

HOW to PREPARE an UNDAF

Part (I)

Guidelines for UN Country Teams

January 2010



**UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

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1. Introduction

The UNDAF is the strategic programme framework that describes the collective response of the UN system to national development priorities. The 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPR)¹ encourages the UN development system to intensify its collaboration at the country and regional levels towards strengthening national capacities, in support of national development priorities, through the common country assessment, when required, and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). It recognizes the potential of the UNDAF and its results matrix as the collective, coherent and integrated programming and monitoring framework for country-level contributions. While the UNDAF is the key instrument for enhancing UN coherence, in certain situations, other programming instruments serving the same purpose may be used, as desired by the national authorities. Even though the UN operates in a range of national development contexts, the UN country programming must, both in process and substance, respond to national development priorities.

The “How to Prepare an UNDAF: Part (I) Guidelines for UN Country Teams,” hereafter referred to as ‘Guidelines’, responds to the call in the 2007 TCPR for simplifying common country programming processes. The Guidelines give UN Country Teams (UNCTs) more flexibility to conduct country analysis and to develop the strategic programming framework based on the national context. Importantly, these Guidelines simplify the process, while the substantive content of the February 2009 CCA-UNDAF guidelines remains and is reflected in the “How to Prepare an UNDAF: Part (II) Technical Guidance for UN Country Teams,” hereafter referred to as ‘Technical Guidance’ and hyperlinked as appropriate. In the Guidelines, ‘stakeholders’ refers to governments, including line ministries; social partners, including workers and

employers organizations; other development partners relevant to a country context; civil society; and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Guidelines emphasize:

- National ownership that is inclusive of all stakeholders in all stages of the process;
- Alignment with national development priorities, strategies, systems and programming cycles;
- Inclusiveness of the UN system with full involvement of specialized and non-resident agencies;
- Integration of the five programming principles (the human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, results-based management, and capacity development) tailored to the country context;
- Mutual accountability for development results.

The UN system contributes to country analysis and to the development of the UNDAF in consultation with all stakeholders. Furthermore, the coherence and inter-linkages between the UNDAF and the agency-specific programme documents and operational/action plans are required. The UNDAF formulation process is kept flexible to enhance its adaptability to different contexts, including middle-income country and post-crisis contexts. The process, throughout, is underpinned by an inclusive approach within the UNCT, recognizing the mandates, expertise, and contributions that agencies may bring to bear in the development and implementation of the UNDAF, in support of national development priorities.

¹ UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/62/208: Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (TCPR).

2. The Mission of the UN System at Country Level

The UN, drawing on the collective strengths of all funds, programmes and specialized agencies, is committed to working with all stakeholders to achieve the agenda endorsed by the 2007 TCPR; the [2005 World Summit and its outcome document](#); the Millennium Declaration (MD); the 2008 Doha Declaration on Financing for Development; and other internationally agreed development goals, including the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs); international norms and standards as well as treaty obligations,² including [international labour standards](#), and fundamental principles and rights at work ([UNDG Action Plan on the Implementation of the Paris Declaration; 2008 Accra Agenda for Action](#)).

The UN is required to ensure greater alignment with national priorities and country systems, harmonization among development actors, including shared analysis, simplification, transparency and accountability in aid management for development results. Supporting country capacities to manage development resources, including aid, and to deliver on development results remains one of the most important mandates of the UN system at country level. The UNCT is required to support national priorities and to advocate that those national priorities include governments' international/global commitments to the MD/MDGs and internationally agreed development goals, and their obligations under international human rights, international norms and standards, and other instruments.

This also includes supporting countries to develop capacities to lead their development processes to pursue poverty reduction, sustained economic growth, peacebuilding, rule of law, human rights, gender equality and international standards and norms in support of global public goods. Some of these aspects are also part of the globally endorsed concept of sustainable development: meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.³ At the heart of the sustainable development concept is the belief that social, institutional, economic and environmental objectives are interdependent, complementary, mutually reinforcing and coherent. UNCT-supported analysis and programming are ways to bring these concerns to the centre of the national development debate and framework.

² 'Internationally agreed development goals and treaty obligations' is a phrase designed to describe the commitments, goals, and targets of international conferences, summits and conventions, and the human rights obligations under international human rights treaties and instruments and multilateral environmental agreements. Throughout these Guidelines 'international human rights treaties and instruments' include the human rights conventions and instruments related to the specialized agencies.

³ [Our Common Future](#) – The Brundtland Report, 1987.

3. The Role of the UN System in the Changing Aid Environment at Country Level

More than ever, UNCTs need to harness, in a strategic manner, the broad range of normative and analytical expertise, advocacy, operational and coordination capabilities available throughout the UN system, building on the participation of all UN agencies, resident and non-resident ([UN Response to the Changing Aid Environment \(2008\)](#)). The minimum result expected from UNCT cooperation is a strategic contribution to the achievement of the national development priorities. UNCTs are expected to participate actively in the national development process, including through national and sectoral visions and development plans; poverty reduction strategy papers; a sector-wide approach or programme-based approach; direct budget support and a joint assistance strategy; among other processes, as appropriate to the national context, making use of its resources at the national level, and where applicable, at regional and global levels. (For details on modalities for engaging in national development process, refer to Chapter I of Technical Guidance.) In post-crisis settings, the UN is expected to facilitate processes for developing country-based transition strategies, leading to peace consolidation and return to the path of development.

Development effectiveness calls for a more coherent UN at country level,⁴ which is also an essential requirement to better address structural and emerging humanitarian and development issues. Food, energy and financial crises, climate change, and other such emerging issues, are also rapidly reshaping the aid environment and forcing UN agencies and other partners to intensify their efforts to meet the MDGs before 2015. ([UNDG and ECHA Chairs' letter to RCs: The Comprehensive Framework for Action](#))

Development effectiveness, therefore, implies four basic elements for UNCT engagement:

- **National ownership:** The UNDAF, and the country analysis from which it emerges, needs to be based on and aligned with national development priorities and strategies. This requires government leadership and engagement of all relevant stakeholders, in all stages of the process, to maximize the contribution that the UN system can make, through the UNDAF, to the country development process.
- **Partnership:** The UNCT is required to partner with all relevant stakeholders; all levels of government, including line ministries; social partners; civil society, including indigenous peoples and minorities, forms of civic engagement, volunteerism; donors; international financial institutions (such as the World Bank and other regional IFIs) and other relevant development actors. ([For details on partnerships with different stakeholders, refer to Chapter II of Technical Guidance](#))
- **Comparative advantage:** While responding to national priorities and supporting the implementation of international norms and standards, the UNCT is required to assess its capacities to focus its efforts where it can best provide leadership and make the biggest difference, avoid duplication and establish synergies with ongoing interventions.
- **Maximum effectiveness and accountability:** UNCT performance needs to be measurable and accountabilities need to be clarified, so that the system can deliver effectively.

⁴ [UNDG Toolkit for improved functioning of the United Nations development system at the country level](#)

4. Five Programming Principles for an UNDAF

The Country Teams are required to apply the five programming principles⁵ ([see list of technical resources](#)) which are intended to strengthen the quality and focus of UN responses to national priorities based on the UN system's common values and standards. Together, these programming principles constitute a starting point and guide for the country analysis, as well as for all stages of the UNDAF formulation, including results planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The five inter-related programming principles are:

- **Human rights-based approach (HRBA):** Every UN Member State has undertaken international legal obligations for human rights. More than 80 per cent of Member States have ratified four or more of the nine core international human rights treaties. When governments ratify treaties, every person within the country is entitled to have those human rights respected, protected and fulfilled. The UNCT supports actions that help Member States to fulfil these obligations and reach these goals. All UNCTs need to use HRBA to support country analysis, advocate for priorities in the national development framework, and prepare an UNDAF that demonstrates a strategic use of UNCT resources, expertise and comparative advantages.
- **Gender equality:** Achieving gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex are at the heart of HRBA. In achieving gender equality, both gender mainstreaming and targeted gender-specific interventions constitute the key strategies of UN-supported analysis and strategic planning. For a rights-based approach to be meaningful, the UNCT should partner with women's groups and with gender equality advocates that can influence the development agenda and demand accountability for implementation of gender equality dimensions of national laws, policies and strategies. Currently, the gender audit and scorecard methodologies are key tools for assessing progress on gender mainstreaming at an operational level.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Environmental sustainability is central because natural resources are the basis for meeting economic and social needs. Human well-being depends on the different eco-system services and the preservation of these critical services as an integral part of national development frameworks, especially because ecosystem deterioration is most critically and severely felt by the poor. Activities in which UNCTs may engage to help countries achieve their development priorities need to consider environmental sustainability, and include provisions to reduce potential harm to the natural resource base.
- **Results-based management (RBM):** Using RBM, the UNCT ensures that its resources contribute to a logical chain of results that increase in complexity and ambition higher up the logical chain from outputs to outcomes and then impacts, which are MD/MDG-related national priorities. RBM requires the identification of critical assumptions about the programme environment and risk assessments; clearly defined accountabilities and indicators for results; and performance monitoring and reporting.
- **Capacity development:** Capacity development is the central thrust and main purpose of UNCT cooperation. For there to be national ownership, capacity development takes place within the national development framework and it responds to national capacity assessments and capacity development strategies. The World Summit

⁵ For details on the five programming principles and other key cross-cutting issues, refer to Chapter II of Technical Guidance; for guidance on their practical application, see the [Guidance Note: Application of the Programming Principles to the UNDAF](#).

outcome document emphasizes that the UNCT's contributions to country analysis and the UNDAF are primarily means for capacity development.⁶ The UNCT aims to develop sustainable in-country capacities at individual, institutional and societal levels. In line with HRBA, these capacities will help rights-holders to claim their rights and duty-bearers to meet their obligations.

A coherent UNCT is required to use these five inter-related programming principles. However, other key cross-cutting issues may be relevant in a particular country context.

⁶ Capacity is defined as: the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. Capacity development is the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.

5. Roles and Responsibilities for an UNDAF

The undg has endorsed the Management and Accountability System for the UN Development and RC System, which provides an overview of the agreed responsibilities and accountabilities, including in the context of developing and implementing an UNDAF. ([M&A Framework](#); [Additional Guidance on Roles and Responsibilities in Preparing an UNDAF](#)).

- **Resident Coordinator:** obtains endorsement of the road map for supporting country analysis and UNDAF preparation by the highest authority in the government coordinating body; engages and maintains inclusive teamwork of the UN system, including specialized agencies and non-resident agencies; obtains full national ownership of the entire process and products; ensures, together with the UNCT, participation of all relevant stakeholders. ([RC Job Description](#); [Guidance Note on RC/UNCT Working Relations](#); [Guidance Note on Stakeholder Analysis](#); [Interest Group Analysis](#))
- **UN Country Team:** is accountable for developing and overall monitoring of the road map for supporting country analysis and UNDAF preparation; full participation in the implementation of the road map; planning for the best use of the UN system's comparative advantages; support implementation of international norms and standards in the country; designing a high-quality UNDAF and timely development of a coherent results matrix in

response to national development priorities; monitoring overall progress in the implementation of UNDAF outcomes; and evaluation of the UNDAF. While the specialized agencies and non-resident agencies normally follow a two-year planning cycle,⁷ they are fully involved in country analysis and the UNDAF in response to national development priorities, as part of a collective UNCT effort and as mandated by their governing bodies. Efforts are made, to the extent possible, to harmonize the individual planning cycles of all members of the UNCT with the UNDAF.

- **Regional Directors Teams (RDTs) and their regional peer support groups (PSGs)** play an important role. RDTs provide strategic guidance and coherent technical support to RCs and UNCTs, and share the knowledge of good practices and lessons learned from the UNDAF process and its implementation. PSG members need to be involved as early as possible in the process, and particularly during the discussion on the UNCT's analytical contribution, as well as the lead-up to, and during, the strategic planning phase of the UNDAF. Furthermore, the Quality Support and Assurance System (QSA), including through the PSG mechanism, is designed to help UNCTs contribute effectively to country analysis and develop strategic UNDAFs that maximize the comparative advantages of the UNCT.

⁷ The Resident Coordinator may invite agencies' national cooperating bodies to join UNCT meetings when dealing with relevant programmatic issues. The development operations of many non-resident agencies are financed by voluntary contributions that do not follow a planning cycle and are provided on an ad hoc and ear-marked basis.

6. Steps for the UNCT to Prepare an UNDAF

There are four main steps in the process of developing an UNDAF: (1) road map, (2) country analysis, (3) strategic planning, and (4) monitoring and evaluation. While these steps are mandatory, UNCTs may undertake each step in a flexible manner in response to the national context and with a view to meeting the minimum requirements discussed here.

6.1 ROAD MAP: A road map must be developed for the preparation of the UNDAF

UNCTs are required to develop a road map outlining the preparation process of the UNDAF.

- The UNCT and the government coordinating body prepare and agree on a road map clearly aligning to the national development planning process, and laying out the steps and milestones for the UNCT's contribution to country analysis and UNDAF preparation. At the same time, the UNCT reviews and draws, as appropriate, on existing joint or collaborative UN frameworks and strategic partnerships (for example, the Education for All global action plan, the ILO Decent Work Country Programme, existing Memoranda of Understanding signed by agencies, strategic assessments or integrated planning processes), which can both support country level action and increase coherence in the UNDAF.
- The road map identifies support needed from regional offices and headquarters. Once finalized, the Resident Coordinator sends the road map to all national partners and also to the RDTs/PSGs, headquarters of all UN agencies and the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO). National stakeholders, as well as staff from non-resident and specialized agencies are included in the development of the road map. The UNCT also agrees on how to share costs. In transition settings, the UNCT needs to consult on the road map with the Integrated Mission Task Force or Integrated Task Force to ensure coordination with other UN actors.

Options of mechanisms: As part of the road map, the UNCT and national stakeholders agree on a consultative process, of their choice, for conducting the country analysis and for validation and review of the draft UNDAF. For increased ownership by all relevant stakeholders, the consultative process needs to be inclusive. UNCTs may identify appropriate coordination mechanism(s) for implementing the road map.

Timing of an UNDAF: The TCPR 2007 emphasizes that the planning and programming frameworks of the UN, including the UNDAF, need to be fully aligned with the national development planning cycles, whenever possible, and that they make use of and strengthen national capacities and mechanisms. The duration and timing of the UN programming process, including the UNDAF, is therefore synchronized with the national planning cycle, and ideally the UNDAF begins when the national plan commences. The timeframe of the country analysis and UNDAF in transition settings responds to the special circumstances of the country, and takes into account other planning processes, particularly relating to mission planning. In highly politically unstable contexts, UNCTs can have similar flexibility. Advice on alignment and agreement on shortening or extending an UNDAF cycle is taken by the government and UNCT in consultation with the RDTs. DOCO and individual agencies are kept informed.

6.2 COUNTRY ANALYSIS: Country analysis must inform the strategic planning step of the UNDAF

In order to ensure ownership, leadership and full participation of national authorities in all phases of the programming process, the UNCT determines whether a common country assessment (CCA) is necessary or whether it can select any other option. The purpose of the UNCT's analytical contribution is to strengthen country analytical capacities, processes and products, and thereby contribute to the articulation of high-quality development objectives and priorities within the UNDAF and the national development plan. Good analysis includes identifying areas where the country has not

been able to reach internationally-agreed development goals and commitments to international norms and standards, and how to assist the country to do so. A clear comparative advantage that the UNCT can bring to a country's analytic work is to help identify priority development problems. The UNCT communicates these as interrelated and ensures a balanced understanding of their economic, social, environmental and institutional causes, as well as the capacity gaps that may prevent action.

6.2.1 Review existing analysis and determine the UNCT's analytical contribution

Country analysis informs the strategic planning phase of the UNDAF; therefore, analysis needs to be available at the time of the development of the UNDAF results matrix.

- The UNCT and partners review existing analytical processes and products to see how well they meet minimum quality standards ([For a checklist on assessing the quality of country analysis, refer to Chapter III of Technical Guidance](#)). The aim is not to criticize what exists, but to work with national stakeholders to highlight gaps where UNCT support can bring added depth and quality of analysis, taking into account, in particular, the situation of excluded and vulnerable groups, as well as human rights treaties and instruments. The UNCT and partners draw on the broadest set of data, analytical products and processes, including from national and international civil society organizations, as well as from the Regional Commissions. The UNCT and their partners make a judgment about the best use of available analytical resources and accordingly determine the UNCT's analytical contribution. In transition settings, when a multi-stakeholder analytical process has taken place, such as a post-conflict needs assessment (PCNA), it is recommended that this is used as a basis for the UNCT's analytical contribution.

- There are UN inter-agency toolkits and frameworks, which need to be consulted and used to support assessment and analysis. These include, *inter alia*, the [CEB Toolkit on Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work](#), which has been further identified by UN agencies as an example of promoting inter-linkages between the five programming principles; the [UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues](#); the [Education for All Global Action Plan](#); the [Cultural Lens Programming Tool](#); the [Inter-agency Framework for Conflict Analysis in Transition Situations](#); the [UNDG Guidance Note on Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into CCA/UNDAF](#); [UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment](#); the [HLCP/CEB Resource Guide on Trade and Capacity Building](#); the [Aid for Trade and Human Development Guide](#); and the [UNDG Position Statement on Capacity Development](#).

Options of analytical contribution: The UNCT and partners may choose any of the three or other options: (i) UNCT participation in government-led analytical work and use of government analysis, including sectoral reviews and analyses; (ii) complementary UN-supported analytical work, with a focus on gaps in the existing analysis; and (iii) a full CCA. ([For details of guidance on three options for country analysis and the structure and content of a CCA document, refer to Chapter III of Technical Guidance](#)).

Recognizing that analysis is an important contribution that the UN system can and does make on an ongoing basis, throughout a programming or development cycle, UNCTs have an additional option of summarizing the relevant findings from the recent years of data collection and analytical processes, with the most up-to-date data available, for use by the UNCT and partners.

In conducting any of the options, agencies can take the lead or contribute to sectoral analyses, as per their mandate and comparative advantage. Country analysis

can be carried out directly before the strategic planning phase, or it can be available in advance. Review of the analysis by regional PSG/QSA is recommended as a good practice, which may enhance quality and depth of analysis.

It is recommended that the UNCT's analytical contribution include an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing national systems, i.e., in public financial management, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, although this has to be agreed to by the government. Sometimes these assessments have already been done by the government itself, or by another partner. These macro-assessments help identify opportunities for capacity building, which may be addressed in the UNDAF. See, for example, the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers system followed by some UN agencies ([Framework for Cash Transfers to Implementing Partners](#)).

6.2.2 Map UNCT work in a country and determine the UNCT's comparative advantage

In assessing its strengths, the UNCT includes an overview of all normative and operational work carried out by agencies at the country level, and expertise within the wider UN system that could become relevant in the particular – or emerging – country contexts. The UNCT must clearly articulate the strategic roles for UN cooperation based on the UN system's mandate and mission as applied to the country context. The UNCT specifically analyzes its comparative advantages in the country to contribute towards achievement of national development priorities. Comparative advantage is not interpreted to mean agency mandate; rather it is a realistic assessment of expertise and value added, and may draw on agency-specific assessments. A national consultative process is followed to identify the expectations of the government and civil society as well as the relative roles of the bilateral and multilateral partners.

Options of timing and modality: The timing of conducting the comparative advantage analysis is flexible, as long as it informs strategic planning. The modalities for assessing the comparative advantage analysis are also flexible. ([For details on SWOT \(strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats\) analysis and guidance on how to conduct comparative advantage analysis, refer to Chapter III of Technical Guidance](#)).

6.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING: A results matrix must be developed for every UNDAF

The UNDAF reflects the comparative advantage of the UN by emphasizing the thematic competence of the agencies involved, without necessarily highlighting their specific mandates. It shows where the UN system can bring its unique strengths to bear in advocacy, capacity development, programming, and cutting edge knowledge and policy advice, for the achievement of the internationally agreed standards and development goals, including MD/MDG related national priorities.

6.3.1 Undertaking a strategic prioritization exercise is critical

The UN system, including specialized agencies and non-resident agencies, and stakeholders, led by the government, including all line ministries concerned, participate in a prioritization exercise. The aim is to relate the comparative advantages of the UN system to specific national development priorities in a particular country, as well as the collective resources of the UN system in relation to other resources available to the government, such as through national budget, private sector, international financial institutions and bilateral aid. ([For details of guidance on strategic priority-setting for UNCTs, and criteria for determining areas of UNCT support, refer to Chapter IV of Technical Guidance](#).) The country analysis and prioritization exercise is the basis for drafting the results matrix, and therefore, the UNDAF document, and for identifying potential joint

programmes (see [Guidance on Joint Programmes](#)). In transition settings, the prioritization exercise needs to be anchored in a conflict analysis, which guides the identification of priorities for action in the transition period.

Option of modality: A prioritization retreat is a useful way to conduct this exercise; however other options are also available (see the [UNDG Toolkit for resources on strategic prioritization](#)).

6.3.2 Priorities and outcomes must be selected

After reviewing all national development priorities, and then agreeing on which national development priorities are appropriate for UN action, the UNCT, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, must agree on a set of outcomes to support each national development priority. The outcomes:

- Make a substantive and measurable contribution to the achievement of the selected priorities of the national development framework;
- Reflect what the UNCT strives to achieve based on a participatory analysis of country needs, involving all relevant stakeholders, and drawing on the entire range of expertise to be found within the UN system, including of specialized agencies and non-resident agencies, in response to national development priorities;
- Are specific, realistically achievable and measurable, so that the UN is accountable for their achievements;
- Reflect the five inter-related programming principles and other key cross-cutting issues;

- Reflect the five Managing for Development Results (MfDR) Principles;⁸
- Reflect the comparative advantages and capacities of the UNCT vis-à-vis other development partners and the government.

Options: number of priorities and outcomes are optional and vary according to national context

- The UNCT, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, focuses on a sub set of national development priorities. For each national development priority, the UNCT defines outcomes as a collective UN system support.
- The UNDAF results matrix has only one level of outcomes. It is important that outcomes are defined such that they strike a balance between being strategic on the one hand, and being focused enough, on the other hand, to reflect the specificities of the UN system's contribution towards the national development priorities, based on comparative advantage.
- The number of outcomes is determined by the UNCT, with national partners, to best reflect the UN system's collective contribution. Experience to date suggests that it is difficult to manage a large number of outcomes. It is recommended that the outcomes are limited in number and specifically reflect the capacities and comparative advantages of the UN system in the country.
- Outcomes may reflect the contribution of one, two or more agencies, though typically their achievement depends on the joint efforts of agencies. It is important that the role, responsibilities and, hence, accountability of each contributing agency and partner is clear. While agencies are accountable

⁸ The MfDR [five principles](#) are: at all phases—from strategic planning through implementation to completion and beyond—focus the dialogue on results for partner countries, development agencies, and other stakeholders; align actual programming, monitoring, and evaluation activities with the agreed expected results; keep the results reporting system as simple, cost-effective, and user-friendly as possible; manage for, not by results; and use results information for management learning and decision-making, as well as for reporting and accountability.

for achieving outputs, they are also accountable for their respective contributions towards the achievement of outcomes. The agencies contributing to each outcome are clearly highlighted in the UNDAF results matrix.

6.3.3 Develop an UNDAF Results Matrix⁹

- A results matrix must be developed for every UNDAF. The results matrix is the management tool within the UNDAF. Progress towards the results, with specific targets, and the contribution of each agency are regularly monitored, reported on, and evaluated.
- The results matrix provides the strategic direction and expected results of the UN in a country, which are delivered through various tools such as the UNDAF Action Plan (optional), agency programmes and projects, joint programmes, work plans, and UN inputs into Government plans and budgets. Two options for the UNDAF results matrix are discussed below.
- It is critical that the division of labour, roles and responsibilities of agencies and partners for planned results are identified clearly in the results matrix. Results in the UNDAF are clearly supported by and linked to UN planning and operational documents. If changes are agreed in the UNDAF, these must be reflected by changes in the corresponding documents. If any result is shared between two or more agencies and their partners, all relevant stakeholders are consulted before the result is changed in any of the plan documents. This ensures that the UNDAF stays current and aligned with agency programming.
- The results matrix integrates both the results and monitoring and evaluation elements, thus, reflecting the commitment to the principles of RBM. The UNCT's use of RBM is based on a harmonized system and terminology. (For guidance on SMART results, risks and assumptions, and outcome and output definitions, refer to Chapter IV of Technical Guidance as well as the soon-to-be-issued RBM Handbook.)
- UNDAF results (at all levels) are tracked through a manageable set of key performance indicators. All indicators are accompanied by baselines and targets. (For guidance on the selection of indicators, refer to Chapter V of Technical Guidance.) To ensure consistency, indicators, baselines and targets are usually not changed retroactively. If they are it is only with the consent of all partners.

Options: UNCTs have two options for the level of results in the UNDAF results matrix

- The UNCT, with the government, determines which option responds best to the country context. UNCTs have the flexibility to either keep the UNDAF results matrix at the outcome level (Option 1a), or develop a fuller results matrix, that includes outputs (Option 1b). Both options include indicators, baselines, targets, means of verification, risks and assumptions, role of partners and resources. The results chain and accountability system have to be agreed upon by all stakeholders.

⁹ The UNDAF results matrix is informed and underpinned by the UNDAF narrative, including the UNCT's rationale for identifying the national priorities and development goals to which the UNCT aims to contribute.

OPTION 1A: UNDAF RESULTS MATRIX WITH OUTCOME LEVEL ONLY

National Development Priorities or Goals

Outcomes	Indicators, Baseline, Target	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Role of Partners	Indicative Resources
<p>Outcome 1 : Expected (planned) institutional or behavioural changes</p> <p><i>(List contributing UN agencies for each of the outcomes and highlight the outcome convenor)</i></p>	All indicators should have baseline and target information/ data			Describes how non-UN partners will contribute	Estimated financial resources required by the UN system for its contribution to the achievement of the outcome and estimated financial resources each agency will contribute (both regular budget and other resources) to the achievement of the outcome. Optional: may include government's contribution or cost sharing.
Outcome 2					

OPTION 1B: UNDAF RESULTS MATRIX WITH OUTCOME AND OUTPUT LEVELS

National Development Priorities or Goals:

Outcomes	Indicators, Baseline, Target	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Role of Partners	Indicative Resources
Outcome 1 : <i>(List contributing UN agencies for each of the outcomes and highlight the outcome convener)</i>					
Output 1.1					
Output 1.2					
Outcome 2					
Output 2.1					

- Some guidance is given below to help UNCTs determine the choice of options:

- If a UNCT chooses Option 1a, it may prepare an UNDAF Action Plan¹⁰ or a similar common operational plan reflecting the outputs that contribute to the outcomes of the UNDAF. The results chain would then be:

Outcomes (UNDAF) ← Outputs & Key Actions (UNDAF Action Plan) ← Activities (Annual Work Plans).

However, if the UNCT is not preparing an UNDAF Action Plan or a similar common operational plan, then it must ensure the flow of the results chain through:

Outcomes (UNDAF) ← Outputs, Key Actions & Activities (Agency-specific bi-annual and annual work plans; CPAPs; Joint Programmes; Project Documents).

The inter-agency groups responsible for M&E ensure that the output level contributions of all agencies to the outcomes of the UNDAF are captured, monitored and reported on.

- If a UNCT chooses Option 1b, and is not preparing an UNDAF Action Plan or a similar common operational plan, the results chain would then be:

Outcomes & Outputs (UNDAF) ← Outputs & Key Actions (CPAPs/Project documents) ← Activities (Annual Work Plans).

¹⁰ The UNDAF Action Plan is a single operational document for the coordinated implementation of the UNDAF. For each outcome, the UNDAF Action Plan reflects the outputs and key actions. The UNDAF Action Plan does not replace legal frameworks for cooperation or any partnership agreement or project document between a UN system agency and a partner. While the UNDAF Action Plan is voluntary, it is an operational tool legally cleared by the headquarters of all UN agencies. (See [UNDAF Action Plan Guidance](#)).

- Regardless of the options chosen, agencies are accountable for their respective contributions towards the achievement of outcomes. Agencies are fully accountable for their respective outputs. Outputs can be shared by two or more agencies and their implementing partners only if they indicate an opportunity for joint programming. Outputs can be adjusted, where necessary, to take account of changes in the development environment, including changes in availability of resources. (See [One Budgetary Framework](#))

6.3.4 Obtain feedback on results matrix

- A self-assessment of the UNDAF must be undertaken by the UNCT to ensure the quality and strategic position for the UN at country level. (For details on criteria for a quality UNDAF, refer to Chapter IV of Technical Guidance.)
- The UNCT and government also seek feedback on the initial draft from other development partners.
- The UNCT is required to share a draft with the regionally based QSA Convening Agency for final review by the PSG. The Convening Agency provides consolidated comments from the PSG within 15 working days. The UNCT then reviews and updates the UNDAF based on the comments and concerns received.

6.3.5 Submission deadline and structure of UNDAF document

- The UNDAF must be signed and launched following the launch of the national development plan, whenever possible. The RC sends the signed UNDAF to all partners and to the Chair of the UN Development Group for submission to the UN Secretary-General.
- All UNDAF documents are subsequently posted on the UNDG web site. The UNDAF results matrix is a basis for developing agency programme

documents. Agencies preparing programme documents, based on the UNDAF, may commence their preparation prior to the signing of the UNDAF in order to ensure that agency-specific submission deadlines are respected.

- The UNDAF document does not exceed 15 pages. It includes the following sections: signature page; introduction, including summary of country analysis; UNDAF results; initiatives outside results matrix; estimated resource requirements; implementation arrangements; M&E. (For guidance on the structure of the UNDAF document, refer to Chapter IV of Technical Guidance.)

6.4 MONITORING & EVALUATION: an M&E plan; an annual review; and an evaluation are required

UNDAF Monitoring and UNDAF Evaluation are linked but distinct processes. In line with the principles of Managing for Development Results, UNCTs ensure that they (i) capitalize on existing national M&E systems whenever possible and feasible, (ii) provide support to areas where further strengthening of national systems is required, while avoiding an excessive burden on partner countries with UNDAF-specific M&E requirements.

- **Monitoring** tracks progress towards the results agreed in the matrix, and checks if the assumptions made and risks identified at the design stage are still valid or need to be reviewed. Thus it helps the UNCT and implementing partners to make mid-course corrections as an integral part of programme management. The results expected from UNDAF monitoring are:
 - Regular assessments of progress towards the outcomes in the matrix;
 - Continued identification of partners' capacity development needs, particularly for data collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting;

- Improved results-based reporting on UNDAF achievements; and
- Improved teamwork among UN agencies and greater ownership of the UNDAF among implementing partners.
- **Evaluation** determines whether the results made a worthwhile contribution to national development priorities, and the coherence of UNCT support. While it makes an essential contribution to managing for results, it is an external function that is separated from programme management. The results expected from the UNDAF evaluation are:
 - A considered judgement about the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of UNDAF results and strategies, as well as alternatives that could have made more effective use of UNCT resources and comparative advantages, particularly for capacity development;
 - Improved positioning of UNDAF results and lessons to influence the national development framework, and inform country analysis and planning in the next cycle; and
 - Better accountability and more effective use of lessons learned to inform management decision-making and build knowledge for enhanced programmes, plans and policies;
 - Effective use of evaluations/studies conducted by agencies and partners during the cycle.
- The M&E plan highlights mechanisms or modalities for monitoring the achievement of outputs and the contribution towards achievement of outcomes.
- In developing the M&E plan, UNCTs consider the following key factors:
 - Most of the data for the indicators on results are drawn from national systems. Where data from national systems is not available, baseline studies can be supported. Each UN agency is responsible and accountable for monitoring and evaluating respective programme outputs and contribution to outcomes, while strengthening existing national M&E systems and mechanisms.
 - When preparing the M&E plan, UNCTs therefore determine major gaps in terms of required data. The M&E plan then spells out how these gaps are filled, e.g., through strengthening M&E in key projects or building government's capacity to operationalize its own M&E systems, wherever feasible.

Option: The M&E plan may be reflected by the UNCT in a table or in the narrative of the UNDAF document. [\(For guidance on the M&E plan, refer to Chapter V of Technical Guidance.\)](#)

6.4.2 An UNDAF annual review process with the government must be undertaken

- Annually, the UNCT and the government conduct a review of the UNDAF. The UNDAF annual review process is aligned with the review of the national development plan, to the extent possible. The agency-specific annual review processes contribute to the UNDAF annual review. It is essential that the UNDAF annual review process is documented, even though an annual UNDAF progress report is not mandatory.

6.4.1 An M&E plan is required

- The UNDAF M&E plan is designed, with the full involvement of government and other partners, at the same time as the results matrix, which is the basis of the M&E plan. It may draw on the national M&E plan, of the national development framework, where available.

- The annual review process is where the UNCT primarily engages with government and other partners to review overall progress towards results and take stock of lessons and good practices that feed into the annual planning processes and commitments for the coming year.
- In order to facilitate the UNDAF annual review process, the UNCT engages with national review mechanisms, where such mechanisms exist for monitoring the national development priorities, and/or forms inter-agency groups around each national development priority reflected in the UNDAF. These inter-agency groups are responsible for using the results matrix and M&E plan as the basis for joint monitoring of outcomes, along with programme partners. The findings of these groups are a vital input for the UNDAF annual review process with the government. (See footnote 12 below.)
- The annual review can be used for continuous planning in transition settings, thus ensuring the UNCT's responsiveness to a changing environment.

6.4.3 A single UNDAF progress report must be produced per UNDAF cycle

- As required by the TCPR,¹¹ UNCTs produce an UNDAF progress report¹² to national authorities on progress towards the outcomes of the UNDAF results matrix. The UNCT draws on available evidence of what the UN has contributed towards these outcomes. The UNDAF progress report does not discuss UN-supported activities. It reports on

how the outputs, produced by the UN or specific UN-supported projects and programmes, contribute towards progress in achieving the outcomes of the UNDAF results matrix.

- For assessing progress towards outcomes, the UNCT and government rely on data from national systems, where available. UNCTs determine how far outputs have been achieved and how far they are likely to contribute to the outcomes. In doing so, UNCTs also maximize the use of performance data from project/programme performance assessments, the RC Annual Report, and any process for reviewing UN reform.
- When assessing progress towards outcomes, it is useful to consider not only quantitative indicators/targets but also qualitative factors that affect the likelihood of achieving the outcomes. The extent to which each outcome adheres to and furthers the five programming principles provides a good basis for such considerations.
- UN agencies and their partners remain accountable for performance of individual projects and programmes and the UNDAF progress report does not blur this line of accountability.
- As a minimum, a single UNDAF progress report must be produced per UNDAF cycle, with the timing to be agreed between the UNCT and national authorities. (See footnote 12 below.)

Option of reporting frequency: The UNCT, in consultation with government and other key partners, may produce more than a single UNDAF progress report per UNDAF cycle, if this adds value.

¹¹ The TCPR 2007 requests that “the resident coordinator, supported by the United Nations country team, should report to national authorities on progress made against results agreed in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework”.

¹² Detailed guidance on the UNDAF Progress Report is available in the “[Standard Operational Format and Guidelines for Reporting Progress on UNDAF](#)”

6.4.4 An evaluation is required

- An evaluation of the UNDAF is required. Evaluation aims to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the UN system's contribution, as described in the UNDAF. It is essential for evaluation to be credible, independent, impartial, transparent and useful. The UNCT and government agree on the arrangements for conducting the UNDAF evaluation.
- Findings from the evaluation are normally available by the end of the penultimate year of the cycle. Together with the UNDAF progress report, the findings from the evaluation guide the UNCT's analytical contribution and the strategic planning of the subsequent UNDAF.
- The evaluation results are validated with national partners and stakeholders, and feed into the development of the next UNDAF. Studies, surveys and evaluations conducted by UN agencies and by their partners during the cycle feed into the UNDAF evaluation or UNDAF evaluation component of a larger development evaluation. The scope of the UNDAF evaluation covers the five programming principles.
- Besides feeding into the next cycle and providing lessons learned from past cooperation, the evaluation calls for a written and agreed management response by the UNCT and the government.

Options of modality: The UNCT and government may opt to establish an evaluation management group to oversee the preparation and implementation of the evaluation. UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System both provide guidance regarding the evaluation process. Where possible, UNCTs may look for opportunities for the UNDAF evaluation to be undertaken as part of a larger evaluation, such as a national development plan, national vision or PRSP evaluation, or as part of an integrated mission planning process such as the Integrated Strategic Framework. Its scope will depend on the kinds of evaluations and studies conducted during the cycle, and by the nature of UNCT involvement in each country ([UNEG Norms for Evaluation of the UN System; UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System; UNDAF Evaluation Terms of Reference](#)). In some countries, the annual review of the third year of the UNDAF implementation potentially serves as a mid-term review.

