ACCELERATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

UNDG LAC STRATEGY FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) provide an integrated package of clear, straightforward and internally consistent guidance on programming, leadership, business operations, funding and communications for country-level development operations.

Based on the QCPR 2012, all the Agencies, Funds and Programmes of UNDG LAC are committed to firmly advance in the implementation of the SOP at country level and accelerate SOPs implementation in this region to ensure a UN focused on results, with strengthened accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and improved outcomes.

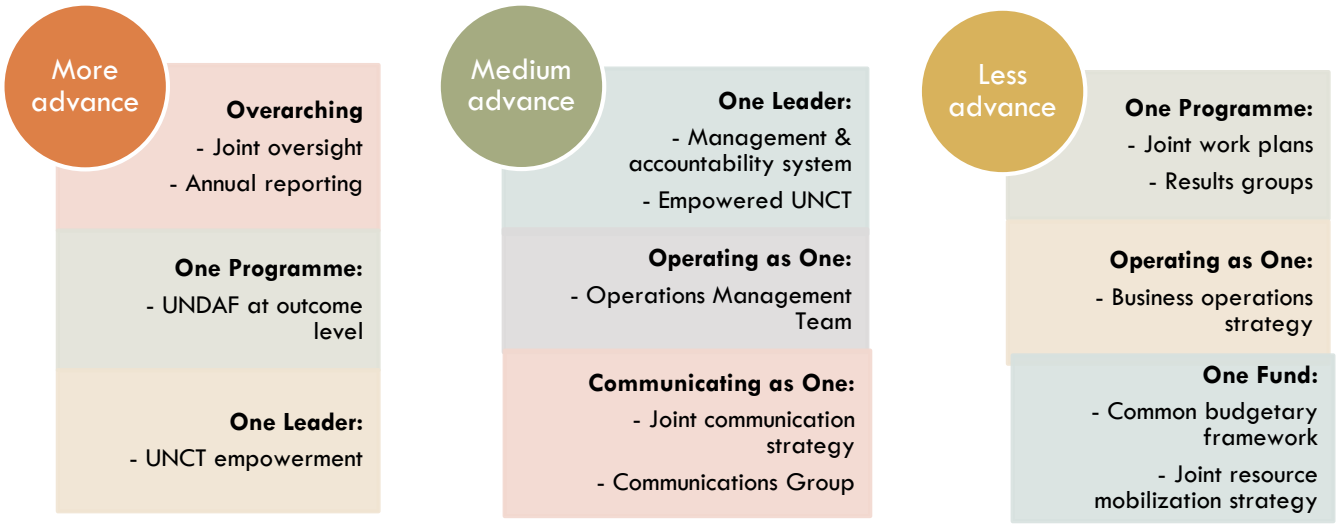
INTEGRATION, is one of the main elements for the UN to effectively support implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**. The new global development agenda is large and complex, posing challenges in terms of capacities, resources, data, and political commitment. The SOPs are a set of business practices and tools that facilitate the UN Country Teams working together. Moreover, they are an important step to ensure there is the readiness, experience, capacities and tools to meet the post-2015 implementation challenges at country level.

The Implementation of the SOPs REQUIRE TWO IMPORTANT SHIFTS:

- **From planning together to delivering together, with a clear focus on simplification.**
- **Accelerate reform in the area of business practices in support of a focused results**

A recent UNCT members self-assessment on the implementation of the 15 Core Elements (Annex 3) of the SOP [1] show progress on strategic programming (increasingly strategic UNDAFs), UNCT empowerment and on Communicating as One; and less progress on common budgetary framework, joint work plans and programme-operation links (see figure 1 for reference).

FIGURE 1. OVERALL ADVANCE IN THE SOP PILLARS. SOURCE: UNDG 2015.



[1] Assessments done based on the checklist provided by the 26 countries in the region.

Most countries have already advanced in more than one of the 15 Core Elements of the SOPs. Therefore, with the commitment of the UNCTs and the support from the UNDG LAC, rapid advancement could be made by defining a sequence of steps to gradually accomplish with the Core Elements of the SOPs. This way, the region can show that all the countries are on track and progressing in specific areas.

I. ROLE OF THE REGIONAL UNDG TEAMS AS PER THE SOPs

According to the SOPs, the Regional UNDG Team is "uniquely positioned to support the roll-out and implementation of the SOPs, given their primary roles of providing leadership, strategic guidance, and support to the Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams, the quality assurance and oversight of the UN contribution and shared results, and the performance review of RCs and UNCTs at country level."

In particular, the role of the Regional UNDG would consists of the following:

Roles	Activities
1. Providing technical and quality assurance support to RCs/UNCTs on SOPs	• Organize Trainings • Support UNCTs to respond jointly to needs • Collaborate globally for technical support/guidance beyond the One Programme
2. Advocating to RCs/UNCTs to adopt the SOPs	• Advocating messages • Facilitate sharing of best practices • Capacity building for PSG members • Raise awareness within their respective organizations • UNDG LAC Members will convey consistent messages and speak on SOPs when they visit UNCTs • Regional Directors should ensure their staff are also appraised on contribution to coordination
3. Ensuring that progress on UN coherence is considered an important element in the performance management of the RCs and UNCTs	• Progress in implementing SOPs discussed during performance appraisal meeting • R/UNDG should ensure continued oversight
4. Troubleshooting when disagreements arise on the implementation of SOPs within the UNCT	• Offer constructive solutions, raise awareness of challenges at global level

II. THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY

The UNDG LAC will perform the roles and functions described in the SOPs with focus on four general components. A detailed list of activities is attached at the end of the document.

1. **Generate common understanding on the SOPs & self-assess SOPs implementation at country level.**

   Establish a baseline of SOP implementation and a monitoring mechanism. The UNDG LAC, has requested to the UNCTs to report on the implementation of the 15 core elements in their respective countries. The information submitted will serve as to define a baseline. At the same, UNCTs will be required to send to UNDG LAC support information on the Core Elements advanced (terms of reference, products, contact person details, among others) in order to have a pull of examples that could serve as a working basis to other countries.

   Annual updates, will allow monitoring advances at country and regional levels, as well as help to identify trends, refine this strategy and define additional support needs.

2. **Ensure quick wins.**

   Support basic steps to advance in quick win areas in all countries. It is indeed necessary that SOPs be applied to a wide variety of country contexts. Therefore, the leadership and analysis of UNCTs is key to determine which components of the SOPs are applicable and useful to their specific country contexts. After the self-assessment, UNCTs should define a **ROADMAP** to advance on its accomplishment with specific targets, chronogram and responsible parties. They should also identify specific support requirements from UNDG LAC in order to fill in gaps.

3. **Foster a new generation of UNDAF.**

   Support roll out countries to strengthen UNDAF strategic approach in order to incorporate the SOPs in order for UNCT to offer more coherent, coordinated policy messages and well designed and combined packages of data, advocacy, policy advisory services and institutional strengthening support. This approach should include:

   - A more integrated approach to sustainable development reflected in the areas of cooperation and UN aggregated value.
     - UNDAFs with more explicit links to the global sustainable development agenda.
     - Intention to work more on upstream policy advice, where possible joint, while supporting national partners to localize the SDGs.
   - Fewer strategic outcomes that are actually achievable (tangible and measurable):
     - Clear and measurable contributions from the UN to the outcomes.
     - Increased focus on the normative agenda including SDG 16.
     - Focus on evidence and data (*the missing millions*), including a specific UNDAF outcome on data and/or evidence-based policy where relevant.
   - Greater emphasis on accountability, transparency and public engagement:
     - Primary interlocutor remains the Government with increased focus on broader public engagement, especially the youth.
     - Stronger monitoring and reporting systems.

4. **Use the SOPs as a tool to implement the post-2015 Agenda.**

   The application of the SOPs has to support UNCTs delivering better together to strategically support countries to implement the SDGs. UNDAF implementation should incorporate the UNCT commitment with the SOPs through action plans that define specific targets to accomplish them.

The One Programme component of the SOPs should be the basis to strengthen the implementation modalities of the UNDAFs and the incorporation of the support to SDGs at country level. The post-2015 Agenda can be used as leverage for UN integration based in thematic platforms (e.g. Food security through sustainable agriculture on SDG 2 Hunger, 6 Water, 7 Energy and 15 Ecosystems). Therefore, effective results groups should be actively working in all countries in order to ensure the convergence in the implementation of the UNDAF, the SOPs and the post-2015 Agenda.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

A sustained personal leadership and commitment from UNCT members, supported by the UNDG LAC and HQ levels, is needed to implement this strategy and ensure there is an institutional change in the way the UN works at country level.

- ✓ **UNCTs** are the implementers and the final responsible for SOPs accomplishment.
- ✓ **UNDG LAC** provides overarching guidance and strategic oversight and will channel and ensure response to specific technical support required by UNCTs to regional experts.
- ✓ The **Peer Support Group (PSG)** provides technical support and advice on demand to implement the SOPs.[2]
- ✓ The **UNDG LAC Secretariat** coordinates the preparation of the mapping and monitoring of status and facilitates exchange among countries.
- ✓ **DOCO** has made available specific support on the application of the integrated package comprising SOPs guides and successful examples.

Distribution of Responsibilities

UNDG LAC (Regional Directors)	PSG	UNDG LAC Secretariat
• Advocacy of SOPs in all countries • Raise awareness of SOPs within respective organizations • Ensure performance appraisal within own agency rewards DaO/SOPs efforts • Offer constructive solutions in troubleshooting • Raise awareness of challenges at global level	• Technical support and quality assurance for common programming (development of Joint Work Plans, TORs of Results Groups, etc) • Technical support to UNCTs' development of roadmap for SOPs implementation • Support training missions to UNCTs • Ensure SOPs are incorporated in UNDAF roll-out process • Support UNDG LAC in gaining common understanding of SOPs	• Mapping and monitoring of status of SOPs implementation • Facilitation of technical support/guidance from DOCO to UNCTs • Facilitation of dialogue and exchange between countries • Knowledge management/sharing with regardds to SOPs • Organization of training workshops • Sharing of regular updates with RCs/UNCTs

2 It is composed of designated senior-level focal points from UNDG LAC member organizations, and is Co-chaired by UNDP and UN Women.

ANNEX 1. ACTIVITIES OF THE STRATEGY

Role	No.	Activity	Lead	Timeframe
Role 1: Providing technical and quality assurance support to RCs/UNCTs on SOPs	**1.1**	Mapping and monitoring of the status of SOPs implementation in UNCTs	UNDG LAC Sec	August 15
	1.2	Incorporation of SOPs in the regular UNDAF roll-out process (include reference on new UNDAF checklists for revision)	PSG	Ongoing
	1.3	Organize DaO/SOPs support missions	UNDG LAC Sec	Ad-hoc
	1.4	Promote knowledge sharing (i.e. webinar, workshop, and peer-to-peer network)	UNDG LAC Sec	October 15
	1.5	Regional roll-out workshop on SOPs for Coordination Officers	UNDG LAC Sec	October 15
	1.6	Capacity Building for PSG Members	PSG	October 15
	1.7	ToT on Business Operations Strategy (Spanish)	UNDG LAC Sec	November 15
	1.8	Translation of SOPs materials/presentations to Spanish	UNDG LAC Sec	September 15
	1.9	Support UNDG LAC in gaining common understanding on the SOPs implementation and their ability to support UNCTs accordingly	UNDG LAC Sec	Ongoing
	1.10	Facilitate support provided by DOCO to UNCTs as requested	UNDG LAC Sec	Ongoing
Role 2: Advocating to RCs /UNCTs to adopt the SOPs	**2.1**	Incentivize the implementation of SOPs, with attention to DaO countries	UNDG LAC Sec	July15
	2.2	Sending a UNDG LAC harmonized message to UNCTs	UNDG LAC Sec	July 15
	2.3	Sharing regular updates with RCs/UNCTs	UNDG LAC Sec	Ongoing
	2.4	Preparation of Standard Talking Points for UNDG LAC Members to use while visiting UNCTs to ensure consistent messaging	UNDG LAC Sec	September 15
	2.5	Message to UNDG LAC Members encouraging them to recognize contributions by their respective Representatives/Heads of Agencies to "Delivering Together" efforts.	UNDG LAC Sec	September 15
Role 3: Coherence considered in Appraisal process	**3.1**	Stress implementation of SOPs in the Performance Appraisal feedback to Resident Coordinators and UNCTs	UNDG LAC Sec	June 15
Role 4: Troubleshooting	**4.1**	Documentation of case studies to be used as reference during troubleshooting issues	UNDG LAC Sec	November 15
	4.2	Raise awareness of challenges at global level as necessary	UNDG LAC Sec	As Requested

ANNEX 2. 15 CORE ELEMENTS OF THE SOPS

PILLARS	15 CORE ELEMENTS
Overarching	✓ Joint oversight and ownership agreed between Government and the UN and outlined in agreed terms of reference for a Joint National/ UN Steering Committee (Generic terms of reference); ✓ Annual reporting on joint UN results in the UN Country Results Report;
One Programme	✓ Signed UNDAF at the outcome level with legal text9 as appropriate; ✓ Joint Work Plans (of Results Groups), aligned with the UNDAF and signed by involved UN entities (this does not preclude agency specific work plans where required) (Tips and template for JWPs); ✓ Results Groups (chaired by Heads of Agencies) focused on strategic policy and programme content established and aligned with national coordination mechanisms (Generic Terms of Reference);
Common Budgetary Framework (and One Fund)	✓ A medium-term Common Budgetary Framework aligned to the UNDAF/One Programme as a results-oriented resourcing framework for UN resources (Guide to the Common Budgetary Framework); ✓ Annual Common Budgetary Frameworks (as a part of the Joint Work Plans) updated annually with transparent data on financial resources required, available, expected, and to be mobilized (Tools and materials); ✓ A Joint Resource Mobilization strategy as appropriate to the country context (with the option of a One Fund duly considered) approved by the UNCT and monitored and reported against in the UN Country Results Report;
One Leader	✓ Strong commitment and incentives of the UNCT to work towards common results and accountability through full implementation of the M&A system and the UNCT Conduct and Working Arrangements; ✓ Empowered UNCT to make joint decisions relating to programming activities and financial matters;
Operating as One	✓ Business Operations Strategy endorsed by UNCT is highly recommended, adapted to local needs and capacities, to enhance operational oneness processes through eliminating duplication of common processes to leverage efficiencies and maximize economies of scale; ✓ Empowered Operations Management Team (chaired by a Head of Agency); ✓ Operations costs and budgets integrated in the overall medium-term Common Budgetary Framework;
Communicating as One	✓ A joint communication strategy appropriate to the country context approved by the UNCT and monitored and reported against in the UN Country Results Report (Guide to Communicating as One); ✓ Country Communications Group (chaired by a Head of Agency) and supported by regional and HQ levels, as necessary.

ANNEX 3. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 15 CORE ELEMENTS OF THE SOPS IN LAC[3]

9/8/2015

PILLAR	CORE ELEMENT	Status by Country																									SUMMARY (by element)
		ARG	BAR	BEL	BOL	BRA	CHI	COL	COS	CUB	DOM	ECU	ELS	GUA	GUY	HAI	HON	JAM	MEX	NIC	PTY	PAR	PER	SUR	TTO	URU	VEN	
OVERARCHING	1. Joint oversight and ownership agreed between Government and the UN and outlined in agreed terms of reference for a Joint National/ UN Steering Committee																											
	2. Annual reporting on joint UN results in the UN Country Results Report.																											
ONE PROGRAMME	3. Signed UNDAF at the outcome level with legal text as appropriate																											
	4. Joint Work Plans (of Results Groups), aligned with the UNDAF and signed by involved UN entities																											
	5. Results Groups (chaired by Heads of Agencies) focused on strategic policy and programme content established and aligned with national coordination mechanisms																											
COMMON BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK & ONE FUND	6. A medium-term Common Budgetary Framework aligned to the UNDAF/One Programme as a results-oriented resourcing framework for UN resources																											
	7. Annual Common Budgetary Frameworks (as a part of the Joint Work Plans) updated annually with transparent data on financial resources required, available, expected, and to be mobilized																											
	8. A Joint Resource Mobilization strategy as appropriate to the country context (with the option of a One Fund duly considered) approved by the UNCT and monitored and reported against in the UN Country Results Report																											
ONE LEADER	9. Strong commitment and incentives of the UNCT to work towards common results and accountability through full implementation of the M&A system and the UNCT Conduct and Working Arrangements																											
	10. Empowered UNCT to make joint decisions relating to programming activities and financial matters																											
OPERATING AS ONE	11. Business Operations Strategy endorsed by UNCT is highly recommended, adapted to local needs and capacities, to enhance operational oneness processes through eliminating duplication of common processes to leverage efficiencies and maximize economies of scale																											
	12. Empowered Operations Management Team (chaired by a Head of Agency)																											
	13. Operations costs and budgets integrated in the overall medium-term Common Budgetary Framework																											
COMMUNICATING AS ONE	14. A joint communication strategy appropriate to the country context approved by the UNCT and monitored and reported against in the UN Country Results Report																											
	15. Country Communications Group (chaired by a Head of Agency) and supported by regional and HQ levels, as necessary																											

SUMMARY (by country)	ARG	BAR	BEL	BOL	BRA	CHI	COL	COS	CUB	DOM	ECU	ELS	GUA	GUY	HAI	HON	JAM	MEX	NIC	PTY	PAR	PER	SUR	TTO	URU	VEN
Achieved	3	2	1	1	4	1	7	6	5	3	6	8	7	5	3	6	4	4	6	0	1	3	8	11	10	5
Partially Achieved	3	10	5	11	3	7	6	5	6	9	8	4	8	8	8	5	8	8	5	9	6	6	3	4	2	4
No progress	9	3	9	3	8	7	2	4	4	3	1	3	0	2	4	4	3	3	4	6	8	6	4	0	3	6
	3	2	3	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	3

[3] Based on the responses submitted by the RCOs in August 2015. SOPs implementation statuses are updated on a yearly basis.