Checklists to assess the quality and strategic positioning of the UNDAF:

Update for 2010 UNDAF Roll-Out

These updated checklists are for use by UNCTs and regional support mechanisms to provide quality support and advice for the 2010 UNDAF roll-out process.

The checklists have been comprehensively revised in light of the 2010 UNDAF guidance package. They are aligned with the 4 main steps of the UNDAF process: (1) Roadmap, (2) Country Analysis, (3) Strategic Planning, and (4) Monitoring and Evaluation.

Step 1: Roadmap

1. Does the Roadmap indicate that the UNDAF will be aligned with national development planning processes? (*Eg. national development plan; poverty reduction strategy; joint assistance strategy; sector-wide or programme-based approach; direct budget support*)

a)   Will the UNDAF commence in the same year as or one year after the national development strategy? If not, has the UNCT outlined a strategy to align the UNDAF cycle in the medium term?

b)   Does the Roadmap make use of unique or particularly strong national capacities and mechanisms?

2. Does the Roadmap present a logical series of steps, milestones, and a timeline for the UNCT`s contribution to county analysis and for UNDAF preparation?

a)   Indicative dates for workshops (HRBA-RBM, SPR) and skills trainings

b)   Indicative dates for the PSG review of draft documents

c)   How clear are the accountabilities? (Who is taking the lead for each activity and who will be held accountable for delivery?)

d)   Is the budget adequate, and is there cost-sharing amongst the UNCT?

e)   Has the UNCT built in sufficient time to complete the activities and products of sufficient quality to ensure a strategic UNDAF?

f)   Have other training and capacity needs been identified? If no, does the roadmap indicate capacity assessment exercises?

3. To what extent have stakeholders[1] been involved in the development of the Roadmap?

a)   Do stakeholders have a solid understanding of the UNDAF process, its key building blocks and built-in reviews and how these will function?

b)   Has the UNCT informed and engaged Non-Resident Agencies (NRAs) in the process? If not, when and how does the UNCT plan to do so?

4. Looking forward, how will consultative processes in the Roadmap include stakeholders, and is there planned engagement with marginalized, disadvantaged and excluded groups? (*Eg. the review of country analysis, assessment of UNCT comparative advantages, the Strategic Planning Retreat*)

5. Does the Roadmap indicate that evaluations, lessons, or key studies from the current cycle will be used to formulate the next UNDAF?

6. Does the Roadmap indicate that the UNCT has begun to consider the different options for the next UNDAF and their implications? (Eg. UNDAF with outcomes only or UNDAF with outcomes and outputs; UNDAF Action Plan)

7. What specific support needs have been requested by the UNCT from (1) Regional UNDG Teams, and (2) UN System Staff College and (3) DOCO?

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[1] In the UNDAF Guidelines, 'stakeholders' refer to governments, including line ministries; social partners, including workers and employers organizations; other development partners relevant to a country context; civil society; and NGOs.

Step 2: Country Analysis

Note: UNCTs have several options for making a contribution to country analysis. The following checklist provides a guide only. It is not comprehensive, nor will it address all the possible options or approaches a UNCT may take. It should be used flexibly, and based on a full understanding of the country context.

Country Analysis Products: Does the country analysis…

1. Provide a structured, comprehensive and accessible analysis of the country situation?
In the case of UNCT participation in government-led analysis or complementary analysis, are there references to the existing processes and reports?

2. Assess the situation of the country with respect to the standards in the MD/MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals and treaty obligations?
   a) Do analytical processes or products (existing or planned) provide reliable, recent data related to the MDGs and do they adequately describe issues, trends and gaps?
   b) Have important comments by Treaties Bodies and supervisory bodies in the UN system (i.e. responding to national reports) been considered?

3. Identify patterns of discrimination and inequality, and describe the situation of groups excluded and made vulnerable due to the denial of their rights?
   a) Are data sufficiently disaggregated (e.g. by gender, ethnicity, region, religion and language, as well as disability, HIV/AIDS and other status) to identify excluded groups?
   b) Are there evident priorities among the problems and challenges identified?
   c) Are the root causes of these problems and challenges identified?
   d) Does the analysis describe patterns of discrimination and the different ways that females and males experience these problems?

4. Identify key environmental issues and how they contribute to major development problems, such as poverty and disease?
How well have environmental targets been addressed, with reference to national and international environmental obligations? (Eg. MDG7 and JPOI targets, Multilateral Environmental Agreements)

5. Assess capacity assets and gaps at different levels?
   a) Does the assessment acknowledge the interdependence of capacity at three levels: enabling environment, organizational and individual?
   b) Does the assessment identify capacity assets and needs of key actors (duty-bearers and rights-holders) to address the problems and challenges (at national, sub-national, community and family level)?

6. Involve non-government stakeholders, and ensure the active and meaningful participation of groups subjected to discrimination, including the poor, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS and different groups of women such as indigenous women and women migrant workers?
Does the Analysis make use of data and reports produced by non-state actors (inc. alternate reports to Treaty bodies)?

7. Assess the risks of conflict and natural disasters, as well as the readiness of countries to respond?
   a) Have risks of humanitarian crises and natural disasters been assessed, and are the groups most likely to be affected identified?
   b) Have the analytical processes and products considered the readiness of government, civil society and communities to respond to crises and natural disasters?

UNCT Comparative Advantages
Did the UNCT conduct a thorough and objective exercise to define its comparative advantages?
   a) Did the exercise focus on national challenges where the UNCT is likely to act?
   b) Did the exercise involve a range of stakeholders from government, donors, and civil society?
   c) Has the exercise resulted in information about whether the UNCT is better positioned than others to address the challenges (as demonstrated by results achieved and/or a unique role)?

Step 3: Strategic Planning (UNDAF checklist)

Focus and Prioritization:

1. Are the selected priorities for the UNDAF strategic?

Priorities should: (1) Respond to one or more major national challenges, aligned with the MD/MDGs, (2) Utilise UNCT comparative advantages, and (3) Have the support of government and other stakeholders for action

2. Do the priorities also reflect major regional priorities that have been identified in national priorities?

3. Is there a clear division of labour amongst the UNCT and stakeholders for the delivery of planned results?

4. Does the UNDAF apply the 5 programming principles (human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, capacity development, results-based management)?

(See *UNDG Guidance Note: Application of the Programming Principles to the UNDAF*)

Alignment

1. Do the UNDAF outcomes make a plausible contribution to national priorities as expressed in the PRS, NDP or equivalent national document?

2. Does the UNDAF reflect national capacity development strategies and incorporate the findings of major capacity assessments conducted by stakeholders?

Results Based Management (emphasis on the results matrix and M&E plan)

Options 1a (*UNDAF with outcomes only*) and 1b (*UNDAF with outcomes and outputs*):

1. Are the outcomes specific and achievable?

2. Are there a manageable number of indicators for each result (normally 1 to 4)?

3. Do the indicators measure the expected result, and are they accompanied by baselines and targets, or is there a plan to collect this information?

4. Are the means of verification logical?

5. Are specific assumptions and risks identified?

6. Are the estimated financial resources required by the UN system for its contribution realistic, and do they show a breakdown by contributing agency?

Option 1b:

7. Is there causality between the outcomes and outputs? (i.e. Will the combined achievement of outputs, including assumptions about what partners are doing, result in the desired behavioural or institutional change at the outcome level?

8. Are any outputs beyond the control of the UN agencies and implementing partners to achieve

9. Do the indicators measure the expected outputs, and are they accompanied (where necessary) by baselines and targets? Or is there a plan to collect this information?

UNDAF M&E Plan:

1. Does the M&E plan provide operational detail about the inter-agency mechanisms and processes for monitoring about UNDAF performance and reporting?

2. Does the M&E plan highlight the major data gaps for UNDAF monitoring and explain how they will be addressed?

3. Is the M&E plan aligned with the national monitoring system, either by using national data and data collection systems or feeding information into these systems?

Conflict/Transition Issues

1. Has the likelihood of crisis/disaster & and who is likely to be affected, been considered?

2. Is the UNDAF based on a conflict analysis? And does it address human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability concerns?

3. Are humanitarian concerns reflected?

UNDAF Action Plan:

Where a UNCT has opted to prepare a UNDAF Action Plan (UAP), the following key questions will help to guide the quality support and assurance:

1. Does the UAP describe the relationship between the UNDAF, agency governing body documents, the UAP, and annual work plans/ project documents?
a) Is there a clear flow of results from the UNDAF though to agency programmes and work plans?
b) Are responsibilities (agency specific and joint) well defined ?

2. Does the UAP describe the programme management and partnership strategies for coordinated delivery of resources?
a) Joint programmes, UN theme groups, or other inter-agency coordination groups?
b) How will the UNCT support Government to implement programme-based approaches such as SWAPs?

3. Does the UAP describe the specific mechanisms for decision-making and coordination between the UNCT and government? Key elements:
a) Mechanisms and partners for government coordination
b) Management arrangements for joint programmes, including government management and coordination
c) Arrangements for cash transfers to implementing partners?
d) Summary of roles and responsibilities

4. Do the indicative resources summarise the financial requirements for each UNDAF priority, and show the contribution of each agency from both core and non-core resources?

5. Do the monitoring processes and mechanisms adequately address the need for performance monitoring of the planned results?

6. Does the UAP describe specific government commitments?

Step 4: Monitoring & Evaluation

Note:

*The UNDAF guidelines describe **4 key activities** to be undertaken by a UNCT and stakeholders to monitor and evaluate UNDAF implementation:*

> *1. Implement the M&E plan*
> *2. Conduct Annual Reviews of UNDAF performance*
> *3. Produce one UNDAF progress report, per cycle at a minimum*
> *4. Carry-out an UNDAF evaluation.*

The following questions provide a guide for review of M&E documents:

UNDAF M&E Plan:

1. Are the inter-agency mechanisms and processes for UNDAF monitoring functioning, and are there routine reports about UNDAF performance to the UNCT?
2. Have the major data gaps described in the M&E plan been addressed?
3. Are UNDAF monitoring mechanism and processes using information from national data collection systems and/or feeding information into these systems?

UNDAF Annual Reviews:

How effective are the UNDAF annual review processes and reports? Do they:

a) Provide evidence from UNDAF monitoring mechanisms and processes, and from national data systems about key outputs and track progress towards outcomes?
b) Provide lessons and good practices?
c) Identify possible constraints or challenges in the year ahead and reflect on assumptions and risks that underpin the UNDAF?
d) Provide opportunities for the government coordinating body and other stakeholders to lead the process?

UNDAF Progress Report:

1. Does the UNDAF progress report effectively demonstrate how outputs have contributed towards progress in achieving outcomes?[2]
2. How well does the progress report use information from national data systems

UNDAF Evaluation:

1. Does the evaluation assess one or all of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of UNDAF results and strategies?
2. Does it make recommendations for how UNCT resources and comparative advantages can be used more strategically and effectively?
3. How are the UNCT and stakeholders planning to use the evaluation findings to influence the national development framework, and inform the next UNDAF process?

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[2] Detailed guidance on the UNDAF report is available in the Standard Operational Format for UNDAF Reporting