

Joint Programme Mechanism Review

Consolidated Final Report

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FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

Revision of the 2003 UNDG Guidance Note for Joint Programming (hereafter “UNDG Guidance Note”) is overdue. The extensive experience with joint programmes over the past decade can provide the ingredients to make the UNDG Guidance Note both more relevant and more helpful. In preparation for those revisions, DOCO, on behalf of the UNDG/Fiduciary Management Oversight Group (FMOG), commissioned a review of the joint programme mechanism. The review was conducted on four tracks: development of a working database of JPs based on agency datasets; e-survey of UN country-level experience with joint programmes; review of agency HQ experience with joint programmes; review of joint programmes in three case countries, particularly to obtain government and donor perspectives.

The review has brought into a single dataset the vast majority of formal joint programmes established over the past decade. The 1031 country joint programmes identified demonstrate the shift from 2006 when pooled and parallel funds constituted nearly 80% of the total to 2012 when pass-through funding strongly dominates. While the dataset is not complete in all regards, it provides the basis for a good understanding of the extent and trends in use of the joint programme mechanism.

Based on analysis of UN agency experience obtained from 329 staff e-survey respondents from 20 UN agencies in 100 countries, responses from UN staff at HQ, and government and donor perspectives in three case countries, the revision to the UNDG Guidance Note should consider the key points below and the specific recommendations provided in this Report:

- Guidance regarding why and when to establish joint programmes should be improved based on experience over the past decade. The Guidance Note should provide clear discussion of key considerations for development of joint programmes. It should suggest situations for which cooperation may be desired but for which joint programme may not be the appropriate vehicle.
- Description of each of the three joint funding modalities should better present the strengths and implications of each, particularly regarding accountability for joint programme results.
- Application of guidance should distinguish when appropriate among funding contexts: JPs within a global MPTF; JPs within a Delivering as One fund; and stand-alone JPs.
- Existing guidance regarding management structures is very incomplete. Revision should emphasize the need for a policy-level steering committee (including donors), especially for stand-alone JPs, an operational-level programme coordination committee (including all implementing partners), dedicated programme coordination unit, and possibly a lead agency.
- There is strong concurrence with the central importance of a unified results framework and annual work plan. The revision should add emphasis regarding the need for a joint budget.
- Revision should endorse established country-level practice of reporting, monitoring and evaluation which goes considerably beyond what is specified in the 2003 Guidance Note.
- Revision should strengthen the various components of the accountability framework.
- The number of agencies involved, duration and budget all make a difference for the effective management of joint programmes. The revision should consider indicative limits to strengthen the effectiveness of the JP mechanism.
- DOCO should call UNDG attention to the serious obstacle to joint programmes caused by the lack of harmonization of agency systems and procedures for finance, procurement and audit.

- DOCO should encourage RCs to utilize the 2013 wrap-up of the MDG-F JPs as an opportunity for discussion of lessons learned regarding the JP mechanism and joint programming more broadly.

Introduction

This Joint Programme Mechanism Review was commissioned by DOCO on behalf of the Joint Funding Sub-Committee of the UNDG/FMOG to inform revision of the 2003 UNDG Guidance Note on Joint Programming (hereafter “UNDG Guidance Note”) by identifying areas in which country-level use of the joint programme mechanism indicated there was a need for such revision (see Annex 1 for Terms of Reference of the Joint Programme mechanism review). As that review was nearing its conclusion, DOCO decided to expand the review to include agency HQ experience to complement the lessons from UN country-level experience and to gather government and donor perspectives from three country cases.

This review of the Joint Programme mechanism is the second of two planned reviews of UNDG fund management mechanisms, following the 2011 review of Multi-Partner Trust Funds. An earlier case study review of selected joint programmes was conducted in 2006; this is the first comprehensive review undertaken. The current review benefited from the strong interest and active cooperation of the members of the UNDG/FMOG Joint Funding Sub-Committee, staff of the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) and DOCO, from the many respondents in UN agencies throughout the world, and from government and donor respondents in the three case study countries.

The review followed four tracks:

- Development of a comprehensive perspective on the extent and frequency of use of country joint programmes globally and in various regions, including the relative importance of the different joint programme funding modalities, based on consolidation of existing datasets
- Identification of issues for consideration in revision of the UNDG Guidance Note for Joint Programmes, based on country-level experience of UN agencies
- Identification of issues from the perspective of HQ offices which manage the JP mechanism
- Discussion with government counterparts and donors of their perspective on the JP mechanism

The study began with a desk review of relevant documentation, including the 2003 UNDG Guidance Note for Joint Programmes, Report of the 2006 review of Joint Programme cases, evaluations of joint programmes, agency guidelines and training materials for support to development of joint programmes, the MDG-F Guidelines developed in 2009 with input from UN staff at country level, interviews with HQ staff involved with support to joint programmes at DOCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, MDG-F and MPTF Office and collection of existing agency datasets (see Annex 2 for list of HQ staff interviewed, Annex 3 for list of people interviewed in the three case countries, Annex 4 for the list of agencies contacted for discussion of issues from the HQ perspective, Annex 5 for documents consulted and Annex 6 for list of datasets collected). This report is organized according to the key topics identified during the review.

Topics for particular attention in the review of country-level practice to inform the revision of the UNDG Guidance Note included country-level perspectives on:

- What are the defining features of a joint programme?
- When are the different fund management modalities appropriate?
- What is the joint programme management and coordination framework?
- What are the key features of the joint programme accountability framework?

- What is the impact of the joint programme mechanism on Aid Effectiveness?
- What is the impact of the joint programme mechanism on UN reform and field coherence?
- Is there a need for revision of the UNDG Guidance Note on Joint Programming?

Country-level experience was assessed primarily through an on-line survey sent to approximately 950 contacts, which received 329 valid responses from 20 agencies in 100 countries (12 responses from UN HQ and government staff were not considered). This provided a rich set of data to assess the current practice and understanding of the joint programme mechanism, as well as providing suggestions for how to improve the guidelines. Survey responses were analyzed as a whole and with respondents grouped into relevant subsets according to their agency, JP experience, and own position (see Annex 7 for more information on the methodology applied in development of the master dataset, survey of country-level experience, review of HQ experience, and three country cases).

While the author hopes that this report provides an illuminating summary of perspectives on the Joint Programme mechanism, it is important to keep in mind what it is not meant to do. This study is not an evaluation of joint programming or of the results and impact of joint programmes. The study has deliberately focused on country-level and HQ experience of UN agencies, complemented by a small sample of perspectives of partner governments and donors. Nonetheless, the author hopes that this study proves to be a very useful contribution, and that the synthesis in this report has been able to present the breadth and interest of the response received. Recommendations contained in the report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of DOCO or any specific UN agency.

Review of Experience with the Joint Programme Mechanism

Master Dataset of Joint Programme Mechanism Usage

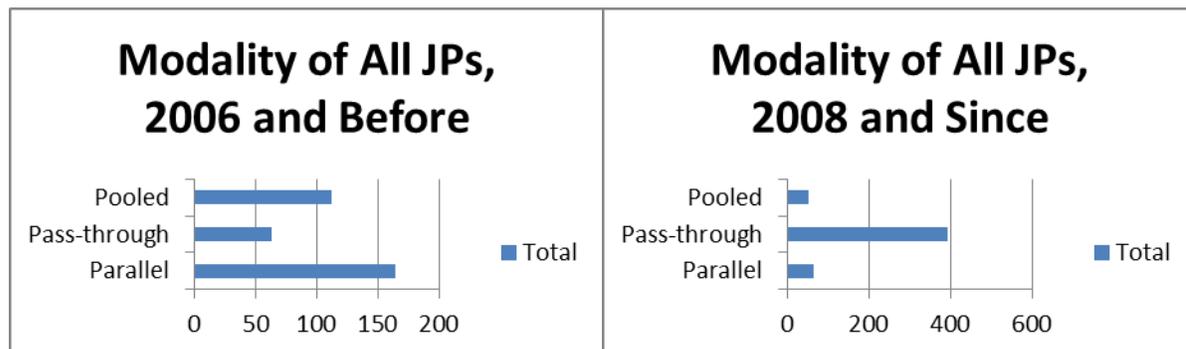
In 2006, the first review of joint programme experience was conducted through case studies of 14 countries with 21 joint programmes, selected from an existing dataset of 162 JPs worldwide as of the end of 2005. Most of these JPs did not derive from the UNDAF process, but many influenced that process. Then (as later) the most frequent participants were UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, although a large number of other agencies also participated. Fully one-quarter of first phase JPs were focused on HIV/AIDS issues; since then HIV/AIDS has continued to be a frequent though less dominant theme, joined by JPs focused on gender, census and other data collection, governance and a range of recovery and sectoral development issues. In 2007 a review of the DOCO dataset, which had by then grown to a total of 507 joint programmes was conducted in preparation for a broader evaluation which did not occur.¹ The more than tripling of the number of JPS during the two year period probably reflected both an increase in the actual number of joint programmes and significantly improved reporting. This period saw growth in the number of pass-through funds at the expense of both pooled and parallel funding.

Funding Modality of Joint Programmes as of 2005 and 2007		
Modality	2005	2007
Pooled	37%	26%
Parallel	44%	39%
Pass-through	13%	27%

¹ The 2007 “RC Synthesis Report on Strengthening Implementation: Joint Programmes” stated that 80 UNCTs reported a total of roughly 260 active joint programmes/projects.

Combination	6%	8%
Total (n=)	162	507
Sources: 2005: UNDG (2006a); 2007: UNDG (2008b)		

Over the years following 2005, three important developments spurred the growth of joint programmes: the Secretary General’s 2002 “agenda for further change”² to strengthen UN reform and effectiveness led to the UNDG-wide efforts to increase “delivering as one,” including the country-specific pilots of the same name which began in 2007; creation of the MDG Achievement Fund which from 2007 funded 130 joint programmes with a contribution of \$700 million;³ and the growth of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office (now Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office) as a recognized high-quality pass-through financial management channel for donor funding to multi-agency programmes. Nearly 90% of the 526 joint programmes in the current records of MPTF Office, UNICEF and UNFPA are funded on a pass-through basis. Out of those 526 joint programmes: 37% are under global MPTFs most of which have a global secretariat and specific guidelines; 24% are under One UN Country Funds and 11% under Stabilization and Recovery Funds both sets of which have country-level steering committees; and 28% are Stand Alone JPs, which include virtually all of the pooled and parallel modality funds.



Analysis of the 2117 listings from the datasets of the MPTF Office, UNICEF, UNFPA, DOCO (2005 and 2007 datasets), UNDP, UNOPS and UNWOMEN provides a cumulative total over the past 10 years of 1031 separate joint programmes through mid-2012, including 55 joint programmes reportedly established during the period 1998-2003 (see Annex 8 for the master dataset). The table below indicates their distribution by fund management modality. There are 40 “combination” JPs, focused primarily on AIDS or gender issues, while all except two of the 11 “blank” cases are gender JPs with incomplete data. The pass-through funding modality – the least frequently used of the three main modalities during the first years – now accounts cumulatively for over 50% of all joint programmes and nearly 80% of all JP funding. Excluding the 391 JPs of the old DOCO (2005 and 2007) datasets which are not in any current agency list, the remaining 607 JPs set up with known funding modality in recent years are about 80% pass-through and 10% each pooled and parallel.

² UN Report of the Secretary General, 2002. Strengthening of the United Nations: An Agenda for further Change, A/57/387, 9 September 2002, NY: United Nations.

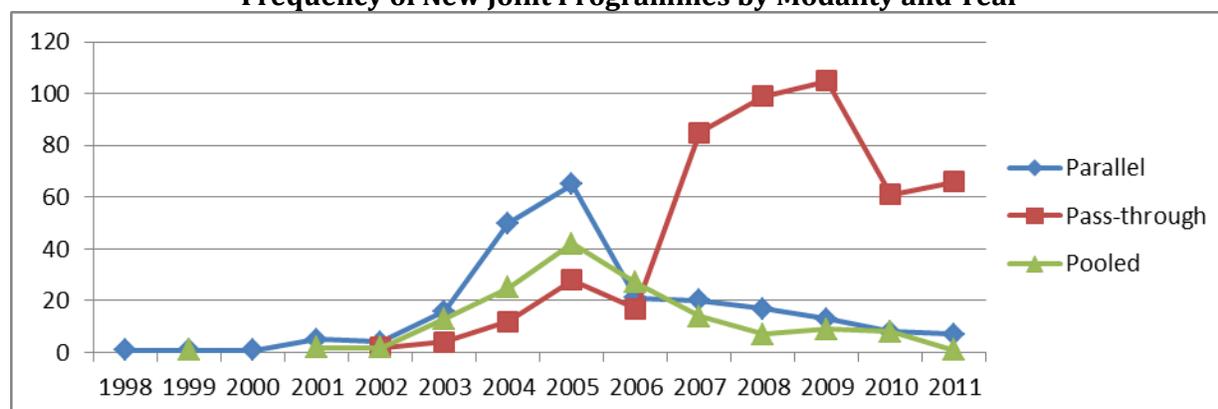
³ The agreement between the donor and UNDP provided that the funds would be utilized through joint programmes managed by UNDP/MPTF Office as AA under the pass-through funding modality. The MDG-F has specific guidelines on how JPs should be established and managed, including close attention to monitoring and evaluation. Many of these factors are directly relevant to the questions raised in the survey for the current study.

Total of each Modality of Joint Programme				
Modality of JP	Quantity		Value	
	Number	Percent	USD	Percent
Parallel	263	26%	183,941,139	6%
Pooled	178	17%	351,710,764	11%
Pass-through	539	52%	2,390,573,065	77%
Combination	40	4%	163,145,546	5%
Blank	11	1%	6,107,377	0%
Total	1031	100%	3,095,477,891	100%

Note: All JP data used in this Report are drawn from the dataset developed by this consultancy as of 15 November 2012.

Joint programmes have been established every year over the past decade. The data collected indicate the height of creation of parallel funds was 2004-2005, for pooled funds it was 2004-2006, and pass-through funds have strongly dominated since 2007. The MDG-F accounts for approximately one-third of new JPs in each of the years 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Frequency of New Joint Programmes by Modality and Year



Establishment of JPs by Modality and Year

Year	Combination	Parallel	Pass-through	Pooled	Total	Value (USD)
2002 and prior	0	12	2	5	19	8,225,161
2003	3	16	4	13	36	18,083,655
2004	3	50	12	25	90	122,264,661
2005	13	66	28	42	149	491,771,637
2006	2	22	16	27	67	79,373,132
2007	7	23	83	15	128	483,777,796
2008	4	20	102	7	133	617,763,979
2009	1	17	104	9	131	537,482,638
2010	4	9	62	7	82	261,496,344
2011	1	7	65	1	74	272,320,518
2012 (mid-year)	1	2	28	1	32	80,881,307
Total	39	244	506	152	941	2,973,440,828

Note: Total does not include 90 JPs lacking initial year or modality.

The table below lists the 41 participating UN organizations involved in the joint programmes. Based on the 886 JPs indicating at least one PUNO, UNDP (68%), UNICEF (57%) and UNFPA (44%) are most frequent. The next group are involved in about one-fourth to one-fifth of JPs, with WHO (27%), FAO (23%), UNWOMEN (19%), UNESCO (18%), ILO (18%), and WFP (17%). Each of the remaining agencies is involved in fewer than 10% of JPs, with 18 organizations in less than 1% (see Attachment 1).

Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs)						
ECA	ILO	PAHO	UNDSS	UNIC	UNOCHA	UNWTO
ECLAC	IOM	UNAIDS	UNEP	UNICEF	UNODC	WFP
ESCAP	IPEC	UNAMI	UNESCO	UNIDO	UNOPS	WHO
ESCWA	ITC	UNCDF	UNFPA	UNIPP	UNRWA	WMO
FAO	MINUSTAH	UNCTAD	UNHABITAT	UNIPSIL	UNV	WORLD BANK
IFAD	OHCHR	UNDP	UNHCR	UNMIL	UNWOMEN (UNIFEM)	

The number of PUNOs in a single JP varies from as few as 2 to as many as 16, with three-fourths having 4 or fewer PUNOs. The eight Delivering-as-One Pilot Countries account for one-third of all JPs with seven or more PUNOs. Considering the 802 JPs with at least two PUNOs listed in the current agency datasets, the number of PUNOs, total and mean budgets are presented below. While the joint programmes with more participating organizations generally have larger budgets, the mean budget of each PUNO is highest at nearly \$2,000,000 for joint programmes with just 2 PUNOs and generally stable at about \$800,000 for joint programmes with five or more PUNOs.

Distribution of PUNOs and Budgets among Joint Programmes						
PUNOS	Cases	%	USD	%	Mean Budget	Mean USD per PUNO
2	251	31%	722,011,455	24%	3,895,422	1,910,083
3	181	23%	593,914,653	20%	3,660,121	1,207,144
4	144	18%	504,965,971	17%	4,240,372	1,052,012
5	84	10%	349,075,274	12%	4,848,268	969,654
6	51	6%	214,818,017	7%	4,304,858	778,326
7	35	4%	174,186,492	6%	5,111,184	777,618
8	16	2%	124,447,872	4%	8,296,525	1,037,066
9	11	1%	72,845,976	2%	6,713,634	735,818
10	11	1%	67,703,943	2%	8,462,993	846,299
11	8	1%	73,317,020	2%	7,587,596	833,148
12	4	0%	44,321,171	1%	11,080,293	923,358
13	3	0%	48,364,842	2%	21,840,663	1,240,124
14	1	0%	11,009,027	0%	11,009,027	786,359
15	1	0%	No data	0%		-
16	1	0%	23,990,433	1%	23,990,433	1,499,402
Total	802	100%	3,024,972,146	100%	4,465,443	

Note 1: "Cases" and "USD" do not include 229 JPs without at least 2 PUNOs listed.

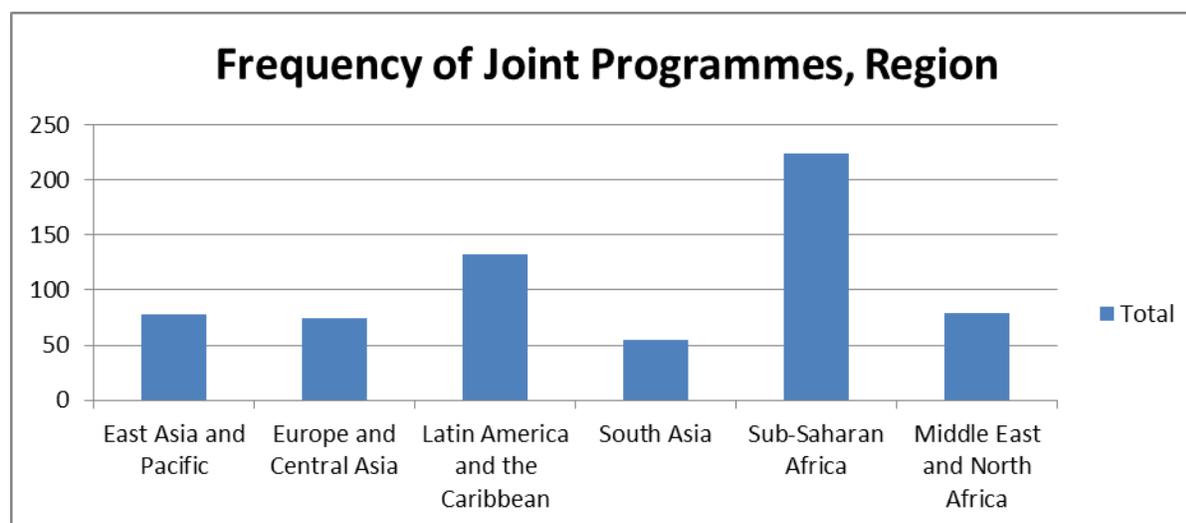
Note 2: "Mean Budget" does not include 357 JPs without PUNOs or budget.

For pass-through funds, UNDP/MPTF Office is Administrative Agent (AA) in 85% of cases, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF each in 4% to 5% of cases and the remaining are accounted for by a few cases each with UNAIDS, UNWOMEN, WFP and WHO (some of which may be errors in the original data). The Managing Agent (MA) for pooled-funding is most often UNDP (55% of cases) or UNFPA with 28%, then UNICEF, UNWOMEN, and UNHCR each with several cases, and UNESCO, WHO and FAO with one case each.

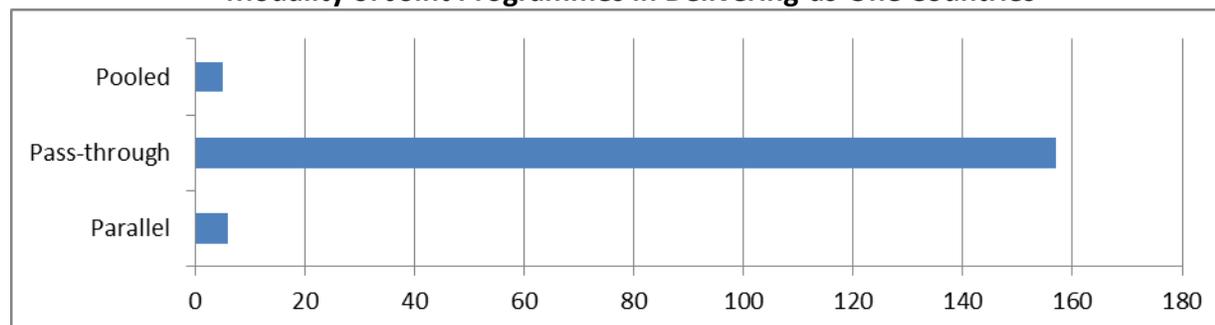
The joint programme mechanism is used widely in both low and middle income countries, with low income countries accounting for 35% of joint programmes and middle income countries 64% (close to the distribution found in the e-survey responses: 40% low income and 57% middle income). The MDG-F has a lower proportion of joint programmes in low income countries and a higher proportion in upper middle income countries.

Use of JPs according to Country Income Level	
Country Income Level	Number of JPs
Low Income Country	367
Lower Middle Income Country	453
Upper Middle Income Country	204
High Income Country	7
Grand Total	1031

According to the current datasets, the mechanism is used in all regions of the world, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa (34%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (19%). The MDG-F joint programmes are more concentrated in Latin America and the Caribbean (42%) and less so in Sub-Saharan Africa (20%).



Considering the joint programmes in the 19 Delivering-as-One Pilot and Self-Starter countries in the agency datasets, the total of 168 joint programmes are 93% pass-through, 4% parallel and 3% pooled. Eight of the eleven parallel and pooled funds are in Self-Starter countries.

Modality of Joint Programmes in Delivering-as-One Countries

UNDG oversight of the use of the JP mechanism would benefit from an up-to-date comprehensive database of JPs, rather than having to reconstruct one every few years. While DOCO could establish such a database, there are significant investment costs to create it and operational costs to maintain it. Perhaps the MPTF Office GATEWAY could provide the platform and be reimbursed for the service, or the service could be provided by DOCO or another party. Alternatively, such a dataset could be created each year through compilation of listings provided as part of individual reporting to the UNDG/FMOG by each AA and MA. **Recommendation: To maintain an overview of the use of JPs, UNDG/FMOG should advise UNDG of the need for a comprehensive Joint Programme dataset, and whether it should be updated continuously or on an annual basis. It should recommend whether DOCO should create a new database for this purpose, utilize the MPTF Office GATEWAY, or rely on separate databases of each agency.**

Survey of Country-Level Experience with the Joint Programme Mechanism

An on-line survey was circulated to approximately 950 contacts provided by the agencies involved. The survey was open from 24 August to 6 September, supported by four reminders (see Annex 9 for the survey questionnaire). There was a total response rate of roughly one-third of the individual invitees. The coverage of countries is more indicative of the successful reach of the survey, with responses from 20 UN agencies in 100 programme countries. Attachment 2 provides the summary analysis of survey results upon which this report is based. Following is the breakdown of responses:

Country-Level Survey Responses by Agency			
Agency	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	Number of Countries
UNRCO	82	25%	58
UNDP	64	20%	40
UNICEF	70	22%	53
UNFPA	44	14%	36
Other	69	20%	42
Total	329	101%	100

Note 1: Those identifying their role as “UNRCO” are listed separately, although most are paid by UNDP their role is on behalf of the UN system as a whole.

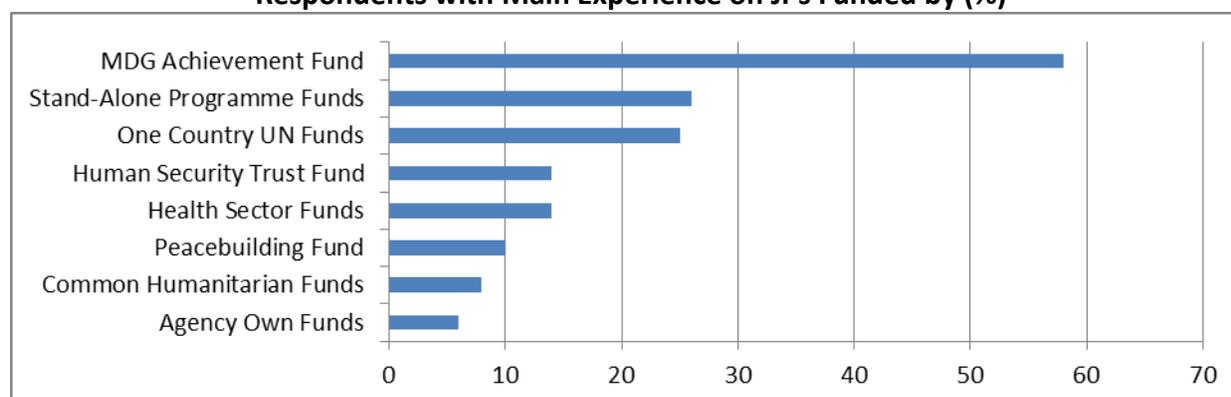
Note 2: Twelve responses are not included above: 10 HQ UN staff and 2 government staff

Note 3: “Other” includes, in declining order of number of respondents: UNWOMEN, WFP, UNESCO, ILO, UNOPS, FAO, UNAIDS, UNHCR, IOM, WHO, UNCDF, UNIDO, WTO, ITC, UNEP, UNHABITAT

Profile of respondents:

- A total of 329 valid responses were received; an additional 12 were excluded from this analysis of UN country-level experience: 10 from HQ staff working with Joint Programmes (covered separately) and 2 from counterpart government agencies.
- Of the total of 329 valid country-level UN agency responses, 25% are from staff of the Office of the Resident Coordinator (including RCs) and 75% are from UN agencies (including UNDP).
- Nearly 50% of respondents are senior agency staff in country (head, deputy head, and assistant, including RC), while the remainder are JP programme managers, RC coordination officers of agency programme officers working with joint programmes.
- Respondents have experience in a wide range of country contexts, of which the most frequent are middle income countries (one half of all respondents), followed by low-income and development contexts (40% of respondents), with substantial numbers with experience in fragile, crisis, recovery and reconstruction contexts (20% of respondents).
- Nearly 60% thirds of respondents have experience with the MDG Achievement Fund, one fourth have experience with DaO/One Country Funds or Stand-Alone JP Funds, while 10 to 15% have experience with the Human Security Trust Fund, health sector funds or the Peace Building Fund.

Respondents with Main Experience on JPs Funded by (%)



Review of Agency HQ Experience with Joint Programme Mechanism

Headquarters offices at 17 UN agencies were contacted for their perspective on the JP mechanism and to identify issues to be considered in the revision of the UNDG Guidelines for Joint Programming. Open-ended interviews were conducted with five offices (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, MPTF Office and MDG-F Secretariat) and written comments were received from five more (FAO, UNDP, UNEP, WFP and WHO) (see Annex 4 for list of agencies contacted and Annex 7 for questions sent via email).

Respondents generally identified the HQ role for country-focused JPs as support to establishment, resource mobilization, financial reporting and donor relations, and certain aspects of overall management and closure of JPs. Together the respondents identified a number of issues for which clearer treatment in the revised UNDG Guidelines would be important, including: (a) strengths and implications of the three fund management modalities; (b) operational management and coordination structures; (c) significant additional HQ work from involvement in a joint programme when the agency is the AA, but not when it is simply a PUNO; (d) final closure of joint programmes including follow-up on operational and financial closure by the PUNOs, and disposition of any unspent balance or interest

earned; (e) reducing the added transaction and financial costs at HQ resulting from inappropriate actions taken at field level; (f) absence of overall accountability for joint programme results; (g) lack of harmonization among agency systems and procedures; and (h) the suggestion to align joint programme templates and procedures with those developed with greater attention for MPTFs.⁴ These issues are discussed below and should be taken into consideration in the revision of the Guidance Note.

Government and Donor Perspectives on Joint Programme Mechanism

The Review included missions to three case countries – Ecuador, Nepal and Uganda – particularly to obtain government and donor perspectives. In each country the mission focused on stakeholders and experience gained with three to four joint programmes. See Annex 7 for further background.

Neither government nor donor interviewees had strong opinions regarding the joint programme mechanism; both groups considered this to be an internal UN issue. Both spoke strongly of the importance of UN involvement in joint programming and both consider it to be a major improvement over multiple single-agency projects and an important aspect of UN reform. Donor respondents stated that “In the spirit of Paris and related agreements, joint programming is good, and more would be better,” and that UN agencies should not restrict their perspective to the relatively limited portion of many programmes which is handled by UN agencies. Donors would like to see increased UN agency participation in joint programmes of the government and more accurate reflection of the UN contribution to government results. Donors also noted the mechanism allows them to negotiate fewer funding agreements, thus significantly reducing donor transaction costs.

Government comments generally were not about the specifics of the joint programme mechanism, but rather about issues related to joint programming and to fund transfer and execution modalities. Governments expressed a preference for on-budget funding, but respondents nonetheless recognized the value of having some funds handled by UN agencies, particularly in terms of more rapid action and isolation from political pressures related to finance, recruitment and procurement.

Government respondents indicated that a core problem with the UN is that UN agencies often prefer to implement their own projects, rather than support government in implementation of those projects. This is particularly problematic because the UN competes with government for funding, often approaching the same donors.

Issues Identified and Recommendations

Nature of Joint Programmes

Characteristics of Joint Programmes

The UNDG Guidance Note states that “A joint programme is a set of activities in a common work plan and related budget, involving two or more UN organizations and (sub-)national partners. The work plan and budget will form part of a joint programme document, which will also detail roles and responsibilities of partners in coordinating and managing the joint activities. The joint programme document is signed by all participating organizations and (sub-)national partners.”

⁴ For JPs funded by a global MPTF with a Global Secretariat (eg, MDG-F and PBF), the Secretariat may be actively involved in ensuring appropriate governance arrangements, and M&E of progress and results.

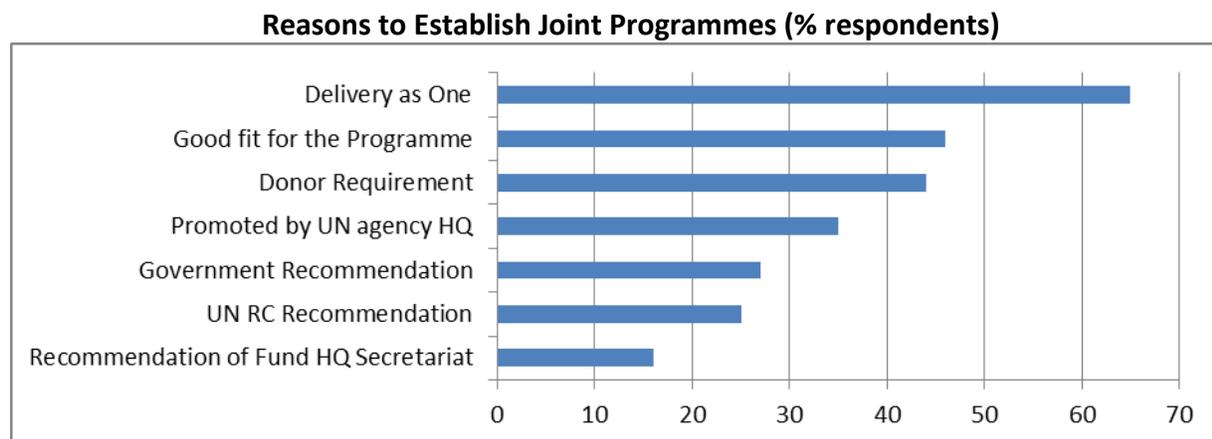
Over 90% of agency e-survey respondents at country-level clearly understand JPs as described above, with the exception of the joint budget; the same high proportion of respondents further agreed that an additional feature of joint programmes is that agencies provide consolidated reporting to government and donors on their work in the joint programme. Furthermore, over 90% of respondents confirm that the JPs in which they participate normally have all of the above characteristics, except in the case of pooled funds where the figure is somewhat lower (in the 80% range).

Many respondents who provided further comments noted that while the defining characteristics of JPs were clear in principle, in practice there is wide variation particularly regarding unified reports and joint budget which compromises the effectiveness of joint programmes.

Recommendation: The UNDG Guidance Note does not require revision regarding the joint work plan and programme documents; however it should emphasize the need for the joint budget and provide guidance on its management and closure. Training should emphasize the above required characteristics in order to promote consistent practice.

Reasons to establish Joint Programmes

The UNDG Guidance Note does not provide much explanation as to why potential partners might wish to establish a joint programme and respondents requested guidance on this. Respondents indicate that in practice the most frequent reason is the policy of “Delivering as One,” followed by the “good fit of the mechanism with the thematic programme,” and thirdly “donor requirement.” Two-thirds of survey respondents indicate that the policy of “delivering as one” is the lead factor, while fully 90% of those with experience with DaO funds cite this as the most important factor for the decision.



Many respondents insist nonetheless that establishment of a joint programme should be based primarily on the fit with the specific programme and whether the JP is likely to provide more effective support to beneficiaries. One RC suggested that JPs are particularly relevant to deal with important horizontal issues (gender based violence, youth social and economic integration, climate change, governance, environment, others). These are areas in which the UN agencies could provide useful policy advisory services, and eventually support monitoring of implementation of successfully developed policies. Many respondents indicated that greater guidance on joint programming would be welcome (see Annex 10 for required HQ support identified by survey respondents).

In recent years there has been a growth of joint programming efforts that do not necessarily result in formal Joint Programmes. This includes UNDAF planning which informs individual agency programmes, as well as other short term or smaller scale joint activities. Nonetheless, several agencies (and government counterparts) noted the importance of the joint programme agreement to formalize the institutional commitment to work together including in resolution of differences. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should highlight considerations to determine when a joint programme may be appropriate and specific situations where or forms of cooperation other than JPs may be more appropriate.**

Selection of fund management modality

Joint Programmes are managed as one of three funding modalities: pooled, parallel or pass-through.

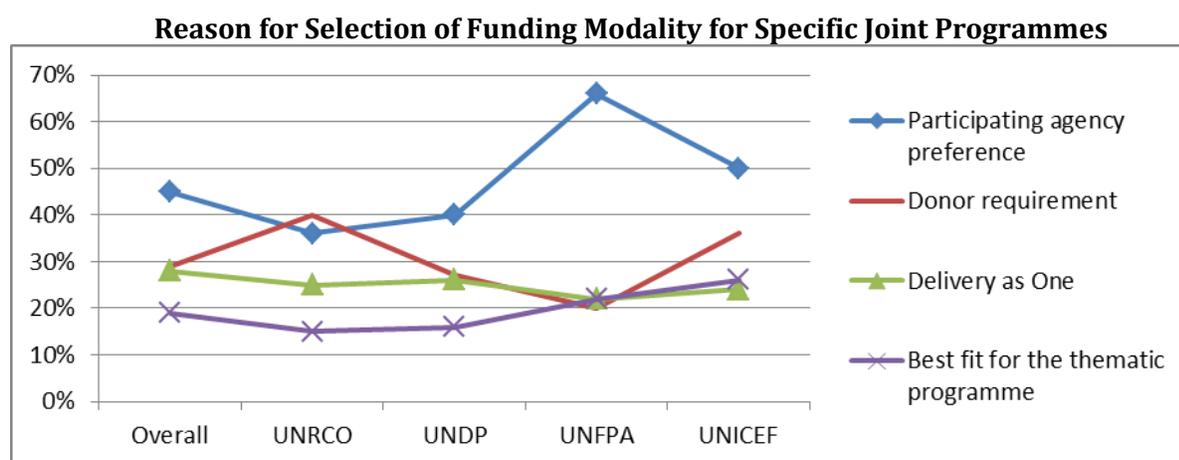
- Pooled funding – in which agencies “pool” part or all of their funds to be managed by one agency on behalf of the others, often based on pooling of the regular budget resources of each of the agencies, typically provides the government partner with a single agency and a single set of procedures with which to interact. The UNDG Guidance Note states that this is “likely to be the most effective and efficient when participating UN organizations work for common results with a common ... partner and/or in a common geographical area.”
- Parallel funding – in which agencies each manage their own funding, but jointly plan and coordinate their work, is most closely linked to traditional cooperation between two agencies. Informal as well as formal cooperation may be reported as joint programmes, and reports of such funding are not fully reliable. The UNDG Guidance Note states that this is “likely to be the most effective and efficient when the interventions of participating UN organizations are aimed at common results, but with different ... partners.”
- Pass-through funding – in which one agency receives funds from one or more donors, is responsible for fiduciary management, and passes those funds through to the various partner agencies as instructed. This modality provides the strongest management of funds between the UN and donors, but leaves programmatic accountability within each separate partner organization. The UNDG Guidance Note does not indicate when this modality would be “likely to be most effective and efficient”, although the discussion suggests that the same advantages of the parallel modality would apply, with the addition of clear responsibility for consolidated annual reporting to stakeholders.

An earlier UNDG Guidance Note on Joint Programmes/Projects, issued in 2000, was superseded by the 2003 UNDG Guidance Note on Joint Programming. The 2000 Guidance Note did not contemplate the pass-through funding modality and referred to the “Lead Agency” handling the pooled funds as the “AA.” This divergent terminology creates some uncertainty as to the actual funding modality for JPs from before 2004 and has contributed to continuing terminological confusion even today.

Many of the e-survey respondents said they were uncertain as to the difference between the three modalities and requested clarification, including not only more complete description of each modality, but also their strengths and implications. At the same time, many respondents observe that pass-through and parallel funding reinforce agency incentives that are contrary to the joint spirit and management of JPs.⁵

⁵ The same observation was noted in the 2006 Case Study Review of Joint Programmes, as well as in the 2012 UNDP-UNEP UN-REDD Lessons Learned Review.

As indicated in the review of the extent of use of the JP mechanism above, 90% of current JPs are based on either pass-through (80%) or parallel (10%) funding, both of which allow each agency to operate largely as if it were conducting a traditional project on its own. This is the case even with a joint work plan and joint budget, in the absence of proactive JP management. Respondents indicate that the first two reasons for choice of modality are “participating agency preference” and “donor requirement,” and that these are chosen because they are easiest for the ones making the decision, requiring the least change from normal procedures. Many respondents state that these reasons may outweigh consideration of the best arrangement for programme effectiveness. **Recommendation: Review of the UNDG Guidance Note should provide guidance on the strengths and implications of each of the three fund management modalities. Training should emphasize consideration of the programmatic and management implications of the selection among modalities.**



Factors affecting Joint Programme success

Survey respondents identified several factors as contributing to or interfering with JP success. The most frequently identified factors are listed below. Most of the factors identified as contributing to success are among the strengths identified with JPs, but here are identified as prerequisites rather than results.

Factors contributing to successful Joint Programme

Survey respondents repeatedly cite the following factors as contributing to success:

- Synergy of multi-agency response enhances impact
- Joint results framework, AWP, budget, monitoring
- JP management structure: Steering Committee, Operational Coordination Committee, Lead Agency, Coordination Unit
- Accountability of participating organizations to Joint Programme management
- Engaged government ownership
- RC leadership and Agency support
- Pooled funding modality

Factors interfering with Joint Programme success

Survey respondents repeatedly cite the following factors as “obstacles to success” (see Annex 11 for a complete list of “obstacles to success of JPs, identified by respondents”)⁶:

- Agency focus on own mandate and results rather than JP results
- Lack of agency accountability to JP management
- Unclear results framework and weak monitoring
- Treating JP opportunity primarily as resource mobilization
- Weak RC and agency leadership toward JP approach
- Lack of harmonization of agencies’ systems and procedures
- Agency desire for “visibility” and “branding”
- Too many partners
- Differences in agency operational effectiveness
- Parallel and pass-through funding modalities

Favourable comments regarding pooled funding and negative comments regarding parallel and pass-through funding reflect the experience of many survey respondents that without active management of joint programmes, the benefits of joint planning are often lost to the reality of individual agency implementation. Pooled funding has the MA to provide this function, but parallel and pass-through modalities do not necessarily have a programme manager unless this function is deliberately created.

Management

Overall management and coordination

The UNDG Guidance Note does not say much about the overall management structure of JPs, but it does provide the following guidance:

“Once a joint programme has been identified and developed, UN organizations should ensure that all necessary arrangements for coordination are made in a timely manner to ensure prompt implementation. This will include an agreement on the division of responsibilities among participating UN organisations and national partners for the implementation of the activities, management of funds, coordination and review of programme results. In particular, the agreed decision making process for managing and implementing the joint programme should be clearly set out in the joint programme document.

“The joint programme coordination mechanism should involve senior personnel of all signatories to the joint programme document with similar level of decision-making authority. It is desirable that this mechanism be drawn from existing UN theme groups and/or SWAP/Sector coordinating mechanisms (for ease of reference, this will be referred to in the annexes as ‘Joint Programme Steering Committee’). The joint programme coordination mechanism may also have other members in an observer capacity, such as donors and other stakeholders.”

⁶ Interestingly, cost recovery (“harmonization of rates”) received only a single mention as an obstacle to success, which is a significant change since the 2006 case study review in which cost recovery figured repeatedly.

When asked whether a joint programme should have a Steering Committee to establish broad policy and approve funding allocations, only two-thirds of respondents recognized that this was an essential characteristic. A similar percentage indicated that JPs are required to have an inter-agency Programme Committee and a Lead Agency; a higher percentage (87%) indicated that each JP should have a Programme Coordinator (although this is not actually required). The Steering Committee, Programme Committee and Coordinator are standard features of the MDG Achievement Fund JPs, but the UNDG Guidance Note simply calls for “arrangements for coordination” and suggests the need for a “steering committee” which combines the policy and operational roles that country experience suggests generally should be separated. **Recommendation: DOCO should encourage RCs to utilize the 2013 wrap-up process of the MDG-F JPs for broader lessons learned on JP mechanism and joint programming. A similar process of sharing lessons learned at the country level would be useful in other countries.**

The policy steering committee and operational coordination committee play different roles, which require different organization, membership, frequency of meetings and reporting. Policy oversight could be provided in one of several ways, including a JP-specific Steering Committee, a sectoral Steering Committee, an UNDAF outcome Steering Committee, etc. Most respondents do not advocate a separate policy Steering Committee for each JP. Survey respondents agreed that the Steering Committee should include UN agencies, government implementing partners, and donors, and should normally meet to review progress each six-months. Field missions highlighted the importance to include civil society organizations on the Steering Committee, when relevant to the specific JP. Respondents concur with having an operational programme coordination committee, which should normally meet at least each quarter and probably more often during the start-up phase. Many respondents express concern about the absence of overall accountability for joint programme results, particularly for parallel and pass-through JPs, unless this is explicitly built into the management structure. Many respondents speak positively of the role of Lead Agency and of Programme Coordination Units, while noting that their effectiveness requires the explicit agreement of agencies in pass-through and parallel funds. Some HQ offices noted that the four levels may be excessively heavy for simpler JPs and that in some cases the “lead agency” or “programme management team” may be equivalent and not require formal recognition. **Recommendation: Issues of typical management structure, including a policy-level steering committee, an operational coordination committee and a Coordination Unit (and options including a Lead Agency and Outcome or other Working Groups, together with the importance of overall joint programme accountability) should be considered in the UNDG Guidance Note revision, which may recommend a flatter structure for simpler or smaller JPs. Donors should be included on the Steering Committee, as should civil society organizations when relevant to the specific JP.**

Practical tools to streamline Joint Programme management

Experience indicates that a core budget for common expenditures and access to agency financial management systems are practical tools to streamline basic management. Many JPs have common cost expenditures, such as coordination staff, office space, evaluations and audits. It is simpler to manage these costs through pooled funds than to have each agency directly pay its share each time. Submission of paper requests for financial transactions and subsequent reporting is subject to much more delay and error than if the Coordination Unit staff requests or reports on the same transactions through agency financial systems. **Recommendation: Coordination Units should manage funds pooled for common costs and should have access to its agency’s financial system (Atlas, etc) to minimize delay and error.**

Significant additional HQ work as AA, but not as PUNO

Joint Programmes sometimes involve considerable additional HQ work. However, this is generally only true when the agency concerned is the Administrative Agent (AA) for the JP rather than simply a Participating UN Organization (PUNO). As a PUNO, HQ generally manages the funds much as it would for any other contribution and provides annual financial reports to the AA. PUNO financial reporting is generally straightforward, and has become more so since the UNDG budget categories were accepted as the standard for reporting under MPTFs and most JPs.

The additional work burden is high in the limited number of cases in which the agency is AA for the JP, and it involves a level of inter-agency liaison work that is otherwise quite unusual for the staff of most Finance and Resource Mobilization Departments. However, for the organization the burden is not great in absolute terms, as a result of which the work to compile separate reports has not attracted sufficient attention to develop specific IT applications (with the important exception of the MPTF Office GATEWAY) and has remained largely manual in most agencies. Furthermore, while manual data consolidation requires some extra time, it is actually quite quick; the main time consumed is to ensure that the data is received from the PUNOs in the first place and that it is reliable (e.g., funds transferred by the AA equal funds received by each PUNO; and amounts reported in the prior year column are the same as in prior year reports).

Role of AA

The HQ workload implications for the PUNO are generally small. The situation changes dramatically when the organization is the AA. Although in most cases the additional workload falls on staff of the Finance and Resource Mobilization Departments, it is not primarily related to accounting issues, but rather to managing relations and obtaining information from the various PUNOs. For each JP the AA work includes:

- Negotiate and sign MOU with PUNOS and SAA with donors
- Set up fund codes to enable receipt of contributions, transfers and financial reporting
- Coordinate PUNO banking information
- Monitor that donor contributions occur in accordance with agreements
- Make payments to PUNOs according to decisions of the Steering Committee
- Collect annual and final reports from each PUNO
- Prepare and issue annual and final reports for the joint programme
- Process grant extensions, including addendums to MOUs with PUNOs and SAAs with donors
- Transfer reallocated funds among agencies
- Agree disposition of remaining funds with each donor
- Handle accounting and refund of final balance
- Ensure transparency through on-line availability of key documents and reports
- Provide annual report on activities to the UNDG Advisory Group on Joint Programming

All agencies which serve as AA in some cases identified most or all of the above tasks as important elements of the additional work they conduct as AA (for the MPTF Office this is its standard work, since it is the AA for all of the funds which it supports). Several recognized that only the MPTF Office ensures transparency through public website reporting and annual reports to the UNDG. For most agencies,

being AA is a minor part of their work, which may consume the professional time of a staff member but does not have much impact on the work of the organization as a whole.

Transparency. The UNDG Guidance Note and generic MOU and SAA all indicate that the AA should maintain a website with basic documents of the respective JP, together with financial and substantive progress reports. To date only the MPTF Office has done this. The AA is required to report annually on its activities to the UNDG/FMOG. Again, only the MPTF Office has done this. The AA is expected to disburse funds to PUNOs within 3 to 5 business days of request, but this is not normally achieved by AAs other than the MPTF Office. The MPTF Office has set the standard for the AA role and this is reflected in current MOU and SAA templates. While core financial management services are provided by all AAs, some aspects of the standard are not provided by most AAs. **Recommendation: Presumption of standard AA behavior should be reinforced in the revised Guidance Note, including the annual AA report to the UNDG/FMOG for comment by the UNDG Advisory Group. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should state whether such services are required of the AA, and if so, whether the UNDG/FMOG should begin to rate agencies on the completeness of their AA service (e.g., “fully compliant,” “largely compliant,” “partially compliant,” and “insufficiently compliant”).**

Annual and final narrative reporting. Preparation of the annual and final narrative report is currently an AA responsibility. In a JP, this is usually carried out by the respective agency programme unit(s), not by the AA/finance unit. With the MPTF Office it is generated by the various agency programme units and compiled by the MPTF Office. It may have been brought together prior to that by a fund secretariat or the UNDP Country Office – not really being done by the AA. **Recommendation: Revision of the Guidance Note should consider assigning responsibility for preparation of the JP narrative report to the coordination unit or the overall Lead Agency, with specific inputs from each agency. In cases with neither a coordination unit nor a Lead Agency, the PUNOs should agree to whom the overall reporting responsibility falls. There may be additional direct costs involved for the Lead Agency or PUNO to prepare the narrative report. The AA would retain responsibility to finalize the report for donors and other stakeholders, applying an overall quality assurance review to the draft report as well as consolidating the certified financial information both among agencies and with the narrative report.**

Quarterly reporting at the field level. Current SAA and MOU require annual financial and substantive reporting. Those annual reports are important, but they arrive too late to be of use for management of the respective JP. In the field most JPs have adopted a more frequent schedule of financial and narrative updates, most often on a quarterly basis, to support adjustments to JP implementation. As a result, some HQ staff (AA and PUNO) spends time assisting with reporting throughout the year, which improves the quality and consistency of reports at both the country and HQ levels, and leaves less to correct at annual reporting time. Field updates sometimes involve greater breakdown of financial detail to support local management decisions. Greater detail can be kept at the country level to provide information to the Steering Committee, but it should not be required as part of the official AA annual reporting to donors and stakeholders. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should recognize that quarterly or semi-annual field updates have become common practice as an element of the reporting system, but note that these updates are unofficial (i.e., not certified by agency HQ) and may involve a level of detail not meant to be captured by the MPTF Office GATEWAY nor reflected in official annual reports. Official financial reporting should remain annual; agency HQ should encourage their in-country staff to provide quarterly financial updates.**

Sufficiency of the 1% AA-fee income. UNICEF estimated that the income received may not be sufficient to cover all the AA work required for JPs; but it has never calculated the exact direct cost and other

indirect organization charges that may be levied on the fee. UNFPA estimated that the AA-fee income received on a current year basis is probably sufficient to cover the work required by JPs during that year, assuming that the funds are fully available for that purpose and that there is not a need to maintain a reserve for future year expenses; but this has not been calculated with any precision since it is so hard to track the specific transaction costs involved. There are continuing costs for follow-up during the closure period, when any JP-level management unit may have already closed and there is no new fee income. Many agencies noted that at the time the final report is due there will be no one left who was familiar with the JP to prepare the report; this is an issue about which no one except the AA seems to be concerned. The MPTF Office has concluded that the 1% fee on most JPs is insufficient to cover the full direct life cycle management costs for the AA and UNDP central services. But the MPTF Office (which must be financed from its fees) is in a different situation than agencies for which AA services are an additional function. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider whether the AA function is expected to be fully financed from the fee on the agency's JPs, which may require additional direct charges beyond the 1% fee; or whether the 1% fee is a good faith full contribution for all ordinary costs, backed up by central administrative services. AAs should be encouraged to monitor the cost to provide the comprehensive AA service and may wish to set and make known threshold characteristics (possibly including number of PUNOs, duration and total budget) they normally will require to accept to provide AA services.**

Field transfer of funds. Direct transfer of funds between agencies in a pass-through JP sometimes occurs in the field, even though funds transferred by the AA to an agency can only be used by that agency or returned to the AA. When direct transfer is made locally, there is considerable HQ clean-up work to regularize it, including ensuring that the correct support costs have been charged by each agency. Donors sometimes have funds available on short notice and pressure the AA agency local head to sign the SAA even before the JP framework has been established by the signature of MOUs with PUNOs. The AA is the HQ level of the respective agency, which may delegate certain functions to its country representation.⁷ However, the local head of the agency that plays the AA role may believe that as country representative for the agency as a whole she is empowered to take action as AA. This may occur with local agency head efforts to transfer funds between two agencies, to receive funds directly from donors, or to sign in the wrong order the SAAs with donors and MOUs with agencies, as well as with the decision as to how and when to charge agreed support costs. **Recommendation: UNDG/FMOG should explore options to facilitate the field acceptance process for funds, for example draft documents, an emailed statement of intent by potential PUNOs to the AA, combined with text in the SAA to condition its entry into effect on signature of the relevant MOU. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should state clearly that direct transfer between PUNOs of funds received from the AA in a pass-through modality JP is not possible. AAs and all agencies should streamline their procedures to ensure prompt local availability of funds as soon as possible following receipt of donor deposits and Steering Committee instructions. Clearer training is required by each agency on these issues.**

Selection of Administrative Agent (AA) or Managing Agent (MA)

If the participating agencies select the pass-through modality, they must also select an Administrative Agent to be responsible for the core financial management and report consolidation functions. In theory any UN agency could be selected for this role; in practice the UNDP/MPTF Office has been selected in the vast majority of cases since 2007.⁸ If the participating agencies select the pooled-fund

⁷ Functions most often delegated are to participate as AA in the Steering Committee, transmit SC Minutes to the AA at HQ, compile and prepare draft narrative reports.

⁸ In the case of the MDG-F, selection of UNDP/MPTF Office was determined in the overall donor-UNDP agreement.

modality, they must also select a Managing Agent to receive and handle the funds which they pool together, particularly for use with government implementing partners.

The UNDG Guidance Note identifies proven administrative capacity and substantive capacity as important for selection of both the AA and the MA. Survey respondents indicate that administrative capacity is very important and that substantive knowledge is important in selection of the AA, and they cite both administrative and substantive capacity as important for selection of the MA. HQ staff that provide training and guidance to their own agencies are generally convinced that only strong financial administrative capacity is important for AA selection and that substantive capacity is largely irrelevant. This is supported by the success of the UNDP/MPTF Office, which does not have in-depth substantive expertise in the subjects covered by most of its funds, but does apply general knowledge on development, transition and humanitarian issues with project management and reporting skills to review draft reports prepared in the field.

Current terms of the UNDG Guidance Note state that: “the donor(s) and participating UN organizations agree to channel the funds through one participating UN organization ... hereinafter called the Administrative Agent,” which implies that the AA must be a PUNO in the respective JP. Some agency staff argue that this should be modified to enable selection of a “well-qualified UN entity” to be AA, even if it is not a PUNO of the specific JP. The primary effect would be to allow the MPTF Office to be selected as AA even though UNDP may not be a PUNO. The 2011 UNDG Guidance Note on Establishing, Managing and Closing MDTFs states that the AA can be any UN organization, however this has not yet been accepted by all agencies. This should be supported by clarification of the MPTF Office oversight, possibly including an “advisory committee” of the UNDG and clear operational autonomy of the MPTF Office from UNDP. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should remove reference to substantive capacity as a criterion for selection of the AA and include wording that allows choice of any qualified UN organization to be the AA, whether or not it is a PUNO for the respective JP.**

Final closure of Joint Programmes

Operational closure often requires longer than anticipated, including for the production of the final narrative report. **Recommendation: Process of operational and financial closure should be planned for and start on time, including preparation of agency components of the final narrative report as one aspect of operational closure. Coordination Unit normally should remain operational for a period of at least three months after operational conclusion of the joint programme. Revision of the Guidance Note should consider application to JPs of the “guidance note on establishing, managing and closing MDTFs” adopted in December 2011.**

One of the problems most consistently identified by agencies as AA is with regard to the financial closure of Joint Programmes. Once operational activities are completed, financial closure for each agency proceeds according to its own rules and procedures. Timeframes for project closure vary among agencies, and this function is notorious across agencies for often exceeding the respective agency standard period. The AA does not have an overview of the rules and procedures of all PUNOs as they relate to the operational and financial closure of projects, as no overview of these procedures exists in the UN system. From the perspective of the AA, each PUNO may seem to have little urgency to financially close the project, and they often do not seem to take very seriously the requests of the AA to expedite the process so that the AA can render accounts and return any remaining funds to the donor. From the perspective of the PUNO, financial closure should follow its rules, procedures, and time schedule, and the AA would be unreasonable to expect special treatment.

The JP can only be closed after the last PUNO has returned any remaining funds and interest (if interest is refundable). Since all agencies normally have funds left over (otherwise they would have been prefinancing JP activities with other resources), time will always be needed for each one to close and return its funds. This process may easily require two years or more after the conclusion of JP operations. Before that time has arrived the AA may be subject to complaints from donors and observations from auditors that it is not complying with the spirit of the agreement and the letter of the agency's own Financial Regulations and Rules.

The issue encompasses both the principle of refunding the final amount and the fact that the sums involved can be quite substantial and useful for other purposes. Some agencies noted the need for guidance on the treatment of small variations at closure – support costs slightly different (higher or lower) than the standard amount, or disposition of remaining funds below a certain threshold overall or for individual donors. **Recommendation: Revision of the Guidance Note should emphasize the importance of timely financial closure, including early return of unutilized funds in excess of potential claims. Revision should state the limits on the support cost, which should be charged as agreed, and any flexibility on disposition of small amounts below a specified threshold should be incorporated into the SAA.**

Once all PUNOs have financially closed their projects and returned any remaining funds, final disposal of funds requires donor agreement. Since many JPs involve funding from more than one donor, there is a need to advise each donor of the total amount of its funds remaining – which can only be determined exactly when all funds have been returned by all PUNOs – and negotiate the disposition of the funds (return to donor, contribution to similar JP, contribution to agency, etc.). Experience with some donors is that this process of agreeing at the end what to do with the funds can take a very long time. Much as there will always be one agency that takes longer than the others to return its final balance, there will always be one donor that wants its funds returned sooner. The AA is squeezed between these two positions. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider inserting into the SAA options for disposition of any funds remaining at closure of the JP, including the option for consultation and agreement at the beginning of the JP (e.g., agree in the SAA that any remaining funds are to be returned to the donor; remaining funds to be allocated to another programme by Steering Committee decision, with advice to the donor; or, remaining funds below a specified threshold to be incorporated in the general funds of the organization).**

Joint Programme Accountability Framework

The UNDG Guidance Note highlights certain elements as part of the accountability framework: agreed results framework, annual reporting, audit according to rules and procedures of each agency, and more broadly the application of each agency's own accountability framework.

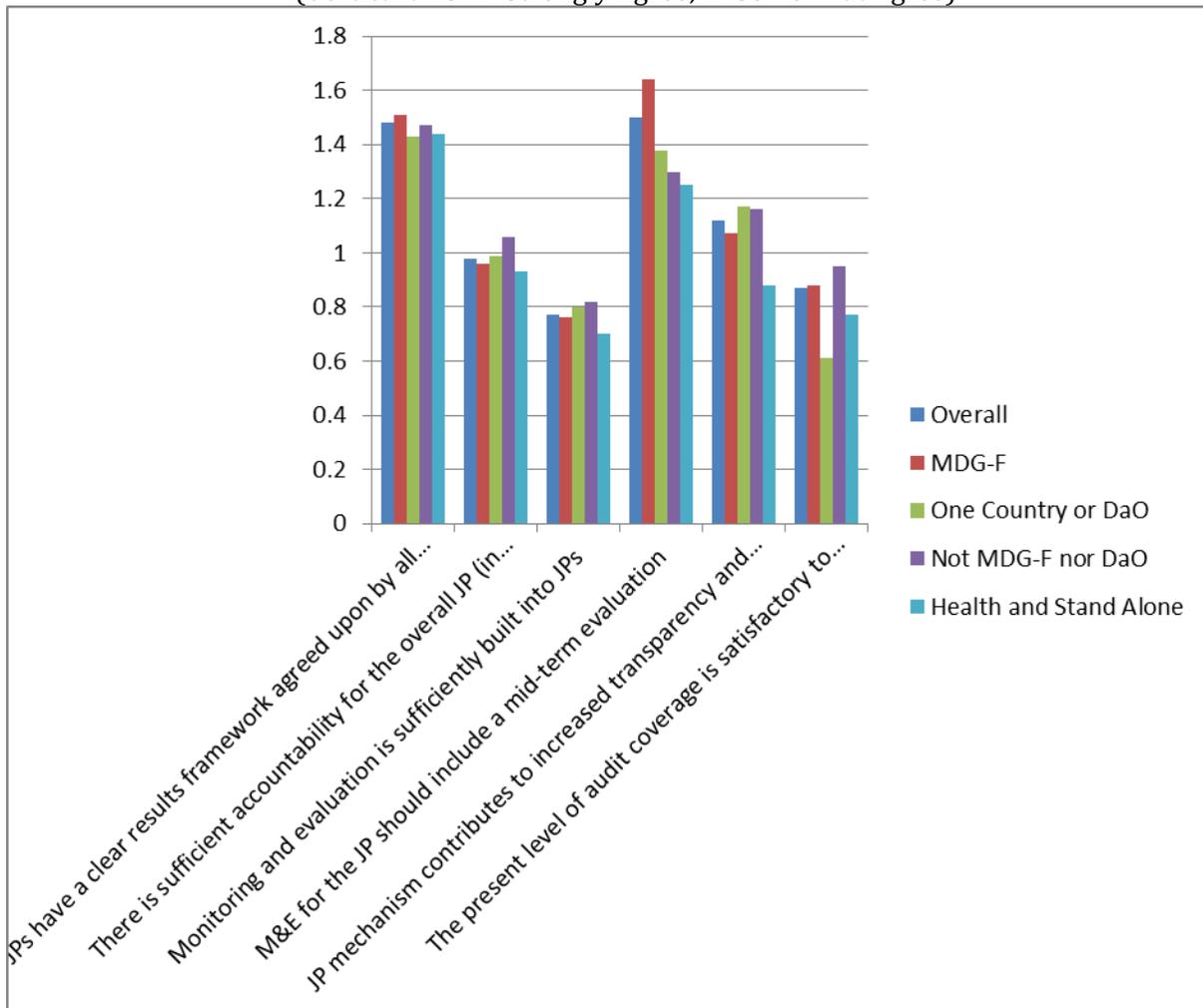
Several respondents noted that one of the weak points of the JP mechanism is that no agency is accountable for the JP as a whole, particularly with pass-through and parallel fund management. Each agency is accountable for its own portion, under its own rules and procedures; targets are agency targets, not UN targets. Neither the AA nor the PUNOs are accountable for the programme as a whole. Survey respondents noted that JPs should have a mid-term evaluation for joint programmes of three years or longer and that the quality of RBM planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting should be strengthened. In some cases JP Coordinators successfully advocate overall responsibility, but often this role is not welcomed by agencies. **Recommendation: Review of the UNDG Guidance Note should highlight the importance of commitment to achieve the overall results of the JP, and an appropriate**

monitoring and evaluation framework with an indicative allocation of 3% to 5% of funds for M&E and reporting to reinforce attention on those results.

Transparency regarding the budget is very important for government ownership and all parties should have an overview of the full budget. Many programmes may have multiple sources of funding, not only the JP, which may make it harder to attribute results to any one of them. **Recommendation: Review of the UNDG Guidance Note should call for reporting of the JP within the context of all directly relevant funding.**

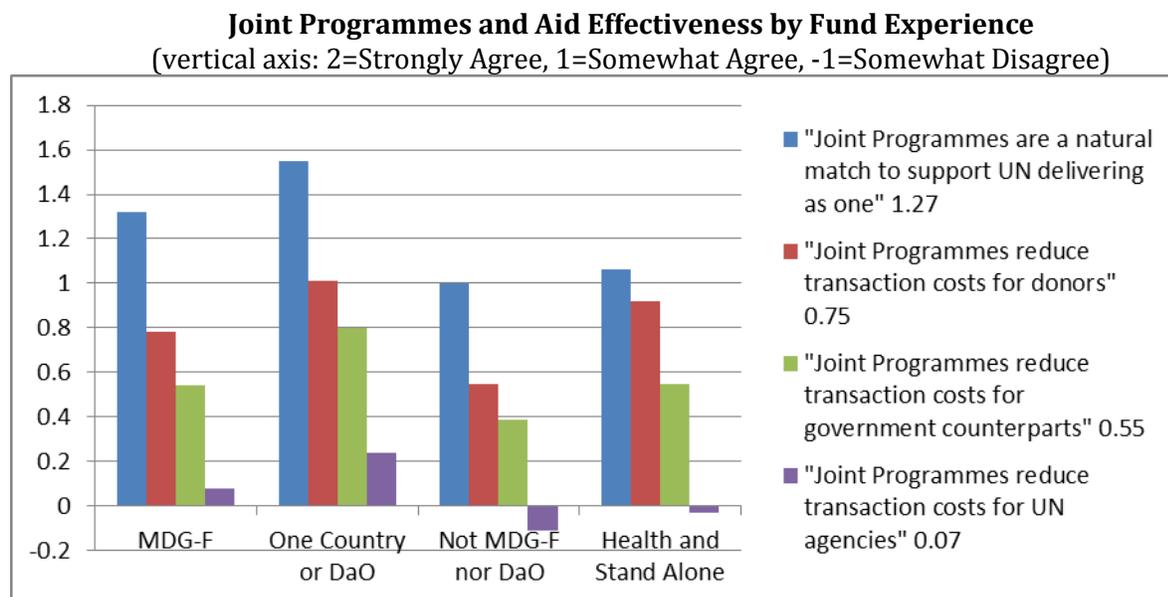
Respondents generally expressed mild agreement that their agency own accountability frameworks and current audit coverage provide sufficient assurance for government and donor stakeholders, although several respondents call for development of unified audits for joint programmes. **Recommendation: DOCO should raise with Representatives of the Internal Audit Services (RIAS) the country-level concern for “unified” rather than “coordinated” audits of joint programmes.**

Respondents Assessment of Aspects of the JP Accountability Framework
(Vertical axis: 2=Strongly Agree; 1=Somewhat Agree)



Joint Programmes and Aid Effectiveness

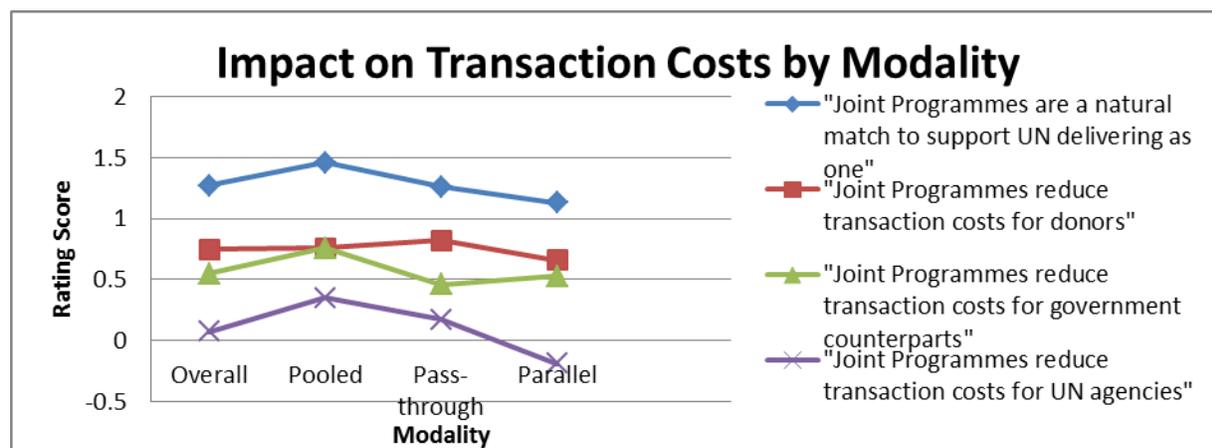
While the UNDG Guidance Note preceded the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, JPs are often promoted as a natural expression of Delivering as One, which directly support harmonization among UN agencies, alignment with government, and reduction in transaction costs for all concerned. Survey respondents generally concur that JPs fit well as an expression of Delivering as One, and that they do promote alignment within the UN and between the UN and government. There is slightly weaker agreement that JPs promote government ownership, coordination among government agencies, and donor engagement, with the variation in opinion suggesting that this depends significantly on the specific type of joint programme (somewhat higher agreement for those with MDG Achievement Fund and DaO fund JPs experience, somewhat lower with Peacebuilding Fund and Health Sector JPs). Several respondents pointed out that the JP Guidance Note is quite “UN-centric,” not reflecting the changed understanding that in general the UN does not have its own development results, but rather those of government. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should continue to cite the aid effectiveness benefits, while noting that the situation varies with the specific JP arrangement. The review should emphasize the role of government in establishment of priorities and determination of the need for joint response.**



Transaction costs

Joint programmes are described in the UNDG Guidance Note and other materials as reducing transaction costs for all concerned (government, donors and UN agencies). Survey respondents indicate that transaction costs are reduced for donors, to a lesser extent for government implementing partners and only slightly if at all for UN agencies. Lack of harmonization of agencies’ systems and procedures was often cited as a significant source of transaction costs for government and UN agencies. The one important divergence is provided by those respondents with experience of pooled funds, who indicate that donors and government implementing partners benefit about equally and UN agencies benefit to some extent; this is due to the application of a single agency’s procedures. **Recommendation: Revision**

of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider the limited and divergent impact on transaction costs of JPs and should not promote JPs as a solution to reduce UN transaction costs.



UN Reform and Coherence in the Field

Joint programmes have developed as an important element of UN reform and coherence in the field. Several factors interact to determine the likelihood of specific joint programmes making a positive contribution to UN reform and field effectiveness. These include in particular the number of participating organizations, annual budget, and duration of the joint programme. In addition, lack of agency presence and insufficient harmonization of procedures could reduce the positive contribution.

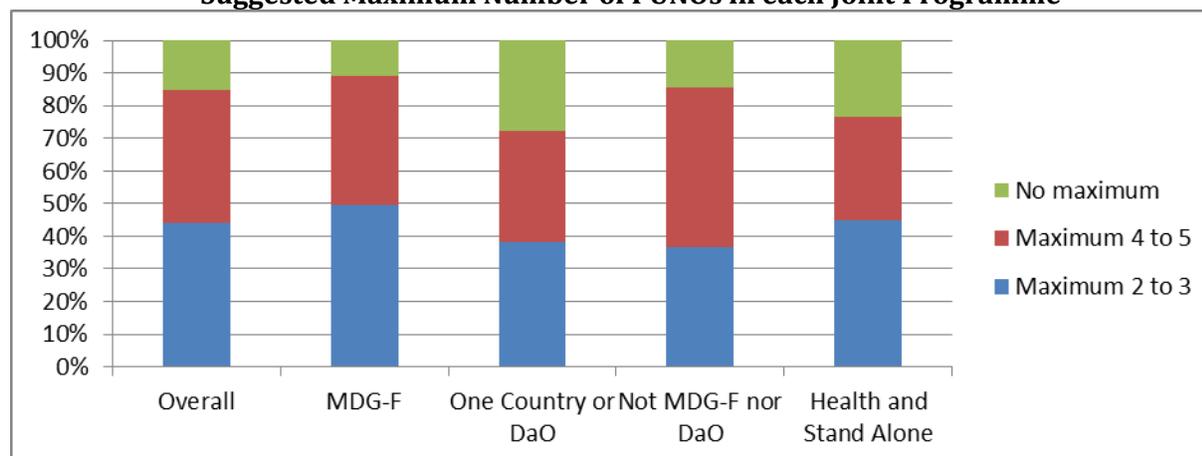
Number of participating organizations, annual budget and duration should best be considered together, although this review of the mechanism only has data on each factor separately. The preferred level for these factors may vary among funding modalities as well as between stand alone joint programmes and those established under a global or country-level fund. Furthermore, they should be considered in relation to the purpose of the joint programme, for which most development objectives are likely to require higher budget and longer duration than may be required for the functional purposes addressed in this review. Finally, there are additional transaction costs and implications of the mechanism for the agencies' HQ-levels, particularly for the agency performing the AA function. In the latter case, the above-mentioned factors may directly affect the financial viability of rendering AA services to JPs.

Maximum number of UN participating organizations in Joint Programmes

The UNDG Guidance Note is silent about the number of UN partners to include in a joint programme. Some RCs and Agency Heads see JPs as an opportunity to involve as many agencies as possible and want "no limit" on the number. Most respondents, however, think that more than four partners together are very hard to manage, and 40% state that the maximum should be three or less.⁹ Less than 30% of current joint programmes have more than 4 PUNOs. Donors and government at the country level question whether some of the PUNOs in large JPs really provide added value. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider an indicative cap of 3 to 4 UN participating organizations in each JP, recognizing that in some cases more may be justified. In development of**

⁹ This is consistent with findings from the mid-term evaluations of MDG-F joint programmes, which indicate that having more than 5 UN agencies in a JP can result in burdensome coordination and inefficiencies.

joint programmes, UN agencies should assess the added value which each agency offers when deciding upon PUNOs for a JP.

Suggested Maximum Number of PUNOs in each Joint Programme

Minimum budget for Joint Programmes

The UNDG Guidance Note is silent regarding the amount of budget resources necessary to justify a joint programme. Many smaller JPs were established using the pooled funds modality as mechanisms to receive small amounts of funding from several agencies for a specific joint activity, rather than to support an ongoing programme. There are now other means to pool funds together for common activities, without creating a joint programme, such as the UN-to-UN fund transfers. Some RCs prefer to have no minimum, but most of those involved with managing JPs believe there should be a minimum, with 50% supporting an annual budget of at least \$1 million and two-thirds saying it should be at least \$500,000. The minimum amount preferred depends on the experience of the respondent: those with DaO experience are most likely to endorse a lower minimum, while those with Health Sector JP experience are most likely to state the minimum should be higher at \$2.5 million.

Actual budgets of JPs vary widely; the table below indicates that a high proportion of the joint programmes of some agencies would not meet a \$500,000 threshold. Yet UNFPA and UNICEF are among the agencies most actively engaged in joint programmes. This suggests that joint programmes smaller than this threshold serve a valuable purpose for the agencies concerned.

Joint Programmes with Annual Budgets Meeting Minimum Threshold of \$500,000			
Agency	Number of JPs	Qualified	
		Number	Percentage
UNFPA as MA	32	1	3%
UNFPA as AA	22	17	77%
UNICEF as AA	19	10	53%
MPTF Office (MDG-F)	128	128	100%

The frequency of very small JPs has fallen over the years, perhaps due to guidance to seek larger budgets and to use other mechanisms for lower value joint activities.

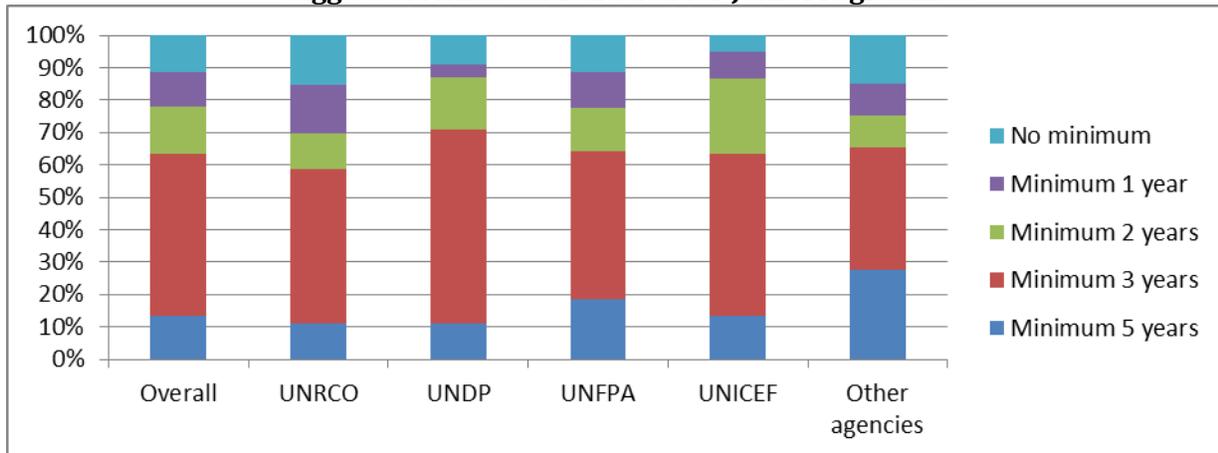
Evolution of Joint Programme Budgets		
Budget	Beginning Year	
	2005 or earlier (n=127)	2008 or later (n=339)
\$50,000 or less	38%	2%
\$250,000 or less	52%	9%
\$500,000 or less	63%	19%
\$1,000,000 or less	80%	39%

The MPTF Office suggests a threshold of \$2,000,000 annually for JPs to break even on all associated AA and central costs (and \$5,000,000 for MPTFs). However, the current 1% fee structure is based on the concept of cross-subsidization from larger JPs to smaller ones, rather than breaking even; agencies other than MPTF Office may also subsidize from other voluntary contributions and have not identified this as a problem. The more relevant indicator may be average annual budget per PUNO and the different AAs may find it useful to determine the minimum annual budget per PUNO that should be required to establish a JP for which they will be AA. The minimum budget should be considered in relation to expected duration and purpose of the joint programme, and allow for the possibility of variation according to the funding modality. **Recommendation: Based on country-level experience, the revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider an indicative minimum budget of \$1 million to establish joint programmes operating under the pass-through modality and \$250,000 for pooled funding modality joint programmes. The revised Guidance Note should encourage the use of other cooperation mechanisms for lower amounts and whenever else that could be more appropriate.**

Minimum duration of Joint Programmes

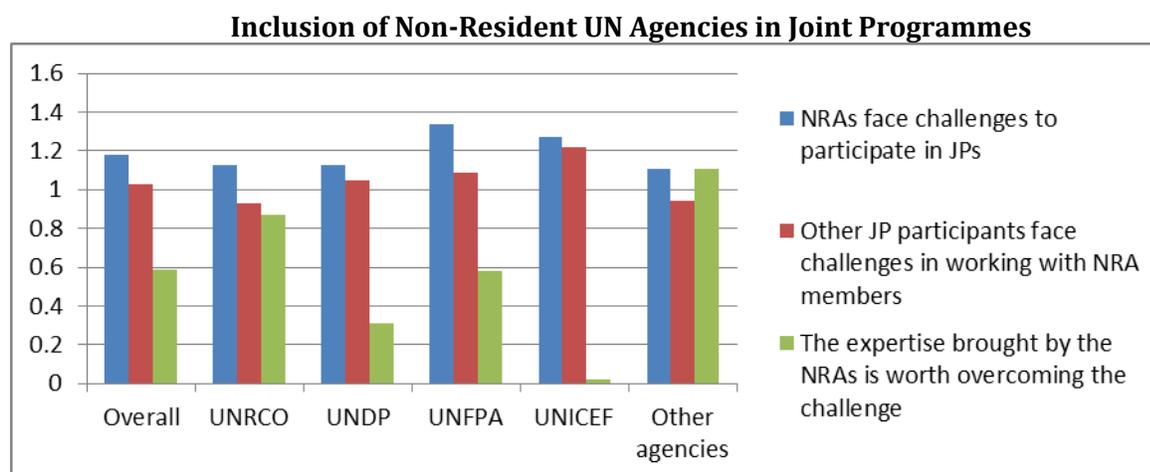
The UNDG Guidance Note is silent regarding the length of operational life necessary to justify a joint programme. Noting the extra effort involved to plan and prepare joint programmes compared to single agency projects, respondents recognize that duration should be sufficient to achieve impact, and that this is a general issue not limited to JPs. Sixty percent of respondents indicate the minimum duration should be at least 3 years, and fully three-quarters argue that it should be at least 2 years, with opinion varying according to the type of JP with which one has had experience: those with MDG-F and DaO experience tend to favour longer minimum durations than those coming from the PBF or Health Sector joint programmes.¹⁰ Actual planned duration should be based in part on the number of participants and total budget, and consider the time necessary in relation to the respective objective. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider an indicative minimum operational duration of at least 3 years, while recognizing that the threshold should be lower for joint programmes in humanitarian and recovery contexts as well as for pooled funds.**

¹⁰ Three-fourths of the MDG-F joint programmes requested the maximum one-year extension to four years.

Suggested Minimum Duration for Joint Programmes

Participation of Non-Resident UN Agencies

One of the benefits of joint programmes for governments is that they can provide access to expertise of UN agencies that are not resident in the country. The UNDG Guidance Note does not discuss participation of different types of agencies. Government and agency respondents recognize that Non-Resident Agencies (NRAs) provide valuable technical input into JPs, but their non-residential status often delays implementation and is an obstacle to their full participation in the management and coordination structures. NRAs have found that joint programmes sometimes provide a point of entry for work in countries where they do not have a regular presence, especially when they bring specialized expertise relevant to a multi-agency joint programme. On the other hand, NRAs are sometimes criticized as only interested in getting the resources, of not having resident staff empowered to make decisions to ensure joint programme operations, and of falling behind because of lack of implementation capacity in the country. Survey respondents agree that NRAs face challenges to participate in JPs and that the other JP participants face challenges in working with the NRAs. While respondents on the whole state that obtaining the expertise brought by the NRAs is worth overcoming the challenges to their participation, in some cases agreement with that position is pretty weak. It is important to focus on the effectiveness of the NRAs to bring specific expertise and to not weaken a JP by giving overall management responsibilities to an NRA. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note and agency-specific training should highlight the need to identify the value added contribution of each agency, and that each has the capacity to ensure timely delivery of its outputs. Only UN resident agencies should be considered for AA, MA, Lead Agency or overall management responsibilities for a country-level joint programme.**



Harmonization of systems and procedures

One of the most frequently identified obstacles to success of joint programmes is the lack of harmonization of agency systems, procedures and reporting requirements, whether overall (implementation modalities) or in specifics (e.g., payment scales for per diem and national consultant honoraria). This challenge has been identified consistently in discussions of joint programmes (viz, 2006 Joint Programme Case Study Review, 2007 RC Synthesis Report on Strengthening Implementation, evaluations of individual joint programmes of MDG-F and Iraq Trust Fund, etc.). While not specific to joint programmes, this is a specific example of how the lack of such harmonization continues to get in the way of UN-government programmes. **Recommendation: DOCO should call UNDG attention to the obstacle which lack of harmonization of systems and procedures among UN agencies presents to UNDG joint programmes, to Delivering as One and to UN reform more broadly.**

Issues may also arise regarding lack of harmonization between government and UN requirements. For example, UN and government may require quarterly reports to be issued at different times (UN on day 6 of new quarter, government on day 15), which would mean that reports will not be fully informed at the earlier deadline. Whenever possible, it would be better if the UN were to align its reporting requirements with those of government. **Recommendation: Revision of the Guidance Note should call for the good practice of avoiding misalignment between UN and government reporting deadlines.**

Visibility

The UNDG Guidance Note states that “National partners and each UN organization participating in joint programmes should be duly recognized in all external communication methods used to publicize the initiative. The role of each participating UN organization should be acknowledged in all communications, reports and publications with partners, donors, beneficiaries and the media.”¹¹ This has often been interpreted to mean that the logo of each agency should appear on all publications.

Some of the funds implemented through JPs have sought to ensure simpler design of visibility products with only a single UN logo rather than including a half dozen or more agencies separately. This has encountered some opposition from UN agencies, which are generally quite concerned about their own visibility. Similarly, government entities and donors expect visibility materials to include them as well.

¹¹ The MDG-F Guidelines sought to restrict visibility of individual agencies in favour of “one” UN logo.

Survey respondents generally indicated that visibility was not a problem of particular concern to donors or government partners. Heads of agencies and other respondents indicate that visibility is an on-going concern for UN agencies, particularly with pass-through or parallel funds. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note and training materials should consider realistic guidance to ensure simple UN agency, government and donor visibility. UNDG should agree on use of (a) a standard logo for all UNDG joint programmes; or (b) a standard UN-system logo for all joint programmes.**

Role of the Resident Coordinator

There is overall agreement that Resident Coordinators (RCs) play an important role in development of JPs, and that in turn JPs have strengthened the role of the RC. This view is supported most strongly in DaO countries and among the RCs themselves. The view is positive but less strong among UN agency staff whose experience is mainly with JPs that are stand-alone, Health Sector, or supported by the Peacebuilding Fund. Nearly all parties agree that the JPs have not provided RCs with significant material resources.¹² Government, donors and UN staff suggest that the RC maintain oversight of the JPs in the country to ensure their smooth operation, including for early resolution of issues that may arise between agencies. **Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should recognize the potential coordination, mediation and system representation roles to be played by the RCO and encourage agencies to maintain the RCO informed of their planned and on-going joint programmes.**

Further use of the Joint Programme mechanism

Respondents were asked whether they would like to develop further cooperation through JPs with current and new partners. They agreed overall that they would like to do so, providing an endorsement of the joint programme model. Nonetheless, some respondents (particularly those with Peacebuilding Fund and Health Sector experience, those without MDG Achievement Fund or DaO experience, and Heads of Agency) expressed some preference for cooperation outside the JP framework.

Recommendation: Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note and training materials should recognize varied field partner cooperation preferences depending on their experience with joint programmes.

Conclusion: Need to revise the UNDG Guidance Note on Joint Programming

Overall, a majority of e-survey respondents and agency HQ staff indicated the UNDG Guidance Note should be revised. While about one-quarter of respondents are not sure whether revision is necessary, two to three times more people believe it is necessary than the number who believe it is not in virtually every segment of the respondents. Those whose experience comes primarily from pooled funds are the least convinced of the need for revision, with a ratio of 4:3 in favour of revision, whereas RCs favour revision by 6 to 1. Survey respondents generally indicated that there is not a need for major revision to the JP Programme Document, annual work plan or budget templates, but that revision should focus on: monitoring frameworks, substantive and financial reporting templates, the rationale for joint programmes, and reasons for selection among financial management modalities.¹³

¹² The MDG-F provided specific funding to the RC Offices in several cases.

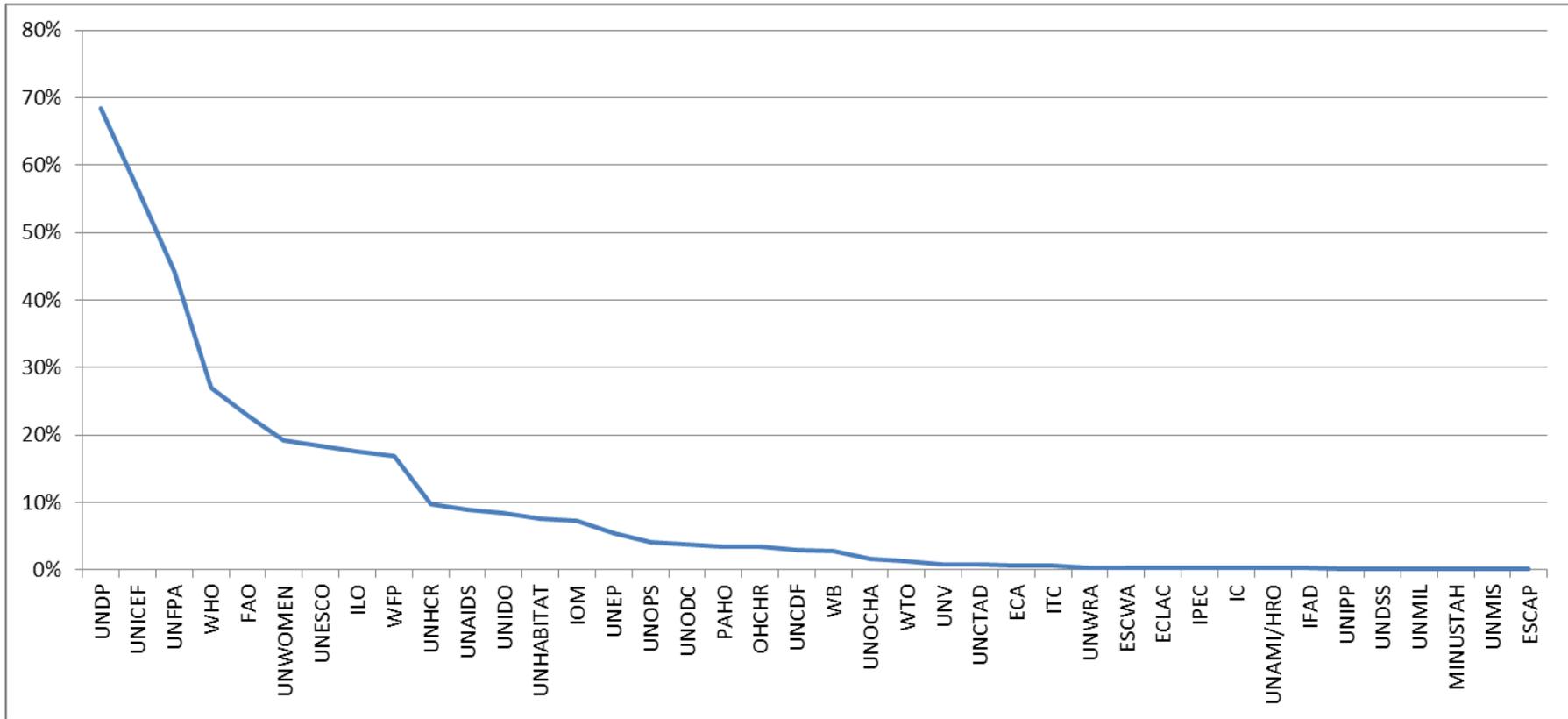
¹³ Several detailed survey respondent recommendations worth further consideration are included in Annex 12.

This review of the joint programme mechanism has identified the important key points below for consideration in the revision of the UNDG Guidance Note on Joint Programming (Attachment 3 provides the complete list of report Recommendations):

Summary of Key Points for Revision of UNDG Guidance Note on Joint Programming

- Provide increased guidance on joint programming (whether or not resulting in JPs)
 - Identify good (and poor) reasons for development of joint programmes
 - Emphasis on UN joint vision and joint results
 - Guidance on when to use JP and when to use other cooperation mechanism
 - Reinforce importance of agreed results framework and AWP
 - Emphasize importance of joint budget framework
 - Guidance on application of Paris Declaration and related principles
- Describe strengths and implications of each joint programme fund management modality
- Emphasize management structures, various roles and means of fulfilling them, including:
 - Policy steering committee (including donors and civil society)
 - Programme coordination committee
 - Coordination Unit
 - Lead Agency
- Assess value-added of potential PUNOs in design of each JP
- Incorporate arrangements demonstrated to improve management efficiency
 - Specific budget allocation for shared expenditures (coordination, evaluation, etc)
 - Coordination Unit staff access to agency financial systems (Atlas, etc)
 - Allowance of time for joint programme start-up and closure
 - Ensure prompt transfer of funds by AA and agencies to field
 - Ensure UN and government quarterly reporting deadlines are not misaligned
- Specify selection of AA only on basis of administrative (not substantive) capacity
- Strengthen accountability framework (reporting, monitoring, mid-term evaluation, expenditure review and audit)
- Recommend limitations on basic framework factors, including:
 - Maximum number of Participating UN Organizations
 - Minimum annual budget
 - Minimum duration
- Present simple image, while ensuring visibility of government, UN agencies and donors
- Coordinate interagency agreement regarding:
 - Reporting templates
 - Annual official financial reporting and locally produced quarterly financial updates
 - Templates for budgeting, monitoring, financial issues
 - Harmonization of UN agency financial, procurement and unified audit procedures (outside UNDG Guidance Note)
- Ensure lessons learned from past and current JPs strengthen future operations

Attachment 1: Frequency of Joint Programme Participation for each Participating UN Organization



Source: Survey of UN-agency country-level experience with joint programme mechanism

Attachment 2: E-Survey Results Summary

Topics and Questions	Ratings by Subset Characteristics														
	All Field	MDG -F	One Country or DaO	Not MDG-F nor DaO	Health and Stand Alone	UNRCO	UNDP	UNFPA	UNICEF	HoA and Deputy HoA	RC	JP Prog Mgr	Pooled	Pass-through	Parallel
Number of cases (n=)	329	184	79	87	107	82	64	44	70	130	19	49	50	134	105
Which are the essential characteristics which define a Joint Programme?															
Involves multiple UN agencies	97%	98%	96%	96%	96%	99%	94%	95%	97%	98%	100%	98%	94%	98%	96%
Has a unified results framework	97%	97%	97%	100%	99%	100%	95%	98%	98%	98%	98%	94%	98%	97%	99%
Has a unified work plan	96%	95%	92%	99%	94%	99%	93%	93%	95%	93%	100%	98%	96%	96%	94%
Provides unified reporting to Government and Donors	91%	90%	90%	91%	90%	92%	90%	95%	89%	93%	100%	87%	90%	91%	91%
Has a unified budget	79%	82%	83%	73%	80%	86%	79%	81%	75%	77%	78%	80%	85%	83%	75%
What are the most frequent reasons to establish Joint Programmes															
Delivering as One	65%	58%	90%	60%	55%	58%	62%	71%	67%	68%	50%	61%	78%	56%	69%
Good fit for the thematic programme	46%	41%	46%	55%	52%	36%	48%	67%	45%	40%	56%	40%	48%	41%	52%
Donor requirements	44%	52%	26%	41%	45%	51%	34%	48%	53%	46%	44%	24%	38%	50%	38%
Why is the (most frequent modality) selected most often?															
Participating agency preference	45%	40%	41%	58%	53%	36%	40%	66%	50%	50%	28%	38%	32%	38%	68%
Donor requirement	29%	37%	16%	22%	27%	40%	27%	20%	36%	22%	39%	21%	30%	36%	21%
Delivering as One	28%	25%	54%	18%	18%	25%	26%	22%	24%	31%	28%	23%	66%	25%	16%
Best fit for the thematic programme	19%	17%	13%	27%	26%	15%	16%	22%	26%	21%	28%	17%	16%	18%	26%

Considering the JPs in your country, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the UN-government Steering Committee?															
"It is difficult to arrange Steering Committee meetings with sufficient frequency"	0.64	0.58	1.01	0.58	0.57	0.75	0.42	1.03	0.53	0.75	0.29	0.14	0.70	0.69	0.68
"Each JP should have its own Steering Committee"	0.52	0.46	0.28	0.69	0.48	0.18	0.79	0.59	0.42	0.59	0.50	0.55	0.79	0.37	0.59
"JPs working in the same sector/outcome should share the same Steering Committee"	0.99	0.97	0.94	0.94	1.13	0.89	0.96	1.32	1.18	0.98	0.88	1.07	0.79	0.96	1.18
"There should be one national Steering Committee for all JPs in the country"	-0.10	-0.03	0.34	-0.44	-0.45	0.30	-0.47	-0.16	-0.31	-0.43	0.24	0.07	0.15	-0.15	-0.08
Considering the JPs in your country, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the Interagency Programme Committee?															
"It is difficult to arrange Programme Committee meetings with sufficient frequency"	-0.29	-0.48	-0.38	0.11	-0.07	-0.58	-0.31	-0.03	0.13	-0.12	-0.18	0.73	-0.25	-0.38	-0.04
"Each JP should have its own Programme Committee"	1.23	1.54	1.03	0.82	1.02	1.43	1.06	1.39	0.84	0.96	1.56	1.44	0.98	1.35	1.16
"JPs working in the same sector/outcome should share the same Programme Committee"	0.42	0.42	0.53	0.35	0.56	0.49	0.56	0.57	0.69	0.41	0.47	0.38	0.25	0.47	0.48
"There should be one national Programme Committee for all JPs in the country"	-0.90	-1.15	-0.44	-0.77	-0.73	-0.90	-0.79	-0.92	-0.87	-0.73	-0.87	-1.31	-0.48	-1.24	-0.62

Considering the JPs in your country, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the role of the Resident Coordinator?															
"RC plays an important role in developing the JPs"	1.15	1.36	1.09	0.86	0.76	1.68	1.23	1.44	0.57	0.82	1.61	1.26	1.00	1.34	0.95
"RC is usually co-chair of the Steering Committee"	1.05	1.31	1.07	0.51	0.48	1.56	0.83	1.24	0.56	0.67	1.22	1.23	1.20	1.27	0.76
"RC promotes JPs as a desirable modality for UN cooperation"	1.43	1.46	1.69	1.22	1.27	1.71	1.43	1.74	0.88	1.21	1.94	1.37	1.40	1.50	1.34
"JPs have strengthened the role of the RC as UN system lead in country"	1.06	1.16	1.25	0.68	0.68	1.28	1.15	1.31	0.5	0.87	0.94	1.21	1.30	1.11	0.82
"JPs have contributed resources to strengthen the RC Office capacity"	0.31	0.45	0.35	-0.26	-0.3	0.29	0.48	0.69	-0.29	0.11	0.11	0.53	0.35	0.34	0.23
Based on your experience with JPs, please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below regarding the Joint Programme Management Framework															
Each JP should have its own Steering Committee	0.55	0.46	0.14	0.85	0.68	0.14	0.83	1.05	0.38	0.63	0.11	0.71	0.42	0.56	0.54
Steering Committees should include donors	1.11	1.19	1.30	1.13	1.17	1.20	1.40	0.84	0.93	0.98	1.17	1.11	0.84	1.24	1.04
Steering Committees should include government implementing partners	1.67	1.70	1.63	1.65	1.67	1.66	1.74	1.79	1.54	1.57	1.56	1.86	1.67	1.67	1.64
Steering Committees should include non-participating UN agencies	-0.48	-0.71	-0.17	-0.05	-0.23	-0.39	-0.50	-0.24	-0.44	-0.53	-0.67	-1.00	-0.38	-0.72	-0.21
Different JPs should combine to use the same Steering Committee	0.15	0.17	0.56	-0.12	0.27	0.41	0.00	0.08	0.20	0.19	0.17	0.09	0.15	0.18	0.18

Steering Committees provide sufficient coordination and oversight of the JP as a whole	0.91	0.92	0.82	0.90	0.86	0.95	1.09	1.05	0.70	0.86	0.88	1.14	0.98	0.87	0.93
Each JP should have a Programme Coordinator	1.40	1.61	1.3	1.08	1.05	1.71	1.66	1.26	0.75	1.02	1.56	1.82	1.34	1.48	1.28
The AA for a pass-through fund should have relevant substantive knowledge	1.15	1.09	0.91	1.26	1.00	0.89	1.12	1.24	1.30	1.14	0.50	1.48	1.24	1.15	1.11
The AA for a pass-through fund should have strong administrative capacity	1.74	1.77	1.83	1.64	1.67	1.84	1.71	1.53	1.61	1.71	1.83	1.65	1.73	1.73	1.80
Resource mobilization for a pass-through fund is principally the responsibility of the AA	-0.55	-0.50	-0.78	-0.59	-0.90	-0.46	-0.54	-0.57	-0.75	-0.82	-0.71	-0.17	-0.38	-0.70	-0.44
The MA for a pooled fund should have relevant substantive knowledge	1.45	1.34	1.28	1.59	1.42	1.26	1.34	1.47	1.67	1.57	0.93	1.53	1.57	1.40	1.48
The MA for a pooled fund should have strong administrative capacity	1.66	1.70	1.72	1.58	1.60	1.75	1.58	1.65	1.54	1.67	1.86	1.60	1.76	1.70	1.61
Resource mobilization for a pooled fund is principally the responsibility of the MA	-0.35	-0.31	-0.61	-0.31	-0.74	-0.45	-0.14	-0.62	-0.32	-0.62	-0.71	0.21	0.06	-0.57	-0.28
Based on your experience with JPs, please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below regarding the Joint Programme Accountability Framework															
JPs have a clear results framework agreed upon by all parties	1.48	1.51	1.43	1.47	1.44	1.57	1.36	1.66	1.23	1.28	1.33	1.69	1.50	1.49	1.46
There is sufficient accountability for the overall JP (in addition to each agency's portion)	0.98	0.96	0.99	1.06	0.93	1.01	0.77	1.38	0.83	0.82	0.56	1.24	1.13	0.91	1.01
Monitoring and evaluation is sufficiently built into JPs	0.77	0.76	0.80	0.82	0.70	0.79	0.71	1.08	0.47	0.57	0.50	1.36	0.84	0.65	0.80

M&E for the JP should include a mid-term evaluation	1.50	1.64	1.38	1.30	1.25	1.57	1.59	1.37	1.36	1.34	0.94	1.67	1.58	1.54	1.40
JP mechanism contributes to increased transparency and accountability through timely financial and narrative reporting	1.12	1.07	1.17	1.16	0.88	1.34	0.91	1.42	0.79	0.79	1.33	1.43	1.14	1.04	1.19
The present level of audit coverage is satisfactory to government and donor stakeholders	0.87	0.88	0.61	0.95	0.77	0.86	0.94	1.03	0.82	0.76	0.81	1.18	0.69	0.76	1.00
Considering the JPs in your country, to what extent do you agree with the following:															
"Joint Programmes contribute to alignment among UN agencies"	1.33	1.37	1.56	1.14	1.18	1.54	1.32	1.53	0.92	1.10	1.44	1.49	1.43	1.36	1.22
"Joint Programmes contribute to UN agency harmonization with government entities"	1.14	1.20	1.39	0.84	1.00	1.37	1.12	1.37	0.73	0.86	1.39	1.27	1.17	1.02	1.23
"Joint Programmes contribute to government ownership"	0.74	0.84	0.89	0.47	0.44	1.14	0.85	0.82	0.08	0.25	0.94	1.11	0.65	0.73	0.68
"Joint Programmes contribute to coordination among government entities"	0.80	1.00	0.86	0.45	0.44	1.25	0.62	1.03	0.40	0.30	1.22	1.00	0.78	0.79	0.77
"Joint Programmes contribute to donor engagement"	0.83	0.93	0.73	0.68	0.81	1.04	0.72	1.18	0.60	0.63	1.06	0.93	0.93	0.87	0.72
"Joint Programmes are a natural match to support UN delivering as one"	1.27	1.32	1.55	1.00	1.06	1.63	1.23	1.45	0.62	1.05	1.78	1.38	1.46	1.26	1.13
"Joint Programmes reduce transaction costs for donors"	0.75	0.78	1.01	0.55	0.92	1.09	0.47	0.97	0.48	0.64	1.28	0.69	0.76	0.82	0.66
"Joint Programmes reduce transaction costs for government counterparts"	0.55	0.54	0.80	0.39	0.55	0.89	0.28	0.76	0.24	0.38	1.33	0.53	0.76	0.46	0.53

"Joint Programmes reduce transaction costs for UN agencies"	0.07	0.08	0.24	-0.11	-0.03	0.52	0.02	0.16	-0.68	-0.47	0.39	0.51	0.35	0.17	-0.19
Should there be a maximum number of agencies in JPs?															
Maximum 2 to 3	40%	46%	36%	33%	38%	32%	58%	30%	48%	36%	18%	47%	36%	47%	34%
Maximum 4 to 5	37%	37%	32%	44%	27%	47%	28%	43%	30%	36%	53%	33%	30%	37%	38%
No maximum	14%	10%	26%	13%	20%	13%	7%	16%	18%	22%	24%	7%	30%	9%	17%
Should there be a minimum annual budget for JPs?															
\$2.5 to \$5 million	18%	21%	14%	14%	21%	15%	22%	16%	25%	23%	33%	20%	13%	22%	15%
\$1 to \$2.5 million	20%	24%	9%	17%	16%	16%	23%	8%	21%	22%	11%	26%	11%	18%	24%
\$0.5 to \$1 million	15%	16%	21%	14%	14%	17%	15%	21%	12%	16%	0%	13%	9%	15%	20%
No minimum	17%	13%	23%	20%	19%	21%	13%	13%	15%	16%	33%	11%	30%	16%	13%
Should there be a minimum duration to establish a JP?															
Minimum 3 years	48%	54%	26%	45%	45%	47%	60%	45%	49%	43%	33%	47%	36%	50%	48%
Minimum 2 years	14%	11%	22%	18%	19%	11%	16%	13%	23%	20%	6%	11%	7%	15%	17%
No minimum	11%	7%	20%	11%	13%	15%	9%	11%	5%	14%	44%	4%	27%	9%	9%
Some people say that the participation in JPs of UN Non-Resident Agencies involves extra challenges. Considering the JPs in your country, please indicate the extent of your agreement with the statements below:															
NRAs face challenges to participate in JPs	1.18	1.28	0.96	1.16	1.21	1.13	1.13	1.34	1.27	1.32	1.61	1.10	0.76	1.35	1.14
Other JP participants face challenges in working with NRA members	1.03	1.07	0.68	1.21	1.00	0.93	1.05	1.09	1.22	1.22	1.22	0.84	0.61	1.18	1.00
The expertise brought by the NRAs is worth overcoming the challenge	0.59	0.49	0.98	0.61	0.61	0.87	0.31	0.58	0.02	0.26	0.56	0.73	0.89	0.63	0.41

There have been challenges regarding "visibility" for:															
Individual UN agencies	47%	51%	44%	45%	48%	45%	38%	70%	54%	52%	44%	39%	41%	48%	51%
Donors	33%	37%	29%	29%	32%	32%	39%	35%	36%	36%	33%	41%	31%	33%	33%
Government counterparts	26%	30%	20%	23%	20%	15%	37%	21%	33%	29%	11%	33%	16%	29%	29%
Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements below:															
I would welcome the opportunity to develop another JP with current partners	1.33	1.37	1.36	1.17	1.28	1.51	1.33	1.57	0.78	1.14	1.59	1.59	1.33	1.33	1.32
I would welcome the opportunity to develop a JP with new UN partners	1.25	1.35	1.34	1.01	1.09	1.66	1.05	1.46	0.64	1.09	1.81	1.20	1.11	1.28	1.29
I would welcome the opportunity to develop a JP with new government partners	1.32	1.46	1.19	1.11	1.2	1.71	1.44	1.14	0.84	1.07	1.82	1.36	1.11	1.35	1.34
I would prefer to cooperate with other agencies without using a JP	-0.14	-0.26	-0.37	0.22	0.02	-0.65	-0.15	-0.22	0.63	0.35	-0.82	-0.51	-0.23	-0.22	-0.04
I would prefer to cooperate with government partners without using a JP	-0.05	-0.16	-0.29	0.29	0.13	-0.65	0.06	0.00	0.68	0.52	-0.76	-0.43	-0.05	-0.17	0.07
There is a need to revise the UNDG Joint Programme Guidelines															
Yes, there is	53%	57%	49%	50%	54%	63%	58%	47%	47%	44%	61%	48%	36%	62%	52%
No, there is not	20%	19%	24%	21%	28%	19%	13%	26%	27%	28%	11%	22%	27%	15%	28%

Attachment 3: List of Specific Recommendations

1. **To maintain an overview of the use of JPs, UNDG/FMOG should advise UNDG of the need for a comprehensive Joint Programme dataset, and whether it should be updated continuously or on an annual basis. It should recommend whether DOCO should create a new database for this purpose, utilize the MPTF Office GATEWAY, or rely on separate databases of each agency.**
2. **The UNDG Guidance Note does not require revision regarding the joint work plan and programme documents; however it should emphasize the need for the joint budget and provide guidance on its management and closure. Training should emphasize the above required characteristics in order to promote consistent practice.**
3. **Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should highlight considerations to determine when a joint programme may be appropriate and specific situations where or forms of cooperation other than JPs may be more appropriate.**
4. **Review of the UNDG Guidance Note should provide guidance on the strengths and implications of each of the three fund management modalities. Training should emphasize consideration of the programmatic and management implications of the selection among modalities.**
5. **DOCO should encourage RCs to utilize the 2013 wrap-up process of the MDG-F JPs for broader lessons learned on JP mechanism and joint programming. A similar process of sharing lessons learned at the country level would be useful in other countries.**
6. **Issues of typical management structure, including a policy-level steering committee, an operational coordination committee and a Coordination Unit (and options including a Lead Agency and Outcome or other Working Groups, together with the importance of overall joint programme accountability) should be considered in the UNDG Guidance Note revision, which may recommend a flatter structure for simpler or smaller JPs. Donors should be included on the Steering Committee, as should civil society organizations when relevant to the specific JP.**
7. **Coordination Units should manage funds pooled for common costs and should have access to its agency's financial system (Atlas, etc) to minimize delay and error.**
8. **Presumption of standard AA behavior should be reinforced in the revised Guidance Note, including the annual AA report to the UNDG/FMOG for comment by the UNDG Advisory Group. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should state whether such services are required of the AA, and if so, whether the UNDG/FMOG should begin to rate agencies on the completeness of their AA service (e.g., "fully compliant," "largely compliant," "partially compliant," and "insufficiently compliant").**
9. **Revision of the Guidance Note should consider assigning responsibility for preparation of the JP narrative report to the coordination unit or the overall Lead Agency, with specific inputs from each agency. In cases with neither a coordination unit nor a Lead Agency, the PUNOs should agree to whom the overall reporting responsibility falls. There may be additional direct costs involved for the Lead Agency or PUNO to prepare the narrative report. The AA**

would retain responsibility to finalize the report for donors and other stakeholders, applying an overall quality assurance review to the draft report as well as consolidating the certified financial information both among agencies and with the narrative report.

10. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should recognize that quarterly or semi-annual field updates have become common practice as an element of the reporting system, but note that these updates are unofficial (i.e., not certified by agency HQ) and may involve a level of detail not meant to be captured by the MPTF Office GATEWAY nor reflected in official annual reports. Official financial reporting should remain annual; agency HQ should encourage their in-country staff to provide quarterly financial updates.
11. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider whether the AA function is expected to be fully financed from the fee on the agency's JPs, which may require additional direct charges beyond the 1% fee; or whether the 1% fee is a good faith full contribution for all ordinary costs, backed up by central administrative services. AAs should be encouraged to monitor the cost to provide the comprehensive AA service and may wish to set and make known threshold characteristics (possibly including number of PUNOs, duration and total budget) they normally will require to accept to provide AA services.
12. UNDG/FMOG should explore options to facilitate the field acceptance process for funds, for example draft documents, an emailed statement of intent by potential PUNOs to the AA, combined with text in the SAA to condition its entry into effect on signature of the relevant MOU. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should state clearly that direct transfer between PUNOs of funds received from the AA in a pass-through modality JP is not possible. AAs and all agencies should streamline their procedures to ensure prompt local availability of funds as soon as possible following receipt of donor deposits and Steering Committee instructions. Clearer training is required by each agency on these issues.
13. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should remove reference to substantive capacity as a criterion for selection of the AA and include wording that allows choice of any qualified UN organization to be the AA, whether or not it is a PUNO for the respective JP.
14. Process of operational and financial closure should be planned for and start on time, including preparation of agency components of the final narrative report as one aspect of operational closure. Coordination Unit normally should remain operational for a period of at least three months after operational conclusion of the joint programme. Revision of the Guidance Note should consider application to JPs of the "guidance note on establishing, managing and closing MDTFs" adopted in December 2011.
15. Revision of the Guidance Note should emphasize the importance of timely financial closure, including early return of unutilized funds in excess of potential claims. Revision should state the limits on the support cost, which should be charged as agreed, and any flexibility on disposition of small amounts below a specified threshold should be incorporated into the SAA.
16. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider inserting into the SAA options for disposition of any funds remaining at closure of the JP, including the option for consultation and agreement at the beginning of the JP (e.g., agree in the SAA that any remaining funds are to be returned to the donor; remaining funds to be allocated to another programme by

Steering Committee decision, with advice to the donor; or, remaining funds below a specified threshold to be incorporated in the general funds of the organization).

- 17. Review of the UNDG Guidance Note should highlight the importance of commitment to achieve the overall results of the JP, and an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework with an indicative allocation of 3% to 5% of funds for M&E and reporting to reinforce attention on those results.**
- 18. Review of the UNDG Guidance Note should call for reporting of the JP within the context of all directly relevant funding.**
- 19. DOCO should raise with Representatives of the Internal Audit Services (RIAS) the country-level concern for “unified” rather than “coordinated” audits of joint programmes.**
- 20. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should continue to cite the aid effectiveness benefits, while noting that the situation varies with the specific JP arrangement. The review should emphasize the role of government in establishment of priorities and determination of the need for joint response.**
- 21. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider the limited and divergent impact on transaction costs of JPs and should not promote JPs as a solution to reduce UN transaction costs.**
- 22. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider an indicative cap of 3 to 4 UN participating organizations in each JP, recognizing that in some cases more may be justified. In development of joint programmes, UN agencies should assess the added value which each agency offers when deciding upon PUNOs for a JP.**
- 23. Based on country-level experience, the revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider an indicative minimum budget of \$1 million to establish joint programmes operating under the pass-through modality and \$250,000 for pooled funding modality joint programmes. The revised Guidance Note should encourage the use of other cooperation mechanisms for lower amounts and whenever else that could be more appropriate.**
- 24. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should consider an indicative minimum operational duration of at least 3 years, while recognizing that the threshold should be lower for joint programmes in humanitarian and recovery contexts as well as for pooled funds.**
- 25. Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note and agency-specific training should highlight the need to identify the value added contribution of each agency, and that each has the capacity to ensure timely delivery of its outputs. Only UN resident agencies should be considered for AA, MA, Lead Agency or overall management responsibilities for a country-level joint programme.**
- 26. DOCO should call UNDG attention to the obstacle which lack of harmonization of systems and procedures among UN agencies presents to UNDG joint programmes, to Delivering as One and to UN reform more broadly.**

27. **Revision of the Guidance Note should call for the good practice of avoiding misalignment between UN and government reporting deadlines.**
28. **Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note and training materials should consider realistic guidance to ensure simple UN agency, government and donor visibility. UNDG should agree on use of (a) a standard logo for all UNDG joint programmes; or (b) a standard UN-system logo for all joint programmes.**
29. **Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note should recognize the potential coordination, mediation and system representation roles to be played by the RCO and encourage agencies to maintain the RCO informed of their planned and on-going joint programmes.**
30. **Revision of the UNDG Guidance Note and training materials should recognize varied field partner cooperation preferences depending on their experience with joint programmes.**

Annexes

- 1. Terms of Reference**
- 2. HQ Staff Interviewed during Initial Phase**
- 3. Persons Met in Three Case Countries**
- 4. Agencies Contacted regarding HQ Experience with Joint Programmes**
- 5. Documents Consulted**
- 6. Joint Programme Listings Received from Each Agency**
- 7. Methodological Notes**
- 8. Master Dataset of Joint Programmes: 1998 – 2012 (separate excel file)**
- 9. E-Survey Questionnaire**
- 10. Support required from Agency HQ, as identified by Survey Respondents**
- 11. Obstacles to JP Success, as identified by Survey Respondents**
- 12. Specific JP Mechanism Improvements, Identified by Survey Respondents**