
**IN BRIEF:
UNITED NATIONS
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION**

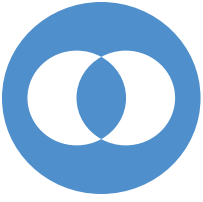
**MAKING THE MOST OF
THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
IN COUNTRIES**



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets forth a new, globally agreed, universal vision for development. Its ambitions are high, its urgency is great, and its timeline is short.

To galvanize progress on the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations must accelerate its delivery of results within countries. The ambitious agenda is a commitment made by 193 governments in 2015 to boost social, economic and environmental gains, while leaving no one behind. That's why UN Member States have supported reforms to reposition the UN development system, encapsulated in UN General Assembly resolution 72/279. The aim: ensure that countries and societies can readily access the full breadth of experience and expertise at the United Nations, in-country and from around the world.

The new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) sits at the centre of the reforms. It is the most important planning and implementation instrument for UN development activities within countries, translating the vision of Member States into UN actions and impacts on the ground. It heightens the ambition of the UN development system, and makes it more agile and equipped to achieve the transformative results that countries now demand.



A NEW ERA OF COLLABORATION

What the United Nations does on the ground, with Governments in the driving seat to deliver a better future for all

Embodying a spirit of true partnership, the Cooperation Framework maps the UN development system’s collective response to the 2030 Agenda and national development priorities, in agreement with each host government.

The framework provides a coherent, strategic direction for all UN development activities by all UN entities supporting a given country. The direction is set through a clear-eyed, rigorous and outward-looking analysis of the most pressing national priorities and opportunities.

The framework ensures that the UN development system will support each country based on their national priorities. It guides the system in convening the best sources of UN expertise inside and outside the country, and mobilizing a spectrum of development partners beyond the United Nations.

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Achieving the 2030 Agenda for everyone, everywhere is humanity’s best chance of ensuring the progressive realization of human rights and a future of peace and prosperity for all. The new UN Cooperation Frameworks offer a tremendous opportunity to scale up implementation of the 2030 Agenda and demonstrate concrete results on the ground.

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— Ms. Amina J. Mohammed
Deputy Secretary-General
of the United Nations



WHAT’S IN IT FOR GOVERNMENTS?

For the first time, in one place, governments will see all contributions from the UN development system for the people of that country. Through the Cooperation Framework, governments can expect more coordinated, responsive support, with greater transparency and more accountability for results than ever before.

More meaningful collaboration between governments and the UN development system will help accelerate progress on the SDGs and national development priorities through:

- Improved, integrated policy advice to unblock progress on major development challenges.
- On-demand and responsive access to development expertise inside the country and beyond.
- More effective, coordinated programmes aligned to national priorities and equipped to deliver on a larger scale.
- Greater responsiveness to emerging issues now and over time.
- Identification and mobilization of development expertise and development finance.
- UN collaboration that is tailor-made for different context.
- Improved addressing of regional and cross-border issues.



UPHOLDING THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

In 2016 the UN Secretary-General made a series of commitments to improve the UN development system's work on the ground. In addition, the framework known as the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities for development of the UN System (General Assembly resolution 71/243), UN Member States noted "the importance of the contribution of the United Nations development system with the aim of supporting government efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, based on full respect for human rights, including the right to development, as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights, and stresses in this regard that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated".

In response to this request, and in line with the fundamental commitment of the 2030 Agenda to **leave no one behind**, all Cooperation Frameworks will define tangible development actions reaching everyone, especially those who are most marginalized and vulnerable. They may include women, youth, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and others. More than ever before, UN entities will look beyond national averages and systematically strive to diminish inequalities.



THE SPECIFICS: WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

The Cooperation Framework is not just a document. It is an instrument to implement a multi-year engagement that evolves based on country context and priorities and is squarely aimed at supporting countries' SDG achievement. The framework drives UN strategic planning, funding, implementation and monitoring, learning, reporting and evaluation, all of which are undertaken with the host government and partners.

1

From assistance to cooperation

The Cooperation Framework replaces the former UN Development Assistance Framework or UNDAF. The new name embodies the contemporary relationship between Governments and the UN development system as one of partnership and accountability to national SDG aspirations. Each framework is anchored in national development priorities, plans, budgets and programming cycles, and involves national partners at every stage.

2

From individual UN inputs to a collective and coherent response

Cooperation Framework priorities are determined based first and foremost on the country's progress on the SDGs, as well as opportunities, gaps and challenges, all against the backdrop of national imperatives. Collective priorities shape outcome objectives that steer the country programmes of each UN development entity. Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, and in line with the UN's Mutual Accountability Framework, each entity is held fully accountable for its contributions to realizing the framework's aims.

3

From single, sectoral issues to SDG integration

Based on agreement with the Government, Cooperation Framework outcomes are linked to SDG targets and indicators, where possible through a national indicator framework. Outcomes include commitments by UN entities to work together as a coherent UN Country Team across sectors, reinforce links across the SDGs, and manage trade-offs that arise across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

A COMMITMENT TO CORE PRINCIPLES

Every Cooperation Framework will adhere to a set of core principles: reaching the most vulnerable and marginalized people, realizing human rights, advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, deepening resilience, ensuring sustainability, and upholding accountability.

Upholding these principles encompasses measures such as close collaboration with all development stakeholders, and their free, active and meaningful participation in UN programmes. At the outset of a framework, UN entities must define, assess and guarantee the effectiveness of participation and accountability mechanisms.

4

From a planning document to a programme cycle

In covering an entire multi-year programme cycle, the Cooperation Framework links programme planning, implementation, monitoring, learning, reporting and evaluation. Ongoing review and analysis, conducted jointly with the government, help keep up with emerging issues over time.

5

From initial analysis to regular assessment

Every Cooperation Framework starts with a common country analysis (CCA). An existing instrument previously done once every programme cycle, the CCA has now been reinvigorated as a comprehensive, nuanced analysis of the national situation as the basis for defining the most meaningful forms of UN assistance. The CCA draws on national data and diverse perspectives as well as the best of the intellectual resources across the United Nations. It delves into factors of risk and vulnerability, emphasizes links to human rights, and considers how development issues may intersect with peace and security concerns. At regular intervals, the UN team will update the CCA to ensure that it remains a signature analytical contribution of the UN, and that the Cooperation Framework continues to address the country's evolving situation.

HOW CAN NATIONAL PARTNERS ENGAGE WITH THE UNITED NATIONS UNDER THE NEW FRAMEWORK?



6

From a standard model to a tailored response

For the first time, development of the Cooperation Framework triggers a review of UN capacities needed to deliver on framework commitments. This shapes a more tailored response, based on national priorities and actual needs, rather than automatically projecting available UN resources from previous cycles. It goes beyond relying on UN entities with a physical presence in the country to define the most appropriate UN resources, whether in a country, or at the regional or headquarters level.

7

From partners in implementation to partners in solutions

Partnership is at the core of the 2030 Agenda. The Cooperation Framework thus calls upon the UN development system to work with national partners not just to implement individual programmes, but to collaborate on development solutions linked to national SDG priorities. These may be within or in tandem with UN programmes. Partners come from across host governments, but also from across society—civil society, academia, parliaments, the private sector and bilateral organizations.

8

Leveraging all forms of financing

The Cooperation Framework takes a broader approach to resources, beyond funding just for UN programmes to leveraging and influencing all available financial flows and instruments for countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda. A mapping of the broader development financing landscape will help define opportunities for the UN development system to reorient diverse sources of financing, whether domestic or international, public or private. Further, when individual UN entities formulate budgets and resource mobilization strategies, the starting point will be realizing the commitments in the Cooperation Framework. In other words, priority development needs will drive resource choices, not the other way around.

9

Factoring in issues across borders

From trade to climate change and health, the issues that influence development trajectories increasingly cross borders. The Cooperation Framework encourages analysis of cross-border and regional issues that may determine opportunities to accelerate and safeguard development gains within a given country. These insights may be reflected in the framework based on agreement with the national government.

10

Use of SDG-aligned indicators

To ensure that the UN development system contributes to SDG progress across countries, Cooperation Frameworks will include more consistent indicators. Each framework will use SDG-aligned national targets and indicators as the default, and regional and global SDG indicators to the extent possible. An online tool, UN INFO, will track all country, regional and global indicators to increase transparency and accountability, and to tell a clear, accurate story about progress towards the SDGs.

11

Rigorous evaluation to guide programmes

Independent and high-quality evaluations will become the norm, and mandatory management responses will systematically uphold accountability, with learning applied to sharpen programme effectiveness and reduce costs.

12

Shorter preparation

More streamlined work and lower transactions costs will reduce the preparation time for the Cooperation Framework from the current average of 14.5 months to 6 to 9 months.

For more information

[See UN Sustainable Development Group website.](#)

WHY NOW?

The 2030 Agenda, agreed by all UN Member States in 2015, represents a paradigm shift. Instead of continuing to act on development issue by issue, sector by sector, countries agreed to pursue a broad, interconnected approach to complex challenges. At its heart, the 2030 Agenda calls for fundamental changes in the world's economies, so they produce prosperity for all people, in a way that is inclusive and just, and sustainable over time and across generations. Realizing this vision requires linking the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, all of which are expressed in the 17 SDGs.

The United Nations development system has long operated through entities focused on specific sectors. But it must now meet the challenge of providing "integrated" assistance that connects and cuts across the SDGs. In practice, this means effectively and coherently linking diverse partners and sources of expertise, including from governments, parliaments, civil society, the private sector, academia and the full range of international organizations.

Students at the National Education Centre
in St. Esprit de Grand Chemin, Haiti
Credit: UN Photo / Leonora Baumann



UN INFO: BETTER OVERSIGHT, EASIER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

An online system, UN INFO, contains the results framework of each Cooperation Framework as well as joint work plans. With a single click there is full transparency on partnerships, funding sources and programming for each entity in a UN country team. Disaggregated analysis shows which agencies are contributing to which SDGs and where in a given country.

Designed to support well-informed decisionmaking, including in response to issues emerging over time, UN INFO opens new opportunities for collaboration and resource mobilization. Users can access the platform through UN country team websites such as kenya.un.org/en/sdgs



UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP



The United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) unites the 40 UN funds, programmes, specialized agencies, departments and offices that play a role in development.

At the regional level, five Regional UNSDG Teams play a critical role in driving UNSDG priorities by supporting UN Country Teams with strategic priority setting, analysis and advice. At the country level, 131 UN Country Teams serving 162 countries and territories work together to increase the synergies and joint impact of the UN system.

The UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) is the secretariat of the UNSDG, bringing together the UN development system to promote change and innovation to deliver results together on sustainable development.

For more information please visit:
unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/cooperation-framework