

Summative Evaluation of the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) between the Government of Eritrea and the United Nations 2013-2016 (“Driving towards MDGs”)

Final Report

Covering the entire Implementation Period (from 1 January 2013 until 31 December 2016)

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Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	3
LIST OF ACRONYMS	4
NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
1. EVALUATION CONTEXT INCLUDING BACKGROUND TO THE SPCF 2013-2016	12
1.1. COUNTRY CONTEXT.....	12
1.2. UN RESPONSE.....	14
2. EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE, CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS	15
2.1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES.....	15
2.2. SCOPE.....	17
2.2.1. <i>Programme Outcomes</i>	17
2.2.2. <i>Response to SPCF Implementation Cycle’s identified Challenges</i>	18
2.3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS.....	19
2.3.1. <i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	19
2.3.2. <i>Relevant Overriding Issues Also Analysed</i>	20
2.3.3. <i>Cross-cutting Issues and Cross-thematic Integration</i>	22
2.4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND ITS LIMITATIONS.....	24
2.4.1 <i>General Approach to Data Collection and Analysis</i>	24
2.4.2. <i>Specific analytical methods by evaluation criterion and related data sources</i>	25
2.4.3. <i>Sequential Structure of Data Collection and Analysis</i>	28
2.4.4. <i>Limitations</i>	29
2.4.5. <i>Ethical Standards followed</i>	30
3. ANALYSIS – KEY FINDINGS BY OUTCOME AREA	32
3.1. KEY FINDINGS – OUTCOME 1.....	32
3.2. KEY FINDINGS – OUTCOME 2.....	35
3.3. KEY FINDINGS – OUTCOME 3.....	38
3.4. KEY FINDINGS – OUTCOME 4.....	41
3.5. KEY FINDINGS – OUTCOME 5.....	44
3.6. KEY FINDINGS – OUTCOME 6.....	46
3.7. KEY FINDINGS – OUTCOME 7.....	48
3.8. KEY FINDINGS – OUTCOME 8.....	52
4. CONCLUSIONS ACROSS ALL SPCF OUTCOMES INCLUDING BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED	54
4.1. RELEVANCE.....	54
4.2. EFFECTIVENESS AND EARLY IMPACT.....	56
4.2.1. <i>Effectiveness</i>	56
4.2.2. <i>Early Impact</i>	59
4.3. EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY.....	60
4.3.1. <i>Efficiency</i>	60
4.3.2. <i>Sustainability</i>	66
4.3.3. <i>Lessons learnt</i>	67
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	73
ANNEXES	75
I. TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	75

II. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES (PERSONS/GROUPS)	84
III. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	86
IV. EVALUATION SCHEDULE (SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW).....	86
V. EVALUATOR'S BIODATA.....	88
VI. FILLED RESULT AND RESOURCE MATRIX.....	88

List of Figures and Tables

FIGURE 1 ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF ERITREA.....	11
FIGURE 2 FUNDING AND REQUIREMENTS BY SPCF OUTCOME AREA (IN MILLIONS OF USD), AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2016.....	61
FIGURE 3 FUNDING AND REQUIREMENTS BY SPCF OUTCOME AREA (MILLIONS OF USD), AS OF END 2014/EARLY 2015.....	62
FIGURE 4 FUNDING TRENDS (2015-2016).....	63
FIGURE 5 FUNDING BY AGENCY (IN MILLIONS OF USD).....	63
FIGURE 6 DONOR CONTRIBUTION BY OUTCOME AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2016	67
TABLE 1 SPCF OUTCOMES BY STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA	17
TABLE 2 EVALUATION MATRIX	26
TABLE 3 GRADE BY OUTPUT (OUTCOME 1).....	33
TABLE 4 GRADE BY OUTPUT (OUTCOME 2).....	35
TABLE 5 GRADE BY OUTPUT (OUTCOME 3).....	38
TABLE 6 GRADE BY OUTPUT (OUTCOME 4).....	41
TABLE 7 GRADE BY OUTPUT (OUTCOME 5).....	44
TABLE 8 GRADE BY OUTPUT (OUTCOME 6).....	46
TABLE 9 GRADE BY OUTPUT (OUTCOME 7).....	48
TABLE 10 GRADE BY OUTPUT (OUTCOME 8).....	52
TABLE 11 SPA OUTCOMES, AVERAGE GRADE	56
TABLE 12 PREVIOUS SPCF PROGRAMME ARCHITECTURE/STRUCTURE	68
TABLE 13 CURRENT SPCF PROGRAMME ARCHITECTURE/STRUCTURE	69
TABLE 14 ALTERNATIVE BASIC SPCF PROGRAMME ARCHITECTURE/STRUCTURE.....	69
TABLE 15 SUGGESTED STRUCTURE	69
TABLE 16 SPCF OUTCOMES BY STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA (SPA)	72

List of Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
AU	African Union
BSS	Basic Social Services
CAC	Committee at Community-level
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEE	Complementary Elementary Education
COAR	Country Office Annual Report
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
CWC	Child Well-being Committee
DaO	Delivering as One
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPHS	Eritrea Population and Health Survey
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFS	Farmer Field School
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (currently 'GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance')
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoSE	Government of the State of Eritrea
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HMIS	Health Management Information System
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
IMNCI	Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness
IP	Implementing Partner
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRD	Inland Revenue Department
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
JP	Joint Programme
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition

MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoLHW	Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare
MoLWE	Ministry of Land Water and Environment
MoND	Ministry of National Development
MoTC	Ministry of Transport and Communications
MoTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NCD	Non-communicable diseases
NCHE	National Commission for Higher Education
NGAP	National Gender Action Plan
NSO	National Statistics Office
NUEW	National Union of Eritrean Women
NUEYS	National Union of Youth and Students
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PPR	Peste des Petits Ruminants
RC(O)	Resident Coordinator('s Office)
RRM	Results and Resource Matrix
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound
SPCF	Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

WFP World Food Programme
WG Working Group
WHO World Health Organization

Note of Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the United Nations Country Team in Eritrea and the Ministry of National Development for having entrusted me with the task of preparing the summative evaluation of the SPCF 2013-2016. This evaluation was a complex exercise which involved logistical coordination of two in-country phases, numerous technical meetings with key informants both within and outside the UN compound, group sessions, remote correspondences, field visits outside Asmara and the organization of a workshop for the final presentation of key findings and recommendations. Rather than naming all the individuals who have contributed to this evaluation, which would fill a couple of pages, suffice it to say that without the support of Ministry of National Development coordinators, sector Implementing Partners, the Programme Management Team and UN Country Team, agency programme officers and managers representing resident agencies (FAO, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO), finance officers and OCHA colleagues who provided budget data and analyses, the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Representative and the Resident Coordinator's Office who provided guidance, oversight but also served as key informants and technical Outcome focal points, the administrative staff and drivers who assisted in getting me to Eritrea and providing transport support, this work and final product would not have been possible. An exception to the rule of not mentioning individual names needs to be made in the case of unfaltering expert support, guidance and counseling provided by my evaluation management focal points, namely Resident Coordinator's Office Coordination Specialist, Mr. Ashok Sayenju and, first and foremost, Ms. Yumiko Ota, UNICEF Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist.

The SPCF Evaluator

Craig Naumann

Executive Summary

Background and Methodology

This summative evaluation report of the SPCF 2013-2016 in Eritrea presents evidence-based findings and recommendations. The evaluation mission, jointly organized by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the Government of the State of Eritrea's (GoSE) Ministry of National Development (MoND), was carried out by an independent international evaluation expert. The report covers the implementation of the SPCF over the entire period 2013-2016. It consists of a descriptive background section of the country and programming context, the purpose and objective of the report, the methodology applied and related analytical limitations; analytical chapters and a final section with recommendations geared towards utility for the current, on-going programming cycle which started over 1.5 years ago.

From a methodological point of view, the evaluation used a mixed method approach. Other than analyzing quantitative indicators, the evaluator also relied on qualitative data available in existing report and other materials (mid-term review, UN reports, filled indicator frameworks etc.), key informant and focus group interviews with programme officers and UN and GoSE/Implementing Partners (IP) managers, as well as face-to-face beneficiary contact interviews including Implementing Partner-beneficiaries in the form of technical managers and decision makers, and last but not least field level end beneficiaries.

Given the flaws in the indicator framework and generalized dearth of statistical data, an important amount of time and effort needed to be invested into gathering as much quantitative and qualitative data as possible across Outcome-level work streams. A standardized methodology was developed and deployed across SPCF Outcome work streams. Following a kick-off meeting held at MoND which served the purpose of introducing the consultant and agreeing on the general approach and mission schedule, the Ministry appointed sector focal points to co-manage and participate in the data collection sessions organized by Outcome work streams.

Through various joint work sessions between UN and appointed IP ministry staff, including joint sessions in the presence of or facilitated by the evaluator, key facts including data to inform indicators, were gathered. In addition, qualitative perceptions were collected through focus group discussions. These discussions allowed to gauge the (early or potential) impact of interventions, collect information about lessons learned and best practices, pinpoint some operational issues and concerns, and identify pros and cons of the SPCF structural logic of the outcome group design and other related governance features.

The analytical section addresses the main evaluation dimensions of accountability through presenting key results achieved, bottlenecks and responsiveness, in discussing the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and (early) impact. In the final section of the report, a number of specific recommendations for content, structure, mechanisms and processes are presented. The overall relevance of the SPCF is beyond doubt given the unique position occupied by the UN in Eritrea as key interlocutor for development strategies and policies, including the normative dimension of human rights, gender etc.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

Overall, even though many outcome indicators as well as output indicators could not be informed, the quantitative and qualitative data that could be collected showed that in terms of effectiveness, substantial achievements were reached across most of the Outcome areas. The total planned budget for the 2013-2016 SPCF cycle amounted to USD187.9 million.

This amount was reached by 83 per cent (or USD156.8m) while 17 per cent or USD31.1m remained unmet by the end of the SPCF life cycle. Among the eight SPCF Outcomes Areas, three (Education; Capacity Development; Gender) received more than what had initially been budgeted for (above 100 per cent of planned funding) whereas three (Health and Nutrition; Environmental Sustainability; Social Protection) received more than 70 per cent. Two areas (Disaster Risk management: DRM and Food Security and Livelihoods), however, received less than 40 per cent funding.

The two Outcomes with the largest funding requirements (Environmental Sustainability at USD66.2m or 35.2 per cent of the total planned budget; Health and Nutrition at USD49.5m or 26.3 per cent of the total planned budget) received decent funding at 77 per cent and 90 per cent coverage rates, respectively. The Education outcome, initially planned as the third largest Outcome area in terms of funding requirements (8.1 per cent, only DRM with 3 per cent and Gender at 2.1 per cent had smaller planned budgets) ended up as the Outcome with the third-largest effective funding received (USD27.1m), with only Health and Nutrition at USD44.4m and Environmental Sustainability at USD51.3m receiving higher absolute amounts of budget support.

Overall SPCF funding mobilized included a total of more than USD18m that were raised across a certain number of Outcomes beyond the initial budget ceiling foreseen, thus resulting in budget coverage or "absorption" rates beyond 100 per cent. In terms of efficiency and effectiveness, however, it must be noted that additional beneficial synergies would likely have been generated by a tighter design of the Outcome architecture. For instance, Outcomes 3/Social Protection and 8/Gender showed inherent substantive overlap.

Stand-out best practices include SPCF interventions in which several UN agencies actively collaborated and/or managed to successfully establish access to novel or additional funding sources and mechanisms, such as the "Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization" ('GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance') and the "Global Partnership for Education" (GPE); behavior-change related interventions in the domains of public health (anti- sexual and gender-based violence: SGBV, anti-Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: FGM/C, ban on open defecation etc.); and directly or indirectly integrated programmes (bee hive support, environmentally friendly land management including land tenure models and practices, integrated silviculture and agriculture, integrated sector wide access to education including teacher training, curriculum support, school construction, (re)enrollment campaigns for out-of-school children etc.), nomadic education etc.

Recommendations submitted include Outcome design, UNDAF/SPCF governance mechanisms and structures including the introduction of Result Groups (RGs) and a Steering Committee, strengthening the monitoring and evaluation function through dedicated staff, introducing comprehensive SPCF-wide RG-driven financial expenditure tracking etc. In terms of the overall Outcome architecture, it is recommended to limit the Outcomes or RGs to not more than 5, ideally less.

(Early) Impact

SPCF activities with a potentially large future or even imminent impact comprise the following:

- The updated ART guideline in line with the 2016 WHO guideline to treat all HIV positive despite the CD4 count and WHO clinical staging, thus potentially eradicating HIV and Syphilis in the country.
- The potential elimination of malaria in Eritrea through strategic planning and grant-making support (Global Fund Grant).
- Progress in country-wide gender mainstreaming at community level.
- The national protected area policy and legal framework legalizing the establishment of terrestrial and marine protected areas.
- The fight against FGM/C practices through sensitizing decision makers, religious leaders and influential individuals resulting in attitudinal and behavioural change regarding such harmful practices.
- The national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system, if and once fully developed, will boost access to basic human and social rights.
- The “Data for Development“ Joint Programme (JP) is likely to make a mark but could increase its impact by associating missing key players thus addressing extant missing links in the data value chain, namely: i. MoLG for bottom-up grassroots/community level localized data collection, monitoring and planning; ii. MoI and WB to build a country-wide and sub-marine IT backbone and ensure common IT standards across various sectors and key stakeholder entities;
- The revised Land Tenure approach seems very promising but concrete data at scale is still pending. Linked to this, there are some promising attempts across Outcomes 6 and 7 to realize environmentally sustainable integrated value chains.

Sustainability

There is evidence that the SPCF programme improved long-term institutional capacity along the parameters of technical expertise, financial independence and participation of rights holders in process. The foremost example would be the results achieved under Outcome 4 (Capacity Development) where statistical and data management capacity was built in a number of areas including the statistics office and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), in particular.

In terms of building an evidence basis for policies and programme/project designs targeting the most vulnerable, including disaggregated data on the basis of sex, location, economic status and other key socio-economic characteristics important for the future commitment of “leave no one behind”, the SPCF laid the foundation through the Data JP by strengthening capacities for data collection and analysis.

Under Outcome 1, while financial independence is not the adequate concept to apply, the fact that the UN helped Ministry of Health (MoH) to establish a link to GAVI certainly boosted the Ministry’s access to financial resources in a major way. The donkey-for-school programme and the land tenure reform pilot, on the other hand, are primary examples of how rights holders’ entitlements and socio-economic security were strengthened quite spectacularly, and in a sustainable manner. Important gains have been made in terms of gender rights and entitlements.

The ability to raise more than 10 per cent (USD18.5m) of funding in excess of initially planned budgets for specific outcomes speaks to the resilience of existing access to donor support among UN agencies. The rate of overall funding coverage (83 per cent) indicates a solid and quite sustainable funding architecture and strategy. Some two thirds of overall effective funding received (approximately USD106m of roughly USD157m) were covered through non-core donor funding with one third covered through core funding, which is a substantial rate that reflects realistic budgeting and a significant initial funding rate.

Lessons learnt

Challenges and bottlenecks in implementing the SPCF included, among others: 1) Quasi-absence of regular SPCF monitoring; 2) A high staff turn-over resulted in capacity drain, wastage of prior investments through training and capacitating staff, the need for lengthy, capital-intensive re-training etc.; 3) Coordination Gaps/Fragmentation in programming and implementation approach (joint programming, fundraising, implementation, monitoring, reporting) with sectoral mindset and/or agency-specific bottom-up planning resulted in insufficient coordination of projects given the narrow design of Outcomes.

Best Practices could be registered in terms of SPCF resilience and flexibility. Examples would be: 1) Successfully tapping into existing potential synergies after realizing interfaces and overlaps in the process of programme/project implementation, with the best example being the Gender JP which in the 2nd half of the SPCF cycle was re-structured more rationally through the collaboration of Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare (MoLHW: “housed” under Outcome 3) and National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) as the Gender JP custodian under Outcome 8; 2) Realizing added value by integrating interventions across multiple sectors as proven in the multi-faceted Anseba project by UNDP/UNCDF as started under the preceding SPCF cycle; 3) UNICEF and WHO helped MoH secure GAVI funding, which is also a best practice in terms of alliance building and using UN funding for catalytic purposes allowing to tap into additional financial resources that otherwise might have remained beyond the reach of the national institutions.

Figure 1 Administrative map of Eritrea



1. Evaluation Context including Background to the SPCF 2013-2016

1.1. Country Context

Located in the Horn of Africa, Eritrea has an area of about 124,000 square kilometres. The population was estimated to be 3.2 million (Ministry of National Development, 2010) with a total fertility rate of 4.8 (Health Management Information System: HMIS 2013/MoH). For the composite measure of the Human Development Index (HDI) which is a composite of economic prosperity (Gross Domestic Product: GDP), longevity, educational attainment and literacy, Eritrea ranks among the most disadvantaged countries (in 2017, it was placed 182th among 187 countries). With regards to the incidence of poverty, women and semi-urban dwellers are among the most vulnerable among the population.

Climate-wise, arid and semi-arid climatic conditions prevail in Eritrea. The consequences of climate change have negatively affected temperature and rainfall patterns during the recent past. Given this adverse climatic environment, the country is extremely vulnerable to adverse effects of climate variability, recurring droughts and environmental degradation, all of which are seriously hampering development efforts.

The country's economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture. Livelihoods, food security, and the national budget have all suffered from the effects of protracted rainfall/water shortage, resulting in negative environmental effects including land degradation and desertification. Thus, the persistent drought has had adverse effects particularly on the vulnerable communities, groups and households. Female-headed households as the most vulnerable among the vulnerable, have been especially affected. Eritrea is at the same time also hosting some 3,000 Somali refugees.

Soon after independence in 1991, Eritrea formulated and implemented socio-economic development policies and strategies resulting in marked improvements in key sectors for the period up to 1997. For most of the first post-independence decade, Eritrea experienced rapid economic growth, with annual growth in GDP peaking at 7.0 per cent for the period up to 1997. However, a border dispute with neighbouring Ethiopia (1998-2000), which escalated into a full-scale war, reversed the gains.

Relevant international legal instanced found Ethiopia to be the guilty party in the dispute and ruled in favour of Eritrea. However, hitherto the ruling remains with very limited effect. On December 12th, 2000, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission passed the Algiers peace agreement which established a neutral Boundary Commission to delimit and demarcate borders based on colonial treaties and called for an investigation regarding the origins of the conflict.

The protracted low intensity border conflict and sanctions imposed on Eritrea in 2009 are negatively affecting Eritrean development and remains a major impediment to the Government's development. Furthermore, the border conflict has left large areas of land unused due to unexploded landmines especially the prime fertile agricultural regions of Gash-Barka and Debub which at least used to be Eritrea's "bread baskets".

Eritrea's Government places an emphasis on community and individual rights as well as social justice issues including access to education, health, food and equitable access to services. National priorities

include: food security; education; health; access to potable water at reasonable distance; roads and infrastructure development; environment and natural resources management; human and institutional capacity development and; information and communication technology.

Despite the existing challenges and setbacks, Eritrea has registered progress towards its development goals and aspirations. The Government has endeavoured to protect the most vulnerable segments of the population and to implement its long-term development policies. It maintains an extensive social safety net, investing in three priority areas: (i) food security and agricultural production; (ii) infrastructure development; (iii) human resources development. Moreover, it is one of the few countries in Africa to have made quite considerable strides towards achieving the health related MDGs (4, 5 and 6, i.e. reduction of child mortality; reduction of maternal mortality and combating HIV and AIDS). The national HIV prevalence is 0.93 per cent. Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) was reduced from an estimated 998 per 100,000 live births in 1995 to 501, by 2015, with a projected further decrease to 485 per 100,000 live births by 2016 (MoH figures).¹

The availability of and access to disaggregated quality and up-to-date data in the various sectors for evidence-based planning and programming is critical. However, this continues to be a challenge in terms of conducting successful planning and evidence-based policy making.

Determining the comparative advantage of the UN System was conducted based on an internal and external analysis of UN Eritrea's strengths and weaknesses and the challenges and opportunities related to the country context. This analysis allowed to highlight the following comparative advantages:

- Supporting the design and formulation of development policies and strategies;
- Technical and regulatory advice, establishment of standards and norms, quality control;
- Strengthening national capacities at central and decentralized levels and, especially strengthening managerial government capacity optimizing the use of scarce resources;
- Up-scaling evidence and results-based programmes;
- Promoting partnerships between all stakeholders (due to the impartiality of the United Nations as an ideal mediator and facilitator of partnerships);
- Ability to initiate political dialogue at top level;
- Resource mobilization capacity;
- Mobilization of high-level, international expertise in specific technical fields.

Taking into account the challenges and national priorities on the one hand and the comparative advantage of the United Nations on the other hand, the partners agreed that the United Nations in Eritrea would focus on the following priority areas: i) fostering access to and the quality of, basic social services; ii) food security, strengthening livelihoods and poverty reduction; iii) consolidation of institutions through capacity building; iv) reducing gender related inequalities and disparities; v) environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation.

¹ Sample-based figures advanced by WHO in 2014 even claim that the rate was already as low as 380/100,000 by 2013 (WHO, 2014).

1.2. UN Response

Historically, the UN initiated operations in support of the Eritrean government in March 1992. While the first half decade of support concentrated on rehabilitation, reconstruction and post-conflict emergency programmes, the focus shifted to capacity development and institution building especially concentrating on basic social services (BSS), as of 1997. The first UNDAF was signed in 2002 and ended in 2006, promoting democratic governance, BSS, pro-poor economic growth and sustainable livelihoods. The second UNDAF (2007-2011) focussed on BSS, capacity development, emergency and recovery, environment, food security and gender issues. The 2nd UNDAF was followed by a one-year interim agreement with a narrowly defined scope (health and WASH, only) which was signed in 2011. Following this, a nearly complete programming hiatus followed marking a hiatus until the end of 2012.

In early 2013, the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) was signed between GoSE and the UN, as UNDAF equivalent. The SPCF had an initial budget of USD 187.9 million of which, at the end of the 1st year of its implementation period (i.e., in late December 2014), USD 97 million or 52 per cent of funds still needed to be mobilized. The SPCF was designed to strengthen national leadership, ownership, execution and accountability through the systematic use of national systems and processes.

In the absence of an overarching governmental development strategy at the design stage of the SPCF, it was decided to focus on aligning SPCF programme results with existing sectorial strategies and policies at the national level; while referencing SPCF outcomes vis-à-vis the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), at the international level.

Managed by the GoSE/UN Joint Steering Committee (JSC), the SPCF comprised of a Resource and Results Matrix (RRM) which includes indicators, baselines, annualized targets and means of verification at SPCF outcome and output level.² SPCF outcomes generally reflected the scope and expanse of the MDGs. Moreover, the SPCF set out to achieve related targets in capitalizing on the collective comparative strengths of UN system member entities (agencies, funds and programmes).

The SPCF was implemented by 9 Resident Agencies, namely FAO, UNAIDS, OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and some minor support from WFP which would then become non-operational early on during the programme cycle. This also included mobilizing the expertise, knowledge, human and capital resources of a select number of Non-Resident Agencies (NRAs). NRAs involved included UNIDO, IFAD, IAEA and UNEP, either through technical assistance or direct program support.

² As mentioned above, the mid-term review pointed out some issues related to the SMARTness of the indicators (including the absence of baselines, targets not always aligned with the indicators, gaps in data availability etc.). This final evaluation will critically discuss the degree of the UN's reactivity with regard to the MTR's M&E-related findings and recommendations.

2. Evaluation Purpose, Scope, Criteria and Methodological Remarks

2.1. Purpose and Objectives

The implementation cycle of the previous UNDAF equivalent in Eritrea, viz. the SPCF 2013-2016, ended on 31 December 2016. As of January 2017, the implementation cycle of the new SPCF (which is to end in 2021) kicked in. The mandatory Mid-Term Review (MTR) was conducted in the window July-September 2015. The equally mandatory final evaluation for the previous SPCF (2013-2016) is expected to provide lessons learned for the implementation of the current SPCF (2017-2021) and future ones.

Hence, the purpose of the current evaluation is to: a) identify what has worked, what has not and related reasons, in the specific context of Eritrea and in the particular collaborative efforts of the UNCT³; b) verify results achieved within the revised framework of the SPCF; c) assess the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions used; and d) focus on aspects related to the implementation of the SPCF with the express aim of formulating lessons learnt and providing recommendations for improvements in the implementation of the current SPCF and UN Agencies' programme cycle, including strategy, design and implementation arrangements.

In order to achieve the above, the present evaluation of the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the United Nations (UN) for the years 2013-2016 was undertaken in line with UNDG and UNEG requirements and professional standards in terms of independence, comprehensiveness, objectiveness, inclusiveness etc. The evaluation, while of a summative nature, was not intended, and logically could not, inform the design of the new UN programme cycle which was developed in 2016-2017 using findings and recommendations of the mid-term review finalized in late September 2015.

Notwithstanding, the final evaluation addressed the key requirement of accountability in that it gauged the UN's performance in delivering relevant services in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner during the 2013-2016 programme cycle. In doing so, it discussed the UN's contribution to GoSE's MDG achievements as per the most recent relevant measurements (in 2016/2017).

The present evaluation's purpose was two-fold in terms of being both of a backward-looking (accountability) and a forward-looking (recommendations) nature. These two major objectives were tackled as follows:

- *Backward-looking dimension:* The evaluation set out to ensure accountability of the UNCT vis-à-vis stakeholders for the achievement of agreed results in support of the national development strategy as reflected in relevant national sector policies and programmes. To achieve this, the evaluation verified results achieved within the framework of the SPCF and assessed the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and, to the extent possible, the impact of the strategies and interventions used. This enabled the various stakeholders in the SPCF process, including national

3 By default, UNCT is to be understood as the family of corporate UN sub-entities (i.e., the funds, programmes and specialized agencies that together make up the UN presence in Eritrea), rather than the various individuals (heads of agency, Country Director, Representative etc.) representing those entities. Under this definition, the RC-HC is also part of the UNCT.

counterparts and development partners, to hold the UNCT and other parties accountable for fulfilling their roles and commitments.

- *Forward-looking perspective:* To support learning in view of enhancing the implementation of future programming, as well as articulating programme/project-related action and/or work plans and finetuning operational modalities (targeting mechanisms, inter-agency collaboration etc.) the evaluation provided recommendations for strengthening programming and operations results at the country level. More specifically, it informed operational planning and decision-making of the current, new SPCF programme cycle. As mentioned, an important angle to be analysed in this context was the degree of coordination and collaboration among UN system agencies at the country level, including resident and non-resident entities. Other important aspects included GoSE's and the UN's absorption capacity of available SPCF funding as well as best practices and recommendations in addressing fundraising/resource mobilization-related challenges. As mentioned, the strategic programming at the level of revisiting and reorganizing the design and content of the SPCF outcome architecture had already taken place. Hence, the focus of the forward-looking analysis and recommendations was on best practices and lessons learned at the level of programme/project delivery

The above-mentioned dual perspective was translated into the following key evaluation objectives:

1. An assessment of the contribution made by the UNCT to national priorities, specifically those national development goals singled out for UN support under the SPCF 2013-2016.
2. An assessment of the extent to which the UNCT supported the country to realise its international and regional commitments on human rights and gender equality, as well as potentially existing climate change-related commitments.
3. Identifying the factors that affected the UN's contribution to national goals, explaining the enabling factors and bottlenecks.
4. Actionable recommendations for improving the UNCT's contribution to national and international development goals in a diverse, broad number of technical areas, covering i) good governance; ii) poverty reduction; iii) environmental protection; iv) developing human capital and v) social protection as well as the reduction of socio-economic disparities/inequalities; and this especially in view of the action plan designed for the current, new SPCF cycle (2017-2021) oriented towards the SDGs. Said recommendations will logically link to the conclusions and lessons learned through the evaluation.

The evaluation was intended to have as a primary audience (1) the UN Country Team (resident and non-resident agencies), both management and staff; (2) the Government of the State of Eritrea and relevant non-state actors, and (3) financial and technical partners. In the perspective of vertical accountability, the evaluation also attempts to inform future strategic planning, programming and related decision-making among relevant UN agencies' regional and Headquarters structures, and the UN Development Group (UNDG). To the extent possible, the evaluation discussed lessons learned in view of pinning down potentially existing lessons to be learned in view of operationalizing the nexus approach.

2.2. Scope

2.2.1. Programme Outcomes

The SPCF 2013-2016 had 8 programmatic outcomes which were logically linked to the respective corresponding Strategic Priority Areas of the national development strategy for the same time period. The table below shows the logical linkage between GoSE's national strategic priority areas and the SPCF 2013-2016 outcome areas (Table 1).

Table 1 SPCF Outcomes by Strategic Priority Area

SPCF Outcomes by Strategic Priority Area (SPA)
SPA I. Basic Social Services
Outcome 1: Access and utilization of quality and integrated health and nutrition services improved among the general population with particular emphasis on children under five, youth, women and other vulnerable groups (MDG 3,4,5,6)
Outcome 2: Children including refugees have equitable access to quality basic education in the hard-to-reach areas in Anseba, Gash Barka, Southern Red Sea (SRS), Northern Red Sea (NRS) and Debub (MDG 2)
Outcome 3: Strengthened protection and participation of vulnerable children, adolescents, young people, women and people with special needs, including refugees, from the impact of poverty, harmful practices, exploitation and injuries in high prevalence areas (MDG 1,3,4,5)
SPA II. National Capacity Development
Outcome 4: Selected government institutions have the capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver services to All (MDG 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8)
Outcome 5: Strengthened national and sectoral disaster risk management (MDG 1,7)
SPA III. Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods
Outcome 6: Poor and vulnerable households have improved access to and utilization of quality food and enhanced livelihood opportunities (MDG 1)
SPA IV. Environmental Sustainability
Outcome 7: Eritrea is on track towards the achievement of MDG targets for environmental sustainability (MDG 7)
SPA V. Gender Equity and Advancement of Women
Outcome 8: National institutions have gender responsive sector plans and policies and promote empowerment of women (MDG 3)

The Outcome areas address the entire range of MDGs. Some outcomes, for instance Outcome 3, contributed to several MDGs at the same time.

The evaluation submitted the total of 8 programme outcomes to the standard set of evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact). Half-way data points, findings and observations of the MTR were taken into account and built open in the analysis. Similarly, MTR conclusions and recommendations and their respective uptake at strategic level as well as in the tactical, operational sense were critically analyzed. In addition, in analysing the programme outcomes

the quality of the mainstreaming cross-cutting dimensions (such as Human Rights and Gender, Monitoring and Evaluation, Health and HIV-AIDS etc.) were ascertained.

The evaluation also undertook a financial analysis, based on aggregate and disaggregated financial data from various sources (detailed financial data against outcomes and, if possible, key actions/activities by region or district, per year; and financial overview data about actual absolute spending and relative fund absorption against outcome/pillar and cross-cutting working group (WG) budgets; including SPCF coordination costs). This allowed to track the implementation and distribution of the SPCF over its time-span with regard to budget/plan/expenditure, by agency and, if applicable, different sources of funds (core agency funds, government contribution in cash and kind, external/donor outcome, programme and project funding including ad hoc funding if applicable).

2.2.2. Response to SPCF Implementation Cycle's identified Challenges

Furthermore, the evaluation assessed to what extent the UNCT, IPs and official stakeholders took on board and responded to the constructive criticism and related recommendations of the mid-term review (MTR). In a nutshell, the MTR had pointed out a number of recurrent issues and weaknesses, some more structural and situated at the macro and upstream level, others more on the operational, day-to-day side. The most important ones comprised the following:

- Absence of a national development strategy, a related PRSP or cross-sectoral action plan with goals matching the implementation life span of the UNDAF/SPCF which rendered the planning dependent on partially incomplete strategic sector plans (N.B.: also, there was no SWAP) and meant that the SPCF RRM could not align with an over-arching national planning framework;
- The issues mentioned above were further exacerbated by the absence of a Common Country Assessment (CCA);
- Weak levels of inter-agency coordination and cooperation with almost total absence of joint project or Delivering as One (DaO)-inspired components;
- Reflecting the absence of a cross-sectoral integrated development framework and dependence on sector plans as well as moderate levels of UN-internal coordination the planning of SPCF Strategic Priority Area outcomes suffered from siloism, resulting in partial overlap or duplication in the formulation of results and indicators and low levels of synergies across outcomes;
- Results-Based Management logic was insufficiently applied in the formulation of the results matrix, resulting in partial flaws within the vertical and horizontal consistency or stringency of outcomes/outputs, their respective indicators, baselines and targets;
- A stand-alone monitoring and evaluation (M&E matrix, M&E strategy and plan and related processes and systems to regularly track SPCF progress at the outcome level was never put in place and thus crucially missing, especially given the weak national statistics machinery and related low frequency of representative macro-level data (from national household surveys, censuses or administrative macro-level updates) being produced/published;
- Weaknesses in the implementation of joint monitoring visits, as well as, in some cases, standard monitoring in remote areas;
- Levels of UNCT resource mobilization sometimes lagging behind (in terms of funding gaps) or not properly coordinated with governmental strategic efforts;

- Capacity and staffing challenges among governmental partner agencies;
- Challenges in fund disbursement to IPs linked to inadequacies of harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) approach and/or the understanding of financial procedures.

2.3. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

2.3.1. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation applied the standard set of evaluation criteria as per UNEG standards, which are:

- **Relevance** – The extent to which the objectives of SPCF are consistent with country needs, national priorities, extending to the country’s international and regional commitments in the form of the relevant Conventions and Treaties.
- **Effectiveness** – The extent to which the UNCT contributed to, or is likely to contribute to, the outcomes defined in the SPCF and to the degree to which the results were equitably distributed among the targeted groups. The evaluation should also note how the unintended results, if any, have affected national development positively or negatively and to what extent they have been foreseen and managed.
- **Efficiency** – The extent to which outcomes were achieved with the appropriate amount of resources and maintenance of minimum transaction cost (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs).
- **Sustainability** – The extent to which the benefits from a development intervention have or are likely to continue, after it has been completed. In particular, if the transition from developing individual capacity in the short-term to creating institutional capacity in the long-term has been made.
- **Impact** – Longer-term transformative changes directly attributable and thus triggered or created by, or unequivocally contributed to, by the programmatic interventions provided under the SPCF.

In applying these standard criteria, the evaluation also measured the extent to which the standard set of UN programming principles were applied. Here, the evaluation determined to what extent the standard set of SPCF programming principles (human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, results-based management, capacity development) were considered and mainstreamed across the general SPCF results matrix and related implementation processes. Related questions comprised, inter alia: Were any shortcomings due to a failure to take account of programming principles during implementation? Were adequate resources (both agency specific and One UN Fund) allocated to enable the application and implementation of SPCF programming principles and related results?

With regards to the human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming, related aspects were closely scrutinized under the respective standard evaluation criteria, as appropriate and as follows:

- **Under relevance:** an assessment of the extent to which the human rights-based approach was effectively integrated in the SPCF, as well as the gender dimension (e.g., in supporting the national strategy for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment) and the needs of women and men of all ages, young people, boys and girls and most vulnerable groups in the country. To what

extent was the SPCF informed by substantive human-rights and gender analyses that identified underlying causes and barriers to Human Rights and Gender Equality;

- Under effectiveness: to what extent were a human rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy incorporated in the design and implementation of the SPCF? Did the intervention contribute to empowerment of rights holders, especially women and young people, to claim and duty bearers to fulfil Human Rights and Gender Equality standards?
- Under efficiency: the extent to which resource allocation took into account or prioritized most marginalised groups including women and girls. To what extent were adequate resources provided for integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in the SPCF?
- Under sustainability: the range of requirements was considered, including creation of technical expertise, financial independence and mechanisms through which rights-holders were able to participate in and assert the fulfilment of their rights. To what extent did the SPCF contribute to developing an enabling environment (including capacities of rights holders and duty bearers) and institutional changes to advance Human Rights and Gender Equality issues?

2.3.2. Relevant Overriding Issues Also Analysed

In addition to applying the standard criteria, the evaluation also attempted to assess, in particular, a number of specific issues relevant to the core objectives of the evaluation. Respective questions comprised the following:

1) The existence or absence of *synergies through programmatic and operational coordination*, harmonization and joint alignment among agencies in view of optimizing results, avoiding duplication and minimizing transaction costs: Issues that were looked at included challenges encountered at the level of operational level and actions that might have been taken during the programme cycle to improve programme efficiency and effectiveness. In particular, the experience of the two JPs (Gender JP; Capacity Development JP) under the SPCF 2013-2016 and the HACT were discussed, here. Budgetary and communication related challenges also fell under this category of internal coordination, including UN-internal as well as external aspects. *One UN Fund eligibility and performance assessment process*: Did these provide incentives for delivery, inclusion of UN agencies with comparative advantages and relevant substantive capacities, and encourage a joint approach to programme planning and implementation?

2) *Leveraging partnerships* with civil society/private sector/local government/parliament/national human rights institutions/gender equality advocates/international development partners to improve performance: Were UN programmes coordinated with/complementing/ implemented in parallel with financial and/or technical partners' programmes to achieve greater impact and improved results? How did the major IPs judge the performance of the UNCT in engaging partnering entities and other stakeholders of the SPCF? To what extent was the "active, free, and meaningful" participation of all stakeholders (in particular vulnerable groups including women and girls) ensured in the SPCF process?

3) *Mainstreaming of South-South and triangular cooperation* in UN Eritrea programmes as called for by the Nairobi Outcome Document and relevant decisions of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and resolutions of the General Assembly.

4) *Strategic foresight and risk analysis*: Did UN Eritrea take appropriate action to ensure that results to which it contributed towards were not at risk of being negatively impacted by various vectors/variables that might not be preventable, but could be mitigated? How systematically were risk analyses undertaken, at what level?

5) *Responsiveness*: How adequately did the UNCT during planning and implementation of the SPCF respond to changes in national priorities and to additional requests from national counterparts, as well as to shifts caused by major external factors and evolving country context? Did the UNCT take specific steps to review and update the underlying situation analysis for the SPCF to take account of major new developments: political, emergencies, in the national economy, changes in the composition and policies of development partners?

6) *SPCF Governance Structure*: Did the SPCF governance structure positively or negatively affect SPCF implementation in light of UNCT-specific division of labour and the UN-GoSE dialogue structure? Could results groups be better defined and operationalized in the future? To what extent did the SPA and Outcome structure enhance synergies and collaboration between resident and non-resident UN agencies and corresponding SPCF programmes?

7) *Strategic pitch*: Are individual programme outcomes, and the SPCF as a whole, pitched at the right strategic angle to achieve wider impact and significantly impact on national level goals? Does the scope of the outcomes, individually and taken together, correspond to the full potential of the UNCT's combined strategic weight; or did it overstretch or, to the contrary, underutilize what the UNCT could have contributed to pursuing and achieving the national goals as set out in the sector strategies that served as strategic reference in designing the SPCF?

As seen, there was a dual purpose to this evaluation, namely to support accountability of the UNCT to stakeholders for agreed results, and to support learning. This was achieved through referring in particular to a backward-looking assessment of results; and by identifying lessons learnt and best practices that will be applicable in a forward-looking perspective, in terms of replication, scale-up and follow-up actions.

The dual nature of this evaluation was addressed through the multi-pronged nature of the evaluation's main end products, viz.:

- an assessment of short to medium term results and of their contribution to national development priorities;
- a determination of what has worked and what has not worked, and why, in the context of the UNCT adopting a DaO approach,
- information in the form of findings, conclusions and recommendations, that will be useful for UN programming and results and governance arrangements (coordination/management) in the implementation and further articulation of the already existing SPCF programme cycle's successor.

The primary focus of the evaluation in terms of indisputable attribution could only be carried out at (potentially only selected) output level, whereas at the Outcome level it followed the logic of the SPCF's contribution to national goals. Obviously, here, the data collection and judgment not only looked at

quantitative performance but also, the relative qualitative assessment of the contribution which largely had to rely on stakeholder assessment data collected during stakeholder interviews and/or through a questionnaire-based approach.

2.3.3. Cross-cutting Issues and Cross-thematic Integration

The UN programming principles of gender equality, human rights-based approach (HRBA), M&E, capacity building and environmental sustainability are cross-cutting issues applying to all programmes. Due to related GoSE prerogatives, the UN in Eritrea in a way had no choice but to embrace the humanitarian-development nexus approach way before the New Way of Working became an issue.

Along a similar vein, it is noteworthy that the original SPCF document specifically mentions that *“the design and implementation of the SPCF allows for cross-thematic integration where impact could be achieved through synergies and linkages (which means that) coordination and harmonization of related activities will be required among thematic areas such as; food security, environment, climate change, health and nutrition, livelihoods, education and, social protection”* (page 31, *Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) between the Government of Eritrea and the United Nations - “Driving towards the MDGs”; January 2013*). The above is a mix of tentative language (“allows for”, “could be”) and prescriptive elements (“will be required”). The analysis will show if and how this passage, which can either be read as optional or prescriptive, was interpreted operationally and eventually implemented.

By virtue of its mandate and role as a trusted neutral development broker and government partner, the UN has traditionally played an important part in setting the normative, policy and development agenda for human rights and gender equality (HR/GE) in countries. Given the cross-cutting nature of mainstreaming the gender and human rights agendas, it was checked whether related aspects were covered and effectively mainstreamed, across the technical evaluation of the eight programme outcomes in line with the intent that gender would be “addressed distinctly by mainstreaming in all programmatic areas and as a stand-alone strategic area” (cf. Page 29, SPCF 2013-2016/“Driving towards MDGs” main document).

The eight SPCF outcomes were thus analysed from a gender and HRBA mainstreaming perspective, including the following angles of inquiry: to what extent were gender and human rights-related issues reflected in the result chain design and related delivery; were these issues properly mainstreamed in the sense of seamless integration, or might there have been any indications of awkward “retrofitting” or superficial (*ex post*) “glossing over”; were sufficient resources budgeted for gender/human rights-related activities, and if there were funding gaps, were resulting reduced allocations equally spread across normative and non-normative activities, or did the gender/human rights-related activities suffer more from any financial shortfalls; and with regards to the SPCF RRM's M&E matrix, were output and outcome indicators properly gender sensitive, and was data always collected, analysed and reported on, in a gender disaggregated fashion.

In cases where only one of these dimensions was to figure prominently, care will be taken to ensure that the other dimension is also properly assessed. In all cases of preparing stakeholder interviews for

the eight outcomes in going through the related data, the evaluability of the HR/GE dimensions will be determined by using the standard UNEG catalogue of criteria.⁴

Capacity development covers basic and advanced understanding and knowledge, plus rendering recipients of the intervention (beneficiaries, implementers, other stakeholders etc.) capable of ultimately sustaining the specific approach, system, process or activity introduced by the UN. Key to capacity building is the question of the interface between individuals and institutions, and the obvious related implications for sustainability. As such, the dimension of “capacity building” sits at the apex of the cross-cutting issues pyramid, since it permeates the SPCF’s structure at any given level and also has two (social services and Disaster Risk Reduction: DRR-related capacity building) of the eight SPCF Outcomes. Indeed, building the capacity of UN staff to then train others and capacitate them, in turn, is the lifeblood of any given intervention.

Hence, the capacity development dimension appears not only under the relevant dedicated Priority Area Outcomes 4 and 5; but it also appears across all of the other technical SPCF cluster/programme axis outcomes in direct support of the sector-based national development goals. The simple scanning of the results matrix for training/sensitization and capacity building activities (examples would be training interventions such as workshops, training cascades, conferences; or long-term support through designing user guidelines, embedded TAs for capacity building through forming tandem partnerships with government counterparts etc.) already allowed to hone in on such activities.

The programming principle of environmental sustainability was assessed with special emphasis on the related Outcome addressing environment protection and climate change issues. Other than looking at the interventions geared towards establishing policies and strengthening regulatory frameworks or strengthening capacities for environmental protection etc. through the lens of the standard UNEG set of evaluation criteria, attempts were made to assess if environmental sustainability concerns were properly applied throughout the other SPCF Outcomes. The obvious pillar or results axis to be looked at for this purpose were the livelihood enhancement and poverty reduction-related Outputs/Outcomes.

During interviews, especially government counterparts and (other) beneficiaries were asked if and how programming addressing the above criteria were well received in terms of perceived pertinence and quality of support, and if anything could have been done better to address these dimensions, and if so, how. Specific attention was given to the perceived success of direct/targeted and indirect (i.e., not specifically planned for or targeted) capacity building in the areas of gender equality, human rights, environmental sustainability, M&E, communications/operations, and knowledge and understanding of the DaO approach and related tools and processes such as RBM, BPR etc. (and its potential repercussions on a potential systematic approach introducing the concept of the whole-of-government paradigm in Eritrea), in general.

⁴ Cf. Table 1.1. “Determining the evaluability of the HR and GE dimensions of an intervention in the evaluation” (pg. 18-20); Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation - Towards UNEG Guidance (UNEG Guidance Document UNEG/G(2011)2); e.g., high evaluability for HR and GE implies that these aspects are clearly reflected in the intervention design (logframe, indicators, activities, M&E systems, reporting mechanisms), that the intervention design benefitted from a strong and inclusive stakeholder analysis etc.).

2.4 Methodological Approach and its Limitations

2.4.1 General Approach to Data Collection and Analysis

The evaluation confronted two meta-sets of data; namely a. (mainly) qualitative data gathered through interviews and b. quantitative as well as qualitative data identified through the desk review and data archive-based searches as directed by Ministry counterparts. This is commonly referred to as a mixed method, or hybrid, approach. Data collected through various collection tools and evaluation phases (mainly through interviews and data analysis using data to inform indicators in the SPCF RRM) was continuously and systematically triangulated against other information sources so that findings could be exposed to different perspectives and challenges whenever needed. The validity, reliability and comprehensiveness of findings gradually emerged throughout initial data collection, taking shape from vague contours to sharp features towards the end of the evaluation process.

In terms of general involvement of informants, a participative approach was applied. To the largest degree possible, the main stakeholders at UN and GoSE level were involved in collecting and classifying empirical data and contributing to the analysis of achievements. In particular the dimension of the review of the governance structure including the design of the outcome framework benefitted greatly from the exchange with stakeholders through technical discussions in the focus group format.

During the data collection phase, in parallel with continued document review and analysis, the evaluation engaged the largest possible number and various sets of key informants. Interviews were conducted with key informants both in group settings and bilateral discussions, in relation to the SPCF as whole and at the levels of outcomes and outputs. Interviewees comprised the upstream policy making and oversight level, programme/project managers and operational management. To the extent possible, efforts were made to also include as many field level counterparts and end level beneficiaries among the interviewees.

The evaluation set out to cover as broad and representative a cross-section of these key-informants as possible, applying different techniques to solicit both objectively and verifiable information as well as qualitative information on perceptions and attitudes. The SPCF involved a quite complex landscape of actors across the territory and institutional structures and sectors at all levels of Eritrea, comprising UN and government coordination and management structures, civil society and private sector partners, development partners, as well as institutional and individual beneficiaries.

In the interest of collecting and verifying critical information, data collection methods included quantitative and qualitative tools. All the data was confronted and exposed to cross-validation by sequential, iterative interview sessions. Explicit and implicit hypotheses and theories were "tested" by confronting them to statements and evidence gathered from among other stakeholders. Assertions made were, by default, systematically challenged to see if they could be backed up by evidence and empirical data. Juxtaposing and confronting different standpoints allowed to assess the validity of assertions, statements, projections and conjectures.

Systematic efforts were made to grant key informants opportunities allowing various stakeholders to voice concerns and critique, for example through combining separate meetings with programme coordinators, implementers and beneficiaries; or individual follow-up exchanges. Thus, a clearer

picture emerged that allowed to establish a better understanding of achievements and issues, problems or challenges.

At the macro-level, stakeholders were prompted to share their opinion (attitudinal stance) and related knowledge and practices about the DaO approach. This allowed to better understand and rationalize potentially existing/persisting differences and discrepancies in different opinions about the SPCF's effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and relevance; and related opinions about strengths and weaknesses of the SPCF's governance paradigms and structures, mechanisms and processes, in particular from the vantage point of collectively delivering joint results.

At the beginning of discussions, a set of "trigger" questions were shared to elicit opinions, view points and facts, and have them discussed if possible among stakeholders. Where applicable, stakeholders were also confronted with other existing viewpoints to gauge their level of agreement. Hence, the standard approach consisted in canvassing a wide array of different categories of key informants to cast as wide a net for collecting information, and shed light on specific issues from different angles.

At the level of SPCF governance and operations, the GoSE-UN coordination, management and joint oversight structures, as well as the structures set up within the UN country team were analysed, with a specific focus on the design of the outcome framework architecture. Related issues were discussed with informants from the level of both senior management to programme and administrative staff.

The involvement of stakeholders in generating empirical evidence, checking results for consistency, discussing hypotheses and shaping recommendations had the benefit of enhancing stakeholder ownership of the final product and the impact of the suggestions and new ideas generated. This will help in future UNDAF/SPCF-related review and design efforts, namely by opening up the possibility of blending evaluation findings into on-going and upcoming discussions related to future SPCF design including governance and programming dimensions. It is hoped that the recommendations can indirectly inform or at least inspire the upcoming (mid-term) review of the current SPCF.

The same goes for those indicators which were reviewed and for which end-of-cycle data could be identified, in the sense that they can be "recycled" and used as baseline data (using SPCF indicators as proxy measures retrofitted into the current framework, or, where identical with current indicators, plugging them in directly where this makes sense and the data can fill data gaps or provide an additional data point for trend analysis) for upcoming reviews.

2.4.2. Specific analytical methods by evaluation criterion and related data sources

Table 2 below presents a synoptical overview of data tools and sources used for the analysis, summarizing the different tools and techniques of the evaluation, as well the related rationale (function, purpose or scope) from a general, bird's eye perspective.

Table 2 Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Method of Analysis	Object and Scope	Data Collection Sources	Evaluation Contents
<p><i>Standard evaluation questions</i> applied to specific Eritrea, SPCF context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relevance – Sustainability – Efficiency – Effectiveness – Impact <p><i>Specific dimensions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Value added or squandered due to coordination (either efforts involving transaction costs or absence of such, wasting opportunities to realize gains) – Application and mainstreaming of UN Programming principles, if applicable – Partnerships leveraged – South-South and triangular cooperation applied – Responsiveness of UNCT to adapt to external needs and requirements – SPCF governance structure – Fund absorption capacity – Strategic pitch of UN support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tailored interview questions to different groups and categories of key informants – Retrospective speculative scenarios (“what would have been, had there not been UN support”) <p><i>Programme-related methods and tools:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Impact screening – Relevance and effectiveness screening – Projection-based scenarios <p><i>Related Tools:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quantitative analysis of performance indicators – Semi-structured interview guidelines and questions – Structured review and data gathering exercises (group work) <p><i>Tools for tracking and assessing performance of cross-cutting issues</i></p> <p><i>Analysis of financial data: budget, allocations, expenditure/by agency/by category of expenditure/programme-related/DaO related etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Focus on Programme results at Outcome level – Analysis of financial trends and distribution of entire SPCF programme – Consolidated Outcome Level results (as per stakeholder agreement and/or reconstitution by evaluator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Document Review – Key informants: UN agencies, GoSE MDAs, LGAs, Development Partners, NGOs, FBOs/ CSOs etc. – Direct observation, visits to project sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assessment of short- to medium-term results achieved and the UN’s contribution to national goals – Assessment of what has worked and not worked, and why – Findings, conclusions, recommendations to improve UN programming, results and governance for the next cycle

The following summarizes the data collection methods, tools applied and related characteristics of data sources, for the various evaluation criteria:

The SPCF's relevance was assessed in terms of the overall programming context, related added value of the UN's contribution to the highest level of macro-level objectives set by the Government, and the specific alignment of the SPCF outcome structure and outcome statements vis-a-vis the national goal structure and respective result chains. SPCF outcomes/outputs and related indicators were analysed regarding the fit and degree of articulation vis-à-vis the national approach, in view of gauging the relative contribution of and through, the SPCF.

In Eritrea, given the absence of a high-level national strategic result framework mirroring high-level goals, objectives and related performance indicators with target result values, and related means of verification, the evaluation looked at strategic sector policies or documents where existing and applicable, with their respective indicators, goals and target values. This approach was closely linked to identifying performance that could be used to gauge performance at the level of programme effectiveness.

In as far as the evaluation criteria of effectiveness and impact are concerned, the bulk of the findings analyzed for the various SPCF Outcomes stems from the revised results matrix collectively revised and filled by stakeholders during the evaluation process (cf. Annex VI). To the extent possible (i.e., where indicators were well-constructed and a coherent baseline, target and actual final performance data were available), the outcome and output indicators in the original results matrix were used to determine a final grade for the effectiveness criterion.

In those cases where the suggested performance indicators were clearly situated at low-level output, process or activity level or logically incoherent in their formulation or cohesion (e.g., indicator not in accordance with actual data provided or no data provided at all) attempts were made to salvage the measure or data by either fixing the indicator formulation so that it would align with the data, or inform the indicators with corresponding data. Again, such attempts were only made in those cases where the indicator and/or data were deemed appropriate according to principles of SMARTness.

It should be mentioned here that the initial draft of the final reporting matrix was based on the results matrix resulting from the mid-term review (MTR). The MTR had opted for the approach of trying to inform indicators with whatever data available without touching at all the actual indicators, even in those cases where the latter were abundantly deficiently formulated or, quite simply, not suitable for the purpose of serving as result level indicator. Hence, mid-term data was often heavily biased in terms of qualitative narrative data that was in many if not most cases not clearly, if not hardly at all, aligned with the indicator at hand.

During the final evaluation, attempts were made to fix these issues, as outlined above. In those cases where the results matrix did not sufficiently and satisfactorily capture the initial programme design's intended programmatic logic and thrust, proxy or alternative, additional measures were retrofitted into the matrix for the sake of ensuring measurability of the interventions implemented in line with the original SPCF plan(ning).

Data sources comprised GoSE statistics and/or SPCF programme implementation or management reports, including sample surveys, project evaluations, special research studies, reporting data, beneficiary counts etc. Wherever applicable and available, validated GoSE data was used in case of dueling data sets, i.e. differing numbers between alternative data sources.

End-of-cycle actual performance data was discussed in view of the mid-term actual progress and target values, as well as, first and foremost, the initially set target value. A grade rating was then applied to appreciate the extent to which the initial target had been reached by actual achievements realized. In each and every case, the ratings (in line with the school grade system of A to F with A being the highest or best mark) of Outcomes are based on a thorough analysis of the information captured in the Outcome matrices' progress data against planned results. Non-weighted averages were then calculated based on available indicator ratings, per Outcome area.

For instance, an overall grade of A+ equals an accomplishment or final result exceeding the planned final result, while A means that the planned final target was fully met etc. The grade of "B-" means that two thirds of the planned result was reached, while a C- means 50 per cent of expectations were met. For every indicator where the data allowed to determine a grade, this was done. At the end, available grades per Outcome were compiled and the simple non-weighted average calculated to determine the final grade for the Outcome area. The obvious reservation towards this approach is that in a number of cases only limited final progress data could be provided due to data source issues or, quite simply, because foreseen indicators were not well designed or did not have any baseline and/or target data to the point of rendering them useless.

Early and/or potential impact data was derived from anecdotal evidence stemming mostly from field visits, such as in the case of the visit to the Auditor General's office (which allowed to identify a very promising development related to the programming areas of capacity development in the realm of evidence-based management and strategic planning).

Efficiency was measured by resorting to the very rich existing analysis that had been prepared within the UN towards the initial stages of the SPCF implementation cycle and, thereafter, at its end. The time window covered by these two existing financial data sets fits nicely with the final evaluation, which thus used those data provided at outcome and agency level.

Finally, sustainability involved a mix of analyzing the degree of mainstreaming key relevant programming principles (gender equality and women's empowerment etc.).

2.4.3. Sequential Structure of Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and iterative cross-validation and analysis engaging stakeholders and comprehensive data was carried out in several phases consisting of two staggered in-country phases. The sequence thus consisted of five modules that built upon each other in the following sense:

1. Remote desk review for the evaluator to familiarize himself with key literature and draft the inception report;

2. First in-country phase for evaluation ramp-up, initial round of interviews, review of results including discussion of indicators, result chains and outcome logic;
3. Out-of-country follow-up to work stream data collection and mission planning processes: In this phase, on-going data collection was remotely supported by the consultant and incoming preliminary RRM drafts were further revised and fine-tuned by means of exchanges between the consultant and UN/GoSE stakeholders, whereas final mission coordination planning for the 2nd in-country-phase was carried out between RCO, GoSE, UN stakeholders, beneficiary institutions and the consultant;
4. Second in-country phase for final data collection and validation:
 - a) wrapping up the critical RRM review including discussion of indicators and outcome design, leading final discussions with stakeholders, pinpointed probing for in-depth and background data, further data calibration etc., thereby fostering the pertinence of the final set of findings and recommendations on content, operational, coordination parameters;
 - b) carrying out field visits of project sites including interviews with end beneficiaries at institutions and at the grassroots level in the rural vicinity of Asmara. This includes Cold Chain Support (Cold Room for Vaccines) for Outcome 1/MoH, Donkeys-for-School/IGA for Outcome 3 (and 8)/MoLHW, Auditor General, MoJ and National Statistics Office (NSO) for Outcome 4, and Integrated sustainable land management (SLM) Project Serejeka for Outcome 7 (and 5, 6).
 - c) a. and b. culminating in the presentation of final findings by means of a stakeholder validation workshop held at MoND;
5. Final out-of-country phase to prepare final draft version of the evaluation report on findings and recommendations, followed by a review phase by GoSE and UN stakeholders to formulate feedback, followed by the preparation of the final report version integrating comments and suggestions received through stakeholder feedback on the draft report.

Through the above-mentioned iterative process of sifting and filtering through different sub-sets of data and information, by challenging statements made, and by analytical triangulation of data, a detailed profile of the issues, challenges and best practices, lessons learned, findings and general recommendations emerged that reflected the complexities of the SPCF's strengths and weaknesses to a fairly large degree. Ultimately, the final analysis distilled a limited number of core findings and messages to be retained from the wealth of perspectives and different (sub)sets of quantitative and qualitative data.

2.4.4. Limitations

The actual data collection process was submitted to a number of limitations that affected the evaluation. Among these must be mentioned limited access to field level visits outside Asmara, gaps in the availability of end line data due to a number of issues including absence of data sources or means of verification, flaws in the design and/formulation of indicators that also negatively affected the mid-term review's attempts to measure mid-term progress against results etc.

The general dearth of readily available comprehensive and reliable high-quality data against key performance indicators made it necessary to invest a considerable amount of time into organizing data

collection processes for the various Outcome areas. The responsibility of populating the indicator matrix with end-of-cycle data was shouldered by UN agency experts and technical IP counterpart focal points. The full compendium of end-line data that could be produced during the consultancy mission and thus represents a by-product of the evaluation exercise is shared in a final annex.

Another limitation to be mentioned is that in the case of the criterion of efficiency (and, somewhat also, sustainability) the dearth of consolidated programme expenditure made it impossible to also discuss fund absorption. This means checking whether monies actually available for spending were eventually spent for the purpose they were originally allocated against. The financial analysis presented in this report is thus based on the assumption that funding data equaled actual spending of resources. Agency focal points of a number of agencies assured the evaluator that this was a legitimate working assumption.

It was further claimed that, while theoretically possible, the reconstruction of exact expenditure data to determine any possible shortcomings or gaps in spending available or allocated monies would consume an inordinate amount of time given that the current financial systems, mechanisms and procedures were not set up for such a detailed type of analysis at Outcome level. (This resulted in a related recommendation to address this weakness.)

Further, it was pointed out to the evaluator that financial tracking systems set up at agency level still followed an agency logic and/or agency standards; and that as such, they were not necessarily compatible with the desire or need for being able to quickly compile inter-agency spending data at outcome level, across several agencies. Hence, the financial analysis assumes that funding received effectively equaled or came very close to actual budget expenditure, in most if not all cases.

Another difficulty arose from the fact that due to delays this summative evaluation could only take place at a point in time situated well into the implementation phase of the follow-up SPCF cycle. Hence, while the nature of the evaluation remains of a summative nature, a challenge arose from the expectation that the following (i.e. the currently on-going) SPCF programme cycle is expected to benefit from the evaluation findings and recommendations.

It is thus the implementation practices and not the design of the present programme which, while not the object of the evaluation, are to benefit from the evaluation findings and, specifically, the related recommendations. Nevertheless, some of the recommendations do refer to general programme design aspects, even though it might seem awkward or too late at this point in time given that the mid-way point in implementing the current cycle will soon be reached, and this summative evaluation does not constitute a mid-term review.

2.4.5. Ethical Standards followed

The evaluation was carried out in cognizance of and complete application of evaluation standards and principles as enshrined in the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation.⁵ This involved ensuring credibility in view of a fair, impartial and complete assessment; aspiring to high quality work guided by

5

Cf. UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (UNEG, March 2008).

professional standards and ethical and moral principles; and ethical conduct in the evaluation process while conducting the evaluation, in dealing with UN staff, GoSE official and grassroots-level end beneficiaries. Impartiality and absence of bias were observed throughout the exercise.

Also, impartiality was ensured including a comprehensive, fair and balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the SPCF and involved parties evaluated, taking due account of the views of a diverse cross-section of stakeholders. The evaluation was thus carried out in an impartial and unbiased manner at all stages of the evaluation collecting diverse perspectives at all times.

All attempts were made to show evidence of consistency and dependability in data, findings, judgements and lessons learned; appropriately reflecting the quality of the methodology, procedures and analysis used to collect and interpret data. No conflicts of interest were existing. In respect for dignity and diversity, in planning and carrying out the interview including beneficiary level visits, disruption was kept to a minimum to set up and conduct meetings to ensure that needed information could be obtained, providing the maximum notice to individuals or institutions they wish to engage in the evaluation, optimizing demands on their time, and respecting people's right to privacy.

To ensure fair representation, the evaluator contacted and exchanged with various levels of staff, from managerial to technical level, across UN and GoSE stakeholders; while also including relatively powerless, 'hidden', or otherwise excluded groups, especially through the field level visits and exchanges with grassroots-level final beneficiaries. In terms of ensuring confidentiality, the interviewees were always informed about, and ensured, their right to provide information in confidence, making them aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality. Recommendations stemming directly from exchanges with stakeholders were packaged and presented in such a way that they cannot be traced to its source so that the relevant individuals are protected from potential reprisals.

In observance of the ideal of avoiding causing any harm, the evaluation minimized risks to, and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation; always seeking to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms that might occur from negative or critical evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation. In the evaluation process and in the production of the various evaluation products, the evaluator always strove to observe the following ideals:

- a. Carry out thorough inquiries, systematically employing appropriate methods and techniques to the highest technical standards, validating information using multiple measures and sources to guard against bias, and ensuring errors are corrected.
- b. Describe the purposes and content of object of the evaluation (programme, activity, strategy) clearly and accurately.
- c. Present openly the values, assumptions, theories, methods, results, and analyses that significantly affect the evaluation, from its initial conceptualization to the eventual use of findings.
- d. Examine the context in enough detail so its likely influences can be identified (for example geographic location, timing, political and social climate, economic conditions).
- e. Describe the methodology, procedures and information sources of the evaluation in enough detail so they can be identified and assessed.

- f. Make a complete and fair assessment of the object of the evaluation, recording of strengths and weaknesses so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.
- g. Provide an estimate of the reliability of information gathered.
- h. Explicitly justify judgements, findings and conclusions and show their underlying rationale so that stakeholders can assess them.
- i. Ensure all recommendations are based on the evaluation findings only, not on their or other parties' biases.

Overall, the guiding principles laid out in the “Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service (revised 2001) relevant to the work of UN staff engaged evaluation“ were truthfully respected and observed during data collection, data analysis, the drafting of findings and the related evidence-based recommendations. The final evaluation report was designed and crafted aiming at establishing and always truthfully maintaining the link between evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations transparent, persuasive and proportionate to the body of evidence collected.

3. Analysis – Key Findings by Outcome Area

The following analysis is primarily based on the information contained in the RRF matrices filled by the Outcome Groups (cf. annex VII). The analysis does not replicate the entirety of contents of the RRF matrix but draws on the various evaluation criteria as applicable and where relevant per specific Outcome area of results and related activities.

The focus is on a selection of (major) achievements by Outcome area. The information is thus an indicative, selective excerpt intended to highlight major results achieved and trends sparked by the programme support provided by the UN. Given spatial constraints this analysis is selective and focusses on the outcome and key output level, discussing related performance indicators wherever relevant data could be provided.

(Disclaimer: The analysis under this section does not intend to exhaustively cover all the details presented in the results matrix. For an exhaustive overview of results achieved under each and every output the reader should consult annex VII.)

3.1. Key Findings – Outcome 1

Outcome 1: Access and utilization of quality and integrated health and nutrition services improved among the general population with particular emphasis on children under five, youth, women and other vulnerable groups

Overall, on a scale of A-F, the Outcome receives the grade of B.⁶ As explained in the methodological brief above (2.4), the grade is based on registered progress against planned results (as measured

⁶ The grade or ranking system is explained in detail under 2.4.

against indicator targets based on available data) applying a non-weighted average to those indicators that could be informed through existing statistics stemming from surveys, administrative reporting etc., as well as information gathered via collective data collection efforts during the evaluation. Under Outcome 1, there were altogether eight different outputs which garnered the following respective rating based on available monitoring data as reflected in the results matrix (Table 3).

Table 3 Grade by output (Outcome 1)

Output ⁷	Grade
Output 1.1 Increased coverage of IMNCI	A+
Output 1.2 Improved access to integrated reproductive health services	A+
Output 1.3 Improved access to nutritional services and supplies	C
Output 1.4 National capacity enhanced to reduce communicable diseases (STI, HIV and AIDS, TB, Malaria, NTDs)	B
Output 1.5 National capacity enhanced to detect and react to epidemic prone diseases	A+
Output 1.6 Major hospitals and health centres equipped with NCD services	A
Output 1.7 Enhanced community participation in health-related decisions and processes	C
Output 1.8 Universal access to and rational use of safe medicines and technologies	A-
Outcome 1 (Overall)	B

Key accomplishments under the various outputs comprised the following results:

- For immunization, HIV and anti-malaria support, along with the Global Fund, the UN was the sole strategic partner providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Health, which gives an indication as to the relevance of the support provided through the SPCF. The support provided by the UN in the field of procurement and logistical aspects of vaccination campaigns etc. is of immense strategic importance.
- During the SPCF implementation period, a number of nutrition-related activities were designed to reduce related issues such as stunting etc. (infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling, hygiene and treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) cases as well as the provision of blanket feeding). However, there was no national level survey to ascertain achievements hence there is no data available to gauge the incidence and any trends in the prevalence of underweight, low height for age etc. This underscores the need to strengthen data collection capacities even in the health sector, which arguably is the most advanced sector in terms of data management capacities.

By the end of 2016, about 2,234 refugees annually got access to comprehensive health service. Health facilities at the health station level were providing comprehensive health services to the Somali

⁷ Some of the output statements presented here are shortened versions of the original statement.

refugees residing at Umkulu refugee camp. Referral services to government health facilities were also maintained. The Umkulu refugee health facility is run by three health professionals and five incentive workers with the salaries covered by the UN. The refugee health facility was kept accessible to the nearby host community as required.

Several behaviour change activities were implemented to sensitize the population about appropriate maternal, infant and young feeding practices. These activities were firmly embedded in an integrated approach combining WASH, community integrated management of neonatal and childhood illness (IMNCI), integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) and IYCF interventions at community level thus increasing the likelihood of success as intended and moreover, more sustainable and stable results.

Eritrea adopted the Test and Treat WHO recommendation of 2015 to improve HIV testing and access to treatment for everyone. Eritrea has thus introduced the provision of treatment of ART in adults, adolescents, and children, irrespective of CD4 count, and antiretroviral (ARV) prophylaxis for HIV-exposed infants at higher risk of acquiring HIV. As a result, the number of people in treatment doubled, from around 4,000 in 2008 to above 8,000 in 2016, which is a great achievement.

Further, by implementing the updated ART guideline in line with the 2016 WHO guideline to treat all HIV positive despite the CD4 count and WHO clinical staging, Eritrea has boosted its chances of progressing towards complete elimination of HIV and Syphilis due to the achievements on ART coverage in both children and pregnant women and the Early Infant diagnosis targeting infants born from HIV positive mothers.

Good progress was made in developing and implementing a new Tuberculosis (TB) strategic plan and sustaining the TB treatment success rate for new TB cases. Another area in which Eritrea covered a lot of ground is the fight against Malaria: The elimination of this disease is no longer hopelessly beyond reach. In fact, it might become a reality thanks to recent achievements, including inter alia: 75k mosquito bed nets were distributed; a National Malaria Strategic Plan 2017-2021 was developed; the Malaria Global Fund Grant 2017-2020 designed and approved; data on the malaria prevalence and infection count was compiled, validated and submitted for the 2017 TB global reporting; a study on the therapeutic efficacy of ACT drugs was carried out (establishing an effectiveness of 98 per cent); the malaria surveillance system was upgraded).

Due to high turnover of staff, maintaining a critical mass of trained health workers is a real challenge. Training is costly and depends on UN support (e.g., the UN provides a 2-week training for health professionals on “Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood illness “(IMNCI: integrated approach to child health focusing on the well-being of the whole child addressing the most common causes of child mortality, i.e. diarrhoea, pneumonia, measles, malaria, and malnutrition).

Community participation in immunization qualifies as a best practise in terms of participation, ownership, cost effectiveness and efficiency. During immunization campaigns, communities provide indispensable in-kind support covering the final leg of the logistics and transport chain by transporting vaccines and other commodities using their animals, vehicles or boats. Moreover, community members were actively engaged in ensuring complete coverage (by helping in announcing the campaign through spreading the word, “rounding up“ the target beneficiaries and/or ensuring complete door-to-door visits, support in spreading sensitization messages and materials etc.). This led to

impressive results: As per the EPI coverage survey of 2017, 95.4 per cent of sampled children (in the 24-35-month age bracket) were fully vaccinated with the recommended antigens.

UN support to MoH helped to ensure the constant availability of vaccine thanks to timely forecasting, procurement and distribution of vaccines ensuring the cold chain thus always keeping vaccines within the recommended temperature range. In addition, support was provided in view of the continuous assessment and monitoring of the program including cold chain and vaccine management. In addition, a comprehensive multi-year investment plan was developed. Capacity was built at all levels and a strong partnership with MoH, JICA and GAVI for which the UN is a major alliance partner, was fostered. Country-wide, all the major health facilities were equipped with cold chain and temperature monitoring devices.

Thanks to cold chain and vaccine management support and the development of a comprehensive multi-year investment plan the coverage of pentavalent 3 vaccine reached a nation-wide average of 97.8 per cent by 2017 and 78 per cent in the 16 most remote areas of the country (as per EPI coverage survey (2017) the 2013 baseline was 74.7 per cent, which was corroborated by the DPH 2014 annual report stating 75.1 per cent for 2014). The 97.8 per cent clearly outperformed the actual target which was set at 90 per cent, starting from an assumed baseline of 82 per cent which was higher than the actual, real baseline as per available data sources as quoted above. Hence, rather than achieving an 8 percentage points increase as planned the actual progress (from approximately 75 to almost 98 per cent, hence some 23 percentage points) reached almost three times that number.

Immunization-related capacity was built at all levels and thanks to support by UNICEF and WHO a strong partnership could be established between the MoH and GAVI which resulted in securing additional funding. This allowed to reach impressive results such as equipping MoH with a state-of-the-art cooling chamber for storing vaccine stocks and ensuring numerous health facilities have their own cold chains with energy supply and temperature monitoring devices. The UN support enabling MoH to secure GAVI funding qualifies as a best practice in terms of alliance building and using UN funding for catalytic purposes allowing to tap into additional financial resources that otherwise might have remained beyond the reach of the national institutions.

3.2. Key Findings – Outcome 2

Outcome 2: Children, including refugees, have equitable access to quality basic education in the hard to reach areas of Anseba, Gash-Barka, SRS, NRS and Dehub

Overall, this Outcome received a grade of B. Outcome 2 had two Outputs which, based on informed performance indicators, received following grade as reflected in the matrix below (Table 4).

Table 4 Grade by output (Outcome 2)

Output	Grade
Output 2.1 Sustainable learning spaces established	B-
Output 2.2 Quality education in schools and learning centres	A-
Outcome 2 (Overall)	B

Apart from UN support (through UNICEF) and the Global Partnership for Education, no other education development partner provided support in the fields of enrolment for non-enrolled over-age children, nomadic education or teacher training.

Major achievements included access to primary education for over-aged, hitherto non-enrolled children (9-14 years of age) who missed the opportunity to attend primary education as of age 6, by enabling non-formal routes to enrolment through the “Complementary Elementary Education” program (CEE). Moreover, the UN provided support to Ministry of Education’s (MoE) “Support to Girls Education” program and to an inclusive education program for children with special needs (donkeys-for-school etc.). The UN also provided support to teacher training and teacher deployment programs of the MoE.

Concretely, ongoing work to promote access to education resulted in 17,145 out-of-school children (6,541 of them females) from the most disadvantaged areas enrolling in primary education during the 2015/16 academic year (UNICEF 2016 Country Office Annual Report (COAR), p.1). The community mobilization and teacher training supported by UNICEF enabled the expansion of the nomadic education programme.

Community mobilization to sensitize household decision makers generated demand for basic education and the provision of learning spaces and a significant number of out-of-school children could enrol since many communities provided makeshift learning spaces via the community-based school construction modality under CAC (Committee at Community level) leadership. Hence, the percentage of out-of-school children aged 7-11 at basic/primary education level, including in Nomadic Education and CEE, was reduced from 23.2 per cent (26.6 per cent girls) in the school year 2011/2012 to 18.9 per cent in 2014/2015 (222,291 including nomadic education (source: Education Management Information System: EMIS, Department of Adult Education and Media).

Joint monitoring missions had revealed that some schools were turning away children for limited learning spaces. To enable schools’ infrastructural capacity (building, benches etc.) to also absorb that additional case load of children, temporary learning spaces accommodating 11,448 (of whom 4,875 girls) out-of-school children were provided by the community members in support of access to learning (cf. UNICEF 2016 COAR, p.5).

There was also an expansion of nomadic education across the disadvantaged zobas: During the reporting period, 1,720 (37 per cent female) out-of-school children were enrolled in nomadic and underutilized schools, bringing the cumulative total of children of eligible school age who were until then not enrolled (and would have remained outside the school system had it not been for this intervention support) to 17,615 (37 per cent girls) since 2015. During the SPCF cycle and as of the baseline year (2013), a total of 59,913 (29,122 females) out-of-school children were enrolled in primary schools (UNICEF 2016 COAR, p.29). Furthermore, the Out-of-School Children Country Study was finalized and disseminated to support evidence-based planning.

From the country's drought-prone nomadic communities, more than 8,000 children benefited from the provision of safe learning spaces and were supplied with school-in-a-box and tents, to ensure improved access to education.

The MoE received support from the UN for regular consultations with nomadic community members to increase their awareness of the importance of children's education. A total of 91 nomadic school teachers were identified and trained to strengthen communities' capacity to sustain nomadic education (Source: UNICEF 2016 COAR, p.3).

In response to documented evidence on declining learning achievements among students, 1,681 teachers reaching more than 60,000 children had pre- and in-service training to improve learning outcomes. Further, as part of efforts to improve students' learning outcomes, UNICEF provided technical and financial support towards the development of National Standards for Quality Education (NSQE). A national technical team was established which developed a framework for the development of NSQE.

In the area of ICT education, 76,000 text books and 5,000 teacher's guides were printed and distributed. 246,000 Life-Skill Education text books and teacher guides were printed and distributed. A total of 1,268,832 text books and teacher guides for Grades 1, 2 and 6 were reprinted and distributed.

With support from the UN during the SPCF cycle, MoE developed an SDG roadmap with support from UNICEF and UNESCO. This is an example of successful inter-agency cooperation in support of GoSE.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiatives were implemented under the Basic Education programme where there have been efforts to champion parenting education linked with adult education initiatives. For instance, a quantity of 1,100 copies of a manual on early learning and development standards (ELDS) were printed in 8 languages for the benefit of all the existing Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres and CCGs (cf. UNICEF COAR 2016).

A major bottleneck penalizing overall implementation of the programme cropped up in the field of procurement. In 2015, critical supplies of construction material needed as inputs for the GPE project could not be secured. Hence, the intended funds for classroom construction could not be absorbed, classrooms could not be refurbished and MoE needed to reimburse USD 6.5 million to the UN (cf. UNICEF COAR 2015).⁸

The GPE-supported country program had a total budget of USD 25.3 million. It had been planned that under GPE, learning spaces would be provided through construction of standard design classrooms valued at USD 11.6 million. In total, the construction component had targeted to construct 315 classrooms, a boarding school and an expansion of the school for children with hearing impairments. Due to the shortage of building supplies in-country related work had to be suspended.

Similarly, a shortage of supply of construction materials also negatively affected the construction of seven WASH facilities under the school WASH programme in 2015. Furthermore, the procurement of

8 UNICEF COAR 2015, page 1: "A critical shortfall was recorded under the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) programme. GoSE was unable to implement the construction component due to a shortage of building supplies, and consequently refunded to UNICEF USD 6.5 million of direct cash transfer intended for the activities."

classroom equipment including furniture was also constrained which prevented the achievement of planned targets during the SPCF cycle and led to the extension of the GPE-supported program beyond 2016.

In terms of reactivity, the Government of Eritrea indicated to UN Regional Office levels and the UNCT that efforts would be redoubled to achieve GPE targets in 2016 but the delays could not be made up prior to the end of the SPCF implementation cycle.

A major challenge faced by the education system is the high attrition rate of trained teachers from the system coupled with and at least partially caused by frail support systems, poor school infrastructure and weak quality in terms of supervision and monitoring systems. There are concerns within government and among the public about the quality of education. Schools continue to register low achievement rates among children across all grades. The 2015 national assessment to Monitor Learning Achievement (MLA 3) revealed a declining performance at Grade 5 where only 25.4 per cent of students attained the minimum mastery level (MML) compared to 49.9 per cent in 2008.

The teacher-pupil ratio did not progress since 2011. While in 2011/2012 the ratio was 1:41, in 2015/2016 it had slipped to 1:42 in spite of efforts to speed up the systemic output of trained teachers demand (data source: EMIS). Similarly, the share of qualified teachers (including those qualified teachers among the refugee population working as teachers in schools for refugees) had declined from 85 per cent (EMIS 2012-2013) to 76.1 per cent (6,487 out of 8,524), by the school year 2015/2016. In spite of efforts, the high attrition rate of trained teachers remains a crucial challenge. Under the GPE program, 256 teachers (40 females) were trained and deployed. In addition, 118 (29 females) CEE facilitators, 559 (290 females) adult education facilitators, 30 (18 females) Special Needs Education staff and 80 ECD facilitators were trained and deployed.

At the Umkulu refugee camp, 50 per cent of the teachers (elementary and junior) received in-service training. In collaboration with and through the University of Asmara, the UN supports MoE through in-service summer training sessions to improve the quality of refugee camp teachers (UNHCR Report).

3.3. Key Findings – Outcome 3

Outcome 3: Strengthened protection and participation of vulnerable children, adolescents, young people, women, and people with special needs, including refugees, from the impact of poverty, harmful practices, exploitation and injuries in high prevalence areas.

Under this Outcome, there were three different Outputs, and the grade attributed to these Outputs based on available data informing the indicators are shown below. The general grade for Outcome 3 is a straight B (Table 5).

Table 5 Grade by output (Outcome 3)

Output	Grade
Output 3.1 Villages (in various regions) are FGM/C-free	A
Output 3.2 Enhanced national protection systems for the vulnerable in place	C+
Output 3.3 Increased access to child justice and adolescent-friendly social services	B+

Output	Grade
Outcome 3 (Overall)	B

A key intended result under this Outcome was the establishment of a functional birth registration system. Whereas the CRVS strategic plan was developed the system never got fully endorsed.

The proportion of unaccompanied and separated children for whom the best interests process has been initiated or completed in refugee camps had a baseline value of 30 per cent and a target of 60 per cent. Actual delivery exceeded the target by 20 percent points (80 per cent) not least due to the strict requirement by resettlement countries that best interest assessment (BIA)/best interests determination (BID) be submitted for children born out of wedlock, father having abandoned the mother and child, divorce etc.

The percentage of villages that are collectively and publicly declared FGM/C free increased to 67 villages with 47 villages still requiring further community mobilization and sensitization by the end of the SPCF cycle.

Nationwide, activities to combat under-age marriages were carried out resulting inter alia in the establishment of an anti-child marriage committee. MoLHW was not part of the Joint Programme but would have preferred to get involved from the beginning. Under the new SPCF cycle, the MoLHW, NUEW and MoH are working in coordination.

For refugees, a counselling service was set up to advise them on issues of resettlement and voluntary return. The related target was fulfilled. Moreover, a victim/survivor referral mechanism for refugees was established and sustained with protection and psycho-social support provided on-site by social workers. This allowed for survivors of SGBV to receive standard SOP-compliant referral services through related channels and receive state-of-the-art services as required. A related secure and confidential reporting system was established in refugee camps ensuring the confidentiality of cases as per professional practice and requirements.

An analysis of the scope and extent of SGBV in refugee camps was carried out through a participatory assessment. A network of health workers, social workers, camp management and legal structures exists to professionally deal with cases of SGBV. An assessment was undertaken on a yearly basis to inform related planning. SOP procedures and a related plan of action for addressing SGBV was established and implemented in refugee camps, in 2014. The SOPs cover the referral mechanism, case identification, reporting and follow-up procedures. The SOPs remain a working document and were updated every year to accommodate new developments.

The target figure for the number of functional community-based committees, Child Well-being Committees (CWCs) working on SGBV prevention and response was completed by 50 per cent (increase from 39 to 45 CWCs planned, actual value realized was 42 CWCs).

An enhanced national integrated protection system was put in place for the vulnerable. The percentage of youth and adolescents receiving risk reduction education and thus gaining increased

comprehensive knowledge on reproductive risks etc. through health education increased from the baseline value of 50 per cent to 80 per cent, thus reaching the target.

Mine Risk Education (MRE) services reached over 300,000 children, more than half of which also received sensitization.

The number of assisted children with specific needs receiving support for education through the donkey-for-school project and other measures increased from a baseline of 1,200 to 1,500 children with disabilities (CWDs) supported. Moreover, 3 orthopedic workshops specializing in CWD support were set up. Community-based rehabilitation support to people with disabilities was introduced in 52 sub-zobas. Training to social workers was provided so that could support people with disabilities.

Under the donkey-for-school project, beneficiaries ended up being able to buy two donkeys or a donkey and an ox, due to adjustment of the purchase power of the local currency. This unexpected windfall enhanced their socio-economic standing in that they could also lend or barter services such as field tilling to neighbors. There is anecdotal evidence that this also had positive spin-off effects on the social cohesion at community level, in a number of cases.

The plan to design a National Social Protection Integrated Framework could not be implemented. Meanwhile, there were 196 orphans that lived in formal, residential care during the SPCF life cycle.

A reduction of 8 per cent of the number of cases of injuries sustained by children could be reached between 2013 and 2014 (HMIS, 2014; WHO data).

A total of 235 families hosting 940 vulnerable children were supported during the SPCF. In 2013, 280 orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) were supported with cash assistance distributed to 75 host families (UNICEF 2013 Review Report). Every year, 4,500 OVCs (mainly school children) were targeted for support, mostly via school supplies. In 2014, 1,000 disadvantaged and street children received cash assistance to cover expenses of school uniforms, text books, etc. 96 single-parent families among refugees and 39 old persons in refugee camp were provided with milk and CSB supply as they were unable to consume regular, hard food requiring chewing and comparably harder to swallow.

UNHCR provided one-time assistance to a limited number of single parents every year. Due to budget shortages, all cases could not be supported all the time.

The proportion of persons with disabilities receiving specific support increased from a baseline of 1,200 to 8,000, still falling short quite considerably of the intended target value of 15,000.

The proportion of vulnerable children and adolescents utilizing integrated, community youth-friendly services under the child justice project could not progress according to plan due to funding shortages.

However, access to child justice and adolescent-friendly social services increased: 32 child-and adolescent-friendly spaces were established. As a result, by 2015, over 80,000 children and adolescents had been able to benefit from the services. 520 social workers and CWCs had been trained by MoLHW.

119 CWCs members from 11 sub-zobas (comprising of the 6 zobas) received specialized training. A consultation workshop was conducted on the 4th Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) document which was reviewed by National Commission of Children (NCC). Eritrea's 4th CRC report was handed over to the CRC committee in Geneva, and NCC visited Geneva to defend the 4th CRC report which was finally accepted. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACR/WC) of the Child of Eritrea was submitted to African Union (AU) experts with review still under progress by the end of the SPCF cycle.

3.4. Key Findings – Outcome 4

Outcome 4: Selected government institutions have the capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver services to all

The Outcome earned a final mark of C, overall. Grades for two outputs under this Outcome are shown below (Table 6).

Table 6 Grade by output (Outcome 4)

Output	Grade
Output 4.1 Capacity improved and systems strengthened within NSO, sectoral ministries and regions for effective development planning and management	C
Output 4.2 Universal Periodic Review	C-
Outcome 4 (Overall)	C

The number of systems and standard practices (e.g., national data management information systems) operational in selected government institutions progressed at a very slow pace. The NSO conducted a number of preparatory activities but finally ran out of time under the funding cycle. For example, by the end of the SPCF, almost all preparatory steps had been concluded in view of conducting the household survey, including the identification of suitable enumerators, but progress had been too slow so the project lost its funding and could not be implemented.

In other cases, projects had actually been concluded from a technical point of view but could not be formally wrapped up. For instance, NSO had carried out a food risk and vulnerability survey together with WFP but the publication with findings never got printed and were thus not disseminated nor used. This is an example of a key challenge faced by the Outcome but also across other sectors, which is the restriction of access to primary and secondary data that does exist but is not officially validated by the Government and hence remains in limbo since potential users refrain from using them even if they have access to the data.

A Labour Market survey was successfully conducted to inform the youth employment and skills training programme and UNDP advocacy work to address youth and migration issues. By the end of the SPCF cycle this survey was still awaiting final clearance for publication.

The Eritrea Population and Health Survey (EPHS) 2010 report was produced and disseminated, in 2013; however, the planned EPHS update round was never implemented. Technical level activities

could all be completed by the end of the SPCF programme cycle, including training in survey methods provided to 28 experts from ministries and zobas.

Moreover, 36 high level officials and experts were trained in using an M&E database, 34 experts from ministries and zobas were trained in results-based M&E, NSO server maintenance was undertaken etc. Activities not undertaken included Masters level training, procurement of equipment, national level M&E workshop and NSO participation in regional survey design workshop, which were all postponed *sine die* and thus remain(ed) pending.

An assessment in view of the establishment of a Civil and Vital Registration System (CVRS) was conducted and the related report validated. A National Strategic Action Plan for CVRS was developed and a training-of-trainers (ToT) workshop conducted for 33 technical experts. Awareness raising and advocacy workshop on CVRS was provided to 36 higher officials from Zobas and relevant ministries.

Overall, there was a protracted inability to mobilize fresh resources under this Outcome. This was due to limited number of donors and the centralized procurement system that has limited technical capacity. Likewise, there are restrictions in place curtailing the withdrawal of money from financial institutions.

The high turnover especially among junior and mid-level technical staff in government offices also does not help in securing sustainability and a reliable threshold of technically capable, trained staff. Nevertheless, rigorous training programmes built the capacity of the staff of national institutions such as the NSO to carry out their work more efficiently. As a point in case, experience has been acquired to conduct national surveys and prepare country level reports.

The rehabilitation of vocational schools ensured the sustainability of the programme but also the expansion of programme activities following the termination of assistance.

A national integrated water resource information management system was established at the Water Department to provide a holistic status update of water resources in Eritrea and critical gaps. A national inventory of water points was conducted to assess the distribution of surface water.

In 2014, an MDG report on Health was produced to show-case Eritrea's policy and institutional innovations driving regional lead on health MDGs at a high-level UN General Assembly side event, namely a strategic platform for advocacy and resource mobilization.

Two country reports (on MDGs and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women: CEDAW) referred to by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) were prepared and defended. A state human rights body was established to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the UPR recommendations.

In collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), a training on the administration of justice with respect to international and regional human rights norms and standards was provided to selected line ministries. The UN actively engaged GoSE to participate in the UPR process and to accept some ninety-two recommendations out of the two hundred.

A number of advocacy and consultation missions created an enabling environment and brokered GoSE's trust. In particular, these included the UNDG-ESA mission, OHCHR mission, among others.

Other than the above-mentioned side event on the progress against Health MDGs, Eritrea also showcased its situation in terms of Women's Empowerment. Other HQ-based specialized fora on Eritrea included the DPA brain-storming event on Eritrea facilitated by the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum (CPPF).

Somalia refugees were protected and received essential services in Umkulu refugee camp. Adequate economic support and social protection services were provided to the refugees through Office of Refugee Affairs and UNHCR support.

About 2,500 refugees and asylum seekers (camp-based and urban refugees) received essential protection and basic social services like food, health care, water and education. SGBV and Child protection were addressed as cross-cutting issues. Advocacy for refugees' local integration also continued.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) capacity was enhanced through provision of equipment. By 2015, 985 vulnerable youths (32 per cent female) had been trained in vocational skills. By 2016, 1,031 vulnerable youths (57 per cent female) had been trained in vocational skills.

Four youth livelihood training centres were rehabilitated and equipped with standard training equipment in Keren (Anseba region), Barentu (Gash Barka region), Mendefera (Debub region) and Adi Guadad (Maekel region). Two colleges benefitted from procurement of equipment for persons with special needs (reading material in braille for vision impaired persons, special computers, special printers, digital voice recorders etc.).

The Department of Mining and Process Engineering revised its curriculum with support of a Sudanese expert from the University of Khartoum, funded and supported by UNDP. The UN supported the Commission for Higher Education in producing qualified personnel that contribute to the economic development of the country by facilitating access to and placement of professionals in the higher technical institutions to enhance their instructional and teaching capacity with focus on training of professionals in the areas of Geology and Mining Engineering and support to the Orotta School of Medicine through the recruitment of professionals and the provision of laboratory equipment. Moreover, research scoping was supported in all six colleges of higher learning, allowing to identify innovative and accessible, meaningful research areas.

Funding support was provided to National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) through ERF. Research proposals were submitted and approved and overall progress was highly satisfactory. Publications of the research reports were ongoing and expected to come out in the near future. Out of 37 projects selected on different topics for funding, 31 projects were completed and more than 6 research papers published in national and international journals.

A 3-day international conference on Eritrean studies was conducted in July 2016 where 120 papers were presented. The conference sought to expand international scholarship on Eritrea, strengthen academic links between Eritrean and international scholars and academic institutions as well as increase the provision and dissemination of top-level research and balanced information on Eritrea.

A functional digital library was established at MoJ. Nine staff received training on digital archiving and electronic library information systems. Related computers and servers were put in place, local IT

experts hired and payments finalized. The digitization of court cases from 1991 to 1998 was completed.

An assessment of the budgeting, treasury and Inland Revenue systems was carried out in view of establishing an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS). The Management Information System of the Office of the Auditor General was enhanced through the provision of IT Equipment.

Support was provided to Ministry of Finance (MoF) to improve the annual recurrent and development budget processing system; upgrade and integrate Treasury systems and link it with budget and fiscal planning systems in view of setting up an IFMIS and develop new Public/Government property administration system to properly record, track and report public property.

In addition, assistance was provided to the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) to analyse and review the existing system and identify all gaps in its functionality with respect to the collection of tax according to the laws and regulations of the IRD in 2015.

In 2015, an assessment mission was conducted by the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) Programme, to identify requirements and suggest options to implement a Project aimed at upgrading the current version of the Customs Management System (ASYCUDA) in Eritrea.

A lesson to be learned from the human capacity-centred training activities during the SPCF cycle is that human capacity alone cannot achieve the objectives of sustainable economic development, efficient service delivery and SDGs. Rather, institutional capacity needs to be strengthened simultaneously, encompassing institutional reforms and incentives, policies and procedures, internal structure, organizational transformation, accountability framework, mandates, vertical and horizontal hierarchy, coordination/networking, Terms of Reference (ToR) and appropriate detailed job descriptions.

When dealing with various levels of government in programme and activity delivery, a broad range of executive decision makers with a focus on executive decision makers and senior management need to be involved. This is critical for the success and sustainability of programme interventions (for instance, the involvement of MoND and sector ministries in the preparation of the SPCF 2013–2016 promoted the integration between ministries involved).

3.5. Key Findings – Outcome 5

Outcome 5: Strengthened national and sectoral disaster risk management

Outcome 5 had few indicators that were informed with data. Overall, a grade of D was attributed for this Outcome as well as at Output level (Table 7).

Table 7 Grade by output (Outcome 5)

Output	Grade
Output 5.1 Enhanced capacities for disaster risk reduction across all sectors	D

Output	Grade
Outcome 5 (Overall)	D

A national policy on disaster risk reduction was supposed to be developed and implemented. By the end of the SPCF cycle, a national policy on disaster risk reduction was still absent. Guidelines and procedures for a disaster management action plan had been drafted, but the national policy as such was still under consideration.

While there were no serious disasters in the country during the SPCF cycle, disaster response mechanisms were in place at the level of institutions and communities.

National capacities for disaster risk reduction were enhanced across all sectors. For instance, an operational DRR National Coordination mechanism had been established. A national and six regional consultative and training workshops had been held.

Guidelines and procedures for DRR were established. The planned regional and national consultative workshops on DRR were not conducted. Thus, there was a gap between planning and implementation and most of the activities remained at the inception phase.

Functional Early Warning Systems (EWS) were developed and implemented. Guidelines for EWS were put in place. A national taskforce and an EWS with necessary preparations were established (e.g., Ebola detection instruments were installed at Asmara International Airport).

Two hazard risk study assessments were conducted in two zobas (Northern and Southern Red Sea regions) aimed at identifying and assessing the prevailing hazard risks and proposing community-based disaster risk reduction measures. Participatory trainings were organized in 20 sub-zones and 60 communities. Trainings focused on developing disaster and climate risk-informed inclusive community development plans.

Short-term income generating activities were implemented supporting 300 households in the form of cash for work inputs targeting persons with disabilities, single parent households, senior citizens and other socially vulnerable citizens.

At the beginning of the SPCF cycle, capacities for the prevention of “Peste des Petits Ruminants” (PPR) in Eritrea were in dire need of strengthening since they were weak and insufficient for an effective PPR control. Accordingly, surveillance, enhanced detection and laboratory diagnostic capacities were strengthened. A project was formulated and implemented to strengthen preventative capacities against small livestock pest in Eritrea. Actions included the improvement of PPR surveillance systems as well as enhanced PPR detection and laboratory diagnostic capacities for better disease control and improved public awareness.

Emergency assistance for smallholder households vulnerable to climate change, pests etc. was provided to affected vulnerable smallholder households, improving their livelihood and resilience. FAO provided needed supplies including chemicals and protective equipment and technical assistance to

monitor the magnitude of desert locust infestation. FAO supported agro-pastoralists in three sub-zones of Northern Red Sea Region through the distribution of pearl millet, seed and processed animal feed. The support comprised training in desert locust survey and control, and the provision of supplies of 1,720 small ruminants and 851 quintals of animal feed to 5,750 affected households.

50,000 one-month-old chicks were distributed to 2,000 households (10,000 individuals), each receiving 25 chicks including 5 males. In parallel, 4,610 quintals (46.1 MT) of chick feed was handed over to the Chicks Growing Centres in Northern and Southern Red Sea regions.

Emergency assistance for vulnerable smallholder households affected by El Niño-induced drought was submitted and approved. The project aimed to improve agricultural production capacities and resilience of 3,720 vulnerable pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. About 110 poor vulnerable households and 200 women benefited from the TeleFood restocking programme project. Each poor vulnerable household was provided with 10 sheep to promote sustainable agricultural livelihood.

3.6. Key Findings – Outcome 6

Outcome 6: Poor and vulnerable households have improved access to, and utilization of quality food and enhanced livelihood opportunities

Based on the analysis of data provided against performance indicators in the results framework, overall, Outcome 6 earned a grade of B- (Table 8).

Table 8 Grade by output (Outcome 6)

Output	Grade
Output 6.1 Enhanced food security	B+
Output 6.2 Access to sufficient amounts of quality food	(no data available)
Output 6.3 Quality food procured for vulnerable populations (including refugees)	B+
Output 6.4 Livelihood skills and employment opportunities of vulnerable women and youth enhanced	C-
Outcome 6 (Overall)	B-

At national level, food security data could not be secured. A new EPHS is still pending in 2018 and hence there was no data available to update 2010 baseline data, thus not permitting to gauge if any progress was/has been made.

Refugees were at least theoretically 100 per cent food secure since they kept receiving a daily food ration of 2,100 kcal per person. However, malnutrition in the refugee camp stood at 19 per cent, which was mainly due to refugees' culturally engrained eating habits, feeding patterns and other factors.

At national level, vulnerable households were supported through various income generating activities conducted by MoLHW, NUEW, MoH, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and others.

100 hectares of land were cleared in 2013 and 2014. By 2017, there had been a total of 29,000 quintals of charcoal produced from prosopis shrubs in Zoba Maekel alone. This allows to infer that on a nationwide scale, it is likely that thousands of hectares were cleared from this non-productive invasive vegetation species. Ground cleared from prosopis was rendered cultivable, again, increasing the surface contributing to growing cereals and other food crops both for human beings and livestock.

90,000 vulnerable children, young people, women and other community members benefitted from awareness raising activities about the risk of landmines (MoLHW report, 2014). In 2013, an IMRE training manual was developed, 960 health focal teachers, Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) and social workers including 120 adolescents from 52 schools were trained in MRE safety messages and messages were successfully integrated in health, education, social welfare programmes. 90,000 MRE posters and 110 MRE videos were distributed in 133 communities and respective schools. In remote areas including those inhabited chiefly by nomads 75 per cent of existing schools benefitted from such awareness raising events.

The number of crop varieties resistant to drought and pests newly developed and disseminated among farmers increased from a baseline value of 3 (Sorghum, pearl millet and wheat) by 2012/2013 to 10, viz.: sorghum (Seare); wheat (Quafza, Sidra, Attila and Sandal); p. millet (White bristle, Kona and White Kona); maize (04 Sadev); barley (Rahwa).

The micro-propagation of date palm cultivars using tissue culture techniques (TCP/ERI/3503) project was successfully completed. 112 farmers from two regions planted a total of 2,000 date palm roots in their own fields. A 3 hectare-large plot was established as a demonstration site for date palm production in Gahtelay. Training on date palm production was given to 186 extension staff and farmers on the technique of planting offshoots and in-vitro plants, irrigation, pollination and the thinning of fruits. Five training programmes were conducted for national partners in November 2016. The beneficiaries included 7 technicians including the head of the laboratory and a total of 4 female staff.

The Project on Ensuring Sustainable Apiculture (TCP/ERI/3502) for Eritrea was successfully completed, training 95 government technical officers/lead farmers on sustainable apiculture including post-harvest procedures. 1,250 farmers received training on bee keeping, pollination and bee hive making with locally available materials. Moreover, 60 posters on sustainable beekeeping were distributed and 1,250 smoke-producing machines and bee veils procured and distributed among farmers. 789 extension officers and farmers received training about the beekeeping value chain. This project which was aligned with several Country Programme Framework (CPF) government priority areas resulted in the adoption of improved practices in honey production.

Regarding the sustainable apiculture approach there is still additional potential for scaling-up and there is evidence for a positive long-term impact of the intervention given that the approach is gaining momentum. Farmers are soliciting information and seeking instructions on how to adopt the approach and various techniques throughout the country. This can be explained by the approach being relatively low-tech not requiring sophisticated training or high investment costs. The approach is easily

compatible with existing practices and benefits outweigh investment costs providing an attractive return on investment.

83 vulnerable families were assisted by receiving ruminant animals (a pair of goats and sheep) for breeding. 20 youth were given computer literacy training. 77 refugees and 15 individuals from the host community graduated after receiving skills training on different food security-related subjects including hydroponic horticulture, plant nutrition and manure application, compost and seedling production, direct sowing, family drip irrigation and diverse agricultural good practices (treatment of plant problems, pests, diseases and viruses).

10 persons with specific needs were provided basic book-keeping and small business management trainings and cash grants for business start-ups.

MoA provided vulnerable groups in the Zobas of Debub, Gash-Barka and SRS through cash-for-work as safety net. Income-generating activities included mat and basket weaving, and the distribution of goat and sheep. In addition, 200 households in Zobas Debub and Gash-Barka were provided with beehives and beekeeping equipment. With support by FAO, MoA supplied 50,000 one-month old chicks to a total of 2,000 beneficiaries in Zobas NRS and SRS. In addition, FAO provided 1,720 small ruminants to 346 beneficiaries in the Sub-Zobas of Ghindae, Massawa, Foro and Gelaelo.

Women were given equal opportunities in business and employment and increased their productivity thanks to the FAO-supported TeleFood program assisting 5 groups of 70 female headed households with a total of 350 indirect beneficiaries to kick-start agricultural production schemes like arable farming, small stock farming, poultry and horticultural crops. In Maekel region, twenty female members of the Agribusiness Association were provided with shelf stands and 15 other women with small agro-processing materials.

60 beneficiaries were trained on making and repairing fishing nets, water management, and livestock development to help them improve their food security and livelihoods.

A lesson learned was that a feasibility study should be done before introducing novel technologies in hot arid places. The hydroponic home gardening technology was found not to be sustainable due to saltiness of the soil, high temperatures, strong sunlight and unavailability of the hydroponic solution in the country.

3.7. Key Findings – Outcome 7

Outcome 7: Eritrea is on track towards the achievement of MDG targets for environmental sustainability (MDG 7)

Outcome 7, with six outputs, received the overall grade of an A- (Table 9).

Table 9 Grade by output (Outcome 7)

Output	Grade
Output 7.1 Communities have access to safe and environmentally sustainable water sources for agricultural and domestic uses	A-

Output	Grade
Output 7.2 National protected areas	C
Output 7.3 Community access to appropriate energy sources for individual and social use	B+
Output 7.4 National vocational training centres have access to modern equipment and new technologies for the phase-out of Ozone-depleting substances	A
Output 7.5 Open defecation free practices adopted in selected communities	A+
Output 7.6 Secured land tenure system implemented	A
Outcome 7 (Overall)	A-

The target number of villages to receive integrated water supply was 97 communities to be provided with access to safe and environmentally sustainable water sources for agricultural and domestic uses (80 rural water supplies, 4 cisterns, 9 micro-dams, and 13 micro-dam based water supplies). In 2013, 6 water supply projects were implemented in 10 communities and 23,250 people benefitted from access to clean drinking water. Four sites were set up for underground rainwater harvesting in NRS Zoba, similar rural water projects were established in 6 villages. In 2014, 21 water supplies were completed consisting of 5 new solar powered water supply schemes and the rehabilitation of 16 dug wells. These water supply schemes provided access to safe water to an estimated 20,000 people including women and children in 21 communities. Overall, the cumulative water supplies constructed or rehabilitated by early 2015 stood at 31 water sources in 30 villages.

In 2014, a total of 3,000 individuals in Umkulu refugee camp were provided with access to safe drinking water. Clean water supply to refugees was provided through 2 tanker trucks, 3 reservoirs and 10 water distribution points in the refugee camp. By 2015, the number of water supply projects constructed had risen to 24, giving access to 41,000 people in 2015. In 2016, 15 water supply schemes were built providing safe water access to another 10,413 individuals. (By 2018, additional access to safe drinking water will have been provided to 46,500 people.)

10 micro-dams and 2 ponds/cisterns were constructed to improve supply of water for livestock use, horticultural crop production, mitigate animal green feed deficiency and recharge downstream wells.

Over 140,000 individuals (including small-scale farmers, agro-pastoralists, pastoralists and rural women) living in climate change-affected farming communities benefitted from 4,010 hectares of soil and water conservation measures implemented on agricultural lands during the SPCF cycle.

1,100 hectares of hillside areas were rehabilitated through different soil and water conservation measures (terraces, check dams, enclosure) including the planting of two million tree seedlings. 3,061.9 cubic meters of check dams were constructed to treat gullies and improve water conservation.

By the end of 2016, 2,234 Somali refugees in Umkulu camp were provided with access to potable water. A full-fledged water system was constructed in order to ensure sustainability and minimize the high cost of fuel and maintenance of the two water trucks. Regarding sanitation, households that use pit latrines increased from 60 per cent to 80 per cent. Also, refugees received cash for soap and sanitary pads (females aged 13-49) throughout the SPCF implementation period.

In the area of pesticide disposal, a local team of 12 individuals (surpassing the target figure of 10) received expert training on safeguarding (repackaging) a stock of pesticide chemicals. A total of 160.8 metric tonnes of pesticide chemicals were repacked safely and made ready for shipment during the SPCF which fell short of the intended 300 tonnes.

In addition to the above-mentioned training of technicians to safeguard chemicals and disposing of pesticides, a nation-wide pesticide inventory was carried out in 294 stores (of which 8 were critical stores) to determine the quantity of obsolete pesticides and safeguard them. The existence of a stockpile of 400 metric tonnes of obsolete pesticides was identified. By the end of 2017 a total of 364 tonnes had been shipped to the UK for destruction.

A system of integrated pest management (IPM) was designed and implemented. In 2014, with FAO support, a foreign consultant was recruited to provide training on principles and concepts of IPM. 42 participants (20 farmers and 22 extension agents and technical staff from MoA, Ministry of Land Water and Environment: MoLWE) were trained in the principles and concepts of IPM, sustainable crop production systems and Farmer Field School (FFS) awareness raising.

A draft water policy was prepared and submitted for official endorsement. A workshop for zoba representatives and other relevant stakeholders was organized on the awareness of efficient water use and management.

The SPCF set out to establish a national protected area policy and legal framework legalizing the establishment of terrestrial and marine protected areas. Protected Areas (PAs) for natural resources conservation and management were to be set up in the Northern and Southern Red Sea Regions. As the first step to establish a regulatory framework for PA establishment and management the GoSE approved Proclamation #179/2017 “The Eritrean Environmental Protection, Management, and Rehabilitation Framework” on January 26, 2017. It is expected that by end of 2018 these initiatives started during the SPCF 2013-2016 will culminate in the completion of a draft protected area policy and institutional framework to operationalize the national protected areas system in three of Eritrea’s PAs (Buri-Irrori-Hawakil Islands, Semienawi/Dehubawi Bahri (Green Belt), and Bara’soli). The framework consists of the following elements: Draft national policy (National protected Area Proclamation); institutional framework necessary to operationalize PA management system; Draft national biodiversity conservation monitoring strategy/program; Draft national strategy for protected area conservation and financing; Draft national biodiversity conservation training strategy/program. If and once all these policies and strategies will be implemented, this will constitute a game-changer.

During the SPCF cycle, the following related achievements could be registered:

The mapping and boundary delineation of native forest degradation hotspots covering 106,469 hectares (16.4 per cent of the proposed terrestrial PAs of 649,100 hectares of terrestrial surface) and human settlement in 11 areas within Semenawi and Dehubawi Bahri Green Belts protected area was completed. 8,499 hectares of mixed use zones were demarcated around 8 villages in Semenawi/Dehubawi Bahri for sustainable SLM, SFM and livestock grazing.

136 hectares of hillside terraces were constructed and planted with 158,989 tree seedlings (*Terminalia brownii*, *Acacia laeta*, and *Eucalyptus rudis*) by local people in the mixed use and buffer zones of the Semenawi/Dehubawi Bahri.

91,130 hectares of critical habitat of the Semenawi and Dehubawi Bahri were put under strict conservation management contributing to significant restoration and conservation of different flora and fauna, resulting in an increase of the METT score for these areas from 29 to 44;

All urban areas had secured electricity supply and due to rural electrification projects, many villages in the rural areas have electricity supply. The refugee camp had electricity supply from Massawa. All facilities in the camp including health and education had access to electricity/lighting.

At national level, in urban and semi-urban areas gas was distributed every 2 to 3 months to households that own a gas bottle or cylinder. All refugee households received cash for firewood during the period. The cash distribution was done following the arrangement that households with a size of 1-4 members received ERN 200, families with 5-9 members received ERN 250 and families counting 10 and above members received ERN 300.

As of 2015, a 2.5 MW Solar PV Mini-grid renewable energy system was being installed in two rural towns and 33 surrounding villages to benefit 40,000 people (with the commissioning of the solar system expected by August 2018).

200 energy saving traditional stoves (Adhanet mogogos) were installed in Hamelmalo sub regions; 67 women were trained as ToTs in the construction of the stoves. In the refugee camp, Adhanet stove was also introduced and 100 refugee households benefitted. Nation-wide, during the SPCF, over 7,500 improved energy efficient stoves were introduced in many rural farming areas, benefiting over 12,000 families.

10 refugee women received a ToT instruction on the improved stove. In total, 16 per cent of the refugee households were subsequently trained on energy saving practices involving the stove. However, the refugees later lost interest in the improved energy saving stove introduced in the camp as it required frequent maintenance. The project was revised in 2016 resulting in the distribution of energy saving stoves made from locally available materials, among 488 households. Here, the lesson to be learned was the need to involve local communities in designing stoves so they could be produced using locally available materials.

National vocational training centres were provided access to modern equipment and new technologies for the phase out of ozone-depleting substances. Tools and equipment for three training centres were procured and delivered to the Department of Environment of MoLWE. The Department of Environment established three training centres in college of marine science and technology, Halay technical school, Asmara and the Ministry of Marine Resources, Massawa.

Trainings were conducted on refrigeration and air-conditioning, targeting refrigeration technicians and students of the College of Marine Science and Technology. A 3rd training centre was established at the Ministry of Marine Resources. 24 nationals were trained to be certified (European Union: EU

standard certificate). 45 nationals were trained in Massawa and Asmara and tools were distributed among them.

In the area of promoting the adoption and enforcement of Open Defecation Free (ODF) practices, in 2013, 163 villages were declared ODF. This figure increased to a total of 336 villages by end 2014, further rising to 428 in 2015. By 2016, another 28 villages were declared ODF, bringing the total to 456. (In 2017, an additional 79 villages were declared ODF.)

A more equitable and gender responsive, environmentally friendly land tenure system with access to secure land tenure rights was promoted through testing the land distribution process under the 58/1994 Land Proclamation. The pilot test involved a shift from the traditional rotation cycle of smaller and scattered plots among local farmers to a system involving life-long usufruct of land. The new approach was piloted in 28 villages benefiting a total of 7,800 households including 35 per cent women headed households. It was seen that the life-long usufruct resulted in farmers investing heavily into improving their plots, which is likely to result or have resulted already in substantial efficiencies and productivity increases. Climate-induced irregular rainfalls etc. have hampered the ability to gauge actual improvements since overall, productivity suffered everywhere regardless of the land tenure system in place.

3.8. Key Findings – Outcome 8

Outcome 8: National institutions have gender responsive sector plans and policies and promote empowerment of women

Outcome 8 earned a B mark, altogether (Table 10).

Table 10 Grade by output (Outcome 8)

Output	Grade
Output 8.1 Enhanced capacity to operationalize the implementation of national gender policy	B
Output 8.2 Enhanced capacity to implement, and report on, CEDAW	A
Output 8.3 Coordination mechanism for gender mainstreaming within Government and UN strengthened	B-/C+
Outcome 8 (Overall)	B

Eight line ministries and institutions (MoE, MoH, MoA, MoLHW, MoI, MoLWE, MoTC and NSO) prepared gender responsive sector plans and appointed gender focal points.

The continuous review and analysis of gender mainstreaming led to the development of a gender mainstreaming strategy to assure gender mainstreaming at community level.

NUEW conducted training workshops in four zobas resulting in increased knowledge and awareness regarding gender equality and legal frameworks against harmful social norms.

Women from different management levels benefited from a training on leadership and decision making. The training complemented government efforts to bridge the gender disparity in national leadership and management positions. The training enabled the participants to gain managerial skills and technical knowledge.

A series of awareness raising sessions against FGM/C practices were organized for the benefit of decision makers, religious leaders and influential individuals resulting in attitudinal and behavioral change regarding such harmful practices.

Similarly, anti-FGM/C trainings targeting community courts, law enforcement officers and police, led to enhanced legal enforcement of the law and a better understanding of FGM/C-induced health impacts.

Under the SPCF, the targeted proportion of women to men in decision making positions was set at 33 per cent. By the end of the programme period, the target had still not been reached given that merely 22 per cent of women were in decision making positions, at the national average. However, at the level of community courts, the target had been exceeded since the female ratio had reached 37 per cent by 2016 (4th and 5th CEDAW reports).

The SPCF had set out to enhance the national capacity to operationalize the implementation of the national gender policy. In building on the 2004 gender policy and 2008-2011 draft National Gender Action Plan (NGAP), a final NGAP was supposed to be developed and implemented. By the end of the SPCF implementation period, a 1st draft of the NGAP (2015-2019) had been completed but was still awaiting its official validation.

The proportion of refugee women involved in decision making and peace building through community management mechanisms they were eligible for increased from an initial level of 10 per cent to 50 per cent, 15 points shy of the target value fixed at 65 per cent. Refugee women held half of the decision-making positions in community-based committees at refugee camp level.

The 4th and 5th CEDAW reports were completed and reported and some related recommendations were accepted and implemented. For example, the coordination mechanism for gender mainstreaming within government and the UN were strengthened, and the proportion of annual resources in the annual budget available and effectively utilized for gender mainstreaming increased. On the downside, by the end of the SPCF, under-age marriages and virginity tests were still being practiced in some of the rural areas. This is to be addressed by continued awareness raising campaigns.

The Gender JP (budget: USD 3,039,949) was expanded during the SPCF life cycle. The JP was supported by a large phalanx of UN agencies including UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR and UNAIDS, which serves as a best practice in terms of inter-agency collaboration and coordination resulting in beneficial synergies leading to enhanced effectiveness and efficiencies (savings/cost-benefit ratio etc.).

However, operational inefficiencies resulted in delays in fund transfers, vehicle shortages etc. These issues greatly affected the ability of the IPs to fulfil their commitments in a timely and effective manner which weighed on the JP's overall progress and implementation rate, and negatively affected the

overall performance and achievement of final results. Addressing such operational issues would allow for the UN and its partners to reduce transaction costs, deliver better quality for money and enhance the general quality of programme support and final results.

4. Conclusions across all SPCF Outcomes including Best Practices and Lessons Learned

4.1. Relevance

SPCF objectives showed a quite satisfactory degree of consistency with Eritrea's needs, national priorities, and international/regional commitments. The general planning process was challenging given the absence of a long-term strategic national master plan that would have facilitated the alignment of the SPCF results chains with existing sectoral policies and strategies. As an alternative to high level nationally defined targets the SPCF architecture used the MDGs as overall "guiding stars" in the sense of macro-level goals.

Nevertheless, the overall SPCF formulation process suffered from the absence of a clearly defined national vision paper and related national development strategy with a coherent set of integrated sectoral strategies, results chains, and results framework to which the SPCF could have aligned. Other than aligning with the MDGs, the programmatic relevance was safeguarded by aligning to the existing sectoral strategies and/or policies; as well as related sectoral strategies and governmental priorities communicated prior to and during the formulation process of the SPCF.

GoSE IPs participated in the design of the SPCF which enabled the SPCF to hone in on specific areas of support where the institutional recipient and beneficiary had identified a need for support and a related comparative advantage of the UN. This resulted in the UN becoming the single exclusive or at least key partner in various sectors/areas of support that can be circumscribed as "saving lives and protecting the most vulnerable" (Outcomes 1 (Maternal/infant mortality etc.), 2 and 3), "investing into the future" (Outcomes 2 and 4), and "strengthening resilience" in a context of persistent drought and in view of climate change-affected agriculture with erratic and shifting rainfall patterns etc. (Outcomes 5-7). For example, in the field of immunization, HIV and anti-malaria support, the UN was the sole strategic partner providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Health, which gives an indication as to the relevance of the support provided through the SPCF. On the other hand, it must be said that Outcome 5 (DRM) was not given the same priority by GoSE.

In this sense, DRM would probably have had a better fit with GoSE priorities had it been mainstreamed into Outcome 4 (Capacity Development) and/or 8 (Environmental Sustainability), with interventions directly or indirectly linked to social protection and livelihood-related support mainstreamed into the respective Outcomes similar to the way the refugee dimension was mainstreamed across other Outcomes. Hence, it can be said that Outcome 5 (DRM) stood out as the Outcome which was the least aligned with GoSE's own strategic decisions.

As mentioned, refugee support was a prominent cross-cutting dimension of the SPCF. Other than that, capacity development, gender and environment which are classic candidates for being considered

cross-cutting topics to be mainstreamed into thematic stand-alone Outcome areas were conceptualized as SPCF Outcome areas in their own right. Green energy concerns were also somewhat integrated into the capacity development outcome and refugee support in terms of implementing or at least considering the introduction of solar panels, improved stoves etc.

The Gender and the Capacity Development Outcome were both endowed with stand-alone JPs which mirrors the related needs as well as comparative importance these matters were accorded by GoSE as well as the UN. The case of the Gender JP shows the extent to which both the UN and IPs fell victim to the silo logic: Since the initial planning focussed on the nominal lead agency NUEW the substantive overlap with work carried out by MoLHW was overlooked. Hence, synergetic potential was wasted during the initial years of the SPCF. Only towards the end of the implementation cycle could this be rectified, to the extent that under the current SPCF those synergies are being tapped into through a more comprehensive design of the Gender JP.

In the actual implementation of the SPCF, agency programmes (CPDs) and sectorial links between UN agencies and IPs played a preponderant role. While SPCF outcomes addressed Eritrea's underlying developmental and social needs quite well, the absence of a national architecture of development goals was compounded by a lack of time in preparing the UN programme, for the SPCF needed to be produced in a certain rush. This element of haste which resulted in staff having to draft a programme under time pressure ad hoc; no time for CCA but built on available expertise and limited data but in coordination with line ministries ("silo logic" affecting cohesiveness of planned programmes and SPCS overall structure; examples: Outcomes 3 vs. 8; 5 vs. 6 vs. 7).

In final analysis, the formulation process of the SPCF would have benefitted from a larger window of time for planning. As such, the window available for preparatory work was very short. Moreover, ideally and in line with standard procedures, the formulation of the SPCF would have been preceded by a sound common country assessment that would have been carried out at least half a year prior to the formulation so as to allow for building solid evidence-based result chains along with a robust set of performance indicators for which baseline data existed. Since the formulation was somewhat rushed, consequentially, the overall design of the programme architecture showed a few gaps and deficiencies that were owed to the insufficient time available for designing the programme framework.

The lack of adequate amounts of time for detailed planning and possibly a lack of RBM (result chain/indicator design-related) skills are also reflected in the comparatively poor quality of the indicator framework. Not all outcome and output indicators were framed in an unambiguous fashion. Others were not realistic and overly ambitious in that they were stipulating policy enactment and other sovereign prerogatives of the State as SPCF results even though these were situated beyond the UN's reach and remit. Hence, the lines of realistic ascription of results in line with an attributional logic became somewhat blurred in that in some cases, high-level results to which the UN could at most contribute to were framed as SPCF goals.

Other aspects that merit being mentioned when discussing the SPCF's relevance are its contribution to "anchoring" the MDG agenda within the country's policy landscape, as strategic programmatic conduit, platform and interface for providing support to GoSE during the final stretch of the MDG timeline (2015) and in preparing the SDGs through the 2015+ process and in domesticating the SDGs to roll out Agenda 2030 as of 2016 (N.B.: the new SPCF cycle's theme is "Driving from MDGs to SDGs").

Overall, the SPCF also allowed for the UN to reposition itself as main GoSE technical ally in the realm of socio-economic development following a somewhat troubles phase during which programme support had come to a halt. This hiatus was effectively overcome when GoSE signalled its interest in resuming comprehensive collaboration in the form of an SPCF, several months prior to its signature. Through the presence of the SPCF, the UN also strengthened its inherent role to act as primary international convenor and catalyst of international aid, by coordinating, managing and attracting (additional) donor support (JICA, EU, WB etc.).

4.2. Effectiveness and Early Impact

4.2.1. Effectiveness

The general achievement of set targets against Outcomes can be assessed as “good” (average grade B-) based on actually measurable progress as per performance indicators (Table 11). The general disclaimer here is the dearth of outcome level data which meant that in many cases, the overall judgment needed to be mainly based on progress against output indicators. Even at this level, only 50 per cent of output indicators could be informed. Only some 25 per cent of all output indicators were well formulated and could be informed (i.e., Outcome/output statement, indicator design, baseline and target set, Means of Verification and data available), in other cases proxy data needed to be referred to.

Table 11 SPA Outcomes, average grade

SPA / Average Grade	Outcome / Average Grade
SPA 1: B	Outcome 1: B
	Outcome 2: B
	Outcome 3: B
SPA 2: C-	Outcome 4: C
	Outcome 5: D
SPA 3: B-	Outcome 6: B-
SPA 4: A-	Outcome 7: A-
SPA 5: B	Outcome 8: B
Average (unweighted): B-	

In a number of sectors key accomplishments were realized that can at least indirectly be attributed to the SPCF. The following overview presents the most important SPCF achievements in reaching a large number of individuals:

Outcome 1/Health: Eritrea adopted the Test and Treat WHO recommendation of 2015 to improve HIV testing and access to treatment for everyone and introduced the provision of treatment of ART in

adults, adolescents, and children, irrespective of CD4 count, and antiretroviral (ARV) prophylaxis for HIV-exposed infants at higher risk of acquiring HIV. As a result, the number of people in treatment doubled, from around 4,000 in 2008 to above 8,000 in 2016, which is a great achievement.

Technical support and management assistance of vaccination campaigns helped to ensure the constant availability of vaccine through timely forecasting, procurement and distribution of vaccines. Thanks to cold chain and vaccine management support and the development of a comprehensive multi-year investment plan the coverage of pentavalent 3 vaccine reached a nation-wide average of 97.8 per cent by 2017 and 78 per cent in the 16 most remote areas of the country. (Outcome 1)

Outcome 2/Education: 17,145 out-of-school children (6,541 of them females) from the most disadvantaged areas enrolled in primary education during the 2015/16 academic year. This included creating access to primary education for over-aged, hitherto non-enrolled children (9-14 years of age) who missed the opportunity to attend primary education as of age 6, by enabling non-formal routes to enrolment through the CEE program. Moreover, the UN provided support to MoE's "Support to Girls Education" program and to an inclusive education program for children with special needs (donkeys-for-school etc.). The number of out-of-school children aged 7-11 at basic/primary education level, including in Nomadic Education and CEE, was reduced from 23.2 per cent (26.6 per cent girls) in the school year 2011/2012 to 18.9 per cent (222,291 including nomadic education. Joint monitoring missions had revealed that some schools were turning away children for limited learning spaces.

Temporary learning spaces accommodating 11,448 (of whom 4,875 girls) out-of-school children were provided by the community members who also identified facilitators to support access to learning. 1,720 (37 per cent female) out-of-school children were enrolled in nomadic and underutilized schools, bringing the cumulative total to 17,615 children (37 per cent girls) since 2015. Among the nomadic communities, more than 8,000 children benefited from the provision of safe learning spaces and were supplied with school-in-a-box and tents, to ensure improved access to education.

A total of 91 nomadic school teachers were identified and trained to strengthen communities' capacity to sustain nomadic education. 1,681 teachers reaching more than 60,000 children had pre- and in-service training to improve learning outcomes. 1,100 copies of a manual on ELDS were printed in 8 languages for the benefit of all the existing ECE centres and CCGs. In the area of ICT education, 76,000 text books and 5,000 teachers guides were printed and distributed. 246,000 Life-Skill Education text books and teacher guides were printed and distributed. A total of 1,268,832 text books and teacher guides for Grades 1, 2 and 6 were reprinted and distributed.

Outcome 3/Social Protection: The number of villages that are collectively and publicly declared FGM/C free increased to 67 villages with 47 villages still requiring further community mobilization and sensitization by the end of the SPCF cycle. An enhanced national integrated protection system was put in place for the vulnerable. The percentage of youth and adolescents receiving risk reduction education and thus gaining increased comprehensive knowledge on reproductive risks etc. through health education increased from the baseline value of 50 per cent to 80 per cent. Over 300,000 children benefitted from MRE.

The number of assisted children with specific needs receiving support for education through the donkey-for-school project and other measures increased from a baseline of 1,200 to 1,500 children

with disabilities (CWDs) that were supported. Moreover, 3 orthopaedic workshops specializing in CWD support were set up. Community-based rehabilitation support to people with disabilities was introduced in 52 sub-zobas. The proportion of persons with disabilities receiving specific support increased from a baseline of 1,200 to 8,000, still falling short quite considerably of the intended target value of 15,000.

Outcome 4/Capacity Development: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) capacity was enhanced through provision of equipment. By 2015, 985 vulnerable youths (32 per cent female) had been trained in vocational skills. A total of 1,031 vulnerable youths (57 per cent female) were trained in vocational skills. An assessment of the budgeting, treasury and Inland Revenue systems was carried out in view of establishing an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS). The Management Information System of the Office of the Auditor General was enhanced through the provision of IT Equipment. Support was provided to MoF to improve the annual recurrent and development budget processing system; upgrade and integrate treasury systems and link it with budget and fiscal planning systems in view of setting up an IFMIS and develop new Public/Government property administration system to properly record, track and report public property.

Outcome 5/DRM: Guidelines and procedures for DRR were established. The planned regional and national consultative workshops on DRR were not conducted. Thus, there was a gap between planning and implementation and most of the activities remained at the inception phase. Functional Early Warning Systems (EWS) were developed and implemented. Guidelines for EWS were put in place. A national taskforce and an EWS with necessary preparations were established (e.g., Ebola detection instruments were installed at Asmara International Airport). Drought-affected households were supported by improving agricultural production capacities and resilience of 3,720 vulnerable pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. About 110 poor vulnerable households and 200 women benefited from the TeleFood restocking programme project.

Outcome 6: Access to quality food and enhanced livelihood opportunities: 90,000 vulnerable children, young people, women and other community members benefitted from awareness raising activities about the risk of landmines (MoLHW report, 2014). In 2013, an IMRE training manual was developed, 960 health focal teachers, Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) and social workers including 120 adolescents from 52 schools were trained in MRE safety messages and messages were successfully integrated in health, education, social welfare programmes. Seven new crop varieties resistant to drought and pests were developed and disseminated among farmers. 95 government technical officers and farmers were trained on sustainable apiculture including post-harvest procedures. 1,250 farmers received training on bee keeping, pollination and bee hive making with locally available materials. Each trained farmer received a smoke-producing machine and a bee veil. 789 extension officers and farmers received training about the beekeeping value chain. The new land tenure law was piloted in 28 villages benefiting a total of 7,800 households including 35 per cent women headed households.

Outcome 7/Environmental sustainability: 51,413 people benefitted from access to clean drinking water, in some 30 communities. In 2015, 24 water supply system constructed and 41,000 people benefitted. In 2016, 15 water supply schemes built and 10,413 people benefitted. Over 140,000 individuals (including small-scale farmers, agro-pastoralists, pastoralists and rural women) living in climate change-affected farming communities benefitted from 4,010 hectares of soil and water conservation measures implemented on agricultural lands during the SPCF cycle.

Outcome 8/Gender: A number of line ministries and institutions (MoE, MoH, MoA, MoLHW, MoI, MoLWE and NSO) prepared gender responsive sector plans and appointed gender focal points, thus most likely reaching a large quantity of women.

The capacity of the UN system in engaging non-resident agencies in the country programming and delivery in support of national development priorities was leverage to some extent, e.g. through the involvement of IAEA under Outcome 6 (pest resistant crops through radiation techniques to create customized mutations etc.). Other agencies that would likely have added value to the SPCF include UNIDO, IFAD (both under Outcome 6), UNCDF for strengthening the private sector through micro-credits etc., UNESCO to provide support to tap into dormant huge potential for tourism (Asmara/World Heritage; Dhalakh etc.).

Under the SPCF, a number of effective partnerships and strategic alliances were promoted around the main SPCF outcome areas among national institutions (e.g., in the later stages of the SPCF cycle, between NUEW and MoLHW through the Gender JP), international partners and other external support agencies (through GAVI with JICA and MoH; the Global Fund Grant to fight malaria etc.).

4.2.2. Early Impact

The national implementation of internationally agreed commitments and UN Conventions and Treaties was supported via a number of activities including, e.g., those related to women's rights and anti-SGBV via CEDAW (Outcome 8), human rights via the UPR (Outcome 4), and HIV infected persons' interests through the Test and Treat WHO recommendation to improve HIV testing and access to treatment (Outcome 1). Results achieved under Outcomes 1, 2, 7 and 8 contributed the most towards MDGs. Interests of the most vulnerable (refugees, children, orphans, physically handicapped etc.) were safeguarded through work under Outcomes 3/Social Protection and 2/Education, in particular. Gender aspects were generally mainstreamed across SPCF Outcomes (e.g., the more equitable and gender responsive newly developed and tested land tenure system) but were specifically bundled under the stand-alone Outcome 8 and the Gender JP.

SPCF activities with a potentially large future or even imminent impact comprise the following:

- The updated ART guideline in line with the 2016 WHO guideline to treat all HIV positive despite the CD4 count and WHO clinical staging, thus potentially eradicating HIV and Syphilis in the country.
- The potential elimination of malaria in Eritrea through strategic planning and grantmaking support (Global Fund Grant).
- Progress in country-wide gender mainstreaming at community level.
- The national protected area policy and legal framework legalizing the establishment of terrestrial and marine protected areas.
- The fight against FGM/C practices through sensitizing decision makers, religious leaders and influential individuals resulting in attitudinal and behavioral change regarding such harmful practices.
- The national CRVS system, if and once fully developed, will boost access to basic human and social rights.

- The “Data for Development“ JP is likely to make a mark but could increase its impact by associating missing key players thus addressing extant missing links in the data value chain, namely: i. MoLG (for bottom-up grassroots/community level localized data collection, monitoring and planning); ii. MoI and WB to build a country-wide and sub-marine IT backbone and ensure common IT standards across various sectors and key stakeholder entities;
- The revised Land Tenure approach seems very promising but concrete data at scale is still pending. Linked to this, there are some promising attempts across Outcomes 6 and 7 to realize environmentally sustainable integrated value chains (bee-keeping, integrated environmentally friendly agricultural production via dairy chains, silviculture/re-forestations and forest management, biodiversity and environmental protection etc.).

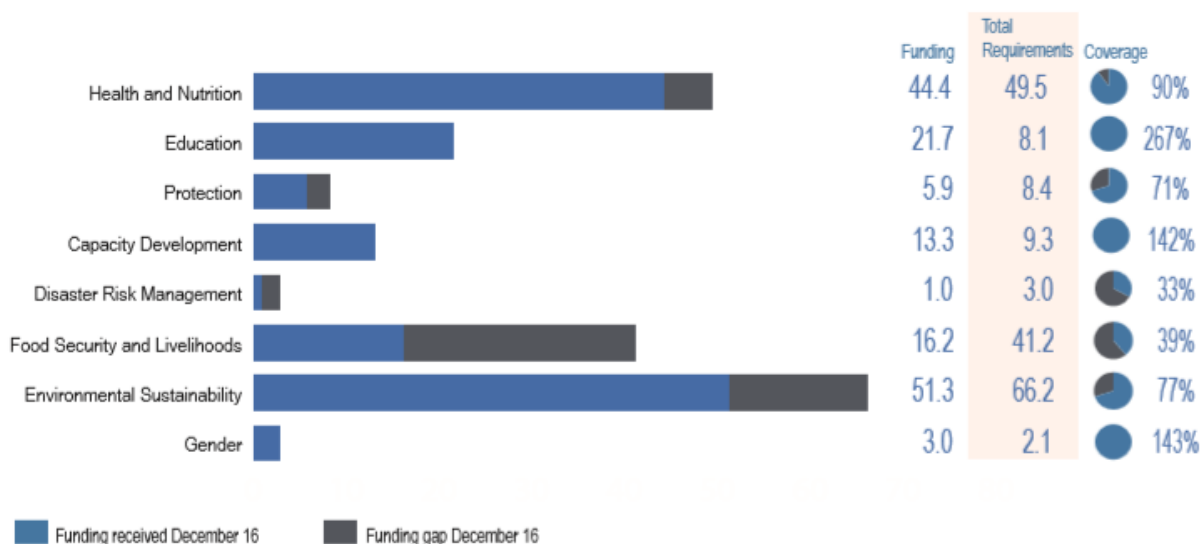
4.3. Efficiency and Sustainability

4.3.1. Efficiency

The total planned budget for the 2013-2016 SPCF cycle amounted to USD187.9. Overall, this amount was reached by 83 per cent (or USD156.8m), at the end of the implementation period. This means that 17 per cent or USD31.1m of the initially foreseen funding ultimately remained unmet. Among the eight SPCF Outcomes Areas, three (Education; Capacity Development; Gender) received more than what had initially been budgeted for (above 100 per cent of planned funding) whereas three (Health and Nutrition; Environmental Sustainability; Social Protection) received more than 70 per cent (Figure 2). Two areas (DRM; Food Security and Livelihoods), however, received less than 40 per cent funding.

The two Outcomes with the largest funding requirements (Environmental Sustainability at USD66.2m or 35.2 per cent of the total planned budget; Health and Nutrition at USD49.5m or 26.3 per cent of the total planned budget) received decent funding at 77 per cent and 90 per cent coverage rates, respectively. The Education outcome, initially planned as the third largest Outcome area in terms of funding requirements (8.1 per cent, only DRM with 3 per cent and Gender at 2.1 per cent had smaller planned budgets) ended up as the Outcome with the third-largest effective funding received (USD27.1m), with only Health and Nutrition at USD44.4m and Environmental Sustainability at USD51.3m receiving higher absolute amounts of budget support.

Figure 2 Funding and requirements by SPCF Outcome Area (in millions of USD), as of 31 December 2016



(Source: Eritrea Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) 2013-2016 Funding Snapshot (as of 31 December 2016); prepared by OCHA based on data submitted by participating UN agencies).

The coverage rates of planned funding presented above deserve a brief discussion. Since some outcomes received far more funding than initially planned for, the total coverage rate can be qualified as “gross coverage”. In total, funding beyond initial planning amounted to USD18.5 million. This amount was shared between the Outcomes of Education (USD13.6 million or an extra 67 per cent), Capacity Development (USD4 million equivalent of additional 42 per cent) and Gender (USD0.9 million or 143 per cent of the initial planned budget). If the total coverage rate was calculated as net coverage, funding received beyond initial planned outcome budget would need to be deducted.

In this case, the additional “excess funding” of USD 18.5 million would increase the total funding gap by the same amount thus only counting the total received as per planned budget figures per Outcome rather than the absolute total received including added “surplus funding”. In this case, the funding gap against the initial planned budget of USD187.9m would increase from USD 31.1 million to USD 49.6 million; reducing the total received from USD 156.6 million (83 per cent of total budget received against initial planned budget) to 138.1 million (73.5 per cent).

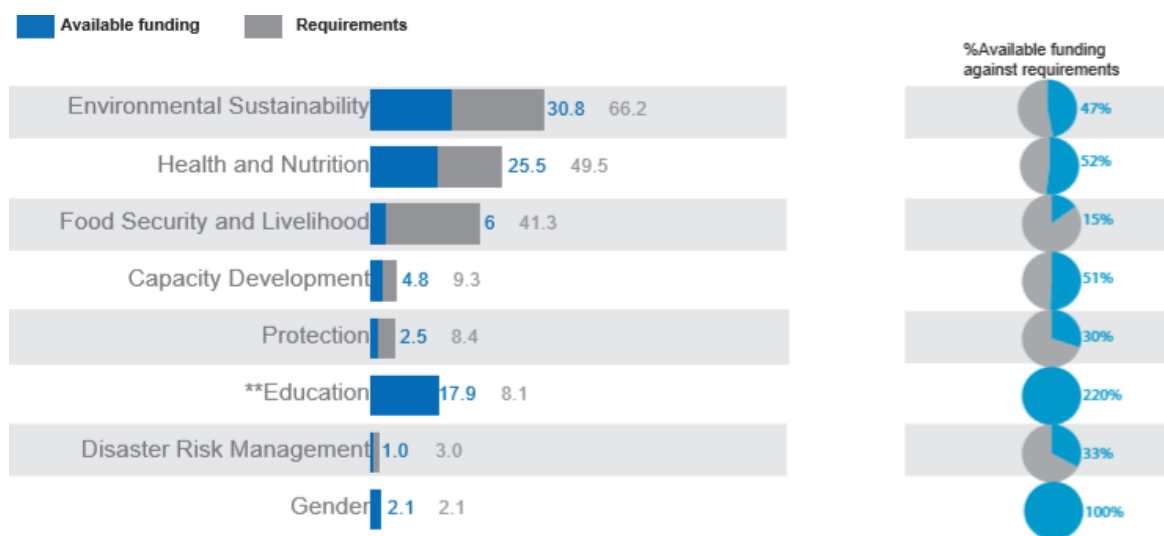
Calculating the net coverage is not a merely academic exercise since the substantive “excess funding” was received by only some outcomes and thus did not benefit all outcomes, equally. On the other hand, the ability of the above-mentioned outcome areas who managed to attract additional funding (way) above and beyond initially planned amounts also indicates a high absorption capacity as well as at least sufficient quality of outputs delivered. This reflects positively on the efficient management of the Education, Gender and Capacity Development outputs and the ability of the UN and respective IPs to meet donor expectations.

It also shows reciprocal satisfaction between the UN and involved IPs in the respective Outcome areas. In the case of the Education outcome it also reflects nimbleness and a capacity of adaptation

to overcome challenges and raise additional funds. Initially, this specific Outcome was facing tremendous challenges in absorbing available funds due to procurement issues. These problems were ultimately effectively side-stepped and resulted in a novel funding source being secured (in the form of the “Global Alliance for Education”) and additional funds being absorbed way beyond initial expectations.

This is underscored by the coverage rates of the Education, Capacity Development and Gender Outcomes at the half-way point of the SPCF cycle (end 2014/early 2015). The Figure 3 shows that the Education and Gender outcomes had were already well ahead of the other outcomes in terms of resource mobilization and fund absorption with coverage rates of 220 per cent and 100 per cent respectively, while the Capacity Development outcome showed solid advancement (51 per cent coverage after 50 per cent of the planned timeline).

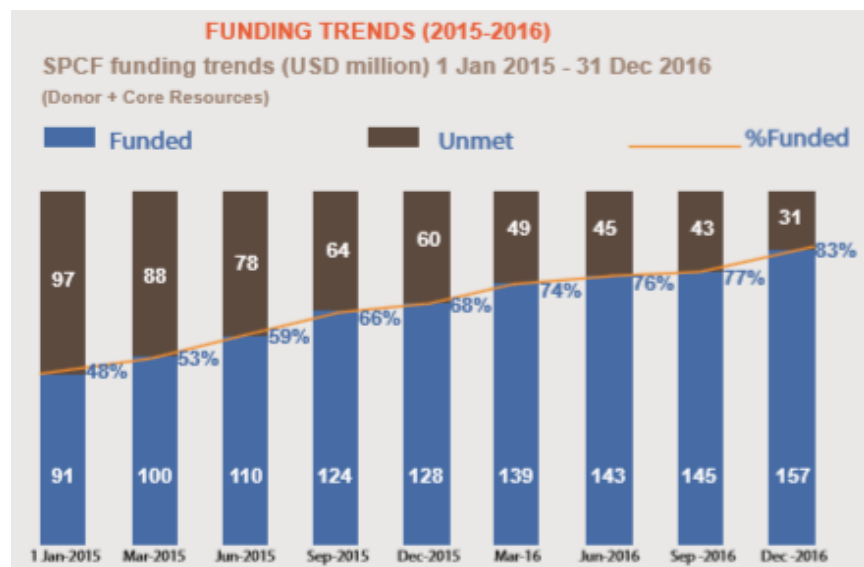
Figure 3 Funding and Requirements by SPCF Outcome Area (Millions of USD), as of end 2014/early 2015



***This includes US\$15.4million that UNICEF received from the Global Partnership for Education, which is additional to the SPCF initial project requirements.*

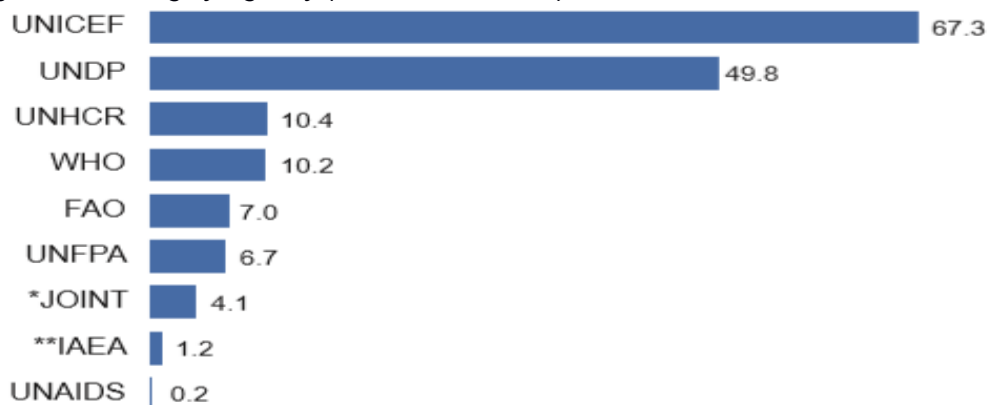
Figure 4 shows that at the mid-term (2 of 4 years of the SPCF cycle) 48 per cent of the foreseen budget needs were covered (USD91m funded, USD97m unmet). The coverage rate increased continuously over time and had reached 68 per cent after 3 of the 4 years of the SPCF cycle. As seen above, by the end of the cycle the coverage had reached 83 per cent.

Figure 4 Funding Trends (2015-2016)



The distribution of effective budget funding under management by agency shows that UNICEF and UNDP by far managed the largest budget portfolios under the SPCF, with USD67.3m (43 per cent of total funding under management) and USD49.8m (32 per cent), respectively (Figure 5). Together, these two agencies managed 75 per cent of the absolute amount of SPCF expenditures. In adding agency-specific funding received and expenditures to implement the two JPs on data and gender, UNICEF and UNDP were responsible for managing around 77 per cent of received funding. UNHCR, WHO, FAO, UNFPA, IAEA, UNAIDS (and OCHA which did not implement any funding but had staff in-country) all taken together had the remaining quarter of the SPCF funding under their managerial responsibility.

Figure 5 Funding by Agency (in millions of USD)



*Joint programmes (UNFPA/UNDP/UNICEF/UNAIDS/UNHCR)
 **Non-resident agency

The actual potential to create synergies among agencies and involve concerted efforts to optimise results and avoid duplication was not fully realized. An example of such shortcomings on the GoSE side would be the Gender JP which was initially limited to the mainly UNFPA-supported NUEW as IP, not involving the mainly UNICEF-supported MoLHW. Another case in point would be the lack to provide integrated support to the dairy results chain, where it would have made to link UNIDO-support to UNDP-provided livelihoods and IGA activities. Another point to be noted is the absence on UNCDF with their expertise in providing micro-credits.

In terms of the outcome design the programme might have benefitted from a reduced number of Outcomes. For instance, given the importance of agricultural production for the economy and the livelihoods of rural Eritrean households, it would have made sense to combine outputs related to the water-climate-energy nexus and food production. Under the SPCF, these various elements were aligned to a sector approach, across different Outcomes, namely 5 (DRM/DRR), 6 (Livelihoods) and 7 (Environment).

The general efficiency would have benefitted from a joint SPCF oversight and coordination mechanism in the form of a Steering Committee. A comprehensive SPCF M&E and RBM oversight mechanism was sorely lacking. Apart from the health and education sectors which boast of reasonably strong administrative reporting mechanisms, the RBM function was absent from macro-level management at the Outcome and cross-Outcomes levels. Programme and project implementation, typically at single agency level, drove SPCF implementation across most outputs. Result Groups at Outcome level that would have allowed to better coordinate interventions (other than JPs) across agencies, did not exist. There was also no functional PMT.

The JP modality, while somewhat allowing to reduce transaction costs, did run into some roadblocks and gridlock at the level of political decision making (Data JP) and in terms of traditional silo logic (Gender JP). Other than through JPs, participating agencies could also coordinate activities through Result Groups and joint programming including joint initiatives. Whether this type of enhanced coordination at Outcome level would result in similar synergies as those that can be realized through JPs, remains to be seen. It is pretty clear, though, that better efficiencies and enhanced effectiveness at Outcome level can be achieved through Result Groups with clear ToRs that are run as multi-agency management hubs, rather than loosely organized ad hoc-style Outcome level coordination meetings that do not hold too much sway over agency-driven programme/project implementation along parallel and largely mutually isolated tracks.

Operational efficiency-related issues were identified especially, but not only, with regards to Outcome 8 (Gender) given that the current banking system and its procedures delayed the implementation status. Reimbursements were not advanced in time and delayed administrative approvals postponed the implementation of activities. There were also some delayed activity reports from some of the zobas. The limited availability of vehicles and fuel delayed joint monitoring of the program. Not all agencies managed to fulfil their timely commitments toward the achievement of set results. According to one key stakeholder, this created discomfort for the implementing partner and greatly affected the Gender JP's implementation rate.

In addition, another issue related to financial and budgetary procedures that has obvious ramifications for current and future operational practices is how to properly reflect the value of in-kind and technical

support provided by GoSE, but also the UN, in resource planning frameworks as well as in the administrative tracking of allocations and related expenditures. Regarding the limitations of the current financial analysis, it is noted that UN consultancy support was part of the SPCF budget, and GoSE in-kind support was probably quite comprehensively reflected but not calculated in standardized fashion and likely to show an inflationary bias; whereas UN staff time support was likely not included at all in the budget.

In this respect, the following description of the current situation and related suggestions ought to be considered:

- a. Budget figures for the previous (and the current) SPCF cycle do include the financial value of technical support provided by consultants; on the other hand, technical support provided by regular staff is not reflected in the budget;
- b. Other than the financial value of technical support for specific operational programme/project activities, general managerial oversight and coordination support also require substantial amounts of staff time;
- c. In-kind support provided by the Government, while likely in many if not most cases captured in the budget, was almost certainly not translated into an equivalent monetary value in a standardized manner and systematically reflected in and across SPCF budgetary documents (from project/programme to the SPCF framework level);
- d. It must be assumed that under the original draft budget for the previous SPCF, non-cash support by staff and GoSE and other in-kind support were not reflected in the original 2012 draft;
- e. It can be equally assumed that in those cases where IPs put forward a cash equivalent amount for their in-kind support, these amounts were worked into the “funds secured/mobilized” section at the project/programme and possibly logframe budget level but probably not into the overall planning figure(s) of the budget;⁹
- f. To conclude, a related finding or recommendation is that there is a need to standardize procedures and define a precise formula and related guidelines on how to calculate in-kind support; e.g., by reflecting the actual cost of staff time spent as a percentage of the overall monthly staff salary (counting hours spent; or estimating a percentage of staff time (to be) spent against certain tasks or activity categories such as management oversight, direct or indirect capacity building of IPs/counterparts etc., costs incurred including DSA during field trips etc.) in actual budget figures;
- g. Moreover, in view of hitherto non-quantified SPCF support (both governmental and UN in-kind and staff time support) it is recommended to launch a related discussion with UN partners about how this can be retroactively estimated, be it through a rough guesstimate. Here, under the assumption that no such related methodology exists, yet, on how this can be done in a

⁹ If this were to prove true, this seems to imply that in-kind support provided by GoSE/IPs ought to be converted into the equivalent cost of those inputs (services, materials, goods etc.) had they been freely procured on the (local or global) market, short of revising the overall required budget figure with every single unforeseen in-kind contribution. Additional adjustment factors might need to be worked into the equation so as to reflect quality differentials between the intrinsic value of internationally procured and local, in-kind contributions. The alternative would be to revise the overall planned budget (mostly: downwards), accordingly, each time local in-kind contributions need to be factored in as replacement of inputs initially budgeted for, which would imply the shrinking of the budget with each unexpected in-kind contribution of locally procured services replacing initially planned-for internationally procured inputs. As a rule, the formula should minimize the bias or distortion of the coverage rate of secured funding over the total planned budget.

standardized way, the focus should be on a quick-fix solution erring on the side of robustness given the short time-frame.

- h. The method(ology) developed in view of monetizing/quantifying such support could then be perfected over the coming months if not years (and be tested and further improved during the current SPCF); the related experiment might result in regional/HQ-level involvement and leadership given the underlying complexities and implications in view of agency standards etc. It might (even) become part of the BOS “bouquet“.

4.3.2. Sustainability

There is evidence that the SPCF programme improved long-term institutional capacity along the parameters of technical expertise, financial independence and participation of rights holders in process. The foremost example would be the results achieved under Outcome 4 (Capacity Development) where statistical and data management capacity was built in a number of areas including the statistics office and the Ministry of Justice, in particular.

In terms of building an evidence basis for policies and programme/project designs targeting the most vulnerable, including disaggregated data on the basis of sex, location, economic status and other key socio-economic characteristics important for the future commitment of “leave no one behind”, the SPCF laid the foundation through the Data JP by strengthening capacities for data collection and analysis. This being said, the overall effect of creating an enabling environment by means of providing a solid evidence basis through updated viable, comprehensive and representative data on household characteristics is still pending given the delays in data collection.

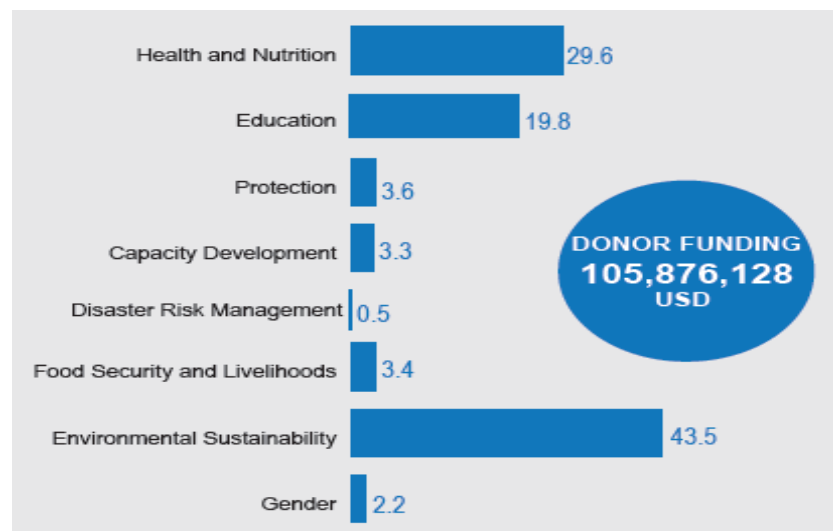
Under Outcome 1, while financial independence is not the adequate concept to apply, the fact that the UN helped MoH to establish a link to GAVI certainly boosted the Ministry’s access to financial resources in a major way. The donkey-for-school programme and the land tenure reform pilot, on the other hand, are primary examples of how rights holders’ entitlements and socio-economic security were strengthened quite spectacularly, and in a sustainable manner. Important gains have been made in terms of gender rights and entitlements.

For example, if the current momentum can be upheld and stepped up, the banning and complete eradication of FGM/C could become a reality within a generation. In the field of education, many out-of-school children and nomadic children benefited from sustainable systemic solutions and adaptations that granted them access to education. Children in conflict with the law benefitted from customized support. Orphans and refugees’ interests were addressed in sustainable fashion. These are only some examples of the ways in which the SPCF sustainably addressed the interests of vulnerable right holders.

The ability to raise more than 10 per cent (USD18.5m) of funding in excess of initially planned budgets for specific outcomes speaks to the resilience of existing access to donor support among UN agencies. The rate of overall funding coverage (83 per cent) indicates a solid and quite sustainable funding architecture and strategy. Some two thirds of overall effective funding received (approximately USD106m of roughly USD157m) were covered through non-core donor funding with one third covered

through core funding, which is a substantial rate that reflects realistic budgeting and a significant initial funding rate (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Donor contribution by Outcome as of 31 December 2016



(Source: OCHA SPCF 2013-2016 Total Funding Overview; 2017)

4.3.3. Lessons learnt

Challenges and Bottlenecks

Key challenges and bottlenecks in implementing the SPCF were:

1. Quasi-absence of regular SPCF monitoring: The M&E and RBM function was neglected, monitoring of agency driven interventions was carried out by the IP and/or responsible UN agency. In general, the value of an overarching SPCF monitoring function could not be tapped into in the absence of required systems, processes, understanding and practices including a dearth of high-level monitoring data at household level for outcome and impact level monitoring;
2. Among the scarce monitoring data that was available, gender analysis and LNOB-related data disaggregation was generally underdeveloped or often quite simply missing;
3. A high staff turn-over resulted in capacity drain, wastage of prior investments through training and capacitating staff, the need for lengthy, capital-intensive re-training of newly hired staff or left crucial gaps among the human resource base thus undermining the effective implementation of interventions;
4. Coordination Gaps/Fragmentation in programming and implementation approach (joint programming, fundraising, implementation, monitoring, reporting): Sectoral mindset and/or agency-specific bottom-up planning resulted in insufficient coordination of projects given the narrow design of Outcomes. Related examples would be: Under Outcome 8, activities implemented by MoLHW under Outcome 3 with support by UNICEF showed huge overlap and/or potential for synergies with activities under the Gender JP as implemented under Outcome 8 via the IP NUEW, with support by UNFPA and UNDP; also, FAO should have played a much more important role under the UNDP-dominated Outcomes 5 and 7. A related question would be

whether specific activities under outputs if not entire outputs or even the entire outcomes should not have been merged from the outset in the interest of effectiveness and efficiency (3 and 8; 5+6+7 would have been candidates for such mergers); in 2012, the absence of a governmental NDS planning framework hampered SPCF alignment;

5. Some initially planned SPCF results were rendered moot due to shifting priorities (example: DRR/Outcome 5; Demining/Outcome 6);
6. General capacity gaps (both human and systemic) delayed or negatively affected the speedy implementation of quality services and programmes; however, in all fairness, this was readily acknowledged and addressed consequentially through significant capacity development interventions mainly funnelled through the related Outcome 4 (technical support to the Auditor General, the Ministry of Justice etc.).
7. In terms of the SPCF architecture and the scope and content of SPAs and Outcome areas (Tables 12, 13 and 14), the following issues could be observed:
 - The number of SPAs and outcomes could have been reduced in the interest of ensuring stringency and enhancing opportunities for, and realize dormant or latent, synergies (SPAs could have been reduced to the following three: 1) BSS; 2) Resilient Livelihoods and Environment; 3) Capacity Development).
 - In terms of the Outcomes, their number could have been reduced to three or four:
 - a. Health
 - b. Capacity development: Outcome 4 shows intrinsic overlap with SPA/Outcome 8/Gender;
 - c. Outcomes 5/DRR, 6/Food Security and Livelihoods and Outcome 7/Environmental Sustainability should have been put under same SPA together with Livelihoods (under current Pillar 4, yet again, Resilience isolated from DRR/Environmental Sustainability under Pillar 2. Reconsider pros and cons of NOT merging; recommendation is by default to merge given the interconnectedness of the issues);
 - d. Outcomes 3 and 8 both dealing with same issue, namely FGM/C sensitization/ prevention, ex-post treatment (fistula) under Outcome 1.
 - e. At least some components of Education could also have been merged with Outcomes 3 and 8 (the donkey-for-school programme intrinsically overlapping with all three areas, including even Outcome 6).

Table 12 Previous SPCF programme architecture/structure

SPA	Outcome
1-BSS	1-Health and Nutrition
	2-Education
	3-Social Protection
2-Systems and Capacity Development	4-Planning and Service Delivery Capacities
	5-DRR
SPA3/Outcome 6-Food and Livelihoods	
SPA4/Outcome 7-Environment	
SPA5/Outcome 8-Gender	

Table 13 Current SPCF programme architecture/structure

Pillar	Outcome
I-BSS	1-Health and Nutrition
	2-WASH
	3-Education
II-Environment, Resilience and DRR	4-Environment
III-Capacity Development	5-Planning and Service Delivery Capacities
IV-Inclusive Growth, Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods	6-Food and Livelihoods
	7-Gender
	8-Social Protection

Table 14 Alternative basic SPCF programme architecture/structure

RG	Outcomes	JPs	
1-BSS	1-Health and Nutrition	DaO JP1: Social Protection and Gender (all other Outcomes and JP2)	DaO JP2: Capacity Development (all other Outcomes and JP1)
	2-WASH		
	3-Education		
2-Resilient Livelihoods, Food Security and Environmental Sustainability	4-Environment and DRM		
	5-Food and Livelihoods		

Hence, an alternative more stringent SPCF design organized and managed according to the Results Group (RG) logic (cf. DaO SOPs) could have looked like this (Table 15):

- RG1: Saving Lives and Ensuring A2BSS (SPA 1: Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 8)
 - Component A: Health (communicable and non-communicable diseases, systemic capacity)
 - Component B: Education (focus on LNOB including girls, out-of-school children, nomadic children)
 - Component C: Social Protection
 - Component D: Gender

N.B.: Alternatively, components C and D (Outcomes 3 and 8) could also have been organized as separate RG, possibly including elements of, or the entire Outcome area 2 (Education).
- RG2: Strengthening Resilience and Livelihoods (SPAs 3-5: Outcomes 5-7)
- RG3: Setting up Systems and building capacity (SPA 2: Outcome 4 and part of Outcome 5)

Table 15 Suggested structure

<p>Top Level: Steering Committee; Secretariat including SPCF M&E Function to be supported by RCO and MoND; RGs responsible for quarterly Output reporting</p>
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Result Groups (Chaired by HoA)	SPCF Outcomes 2013-2016	Comment
RG1/Saving Lives and BSS+ (including Social Protection and Gender) UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNAIDS (IPs: MoH, MoE, MoLHW, NUEW, NUEYS, ORA)	1+2+(3+8) and link to RG 3 (Outcome 4+)	Treatment/campaign-related nutrition-related activities to be kept under RG1
RG2/Resilient Livelihoods, Food Security and Environmental Sustainability FAO, UNDP, UNCDF, IFAD, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNEP (IPs: MoA, MoLWE, NUEW, NUEYS)	5+6+7 and link to RG3 (Outcome 4+)	NUEW/NUEYS: Youth and Gender JP across all 3 RGs (3 components/outcome modules)
Cross-cutting RG: RG3/Economic Governance and Evidence-based Planning (a) UN: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, ILO (b) Donors and TA: WB, ADB, EU (c) IPs: MoLG, MoTI, MoJ. MoH, MoE, MoC, MoI, NUEW, NUEYS	4	Cross-cutting/strong connection with RGs 1 and 2 in terms of indicator design and analysis Introduce: Micro-Credit component via UNCDF; Tourism Support National Procurement Institute; National Stats College Focus on (RBM JP): a. integrated IT backbone (WB/ADB) b. CRVS c. MPHS 4 d. RBM (AG, all sectors/ministries) e. SDG MAPS (VNR, Vision 2035, plan 3x5 or 4x4 NDS cycles) f. Meteorological and Environmental Data (JP RG2 and RG3)

Best Practices

Best practices could be registered in terms of SPCF resilience and flexibility. The most prominent examples in this department are:

1. Successfully tapping into existing potential synergies after realizing interfaces and overlaps in the process of programme/project implementation, with the best example being the Gender JP which in the 2nd half of the SPCF cycle was re-structured more rationally through the collaboration of MoLHW (“housed” under Outcome 3) and NUEW as the Gender JP custodian under Outcome 8.

2. Using a top-level goal tier such as the MDG framework (see the referencing of relevant MDGs for SPCF Outcomes in the table below) for strategically anchoring the SPCF high-level goals in a super-structure, a practice that is currently pursued via introducing the SDGs and intended support helping GoSE develop an SDG-related national development planning.
3. Realizing added value by integrating interventions across multiple sectors as proven in the multi-faceted Anseba project by UNDP/UNCDF as started under the preceding SPCF cycle.
4. Instilling lasting change through influencing attitudes and behaviours was one of the entry points of intervention under Outcome 1 (Health). This included several behaviour change activities that were implemented to sensitize the population about appropriate maternal, infant and young feeding practices. These activities were firmly embedded in an integrated approach combining WASH, community IMNCl, IMAM and IYCF interventions at community level thus increasing the likelihood of success as intended and moreover, more sustainable and stable results.
5. Tapping into synergies thanks to coordinated activities not only among UN agencies (cf. Gender and Data JPs) but also through collaboration and intense regular coordination with FTPs. Here, the most striking example is the Health sector where UNICEF and WHO supported MoH through close collaboration with JICA (and GAVI).
6. Community participation in immunization qualifies as a best practise in terms of participation, ownership, cost effectiveness and efficiency. During immunization campaigns, communities provide indispensable in-kind support covering the final leg of the logistics and transport chain by transporting vaccines and other commodities using their animals, vehicles or boats. Moreover, community members were actively engaged in ensuring complete coverage (by helping in announcing the campaign through spreading the word, “rounding up“ the target beneficiaries and/or ensuring complete door-to-door visits, support in spreading sensitization messages and materials etc.). This led to impressive results: As per the EPI coverage survey of 2017, 95.4 per cent of sampled children (in the 24-35-month age bracket) were fully vaccinated with the recommended antigens.
7. UNICEF and WHO helped MoH secure GAVI funding, which is also a best practice in terms of alliance building and using UN funding for catalytic purposes allowing to tap into additional financial resources that otherwise might have remained beyond the reach of the national institutions. Not only was immunization-related capacity built at all levels but a strong partnership was forged between MoH and GAVI. Impressive results were reached such as equipping MoH with a state-of-the-art cooling chamber for storing vaccine stocks and ensuring numerous health facilities have their own cold chains with energy supply and temperature monitoring devices.
8. The model and practice of multi-year work plans as introduced by the Auditor General is an approach worth being studied by other IPs and the UN, as such. In this context it should be mentioned that the UN-RCO has recently shown promising efforts to develop a multi-year work plan model under the current SPCF cycle.

Table 16 SPCF Outcomes by strategic priority area (SPA)

SPCF Outcomes by Strategic Priority Area (SPA)	PUNO(s)	GoSE Focal Point Structure(s)
SPA I. Basic Social Services		
Outcome 1: Access and utilization of quality and integrated health and nutrition services improved among the General population with particular emphasis on children under five, youth, women and other vulnerable groups (MDG 3,4,5,6)	UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNAIDS	MoH, NUEYS
Outcome 2: Children including refugees have equitable access to quality basic education in the hard-to-reach areas in Anseba, Gash Barka, Southern Red Sea (SRS), Northern Red Sea (NRS) and Debub (MDG 2)	UNICEF, UNHCR	MoE
Outcome 3: Strengthened protection and participation of vulnerable children, malnutrition, young people, women and people with special needs, including refugees, from the impact of poverty, harmful practices (e.g. FGM/C, under-age marriage) exploitation and injuries in high prevalence areas (MDG 1,3,4,5)	UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR	MoLHW, NUEYS, MoJ
SPA II. National capacity Development		
Outcome 4: Selected government institutions have the capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver services to All (MDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	UNICEF, UNDP	ORA, MoF
Outcome 5: Strengthened national and sectoral disaster risk management (MDG 7)	OCHA, UNDP	DRR Institute
SPA III. Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods		
Outcome 6: Poor and vulnerable households have improved access to and utilization of quality food and enhanced livelihood opportunities (MDG 1)	UNHCR, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNIDO, UNODC, ILO, IAEA	MoLHW, NUEW, MoH, MoA, ORA, MoLWE, MRE
SPA IV. Environmental Sustainability		
Outcome 7: Eritrea is on track towards the achievement of MDG targets for environmental sustainability (MDG 7)	UNEP, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF	MLWE
SPA V. Gender Equity and Advancement of Women		
Outcome 8: National institutions have gender responsive sector plans and policies and promote empowerment of women (MDG 3)	UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR	NUEW, MoTI, MoE, MoA, MoLHW

5. Recommendations

Final Evaluation (SPCF 2013-2016) Recommendations

(arranged in Order of related DaO Principle(s) a.k.a. 5 “Ones”)

(N.B.: “One Leader” applies across all categories)

Category	Recommendation	Recommended to	Priority
Communicating-as-One (“ One Voice ”) / Common Budgetary Framework (“ One Budget ”)	1. Ensure that the UN-internal RC/UNDP firewall is fully in place	UN	High
	2. Consider inviting WB and AfDB to join UNCT	UN RC	Medium
	3. Integrated budgeting and expenditure tracking through RGs (along with reporting against SPCF indicators)	UN/GoSE	Medium
	4. Full implementation of DaO SOPs (note: only relevant as of 2020)	UN	High
“ One Office ”	5. Fast-track BOS implementation	UN	High
	6. Consolidate UNCT agency presence within main UN compound	UN	Medium
	7. Provide procurement training and practical support (HACT etc.) to GoSE	UN/GoSE	Medium
	8. Joint Monitoring through RG-based multi-stakeholder joint monitoring missions	UN/GoSE	Medium
	9. Align draft joint integrated implementation plan (reduce to 2019-2020 + 2021; or rolling 2019-2021 including flexible financial arrangements)	UN/GoSE	High
“ One Programme ”	10. Joint UNCT/GoSE workshop to brainstorm on novel JPs around UNDP SP	UN/GoSE	High
	11. Design more integrated SPCF Pillars/RGs including integrated result chains (reduce number of outcomes through consolidation), leading to shift from Outcome-based coordination and implementation practices to integrated RG-driven approach	UN/GoSE	Medium
	12. Increase level of ambition and widen scope of (existing) “Data and Planning” and “GEWE” JPs across most if not all Outcomes (thus embracing the cross-cutting, multi-sectoral nature of i. institutional capacity building/evidence-based planning and ii. Gender (N.B.: Converting the existing JPs into DaO Flagship “super-JPs” would imply setting up an “Evidence-based Planning” JP Secretariat within MoND, and a “GEWE JP” Secretariat within	UN/GoSE	High

Category	Recommendation	Recommended to	Priority
	NUEW with a JP Coordinator at NO-C or NO-D level)		
	13. Shift from separate CPDs and CPAPs to common programming, management, reporting (reduce transaction costs rather than keeping up the double layer)	UN	Low to Medium
	14. Organize Strategic Planning Capacity Building Training and Brainstorming Workshop on SDGs: a. MAPS; b. Whole-of-Government; c. Nexus; break-out sessions: Potential of UNDP SP signature solutions and PPP platforms for strengthening DaO; Presentation of new UNCDF and FAO corporate plans	UN/GoSE	Medium to High
	15. Introduce customized Theory of Change at RG and Outcome levels	UN	Medium to High
	16. Design SMART DaO performance indicator/tracking matrix	UN	High
	17. Joint UN/GoSE RBM training linked to revision of RRF/M&E logframes	UN/GoSE	Medium
	18. Ensure that WP indicators are logically linked to SPCF output metrics (SPCF Output indicators to be used as WP outcomes; WP outputs based on activities/processes culminating in, or contributing to, WP Outcomes/SPCF Outputs)	UN/GoSE	High
	19. Introduce basic experimental research for recurrent programme features (programme content; entry point; beneficiary group etc)	UN/GoSE	Low to Medium
	20. Carry out an impact evaluation and applied agro-anthropological research on SLM Serejeka project	UN/GoSE	Medium to High

Annexes

- I. Terms of Reference
- II. List of Interviewees (Persons/Groups)
- III. Bibliography of Documents reviewed
- IV. Evaluation Schedule (Schematic Overview)
- V. Filled Master Matrix

I. Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference
Evaluation of the SPCF 2013 – 2016
Ministry of National Development and the United Nations Country Team Eritrea

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Eritrea is located in the Horn of Africa region, where arid and semi-arid climatic conditions prevail. The country is therefore, vulnerable to adverse effects of climate variability, recurring droughts and environmental degradation, hampering development efforts. The economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture. Persistent drought has had adverse effects particularly on the vulnerable communities, groups and households (especially the female-headed). The country's socio-economic conditions (livelihoods, food security, and national budget), environment (land degradation, desertification) also suffer drought effects.

Eritrea has an area of about 124,000 square kilometres. The population was estimated to be 4.068 million in 2013 (HMIS 2013, MOH) with a total fertility rate of 4.8. The GDP per capita (2011 PPP USD) is USD 1,180 and the Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.381, giving the country a rank of 182 out of 187 countries. About 58 per cent of the population is classified as poor living on under USD1.25 per day. The incidence of poverty is slightly higher in semi-urban areas and among women.

Eritrea's development aspiration is to achieve rapid, balanced, home-grown and sustainable economic growth with social equity and justice, anchored on the self-reliance principle. Moreover, the Government places emphasis on community and individual rights as well as issues of social justice, such as access to education, health, food and equitable access to services regardless of locality. Based on the sector-specific policy documents, national priorities point towards; food security; education; health; access to potable water at reasonable distance; roads and infrastructure development; environment and natural resources management; human and institutional capacity development and; information and communication technology.

Soon after independence in 1991, Eritrea formulated and implemented socio-economic development policies and strategies resulting in marked improvements in key sectors for the period up to 1997. For most of the first post-independence decade, Eritrea experienced rapid economic growth, with annual

growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) peaking at 7.0 per cent for the period up to 1997. However, a border dispute with neighbouring Ethiopia (1998-2000), which escalated into a full-scale war, reversed the gains. The protracted border standoff and the prevailing ‘no peace, no war’ situation as well as the sanctions imposed on Eritrea in 2009 are negatively affecting Eritrean development and remains a major impediment to the Government’s development. Furthermore, the border conflict has left large areas of land unused due to unexploded landmines especially the prime fertile agricultural regions of Gash-Barka and Debub considered to be the “bread baskets” of Eritrea.

Despite these challenges and setbacks, Eritrea has made tremendous progress towards its own development goals and aspirations. The Government has endeavoured to protect the most vulnerable segments of the population and to implement its long-term development policies. It maintains an extensive social safety net, investing in three priority areas: (i) food security and agricultural production; (ii) infrastructure development; (iii) human resources development¹⁰. Moreover, it is one of the few countries in Africa that made some impressive progress towards achieving the health related MDGs (4, 5 and 6, i.e. reduction of child mortality; reduction of maternal mortality and combating HIV and AIDS)¹¹. The national HIV prevalence is 0.93 per cent. Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) was reduced from an estimated 998 per 100,000 live births in 1995 to 380/100,000 in 2013 (WHO, 2014).

The availability of and access to disaggregated and quality and up-to-date data in the various sectors for evidence based planning and programming is very critical. However, this continues to be a challenge in terms of conducting successful planning and evidence-based policy making.

It is in this context that the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) for the period of 2013 to 2016 was developed seeking to build on and sustain the gains and progress achieved by GoSE in the MDGs as well as address areas that are still lagging behind.

1.2 The Setting

The SPCF was signed on 28 January 2013 after a year-long collaborative and consultative process between the Government of the State of Eritrea (GoSE) and the UN system in Eritrea. It focused on five strategic areas of cooperation over the four years, namely, Basic Social Services, National Capacity Development, Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods, Environmental Sustainability and Gender Equity and Advancement of Women in Eritrea. The five strategic areas were further elaborated into eight SPCF Outcomes in line with eight MDGs which formed the basis for specific programme interventions and the establishment of thematic working groups. It was expected that the design and implementation of the SPCF allowed for cross thematic integration, synergies and linkages among different UN agencies to maximise developmental impacts and to improve efficiency. Furthermore, the SPCF sought to enhance the wellbeing of all Eritrean people while it took into consideration of the needs of the refugee population groups that the country hosts.

The execution of the SPCF was guided and coordinated by the MoND and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator with the programmatic direction of the sector ministries, relevant institutions and the UN agencies. In order to facilitate the implementation arrangement at technical level, under the umbrella of above overarching mechanism, thematic outcome groups were formed involving respective governmental ministries, departments or institutions and UN agencies that are contributing to particular

¹⁰ IMF Article 4 Consultations on Eritrea Public Information Notice (PIN) No. 09/133. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/misc/qualifiers.htm>.

¹¹ Eritrea was quoted as among 4 out of 46 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (alongside Cape Verde, Mauritius and Seychelles) as one of 16 countries in the developing world to have been on track to attain MDG 4 (Reduce Child Mortality) by 2015.

thematic outcome areas. The groups were established at technical level with designated convenors/co-convenors as specified in the SPCF in order to oversee implementation progress on the ground in respective outcome areas. Over the SPCF (2013 – 2016), implementation period, the eight thematic outcome groups organised consultative meetings on periodic basis and produced progress reports.

In order to monitor and evaluate the results planned to be achieved by the SPCF, alongside the SPCF 2013-2016, the SPCF Results Framework was also developed and submitted to MoND. The SPCF Results Framework is an explicit articulation of the different levels or chains of results which were expected to be achieved through the implementation of the SPCF. The results specified in every thematic outcome areas of the SPCF Result Framework typically comprise the longer-term objectives referred to as ‘Outcomes’ and the intermediate or short term objectives, ‘Outputs’ that precede, and lead to, those desired longer-term objectives. To track the progress in every outcome and output results, indicators were developed indicating their baselines and expected targets expected to be realised by the end of the SPCF period, 2016.

In alignment with the SPCF coordination structure, the monitoring of SPCF was undertaken at two levels: policy level and technical level. The policy level was exercised by the Minister of MoND and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator having regular meetings to review policy implications of the SPCF while the technical level monitoring was undertaken by programmatic monitoring and evaluation of the eight thematic outcome areas of the SPCF regularly reviewing the progress of implementation status during thematic outcome group meetings and periodic reporting arrangements. The monitoring function at the technical level was led by designated convenor of the government and the UN co-convenor of respective thematic outcome groups with the participation of relevant stakeholders contributing to the same thematic outcome areas.

With the coordination support of Ministry of National Development, the national ministries and institutions involved in the SPCF implementation were: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Land, Water and Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Office of Refugee Affairs, National Union of Eritrean Youths and Students and National Union of Eritrean Women. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Eritrea is comprised of resident agencies and non-resident agencies. The resident agencies currently operational in-country are UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, WHO, UNAIDS, FAO, WFP, and UNOCHA while UNIDO, IAEA, UNEP, ILO, UNODC and IFAD are non-resident agencies providing support to the GoSE in the realisation of relevant SPCF outcome areas. Nevertheless, the SPCF also specified resource contribution of IAEA, UNEP and UNIDO.

2. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

2.1 Purpose

The SPCF 2013-2016 implementation ended on 31 December 2016. According to the UNDAF operation guidelines, it is mandatory for the government- UN collaborative framework to undertake a Mid-Term Review (MTR) as well as the final evaluation. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) which marked the mid - point of the SPCF (2013 – 2016) was conducted between July – September 2015. This provided required inputs to start preparatory work for the next SPCF (2017 – 2021). In addition, some UN Agencies particularly UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF were also able to utilize the results from the MTR to develop their respective Country Programme Documents (CPD) for the next Programme cycle (2017 – 2021).

Given that the new SPCF (2017 – 2021) as well as respective Agencies Work Plans have been approved for implementation, the conduct of the final evaluation for the previous SPCF (2013 – 2016) is critical since the findings and recommendations will provide the needed lessons learned for the implementation of the current SPCF (2017 – 2021) and future ones. Thus the purpose of undertaking the evaluation is to:

- Learn about what has worked, what has not and why, in the specific context of Eritrea and in the particular collaborative efforts of the UNCT;
- Verify results achieved within the revised framework of the SPCF;
- assess the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions used; and
- Focus on aspects related to the implementation of the SPCF with the express aim of formulating lessons learnt and providing recommendations for improvements in the implementation of the current SPCF and UN Agencies' programme cycle, including strategy, design and implementation arrangements.

2.2 Objectives

The evaluation will be conducted based on United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and Evaluation and Ethical standards, as well as OECD/DAC evaluation principles based on the four evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability). The evaluation will assess the work of UN agencies in Eritrea along the following three dimensions:

- a) **Accountability:** Assess the contribution of the SPCF 2013-2016 to national priorities and results, based on qualitative (perception) and quantitative evidence, articulating the changes that have occurred in a logical chain of results, which speaks to the accountability of the UN system.
- b) **Explanatory factors:** Identify the factors that have affected the UNCT's performance and its contributions, answering the question of why the performance is as it is and explaining the enabling factors and critical bottlenecks; and
- c) **Continuous improvement:** Assess the effectiveness of the UN in implementing the SPCF, in particular the extent to which progress has been achieved and what difference it has made. The evaluation is expected to generate actionable recommendations for improving UN contributions under the current programme cycle.

2.3 Scope

Given the context described above, the SPCF Evaluation will focus on programme and financial results and on issues of SPCF implementation, including a review of its design and the assumptions made at the beginning of the implementation period.

Programme design: This evaluation will also assess the SPCF Joint Programmes focusing on their effectiveness (including resources allocation) as its operational strategy.

The evaluation will equally look at the coordination architecture, operation, effectiveness, and impact of the Programme Planning, the SPCF Outcome Groups; the Programme Management and M&E Group; the Operations Management Team (OMT), and the UN Communications Group (UNCG) in supporting the implementation of the SPCF.

The evaluation will cover the period from 1st January 2013 to 31st December 2016.

Key questions by assessment criteria

The key criteria for assessment are:

- a) **Relevance** – defined as the responsiveness of the SPCF strategy and content, and its implementation mechanisms, to the needs and capabilities of the intended beneficiaries (including national institutions, communities, and policy frameworks);
- b) **Effectiveness** – the extent to which SPCF results have been achieved;
- c) **Efficiency** – the return on investment of human and financial resources in terms of delivering the development results, including reduced transaction costs and increased efficiency of SPCF implementation;
- d) **Impact** - to the extent possible, the impact of SPCF on the lives of the people especially the poor and other vulnerable groups; and
- e) **Sustainability** – the extent to which results can be sustained over time.

The inception report will identify key questions in these four areas, including and expanding on the following core questions:

Relevance

- To what extent were the objectives of the SPCF consistent with Eritrea’s needs, national priorities, and international and regional commitments?
- Did the SPCF outcomes address the underlying development and social needs of the country?
- To what extent were the SPCF document and the Joint Programmes used by UN agencies and the Implementing Partners in planning their activities, setting goals, and cooperating?
- To what extent was the Government involved in the planning of the SPCF activities and Joint Programmes? Was there a clear nexus alignment between Government activities and those of the SPCF and Joint Programmes?
- Was the SPCF design and its implementation sufficiently flexible to remain responsive to evolving national development policies and challenges that arose during the SPCF cycle?
- Were the expected outcomes realistic, given the SPCF timeframe, resources and the planned Country Strategies and Programmes?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were the SPCF Outcomes been achieved? What were the main factors that contributed positively, or negatively, to the progresses towards achieving the SPCF outcomes and national development goals?
- Was there any major change in people’s lives as a result of SPCF implementation? Using the SPCF indicators, can these changes be attributed to or associated with SPCF?
- To what extent was the capacity of the UN system leveraged in engaging non-resident agencies in the country programming and delivery in support of national development priorities?
- Did the SPCF promote effective partnerships and strategic alliances around the main SPCF outcome areas (e.g. within Government of Eritrea, with national and international partners and other external support agencies)?
- To what extent did the Joint Programmes deliver results, and how effective were they in terms of teamwork, resource mobilization, and cost effectiveness?

Efficiency

- Were adequate financial resources mobilised for the SPCF? Was the planned budget realised?
- To what extent did the SPCF create actual synergies among agencies and involve concerted efforts to optimise results and avoid duplication?

- To what extent was the SPCF oversight and coordination mechanisms effective and sustained?
- How were joint programmes selected, designed, implemented and monitored? Were they cost-effective in terms of investment of UN time relative to results?
- In what ways could transaction costs be further reduced in the next SPCF?

Impact

- Is there any notable change in the national indicators that can reasonably be attributed to or be associated with the SPCF, notably in the realization of MDGs, national development goals and the national implementation of internationally agreed commitments and UN Conventions and Treaties?
- How have the human rights and gender equality been included in work undertaken under the SPCF?

Sustainability

- To what extent did the UN contribute to building partnerships and to promoting GoSE's ownership of the programs, projects, research findings and policy assessments?
- To what extent did the SPCF strengthen capacities for data collection and analysis, including in disaggregating data on the basis of sex, location, economic status, or other key characteristics important for the future commitment to "leave no one behind"?
- In which areas is there evidence that long-term institutional capacity has been improved (technical expertise, financial independence and participation of rights-holders in process)?
- To what extent did the SPCF contribute to developing an enabling environment and institutional changes to advance human rights and gender equality issues?
- To what extent has funding – amount and type - affected (positively or negatively) the contribution of the UN/SPCF 1 to long-term sustainability?

3. METHODOLOGY

This is a summative evaluation to assess the SPCF's performance against the criteria and key questions outlined above and to make recommendations for the on-going programming cycle. It is therefore expected that the evaluation will mainly draw on existing evidence from official documentation (e.g. UNCT / SPCF documents, GoSE Frameworks and planning documents, agencies' reports) and reliable secondary data sources from the surveys that have been undertaken as well as focus discussion groups.

Data and information should be systematically analysed and the results presented and disaggregated. In the spirit of inclusiveness and participation, it is expected that the evaluators validate the findings from their secondary data analysis through systematic consultations with relevant stakeholders, including the UN, the GoSE institutions, development partners and beneficiaries where applicable.

Field visits will also be necessary to selected project sites where the consultation and validation meetings are to take place. Findings from the consultations must be documented; the main evaluation report should indicate how and where the consultations have qualitatively enriched the analysis and presentation of findings.

The assignment shall be undertaken in the spirit of partnership with the Government of the State of Eritrea and UN providing oversight, co-ordination and linkages with other key players.

Technical support and back-stopping will be provided by the UN Resident Coordinator Office and other UN Agencies where applicable. While undertaking this assignment, it will be important that informal

and formal planning and progress meetings and discussions are held with Working Groups, respective UN agencies and key Government representatives - both while in country and by remote - to ensure the process stays on track and produces expected results.

Data Collection methods

- Review of GoSE Frameworks, Policies and Strategic documents available;
 - Review of UNCT documents, including SPCF1 planning documents, and annual and review reports; joint programme’s documents and reports; UNCT Retreat reports (including by UN working groups); UN Communication Group plans and reports, etc;
 - Review and analysis of secondary data sources produced by the GoSE;
 - Specific Agencies reports and evaluations;
 - Briefing and debriefing sessions with UN and the Government officials, as well as with development partners and implementing partners;
 - Interviews with key stakeholders, including Government counterparts, development partners, implementing partners and selected beneficiaries;
 - Focus group discussions or key informant interviews with beneficiaries;
 - Debriefing sessions with stakeholders to further explore their insights on the preliminary findings.
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- To assess the contribution made by the UNCT in the framework of the SPCF to national development results through making judgements using evaluation criteria based on evidence. (Relevance)
 - To assess the extent of achievement of the results described as outcomes in the SPCF Results Framework over the implementation period of the SPCF. (Effectiveness)
 - To identify any factors that may have affected the UNCT's contribution, answering the question of why the performance is as it is and explaining the enabling factors and bottlenecks (for learning and application for modification).
 - To provide actionable recommendations for improving the UNCT's contribution in supporting the Government towards the realization of SDGs. These recommendations should be logically linked to the conclusions and draw upon lessons learned identified through the evaluation.
 - To assess the contribution of the UN System to the pursuit of the national priorities articulated in the interim National Development Plan.
 - To identify lessons in terms of what has worked, what has not and why that can benefit the implementation of the new SPCF and the design of future ones; and
 - To provide important information for strengthening programming and results at the country level and for improving UNCT coordination at the country level.

Timelines

Activity	Deliverables	Estimated Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation design, methodology, and detailed work plan - Inception meeting initial briefing 	Inception report	5 days (home-based)

Activity	Deliverables	Estimated Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document reviews and stakeholder consultations through interviews and focus group discussions - Data analysis, debriefing and presentation on initial draft evaluation report - Validation Workshop 	Draft evaluation report and a power point presentation for workshop	30 days (home-based for 10 days and on-site for 20 days)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalization incorporating additions and comments provided by all stakeholders and submission to Government and UN 	Final evaluation report	10 days (on-site)
Total Number of Days		45 days

Inception report: The consultants will prepare an inception report which details the firms understanding of the scope of the evaluation and how the evaluation questions will be addressed. This is to ensure that the firm and the stakeholders - GoSE, UN, Development Partners, and other stakeholders have a shared understanding of the evaluation. The inception report will include the evaluation matrix summarizing the evaluation design, methodology, evaluation questions, data sources and collection analysis tool for each data source and the measure by which each question will be based.

Draft Evaluation report: The consultants will prepare a draft evaluation report cognizant of the TOR and other agreed requirement. The report will be submitted to the SC and TRC for review and validation to ensure that the evaluation meets the required quality criteria. The report will be produced in English.

Power Point Presentation during validation workshop

The Final evaluation report: The final time bound report including recommendations (30-50 pages); including theory of change will include comments from the Government and the UNCT.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE UNDAF EVALUATION REPORT

In addition to the inclusion of the standard starting features of a Report (Table of Contents, Acronyms, Forward and Acknowledgement) the Report should essentially include the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction (including background to the SPCF 2013 – 2016)
- Evaluation Purpose and Evaluation Questions
- Evaluation Methods and Limitations
- Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations
- Annexes e.g.
 - Power-point presentation of the Report
 - Evaluation Statement of Work
 - Evaluation Methods and Limitations
 - Data Collection Instruments
 - Sources of Information
 - List of Persons/groups Interviews
 - Bibliography of Documents Reviewed
 - Databases
 - Disclosure of Any Conflicts of Interest
 - Etc.

5. MANAGEMENT AND CONDUCT OF THE REVIEW

Since full participation of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation process is critical for reaching mutual understanding and collective agreement in making decision towards follow up actions, both parties, the GoSE and the UNCT, will ensure successful implementation of the exercise involving every single ministry, institution and agency that has stake in the SPCF. At the UNCT, the process will be coordinated by the PPM&E Group. The MoND will assist the evaluation consultant in obtaining information from all the government implementing partners. The MoND will also convene the final meeting to discuss the findings of the evaluation and the way forward with the recommendations emanating from it.

6. CLIENT SUPPORT

The UNCT and GoSE will ensure that all the necessary support, especially in securing the required documents, field visits and logistical support is provided. Office space for the evaluation consultants will be provided by the UNCT.

7. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CONSULTANTS

The successful candidates are expected to have the following qualifications:

- Minimum Advanced academic degree (masters/PhD) in economics, statistics, health sciences, gender studies, social sciences, and development studies, with specialized training in monitoring and evaluation;
- Minimum of 10 years and more relevant experience in programme planning, reviews, monitoring and evaluation;
- Knowledge and experience of development issues including health, water and sanitation, gender, human rights and related fields of the UN work;
- Previous experience in conducting evaluation and programme reviews, especially in developing countries;
- Familiarity with the UN system and with other development partners;
- Proven experience with Results-Based Management (RBM) approaches and report writing;
- Good understanding of gender and human rights mainstreaming into programmes;
- Experience working with a wide range of sectors including high-level government entities, UN and civil society; and excellent English-language oral and written communications skills, especially for drafting and editing of reports as well as good presentation skills.

8. ANNEXES

Annex 1: The SPCF 2013 – 2016 Document with the related Results and Resources Framework

Annex 2: Concept Note for SPCF evaluation

II. List of Interviewees (Persons/Groups)

a. UN Staff

Susan Ngongi, RC/RR
Pierre Ngom, UNICEF
Shaya Asindua, UNICEF
Clement Adams, UNICEF
Ashok Sayenju, RCO
Adam Habteab, UNDP
Solomon Gebreyohannes, UNDP
Kibreab Gebremichael, UNDP
Michael Tewoldemedhin, UNDP
Clever Maputseni, UNDP (Ex-OCHA)
Ghenet Tesfazion, FAO
Teklemariam Asghedom, FAO
Yirgalem Solomon, UNICEF
Alemtsehay Fisseha, UNHCR
Asfaha Tesfagiorgis, UNHCR
Habte Gebregziabher, UNDP
Yordanos Mehari, UNFPA
G. Taddese, UNFPA
Ghebrat Yohannes, WHO
Assefash Zehaie Kassahun, WHO
Semere Gebregiorgis Goitom, WHO
Senait Tesfamicael, UNAIDS
Samuel Yohannes, UNICEF
Yodit Hiruy, UNICEF
Aster Ermias, UNICEF
Yalem Mohammed, UNICEF
Awet Araya, UNICEF
Tesfay Bahta, UNICEF
Ibrahim Sambuli, UNFPA
Yumiko Ota, UNICEF
Sanjay Rane – OCHA Consultant
Augustin Gatera – UNICEF Immunization Consultant
Tedla Gebrehiwet, UNICEF
Vedaste Kalima, OCHA
Cleophas Mubangizi, Representative (UNHCR)
Alemtsehay Fisseha, UNHCR
Semere Gebregiorgis Goitom, WHO
Teklemariam Asghedom, FAO

b. Government Representatives

Afewerki Tesfay (DG/Ministry of National Development)
Nemariam Yohannes (Ministry of National Development)

Gebrehanes Hagos (DG/Ministry of Education)
Andebrehan Tesfatsion (DG/Ministry of Health)
Mihreteab Fissahye (Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare)
Tedros Kibrom (Ministry of Land, Water and Environment)
Yosief Ghirmatsion (National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students)
Kahasay Negash (Ministry of Agriculture)
Goitom Asmerom (National Union of Eritrean Women)
Emmanuel Isaak; Head of IT Department (Office of the Auditor General)
Gherezgiher Gheberemedhin, Auditor General (Office of the Auditor General)
Hagos Ahmed (NSO)
Robel Woldemichael (MoJ)

c. Beneficiaries

Individuals met during field trip to Zoba Maekel with Ministry Of Labour and Human Welfare (Outcome 3)

1. Etay Gebrezegi: CBR Worker – Kushet Community, Sub Zoba Berik.
2. Nuguse Daniel: CBR Worker, Tsadamba Community, Sub Zoba Berik.
3. Gebremedhin Haile (Priest), CBR Worker- Tsadamba Community, Sub Zoba Berik.
4. Mizan: Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare, Sub Zoba Berik – Desk Office.
5. Numa Hassen – Beneficiaries of IGA and Donkey for School – Adi-gebru Community
6. Munira Hassen (7 years old girl) – Beneficiaries of Donkey for School - Adi-gebru Community
7. Saron Fitum - Beneficiaries of IGA – Tsadakiristain Community.

Individuals met during field trip to Sustainable Land Management Project (Outcome 7)

1. Teklit; Administrator; Embadorho
 2. Fesshaye Yohannes; Farmer/Beneficiary; Embadorho
 3. Michael Haile; Farmer/Beneficiary; Embadorho
 4. Gebremeskel Gebregzabher; Farmer/Beneficiary; Embadorho
 5. Hailemichael; Farmer/Beneficiary; Embadorho
 6. Ibrahim; MoA/Beneficiary; Guritat
 7. Beshir; Farmer/Beneficiary; Guritat
 8. lyob; Village Administrator; Guritat
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III. Bibliography of Documents Reviewed

- Eritrea – Delivering Together for Eritrea’s Development and Self-Reliance; United Nations Eritrea (2014)
- The Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) Between the Government of Eritrea and The United Nations 2013-2016 “Driving towards MDGs” - January 2013; UN Eritrea (2014)
- The Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) Between the Government of Eritrea and The United Nations 2017-2021 “Delivering as One for SDGs” - January 2017; UN Eritrea (2017)
- SPCF 2013-2016 Mid-Term Review, Final Report
- Terminal Evaluation “SIP SLM Pilot Project—Eritrea”; Global Environment Facility (GEF) Project ID: 2979 / UNDP Project ID: 00075747
- Terminal Outcome Evaluation of the Environmental Sustainability/Outcome7 of SPCF-I within the UNDP Eritrea (2013-2016) Country Program Action Plan
- Mid Term Evaluation (MTR): Climate Change Adaptation Programme in Water and Agriculture in Anseba Region, Eritrea; PIMS #: 4540
- JP Programme Document “Capacity Development”
- JP Programme Document “GEWE”

IV. Evaluation Schedule (Schematic Overview)

a. Inception Phase (total of 5 days; work days 1-5: January/February 19, 2018)

During this period the evaluator familiarizes himself with the main documentation and data-sources (MTR, SPCF main document, RRM etc.) relevant to the evaluation to absorb basic information about the context, background and evolution of the SPCF. At the end of this phase, the present Inception Report is presented to internal stakeholders to discuss the general approach towards work, the methodology and suggested schedule, and draft work plan.

b. Data collection and preliminary analysis phase/in-country (total of 16 days; work days 6-26: February 20 – March 10)

Data collection and analysis will continue from the end of the inception phase until the end of the report drafting phase. Work during this period will be structured into distinct stages and benchmarks: The phase of meetings/interviews with key informants will be clustered into logical groups following similar functional responsibilities (e.g. GoSE representatives; PMT, Operations Managers, combined with some individual meetings, focus groups, round-table discussions at Outcome level etc. Meetings/interviews will be concentrated in early March. Following initial meetings in February with UN senior management and GoSE representatives, the final days of February and first days of March were used to explain the methodology and timeline of the evaluation to GoSE staff (who went on to identify suitable IP evaluation counterparts) and to ramp up technical in-house discussions with agency Outcome-level experts representing outcome lead agencies and other contributing partner agencies.

Following some bilateral meetings with financial experts and specific agency staff inside the main UN compound (UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, OCHA etc.) the mission went on to meet agency focus groups representing various in-house Outcome groups in line with the following schedule:

March 7 – Wednesday:

- 1.) 10 a.m. (at UNICEF Conf Room no.2) - Outcome 2/Education (UNICEF, UNHCR)
- 2.) 2 p.m. (at FAO Bldng.) - Outcome 6/Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods (FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, WHO, UNIDO, IAEA)

March 8 – Thursday:

- 3.) 9 a.m. (at UNDP-SEU) - Outcomes 5/DRR (UNDP, WHO, OCHA) and 7/Environment (UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, IAEA, UNEP, UNIDO)
- 4.) 3 p.m. (at WHO Office) - Outcome 1/Health (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, WFP, UNAIDS, IAEA)

March 9 – Friday:

- 5.) 8 a.m. (at UNFPA conference room) - Outcomes 3/Social Protection (UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNHCR); 4/Cap Dev (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNHCR, UNIDO); 8/Gender (UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNAIDS)

b'. Continuation of data collection and data analysis (total of 14 days; work days 22-35: March 12–April 14)

Unforeseen delays in securing the visa make it unavoidable to continue the data collection phase from outside the country and finish up the mission during a second in-country phase after a 1-month absence from Eritrea. As of March 11 until mid-April, the mission will exchange information with and through the respective lead agency focal points of UN SPCF Outcomes, who will liaise closely with GoSE IP (ministerial and state agency) focal points as designated during the 2nd week of March.

c. 2nd in-country phase for finalization of data collection and analysis stage, report presentation and validation (total of 10 days; work days 36-45: April 15-30)

Data collection and in-depth analysis will resume for another 2 weeks in-country, during the 2nd half of April. During this phase, preliminary findings will be presented, discussed and finetuned together with UN and IP stakeholders. Likewise, donor consultations will take place. About a week worth of field visits of project sites is also scheduled in order to interview local beneficiaries, cross-validate findings and spot-check some of the data. During the drafting of the final report, it is foreseen that, if need be, the evaluation will continue on a more limited scale to conduct follow-up interviews and analyse collected data for further validation of findings and recommendations.

The evaluation will first prepare a draft version of the report to be submitted to all relevant stakeholders for comments. At the end of the in-country phase, key findings will be presented to the forum of technical experts for a final round of vetting. The final event will be a multi-stakeholder workshop to present the final version of findings and recommendations of the evaluation. The presentation shall contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

Feedback provided by the stakeholders participating in the presentation of the final report will be taken into account during a final round of editing. Hence, the final days of the contract period will be used to incorporate comments received into the Final Report. The final version will be submitted by the end of April 2018. The final report will then be submitted to the UN and GoSE at the end of the process. The report will be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations geared towards the process of preparing the successor programme to the SPCF as regards both programmatic content and governance and management institutional and operational arrangements.

V. Evaluator's Biodata

Dr. Craig Naumann is an American German strategic planner and evaluator with more than two decades of professional experience in 30 countries. He has received academic degrees in international relations, political science and sociology with a focus on socio-economic development in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2001, he has been working in different applied research functions for various UN agencies (including WFP, UNDP, UN Women, UNICEF, USAID, and the EU). He is an expert in (institutional) change management and M&E/RBM.

VI. Filled Result and Resource Matrix

(cf. separate file/Volume)