of what the sample includes and its balance across different categories and criteria.
81. Figure 4 provides full details of the countries selected and the sampling criteria. It includes the following:
- a. **Number of Cooperation Framework cycles:** 8 UNCTs that have implemented or designed more than one Cooperation Framework.
 - b. **Recently concluded/upcoming processes:** 6 UNCTs that conducted the configuration exercise in 2023, 2 that have completed it in 2024, and several countries where the exercise is in progress/planned. UNCT configuration exercises are planned in Ethiopia and Rwanda during the evaluation's data collection period (Oct-Dec 2024).
 - c. **Other evaluation coverage:** 5 UNCTs that have recently conducted a Cooperation Framework/UNDAF evaluation (2023 to date). 8 UNCTs where there is a body of 2 or more (recent – 2023 to date) UN entity country programmes to draw on.
 - d. **Pooled funding:** Five UNCTs with Cooperation Framework-aligned UN pooled funds – Albania, Colombia, Kenya, PNG, and Malawi (with committed 2019-24 ranging from \$13m to \$131m)
 - e. **Member State participation in key UN development system governing bodies:** four countries which are currently serving in senior positions within UN fund and programme Executive Boards – Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Colombia.
 - f. **Resident Coordinator term:** 16 countries where the incumbent Resident Coordinator has been in post throughout CF design and into CF implementation, 3 countries where the RC arrived shortly after CF implementation began, and 1 country where there is an acting RC (post vacant)
 - g. **Balance across regions, special situations (LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS), humanitarian/mission contexts, country income status**
 - i. **Regions:** 9 (43%) Africa, 5 (24%) Asia-Pacific, 4 (19%) Latin America and Caribbean, 2 (10%) Arab states, and 1 (5%) Eastern Europe and Central Asia
 - ii. **Special situations:** 12 countries (57%) with LDC, LLDC or SIDS status
 - iii. **Humanitarian/mission contexts:** 8 countries (38%) with an ongoing (2024) UN-coordinated humanitarian response and/or a UN peacekeeping/special political mission presence (Mali, Iraq, Colombia)
 - iv. **Country income status:** 5 low-income countries (24%), 9 lower middle-income countries (43%), and 7 upper middle-income countries (33%)
 - h. **Multi country offices:** two multi-country office settings Mauritius-Seychelles and El Salvador-Belize are included.

Figure 4 Detailed focus country sampling criteria (Source: DCO data/evaluation team desk research and analysis)

Sequencing / Group	UN Country Team	Number of CF cycles	CF Start Date	RC EOD	UNCT configuration exercise	CF / UNDAF Evaluation Status	CPI evaluations recently complete	CF aligned Pooled Fund (commitments 2019-24)	EB Chair/Bureau member	Region	Special situation	HRP/ FA/ SPM/ PKO (2024)	Income category
1	Albania	1st	Jan-22	1-Sep-20	2021			SDG Acceleration Fund (28m) & SDG Fund II (13m)		ECA			Upper Middle
1	Angola	2nd	Jan-24	21-Sep-20	2023					AFR	LDC		Lower Middle
1	Jordan	1st	Jan-23	22-Jan-23	2022					ARAB			Lower Middle
1	Bangladesh	1st	Jan-22	8-May-22	2022				UNDP/UNFPA	AP	LDC	X	Lower Middle
2	Bhutan	1st	Jan-24	1-Mar-22	2023		UNICEF, WFP			AP	LLDC		Lower Middle
2	Botswana	1st	Jan-22	5-Jan-20	2021					AFR	LLDC		Upper Middle
1	Colombia	2nd	Jan-24	18-Jul-21	2024	Complete	WFP,IFAD,OIOS	Trust Fund for Peace (131m)	UNDP/UNFPA	LAC		X	Upper Middle
2	El Salvador / Belize	1st	Jan-22	1-Jul-23	2021		PBF			LAC		X	Upper Middle
1	Ethiopia	2nd	Jul-25	8-Aug-23	Planned during data collection	Ongoing	UNDP, WFP		UNDP/UNFPA	AFR	LDC, LLDC	X	Low
1	Honduras	1st	Jan-22	13-Jul-20	2021		UNHCR			LAC		X	Lower Middle
2	Iraq	2nd	Jan-25	30-Sep-22	Dates missing	Ongoing	WFP,WHO, UNHCR			ARAB		X	Upper Middle
1	Kenya	1st	Jul-22	1-Mar-21	2022		WFP	SDG MPTF (16m)		AFR			Lower Middle
2	Malawi	2nd	Jan-24	10-Dec-22	2023		WFP	SDG Acceleration Fund (124m)		AFR	LDC, LLDC	X	Low
2	Mali	2nd	Jan-25	a.i	2024	Complete	UN-Women, WFP, UNHCR, FAO			AFR	LDC, LLDC	X	Low
2	Mauritius / Seychelles	1st	Jan-24	11-Nov-22	2023					AFR	SIDS		Upper Middle
1	Papua New Guinea	1st	Jan-24	7-Dec-22	2023			UN Country Fund (120m) & Fund II (42m)		AP	SIDS		Lower Middle
1	Paraguay	2nd	Jan-25	23-Sep-19	In progress	Complete	UNDP			LAC	LLDC		Upper Middle
1	Philippines	1st	Jan-24	11-May-20	2023		WFP, UNFPA, UNICEF			AP			Lower Middle
1	Rwanda	1st	Jan-25	10-Jul-22	Planned during data collection	Complete	UN-Women, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP		UNICEF	AFR	LDC, LLDC		Low
1	Sierra Leone	2nd	Jan-25	6-Dec-23	In progress	Complete				AFR	LDC		Low
1	Viet Nam	1st	Jan-22	18-Jun-22	2021					AP			Lower Middle

Annex 6: Data collection plan

82. The approach to the sequencing of data collection is set out for each level (country, regional and global). Where feasible sequencing between the levels will be focused on ensuring optimal triangulation of information.
83. SWEO kindly requests cooperation and assistance from Resident Coordinators, RCOs and DCO at global and regional level in identifying individuals for interview and convening online focus group discussions.

Focus country studies

84. For each focus country, data collection will proceed according to the following schedule. Studies will be conducted remotely and simultaneously, such that delays in the organisation of one country study does not delay others. As noted in the sampling section above, the global RC meeting in mid-October 2024 will be an important, in-person, moment at which to introduce the evaluation to Resident Coordinators, gather a wide range of RC perspectives through facilitated discussions, and request RC/RCO assistance and cooperation in more focused country level data collection to follow.

Step	Activity	Support required	# meetings
1	Collect all UNCT-wide documents – including: Common Country Analysis (and updates), Cooperation Framework, UNCT Configuration Joint Concept Paper, Joint Work Plans, Multi Year Funding Framework, Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), UN Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy, UN Country Results Report, UNDAF/CF Evaluation and Management Response	Extract from UN-INFO, follow up with RCO if required	
2	Collect all current UNCT Country Programming Instruments	Request documents from RCO ¹⁹	
3	Desk review of survey and IMS data, UN-INFO, documents and Country Programming instruments (and any available evaluations) to assess extent of derivation and alignment and develop discussion points/country specific lines of enquiry for primary data collection		
4	Country Information Note and tailoring of interview guide for each country based on document and data review		
5	Interview – Resident Coordinator		1
6	Focus Group Discussion – RCO staff	Request support from RC/RCO to make introductions	1
7	Focus Group Discussion – UN Country Team members / Results Group members – Where possible, use UNCT, programme group or results group meeting. Otherwise, ensure to include a		1 or 2

¹⁹ Follow up with entities at the global level, if necessary.

	balance of types of entities (CPD entities, specialised agencies, others)	and schedule meetings	
8	Interview – government counterpart – e.g. ministry of planning, development, finance, foreign affairs. Guided by RC/RCO and chairmanship of the Cooperation Framework joint steering committee		1
Option	Interview – bilateral donors, MDBs, European Union (based on value of funding to the CF, institutional memory and suggestion of the RCO)		0.5 (x1 in 50% of sample)
Option	Observation of meetings – if directly relevant to CPI derivation and/or UNCT configuration processes (and possible to observe remotely, given that in-person data collection at country-level is not planned/foreseen)		?

85. Country total: 5 meetings per country x 21 focus countries = 105 country-level engagements

Regional level

86. For each of the five programme regions, the following stakeholders will be invited for remote interviews, according to the following schedule. Regional level data collection will also be conducted simultaneously across the regions to reduce potential for delays.

Step	Activity	Support required	# meetings
1	Interview – DCO Regional Director/Deputy		1
2	Focus Group Discussion – DCO Regional Staff (to include Caribbean and Pacific MCO participants in AP and LAC regions)	Request support DCO regional to make introductions and schedule meetings	1
3	Focus Group Discussion – Peer Support Group – Where possible, use PSG meeting. Otherwise endure to include a balance of types of entities (CPD entities, specialised agencies, non-resident entities, others)		1
4	Interview(s) – non-resident UNCT members (based at regional level) – targeting entities that are most commonly non-resident members of UNCTs (e.g. regional economic commissions and/or smaller specialized agencies)		1 or 2 ²⁰
5	Interviews(s) – non-UN development actors – including major donors with regional offices/hubs and international financial institutions		2
Option	Observation of meetings – if directly relevant to CPI derivation and/or UNCT configuration processes (e.g. regional office calls with RCs or Heads of RCO)		?

2. ²⁰ Dependent on composition of FGD with Peer Support Group

87. Regional total: 6 to 7 regional level meetings x 5 regions = 30-35 regional level engagements

Global/HQ level

88. At the global/HQ level, the following stakeholders will be invited to participate in remote or in-person interviews (with the possibility of final and follow up interviews being conducted in January during data analysis and report drafting). Some in-person interviews will be conducted in New York alongside the global RC meeting and DCO management retreat. Further in-person data collection will be considered in other UN HQ locations (e.g. Geneva, Vienna, Rome and Nairobi).

Organisation – stakeholders	Support required	# meetings
EOSG - Deputy Secretary General, Sustainable Development Unit Director, advisers		3
DCO – ASG, former ASG, Chief of Policy and Programming Branch, Inter-Agency Programme Facilitation Team, Funding Compact focal points, UNSDG Secretariat		6
UNSDG entities – 37 members – Heads of Programme/Policy or equivalent	Entities have been invited to nominate a senior level focal point for the evaluation HERE . This person will be invited to participate in an interview.	Up to 37
OIOS – RC system evaluation team		1
Global pooled fund secretariats – including Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, Peacebuilding Fund and Joint SDG Fund		3
UNSDG entity governing bodies – senior members (e.g. chair/presidents) of entity governing bodies – prioritisation of countries also in the geographic sample (Rwanda, Ethiopia and Bangladesh)	SWEO ED memo	5
Independent evaluators/researchers in previous or ongoing studies and evaluations– e.g. on UNDS reforms (IDOS, MOPAN, Dalberg), funding the UN (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation)	Recommendations and connections made by Expert Advisory Group members and others	3
Programme country government officials (and former officials) identified as having extensive experience in liaising/partnering with the UNDS at country level		3
Donor government officials (HQ) identified as having high levels of interest and knowledge in reform of the UNDS at country level		6

89. Global/HQ total: up to 67 global/HQ level meetings/interviews

90. The evaluation will also carry out a desk review of HQ level documents. Some have been reviewed in detail during the scoping and inception phases to formulate the Terms of Reference and this Inception Report.

A. Resolutions on repositioning the UN development system

B. UNSDG-wide guidance/tools:

- Cooperation Framework Guidance (2019)
- Cooperation Framework Guidance – Companion Package (2020)
- Cooperation Framework Guidance – Consolidated Annexes (2022)
- Draft revised chapters of the Cooperation Framework Guidance (2024)
- Management and Accountability Framework (2021)
- Terms of Reference – Peer Support Group

C. UNSDG entity guidance/reporting on country programming:

- Entity global strategic plans
- Policies/statements/updates on country programming produced in the context of UN development system reform – identified for FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, joint UNDP/UNFPA/UN Women/UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, WFP and WHO
- Training materials on country programming for country/regional offices
- UNDS Reform Checklists presented to governing bodies
- Records of governing body discussions

D. Evaluations/independent analysis:

- OIOS evaluations of the RC system
- Evaluations of UN development system reform, 2030 Agenda and country programming approaches by UNSDG entity evaluation offices
- UNSDG entity strategic plan evaluations
- Studies on UNDS capacities (EOSG), funding the UN (DH Foundation), UNDS reforms (IDOS/MOPAN)

91. The evaluation will map existing questions from administrative survey, monitoring survey, surveys conducted by UN entities of their staff on the issue of engagement with UNDS reform and surveys undertaken by previous evaluations (e.g., OIOS RC surveys) to relevant evaluation questions. Raw data will be analysed, or existing analysis repurposed, to form an important part of the evidence base. Should clear gaps emerge through this step and other data collection tools, the evaluation will consider conducting a targeted validation survey, if appropriate.

92. The evaluation will be conducted alongside separate but to some extent related global level evaluations and reviews, namely evaluations of the strategic plans of the UN funds and programmes/CPD entities (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP) and a review of the Management and Accountability Framework. During the Inception Phase of the evaluation the team has met with the evaluation teams of the ongoing strategic plan evaluations for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to discuss sequencing of data collection activities and opportunities to draw on each other's analysis. The team also met with the UNSDG Secretariat (that will commission the MAF review) and committed to early engagement to discuss coordination with the review consultants when they are onboarded.

Annex 7: Stakeholder engagement plan

Phase	What (product/event)	Which (target audience)	How and where (channels)	Who (responsible)	When (dates/ deadline)
Preparation phase	Concept note	UNSDG Evaluation Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online briefing/presentation/Q&A - Email dissemination - Written comments on evaluation approach/methodology/management 	SWEO Evaluation Manager	May 2024
	Scoping Paper	UNSDG entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of UNSDG PDR group/Q&A - Email dissemination - Written comments on evaluation scope/questions 	SWEO Evaluation Manager	May/June 2024
	Scoping consultations	Selected senior UNSDG programme staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online meetings with Evaluation Manager and SWEO ED on evaluation background and key issues for consideration in scope/evaluation questions 	SWEO Evaluation Manager	May/June 2024
	Terms of Reference and Summary	UNSDG entities and Evaluation Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Email dissemination - Written comments on all aspects of the evaluation - Request for nomination of entity senior and working level focal point for the evaluation - Request for entity work plans for CPD evaluations - Attached to requests for meetings/interviews in Inception Phase and onwards 	SWEO Evaluation Manager	July/August 2024
Inception phase	Inception interviews	<p>Key internal stakeholders (primary evaluation users) – see list in Annex 3</p> <p>Independent Expert Advisory Group members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online interviews 	SWEO Evaluation Manager	August/September 2024
	Inception report	<p>Evaluation Reference Group</p> <p>Expert Advisory Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation to UNSDG PDR group – 3rd October - Email dissemination – to UNSDG PDR and nominated focal points, Expert 	Evaluation Team	Early October 2024

			Advisory Group, and UNSDG Evaluation Offices (for info) - Request for written comments - Response to written comments		
Data collection and analysis phase	RC Global Meeting and DCO Senior Management Retreat	Resident Coordinators DCO Regional Offices DCO HQ	- Briefing on the evaluation purpose/scope and timeframe through keynote speakers talking points - "RC side event" or informal session on derivation and configuration processes and outcomes to gather wide range of perspectives - RCs asked to volunteer UNCT/ Results Groups for further participatory discussion/data collection at country level - Identification of possible "good practices" and/or "opportunities for improvement" for further investigation at country level (adjustment of sampling)	Evaluation Team, EOSG, DCO	October 2024
	Country/regional-level engagements	RCs, UNCT members, Regional Directors (DCO and entities)	- RC/RCO to be the first (entry point) interview in each sampled focus country – facilitates access to other UN stakeholders at country level and the national government counterpart	Evaluation Team	October-December 2024
	CEB/UNSDG Principals Meeting	UNSDG Principals	- One page update on the evaluation as a background note - Inclusion of evaluation in Chair's talking points	Evaluation Team, UNSDG Chair, UNSDG Secretariat	Early November 2024
	Preliminary findings presentation	Evaluation Reference Group Expert Advisory Group	- Presentation/discussion of evaluation findings (PowerPoint presentation, followed by Q&A) – 2.5 hours	Evaluation Team	Late January 2025
Reporting/validation phase	Draft Evaluation Report	Evaluation Reference Group Expert Advisory Group	- Report shared for written comments - ERG meeting held to receive verbal feedback/questions - Evaluation team response to written comments	Evaluation Team	Late February to early March 2025
	SG's report on QCPR	EOSG / DESA / DCO Member States	- Briefing to EOSG, DESA, DCO - SWE0 ED written input in response to requests from DESA/DCO	Evaluation Team	March 2025 (circulation April 2025)

	UNSDG Chair Report on DCO/RC System			SWEO ED EOSG / DESA / DCO	
	Regional Forums for Sustainable Development Regional Collaborative Platforms	Member States (RCO counterparts) Resident Coordinators/UNCTs Regional Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depending on their precise timing the RFSD and RCP meetings in early 2025 present the evaluation with opportunities to: - Present evaluation findings to regional/country stakeholders - Consult the national government counterparts of RCs (in-person) - Validate the evaluation findings in workshops with a combination of regional and country level UN development system actors (including RCs, DCO Regional, UNCT members and UN entity regional staff) 	Evaluation Team / UNSDG Secretariat	February to April 2025
	Recommendations Workshop 1- in person	Evaluation Reference Group (UNSDG representatives must be at a sufficiently senior level to discuss recommendations on behalf of their Principals)	- In person workshop – 2.5 hours in New York – for entities with New York HQ	Evaluation Team SWEO ED	Mid-April 2025
	Recommendations Workshop 2 – remote	Evaluation Reference Group (UNSDG representatives must be at a sufficiently senior level to discuss recommendations on behalf of their Principals)	- Online workshop – 2.5 hours for entities with HQs elsewhere	Evaluation Team SWEO ED	Late April 2025
Dissemination phase	UNSDG Principals Meeting	UNSDG Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNSDG Chair and/or Principals may decide to consider the evaluation report in the May 2025 in-person meeting - SWEO to offer a presentation on the main findings and recommendations of the evaluation 	SWEO ED / UNSDG Chair / UNSDG Secretariat	Early May 2025

	ECOSOC Operational Activities segment	Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member States may wish to formally consider the evaluation report during the segment - SWE0 to offer an informal presentation to Member States on the evaluation 	SWE0 ED	Mid-May 2025
	Final Evaluation Report	UNSDG Entity Management/Principals DCO / EOSG RCs/UNCTs Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Published on UNSDG website / SWE0 website - UNEG repository - UNSDG Knowledge Portal - Email/Memo from SWE0 ED to UNSDG Principals - Email to Reference Group, Advisory Group and UNSDG Evaluation Offices 	Evaluation Manager / SWE0 ED	June/July 2025
	Summary Evaluation Report	UNSDG Entity Management/Principals DCO / EOSG RCs/UNCTs Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Published on UNSDG website / SWE0 website - UNEG repository - UNSDG Knowledge Portal - Email/Memo from SWE0 ED to UNSDG Principals - Email to Reference Group, Advisory Group and UNSDG Evaluation Offices 	Evaluation Manager / SWE0 ED	June/July 2025
	Management Response	UNSDG entities/Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following protocol outlined in the System-wide Evaluation Policy - SWE0 provides a Management Response template - Published on UNSDG website / SWE0 website 	SWE0 ED / UNSDG / DCO	July 2025
	Agency, Fund and Programme governing body sessions (in particular, joint sessions)	UNSDG Entity Management/Principals Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entity governing bodies (in New York and elsewhere) may wish to formally consider the evaluation report (and management response) during their sessions in mid-2025 - SWE0 to respond to requests for informal briefings on the evaluation to entity governing bodies 	SWE0 ED	May 2025 onwards

Annex 8: Draft data collection tools

93. Data collection tools will be used to answer evaluation questions, sub-questions and lines of inquiry as specified in the Evaluation Matrix in Annex 4. Data collection tools foreseen include:

- A master **semi-structured interview guide**, which will set out the full menu of questions and issues for discussion, related to the evaluation questions. There will be one for each level (global, regional and country). At the regional and country level, interview guides will be tailored to each region/focus country based previous data and document analysis and the country information note. More detailed FGD guides will be developed, drawing from the same menu of questions and issues.
- **Document review framework** in line with each of the evaluation questions, as set out in the Evaluation Matrix.
- **Country Information Note template**. For each of the focus countries the evaluation team will compile key information related to the Cooperation Framework cycle, composition of UNCTs and relevant responses to existing surveys. This will form the basis for tailoring interview guides and relevant document review.
- **Spectrum of alignment review framework**: The level of alignment of country programming instruments to the Cooperation Framework will be determined through a systematic review of the Cooperation Framework, related country programming instruments and the joint work plans. The criteria for determining the placement of a CPI on the spectrum of alignment will be finalized once a critical mass of CPIs have been collected, to determine what is most feasible, meaningful and useful.
- **Survey question mapping**: Existing survey questionnaires will be mapped to relevant evaluation questions.

94. Data collection tools are being developed and will benefit from review by the Evaluation Management Group.

Annex 9: Terms of Reference for interagency governance of the evaluation

95. This annex provides minor updates and details to section 5.2 and Annex 1 of the evaluation ToR. It finalises the composition and Terms of Reference/working arrangements for the Evaluation Management Group (EMG), Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) and Expert Advisory Group (EAG).

96. The table below presents the overall management and governance model 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.

	Role	Composition
UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office (SWEO)	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.	Executive Director (supported by an Evaluation Officer)

Evaluation Management Group (EMG)	Provides expertise on evaluation approaches, methodology, data collection and analysis, and first-level quality assurance of evaluation deliverables.	Evaluation Officers from independent Evaluation Offices of UNSDG entities Chaired by SWEO Executive Director
Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)	Ensure the relevance, quality and utility of the evaluation by focusing on evaluation questions, content and scope, soundness of recommendations and evaluation use	Drawn from the UNSDG Interagency Group on Programme Development and Results (PDR) Chaired by SWEO Executive Director
Expert Advisory Group (EAG)	Provides thought leadership, external viewpoints and substantive advice on topics related to their specific areas of expertise at key moments during the evaluation process.	Individuals with extensive research or professional experience in relevant UN development system reform issues, who are (currently) fully independent from the UN system

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:
 - o Review and approve “zero draft” products before their circulation to stakeholders/users.
 - o Facilitate stakeholder discussion and feedback on draft products.
 - o Ensure that the evaluation team gives consideration to stakeholder feedback in revised versions.
 - o 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 - Vijayalakshmi Vadivelu
- WFP Office of Evaluation – Sergio Lenci
- UNICEF Evaluation Office – Erica Mattellone
- UNODC Independent Evaluation Section – Katharina Kayser

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:
 - o 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
 - o 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:
 - o 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.

102. The **UNSDG inter-agency group on Programme Development and Results** will serve as the primary reference group forum 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.

103. Each UNSDG entity represented in the PDR group has been invited to 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. **Entities yet to nominate a focal point can do so: [HERE](#).**

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 is composed of a small number of individuals 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. During the scoping and inception phases the following agreed to participate in the EAG on a voluntary basis:

- Max-Otto Baumann – Project Lead, *The United Nations and the global common good: roles, possibilities and limits of UN development cooperation*, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)
- John Hendra – former Assistant Secretary-General for repositioning of the UN development system, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women and UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative (Vietnam, Latvia and Tanzania)
- Manoj Juneja – former Deputy Executive Director - WFP; Deputy Director General – FAO, and Executive Director – ILO.
- Martin Kimani – Executive Director, Center on International Cooperation at New York University (NYU). Former Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN in New York and Nairobi. President of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS Executive Boards (2023-24).
- Coumba Mar Gadio – former UN Resident Coordinator (Zambia) and UNDP Resident Representative (Equatorial Guinea and Mauritania)
- Suzanne Steensen – Head of Secretariat, Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN)

Annex 10: Final report structure

- a. Executive Summary / Summary Evaluation Report
- b. Context and background
 - i. Introduction
 - ii. UN development system reform
 - iii. Policy framework for derivation, configuration and alignment
 - iv. Roll out of Cooperation Frameworks
- c. Evaluation purpose, scope, objectives
- d. Evaluation approach and methodology
 - i. Evaluation questions
 - ii. Evaluation components
 - iii. Analytical approach
 - iv. Limitations
- e. Evaluation findings
 - i. EQ1
 - ii. EQ2
 - iii. EQ3
 - iv. EQ4
- f. Conclusions
- g. Recommendations
- h. Management response template
- i. Annexes:
 - i. Terms of Reference
 - ii. Evaluation matrix
 - iii. Methodology
 - iv. Data collection tools
 - v. Bibliography
 - vi. List of stakeholders consulted
 - vii. Mapping of findings, conclusions and recommendations

Annex 11: Inception report review process

Version	Detail	Date(s)
Draft 0	Reviewed/quality assured by SWE0 Executive Director and Evaluation Management Group.	20/09/24 – 27/09/24
Draft 1	<p>Presented to a UNSDG PDR group meeting.</p> <p>Circulated to the following for feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNSDG PDR group - UNSDG Focal Points group - UNSDG Evaluation Offices - Additional focal points for this evaluation nominated by UNSDG entities - Evaluation Advisory Group <p>Written feedback received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DCO - ESCAP - OHCHR - UNDP - UNHCR - UNICEF - WFP - WHO - Advisory Group members 	<p>03/10/24</p> <p>04/10/24 - 18/10/24</p>
Final Draft	<p>Revisions to Draft 1 and comment responses reviewed by Evaluation Management Group and SWE0 Executive Director</p> <p>Circulated to all stakeholders listed above for information.</p> <p>Key elements included in summary ToR/Inception Report circulated to evaluation participants/interviewees.</p>	<p>30/10/24</p> <p>15/11/24</p>