



System-Wide Evaluation of the Joint SDG Fund 2019-2022

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Members of the Evaluation Team

Gonzalo Hernández Licona

Ian Davies

Paola Vela, Cross-Learning Evaluator from the SWE COVID-19 MPTF Lessons Learned and Evaluability Assessment

Special Advisor to the Evaluation

Marianne Loe, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Members of the Quality Assurance Panel

Ole Winckler Andersen, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen.

Indran Naidoo, Director of the Independent Office of Evaluation, IFAD.

Members of the Evaluation Reference Group

Alberto Miranda de la Peña, Counsellor, Spain

Didier Trebucq, RC, UN Barbados (MCO)

Gerard Steeghs, Director Multilateral Organizations, Netherlands

Halvor Saetre, Director of UN, Norway

Jan Matyas, Programme Manager, EU

Jennifer Topping, Executive Coordinator, Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)

Lisa Kurbiel, Head of Secretariat, Joint SDG Fund Secretariat

Marcus Koll, Counsellor, Germany

Pauline Tamesis, RC (former RC, Cambodia), UN Viet Nam

Rebecca Hallin, First Secretary, Sweden

Suzanne Steensen, Head of Secretariat, MOPAN

Managed by

Mathew Varghese, System-Wide Evaluation at the Executive Office of the Secretary-General

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Preface

The Joint SDG Fund plays a unique and strategically important role for the UN Development System. The overarching goal of the Fund is to accelerate progress on SDGs. To achieve the objective of accelerated progress on SDGs, the Fund is used as an instrument to incentivize transformative policy shifts with strategic investments. The Fund supports UN system-level projects to support the new generation of Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams. As a pooled funding mechanism, there are multiple donors and funds are directed for collaborative programmes. This type of funding mechanism fosters collaboration and joint work among the UN agencies, thus allowing each UN entity to bring their sectoral technical expertise to the national governments as a UN Development System. The adaptability and flexibility of the Fund have helped to re-allocate funds for a speedy response to COVID-19 pandemic and rapidly allocate funds by activating the Development Emergency Modality to respond to the unfolding global food, energy, and financing crisis.

The evaluation design, areas of enquiry and methods had to be responsive to the uniqueness of the Fund. The scoping exercise, while clearly indicating the areas of enquiry, also showed other evaluation complexities that needed to be addressed. For example, how to assess results of catalytical programmes that are designed for policy shifts in real-time, how best to examine tradeoff in efficiency in project implementation of cross-agency and cross-ministry programmes, and how to approach effectiveness of the programmes to accelerate SDGs from the pathway of UN reform.

The evaluation sought to influence the second phase of the Fund through evaluative evidence, so the draft evaluation report had to be turned around in six months. This ensured that the evaluation findings and recommendations did not arrive too late to make a difference to the second phase. As a forward-looking evaluation the draft report calls for major changes in governance, management, and the design of the projects, as well as clarity in value proposition (relevance and additionality), synergy with other pooled funds, as well as changes in overall leadership of the RC in programme management, and ownership of the fund and its programmes at the country level.

This report was possible due to the support and hard work of many committed stakeholders. I thank Mr. Haoling Xu, the Chair of the OSC, for assigning the evaluation to be managed from a system-wide lens; the evaluation team for its hard work to produce a high-quality report under significant time pressure; and the evaluation reference group for its insightful comments on the draft report. Much appreciation to the continuous advice and guidance from the Quality Assurance Panel to ensure a high-quality report. Special thanks go Mr. Heewoong Kim for substantive support, and to Ms. Lisa Kubriel, Ms. Jennifer Topping, and Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal for valuable information and for maintaining open lines of communication.

We hope that this real-time evaluative effort will support the Fund in achieving better governance, management, transparency, accountability, and impact.

Mathew Varghese
Senior Coordinator, System-Wide Evaluation
Executive Office of the Secretary-General,
United Nations. +1 917 703 2925
mathew.varghese@un.org

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Since the launch of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, governments worldwide have taken steps toward reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Progress has been made on several SDGs. For example, poverty and mortality from non-communicable diseases have reduced. Despite these achievements, there have also been setbacks in progress toward the SDGs, even before the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, 650 million people suffered hunger, and approximately two billion people suffered from food insecurity. Furthermore, several dimensions with cross-cutting impacts on various SDGs were moving in the wrong direction, including inequality, climate change, biodiversity loss, and increasing waste from human activity.

Given the endeavor of the 2030 Agenda, the most significant reform ever undertaken of the UN development system (UNDS) began in 2018. The UNDS reform's main intention is to have a UN development system fit for the purpose to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the 2030 Agenda. The reform reinvigorates the role of the Resident Coordinator (RC), empowering the RC to effectively coordinate the work of the UN Country Teams (UNCTs). The UNDS reform centrally promotes and encourages more collaborative work and joint programming among UN agencies at the country level.

Helping governments progress toward the 2030 Agenda and advancing the UNDS reform at the country level are the two elements behind the launch of the Joint SDG Fund (the Fund) in 2017. The Fund, which was fully operationalized in 2018, was established as a key mechanism to promote concerted and integrated, multi-sectoral actions by the UN development system (UNDS) for the 2030 Agenda at the country level. The Fund's primary purpose is to collaborate with countries to accelerate the SDGs. In doing so, the Fund plays a key part in the UNDS reform by empowering the Resident Coordinators (RCs) leadership role in joint programme design and implementation and ensuring that the programmes are based on the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) with ownership from government partners. The Fund was designed as a critical funding modality that the RCs could use to leverage their coordination role and authority to bring about effective and catalytic UN joint actions in response to the country's needs and SDG priorities.

The Fund, as stipulated in its Terms of Reference, operates under three interwoven domains of change: (i) unleashing integrated policy change, (ii) developing the SDG financing ecosystems, and (iii) catalysing SDG programming and investments, which are managed under the Fund's two outcome areas:

- **Outcome 1: Integrated multi-sectoral policies to accelerate SDG achievements**
- **Outcome 2: Additional financing leveraged to accelerate SDG achievements**

In line with the UN Development System (UNDS) reform, the Fund provides financing for joint programming by UNCT members. The Fund operates through a call for proposal process opened to the Resident Coordinators in coordination with the UN Country Teams (including non-resident UN entities) to design and submit programme proposals based on the specific thematic and/or regional focus of the calls.

Overall, the Joint SDG Fund has channelled funding to 25 Participating United Nations Organizations (PUNOs) throughout the four calls for proposals it has launched to date. This includes both resident UN entities and non-resident UN entities and technical organizations, including the regional economic commissions and specialized UN agencies. With a total of

US \$250 million over the last three years, it has funded over 150 joint programmes in more than 110 countries.

The overarching purpose of the evaluation of the Joint SDG Fund is to address the progress of results, assess how the Fund has positioned itself to achieve its strategic objectives, and be forward-looking in terms of its future strategic objective of catalysing and influencing larger funding for achieving SDGs as outlined in the Fund's Terms of Reference (ToR). The evaluation makes recommendations on how to better position the Joint SDG Fund within the UNSDG and the wider development context and better manage the Fund to accelerate UN collaborative action to support developing countries during the Decade of Action.

The evaluation methods used included structured document reviews at global and country level, key informant interviews at global level, and country case studies on the operation of the Fund in Uruguay, Samoa (Multi-Country Office), Uganda, Bangladesh, and Lebanon. Interviews were also conducted with Fund stakeholders in Lao PDR, Indonesia, Fiji¹ and Uzbekistan to analyze specific programmes, and Mozambique, Panama and Ethiopia to learn from countries with unsuccessful proposals. More than 150 of the Fund's stakeholders were interviewed for this evaluation.

Conclusions

During the Decade of Action to reach the SDGs by 2030 the world is faced with continuing impacts from COVID-19, food and inflation crisis and increasing effects of climate change. The Deputy Secretary General articulate the justification for the existence of the Joint SDG Fund as: *"..more effective, integrated policy support and much greater financing – are the raison d'être of the Joint SDG Fund, an innovative instrument designed to incentivize the transformative policy shifts and stimulate the strategic investments required to get the world back on track to meet the SDGs."* Therefore, the lens applied for the evaluation is whether the Fund's programme promote catalytical action through joint programmes that incentivize transformative policy shifts rather than quantitative numbers. Contribution to impact on acceleration of SDGs through quantitative numbers is an assessment that needs to be made some time after the programmes are completed.

The evaluation concludes that the Fund is relevant to the strategic reason behind creating the Joint SDG Fund – financing UN catalytic action through joint programmes to incentivize transformative upstream policy shifts and leverage additional investments to get the SDG back on track. The contributions to the acceleration of the SDGs by leveraging the repositioned UNDS serve as the Fund's broad strategic purpose and mandate.

The joint programmes supported by the Fund are living up to the Fund's strategic intentions considering the complexity of its mission, the challenging contexts at the country level, and the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund has supported new types of joint programmes leveraging the new generation of RCs and UNCTs with new partnerships within and beyond the UNDS.

The evaluation concludes that the Fund serves as an integral part of the UNDS reform in financing the programmatic implementation of the UNDS at the country level for the SDGs. The Fund leverages the new generation of RCs and UNCTs by ensuring the developmental financing for its activation through the inter-agency pooled fund mechanism. Interviewees from UNCTs have noted that this has been the closest they have ever worked together. The

¹ Written exchanges.

Fund has also given the RC's the ability and space to coordinate joint programmes and establish conversations with stakeholders, especially government partners, around social protection and innovative financing.

However, the Fund still faces structural challenges in relation to UNDS reform process, including competition among UN agencies, conflicting reporting lines, limited human resource capacities for small agencies to participate, and pre-existing government-UN agency partnerships. The country teams express the need for better clarity between the role of the RCs and the lead UN agency. These challenges make UN agencies work in parallel in several joint programmes.

The evaluation concludes that the quality of programming depends significantly, among other factors, on the quality of the joint programmes' preparation and that, to date, processes and procedures of calls for proposals do not always allow for fulsome preparation, including close consultations with government counterparts. The evaluation concludes that the Fund's thematic calls do not always coincide well with national priorities. The evaluation determines that the most successful programmes seemed to be those where the thematic calls coincided with ongoing UNSDCF work and predefined national priorities.

In terms of the Fund's governance, the stakeholders generally express a high degree of satisfaction with the responsiveness and quality of support from the Chair of the Operational Steering Committee (OSC) and the Fund Secretariat. The evaluation concludes that, because of its organizational structure and mode of functioning, the OSC cannot adequately perform the executive management function the Fund requires to be agile, responsive, and effective. DCO, non-OSC UN partners, and Member States have no roles in the OSC. Due to the existing competition for available funding, OSC members may have conflicting interests in resource mobilization and visibility when it comes to championing the Fund.

There is a strong consensus among all stakeholders that the Fund requires a sufficient level of capitalization and contributions from a broader and diversified range of donors. As these conditions are not currently met, the existing level and nature of capitalization put the Fund's strategic intentions at risk. The Fund's position can be further strengthened to gain the trust and support from a diverse group of donors by making strategic shifts in its programming, governance, resource mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity. The pathways to these strategic shifts are presented in the recommendations.

Finally, with some two or less years of programme implementation, it is too early to assess the full outcome and impact of the Fund's joint programmes. While some are indeed showing potential and progress in their results chain, especially those that are aligned closely with UNSDCF and national developmental priorities with ownership by the Governments, there is need for a follow-up evaluation in 2-3 years to systematically assess whether the Fund's programmes have resulted in the catalytic unleashing of multi-dimensional policies and unlocking of additional financing after full implementation.

Recommendations

1. Improve programming through the following three actions.

- a) **Joint programme driven by country context and priorities.** The Fund should change its programmatic approach by providing space, time and capacities for RCs and UNCTs to identify strategic opportunities that bring out the unique value of UN collective action, emphasising countries' priorities, in line with the CF. The UNCTs, under RC leadership, should be allowed to identify areas where UN entities can come together and demonstrate the added value of jointness – areas where the UN delivering together is more than the sum of individual agency actions. The focus of the Fund should be maintained by highlighting the priority thematic areas in the value proposition document and in the guidance note, all while ensuring country ownership. The call for proposals will be as per the value proposition. The value proposition along with competitiveness among the RC/UNCT will help to keep the programmes focused and dynamic.
- b) **Improve and ensure quality programme design.** Provide preparatory funding and adequate time for programme design to ensure the quality of the programme at entry. The programme design should consider an assessment of capacity, inclusion of cross-cutting areas and sustainability at the end of project. The design should also be clear on the meaning of jointness at all stages of the programme cycle (design, planning, advocacy, implementation, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation).
- c) **Simplify guidance and processes.** Review and streamline guidance and procedures in accordance with the improvements being made to programming and value proposition.

Rationale

Country contexts differ widely, and global thematic areas do not always resonate with the priorities at the country level. Evidence from the case studies shows that the programmes with strong alignment with the CF/government priority, the programmes were more successful. The country teams also expressed need for more time, capacities, and resources to support better programmatic design to ensure quality entry for complex developmental approaches with sufficient engagement with multiple UN and governmental agencies.

Benefits

There is greater ownership by all stakeholders at the country level for projects that the country has prioritized through the CF. It is also well evidenced from other evaluations that poorly designed projects lead to poor results. Providing preparatory funding and adequate time for project design will have multiple benefits: it would incentivize country teams to design programmes in a collaborative way, it will give time for the inclusion of small agencies whose technical expertise might be critical for the project, it will allow for a project that brings out the unique value of UN to work as a system, this approach will facilitate the coordinating power of the RC, and it allows for dialogue with government and partners, clearly identifying countries' priorities. Programmes that include cross-cutting areas and sustainability into the design of the programme have a better chance of addressing cross-cutting areas and ensuring sustainability.

- 2. Strengthen the value proposition (relevance and additionality) during the next phase of the Fund.** The value proposition should be centered in leveraging the UNDS Reform at country level by promoting well designed joint programmes, addressing countries priorities and strategic opportunities identified together by governments and UNCTs, and by bringing out the unique value of UN collective action. The focus of the fund and its thematic priorities are essential part of the value proposition so that fund is the heartbeat of the UN development system for catalytical and innovative programmes that promotes transformative policy shifts to accelerate achievement of the SDGs during the decade of action.

Rationale

The Fund needs a clearer distinctive value proposition. The Fund should elaborate on its strategic purpose aligned with accelerating the SDGs by leveraging the UNDS reform in a clear value proposition. The value proposition would also need to reflect the programmatic changes proposed by this evaluation.

Benefits

A value proposition that is developed in close consultation with the Fund's stakeholder groups will ensure better buy-in and increase possibilities for resource mobilization.

- 3. Make the governance system more inclusive, agile and effective through the following actions.**

- a) The Operational Steering Committee (OSC) could be replaced by an empowered and impartial executive head of Fund. If legal and administrative procedures do not allow, the OSC can be given an advisory role.
- b) The new governance bodies should be inclusive of select RCs to represent country-level views, DCO, technical experts, and other UN agencies as appropriate.

Rationale

The current governance structure of the Fund was created before the launch of the UN Reform. The structure does not have the inclusion of DCO, a majority of the UNSDG members, member states, or RCs. Evidence suggests that OSC has a conflict-of-interest in resource mobilization and OSC entities participate in most of the joint programmes receiving most of the funding. Moreover, the COVID-19 MPTF set an example of an effective and efficient governance/management structure with a SG's designate having fully authority to manage the fund with support from an inclusive advisory committee.

Benefits.

A more inclusive governance system is possible through systematic consultations with key stakeholders and a SAG that provides strategic guidance. An executive head with similar authority as the SG's designate will be able to give the Fund the leadership and visibility it requires.

- 4. Conduct a review in coordination with the MPTF-O and the global fund secretariats to improve coherence and synergies at global and country level between pooled funds.** The assumption is that finding ways to improve coherence and synergies at the global

and country level between pooled funds will help to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

Rationale

There is a growing number of pooled funds and a growing number of joint programmes that RCs and PUNO participate in. Each of the pooled funds have their own guidance and process. Many agencies, especially the smaller ones, find navigation through the guidance and process tedious. This adversely affects the workload and effectiveness at the country level.

Benefits

Coordination of calls for proposals, harmonizing procedures, processes, and guidelines, and, above all, simplification will not only help global and country-based pooled funds to leverage each other, but also align better with the spirit of the UN Development Reform.

5. Greater commitment to resource mobilization to strengthen capitalization and improve predictability of funding, through the following four actions:

- a) More visibility and stronger resource mobilization leadership for the Fund from senior levels of the UN, including the new and impartial executive head of the Fund.
- b) Improved showcasing by the UN of the value of jointness, demonstrating the added value of investing in collective UN actions through the Fund.
- c) Frequent and inclusive consultations with existing and prospective donors, in order to strengthen their understanding and confidence in the Fund and broaden the donor base.
- d) RCs should continue to employ strategies to leverage country level funding to support Joint SDG programmes.

Rationale

A capitalization of \$US 290 million annually is seen in general as a reasonable figure that can provide the critical scale needed for the Fund to have an impact at the country level, it is important to donors that this funding envelope be built on a real business case. Member states have committed to this level of capitalization of the fund in the Funding Compact but have so far not fulfilled their commitment. It is assumed that the recommendation to have an empowered leadership to the Fund will help the Fund to better champion the Fund and provide visibility and donor engagement. As the Fund moves to the next phase, it may be a critical time to re-engage with a broader and diversified range of donors with an empowered leadership.

Benefits

The Joint SDG fund is seen by all respondents to this evaluation as a worthwhile instrument that has the potential to support progress towards the SDGs and strengthen UNDS reform. There is evidence from previous reforms, including Delivering as One, that shows the reform objectives stalling or reversing once funding as an incentive is removed or limited.

6. Clarify the role of the RC in steering and coordination of joint programmes funded by the Joint SDG Fund and through the revision of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF).

Rationale

Coordination between institutions and agencies has always been difficult, but it improves whenever the coordination is institutionalized, since the roles of the various institutions are made clear. Currently, there is a mixed understanding of RC's role during the programme implementation phase. The confusion grows especially in relation to who is accountable to the programme RC/RCO or the lead agency. The issues arise mainly when one of the PUNO has not delivered on its responsibility and the project is failing. Whenever there was greater engagement of the RCs through a steering committee or task team the Joint SDG Fund programmes were better governed and managed. Institutionalizing the RC's role would help avoid confusion and potential friction with lead agencies.

Benefits.

Clarity and systematic application of the RC role in Joint Programmes funded by the Joint SDG Fund will help leverage the unique value of UN collective action.

7. Continue to strengthen monitoring, lessons learned, evaluation and greater visibility of the Fund. The Fund should streamline programme monitoring requirements, while ensuring measurement of catalytical results for policy shifts. The Fund should provide oversight to the conduct of decentralized evaluations under the leadership of RC. At the global level, across the UN system and with external partners, the Fund should facilitate spaces for cross-learning and knowledge generation and sharing, especially through South-South and North-South-South exchanges

Rationale

With the Fund's complex joint programmes and new partnerships, there is a need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation function of the Fund to sufficiently assess and monitor jointness as a pathway to catalytical policy shifts. The Fund should also ensure that there is a mechanism to check the quality of the decentralized evaluations and follow-up on assessing the Fund's results and impact as the programmes fully mature.

Benefits

The Joint SDG Fund, with catalytical, innovative, new types of programmes and new types of partnership, has much to offer for learning and evidence generation, as well as making successful Fund's programmes more visible. This is a unique opportunity that offers learning for the UN System and should be fully captured.

8. Capacitating the Fund Secretariat to ensure support to the new governance/management structure and strategic value proposition. The human resource requirements for the next phase of the programme should be considered in a more structured way, taking into account support to countries for developing new types of programmes, monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing, and, importantly, the visibility of the Joint SDG Fund programme.

Rationale

This evaluation has recommended changes in programming, improvements in governance and management, improvements in monitoring and evaluation, and improvements in knowledge sharing. Therefore, there is a need to have capacity to make these improvements.

Benefits

The Fund covers more than 100 countries across a range of diverse programmes and themes, therefore having capacity to provide a help desk to countries to design better programmes, to share knowledge, to increase visibility of the funds results, and have better M&E capacity, which will help to improve the overall results of the SDG Funds.

1. Rationale and Purpose of the Evaluation

1.1 Rationale

The Joint SDG Fund (hereafter the Fund) was established in late 2017 as an important financing mechanism for system-wide efforts to accelerate the SDGs at the country level. The United Nations Secretary-General (SG) sees the Fund as a key part of the reform of the UN's development system by providing the "muscle" for a new generation of Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to accelerate SDG implementation.

In line with the UN Development System (UNDS) reform, the Fund provides financing for joint programmes by UNCT members. The Fund operates through a call for proposal process opened to the Resident Coordinators in coordination with the UN Country Teams (as well as relevant non-resident UN entities) to design and submit programme proposals based on the specific thematic and/or regional focus of the calls.

During the programme proposal design and implementation phase, the Fund is designed to empower the leadership role of the Resident Coordinators (RCs). The RCs can use the Fund to leverage their convening role and authority to bring about effective and catalytic UN joint actions in response to the country's needs and SDG priorities.

The Joint SDG Fund is currently the UN's third-largest global Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF)² in terms of its approved budget for ongoing programmes. Across its four calls for proposals, and with a total of US \$250 million over the last three years, it has funded over 150 joint programmes in more than 110 countries.

The vision, the structure and the evaluation of the Joint SDG Fund are clearly outlined in the Fund's Terms of Reference. These Terms of Reference stipulate the need for an independent evaluation report to assess the progress of the Joint SDG Fund by 2021. With the delays in COVID-19 and the need for the Fund's first portfolio on integrated policy to reach completion, the Fund's Operational Steering Committee in 2021 decided to postpone the evaluation to be completed by 2022.

This evaluation addresses the call for an evaluation stipulated in the Fund's Terms of Reference and in line with the SG's proposal in his QCPR implementation report to the ECOSOC to evaluate the Fund as a system-wide evaluations.

Completing this evaluation has also become important given the COVID-19 pandemic and the emerging cost-of-living crisis. Countries are looking to the UN for support on a broad spectrum of initiatives, including those funded by the Joint SDG Fund, to stop the reversal of progress on the SDGs. The evaluation is intended to contribute to the improvement of the Funds governance, management and quality of programming at the country level.

1.2 Purpose of the Evaluation

The overarching purpose of this evaluation is to provide key stakeholders in the Fund (internal and external to the UN) with evidence-informed and actionable recommendations to fully exploit the Fund's catalytic potential for accelerating the SDGs and contributing to the UNDS reform.

² The Joint SDG Fund is the third-largest MPTF in terms of its approved budget for ongoing activities, only behind the Peacebuilding Fund and the Spotlight Initiative Fund.

The evaluation aims to make forward-looking recommendations on how to better position the Joint SDG Fund within the UNSDG and the broader development context, and better manage the Fund to accelerate UN collaborative action (enabling UN Resident Coordinators and UNCTs) to support developing countries.

2. Scope, Approach, and Methodology

2.1 Scoping report

In December 2021, a scoping report to define the focus of the system-wide evaluation of the Joint SDG Fund was undertaken by Indran A. Naidoo with support from Heewoong Kim. The report was used to determine the objectives, scope, key evaluation questions, methods, and overall approach of the evaluation. The scoping team interviewed a total of 32 key informants, including eight members from the UN RCs and RC Offices that received funding from the Joint SDG Fund, 14 focal points from UN partners and Operational Steering Committee members, including DCO, MPTFO, and UN funds and programmes, and ten representatives of the donor partners both from the capitals and permanent missions. The complete list of informants is made available in Annex B.

The scoping team also reviewed the key reference documents of the Joint SDG Fund, including its Terms of Reference, Operational Guidance, annual reports, mid-term portfolio reviews, OIOS audit draft report, and Operational Steering Committee (OSC) materials. They also examined other relevant reports and analyses, including MOPAN reports, inter-agency pooled financing services evaluations, the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation report on financing the UNDS and the Funding Compact, and the COVID-19 MPTF Early Lessons report.

The evaluation's objectives, areas of investigation (Aols), proposed methodology, and the overall Terms of Reference for the SWE of the Joint SDG Fund (ToR) were developed using the results of the scoping mission³.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were articulated in the evaluation's ToR:

The overarching purpose of the evaluation of the Joint SDG Fund's is to measure progress of results, assess how the fund has positioned itself to achieve its strategic objectives, and be forward looking in terms of its future strategic objective of catalysing and influencing larger funding for achieving SDGs as outlined in the Fund's Terms of Reference (TOR). As a forward-looking evaluation it will make recommendations on how to better position the Joint SDG Fund within the UNSDG as well as the wider development context, and better manage the Fund to accelerate UN collaborative action to support developing countries during the decade of action.

To this end, the evaluation has made a forward-looking assessment of the Fund for it to enable the UN Resident Coordinators and the new generation of UN Country Teams to help countries devise and implement integrated policy and financing solutions for the SDGs. It will make an assessment of how the Joint SDG Fund has adapted to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Furthermore, the evaluation will focus on Joint SDG Fund's results and accountability to its diverse stakeholder groups. The evaluation will pay particular attention

³ The key issues with the Joint SDG Fund identified in the Scoping Phase Report were further analyzed by the evaluation team at the global and country-level throughout the course of the evaluation.

to how the Joint SDG fund has managed cross cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality and leaving no one behind.

2.3 Areas of Investigation (Aoi)

The objectives above and other key considerations from the scoping report, were further articulated within the following six areas of investigation in the ToRs for the SWE of the Joint SDG Fund. The ToRs also specify evaluation sub-questions under each Aoi. These Aois and sub-questions delimit the scope of the evaluation.

- I. The extent to which the Joint SDG Fund has lived up to the expectations of the Fund's strategic intentions and expected level of capitalization. This will encompass the Fund's contribution to accelerating the SDGs at the country level but also taking into account the impact of COVID-19 and the UNDS reform.
 - a) To which extent are there gaps between the Joint SDG Fund's achievements and the strategic intentions of the Joint Fund especially in relation to the **Fund's contributions to UNDS reform and to accelerating the SDGs at the country level?**
 - b) What are the opportunities and **challenges for the Fund to reach a scale in its capitalization** to bring about transformative change in support of the **UNDS reform** and implications from the impact of COVID-19 on SDGs?
- II. The extent of changes needed for the Fund to have a more effective and inclusive governance structure and build a coalition for the SDGs, including key UNSDG entities – big and small – and governments, donors, as well as international financial institutions and private sector partners both at the global and country levels based on lessons and comparisons with similar pooled and thematic funds.
 - a) What changes are needed for the Joint SDG Fund to have a **more inclusive governance structure** and build a coalition for the SDGs including with key UNSDG entities, governments/donors, and other public and private stakeholders both at the global and country levels?
 - b) Are there any lessons from the **experience of similar funds** especially the COVID-19 MPTF, Peacebuilding Fund or Spotlight Fund that could be learned to govern and manage the Fund for better impact?
- III. The extent to which the Joint SDG Fund has been able to achieve or maintain a substantial focus on investing in the CFs and country priorities, emphasizing cross-cutting areas, accelerating upstream policy solutions for leaving no one behind and integrated social protection, and playing a lead role in devising financing frameworks and catalytic investments for the SDGs at the country level.
 - a) How effective has the Joint SDG Fund been in achieving its expected results in its main areas of **programming** including promoting integrated social protection, devising integrated financing frameworks and catalysing public and private investments for the SDGs?
 - b) How has the Joint SDG Fund incorporated **UN core values and cross-cutting priorities** of furthering human rights, gender, youth, and environment, and operationalize the principle of Leaving No One Behind, and substantially contributed to results embedded in the CFs and country priorities?

- IV. The extent that the UN senior leadership has guided the strategy and management of the Joint SDG Fund both at the global and country levels, with the RCs taking a lead role with the UNCTs in the management of the fund, while DCO and UNSDG entities provide global coordination under the strategic oversight and attention from the Executive Office of the Secretary General.
- a) Are changes needed in the **roles of DCO and EOSG** in terms of the Fund's **governance** taking into account the Fund's contributions to the UNDS Reform and to enhance visibility and leadership of the Fund to stakeholders?
 - b) What changes are required in the guidance to and **capacities of the RC/UNCT** to better manage the Joint SDG Fund programmes and ensure ownership of local partners at the country level?
- V. The extent to which the Joint SDG Fund has influenced UNDS reform and collaborative results at the country level during COVID-19 with a forward-looking focus on how the fund needs a clear value proposition to revitalize the fund for scale with guidance from the UNSDG entities and donors alike.
- a) How can the fund be an incentive for the **UNCTs to better work together** in terms of delivering **catalytic** and transformative services, communicating results and ensuring accountability under the RC system?
 - b) How can the Fund better support the **joint programmatic elements of investments into the UNSDCFs and RC system** with a clear value proposition to revitalize the fund for scale?
- VI. The extent to which the Joint SDG Fund has ensured the quality of programming, dynamism, and visibility through collective action.
- a) How has the Fund managed its **portfolio of programmes in terms of identifying quality joint programmes**, ensuring transformative results, and visibility through collective action at the country level?
 - b) How can the Fund become more efficient and effective by **simplifying its procedures/guidelines** and eligibility criteria to ensure flexible and quick processing of proposals building on lessons from other MPTFs while also recognizing opportunity costs for RCs/UNCTs when proposals are not selected?

Given the terminology featured in the Areas of Investigation and sub-questions, a glossary with concept definitions for the evaluation can be found in Annex A.

The ToRs also outline other important aspects regarding the scope of the evaluation. They specify the evaluation must cover the period from January 2019 to March 2022⁴, when the Joint SDG Fund was fully operational by launching calls for proposals and implementing joint programmes. They also specify the evaluation must consider important aspects related to the Joint SDG Fund, such as UNDS reform objectives and the funding compact.

OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria

The OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation has defined six evaluation criteria intended to guide all evaluations. These criteria describe the desired attributes of the Joint SDG Fund: be relevant to the context, coherent with other Funds and efforts, achieve its

⁴ In practice, the evaluation extended till May 2022.

objectives, deliver results in an efficient way, and have a positive impact that lasts. The criteria have been contextualized and woven into the Areas of Investigation.

Table 1 illustrates the extent that the Areas of Investigation provide coverage of the current OECD/DAC evaluation criteria.

Table 1: OECD/DAC Criteria

Areas of Investigation	OECD/DAC Criteria ⁵					
	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
The extent to which the Joint SDG Fund has lived up to the expectations of the Fund's strategic intentions and expected level of capitalization. This will encompass the Fund's contribution to accelerating the SDGs at the country level but also taking into account the impact of COVID-19 and the UNDS reform.						
The extent of changes needed for the Fund to have a more effective and inclusive governance structure and build a coalition for the SDGs, including key UNSDG entities – big and small – and governments, donors, as well as international financial institutions and private sector partners both at the global and country levels based on lessons and comparisons with similar pooled and thematic funds.						
The extent to which the Joint SDG Fund has been able to achieve or maintain a substantial focus on investing in the CFs and country priorities, emphasizing cross-cutting areas, accelerating upstream policy solutions for leaving no one behind and integrated social protection, and playing a lead role in devising financing frameworks and catalytic investments for the SDGs at the country level.						

⁵ Criteria are as defined in: OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use. Pgs. 7-11

<p>The extent that the UN senior leadership has guided the strategy and management of the Joint SDG Fund both at the global and country levels, with the RCs taking a lead role with the UNCTs in the management of the fund, while DCO and UNSDG entities provide global coordination under the strategic oversight and attention from the Executive Office of the Secretary General.</p>						
<p>The extent to which the Joint SDG Fund has influenced UNDS reform and collaborative results at the country level during COVID-19 with a forward-looking focus on how the fund needs a clear value proposition to revitalize the fund for scale with guidance from the UNSDG entities and donors alike.</p>						
<p>The extent to which the Joint SDG Fund has ensured the quality of programming, dynamism, and visibility through collective action.</p>						

2.4 Approach and Methodology

Guided by the ToRs for the SWE of the Joint SDG Fund, the evaluation team opted for an overall methodological approach that combined a global view of the Fund in the context of UNDS reform with a country level view developed mainly through five case studies. Taking into account the overarching strategic purpose of the Fund, the lens applied for the evaluation is whether the Fund’s programme promoted catalytical action through joint programmes that incentivize transformative policy shifts rather than quantitative numbers. As the projects have been implemented for a span of less than two years the approach was to look for potential for policy shifts that can accelerate SDGs.

At both global and country levels, the evaluation team reviewed key documents, profiled data, and conducted semi-structured interviews with stakeholders.

2.4.1 Global Level Methodology

At the global level, the evaluation team identified and reviewed documents addressing UNDS reform and documentation specific to the Fund. These included:

- Joint SDG Fund Terms of Reference
- Joint SDG Fund Annual report for 2020
- Joint SDG Fund Annual report for 2021
- Joint SDG Fund Operational Guidance

- Note on Joint SDG Fund Value Proposition and Reform Options
- OIOS Detailed Audit Results for Comments/Confidential
- Confidential scoping interview notes

Global-level key informant interviews were also conducted. In total, 25 key informants were interviewed at the global level from:

- UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes
- Contributing development partners
- Ex-officio members

A complete list of global-level informants can be found in Annex B.

2.4.2 Country Level Methodology

At the country level, given the available resources and the evaluation's logistical and operational realities, a sample of five case study countries was determined based on the following set of criteria:

- The selection is geographically diverse, including at least one Small Island Developing State (SIDS).
- The selection offers an adequate representation across different national income levels (based on World Bank data).
- All selected countries received funding in at least one but preferably two or three of the Fund's calls (LNOB, C1, C2, SIDS).
- The selection includes countries with different amounts of funding from the Joint SDG Fund.
- The section covers a broad range of participating UNCT entities (PUNOs).
- Selected countries are at different levels of gender parity as measured through the GDI (UN Women).
- The selection has a mix of smaller, mid-size and larger countries by population size.

The evaluation's selected case study sample includes **Bangladesh, Lebanon, Samoa (Multi-Country Office), Uganda, and Uruguay.**

Table 2: Country Case Study Criteria

Country	Region	Portfolio	Funding from Joint SDG	Participating UN entities (PUNOs)	GDI	Population	Income Level
Bangladesh	South Asia	LNOB, C1	2,998,310	UNDP, ILO, UNWOMEN, UNCDF, UNICEF, UNFPA	4	164,689,383	Lower Middle income
Uruguay	Latin America and the Caribbean	C1, C2	10,190,000	IOM, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNDP, UNIDO	1	3,473,727	High income
Samoa (Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau)	East Asia and the Pacific	LNOB, C1, SIDS	4,869,862	UNDP, UNWOMEN, ESCAP, UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF	..	198,410	Lower middle income
Uganda	Eastern and Southern Africa	C1, C2	1,200,000	UNDP, UNWOMEN, UNCDF, UNHCR, WHO	5	45,741,000	Low income

Lebanon	Middle East and North Africa	LNOB, C1	2,999,031	UNDP, UNWOMEN, WFP, UNICEF, ILO, FAO	5	6,825,442	Upper Middle Income ⁶
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For each case study country, the evaluation team interviewed key informants, including the RC, staff at the RCO, UNCT entities participating in the joint programmes supported by the Fund, national government staff, active bilateral development partners, and participating civil-society organizations, among others.

The evaluation team also reviewed key documentation, including the programmes' proposals, proposal appraisals, and annual progress reports for 2020 and 2021. The team collected in-field data in Uruguay and Uganda. The remaining case study countries were conducted virtually.

The findings of each country's case study were summarized in a presentation slide deck and a supporting country case study brief. These served as the basis for analysing the Fund at the country level and identifying the common and divergent findings among case study countries that support the identification of country-level findings.

The findings proceeding from the case study countries presented in this report cannot be generalized to the entire Fund. When the evaluation points to common or specific findings in these countries, they are illustrative of lessons applicable to other countries with programmes supported by the Fund, but they are representative of the views of the five case study countries.

According to the ToRs for the evaluation, a sixth country was meant to be included in the case study sample. Given the limitations further explained in Section 2.6, the evaluation could not complete the sixth case study.

Nevertheless, the evaluation team enriched the country-level data collection by virtually interviewing RC, RCO staff, and PUNOs, outside the country sample, engaged in Joint SDG Fund joint programmes that have reported important outcomes in their annual reports. These included Lao PDR, Indonesia, Fiji⁷, and Uzbekistan. The evaluation team also enriched the country-level data collection by capturing the views on the Fund from RCs in countries that had submitted proposals for the Joint SDG Fund but have been unsuccessful in receiving funding⁸. These included Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Panama.

The evaluation also reviewed the findings from country-level decentralized evaluations of completed joint programmes. Inputs and findings from other evaluations related to pooled funds at the country level, such as the *COVID-19 MPTF Early Lessons and Evaluability Assessment* and the *System Wide Evaluation on the UNDS Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19*, were also analyzed by the evaluation team to promote cross-learning across evaluations.

At the country level, a total of 129 relevant stakeholders were interviewed. The complete list of informants per country can be found in Annex B.

⁶ At the time of the evaluation, Lebanon was categorized as an upper-middle income country. As of July 2022, the World Bank revised Lebanon's classification to a lower-middle income country.

⁷ Written exchanges.

⁸ The evaluation team's intent was to select similar countries to Uruguay and Uganda (included in the sample), but with the difference of being unsuccessful in obtaining funding from the Joint SDG Fund.

2.5 Analysis

The evaluation team compiled all data sources from the country and global levels to analyze the Fund as it relates to a determined set of key components that address the sub-questions under each Area of Investigation. Table 3 summarizes the relationship and clear link between key components and the sub-questions per Areas of Investigation.

Table 3: Sub-questions per Area of Investigation and Key Components

Sub-questions per Area of Investigation	Key Components (Subsections in Section 5)
<p>I. a) To which extent are there gaps between the Joint SDG Fund's achievements and the strategic intentions of the Joint Fund especially in relation to the Fund's contributions to UNDS reform and to accelerating the SDGs at the country level?</p>	<p>5.2- The Fund's Contribution to Accelerating the SDGs and Catalytic Potential</p> <p>5.4- The Fund's Contribution to UNDS Reform</p>
<p>I. b) What are the opportunities and challenges for the Fund to reach a scale in its capitalization to bring about transformative change in support of the UNDS reform and implications from the impact of COVID-19 on SDGs?</p>	<p>5.9- Fund Capitalization, Value Proposition, and Resource Mobilization</p>
<p>II. a) What changes are needed for the Joint SDG Fund to have a more inclusive governance structure and build a coalition for the SDGs including with key UNSDG entities, governments/donors, and other public and private stakeholders both at the global and country levels?</p>	<p>5.8- Global Level Governance Structures</p>
<p>II. b) Are there any lessons from the experience of similar funds especially the COVID-19 MPTF, Peacebuilding Fund or Spotlight Fund that could be learned to govern and manage the Fund for better impact?</p>	<p>5.6- Management, Processes, and Coordination with other Pooled Funds</p>
<p>III. a) How effective has the Joint SDG Fund been in achieving its expected results in its main areas of programming including promoting integrated social protection, devising integrated financing frameworks and catalysing public and private investments for the SDGs?</p>	<p>5.7- The Fund's Programmatic Effectiveness</p>
<p>III. b) How has the Joint SDG Fund incorporated UN core values and cross-cutting priorities of furthering human rights, gender, youth, and environment, and operationalize the principle of Leaving No One Behind, and substantially contributed to results embedded in the CFs and country priorities?</p>	<p>5.3- National Priorities and Cross-Cutting Areas</p>
<p>IV. a) Are changes needed in the roles of DCO and EOSG in terms of the Fund's governance taking into account the Fund's contributions to the UNDS Reform and to enhance visibility and leadership of the Fund to stakeholders?</p>	<p>5.8- Global Level Governance Structures</p>
<p>IV. b) What changes are required in the guidance to and capacities of the RC/UNCT to better manage the Joint SDG Fund</p>	<p>5.5- RC Role</p>

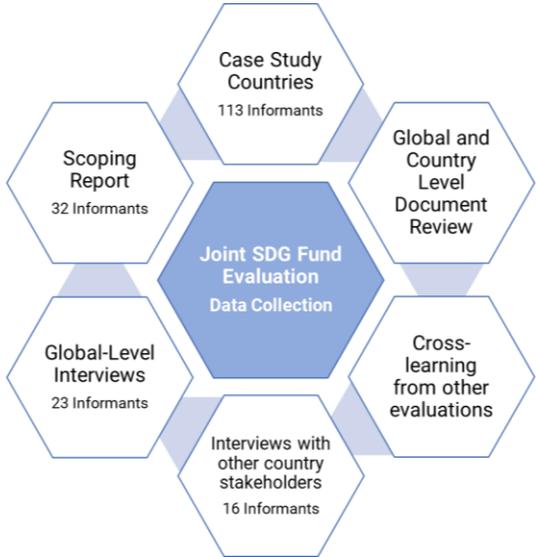
programmes and ensure ownership of local partners at the country level?	
V. a) How can the fund be an incentive for the UNCTs to better work together in terms of delivering catalytic and transformative services, communicating results and ensuring accountability under the RC system ?	5.2- The Fund’s Contribution to Accelerating the SDGs and Catalytic Potential 5.4- The Fund’s Contribution to UNDS Reform
V. b) How can the Fund better support the joint programmatic elements of investments into the UNSDCFs and RC system with a clear value proposition to revitalize the fund for scale?	5.9- Fund Capitalization, Value Proposition , and Resource Mobilization
VI. a) How has the Fund managed its portfolio of programmes in terms of identifying quality joint programmes , ensuring transformative results, and visibility through collective action at the country level?	5.7- The Fund’s Programmatic Effectiveness
VI. b) How can the Fund become more efficient and effective by simplifying its procedures/guidelines and eligibility criteria to ensure flexible and quick processing of proposals building on lessons from other MPTFs while also recognizing opportunity costs for RCs/UNCTs when proposals are not selected?	5.6- Management, Processes, and Coordination with other Pooled Funds

At the global level, all documents were uploaded to a central database and excerpts were coded using qualitative analysis software. All extracted excerpts were organized under the key components. The evaluation team also compiled and organized all global-level informant interviews under the same key components derived from each sub-question.

At the country level, and for each case study, interviews with key stakeholders were combined with document and data reviews to analyze how the Fund addresses the key components under each sub-question. For case study countries, each country’s findings were organized per key component and summarized in the presentation slide deck and a supporting country case study brief. These served as the basis for analysing the Fund at the country level and identifying the common and divergent findings among case study countries that support the identification of country-level findings.

In summation, collected data from all sources (Figure 1) was organized under the key components that address the sub-questions within each Area of Investigation. After all data was integrated and triangulated, preliminary findings for each key component were systematically deduced. These

Figure 1: Triangulated Data Sources



preliminary findings were then re-examined in a team data consolidation workshop and finalized by the evaluation team.

Section 5 of this report presents an analysis of each key component; each subsection addresses a key component with a direct link to a sub-question within an Area of Investigation (Table 3). Each subsection concludes with the findings under each key component.

These findings were then used as the main inputs for developing the evaluation's recommendations.

2.6 Limitations

There are three types of significant limitations to the evaluation: those arising from an evaluation about a complex multi-country programme, those arising from the evolving conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, and those arising from the type of results the evaluation can detect at such an early stage.

Limitations in relation to a complex subject

- To be useful for the Joint SDG Fund's decision-makers, influence donor planning, and support strategic planning going forward, the evaluation was compressed into a five-month time frame (February 2022-June 2022). This limited the time for planning, reviewing documentation, and conducting interviews at the global and country levels.

To address these constraints, it was necessary to conduct fewer full case studies (5 countries) than those specified in the Terms of Reference (6 countries). With fewer case studies, some aspects of the Fund did not receive as much coverage as others. However, the careful selection of case study countries, as well as the partial analysis of six additional countries, allowed for examination of the Fund across a wide variety of contexts.

Limitations from the COVID-19 pandemic

- Key informants at the global and country level were heavily engaged in recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited their availability for the evaluation's consultations or infield visits.
- The pandemic was impacting the case study countries in different ways, leading to imposed travel restrictions during the study.

In response to these limitations, the evaluation focused on ensuring that the burden on case study countries and their partners was limited. The evaluation team mainly relied on virtual interviews for data collection. The evaluation was also flexible and modified countries within the sample to ensure in-person fieldwork at the country level could be completed in at least two of the five case study countries.

The evaluation team further enriched country-level data collection by virtually interviewing stakeholders from countries outside the sample (Ethiopia, Indonesia, Fiji⁹, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Panama, and Uzbekistan), reviewing decentralized evaluations, and cross-learning from other system-wide evaluations.

Limitations about the type of results the evaluation can detect at an early stage

⁹ Written exchanges.

- Due to the early stage of the Fund and because of the Fund's strategic purpose, the focus of the evaluation is to assess if the Fund promoted catalytical action through joint programmes that promoted transformative policy shifts rather than quantitative results.
- Further evaluations together with the Fund's decentralized results evaluations will capture quantitative results, which complement the scope of this evaluation.

The limitations of this evaluation indicate that its results are mainly to share with key stakeholders, the valuable qualitative points of view that the evaluation systematically obtained both from global actors and from essential local actors across the globe. Listening to their points of view, through this evaluation, is a valuable element that contributes to the dialogue and the evidence through other sources on how to improve the Fund in its second phase.

2.7 Quality Assurance

A Quality Assurance Panel (QAP) has provided advice to the evaluation team and served as a continuous advisor for the evaluation. The QAP presented the team with detailed comments and suggestions to improve the rigour and validity of the identified findings.

3. SDG Challenges in the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Cost-of-Living Crisis

Before COVID-19

In the years leading up to the pandemic, governments across the world had taken steps towards incorporating the 2030 Agenda. By 2019, progress was made towards SDG 1: Eradicating poverty, as the percentage of the world's population living in extreme poverty was reduced from 10.1 percent in 2015 to 9.3 percent in 2017. Achievements were also made towards SDG 2: Zero Hunger, with the percentage of undernourished people reducing from 12.4 to 8.4 percent from 2005 to 2019 (United Nations, 2021). There had been advances also in reducing mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCD); the probability of dying from any of the four main NCDs (cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease) for people between 30 and 70 decreased from 19.9 percent to 17.8 percent between 2010 and 2019 (United Nations, 2021).

Despite these achievements, there were also setbacks in progress towards the SDGs, even before the pandemic. The Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 identified challenges across various dimensions (United Nations, 2019). The vigor of global economic growth had slowed after the 2009 crisis and average growth since 2012 had been at around 3.8 percent. Despite progress in access to basic services, coverage remained low for many countries and social groups. In 2019, 650 million people suffered hunger, and around two billion people suffered from food insecurity (United Nations, 2021). Furthermore, several dimensions with cross-cutting impacts on various SDGs were moving in the wrong direction; this included inequality, climate change, biodiversity loss, and increasing waste from human activity.

The COVID-19 pandemic

In 2020 the global COVID-19 health emergency further intensified development challenges across almost all SDGs. Income generation, poverty, and access to basic rights such as employment, health, education, and food security, were particularly affected. Equality also

suffered an important drawback as the global pandemic widened existing gender, work, and educational inequalities. So far, data on the magnitude of the socioeconomic effects of this pandemic reveals the damage it has caused and just how vulnerable we all were before COVID-19 started.

In April 2022 the total number of reported deaths from COVID-19 surpassed 6 million globally (WHO, 2022), and numbers have continued to rise. The pandemic also disrupted health services, including detecting and treating non-communicable diseases (NCDs), a critical component of SDG 3. A rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on NCDs carried out by WHO found nearly all countries (94%) reported that their ministry of health staff with responsibility for NCDs was supporting the COVID-19 efforts either full time or along with routine NCD activities (WHO, 2020). Worldwide, lifestyles changed from the beginning of 2020: social distancing, house confinement, and school and office closures all came as an unfortunate and sudden surprise for all. These changes made an important impact on the population's employment, income and mental health.

The 6.5% global unemployment rate for 2020 was the world's highest rate in the last 30 years (World Bank, 2022). Unemployment hit differently across schooling levels; in Latin America and the Caribbean, while 18% of people with tertiary education (or more) lost their jobs during the pandemic, 35% of people with primary education (or less) lost theirs (UNDP, 2021).

With rising unemployment, a global contracting economy, and millions of people experiencing hunger during the pandemic, it came as no surprise to see the world experience its first rise in extreme poverty since the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s (United Nations, 2021). Estimates point to an increase from 8.4% of the world's population living in extreme poverty (\$1.90 a day) in 2019 to 9.5% in 2020 (United Nations, 2021).

The Cost-of-Living Crisis

The world was barely recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, when yet another event made things worse for all. In February 2022, the war between Russia and Ukraine catapulted development challenges.

Ukraine and the Russian Federation provide around 30 per cent of the world's wheat and barley, one fifth of its maize, and over half of its sunflower oil. The Russian Federation is the world's top natural gas exporter and second-largest oil exporter. Belarus and the Russian Federation export around a fifth of the world's fertilizers (UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, 2022a). The supply chain issues that was exacerbated by the war has brought have generated an inflationary process fueled by rising food and energy prices, as well as rising interest rates that affect the economy. The overall crisis has tightened financial conditions worldwide.

The FAO Food Price Index reached its historic highest level in March 2022. Although the index reduced in April and May, it was still 22.8 percent above its value in the corresponding month last year. The Food Price Index has increased by 65.5 percent¹⁰ since 2019. The

¹⁰ Data from FAO Food Price Index: <https://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/>

Bloomberg Commodity Index (BCOM) increased 9.3% in only a month¹¹ and energy prices are expected to increase 50% during 2022¹².

The compounded effect of COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine has been devastating for millions of families in most countries. As of June 2022, “60 per cent of workers have lower real incomes than before the pandemic; developing countries miss \$1.2 trillion per year to fill the social protection gap, and \$4.3 trillion is needed per year - more money than ever before - to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2022, between 179 million and 181 million people are forecasted to be facing food crisis or worse conditions in 41 out of 53 countries where data are available.” (UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, 2022b).

Households and countries with highest vulnerabilities are the most affected by these combined crises, including vulnerable households in middle income countries. For example, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) estimates that poverty in 18 representative countries in the region will increase in 2022, from 32.1% in 2021 to 33.8% in 2022. In middle income countries poverty will increase from 2021 to 2022: Argentina (29.5-30.2%), Brazil (21.4-23%), Chile (8.7-9.2%), Colombia (36.3-39.2%) and Mexico (34.9-37.2%) (ECLAC, 2022).

The Secretary General declared “developing countries need help now, and the funds are there. So, we need to make them available to economies that need them most so that governments can avoid default, provide social safety nets for the poorest and most vulnerable, and continue to make critical investments in sustainable development” (UN Secretary-General, 22 April 2022). **In mid-2022, most of the world’s population is living through simultaneous crises: the impacts of COVID-19, the rising cost of living, and the devastating effects of climate change. At the same time, we are in the Decade of Action to reach the SDGs by 2030. The UN must rise to the challenge and support governments in their efforts to reach the SDGs.**

4. The Joint SDG Fund: Background on how the Fund operates

As evidenced in the previous section, there’s an urgent need to accelerate efforts to achieve the SDGs. The crises that the world has endured in the last two years, have further demonstrated the need for catalytic funding that accelerates progress towards the SDGs. The Joint SDG Fund was designed to provide just that.

The Joint SDG Fund, which was fully operationalized in late 2017, was established as a key mechanism to promote concerted and integrated, multi-sectoral actions by the UN development system (UNDS) for the 2030 Agenda at the country level. The Fund was designed to play a key part of the UNDS reform by empowering the leadership role of the Resident Coordinators (RCs) in joint programme design and implementation and ensuring that the programmes are based on the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) with ownership from the Government partners. The Fund was designed as a critical funding modality that the RCs could use to leverage their coordination

¹¹ Data from Bloomberg Commodity Index as of May 8 2022:
<https://mx.investing.com/indices/bloomberg-commodity>

¹² Data from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-26/commodity-prices-to-stay-elevated-through-2024-world-bank-says>

role and authority to bring about effective and catalytic UN joint actions in response to the country's needs and SDG priorities.

The Joint SDG Fund is currently the UN's third-largest global Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) in terms of its approved budget for ongoing programmes behind the Peacebuilding Fund and the Spotlight Initiative Fund. The Fund is meant to complement existing global and country funding mechanisms and programmes by enabling UN country teams (UNCTs) to bring their capacities, knowledge and partnerships together for cross-sectoral and cross-organizational action responding to the integrated nature of the SDGs. The Fund, as stipulated in its Terms of Reference, operates under three interwoven domains of change of (i) unleashing integrated policy change, (ii) developing the SDG financing ecosystems, and (iii) catalysing SDG programming and investments, which are managed under the Fund's two outcome areas:

- **Outcome 1: Integrated multi-sectoral policies to accelerate SDG achievements**
- **Outcome 2: Additional financing leveraged to accelerate SDG achievements**

Gender equality, human rights, and the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) are considered as cross-cutting issues, meant to be mainstreamed in the selection and implementation of the joint programmes. The Fund operates through a call for proposal process opened to the RCs in coordination with the UNCTs as well as relevant non-resident UN entities to design and submit proposals based on the specific thematic and/or regional focus of the calls. **To date (as of June 2022), the Fund has launched four calls for proposals** since 2019 for the SDGs aligned with the Fund's outcome areas.

The Fund's **first call for proposals** was launched in March 2019 focused on integrated policy solutions for LNOB and specifically promoting **integrated social protection** solutions that contributes to catalytic and sustainable progress towards the SDGs with specially attention on the most vulnerable and marginalized population groups. The proposals were capped at US\$ 2 million per UNCT with exception of Multi-Country Offices (MCOs), which could request up to US\$3 million. Through the call, the Fund received 114 proposals, among which 35 joint programmes covering 39 countries and territories were selected for financing and implementation based on a technical review carried out by UN agency partners. The total budget for the first call was US\$ 69 million with an average budget of US\$ 2 million per joint programme. The joint programmes began operations in the fourth quarter of 2019 with a two-year programme duration. However, the majority of the programmes required no-cost extensions due to implementation delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These programmes mostly completed their operations in the first half of 2022.

The Fund's **second call for proposals** launched in December 2019 focused on receiving joint programme proposals aligned to outcome area 2 of the Fund on leveraging additional financing for the SDGs. The call was divided into two components as below:

- **Reinforce the SDG financing architecture (Component 1):** The Fund supported UNCTs in the development of planning tool to better understand the national financial envelop for SDG investment. This work included the strengthening of the capacities of the national and sub-national SDG financing architecture, piloting of integrated national financing frameworks, the establishment of partnerships through convening networks and consortia comprised of actors from the public and private sector, and the production of SDG-aligned financing strategies.

- **Catalyse strategic investments (Component 2):** The Fund supported UNCTs in investing in key initiatives that leverage public and private financing to advance the SDGs. These initiatives provide a demonstration of concept and were selected for their scalability both in-country and elsewhere.

Joint proposals under Component 1 entailed developing and implementing the **Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs)**. This is a UN tool designed to support governments in identifying and implementing a strategic and integrated approach to financing their development objectives. Explained differently, INFFs are a planning tool that helps countries cost their development strategy (e.g., a national development plan that lays out what needs to be funded) and design a financing strategy that relies on public and private financing sources. INFFs are meant to help countries overcome obstacles to financing sustainable development and guide thinking about necessary financial reforms.

All proposals under Component 1 were capped at US\$ 1 million per joint programme for a 2-year period. Through the call, the Fund received 103 proposals, among which 62 joint programmes covering 69 countries and territories were selected for financing. The total budget for Component 1 was US\$ 59 million with an average budget of US\$ 0.95 million per joint programme. The majority of the joint programmes began operations in the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2020. Due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, most are scheduled to conclude by the end of 2022 after receiving a programme extension.

For Component 2, the Fund took a phased approach by first requesting proposals that were selected for preparatory design funds of up to US\$ 200,000 per UNCT to support the full design and structuring of the catalytic investment vehicles and financial instruments under a full joint programme. For the design phase, the Fund received a total of 155 proposals, considering that UNCTs were able to submit more than one proposal per country team. Among the proposals received, 28 proposals were selected for design-phase funding. Following the design phase, the Fund assessed the 28 full joint programmes that had a budget of up to US\$ 10 million with a programme duration of five years. Based on the technical quality review, the Fund initially selected four proposals for full financing in mid-2021 and another five proposals in February 2022. The average size of the nine full joint programmes is US\$ 7.4 million. The remaining proposals that have not been selected for full funding are managed by the Fund as part of its investment pipeline with possibilities of future fundings and investment incubation through resource mobilization and other partnerships. The total budget approved for the Component 2 joint programmes is US\$ 71.2 million.

The Joint SDG Fund launched a **third, non-competitive call for proposal** in June 2021 focused on **building resilience and reducing vulnerabilities in the Small Island Development States (SIDS)**, with a funding envelope of USD \$30 million. Proposals were capped at USD \$1 million per SIDS. MCOs were eligible for a larger budget corresponding to the number of countries they served. Through the call, the Fund received 26 joint programme proposals covering 42 SIDS implemented in partnership with 23 UN entities both at the country and regional levels. This also included funding to eight out of the nine UN MCOs. While all focused on building resilience and addressing vulnerabilities, 18 joint programmes are prioritizing the promotion of integrated policies and LNOB, while the other eight are focused more on SDG financing and investments. The joint programmes have been launched in the first half of 2022 and will run for two years.

In May 2022, the Fund was directed by the Deputy Secretary-General and its Operational Steering Committee to open a **special call for proposals activating its Development Emergency Modality** to distribute rapid seed funding to UNCTs affected by the unfolding global food, energy, and financing crisis due to the impact of the war in Ukraine. The call intends to enable UNCTs to move quickly to generate data and analytics around the crisis and work with Governments and other partners to identify and deploy specific preventative measures. The call has been designed under the direct guidance and framing provided by the UN Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG) task team, which has been set up by the Secretary-General to ensure an immediate and cohesive UN response. Based on GCRG task team guidance, the call has been open to 81 UNCTs covering 94 countries and territories with a cap of US\$ 250,000 per country. MCOs can request up to a maximum of US\$ 400,000 per office. This non-competitive call has been launched with an initial funding envelope of US\$ 21.5 million for the first round and will commence programme implementation by July 2020.

Overall, the **Joint SDG Fund has channelled funding to 25 Participating United Nations Organizations (PUNOs) throughout its calls to date**. This includes both resident UN entities as well as non-resident UN entities and technical organizations including the regional economic commissions and specialized UN agencies. The Fund's 2021 Financial Report reveals that out of the grand total of net funded amount, 28% of the funding has gone to UNDP, 25% of the funding has been allocated to UNICEF, 12% to ILO, 7% to WFP, and 6% each to UNCDF and UN Women, respectively. These six agencies have received 83% of the total net funded amount.

5. Analysis and Findings of the Joint SDG Fund by Key Component

This section triangulates all data sources at country and global level to address how the Fund relates to the key components directly linked to each of the sub-questions within the Areas of Investigation proposed in the ToR.

As a matter of context, the section first offers background information on how the Fund's programmes operate in the five case study countries, where most of the analysis and findings for the section stem from. The section then proceeds with an analysis of the Fund under each of the key components.

5.1 Background Context: Fund Programmes in the Case Study Countries

The country sample for the evaluation covered eleven joint programmes with allocated funding of USD \$23.3 million from the Joint SDG Fund: three financed under the LNOB call, five financed under the C1 call, two financed under the C2 call, and one under the SIDS call. The sample also includes a variety of PUNOs: UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNFPA, ILO, WFP, FAO, UNESCO, ESCAP, UNEP, UNCDF, WHO, PAHO, UNHCR, and UNIDO. Only two out of the eleven studied programmes have concluded; the rest are ongoing.

Table 4 highlights the most important aspects of Joint SDG Fund programmes in each of the case study countries.

Table 4: Fund Programmes in Case Study Countries

Short Programme Name	Call	Joint SDG Funding	Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs)	Period	Status
Bangladesh					
Social Protection for Tea Workers	LNOB	\$2,000,000	ILO (lead), UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNFPA	Jan 2020-Mar 2022	<i>Concluded</i>
INFF4SDGs	C1	\$998,310	UNDP (lead), UNCDF, UNWOMEN, ILO	Jul 2020-Dec 2022	<i>Ongoing</i>
Lebanon					
Developing Inclusive SP	LNOB	\$2,000,000	UNICEF (lead), WFP, ILO, UNWOMEN, UNDP	Jan 2020-Sep 2022	<i>Ongoing</i>
Budgeting and Investing for SDG2	C1	\$999,031	UNDP (lead), FAO, UNWOMEN	Jul 2020-Jun 2023	<i>Ongoing</i>
Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau					
Social Protection for Resilience	LNOB	\$3,000,000	UNDP (lead), UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, ESCAP	Dec 2019-Sep 2022	<i>Ongoing</i>
Developing INFFs for SDGs	C1	\$979,462	UNDP (lead), ESCAP, UNWOMEN	Sep 2020- Dec 2022	<i>Ongoing</i>
Four programmes- One per Island	SIDS	\$2,202,598	UNESCO, ESCAP, UNEP, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF	Jan 2022- Dec 2023	<i>Ongoing</i>
Uganda					
Integrated financing	C1	\$1,000,000	UNDP (lead), UNWOMEN, UNCDF	Jun 2020-Dec 2022	<i>Ongoing</i>
PPA guarantee to solarize UN	C2	\$200,000	UNDP (lead), WHO, UNHCR, UNCDF	Jun 2020-Jan 2021	<i>Concluded (preparatory phase)</i>
Uruguay					
A new financing ecosystem	C1	\$910,000	UNDP (lead), IOM, UNWOMEN, UNICEF, PAHO	Oct 2020-Dec 2022	<i>Ongoing</i>
The Renewable Energy Innovation Fund	C2	\$10,000,000	UNIDO (lead), UNDP, UNWOMEN	Jan 2021-Dec 2024	<i>Ongoing</i>

5.2 The Fund's Contribution to Accelerating the SDGs and Catalytic Potential

This subsection focuses on analysing whether the Joint SDG Fund has contributed to accelerating the SDGs at the country level. According to the Fund's Terms of Reference, accelerated progress towards the SDGs is generated by the joint-programme's catalytic investments that enable countries to leapfrog in their development. In the Fund's TOR, catalytic is defined as "producing 'chain-reactions' in development and financial terms" focused on unleashing multi-dimensional policies and unlocking additional financing. To address how the Fund has contributed to accelerating the SDGs, the evaluation first looked at some of the Joint SDG Fund's results in its main areas of programming, including promoting integrated social protection and public and private investments for the SDGs.

From the beginning, the Fund was envisioned to promote 'coherent and integrated support to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda] by the United Nations development system' ([A/RES/70/1](#), 2015) as requested by the Member States. The main objective of all joint programmes being implemented by the Joint SDG Fund is to unlock systemic policy shifts that will catalyze rapid progress across SDGs.

The Fund supports activities that are consistent with strengthening country capacity for achieving the SDGs. In all case study countries, the UNCTs, together with governments, had implemented important activities towards achieving the goals of the Fund's programmes. Global level respondents, including donors, generally agree that the Fund is being used for

Joint Programmes that are relevant to the SDG, and as well consider that the Fund's work on SDG financing is innovative and important.

Some of joint programmes in the country case study sample are well-positioned to contribute to the SDGs. For example, the C2 joint-programme in Uruguay that creates a Renewable Energy Innovation Fund has the potential to drive catalytic investment in SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and is likely to become an important example of a clean energy transition for the region. The LNOB/Social Protection joint-programme in Bangladesh, *Enhancing Social Protection for Female Tea Garden Workers and their families in Sylhet Division*, has raised awareness on the importance of improving the lives of the women tea workers, who are marginalized from national labor regulations. The programme has also enhanced understanding and built capacity of duty bearers on gender responsive allocation of national budget for the social protection of women tea garden workers and their families. The Integrating Policy and Financing for Accelerated Progress on SDGs programme in Uganda, has been able to review 176 local government plans for alignment with the National Development Plan III in the country.

These programmes are good examples that the work of the Fund is on the right direction towards contribute to SDG results. Although specific activities and components have been completed, these programmes' catalytic and accelerating potential on the SDGs is to be confirmed, given it appears' too early to expect outcome and impact level results considering the programmes' relatively short implementation period and the fact that they are still ongoing.

Table 5 summarizes the sample case-studies main programme accomplishments, reported in the Fund's RBM System and programme level. As the Fund's strategic objective is catalytical and innovative programmes for transformative policy shifts, therefore, the programmes outputs have to be assessed from its ability to achieve a policy shift. The actual impact of these outputs on the SDGs is yet to be measured as it appears too early to assess the programmes' contributions to the SDGs, reiterating the relatively short implementation period and the ongoing nature of these programmes.

Table 5: Selected Outputs from Case Study Programmes

Project Name (Participating UN Entities)	Selected Outputs Reported in the Fund RBM System at Project Level: Case Study Countries
Bangladesh	
<p>Enhancing social protection for female tea garden workers and their families in Sylhet Division, Bangladesh (ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25,193 people (56% women) received access to social protection. • 88% of tea garden health facilities increased capacities to provide ante-natal and post-natal care and nutrition counselling to pregnant and lactating women. • 625 women workers have increased leadership capacity and enhanced self-management skills to negotiate and communicate with garden authorities and local government. As a result of women leaders participation in community dialogues, 70% of issues were addressed by relevant authorities and duty bearers. • 40 day-care centres providing quality care support to children of the tea garden workers. • 3 policy briefs developed proposing legislative amendments expanding access to social protection and services.
<p>Integrated National Financing Framework for Accelerating Achievement of SDGs (INFF4SDGs) in Bangladesh (UNDP, UNCDF, ILO, UN Women)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% increase in public budget dedicated to SDG 6 (Water/Sanitation) • SDG financing governance sub-committee under the SDG Implementation Review committee is approved by the Principal Coordination of the Prime Minister’s Office • Revisiting of Development Finance Assessment and SDG Financing Strategy completed in the context of Covid-19, Eight Five Year Plan and LDC graduation. • 47 private sector companies adopting SDG impact measurements, which will be scaled up to 100 companies for 2022. • 3 partnership initiatives underway to de-risk / leverage climate finance (e.g. Digital trade platform, SDG investor mapping, Renewable energy and green supply chain opportunities for RMG factories). A gender perspective has been incorporated in the SDG investor map. • The Development Finance Assessment (DFA) and the SDG Financing Strategy (FS) have been updated with revised SDG costing exercise. Will be submitted to SDG financing oversight committee for validation and adoption by the Government of Bangladesh. • Financing Roadmap for SDG 6, 7, and 13 drafted. Roadmaps for SDG 6 and 7 have been validated by the respective coordinating Ministry. A gender perspective has been incorporated in each of the three roadmaps.
Lebanon	

<p>Transforming National Dialogue for the Development of an Inclusive National SP System for Lebanon (UNICEF, WFP, ILO, UNDP, UN Women)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National social protection strategy with informed gender and disability perspective devised and presented for Government approval. • UNICEF and ILO secured a 20 million Euro grant to support the institutionalization of Social Grants within the national system and to launch a National Disability Allowance in 2022 (planned to start in August 2022). Discussions around the establishment of a social pension are ongoing. • 2 sector-based strategies/roadmaps for extension of coverage for social insurance developed and endorsed through national dialogue. • Additional assessments informed the national social protection strategy including on extension of social health protection and the role of the national social security fund; vulnerability analysis focusing on gaps in coverage; analysis of fiscal space focusing on revenue forecasts and costing models; gender mainstreaming responding to the crisis.
<p>Gender Responsive National Budgeting and Private Investing for SDG2-Zero Hunger (FAO, UNDP, UN Women)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme faced severe delays following the economic crisis and political turmoil in the country since 2019. • Analysis and partnership measures underway regarding Public Finance Management and SDG financing / budget. • Supported IMF to ensure gender-responsive budgeting by Government partners
<p>Samoa Multi-Country Office</p>	
<p>Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Islands States through Universal Social Protection (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, ESCAP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of comprehensive reviews of the social protection systems in Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue. The findings have informed the establishment of social protection floors and reforms. • Draft National Social Protection Policy was developed and submitted for approval. Comprehensive review of Samoa National Employment Policy improved the labour market component of the social protection system. • Disability Reference Groups (DRG) were established in Samoa, Niue and the Cook Islands. • Development and capacity building on strengthening the management information systems for social protection underway in 4 countries.
<p>Sustainable Financing for the 2030 Agenda through viable INFF in Cook Islands, Niue, and Samoa (UNDP, ESCAP, UN Women)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 INFF inception stage completed for Samoa and Cook Island with commencement workshops with Governments. • 4 financing analysis, feasibility assessments underway to support designing of financial reforms: e.g. Gender Responsive Analysis of the Samoa National Budget underway, Cost prioritizing initiatives in the Samoa Tourism Sector Plan, Regional feasibility study on innovative debt for climate swap instruments, Development of a National Strategy on Private Sector Development, Investment and Co-financing in Samoa. • INFF Governance mechanisms agreed in Samoa and Cook Islands.
<p>Uganda</p>	

<p>Integrated policy and financing for accelerated progress on SDGs in Uganda (UNDP, UNCDF, UN Women)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed the Development Finance Assessment (DFA), and currently finalizing Public Investment Financing Strategy (PIFS). • 176 local governments planning being aligned with National Development Plan III • Partnered with IMF to build capacities in tax administration.
<p>Accelerating Innovative Finance for Renewable Energy in Social Sectors and UN operations in Uganda (Preparatory design funding – UNDP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed and structured a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) Payment Guarantee Fund that is envisioned to support expanding sustainable electrification and reduce diesel consumption. • The programme was not selected for full funding in the two rounds under the Fund’s catalytic investment portfolio. It is managed as an incubation project awaiting further development and funds.
Uruguay	
<p>Reshaping market conditions and strategy to finance the transition to sustainable development in Uruguay (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, IOM, WHO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting the nation’s first sustainable certifications, seals, or guidelines with the Government for private sector. • Launched Sustainable Financial Roundtable (SFR) was launched together with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Government. • Completed 5 analytics and feasibilities studies including on thematic sovereign bonds, guarantee fund for rural women, social impact bond, etc. • Built local capacity by conducting a comprehensive training on Sustainable Finance to promote a common understanding of the role of public policy in the integration of SDGs planning and financing.
<p>Innovative Finance for Clean Tech Solutions in Uruguay’s Renewable Energy Sector – The Renewable Energy Innovation Fund (REIF) (UNIDO, UNDP, UN Women)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Renewable Energy Innovation Fund, which will help finance the country’s second renewable energy transition, was publicly launched in May 2022 and first transactions are expected in the second half of the year. • Selected a leading financial institution in Uruguay as a financial trust provider and has developed the fund’s impact framework based on UNDP’s SDG impact standards. The impact framework will be presented to commercial banks, and a strategy for capacity building will be designed collaboratively. • Mainstreamed the importance of gender inclusivity for full decarbonization in developing the investment strategy.

Interviewed stakeholders generally acknowledge that, given the relatively short period of implementation of JPs, the complexity of initiatives as well as the effects of external factors such as the COVID pandemic, climate and eco-system breakdown, the war in Ukraine, etc. demands on the Fund are varied, dynamic, and sufficient time is required for Fund investments in JPs to show observable results at outcome level.

Additionally, given that most of these programmes set out to achieve policy change, this has not necessarily happened in the given timeframe, as was the case of the social protection programmes in Bangladesh and Samoa. Programmes need continued financial support to

maintain momentum and advocacy efforts. Otherwise, stakeholders alert all progress may be lost.

At the global level, the Secretariat points out that tracking progress against the Global SDG Indicators, and around SDG acceleration, poses several challenges in terms of the timely availability, quality and comparability of SDG data. Most SDG indicators experience one- or two-years' delay in data collection and reporting, and are aggregated at the national level by the national statistical agencies. Hence, the SDG indicators only provide indications of SDG progress over the long term. As well, sufficient time is required for policies and financing to mature to catalyse impact level movements on the SDGs that can be measured and reported. Nonetheless, decentralized evaluations and annual reports provide valuable data on Fund outcomes which significantly contribute to the SDGs, for example:

- In **Viet Nam**, the joint programme helped the Government reach 32.7 million people in need, of whom 48 percent were women and girls, by reforming the national social protection system and extending COVID-19 support. The decentralized evaluators found direct evidence confirming the contribution of the programmes towards the targeted SDGs, including the SDG 1.3 on social protection, to some extent to SDG 2.2 on ending malnutrition and SDG 3.8 on Universal Health Coverage, and significantly to SDG 16.6 on effective, accountable and transparent institutions
- The UNCT in **Cambodia** supported the Government in increasing its fiscal space for social protection and extend coverage of the national social protection policy framework. Through these efforts, the programme supported a new roll-out of cash transfers for 200,000 pregnant women and children
- Through the Fund's investment in **Lao PDR**, the Government launched a new social service providing cash and care services for at least 2,000 pregnant women and newborns called the Mother and Early Childhood Grant, which specifically targeted women and children in rural areas.
- The joint programme in **Mongolia** is supporting the Government to develop an integrated national financing strategy to finance the national medium-term sustainable development plan.
- The joint programme in **Ghana** adopted a bottom-up approach and launched five district level financing frameworks in 2021, which supported the COVID-19 local economic recovery plan; addressed trade-offs and synergies among different financing policy areas; and focused on access to finance through taxation and other government revenue, public-private partnerships, FinTech and digitalization.

Additional examples of the Fund's concrete contributions to the SDGs have been summarized and documented in detail in the Fund's [2021 annual report](#).

The Fund's Catalytic Potential

At the country level, the evaluation examined the programme's catalytic potential in two different ways. First, a programme was deemed catalytic if it produces 'chain-reactions' in development by unleashing multi-dimensional policies. Second, a programme was deemed catalytic if it produced 'chain reactions' in financial terms by unlocking additional financing.

The catalytic potential of the Fund's programmes on unleashing multi-dimensional policies is yet to be determined, even so, strong examples were observed. One example of the catalytic potential of a Fund initiative was identified in the joint programme for female tea

garden workers in Bangladesh. Previously, UN agencies worked in the tea gardens with specific programmes and angles. The Fund programme rallied their efforts together and ensured there were no duplications. Additionally, by working jointly, they could approach tea garden owners and government counterparts in a more coordinated and strategic way. Another example regards the C2 programme in Uruguay: Renewable Energy Innovation Fund (REIF). Completing the second energy transition is a national priority established in the Uruguay UNSDCF. The Fund has heavily contributed to addressing this priority by de-risking energy investments; unlocking projects that will strongly contribute to completing the second energy transition and progressing on SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure).

The outcomes from these programmes are still pending. To an extent, this is primarily due to programmes being ongoing. In the observed sample of C1 and C2 programmes specifically, PUNOs have been developing new and innovative partnerships to mobilize resources for SDG acceleration. For example, PUNOs in Uruguay have been building a strong partnership with private banks to finance the second energy transition. In Uganda, PUNOs have been engaging the private sector to finance development. The results of these ongoing efforts with regards to unlocking additional finance is yet to be observed.

The document review has highlighted catalytic potential for unlocking additional finance in the following programmes.

Indonesia and the Sovereign SDG Bond

In Indonesia, with \$9.6 million in investments from the Joint SDG Fund, the joint programme is focused on structuring four types of financial instruments focused on reducing the impact of climate change (SDG 13), with the aim to leverage billions in financing. In 2021, the programme issued a \$584 million sovereign SDG Bond, which is the first of its kind in southeast Asia, with a 12-year term and 1.3 percent coupon rate. The bond adheres to the country's SDG Government Securities Framework. Furthermore, the Bond's impact framework was independently assured to be aligned with the International Capital Market Association Green Bond principles. The proceeds from the SDG bond will fund SDG-aligned projects, including infrastructure, education, health, and climate action. The use of the bond's proceeds will be reviewed annually to ensure that the financing raised is used for SDG acceleration.

Fiji and Blue Economy Investments

In Fiji, the Fund has enabled and commits to provide much needed grant and affordable debt finance for four reef positive businesses that would have otherwise struggled to secure such finance from the conventional sources. The joint programme of \$10 million, co-funded with the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, aims to leverage \$50 million for the blue economy. The programme is working towards the completion of four individual blended finance transactions and secured \$900,000 from Blue Finance and Matanataki to support the incubation of early-stage blue economy investments. The transactions include: an investment in marine protected areas that will raise revenues from the sustainable management of the marine assets and eco-tourism; a fertilizer factory that aims to reduce runoffs from synthetic fertilizers, which is a driving factor of coral degradation; and a sanitary landfill designed to decrease waste and pollution and to create a recycling hub in the Pacific. The UNCT executed the first two blended finance transactions in 2021 for the conservation of shark reef marine reserve and the organic fertilizer factory. The sustainable management and preservation of the marine ecosystem in Fiji is estimated to bringing in around \$1 billion in income from tourism and other sectors per year.

Uzbekistan and the Sovereign SDG Bond

Uzbekistan has become one of the first countries in the region to issue a Sovereign Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Bond. The Bond will facilitate the transfer of resources from private funds to finance public SDG-oriented programmes in seven areas: Education (SDG 4); Water Management (SDG 6); Health (SDG 3); Green Transportation (SDG 11); Pollution Control (SDG 11); Management of Natural Resources (SDG 15); and Green Energy (SDG 7). The instrument will increase transparency, efficiency and accountability of the allocation of proceeds through reporting of impacts and results. The proceeds are allocated to finance approximately 120 projects. The bond started trading on the London Stock Exchange on 19 July, 2021. The total amount is worth of approx. \$US 235 million, with three years maturity and 14% coupon rate.

The bond was issued with the support of the Joint SDG Fund's programme "Establishment of an Integrated National Financing Framework for Sustainable Development in Uzbekistan". This bond is a good example of the catalytic power of the Fund, since not only accelerated decisions by key stakeholders on issuing the instrument, but it has already attracted the interest of investors. The July 2021 issuance on the London Stock Exchange is expected to pave the way for the issuance of additional SDG Bonds for Uzbekistan. The bond has already attracted the interest of about 50 international investors.

Findings on the Fund's contribution to accelerating the SDGs and catalytic potential (AoI I and V)

The Fund's programmes are mostly on the right direction to support country efforts in accelerating the SDGs. Nevertheless, it appears too early to measure the impact of these programmes on the SDGs. The reasons being programmes are still ongoing, with a short implementation period (2 years), limited funding (most programmes are under USD 2 million), all while having ambitious programme objectives. In addition, some programmes have been delayed due to COVID-19. Some of the most innovative programmes, may serve as a pilot with the potential to attract further funding from other sources to accelerate the SDGs.

Joint programmes in countries have initiated innovative partnerships and are currently developing new financing instruments. Many good ideas have been identified, yet it's too early to observe a catalytic change in most programmes. Nevertheless, the documentation review revealed examples of the Fund's programmes catalyzing investments and mobilizing additional resources. The Fund has also pulled together stakeholders, inside and outside the UN, and provided seed money to promote and advocate for new social protection policies. Under the social protection thematic call, successful advocacy efforts have sometimes resulted in greater coverage of vulnerable populations.

5.3 National Priorities and Cross-Cutting Areas

This subsection focuses on how the Fund's programmes relate to national priorities. The evaluation approached the question of the Fund relevance to national priorities through the lens of how well the Fund's programmes met the country needs identified in the UNSDCF and how successful the programmes were in obtaining government engagement.

Joint programmes supported by the Fund are required to be aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (or UNDAFs, if CFs are not yet adopted) contributing

to the national priorities to support the SDGs. Programmatic alignment with country-level UN frameworks is a specific requirement in all the Fund’s calls for proposals. However, call themes are based on the strategic direction set globally by the Fund’s Strategic Advisory Group, with oversight from the Operational Steering Committee. A downside of receiving global call themes is that these do not necessarily coincide directly with national priorities identified in the UNSDCF.

RC respondents have identified that often, when a new call arrives, UNCTs develop proposals that may distract from their original work plans and UNSDCF commitments. UNCTs take a globally determined theme and adapt it to the national context. Given the broad scope of UNSDCFs, PUNOs regularly find a way to align the joint programme to the framework.

Yet, the most successful joint programmes seem to be those where the Fund’s thematic call coincided with ongoing UNSDCF work and national priorities. In most of these cases, governments and PUNOs had pre-existing experience working together on these issues and a greater clarity on what type of joint programme proposal to put forward.

For example, in Bangladesh the joint programme for developing the Integrated National Financing Framework for Accelerating Achievement of SDGs (INFF4SDGs) was already a clear priority for the Bangladesh government. The country has been a proud pioneer on INFF since 2016. The INFF is even incorporated in the government’s National Eight Five-Year Plan. The Joint SDG Fund funding was then used to update key documents, like the SDG cost assessment.

“The SDG Fund launches a call, we share that with the UNCT and ask them to submit proposals- there’s no real method to select who should participate, as a result, we end up with agencies that have not committed to working in that space in the UNSDCF putting proposals forward. Why? Just to get the money.”

-RC Informant

Uruguay: The REIF and Government Engagement

The government, led by the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining had established as a strong national priority to complete the country’s second energy transition. When the C2 call for proposals came, the Ministry partnered with the agencies to develop the proposal and pool technical knowledge together. Under the C2 call for proposals, Uruguay received USD \$10 million to jumpstart a Renewable Energy Innovation Fund. The government’s involvement in the programme, since its design, has led to strong sense of ownership. The programme is effectively addressing a national priority.

“It was an active participation, it is something we all built together, it wasn’t something the UN imposed on us.”

-Government informant

When programmes indeed relate to national priorities, government buy-in and engagement tends to follow. The degree of government ownership of the Fund’s programmes (recognizing the programme as truly addressing a government priority) varies from country to country and programme to programme. The evaluation observed clearer and stronger government ownership whenever the UNCT had sufficient time to engage with the government during the design phase and negotiate the programme’s objectives and components.

Unfortunately, that was not the case in all programmes. Most interviewed stakeholders report rushing through the design process, having insufficient time for a profound reflection or adequate government consultations, and chasing a government signature.

Shifts in national priorities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic or ruling-party political transitions have also challenged government ownership and engagement in the Fund's programmes. RC turnover may also affect government engagement.

"For collaboration to happen there needs to be a deeper proposal development process. Calls are launched with really short time frames, there tends to be a rush to develop the proposal. We need more time to go back and forth with the government, for more constructive feedback and critique of the programme."

-Country level Informant

During COVID-19, the Fund repurposed its programmes to respond to the crisis and support the UNDS response in general. According to the Fund's 2020 Annual Report: "the Fund allowed the Joint Programmes to re-purpose 20 per cent of their budget for COVID-19 response, which was used by a third of the programmes in addressing the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Furthermore, all other Joint Programmes adapted their interventions to respond to the changed context and quickly pivoted to rolling out digital and other solutions to continue implementation [...] Furthermore, several Joint Programmes were requested by the Government partners to carry out vulnerability assessments or support the training of social workers that were working to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Cross-Cutting Areas

In addition to addressing national priorities, Joint SDG Fund programmes are also meant to address cross-cutting thematic issues, including climate change, gender equality, human rights, and youth.

Gender equality has been mainstreamed in almost all of the Fund's programmes. The Joint SDG Fund has mainstreamed the use of gender markers throughout its programmes, where 88% of joint programmes are at or beyond GEN2 (making a significant contribution to gender equality). Some 26% of programmatic funds are channelled to GEN3 programmes whereby gender equality is the principal aim. In addition, the Fund has collaborated with UN Women to update its Gender Matrix in 2021 and to carry out gender specific reviews of joint programmes during the calls for proposals. UN Women has collaborated actively in most of them and offers technical assistance and guidance on adequately mainstreaming a gender perspective. Programmes have greatly benefited from UN Women's active collaboration. As an example, UN Women has contributed to bringing a gender perspective in Development Finance Assessments (DFA) and Finance Strategy Development, previous DFAs lacked mentions of gender equality. When UN Women is absent, it tends to be because of insufficient staff capacities to participate.

At the portfolio/call level, according to the Fund Secretariat, the LNOB/Social Protection portfolio (Call 1) has mainstreamed contributions to human rights: "All 35 joint programmes implemented a rights-based approach to social protection emphasizing human rights principles of equity, participation and accountability. 33 joint programmes (94 percent) reported that they contribute towards implementing specific recommendations from human rights mechanisms." In addition, 91% of the LNOB joint programmes specified that youth were going to benefit from their JP either directly or indirectly and 65% of the JPs implemented initiatives specifically designed for young persons.

At country-level, the evaluation systematically observed how sample programmes incorporated cross-cutting issues. With some notable exceptions, most of the examined programmes lacked a comprehensive cross-cutting human rights perspective. Climate change and youth were addressed only when the programme itself relates directly to these issues, as exemplified in Uruguay where the C1 programme trains young people on entrepreneurship and works with adolescents in conflict with the law on skill development for work in mechanical workshops.

Findings on country priorities & cross-cutting areas (Aol III)

The most successful programmes seemed to be those where the thematic calls coincided with ongoing UNSDCF work and predefined national priorities. This alignment with national priorities gives government partners a strong sense of ownership. Nevertheless, government and UN respondents at country level often not necessarily see the Fund's thematic focus as a national priority.

Whenever government and PUNOs had previously worked on the calls' themes, programmes achieved notable engagement in their implementation.

In almost all the observed programme selection, gender equality has been mainstreamed adequately. UN Women has collaborated actively in most and offers technical assistance and guidance on adequately mainstreaming a gender perspective. Programmes have greatly benefited from UN Women's active collaboration. However, with some notable exceptions, most of the examined programmes lacked a comprehensive cross-cutting human rights perspective. Climate change and youth are addressed only when the programme itself relates directly to these issues.

5.4 The Fund's Contribution to UNDS Reform

In this subsection, the evaluation analyses how the Fund has enabled and supported the process of UNDS Reform. Specially, the subsection focuses on how the Fund has incentive (or disincentivized) UNCTs to better work together.

The Joint SDG Fund is seen by the Secretary General as a key piece of the reform of the UNDS, referring to the Fund as "the muscle" for Resident Coordinators and a new generation of United Nations Country Teams to help countries deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. Subsequently, the capitalization of the Joint SDG Fund at US \$290 million per annum was included as a target for Member States to ensure quality funding to attain the SDGs as part of the Funding Compact of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of United Nations operational activities ([A/74/73/Add.1](#), 2019).

In line with the objectives of UNDS Reform, the Joint SDG Fund is set up to finance joint UN action at the country level, which is critical to empowering the RC's leadership and convening role, while promoting UNCT coherence and integration around key national priorities to attain the 2030 Agenda. The Fund operates by financing UN joint programmes endorsed by the RC in partnership with UNCTs and other technical UN entities (e.g. regional commissions and non-residential UN entities are also part of the Fund's Participating UN Organizations-PUNOs).

"This is the closest we have ever worked together."

- Focal point from participating agency

At ground level, interviewed stakeholders agreed that development challenges are so complex that agencies recognize the need to harness the system's strength. The Fund definitely has the potential to draw on each agency's expertise and improve the quality of joint programmes. Simply put, resources bring people together. Having a clear joint programme objective from the start, shared and

understood by all participating stakeholders, has contributed significantly to strong collaboration. Joint work among agencies is even stronger when there is a proper governance and institutional structure for the programme; for example, a task team or steering committee that meets regularly (and preferably includes a focal point from the RCO). These structures force collaboration and agreements among all participating stakeholders. Uruguay, Samoa, Uganda and Bangladesh have implemented periodic committees or task teams to improve the coordination between stakeholders, including the government. The Fund's ToR'S mention that the country-level governance

Argentina and the Joint SDG Fund

In the Argentina case study for the SWE of the UNDS Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19, the evaluation found the Joint SDG Fund financed a programme focused on improving the employment conditions of workers in early childhood care, enhancing the quality and access to quality care services, and contributing to women's financial independence when meeting care needs. The evaluation noted that without a Steering Committee governance structure led by an impartial RC, the programme's implementation was mostly done in parallel, with each agency focusing on its components and activities, without a truly joint programming approach.

This note is consistent with what was observed in the sample of programmes under the Joint SDG Fund

architecture may include a Joint Programme Steering Committee, leaving the precise governance arrangements to be decided at country-level. Yet, in the observed sample of programmes, when these governance structures are absent, agencies have regressed to working in silos; splitting programme activities and working in parallel during the implementation phase.

"Theoretically, One UN is fine, but at an operational level working with multiple agencies doesn't always go well, one of the reasons being each agency has its own operational and funding mechanisms. All these separate budget processes come with a lot of time and transaction costs. Our system just does not talk to each other, administrative and recruitment processes are all different, that takes a lot of time from us."

- Focal point from participating agency

Both RCOs and agencies in most interviewed countries mentioned that the Fund still faces structural Reform challenges, including competition among UN agencies, conflicting reporting lines, mandate territoriality, limited human resource capacities for small agencies to participate, and pre-existing line-ministry government-UN agency partnerships. Joint work becomes complex due to each agency's different operational

mechanisms, including diverse hiring, fund disbursement, and oversight processes. Occasionally, programmes lack cohesion because not all PUNOs are at the same level regarding staff capacity and resources. PUNOs have also identified additional transaction

costs in working together on Joint SDG Fund programmes, such as human resources, timely meetings, and slower programme implementation.

Yet, much is gained from joint programmes. For example, the government's engagement with the programmes is greater when PUNOs and the RC approach government counterparts collectively. Additionally, joint programmes also facilitate working with a broader range of development partners, including the World Bank, IADB, European Union, and NGOs.

PUNOs in all case study countries considered that the funding made available by the Joint SDG Fund is small in relation to the Fund's expectations. For large UN agencies in countries with large donor resources, the Fund's contributions appear marginal. However, these large agencies typically have the staff capacity to design and implement programmes. Having broader mandates, the programmes tend to align with their ongoing Country Programme Documents. Contrastingly, for smaller agencies, the amount of funding becomes more attractive, but they have less staff capacity to participate and operate the programme. These small agencies cannot afford to allocate staff to engage in programmes that may not be fully within their mandates, as stated by stakeholders in almost all country cases. As a result, the usual agencies participate in most Joint SDG Fund programmes; UNDP is involved in 73.9% of all programmes, and UNICEF is involved in 57.7% of all programmes.

Findings on the Fund's contributions to UNDS Reform (Aol I and V)

The Fund has the potential to draw on each agency's expertise and improve the quality of joint programmes. In some cases, interviewed agencies agreed this is the closest they have ever worked together. Simply put, resources have brought agencies together. However, the Fund faces structural reform challenges. Interviewed stakeholders identified the following: competition among UN agencies for resources, conflicting reporting lines, different operational procedures, mandate territoriality, limited human resource capacities for small agencies to participate, and pre-existing government-UN agency partnerships. These challenges resulted in UN agencies working in parallel in many of the joint programmes.

Regarding the Fund's country-level governance structure, joint work among agencies appears stronger when there is a proper governance and institutional structure for the programme; for example, a task team or steering committee that meets regularly. These structures have forced collaboration and agreements among all participating stakeholders. When these governance structures are absent, agencies have regressed to working in silos; splitting programme activities and working in parallel during the implementation phase.

5.5 RC Role

In this subsection the evaluation proceeds to analyse how the Fund has enabled and empowered the Resident Coordinator, in line with UNDS Reform. Specifically, the subsection addresses how the Fund positions the RC to support steering and coordination of joint programmes.

The Terms of Reference for the Fund mention specific moments during the programming cycle in which the RC must participate. In the proposal design phase, the proposals must be submitted by UNCTs *through the RC* on behalf of participation agencies. In the reporting phase, the lead agency is meant to compile the narrative reports of PUNOs and submit a

consolidated annual report *through the RC*. The RC is responsible for reporting on the joint results achieved through the joint programmes funded by the Joint SDG Fund.

The Fund emphasizes the role of the RC during design, implementation and review, where RCs are requested to chair or co-chair the joint programme steering committees or equivalent bodies at the country level and serve as the face of the UN in issue-based national coordination mechanisms with government counterparts and other partners. The Joint SDG Fund was instrumental in underscoring the role and responsibilities of the RC in joint programmes especially for pooled funds in the newly released [Management & Accountability Framework \(MAF\) of the UN development and RC system \(2021\)](#).

“It has been extremely empowering for the RC, while the reform is ambitious, we wouldn’t have been able to generate dialogues on how to work together and have such a substantive engagement unless we have this instrument that puts resources on the table, that invited us for joint programming.”

- RC Informant

RCs and all interviewed stakeholders believe the Fund has empowered them by putting resources on the table to convene UN agencies to work together. They also own their role in procuring government engagement, considering the Fund has given them the space to help PUNOs approach the government with one voice. RCs believe the Fund has given them the ability to coordinate programmes effectively and establish a conversation around social protection and innovative financing.

Undeniably for stakeholders, the RC plays a strategic role during the programme design phase: convening agencies and often helping in drafting and revising the proposal before endorsing and submitting it to the Secretariat. Unfortunately, the RC role becomes unclear to most stakeholders, including the RCs themselves, when it comes to the joint programme implementation phase.

At one end of the spectrum, the RC/RCOs have played a strong coordination role: convening UN agencies in the country to design and draft proposals (even including non-resident UN entities in the conversations), enhancing inter-agency collaboration, facilitating government engagement, strategically overlooking and steering the programme, and enabling the monitoring and reporting process.

At the other end of the spectrum, the RC role has been quite shallow: the RC informs the UNCT of the call for proposals, helps PUNOs put the proposal together, endorses the proposal, and then just serves as a channel for reporting back to the Secretariat.

Where programmes fall on this worst-best case scenario spectrum depends on each RC’s interests and personality. In some observed programmes, the RC leads the programme’s operational committees and is proactively engaged. In most observed programmes, the RC has appointed an RCO focal point that actively participates in the task teams that implement the programme. In a select few observed programmes, the RC has been kept in the dark for much of the implementation process and is mostly unaware of the programme.

The Terms of Reference for the Fund specify the participating lead agency, designated in the proposal, would be accountable to the RC for the results and resources provided through the Fund, yet this is not fully institutionalized nor understood at country level. Joint programmes have either an informal or often inexistent reporting line between the RC and PUNOs. An unfortunate result of this haziness has also been an unclear understanding of who is accountable for the programme (RC, leading agency, or all participating agencies)

and an unclear understanding of who is meant to lead the coordination efforts (RC/RCO or the lead agency) on the ground.

Much of the RCs level of engagement is also dependent on the RCO staff capacity and resources. Stakeholders agree the RCs are required to do a large amount of background work and submit documentation for a limited pool of money from the Fund. Given the RCO oversees various programmes and activities, the cost of allocating staff to coordination efforts for these small Joint SDD Fund programmes is high- especially in Multi-Country Offices (MCO) with a wider range of implementation partners and limited MCO staff. When the RCO has been heavily involved in programme coordination, participating

"In MCO there's the perception that we are meant to be doing activities to increase the One UN approach. Yet, there is frustration from agencies on the complexity and time needed to engage in these processes. The MCO has worked hard to try and support with our capacity but it's quite challenging for us to oversee this number of joint programmes. I'm not sure the resources put in are commensurate with the complexity we are facing in moving things forward."

- MCO Informant

stakeholders tend to agree on the importance of the RCO receiving some small funding to support their coordination role. However, from the OIOS's view, the RCs cannot get more authority regarding money allocations without more structural reforms coming from the UN Secretariat, which is unlikely to happen, and might not be a good idea. According to the OIOS's Final Evaluation of the RC system, RC's contribute to UNCTs with their independent leadership and convening role. It's identified in the evaluation as a good practice for RCs to focus on higher level strategic issues, which can be contradicting with RCO's being heavily involved in joint programme coordination and implementation.

Also, coherent with OIOS' view, reputational damage to the RCs who submit too many failed proposals is a risk. Interviewed RCs who have submitted unsuccessful proposals agree: *"everyone is thinking twice before embarking on a new Joint SDG Fund enterprise because of having been discouraged or disfavored."* The RC's convening power is then diminished. This goes against the Fund's goal of strengthening the RCs. Interviewed RCs would appreciate feedback from the Secretariat and the opportunity to resubmit proposals.

Considering the mentioned challenges and limitations, the evaluation concludes the design of the Fund has the potential to empower the RC.

Findings on the RC role and capabilities (AoI IV)

Having pooled funds, such as the Joint SDG Fund, over which the RC has authority, helps strengthen the RC to convene UN agencies to work together. RC's have a role in obtaining government buy-in and engagement. The Fund has given RC's the ability to coordinate programmes and establish a conversation around social protection and innovative financing.

There's a mixed understanding at ground level of the RC's role during the programme implementation phase. At country-level, interviewed stakeholders have an unclear understanding of who is meant to lead the coordination efforts on the ground (RC/RCO or the lead agency) and who is accountable for the programme (RC/RCO, lead agency, or all PUNOs). RC role requires clarification and should include fostering inter-agency collaboration to reduce the possibility of parallel programme implementation.

The RC's engagement with the programmes varies significantly across countries. Greater engagement from the RC was identified in cases where the programme's governance included a steering committee or task team. RC engagement was also dependent on the RCO's staff and resource capacity, which can be limited, especially when the RCO is involved in many joint programmes from different Funds and calls. In Multi-Country Offices, staff engagement in all joint programmes can become overwhelming.

5.6 Management, Processes, and Coordination with other Pooled Funds

This subsection addresses the relationship of the Fund with other MPTFs, based on lessons and comparisons with similar pooled and thematic funds. Particularly, the subsection focuses on identifying lessons from similar funds, especially the COVID-19 MPTF, that have been learned to manage to Fund for better impact.

The evaluation found that at the global level, the Joint SDG Fund has incorporated lessons from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, which is planned to close in mid-2022, building on findings from its [early lessons and evaluability report](#). In particular, **the Joint SDG Fund launched a development emergency modality to avoid creation of parallel funding structures and streamline the UNDS response to future socio-economic crises**. The development emergency modality has been automatically activated to support continued efforts against COVID-19. Furthermore, the Fund in May 2022 activated the modality once again as part of the United Nations system-wide response to global crisis on food, energy and finance affected by the war in Ukraine. The Fund has launched a dedicated call for proposal in response to the global crisis under the guidance of and in full alignment with the analysis provided by the Global Crisis Response Group set up by the Secretary-General.

Donors have highlighted other aspects from the COVID-19 MPTF that should be incorporated into the Joint SDG Fund. These include the need for a strong champion for the Fund, the need for more inclusive government arrangements including closer consultations with donors, closer interactions with RCs, and a quicker and more agile decision-making processes.

In addition to the Joint SDG Fund's relationship with the COVID-19 Fund, there are concerted efforts to 'maximize the coherence, and therefore impact' across existing pooled funds' operating across the development-peace-humanitarian nexus including the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), the Joint SDG Fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), as outlined in the Secretary-General's recent report on the QCPR ([A/77/69](#), 2022)¹³. The report states: 'While these funds will preserve their separate governance and programmatic focus, there is significant scope to improve the coordination of funding allocation to improve overall effectiveness on the ground and contribute to a longer-term effort to introduce more flexible pooled funding mechanisms.' (ibid.)

The three representative global funds – PBF, Joint SDG Fund, CERF – all rely upon the leadership of the RC (and Humanitarian Coordinator where assigned) to facilitate planning

¹³ Within the Secretariat, efforts are underway to better align the CERF, PBF and SDG Fund so that requests from the field can be better joined up. At the same time, in keeping with paragraph 58 of the SG's report on QCPR, the concept of a flexible funding mechanism to help RCs and RC/HCs better align existing country level pooled funds to support work projects across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, is being developed.

and prioritization of the funds across the UNCTs/Humanitarian country teams (HCRs). The convening role of RCs in the planning processes around joint programmes catalyses joined-up programming with diverse stakeholders. The RC is also accountable for the overall results of joint programmes financed through the Joint SDG Fund and the Peacebuilding Fund. The RC or RC/HC also leads on any UN-system wide communications at country level pertaining to the allocation and use of the funds.

Managing the different Fund's processes can become challenging for RCs at country-level. For them, all funds have different guidelines, formats, and processes. When a new fund arrives, it takes the RCO and PUNOs time to learn how to successfully navigate these processes; this is not necessarily efficient. For small UN agencies, these processes may become heavy. Interviewed stakeholders agree design and reporting processes could become more efficient by being similar across funds¹⁴.

"It would be extremely beneficial if the Joint SDG Fund, GEF, and other global funds could agree on how they can leverage one another. If the Joint SDG Fund gives us a small amount of money, but other funds agree to use the allocation as seed financing to allow them to complement, then we would get bigger traction."

- Country level Informant

Since RCs and PUNOs participate in different Funds, they question how all of these Funds make sense together. They firmly believe that coordinating these Funds and finding synergies among them at the global level would make every dollar of the Joint SDG Fund much more impactful. Global funds should come together to leverage one another. Ongoing programmes would benefit from being referred to other funding sources, as most of these programmes will require extra funds to achieve results. PUNOs have identified that funding from the Joint SDG Fund is limited and that the time frame (two years) is too short to achieve that strategic policy change that will accelerate the SDGs.

Findings on lessons from other pooled funds (AoI II and VI)

The Joint SDG Fund has included the need for a development emergency modality based on lessons from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. The Fund has not taken into account other lessons, including the recommendations from the early lessons and evaluability study of the COVID-19 MPTF and those coming from other development partners. Some of these lessons relate to the need for a strong champion for the Fund, a more inclusive governance arrangement which includes closer consultations with donors and RCs, and a quicker and more agile decision making process.

At country level, because RCs and PUNOs participate in different Funds, they question how all these Funds make sense together. They firmly believe that coordinating these Funds at the global level would make every dollar of the Joint SDG Fund much more impactful.

¹⁴ The Fund Secretariat has an ongoing effort to enhance programmatic coordination among pooled funds- especially the CERF, PBF, and the Joint SDG Fund- to ensure synergies and possibilities of leveraging and sustaining efforts across the nexus. Beyond the nexus, according to the Fund Secretariat, the Fund has also closely partnered with the Global Fund on Coral Reefs to co-fund a number of investments that promote blue economies in the SIDS. With the co-funding, the two Fund have already harmonized its processes and reporting templates reduce transaction costs for the UNCTs.

Operational procedures across pooled funds differ, affecting efficiency at the country level (e.g.; templates, reporting procedures, guidelines)

5.7 The Fund's Programmatic Effectiveness

At the Fund's core are the programmes designed by the UNCTs together with local partners, especially governments. The effectiveness and quality of these programmes depends on the call itself decided globally, on the time UNCTs have to prepare proposals, on the period of implementation, and on how these programmes address country priorities. This subsection reviews how the Fund has effectively managed its programmes in terms of identifying the extent to which the programme's achieved, or are expected to achieve, their objectives and results. Analyzing programmatic effectiveness helps identify whether achievement of results (or lack thereof) is due to shortcomings in the programme's implementation or its design.

"If we want to accomplish some real changes, the short duration of the programmes does not work. It takes nearly one year to get the programme up and running, then you're left with just one year to come up with long-lasting change."

- Country level Informant

The four thematic calls issued by the Fund (LNOB, C1, C2, SIDS), address important issues, where change is required to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

Upfront, most informants believe the timing has been too short for both designing and implementing the programmes. Almost all informants agree on a two-year implementation time frame being extremely tight for a successful programming process

and achieving the desired SDG results. All stakeholders mention that the programmatic process has been delayed because of COVID-19.

Still, most of the programmes implemented under the Fund's first LNOB/Social Protection thematic call have achieved notable progress in their implementation, mainly because stakeholders (government and PUNOs) had previously worked on these issues from different angles. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic drew attention on the importance of social protection systems to aid in the emergency response. Under this call, the Fund has supported the design of national multidimensional poverty indexes (MPI) in several sample countries. The MPI may serve as an entry point to the 2030 Agenda and significantly contribute to the COVID-19 recovery, as governments would have better data to design and focalize social policy.

Social Protection Programme in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean

In the Barbados and Eastern Caribbean case study for the SWE of the UNDS Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19, the evaluation found the Joint SDG Fund financed a joint programme between WFP, UNICEF, ILO, UNDP, and UN Women to develop an adaptive universal social protection system in Barbados and Saint Lucia. The programme supported legislative and policy development for integrated social protection delivery, programme design, and service implementation. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, building capacity for social protection became a priority for the governments, the JP provided such technical expertise. The programme has also managed to foster links with IFIs, including the World Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank to provide opportunities to more coherently implement social protection initiatives.

“Government ownership in INFFs is very challenging. Government is mostly person driven rather than system driven. The people who we started the project with are no longer there, and the institutional memory does not transfer”

- Country level Informant

By design, second call (C1) programmes require a significant amount of government engagement and ownership. Governments must grasp innovative SDG financing architecture, including integrated national financing frameworks (INFF), and be willing to develop the technical capacities to close the gap between national planning and budgeting. Planned to start in mid-2020, PUNOs in all sample countries immediately struggled with

government engagement as government priorities shifted towards the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. C1 programmes also require a significant amount of high-level dialogue meetings, which could not be carried out as scheduled due to the COVID-19 lockdown measures imposed at some point in time by all countries in the selection. Government transitions and personnel turnover have also affected C1 programme effectiveness in most case study countries. INFF implementation has been slow and complicated; the evaluation team was unable to observe a completed and operationalized INFF¹⁵.

PUNOs consider that programme effectiveness is heavily dependent on programme design and that the design process is resource intensive. For various UNCTs, the main objective seemed to be pulling proposals together to secure the funds, figuring out how to develop and implement the programme at a later stage. UNCTs feel like they keep chasing the Fund’s submission deadlines, overwhelmed by processes, with no real time to develop a rigorous Theory of Change (ToC), or at least a common understanding of the problem and the potential solutions. As a product of a rushed design process, programmes end up having unclear objectives and ToC, which at a later stage truly affect programme effectiveness and intensify the risk of overpromised and underperformed programmes.

There is also concern with regards to the Fund being spread too thin given the number of Joint Programmes and the amounts of funding involved. This makes it more difficult for the Fund to demonstrate its added value. Some donors consider that the Fund should focus strategically on areas where it adds value and on filling gaps among the mandates of other UN funding programmes.

¹⁵ At the time of the evaluation, only 5 joint programmes under C1 had finalized implementation of activities. As of July 2022, 54 JPs had been granted a no-cost extension of 6 months on average and those 40 INFFs are expected to be developed, validated, and operational by the end of 2022. The Fund has plans to organize an independent portfolio evaluation of INFF programmes in Q2/2023.

To design better programmes, all stakeholders recognize the Fund would need predictability. Currently, UNCTs don't know if a call will be coming this year or what the theme will be. They don't know if the Fund will financially support subsequent phases to complete the current Fund's programmes or revisit some of the proposals that failed to receive funding in the past. RCs from countries that applied but did not receive any funding would greatly appreciate revisiting proposals, fine-tuning, and improving them in the process. They emphasize how proposals take a lot of effort and resources. When proposals are unsuccessful, UNCTs feel demotivated and disincentivized to participate in future calls. They also think they should obtain guidance from the Secretariat on how they are expected to put a proposal together and on how to improve it. Countries that have submitted unsuccessful proposals, like Panama and Ethiopia, would like to learn from the Secretariat the reasons for the rejection. As of now, they believe the feedback received has not been communicated to all PUNOs and has been extremely limited, with no reasonable explanation for the rejection. RCs think they should also be offered the chance to improve the proposal and resubmit.

Summary of the Main Challenges for Quality Programming

- Rushed design process. Although calls are launched by the Secretariat with a two-month notice, by the time UNCTs begin drafting proposals less than two weeks tend to remain before the submission deadline
- Insufficient time for government consultations during the design process
- COVID-19 pandemic delays and challenges in implementation
- Limited funding available
- Short implementation period (often less than two-years)
- Imposed themes that may not necessarily coincide with national priorities or UNSDCF work.

The Fund Secretariat has recently initiated a process to devise a multi-year strategy that will provide a framework of priorities and areas that the Fund will be focused on in the next 3-4 years. The implementation of this strategy can only be possible with capitalization of the Fund, especially through multi-year commitments, to ensure predictability going forward.

“For me, as a UNCT we’ve already decided what our priorities are, related to the results we agreed with the government, and we’ve come up with our action plan which we are now costing. We should be able to submit these actions for funding.

It shouldn’t be the money that drives what we do- we want to define what we want to do and then say ‘this is what we need’. ”

- RC Informant

Interviewed RCs agree they would rather *turn the table around*. They believe they have a greater capacity to identify the priorities and areas that would benefit from funding from the Joint SDG Fund at the country level. In some cases, RCs have been working on identifying flagship areas and specific interventions that could unlock development and catalyze progress toward the SDGs through a collaborative work (as is the case of Uganda and Ethiopia). These flagship areas (or action plans) are designed to be fully aligned with the

UNSDCF and national priorities; they also leverage UN agencies' expertise and are of interest to the whole UNCT. Even in small amounts, funding these areas could greatly empower the RCs, drive UNDS reform, and propel strategic interventions that could drive acceleration towards the SDGs.

Findings on the Fund's quality of programming (AoI III and VI)

There is an overwhelming consensus from country-level respondents on two years being a short timeframe for implementing programmes under any of the Fund's calls. COVID-19 slowed the implementation process, but two years is clearly a short period of time to achieve the programme's main objectives, especially considering how ambitious the programmes objectives tend to be (e.g.: reforming legislation for social protection) and the limited funding they've received (often less than USD 2 million split among several agencies). The Fund may be "spreading itself too thin" with multiple funding windows open to a large number of countries. The Fund is present in more than 100 countries, with only 8 of them having received more than USD 5 million. Stakeholders, at both global and country level, suggest a more focused and targeted approach may be preferable.

The quality of programming is often affected by a rushed programme design phase. When this happens, there is insufficient time to work thoroughly and jointly on the Theory of Change, to ensure government ownership and to fully prepare for a successful programme. RCOs consider that programme effectiveness is heavily dependent on programme design and that the design process is resource intensive.

RC and country team respondents agree they would rather "*turn the table around*". In some cases, RCs have been working on identifying flagship areas and specific interventions that could unlock development and catalyze progress toward the SDGs through collaborative work. The UNCTs and RCs believe they are better positioned to identify strategic opportunities for joint programmes in line with the CF and country needs that would benefit from funding from the Joint SDG Fund.

To design better programmes, stakeholders would need predictability on behalf of the Fund. Currently, UNCTs don't know if a call will be coming this year or what the theme will be. They don't know if the Fund will financially support subsequent phases to complete the current Fund's programmes or revisit some of the proposals that failed to receive funding in the past.

5.8 Global Level Governance Structures

This subsection analyzes the Fund's current governance structure to identify needed changes for the Joint SDG Fund to have a more inclusive governance structure and enhance the visibility and leadership of the Fund to stakeholders.

The Fund's allocations and performance at the country level are greatly influenced by the Fund's governance structures at the global level.

The Strategic Advisory Group

According to the Fund's Terms of Reference: "The Joint SDG Fund governance structure is led by the Strategic Advisory Group, which is chaired by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and Chair of the UNSDG. The Strategic Advisory Group is the overarching high-level mechanism that will provide leadership, vision and strategic direction. The Strategic Advisory Group acts as a high-level forum that facilitates consultation among stakeholders of the Joint SDG Fund, including the United Nations, partner countries, contributing Member States, the private sector and civil society. The Strategic Advisory Group will recommend strategic priorities and take stock of overall progress".

The Operational Steering Committee

The Operational Steering Committee (OSC) is tasked with ensuring "effective and efficient management and coordination of operational and technical aspects of the Joint SDG Fund" and that "the Joint SDG Fund remains fast and light and able to respond to country needs through Resident Coordinators and UNCTs, in a timely way."

From its review of documentation and information provided to it by respondents, the evaluation understands that the Fund was initiated as an inter-agency fund between UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, WFP and UNFPA. The structure of the Joint SDG Fund, with Participating UN Organizations establishing a fund through the appointment of an Administrative Agent is the standard approach in establishing pass-through funds; plenty of UN funds (i.e. more than 100) have been established in a similar fashion.

The governance structure of the Fund was established by the five agencies and the Strategic Advisory Committee chaired by the DSG was added later to help give the Fund strategic direction related to higher level reform. The five agencies are the senior decision-makers of the Operational Steering Committee. Furthermore, all decisions of the OSC are reached by consensus, which may not always be in the best interest of the Fund. DCO is part of the OSC but without decision-making rights. DCO plays a role in providing direct reports on the Fund to the DSG, as SAG chair, and advocating for the Fund to Member States and stakeholders by organizing high-level meetings and events.

Though the historical legitimacy of the OSC's role, responsibilities and organisation, is understood and recognised generally, there is consensus among key informants to this evaluation that changes to the OSC are required to address aspects of its functioning that are perceived as problematic, with a view to enhancing its value to the Fund and its operations.

Within this broad consensus, views range from "making adjustments", e.g., rotating the chair of the OSC, to its fundamental restructuring, e.g., changing its role and mode of functioning.

In any event, there is general agreement that changes should be made to the OSC to address what are perceived to be, among others, the following key issues:

- *Predominance of member agencies*: OSC member agencies participate in most Joint Programmes (JP). UNDP participates in 73.95% of them, UNICEF participates in 57.7%, ILO in 27.5%, UNFPA in 19.7%, and WFP in 15.5%. These five OSC agencies have received 70.3% of the approved budget for the Joint SDG Fund.
 - The view was expressed to the evaluation that, as the governance structure of the Fund was established before the UN reform, the structure could be seen as an attempt to reconcile "nervous development agencies" ahead of the UN reform, which led to a "restrictive" OSC membership with patterns of financing that follow the membership. On the other hand, the reasoning was also put forward that these agencies are de facto the ones "on the ground that get things done", and that the allocation of funds simply reflects this reality.
- *Credibility*: In some cases, respondents were unsure of the commitment of OSC member agencies to the Fund and its objective of supporting the UNDS reform, citing, among other things, weak visibility of engagement in, and support for, the Fund by agency heads and senior management, both globally and in countries. Other interviewed stakeholders voiced their concerns over OSC members not having incentives to champion the Fund or advocate for resource mobilization.

- *Aspects of performance:* Key informants commented that, in their view, the level of the OSC should be raised, as it appears too small and too technical to deliver on all expectations, adding that there are likely management decisions that it is currently responsible for that could be fully delegated to the Secretariat with appropriate capacity and oversight. The evaluation also found general agreement among respondents that OSC executive management processes and their resulting decisions, are perceived to be slow and insufficiently responsive for RCs and UNCTs to take full advantage of evolving windows of opportunity in countries. Consequently, it is not clear to them that the OSC's current organisation is sufficiently well suited for it to make sure that "the Joint SDG Fund remains fast and light and able to respond to country needs through Resident Coordinators and UNCTs, in a timely way."

The OSC and the Secretariat

Interviewed stakeholders generally express a high degree of satisfaction with the responsiveness and quality of support from the Chair of the OSC and the Fund Secretariat. Yet, from its examination of documentation, including minutes from OSC meetings and the documentary and web-based outputs of the Secretariat, as well as its interviews with key informants, the evaluation finds substantive support for a more efficient division of responsibilities and management authority between the Secretariat and the OSC.

There is also general agreement that a more performance-based, rather than mandate-based, organisation of responsibilities between the Secretariat and the OSC would likely yield improvements in efficiency, including with respect to procedures and processing time relative to calls and approvals of Fund proposals.

These considerations should also include the required capacity of the Secretariat as well as its line of reporting to the senior political level in the EOSG.

All respondents who interact with the Secretariat express their satisfaction with its responsiveness and the quality of its support.

Findings on the Fund's governance structure (AoI II and IV)

The current governance structure of the Fund was envisioned and created before the full launch of the UNDS reform process both at the global and country levels. Hence, there are missing pieces in the structure including the limited role of DCO and non-OSC UN partners as well as Member States. The OSC members have conflicting interests for resource mobilization, visibility, and championing the Fund. Operational Steering Committee member agencies participate in most Joint Programmes and receive most of the funds available. The current governance structure is not able to react quickly, make decisive decisions in support of the UNDS reform and SDGs, and serve as a key tool for RCs and UNCTs.

Issues and opportunities for improvement regarding the Fund's governance architecture that were identified by most respondents are: a strong and distinct value proposition for the Fund; visible and sustained political leadership; meaningful engagement with the range of donors and potential donors; substantive engagement with, and accountability requirements for, the Fund's executive, the agencies receiving funding and the RC system.

Operational Steering Committee member agencies participate in most Joint Programmes and receive most of the funds available.

Respondents generally express a high degree of satisfaction with the responsiveness of the Secretariat and the quality of its support. They also consider that the procedures for responding to calls could be made simpler and more efficient, as could reporting requirements. UNCTs would benefit from clearer feedback from the Secretariat on programme selection criteria. RCs from countries that have had unsuccessful proposals, note they would benefit from better feedback from the Secretariat, especially to have successful proposals in the next calls. When proposals are unsuccessful, UNCTs feel demotivated and disincentivized to participate in future calls. RC's convening power is also jeopardized by unsuccessful proposals.

5.9 Fund Capitalization, Value Proposition, and Resource Mobilization

The evaluation proceeds to analyze the Fund's opportunities and challenges to reach a scale in its capitalization to bring about transformative change in support of the UNDS reform and the implications from the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs. For the Fund to reach scale in its capitalization, it requires a clear value proposition. The subsection also presents the main challenges identified with regards to the Fund's current value proposition.

Fund Capitalization

The intended level of annual capitalization of the Fund, set at \$290 million annually, was agreed upon within the QCPR funding compact, but has not been achieved. According to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office Gateway for the Joint SDG Fund, total contributions from donors stood at \$236,345,246 since the start of the Fund.

Key informants at the global level, acknowledge the fact that the Fund is not capitalized as expected, and risks being perceived as losing momentum due to the level of contributions, number of donors and engagement of new donors. The expected level of capitalization at \$290 million annually is assessed differently by key informants. Some consider it to be a reasonable figure intended to help the Fund build a "critical mass" and reach more countries, while others tend to consider it as an "artificial number" that was not negotiated based on a "real business case."

Value Proposition (Relevance and Additionality)

In the context of the Fund, the value proposition refers to a simple statement that summarizes why stakeholders (including donors) should participate in the Fund. The value proposition should clearly communicate and capture the Fund's relevance in addressing stakeholder needs and the features of the Fund that make it truly unique (additionality).

The Deputy Secretary General has articulated the Fund's value proposition as follows: "two elements – more effective, integrated policy support and much greater financing – are the *raison d'être* of the Joint SDG Fund, an innovative instrument designed to incentivize the transformative policy shifts and stimulate the strategic investments required to get the world back on track to meet the SDGs."

Yet, the global-level evidence shows that the manner in which the value of the Fund is understood at the highest political levels and agreed on, e.g., to incentivize, catalyse, innovate, transform systems, etc., does not carry through logically and coherently to the way in which the Fund is governed and managed. This includes how it monitors and reports on its performance, and the way in which donors assess the return on their contribution. In

other words, while there is consensus on the Fund's potential value, its value proposition is not embodied objectively and practically in its functioning.

As such, the value proposition of the Fund remains a somewhat abstract notion that to date appears to exist mostly in words, that is not very visible in the practical organisation and management of the Fund and so is reduced to the business-as-usual default of equating value to the achievement of results, a simplification further exacerbated by their quantification.

The major donors believe it is a critical time to reignite the Joint SDG Fund with a clearer value proposition specifically focused on its value added to the UNDS reform and the SDGs. It would be important to highlight the jointness of the Fund and how it brings together various UN entities – both small and large and with different sectoral expertise – at the country level for catalytic and accelerating actions for the SDGs.

Many of the donors to the Fund have expressed that they see the Fund as an integral part of the UNDS reform and view their support as a key element of the QCPR funding compact. They also see the Fund as a catalytic tool for innovation led by the RC to convene the UNCTs for 'breaking new kinds of grounds' in areas of integrated policy support and leveraging innovative financing.

Resource Mobilization

In addition to a clear value proposition, the donors called on the need **for more resource mobilization leadership and visibility especially from the senior levels** of the UN including the Deputy Secretary-General, the executive heads of the UN agencies, funds and programmes, Director of DCO and the OSC chair. The evaluation simultaneously notes that executive heads of the UN agencies, funds, and programmes have conflicting incentives for joint resource mobilization for the Joint SDG Fund, as they consider it competes with available funding for their own agencies. In this regard, agencies also lack incentives to showcase the Fund's joint-programme results.

Still, donors requested that much more visibility of the Fund needs to be given by the UN system especially as a key factor of the Funding Compact. Hence, it will be important that top UN leadership politically reach out to Member States to build support for the Joint SDG Fund and that RCs in countries benefitting from the Joint SDG Fund showcase to both current and prospective donors what is being achieved and how important support to the Joint SDG Fund is.

However, it is important to recognize that the number of Member States contributing to inter-agency pooled funds have actually decreased from 59 Member States in 2017 to 48 in 2020, which is well below the target of 100 Member States by 2021 ([A/77/69 Annex 2](#), 2022). This indicates that the majority of donors continue to direct contribution to UN agencies, funds and programmes, especially in development financing, rather than shifting their policies towards supporting inter-agency pooled funding mechanisms, despite their added value in strengthening coherence, reducing fragmentation, allowing sharing of risks, and tackling multi-dimensional challenges with comprehensive and innovative solutions.

Without major shifts in donor policies at the capitals towards UN inter-agency pooled funding, it is unlikely for the Joint SDG Fund to be able to mobilize the level of capitalization it requires to be fully effective and efficient in delivering its strategic mandate. Therefore, it would be important to emphasize this aspect of inter-governmental accountability in enhancing donors' commitment and expanding the donor base towards inter-agency pooled

funds, including the Joint SDG Fund, continuously as part of the QCPR and the Funding Compact. Increasing funding for the Joint SDG Fund is a shared responsibility, the Fund has to make itself more attractive to donors, and donors have to positively relate to the commitments made in the Funding Compact.

The evaluation found that the question of how thematic priorities are set is an important one to donors, who expressed a desire for better communication from the Fund on this process and more meaningful consultations with them on these considerations. From a country perspective the view was also put forth that, although thematic priorities set globally made sense to maintain coherence of UNDS efforts in respect of the SDGs, their relevance should be assessed at country level relative to country context, priorities and the applicable UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

Findings on capitalization, value proposition, and resource mobilization (AoI I and V)

The Fund requires a sufficient level of capitalization and contributions from a broader and diversified range of donors. Major donors believe it is a critical time to reignite the Joint SDG Fund with a clearer message on its value added in particular to the UNDS reform.

Donors call on the need for more resource mobilization leadership and visibility especially from the senior levels of the UN.

Some of the reasons why the Fund is undercapitalized relate to donors not finding the value proposition to be clear enough and donors feeling the Fund lacks a distinct added value. It is difficult to sell the Fund when the purpose is unclear. Donors are unsure about how the Fund contributes to furthering the UNDS Reform.

Undercapitalization also relates to limited will from donors to contribute to UN pooled funds and lack of efforts from the UN system to advocate and mobilize resources for pooled funds.

For donors and country-level informants, the process for the choice of thematic priorities is not always clear, can appear top-down, and would call for more transparency and inclusion of key stakeholders.

6. Conclusions

During the Decade of Action to reach the SDGs by 2030 the world is faced with continuing impacts from COVID-19, food and inflation crisis and increasing effects of climate change. The Deputy Secretary General articulate the justification for the existence of the Joint SDG Fund as: *"...more effective, integrated policy support and much greater financing – are the raison d'être of the Joint SDG Fund, an innovative instrument designed to incentivize the transformative policy shifts and stimulate the strategic investments required to get the world back on track to meet the SDGs."* Therefore, the lens applied for the evaluation is whether the Fund's programme promote catalytical action through joint programmes that incentivize transformative policy shifts rather than quantitative numbers. Contribution to impact on acceleration of SDGs through quantitative numbers is an assessment that needs to be made some time after the programmes are completed.

The evaluation concludes that the Fund is relevant to the strategic reason behind creating the Joint SDG Fund – financing UN catalytic action through joint programmes to incentivize transformative upstream policy shifts and leverage additional investments to get the SDG

back on track. The contributions to the acceleration of the SDGs by leveraging the repositioned UNDS serve as the Fund's broad strategic purpose and mandate.

The joint programmes supported by the Fund are living up to the Fund's strategic intentions considering the complexity of its mission, the challenging contexts at the country level, and the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund has supported new types of joint programmes leveraging the new generation of RCs and UNCTs with new partnerships within and beyond the UNDS.

The evaluation concludes that the Fund serves as an integral part of the UNDS reform in financing the programmatic implementation of the UNDS at the country level for the SDGs. The Fund leverages the new generation of RCs and UNCTs by ensuring the developmental financing for its activation through the inter-agency pooled fund mechanism. Interviewees from UNCTs have noted that this has been the closest they have ever worked together. The Fund has also given the RC's the ability and space to coordinate joint programmes and establish conversations with stakeholders, especially government partners, around social protection and innovative financing.

However, the Fund still faces structural challenges in relation to UNDS reform process, including competition among UN agencies, conflicting reporting lines, limited human resource capacities for small agencies to participate, and pre-existing government-UN agency partnerships. The country teams express the need for better clarity between the role of the RCs and the lead UN agency. These challenges make UN agencies work in parallel in several joint programmes.

The evaluation concludes that the quality of programming depends significantly, among other factors, on the quality of the joint programmes' preparation and that, to date, processes and procedures of calls for proposals do not always allow for fulsome preparation, including close consultations with government counterparts. The evaluation concludes that the Fund's thematic calls do not always coincide well with national priorities. The evaluation determines that the most successful programmes seemed to be those where the thematic calls coincided with ongoing UNSDCF work and predefined national priorities.

In terms of the Fund's governance, the stakeholders generally express a high degree of satisfaction with the responsiveness and quality of support from the Chair of the Operational Steering Committee (OSC) and the Fund Secretariat. The evaluation concludes that, because of its organizational structure and mode of functioning, the OSC cannot adequately perform the executive management function the Fund requires to be agile, responsive, and effective. DCO, non-OSC UN partners, and Member States have no roles in the OSC. Due to the existing competition for available funding, OSC members may have conflicting interests in resource mobilization and visibility when it comes to championing the Fund.

There is a strong consensus among all stakeholders that the Fund requires a sufficient level of capitalization and contributions from a broader and diversified range of donors. As these conditions are not currently met, the existing level and nature of capitalization put the Fund's strategic intentions at risk. The Fund's position can be further strengthened to gain the trust and support from a diverse group of donors by making strategic shifts in its programming, governance, resource mobilisation, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity. The pathways to these strategic shifts are presented in the recommendations.

Finally, with some two or less years of programme implementation, it is too early to assess the full outcome and impact of the Fund's joint programmes. While some are indeed showing potential and progress in their results chain, especially those that are aligned closely with UNSDCF and national developmental priorities with ownership by the Governments, there is need for a follow-up evaluation in 2-3 years to systematically assess whether the Fund's programmes have resulted in the catalytic unleashing of multi-dimensional policies and unlocking of additional financing after full implementation.

7. Recommendations

1. Improve programming through the following three actions.

- a) **Joint programme driven by country context and priorities.** The Fund should change its programmatic approach by providing space, time and capacities for RCs and UNCTs to identify strategic opportunities that bring out the unique value of UN collective action, emphasising countries' priorities, in line with the CF. The UNCTs, under RC leadership, should be allowed to identify areas where UN entities can come together and demonstrate the added value of jointness – areas where the UN delivering together is more than the sum of individual agency actions. The focus of the Fund should be maintained by highlighting the priority thematic areas in the value proposition document and in the guidance note, all while ensuring country ownership. The call for proposals will be as per the value proposition. The value proposition along with competitiveness among the RC/UNCT will help to keep the programmes focused and dynamic.
- b) **Improve and ensure quality programme design.** Provide preparatory funding and adequate time for programme design to ensure the quality of the programme at entry. The programme design should consider an assessment of capacity, inclusion of cross-cutting areas and sustainability at the end of project. The design should also be clear on the meaning of jointness at all stages of the programme cycle (design, planning, advocacy, implementation, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation).
- c) **Simplify guidance and processes.** Review and streamline guidance and procedures in accordance with the improvements being made to programming and value proposition.

Rationale

Country contexts differ widely, and global thematic areas do not always resonate with the priorities at the country level. Evidence from the case studies shows that the programmes with strong alignment with the CF/government priority, the programmes were more successful. The country teams also expressed need for more time, capacities, and resources to support better programmatic design to ensure quality entry for complex developmental approaches with sufficient engagement with multiple UN and governmental agencies.

Benefits

There is greater ownership by all stakeholders at the country level for projects that the country has prioritized through the CF. It is also well evidenced from other evaluations that poorly designed projects lead to poor results. Providing preparatory funding and adequate time for project design will have multiple benefits: it would incentivize country teams to

design programmes in a collaborative way, it will give time for the inclusion of small agencies whose technical expertise might be critical for the project, it will allow for a project that brings out the unique value of UN to work as a system, this approach will facilitate the coordinating power of the RC, and it allows for dialogue with government and partners, clearly identifying countries' priorities. Programmes that include cross-cutting areas and sustainability into the design of the programme have a better chance of addressing cross-cutting areas and ensuring sustainability.

- 2. Strengthen the value proposition (relevance and additionality) during the next phase of the Fund.** The value proposition should be centered in leveraging the UNDS Reform at country level by promoting well designed joint programmes, addressing countries priorities and strategic opportunities identified together by governments and UNCTs, and by bringing out the unique value of UN collective action. The focus of the fund and its thematic priorities are essential part of the value proposition so that fund is the heartbeat of the UN development system for catalytical and innovative programmes that promotes transformative policy shifts to accelerate achievement of the SDGs during the decade of action.

Rationale

The Fund needs a clearer distinctive value proposition. The Fund should elaborate on its strategic purpose aligned with accelerating the SDGs by leveraging the UNDS reform in a clear value proposition. The value proposition would also need to reflect the programmatic changes proposed by this evaluation.

Benefits

A value proposition that is developed in close consultation with the Fund's stakeholder groups will ensure better buy-in and increase possibilities for resource mobilization.

- 3. Make the governance system more inclusive, agile and effective through the following actions.**

- a) The Operational Steering Committee (OSC) could be replaced by an empowered and impartial executive head of Fund. If legal and administrative procedures do not allow, the OSC can be given an advisory role.
- b) The new governance bodies should be inclusive of select RCs to represent country-level views, DCO, and other UN agencies as appropriate.

Rationale

The current governance structure of the Fund was created before the launch of the UN Reform. The structure does not have the inclusion of DCO, a majority of the UNSDG members, member states, or RCs. Evidence suggests that OSC has a conflict-of-interest in resource mobilization and OSC entities participate in most of the joint programmes receiving most of the funding. Moreover, the COVID-19 MPTF set an example of an effective and efficient governance/management structure with a SG's designate having fully authority to manage the fund with support from an inclusive advisory committee.

Benefits.

A more inclusive governance system is possible through systematic consultations with key stakeholders and a SAG that provides strategic guidance. An executive head with similar authority as the SG's designate will be able to give the Fund the leadership and visibility it requires.

4. Conduct a review in coordination with the MPTF-O and the global fund secretariats to improve coherence and synergies at global and country level between pooled funds.

The assumption is that finding ways to improve coherence and synergies at the global and country level between pooled funds will help to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

Rationale

There is a growing number of pooled funds and a growing number of joint programmes that RCs and PUNO participate in. Each of the pooled funds have their own guidance and process. Many agencies, especially the smaller ones, find navigation through the guidance and process tedious. This adversely affects the workload and effectiveness at the country level.

Benefits

Coordination of calls for proposals, harmonizing procedures, processes, and guidelines, and, above all, simplification will not only help global and country-based pooled funds to leverage each other, but also align better with the spirit of the UN Development Reform.

5. Greater commitment to resource mobilization to strengthen capitalization and improve predictability of funding, through the following four actions:

- a) More visibility and stronger resource mobilization leadership for the Fund from senior levels of the UN, including the new and impartial executive head of the Fund.
- b) Improved showcasing by the UN of the value of jointness, demonstrating the added value of investing in collective UN actions through the Fund.
- c) Frequent and inclusive consultations with existing and prospective donors, in order to strengthen their understanding and confidence in the Fund and broaden the donor base.
- d) RCs should continue to employ strategies to leverage country level funding to support Joint SDG programmes.

Rationale

A capitalization of \$US 290 million annually is seen in general as a reasonable figure that can provide the critical scale needed for the Fund to have an impact at the country level, it is important to donors that this funding envelope be built on a real business case. Member states have committed to this level of capitalization of the fund in the Funding Compact but have so far not fulfilled their commitment. It is assumed that the recommendation to have an empowered leadership to the Fund will help the Fund to better champion the Fund and provide visibility and donor engagement. As the Fund moves to the next phase, it may be a critical time to re-engage with a broader and diversified range of donors with an empowered leadership.

Benefits

The Joint SDG fund is seen by all respondents to this evaluation as a worthwhile instrument that has the potential to support progress towards the SDGs and strengthen UNDS reform. There is evidence from previous reforms, including Delivering as One, that shows the reform objectives stalling or reversing once funding as an incentive is removed or limited.

6. Clarify the role of the RC in steering and coordination of joint programmes funded by the Joint SDG Fund and through the revision of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF).

Rationale

Coordination between institutions and agencies has always been difficult, but it improves whenever the coordination is institutionalized. Currently, there is a mixed understanding of RC's role during the programme implementation phase. The confusion grows especially in relation to who is accountable to the programme RC/RCO or the lead agency. The issues arise mainly when one of the PUNOs has not delivered on its responsibility and the project is failing. Whenever there was greater engagement of the RCs through a steering committee or task team the Joint SDG Fund programmes were better governed and managed. Institutionalizing the RC's role would help avoid confusion and potential friction with lead agencies.

Benefits

Clarity and systematic application of the RC role in Joint Programmes funded by the Joint SDG Fund will help leverage the unique value of UN collective action.

7. Continue to strengthen monitoring, lessons learned, evaluation and greater visibility of the Fund. The Fund should streamline programme monitoring requirements, while ensuring measurement of catalytical results for policy shifts. The Fund should provide oversight to the conduct of decentralized evaluations under the leadership of RC. At the global level, across the UN system and with external partners, the Fund should facilitate spaces for cross-learning and knowledge generation and sharing, especially through South-South and North-South-South exchanges

Rationale

With the Fund's complex joint programmes and new partnerships, there is a need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation function of the Fund to sufficiently assess and monitor jointness as a pathway to catalytical policy shifts. The Fund should also ensure that there is a mechanism to check the quality of the decentralized evaluations and follow-up on assessing the Fund's impact as the programmes fully mature.

Benefits

The Joint SDG Fund, with catalytical, innovative, new types of programmes and new types of partnership, has much to offer for learning and evidence generation, as well as making successful Fund's programmes more visible. This is a unique opportunity that offers learning for the UN System and should be fully captured.

8. Capacitating the Fund Secretariat to ensure support to the new governance/management structure and strategic value proposition. The human resource requirements for the next phase of the programme should be considered in a

more structured way, taking into account support to countries for developing new types of programmes, monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing, and, importantly, the visibility of the Joint SDG Fund programme.

Rationale

This evaluation has recommended changes in programming, improvements in governance and management, improvements in monitoring and evaluation, and improvements in knowledge sharing. Therefore, there is a need to have capacity to make these improvements.

Benefits

The Fund covers more than 100 countries across a range of diverse programmes and themes, therefore having capacity to provide a help desk to countries to design better programmes, to share knowledge, to increase visibility of the funds results, and have better M&E capacity, which will help to improve the overall results of the SDG Funds.

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Annex A: Glossary

Accountability: How responsibilities have been managed to create value, based on two fundamental principles- one should not be expected to do the impossible, and one should not be accountable for things over which they have no reasonable control over.

Capitalization: The accumulation of resources in support of the Fund's goals and objectives over time.

Catalytic potential: In the context of the Fund, catalytic is defined as "producing 'chain-reactions' in development and financial terms" focused on unleashing multi-dimensional policies and unlocking additional financing.

Coherence: The compatibility of the Fund with other UN interventions in a country. The extent to which other interventions support or undermine the Fund and vice versa.

Efficiency: The extent to which the Fund delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. "Economic" is the conversion of inputs into outputs in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. Timely delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context.

Governance Structure: The Fund's steering structure, in charge of setting and adjusting direction. A governance function steers towards the vision, sets and adjusts overall or strategic priorities, determines the accountability framework, and receives accountability from executive management. The governance structure should represent the interests of the Fund.

Programmatic Effectiveness: The extent to which the programme's achieved, or are expected to achieve, their objectives and results. Analyzing programmatic effectiveness helps identify whether achievement of results (or lack thereof) is due to shortcomings in the programme's implementation or its design.

Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the Fund continue or are likely to continue.

Transformative policy change: In the context of the Fund, refers to introducing policies and interventions that are:

- a) integrated across sectors and across organizations breaking down the siloed approach;
- b) accelerating progress towards the Goals in terms of reducing the time to reach the concrete targets;
- c) catalyzing additional follow-on action and/or financing from diverse stakeholders, and;
- d) sustainable through the additional resources mobilized, capacities that were built, and the systems that has changed.

Value Proposition: In the context of the Fund, refers to a clear statement that summarizes the Fund's relevance in addressing stakeholder needs and the features of the Fund that make it truly unique (additionality). This statement would reflect why stakeholders (including donors) should participate in the Fund.

Annex B: Persons Interviewed

Scoping Report Interview List

Stakeholder Group	Name	Position
UN RC/RCO (8)	Valerie Julliard	RC, UN Indonesia
	Afke Bootsman	Head of RCO, UN Indonesia
	Sarah Aver	Joint Programme Officer, UN Indonesia
	Erlangga A Landiyanto	Data & reporting officer, UN Indonesia
	Sabine Machl	RC, UN Georgia
	Maria Jose Torres Macho	RC, UN Chile (formerly RC, UN Malawi)
	Consuelo Vidal Bruce	RC, UN Cuba
	Tapan Mishra	RC, UN Mongolia
UN partners / OSC members (14)	Jennifer Topping	Executive Coordinator, MPTF-O
	Ilaria Carnevali	Deputy Executive Director, MPTF-O
	Mari Matsumoto	Portfolio officer, MPTF-O
	Raul de Mora Jimenez	Communication officer, MPTF-O
	Robert Piper	ASG/Director, DCO
	Rosemary Kalapurakal	Deputy Director, DCO
	Haoliang Xu	ASG/UNDP, Chair of OSC
	Coco Ushiyama	Director of UN systems, WFP
	Romina Woldemariam	Partnership officer, WFP
	Solome Zemene	Partnership officer, UNICEF
	Raky Kane	Senior Social Protection officer, ILO
	Mira Ihalainen	Partnership officer, UNFPA
	Lisa Kurbiel	Head of Secretariat, Joint SDG Fund

	Michelle McDonnough	Gyles-	Director of Sustainable Development Unit, EOSG
Donors / Member State Representatives (10)	Moe Siv Cathrine		Minister Counsellor, UN Mission, Norway
	Rina Kristmoen		Senior Advisory, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
	Balbir Singh		Evaluation Unit, NORAD
	Gerard Steeghs		Director of Multilateral Organizations, The Netherlands
	Yvonne Wilmer		Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands
	Martijn Engels		First Secretary, UN Mission, The Netherlands
	Liliane Tarnutzer		Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland
	Ulla Jarvela-Seppinen		Evaluation Unit, Finland
	Jan Matyas		SDG Unit, European Commission
	Federica Petrucci		Evaluation Unit, European Commission

Global Level Interviews

Name	Organization	Position
Lisa Kurbiel	Fund Secretariat	Head of Secretariat
Kim Heewoong	Fund Secretariat	Reporting & Evaluation Manager
Suzanne Steensen	MOPAN	Head of MOPAN Secretariat
Ted Freeman	Consultant	Early Lessons and Evaluability of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF / Evaluation of COVID-19 response
Butholezwe Ncube	OIOS	Principal auditor internal audit of Joint SDG Fund Secretariat in Oct-Nov 2021 -
Patrick Breard	Consultant	Mid-term review LNOB portfolio
Karl Backéus	(Donor) Sweden	Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN in New York

Markus Reisle	(Donor) Switzerland	Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in New York
Danielle Maniscalco	(Prospective donor) USA	
Michelle Gyles-McDonnough	EOSG	Director of Sustainable Development Unit
Haoliang Xu	UNDP	ASG, Chair of Joint SDG Fund OSC
Robert Piper	DCO	Director
Rosemary Kalapurakal	DCO	Deputy Director
Jennifer Topping	MPTF-O	Executive Coordinator
John Hendra	UN Retired	External consultant
Andres Franco	UNICEF	Deputy Director, Multilateral Partnerships
Beate Andrees	ILO	Special Rep to the UN and Director of ILO New York
Veronika Wodsak	ILO	Social protection technical expert
Paul Skoczylas	WFP	Deputy Division Director
Arthur Erken	UNFPA	Director of Communications and Strategic Partnerships
Pramaporn Mongkolthavorn	UNFPA	Special Assistant to the Director Policy and Strategy Division
Jens Wandel	UN Retired	Former SG designate COVID recovery Fund
Massimilio Riva	Fund Secretariat	In charge of the INFF and investment portfolio (C1/2)
Nenad Rava	Fund Secretariat	Manages the LNOB portfolio and has been with the Fund early on
Vivalda Poggiali	Fund Secretariat	Governance and partnerships

Bangladesh

Name	Organization
Alexius Chicham	ILO
Animesh Biswas	UNFPA
Hasina Begum	UNICEF
Mazedul Islam	RCO
Mohammad Nazmul Avi Hossain	ILO
Ranjit Chakraborty	UNDP
Sakshi Chadha	UNCDF
Shohel Rana	UN Women

Tapati Saha	UN Women
Zahid Hossain	RCO

Lebanon

Name	Organization	Position
Najat Rochdi	UN RCO	Resident Coordinator
Rony Gedeon	UN RCO	RCO Main JP Focal Point for LNOB
Sarah Hague	UNICEF	Chief of Social Policy
Yasmine Ibrahim	UNICEF	Social Policy Specialist
Melanie Hauenstein	UNDP	Resident Representative
Kawthar Dara	UNDP	Senior Economist
Jad Alhalabi	UN Women	Project Officer
Luca Pellerano	ILO	Senior Social Protection Specialist (Regional Office for the Arab States)
Abed Ayoubi	UNDP	Senior Economic Officer
Elie Choueiri	FAO	Programme Associate and Focal Point for LNOB

Samoa

Name	Organization
Albert Meredith	Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Samoa
Anne Herman	Ministry of Internal Affairs, Cook Islands
Aya Aoki	UNESCO
Christina Mualia-Lima	UNDP
Dulcie Wong-Sin	Samoa Tourism Authority
Dwayne Bentley	Samoa Tourism Authority
Gatoloai Tili Afamasaga	Samoa National Tripartite Forum
Klem Ryan	Resident Coordinator Office
Lemauga Hobart Vaai	Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Mele Mauala	UN WOMEN
Papali'i Benjamin Sila	Samoa Bureau of Statistics
Ronesh Prasad	UNICEF
Sanjesh Neidu	UNESCAP
Simona Marinescu	Resident Coordinator
Tepaeru Herrmann	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Cook Islands
Tomasi Peni	ILO

Uganda

Name	Organization	Position
Adekemi Ndieli	UN Women	a.i. Country Representative
Albert Byamughisha	SDG Secretariat	Senior Technical Advisor
Ayumi Yasuda	Resident Coordinator Office	UN Coordination Analyst
Barbara Mirembe	UN Women	Programme Officer in Gender Mainstreaming
Biof	WHO	Communicable Diseases Cluster
Brigitte Mukanga-Eno	UNHCR	Deputy Representative
Comachesh	WHO	Emergency Preparedness and Response
Daniel Alemu	UNFPA	Deputy Representative
David Hiridi	UNHCR	Senior Technical Coordinator
Dmitry Pozhidaev	UNCDF	Head of Office
Edward Walugembe	OPM Strategic Coordination and Implementation	Commissioner
Florence Mpabulungi	UNFPA	Programme Specialist in Data
Francis Wasswa	UNDP	National Economist and Advisor on the SDGs Strategy and Policy Unit
Grace Gulere	UN Women	Programme Specialist for Gender Statistics
Joel Mundua	UNCDF	Lead Specialist for Governance
Joseph Muvawala	National Planning Authority	Executive Director
Kisembo Agnes	UN Women	Programme Specialist for Intergovernmental Gender-Responsive Budgeting
Mary Otieno	UNFPA	Country Representative
Masaba Andrew	Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development	Assistant Commissioner
Molly Opwonya Apio	Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development	Senior Finance/Legal Officer
Muhumuza Ntacyo Juvenal	Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development	Commissioner
Nassan	WHO	Data Management
Pascal Byarugaba	UN Women	Monitoring and Evaluation
Sama Hassun	WHO	External Relations Officer
Sandy Dennis	UNCDF	Local Development Finance Officer
Shelia Ngatia	UNDP	Deputy Representative
Solomon	WHO	Emergency Offices
Sunraj Man Shrestha	WHO	Programme Management Officer
Susan Namondo	Resident Coordinator Office	Resident Coordinator
Tarik Kubach	European Union	Programme Officer

Tatsuhiko Furumoto	Resident Coordinator Office	Head
Tseday Alemsegedt	UNAIDS	Global Fund Implementation Advisor

Uruguay

Name	Organization	Position
Albaladejo, Manuel	UNIDO	Regional Representative
Benia, Wilson	WHO/PAHO	Specialist
Berro, Mariano	Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation	Executive Director
Botino, Gabriel	UNDP	Deputy
Charro, Alberto	BBVA	Country Manager
Cobas, Paula	Joint SDG Fund	Programme Coordinator for C2
Dade, Graciela	UN Uruguay	Human Rights Advisor
de Brun, Julio	Planning and Budgeting Office	Advisor to the Director
Díaz, Johanna	ANIMA (NGO)	Fundraiser
Ferrer, Guillermo	Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining	Technical Advisor for the Energy Department
Ferriolo, Mateo	UNIDO	National Programme Officer
Fichte, Geoffrey	HSBC	General Manager
Fuletti, Dario	UNICEF	M&E Officer
Furtado, Magdalena	UN Women	Country Programme Manager
Guerra, Valentina	Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining	International Relationship Advisor for the Ministry
Guinaud, Michel	UNICEF	Officer in Charge
Lamas, Lorena	UN Women	Specialist
Liller, Stefan	UNDP	Resident Representative
Montenegro, Hernán	WHO/PAHO	Representative
Pacifico, Tania	IOM	Mission Representative
Pereira, Diego	Joint SDG Fund	Programme Coordinator for C1
Porcile, Gabriel	ECLAC	Director- ECLAC Montevideo Office
Preve, Magdalena	UNDP	Programme Officer
Quirici, Amalia	National Development Agency	General Manager
Rapetti, Paola	Global Compact	Global Compact Executive Director
Ruiz Hiebra, Pablo	UN Uruguay	Resident Coordinator
Sánchez Campanella, Lorena	BROU	Strategic Planning Advisor
Sierra, Wilson	Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining	Renewable Energy Director
Sommer, Ximena	ANIMA (NGO)	Founder and Director
Suarez, Virginia	UN Uruguay	Advisor

Van Waveren Hogervast, Marko	UNIDO	Project Manager Joint SDG Fund-Vienna
Villar Forner, Mireia	UN Uruguay	Previous Resident Coordinator
Villarreal, Francisco	Finance for Development in Chile	Unit member
Vilnolo, Andrea	IOM	Consultant
Vincent, Paula	UN Uruguay	Partnership Officer

Country level informants from other countries

Name	Country	Organization	Position
Catherine Sozi	Ethiopia	RCO	Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
Hanna Schmitt	Ethiopia	RCO	Head of RCO
Kerry Mara	Fiji	RCO	UN Pacific Strategy Fund Coordinator
Jan Nemeck	Fiji	RCO	Team Leader
Mohammed Mozeem	Fiji	RCO	UN Partnerships Specialist
Muhammad Didi	Indonesia	UNDP	Head of Innovative Finance
Nila	Indonesia	UNDP	National Project Manager
Diandra Pratami	Indonesia	RCO	Programme Focal Point
Sara Sekkens	Lao PDR	RCO	Resident Coordinator
Matthew Johnson-Idan	Lao PDR	RCO	Senior Economist
Myrta Kaulard	Mozambique	RCO	Resident Coordinator
Amaya Perez	Panama	RCO	Head of RCO
Jacqueline Ruiz	Panama	RCO	Partnerships and Development Finance Officer
Cristian Munduate	Panama	RCO	Resident Coordinator
Diyora Kabulova	Uzbekistan	UNDP	Programme Officer
Komolkohn Islamov	Uzbekistan	UNDP	Programme Officer