



Spotlight Initiative Scoping and Evaluability Assessment

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Acronyms

AOI	Areas of Investigation
AR	Annual Report
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CPD	Country Programme Document
CS	Case Study
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EAG	Evaluation Advisory Group
ECA	European Court of Auditors
EOSG	Executive Office of Secretary General
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EU	European Union
EVAWG	Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HOA	Head of Agency
IP	Implementing Partner
JWP	Joint Work Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
KM	Knowledge Management
ILO	International Labor Organization
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
MSC	Most Significant Change
MTA	Mid-Term Assessment
NRA	Non-Resident Agency
NRG	National Reference Group
OSC	Operational Steering Committee

PMU	Program Management Unit
QAP	Quality Assurance Panel
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
RO	Regional Office
RRG	Regional Reference Group
RUNOs	Recipient United Nations Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SI	Spotlight Initiative
SIC	Spotlight Initiative Coordinator
SIS	Spotlight Initiative Secretariat
SOP	Standard Operation Procedures
SN	Strategic Note
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SWE	Systemwide Evaluation
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UN	United Nations
UN DCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office
UN DSG	United Nations Deputy Secretary General
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNTFEVAW	United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VAWG/HP	Violence Against Women and Girls and Harmful Practices
WPHF	Women’s Peace & Humanitarian Fund

Spotlight Initiative

Scoping and Evaluability Assessment

I. Background and Objective

The scoping exercise aims to arrive at a consulted agreement on the objectives and scope of the final evaluation between the stakeholders to inform the preparation of the final evaluation TOR. The exercise includes a review of existing evaluative evidence combined with inputs from stakeholders at all levels to define the objectives, scope, method, implementation plan and timelines for the evaluation. The purpose of conducting an evaluability assessment during the scoping exercise is to enable evaluation preparation, identify gaps in available information and provide the basis for an evaluation design that draws on existing evidence and meets the needs of stakeholders to learn lessons, capture results and assure accountability. The scoping and evaluability assessment does not forecast findings or make judgements on the program itself. Findings and conclusions will be made during the final evaluation.

The scoping and evaluability assessment was undertaken by an independent consultant during the final operational year of the Spotlight Initiative (SI).¹ The final evaluation will be undertaken from April 2023 – April 2024 over a period of time in which the initiative is transitioning into a new phase (Spotlight 2.0). The design, scope and operationalization of the transition and new program iteration is under development, and there remain unknowns in terms of funding commitment and modalities that will continue to take shape over the course of the final evaluation. Findings and learning from the evaluation will feed into the knowledge base that informs the next phase of the SI as well as wider programs and initiatives to address violence against women and girls and harmful practices (VAWG/HP). Findings will also offer an indication of the extent to which the initiative was able to leverage off of and accelerate progress toward achieving the SDGs as well as any associated lessons that may inform efforts during the Decade of Action.

II. Scoping and Evaluability Methodology

The scoping and evaluability assessment was undertaken from December 2022 – March 2023. As per the TOR for the exercise, the work considered the following areas:

- overall strategic approach of the initiative, aligned with UN Reform and the principle of “leaving no one behind”, and committed to fostering national ownership and multisectoral partnerships;
- review governance structure of the initiative;
- note documented progress toward reaching global objectives, and where the final evaluation could further examine/interrogate data and evaluative information;
- assess extent to which we can learn lessons to better design programs;
- consider SI public profile, specifically its communications, visibility, reach, and influence;
- review of coherence of theory of change and associated results framework;
- conduct document review and preliminary synthesis;

¹ Revised end date for global components is 31 Dec 2023; revised end dates for country programs are between 31 Mar 2023 and 31 Dec 2023 as per OSC Decisions #19, 22 and 23 (Internal SI Document, Oct 2022).

- assess monitoring system and availability/quality of data to measure results specified in the framework;
- note gaps in the information required to measure results, and identify options to fill gaps;
- identify methods and approaches for the evaluation to capture results;
- develop and field test the evaluation matrix, questions, methods and reliability to verify methodology.

The exercise was informed by several streams of evidence as follows:

- review of **documentation and secondary information** on the Spotlight Initiative including design, strategies, guidelines and frameworks (refer to Annex G);
- review of internal and independent **SI monitoring and evaluation data** including tracking of available information against areas of inquiry (refer to Annexes G and H);
- total of **43 key informant interviews** (34 female; 9 male) with stakeholders at global, regional and national levels including with representatives from SI Secretariat, CSO reference group, European Union, core UN entities and offices, RCs and SI Coordinators/team members at country and regional levels (see Annex I);
- **field mission** to Zimbabwe country program to test proposed evaluation methodologies and fine-tune approaches encompassing discussions with a total of **59 stakeholders** (40 female; 19 male) from the highest levels to the beneficiary level as well as site visits to two project areas (see Annex I).

The scoping and evaluability assessment included a review of documents that guide the initiative, monitoring reports and strategies as well as internal and independent reviews and evaluations. Further mapping of available resources was conducted to assess the extent to which the existing monitoring and evaluation evidence provides a base to inform each area of investigation. Secondary data reviews were complemented with key informant interviews at global, regional and national levels. Interviews were semi-structured, designed to capture a cross-section of perspectives on the SI to guide the evaluation design. Deeper interrogation of country-level data and perceptions was undertaken during a field-testing mission to Zimbabwe. Information obtained was used to test proposed framework, tools and methodology to inform the design of the evaluation.

III. Global Context of VAWG

Gender based violence is a widespread global phenomenon that is deeply embedded in unequal power structures, patriarchal values, culture, and tradition. One of the most pervasive violations of human rights, violence against women and girls occurs because of longstanding, systemic gender inequality in countries around the world, supported by associated discriminatory norms and practices.

The United Nations defines violence against women and girls as “any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (UN 1993:2). Harmful practices (HP), such as early, forced and child marriage and female genital mutilation, are discriminatory practices committed over long periods of time that violate human rights, but are seen as ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’ to societies and communities in which they are practiced.² Gender-based violence (GBV) and HP manifest in various forms that may be more or less prevalent in different social and cultural contexts. Types of gender-based violence and harmful practices include:

² See, for example, [UNICEF, n.d. ‘Child Protection, Harmful Practices’](#) and [OHCHR, 2020, ‘Information Series on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Harmful Practices’](#).

- **Intimate partner or domestic violence** - any pattern of behavior used to gain power and control over an intimate partner, including economic, psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual violence;
- **Femicide** - the intentional murder of women because they are women;
- **Sexual violence** - any sexual act committed against another person's will without consent, including sexual harassment, rape, corrective rape, and rape culture;
- **Human trafficking** - the acquisition and exploitation of people through means such as force, fraud, coercion, or deception;
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons, often as a means to prepare girls for adulthood and marriage;
- **Child marriage** - any marriage where one or both spouses are below the age of 18.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes VAWG as one of the world's most prevalent human rights violations and a global public health problem affecting women and girls of all ages, races, socio-economic backgrounds. WHO estimates that one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime (WHO 2018). Rooted in gender inequality and power imbalances, VAWG limits attainment of a global vision of peace and prosperity as laid out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and further elaborated in the Secretary General's report on Our Common Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development builds on foundational international frameworks for achieving gender equality eliminating VAWG/HP, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the four pillars of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention: prevention, protection, prosecution and coordinated policies. The 2030 Agenda identifies GEWE as central to achieving sustainable development, recognizing that VAWG presents a critical barrier to realizing gender equality as well as to the achievement of other goals, such as poverty eradication, health, education and food security.

The magnitude of VAWG/HP impact on individuals' lives and society is immeasurable as it has long-term physical, economic, and psychological consequences. Despite the significant personal and societal costs of VAWG, work to address the causes and consequences of VAWG has been historically underfunded as part of the global development agenda. Less than 0.5 percent of development funding (combined official development assistance and private funding) targeted VAWG in 2018, and this figure has not risen significantly in recent years (Dalberg 2022:1).

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns generated a significant uptick in gender-based violence (UN Women 2021). According to the SI 2021 Annual Report, there was a 35 per cent increase in cases of violence reported to the police across countries covered by the Spotlight Initiative. Other forms of violence against women and girls also increased during the pandemic, with evidence from SI countries pointing to increases in rape, child marriages and teen pregnancies (SI 2022). Declines in women's human rights in recent years have been bolstered in some countries by rising conservative values and populist political leaders that promoted restrictions and rollbacks to women's sexual and reproductive health rights (SI 2022).

Despite challenges and setbacks, the issue is not intractable. Evidence of changing attitudes and beliefs have been documented in some countries where women’s acceptance of being beaten by their partners has decreased by almost 75 percent (UN DESA 2020) while deep-seated patriarchal values persist in other countries with widespread beliefs amongst both men and women that it is acceptable for husbands to punish wives through physical, emotional, economic, and other forms of violence (SI 2022). Further positive signs demonstrate changing attitudes and practices around some forms of GBV. For example, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has become less common in some countries, and early marriage has also seen a decrease in recent years. In 2021, 19.5% of women aged 20-24 were married before turning 18, down from 25.8% in 2001 (UN DESA, UN Women 2022).

IV. Spotlight Initiative Approach and Design

The SI was launched amidst the continued development and articulation of UNDS reform as first outlined by the Secretary General in June 2017 that set out the major changes required to ensure more coherent and effective support to the 2030 Agenda. Seven key areas for transformation in the reform process were approved on 31 May 2018 by the General Assembly in Resolution A/RES/72/279:

1. Accelerating the alignment of the UNDS support with the 2030 Agenda;
2. Creating a new generation of UN Country Teams;
3. Reinvigorating the role of the Resident Coordinator system;
4. Revamping the regional approach;
5. Ensuring a system-wide approach to partnerships;
6. Strengthening strategic direction, oversight and accountability for system-wide results;
7. Funding the UNDS (including with a new Funding Compact).

A joint initiative of the United Nations and the European Union (EU), the Spotlight Initiative is the first large scale initiative of its kind to systematically address both the drivers and consequences of gender-based violence. The SI was launched in December 2017 with a funding commitment of 500 million euros from the EU. The initiative’s main goal is that all women and girls, including those most vulnerable, live free from violence and harmful practices. Envisioned as a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demonstration fund, the Spotlight Initiative seeks to show that a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality and ending violence can contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

SI Theory of Change

The SI Theory of Change (TOC) lays out the initiative’s framework to support actions to address the diverse drivers of violence against women and harmful practices (VAWG/HP) combined with efforts to provide services and support to mitigate the consequences of VAWG/HP. The TOC has evolved in terms of its graphic presentation since the programme start, but the main elements have remained stable. **The overarching goal remains that all women and girls, especially those most vulnerable, live free from violence and harmful practices.** The SI aims to promote progress toward two SDGs in line with global human rights obligations:

- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and,
- SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The SI TOC and associated results framework lays out a comprehensive rationale to inform program and project design via a six-pillar approach: 1) targeting inequitable laws and policies; 2) strengthening institutions; 3) challenging harmful social norms; 4) strengthening services, access to justice and referral systems; 5) strengthening data and tracking systems; and 6) supporting civil society and movement building.

The overarching TOC as put forth at the start of the program in 2017 was as follows:

"If (1) National and sub-national systems and institutions enabled to plan and deliver multisectoral programmes that prevent and respond to violence against women or address other related SDG targets; if (2) an enabling legislative and policy environment in line with international standards on EAWG and other forms of discrimination is in place and translated into action; (2) if policies and programmes are informed by the evidence of what works, and quality and comparable data on violence against women and girls; (3) if favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviors are promoted at institutional, community and individual levels to prevent VAW; (4) if women and girls who experience violence are empowered to use available, accessible & quality essential services & recover from violence and perpetrators of VAW are duly prosecuted ; if (5) Policies and programmes on violence against women and girls are designed, implemented and monitored with the participation of women's rights groups and autonomous civil society organisations; then (6) there will be a substantial reduction in violence against women and girls; because (7) better responses to VAWG are available, violence is being prevented before it happens or before it re-occurs, and those experiencing violence, as well as their dependents, will be empowered to recover and rebuild their lives with appropriate assistance and support."³

By 2021, the initiative began using a more focused and succinct iteration of the high-level TOC to convey the overarching logic that guides the program. **The Spotlight Initiative’s Theory of Change posits that a robustly resourced, rights-based, comprehensive approach – one that addresses the root causes of violence – will, over time, contribute to ending violence against women and girls.**⁴

The logic and assumptions that underpin each pillar as put forth in the TOC are depicted below.

Table 1 - SI Theory of Change and Underlying Assumptions by Pillar

Theory of Change	Assumptions
<i>Outcome 1 – Policies and Legislation</i>	
<p>If.... women and VAWG/HP experts are engaged in assessing, developing and implementing policies and legislation to VAWG/HP; the implementation of legislations and policies is monitored</p> <p>Then.... an enabling legislative and policy environment on VAWG/HP and other forms of discrimination is in place and translated into plans, guaranteeing the rights of women and girls</p> <p>Because.... effectively implemented legislative and policy frameworks address impunity and provide for coordinated action, including in the areas of prevention, services and data collection; laws and programmes that integrate VAW/HPs into SRH services are developed, implemented and monitored</p>	<p>Political will and commitments at the highest levels demonstrated through VAW/HP legislative and policy frameworks that align to international human rights standards and harmonization of all other laws and policies to be gender equitable including family law; linkages across policies on migration, disability, poverty, ethnicity, age, location, education, overall violence and conflict.</p>

³ ‘SI Global TOC 6th Pillar’, internal working document, 19 October 2017.

⁴ Spotlight Initiative 2022,2021 Annual Report, p.66.

Theory of Change	Assumptions
<i>Outcome 2 – Institutions</i>	
<p>If.... relevant decision-makers and stakeholders in all sectors of government are informed and mobilized to address VAWG/HP; institutions at all levels and relevant stakeholders have strengthened capacity on VAWG/HP; national and subnational bargaining processes are effective in overcoming the hurdles of collective action to address and prevent VAWG/HP; and adequate budgets are allocated</p> <p>Then.... institutions will develop, coordinate and implement programmes that integrate the elimination of VAWG/HP and other SDG targets into development planning processes</p> <p>Because.... institutional change requires appropriate capacity, adequate funding as well as political engagement and leadership to sustainably address VAWG/HP</p>	<p>Governance, institutional and critical bottlenecks addressed to allow transformation of institutions; develop and full financed national action plan on VAW/HP; institutions are gender responsive/human rights based; VAW/HP is integrated into other sectors; linkages across institutions on migration, disability, poverty, ethnicity, age, location, education, overall violence and conflict.</p>
<i>Outcome 3 – Prevention (norms, attitudes, behaviors)</i>	
<p>If.... multiple strategies such as community mobilization, key stakeholders' engagement and education strategies are carried out in an integrated and coordinated manner based on a shared understanding and approach in line with international standards and evidence on preventing VAWG/HP</p> <p>Then.... favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours will be promoted at community and individual level to prevent VAWG/HP</p> <p>Because.... multi-pronged prevention initiatives that mutually reinforce each other can effectively shift individual and socio-cultural norms including those affecting women's sexuality and reproduction</p>	<p>Political will and commitments at the highest levels demonstrated through investment in national programmes and interventions aimed at addressing root causes and gender transformative results across relevant sectors; An integrated/multi-pronged approach to prevention is effective to change social norms and attitudes which results in changes in behaviors.</p>
<i>Outcome 4 - Services</i>	
<p>If.... service providers have the capacity to deliver essential services, including SRH services, and to prosecute perpetrators in line with international human rights standards and guidelines; these services are made available and accessible to women and girls; women and girls are informed and empowered to exercise their rights to services (including SRHRs and access to justice)</p> <p>Then.... women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices will increase their use of services and recover from violence, while perpetrators will be prosecuted</p> <p>Because.... underlying barriers to women and girls' access to services have been addressed including in relation to gender and socio-cultural norms affecting women's sexuality and reproduction</p>	<p>Political will and commitment at the highest levels demonstrated through investment of national funds towards multisectoral services at the national level; Quality services will increase women's confidence in seeking support and increasing their access to such services, including SRH services, commitment and resources to collect data and coordinate services; there is political will to address impunity and prosecute perpetrators; integrate VAWG into education and training</p>
<i>Outcome 5 – Data</i>	

Theory of Change	Assumptions
<p>If.... measurement and methodologies for VAWG/HP data collection are improved and strengthened (including monitoring and reporting requirements for SDG target 5.2 indicators); the capacity of national institutions to collect disaggregated VAWG/HP data in line with globally agreed standards is strengthened; and disaggregated data (including to extent possible on age, ethnicity, location, socio-economic status, disability) are made accessible and disseminated to be used by decision makers and civil society</p> <p>Then.... laws, policies and programmes will be based on evidence and better able to respond to the specific context and realities of women and girls, including those most marginalized</p> <p>Because.... they will be based on quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data</p>	<p>Political will and commitment at the highest levels demonstrated through investment of national statistical systems to improve data production, analysis and use, including data on gender related-targets; there is political will and commitment to invest in the collection of data on VAWG/HP; freedom of information is respected and governments are increasingly open to sharing data on VAWG/HP with all stakeholders; VAWG/HP data will be used to inform policy making and budgeting.</p>
Outcome 6 – Civil Society	
<p>If.... the knowledge, expertise and capacities of women's rights organisations, autonomous social movements and civil society organisations, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination is drawn upon and strengthened; the space for women's rights organisations, autonomous social movements and civil society organisations including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination's expression and activity is free and conducive to their work; and multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks are established at local, national, regional and global level with women's rights groups and autonomous social movements and civil society organisations, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination</p> <p>Then.... women's rights organisations, autonomous social movements and civil society organisations will be able to influence, sustain, and advance progress on GEWE and ending VAWG policies and programmes that respond to the needs of all women and girls, including those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination</p> <p>Because.... the activism of women's rights organisations, autonomous social movements and civil society organisations, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination is a crucial driver of progress on efforts to end VAWG</p>	<p>Norms and frameworks aligned to international standards as the necessary enabling environment for women's organization and civil society organizations involvement in policy making and delivery of programmes on VAWG/HP; autonomy, agency and role of women's rights organizations and civil society recognized by government and partners; women's organizations represent the diversity of women and girls, survivors of violence and all groups facing intersecting forms of violence and discrimination</p>

The six-pillar interconnected model for preventing and addressing VAWG/HP was designed for comprehensive application in all the regions and countries where SI engages. It was not put forth as a menu of actions from which programs may select. This point is made with considerable emphasis in the 2021 Global Results Report:

Programmes work comprehensively across all pillars, targeting inequitable laws and policies, strengthening institutions, and challenging harmful social norms, attitudes, and behaviors, while also championing women's control over their bodies and bodily integrity.... This approach is central to

Spotlight Initiative's Theory of Change, which posits that a robustly resourced, rights-based, comprehensive approach – one that addresses the root causes of violence – will, over time, contribute to ending violence against women and girls.⁵

Each of the six pillars has an associated defined outcome in the TOC that is monitored by three outcome-level indicators as well as output-level indicators. Progress against each pillar is monitored with outcome and output level indicators. The 2022 graphic presentation also includes three different sub-outcomes or key outcome indicators, which, in turn, are reflected in the Global Results Framework.⁶ The TOC identifies key assumptions under each pillar and includes root causes, underlying causes, and drivers. A further feature of the TOC is the identification of cross-cutting principles to be adhered to in all programming:

- Mainstreaming women's empowerment;
- Leaving No One Behind (LNOB); and
- CSO engagement and participation.⁷

The Global Results Framework further identifies a total of five direct and three indirect impact indicators that are tied to global indicators for SDG 5 and SDG 16. Some of the impact indicators apply globally while others apply to specific regions.

The SI TOC establishes a different programmatic focus in each of the five regions covered as follows:

- **Africa:** Sexual and gender-based violence (with a focus on harmful practices including female genital mutilation and child marriage);
- **Asia:** Sexual and gender-based violence and child marriage;
- **Caribbean:** Family violence;
- **Latin America:** Femicide; and
- **Pacific:** Domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

The SI was designed to build on and accelerate efforts to achieve the SDGs, particularly targets designed to eliminate VAWG/HP (Target 5.2 End all violence against and exploitation of women and girls; Target 5.3 Eliminate forced marriages and genital mutilation) as well as Target 5.6 that focuses on women's sexual and reproductive rights. Grounded in the human rights obligations and the indivisibility of the 2030 Agenda, SI interventions worked across multiple entry points to address VAWG/HP across the SDGs and contribute to overall SDG achievement.

The Spotlight Initiative models the vision for UN reform, leveraging the expertise of multiple UN agencies within one programme. The SI approach is characterized by partnerships across the UN agencies, governments at all levels, civil society and other stakeholders including academia, media, the private sector, and religious institutions to advance a whole-of-society approach to EVAWG.

⁵ Spotlight Initiative 2022, 2021 Annual Report, p. 66.

⁶ Spotlight Initiative, *Annex A: Global Results Framework, 01 January 2021 – 31 December 2021*.

⁷ Spotlight Initiative, *Global Annual Report 2017:22*.

Key Features of the Spotlight Initiative

The SI aims to demonstrate new ways of working for large-scale, multilateral, multi-year initiatives to address complex development issues by:

- Taking a **comprehensive approach** based on six pillars to strengthen systems around rule of law, prevention, services, data and movement building.
- Embedding the principles of **leaving no one behind** to target those facing multiple forms of discrimination.
- Partnering with **civil society and women's movements** to ensure relevance and sustainability of investments.
- Fostering **collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders** including non-traditional partners.
- Building political buy-in and **government ownership** of the agenda.
- Integrating **resources and expertise across UN entities** to bring to bear a synergistic and holistic approach to GBV programming.

Geographic Scope and Governance of the Spotlight Initiative

The scope of the initiative is broad and complex in terms of geographic coverage that includes country programs, regional programs and CSO grants. Governance and operational management involve a wide range of stakeholders functioning at global, regional and country levels to guide and support the initiative.

Global Level

The SI operates as a UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund with the SI Secretariat and the UN MPTFO jointly providing operational guidance and the MPTFO acting as Administrative Agent. Project establishment and reporting processes for the SI are established by the SI Terms of Reference (TOR), and MOUs signed between the UN and MPTFO as well as the MOU Addendum for EU contribution signed between the Recipient UN Organizations (RUNOs) and the MPTFO as Administrative Agent.⁸

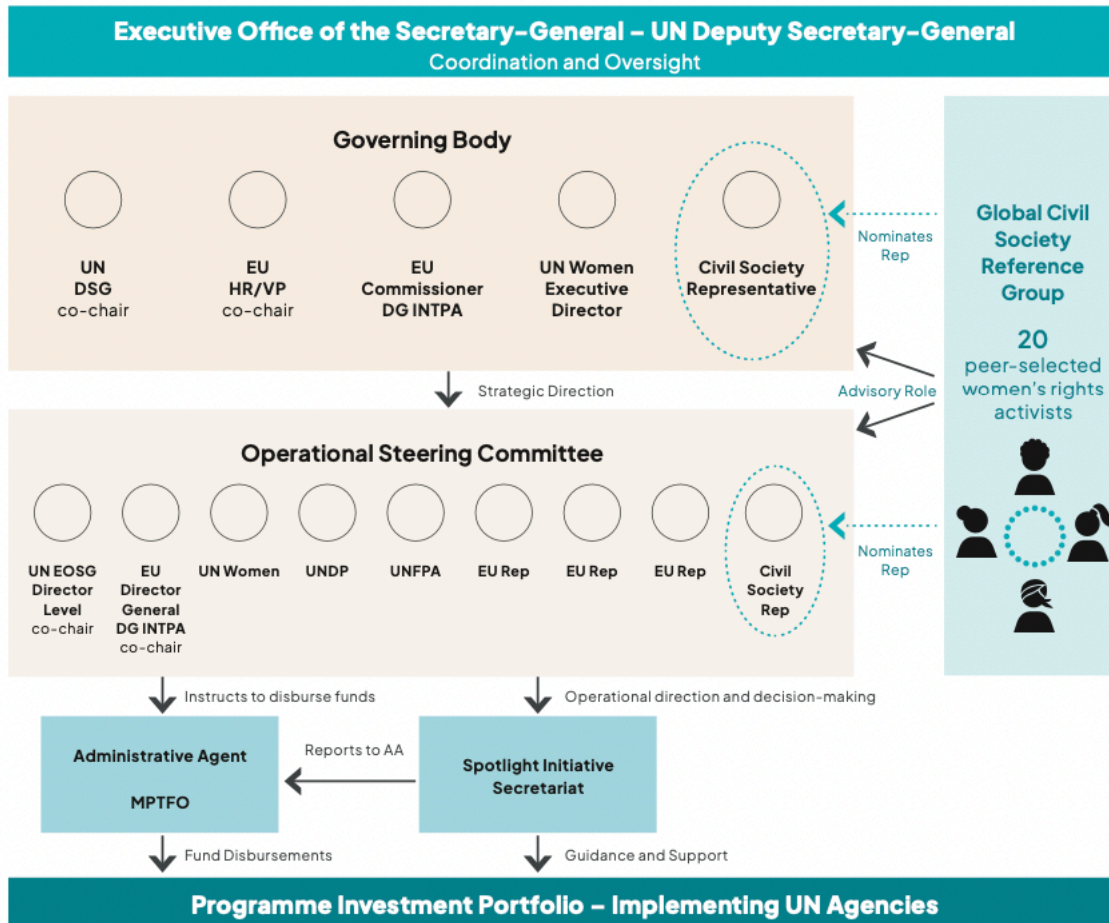
There are two levels of governance for the SI at the highest level: the Governing Body and the Operational Steering Committee. The Governing Body is the senior level of governance and is co-chaired by the UN DSG and the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission. It also includes the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Executive Director of UN Women and a Civil Society Representative nominated by the Global Civil Society Reference Group.

The Operational Steering Committee (OSC) is co-chaired by director level staff of the Executive Office of Secretary-General (EOSG) and the European Union and includes three other representatives from the EU and one each from UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA (UNICEF holds an observer status) as well as a Civil Society Representative. One key role of the OSC is to provide operational direction and decision making to the SI Secretariat. It is also responsible for directing the Administrative Agent (MPTFO) to make disbursements to implementing UN agencies through the SI investment portfolio.

⁸ Spotlight/UN MPTFO: *The Spotlight Initiative Guidance Note on Programme Operationalization*, N.D., p.1.

Figure 1 – Global Governance

Global-Level Governance Structure



Spotlight Initiative Global Annual Report 2021:20

At the global level, the SI Secretariat is responsible for “ensuring effective and sound Fund and programme management and implementation that maximizes the European Union’s investment and achieves transformational results.”⁹ The Secretariat is composed of a management and a technical unit that together carry out a long list of functions around programme reporting, monitoring and evaluation, technical support, oversight, coordination, partnership engagement, communications and knowledge generation, and resource management.

The Secretariat coordinates the implementation of the SI portfolio of investments which is allocated across 34 Spotlight Initiative programmes: 26 country programmes; six regional programmes (inclusive of the ‘Safe and Fair’ regional thematic programme); and two Civil Society Grant-Giving Programmes. Total allocations to administrative costs including the Secretariat, Administrative Agent and Global Platform comprised 4.9 percent of the SI budget (USD 25,853,653) as of September 2022.

⁹ Spotlight Initiative, Global Annual Report 2021:22

Regional Level and Country Level

Regional programmes were identified and selected by the Operational Steering Committee, focusing on the develop of joint regional programmes that could reach a larger number of countries and amplify the impact of the initiative (Spotlight Initiative 2017 Annual Report:9/18). Regional programmes were started at different times between 2019 and 2020¹⁰ and will close at end of 2023. The six regional programs have been allocated 15.8 percent (USD 83,698,403) of the total approved budget as of September 2022 as follows. The ‘Safe and Fair Programme’ is distinct from the other five regional programs in that it was designed prior to the launch of the SI, focusing on violence against women migrant workers in the ASEAN region. It functions under separate coordination, governance and management structures and its own theory of change and results framework.

The selection of 26 countries was made according to an analysis of countries’ situations and contexts, using the following criteria based on primary and secondary data approved by the OSC:

- Prevalence of the particular form of violence in the region;
- Gender Inequality Index (GII);
- Level of government commitment towards ending VAWG;
- Absorption capacity at national level;
- Presence and capacity of UN country teams to deliver;
- Presence and capacity of EU delegations in country to engage;
- Enabling environment in country, in particular for civil society;
- Existing initiatives on VAWG at regional/country levels with the potential to be scaled-up;
- Possibility to produce ‘models’ for replication in other countries and capacity to influence others in the region (Spotlight Initiative 2017 Annual Report:32).

Country programmes were operationalized over two project cycles, with programmes in Latin America and Africa implemented from 2019, and the Asia, Caribbean, and Pacific country programmes beginning in January 2020. The 26 country programs have been allocated 71.9 percent (USD 354,200,002) of the approved SI budgets as of September 2022.

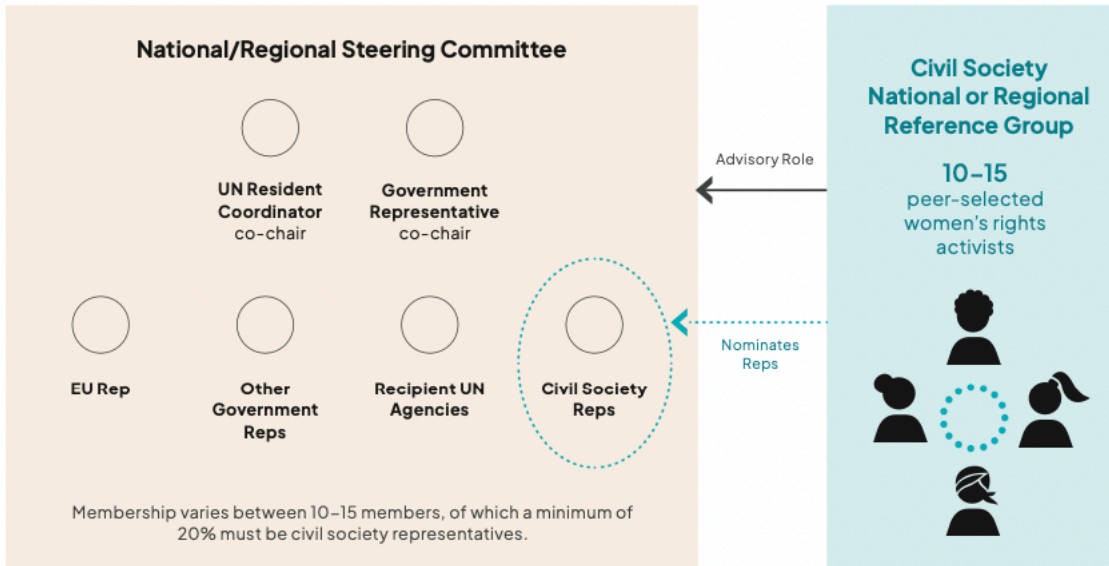
Regional and country programmes are governed by regional/national steering committees chaired by a senior UN Official¹¹ and a Government Representative. Regional/National Civil Society Reference Groups play an advisory role with the power to nominate representatives to steering committees.

¹⁰ Start dates as follows: Africa RP 13 July 2020; Caribbean RP 24 July 2020; Central Asia RP 24 July 2020; Latin America RP 15 June 2019; Pacific RP (excluding Pillar 6) 1 January 2020; Pacific RP Pillar 6 24 July 2020.

¹¹ The RC serves as chair in the Caribbean, Central Asia, and the Pacific. The Latin America Regional Programme is chaired by the UN Women Regional Director. The Africa Regional Programme is chaired by the Head of the UN Liaison Office to the African Union.

Figure 2 – Programme Governance

Programme-Level Governance Structure



Spotlight Initiative Global Annual Report 2021:21

Country programmes are implemented by Recipient UN Organizations (RUNOs) under the overall coordination of the UN Resident Coordinator, working together with a Spotlight Initiative programme team (led by the Spotlight Coordinator). The UN Resident Coordinator is intended to “exercise leadership and oversight over the Initiative’s programmes, leading UN Country Teams towards an integrated working model that ensures coordination, coherence and accountability in implementation.”¹² SI programmes are also intended to be integrated into UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and thus to support and capitalize on progress in UN reforms.

A review of the initiative’s budget allocations provides a snapshot of the SI spread and focus. Table 2 offers an overview of SI allocations in country programs as of end September 2022, showing that the total allocations to country programs was 71.9 percent of the approved budget.

¹² Spotlight Initiative, Global Annual Report 2021:20.

Table 2: Total Approved Budget as of September 2022¹³

Africa	
Liberia	\$ 22,634,286
Mali	\$ 25,714,287
Malawi	\$ 28,571,429
Mozambique	\$ 28,571,429
Niger	\$ 24,285,715
Nigeria	\$ 35,714,286
Uganda	\$ 31,428,571
Zimbabwe	\$ 30,000,000
Total for Africa	\$ 226,920,003
Africa CP as percent of all CP	59%

Latin America	
Argentina	\$ 7,714,286
El Salvador	\$ 10,285,714
Ecuador	\$ 2,900,000
Guatemala	\$ 20,390
Honduras	\$ 10,285,714
Mexico	\$ 8,999,999
Total for Latin America	\$ 40,206,103
Latin America CP as percent of all CP	11%

Administrative Costs	
Administrative Agent costs	\$ 5,186,067
Global Platform	\$ 767,337
Secretariat costs	\$ 19,885,249
Total for Administrative Costs	\$ 25,838,653

Spotlight Grants	
UNTF EAW LA	\$ 5,660,378
UNTF EAW Africa	\$ 20,636,792
WPHF Afghanistan	\$ 2,000,000
WPHF Africa	\$ 7,075,472
WPHF Haiti	\$ 2,000,000
WPHF Papua New Guinea	\$ 2,000,000
Total for Grants	\$ 39,372,643

Asia	
Afghanistan	\$ 16,500,000
Kyrgyzstan	\$ 6,714,286
Tajikistan	\$ 7,000,000
Total for Asia	\$ 30,214,285
Asia CP as percent of all CP	8%

Caribbean	
Belize	\$ 3,535,714
Grenada	\$ 2,357,143
Guyana	\$ 5,285,714
Haiti	\$ 14,142,857
Jamaica	\$ 9,428,571
Trinidad and Tobago	\$ 5,285,714
Total for Caribbean	\$ 40,035,713
Caribbean CP as percent of all CP	10%

Pacific	
Papua New Guinea	\$ 22,400,000
Samoa	\$ 4,142,857
Timor-Leste	\$ 14,142,857
Vanuatu	\$ 3,535,714
Total for Pacific	\$ 44,221,428
Pacific CP as percent of all CP	12%

Regional Programmes (RP)	
Africa RP	\$ 25,620,001
Caribbean RP	\$ 9,552,830
Central Asia and Afghanistan RP	\$ 5,309,298
Latin America RP	\$ 5,000,000
Pacific RP	\$ 8,845,687
Safe and Fair	\$ 29,370,587
Total for Regional Programmes	\$ 83,698,403

Grand Total Approved Budget	\$ 530,507,230
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Notably, the eight countries that comprise the SI Africa region garnered almost 59 percent of total country-level allocations, with each of the other four regions allocated between 8 and 12 percent.¹⁴ Heavy weighting toward the Africa region was impacted by a commitment of at least 100 million USD in Africa to provide coverage for declining funding trends for the Sexual and Reproductive Health sector.

7.4 percent (USD 39,372,643) of the budget went to grants for CSOs working at country level. Programmes under grants were started between July 2019 and July 2020. Countries receiving grants

¹³ Annex C presents a country breakdown of the Spotlight Initiative's WPHF and UNTFEAW Grants.

¹⁴ UN MPTFO Fund Gateway: <https://mptf.undp.org/trust-fund-overview/dynamic-portfolio-investing-sdgs-worldwide>

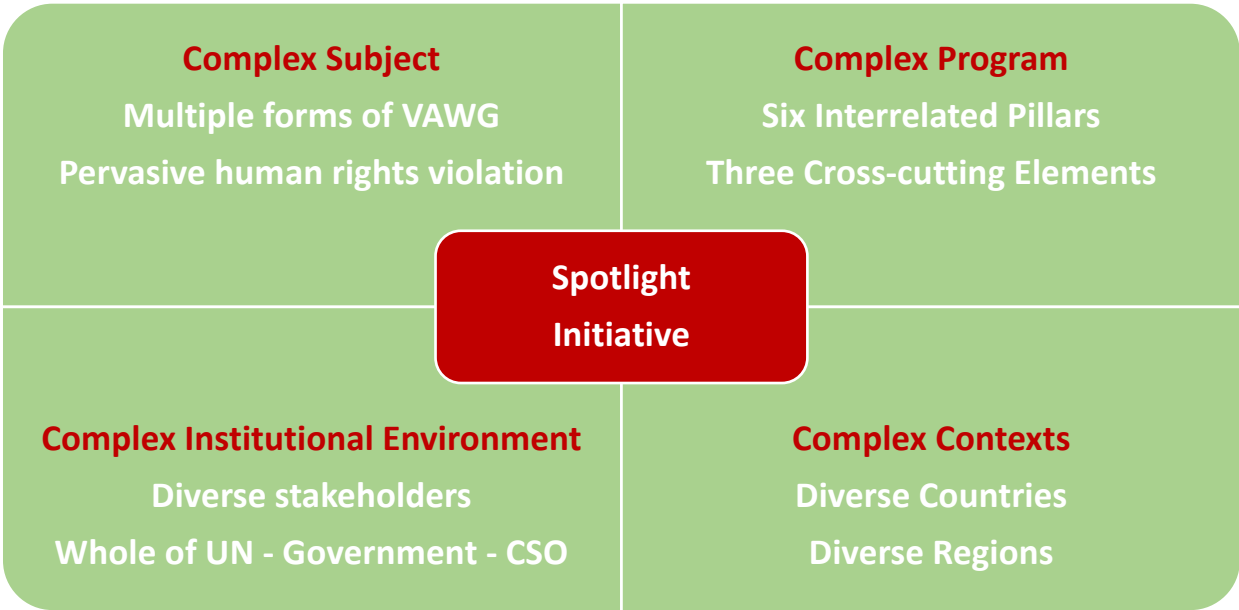
under the two funding windows included some that were SI country programs as well as some that were not, extending the direct reach for country-level programming. Countries receiving grants in the absence of SI county programs included: Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Zambia.¹⁵

Overall Scope of the Spotlight Initiative

By the end of 2021, the SI had programmed USD 477,828,188 through 26 country programmes in five regions; six regional programmes; and two civil society grant-giving programmes (United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund) that reach another 29 countries.¹⁶ In total, the SI work extends to over 1,500 partners, reaching 122 countries through country-level and regional initiatives (SI 2022b).

The initiative is situated within a set of environments that are each highly complex, requiring careful attention to multiple levels and realms of complexity, as depicted below.

Figure 3 – Spotlight Initiative Environment¹⁷



The Spotlight Initiative seeks to address the **complex subject** of VAWG that manifests in multiple forms, collectively comprising one of the most widespread human rights violations faced by women and girls. It works across **complex contexts** to target diverse countries and regions under a coherent theory of change that is nevertheless adaptable to unique contexts. The SI is a **complex program** that works across six inter-related pillars and three cross-cutting themes to target systemic changes in **complex institutional systems**, involving a broad range of stakeholders with a ‘whole of UN – whole of Government’ approach that expands partnership engagement and seeks to build civil society movements.

¹⁵ Refer to Annex C for details on grant allocations by country and amount.
¹⁶ Including 14 countries with SI country programs and 15 countries without SI country programs.
¹⁷ Graphic prepared for scoping and evaluability report.

These four complexities were dynamic and inter-related. Furthermore, stakeholders functioned within a context whereby the initiative received focus and scrutiny from the highest levels of leadership of the EU and UN. It was well understood by stakeholders at all levels that the program was unique, the context was challenging, and the stakes were high.

V. Evaluability of the Initiative

The assessment of the evaluability of the SI included the following three parameters. Refer to summary findings at end of this section for key points.

- a) clarity of the **design and TOC** for assessing the achievement of results (detailed under section 'SI Theory of Change');
- b) appraisal of **scope of operations** to assess the strategies required for the involvement of relevant stakeholders at all levels (detailed under section 'Geographic Scope and Governance of the SI');
- c) extent to which **adequate data and information** is available to assess the achievement of results and answer other evaluation questions (detailed below).

Evaluative Evidence, Data and Information

Review of existing documentation and secondary information was compiled into an annotated resource list, organized under sub-headings: internal reports and assessments; independent and external reviews and evaluations; program documents; global results framework; strategies and design documents. See Annex G for elaboration. The listing also includes resources that are under development that are expected to offer valuable information and analysis to inform the final evaluation, including:

- European Court of Auditor's SI Audit
- SI Compendium and Good and Promising Practices
- Thematic Assessment of SI Contribution to Civil Society, LNOB and Movement Building
- Mid-Term Evaluation of EU Gender Action Plan 3
- Study of SI Institutional History
- UN Gender Architecture Review
- Updated Meta-Review of MTAs including Pacific, Caribbean and Central Asia

Further mapping of available resources was conducted to assess the extent to which the existing monitoring and evaluation evidence provides a base to inform each area of investigation. This was done to help develop a deeper understanding of gap areas and methods needed to fill gaps and/or verify/triangulate existing evaluative evidence. Refer to Annex H.

Available evaluative evidence (both internal to SI and externally generated) constitutes a large body of information to inform the evaluation on various aspects of the initiative including the design process, architecture, governance and management. Narrative reports offer important insights into the stories behind the reported outputs and outcomes while also documenting challenges and offering elaboration on integration of cross-cutting issues.

Available information concentrates on mid-term and annual reviews, thematic assessments and audits. The body of evidence does not offer a comprehensive picture of the initiative as a whole to provide final accountability.

Monitoring of Results

Monitoring of quantitative results against outcome (contribution) and output (attribution) indicators generally has been systematic and well documented. Reviews of systems put in place to strengthen the reliability and comparability of data collected suggest a sound degree of confidence with procedures to standardize and quality assure data at different stages of the collection process. Interviews and further inquiries during the field testing in Zimbabwe further supported a reasonable degree of confidence in the accuracy of data tracked against the results framework.

Tables below show the status for the 18 outcome level indicators based on the 2021 reporting, noting that varying numbers of programs track specific indicators with numbers of programs tracking each indicator ranging from 5-29. While most outcome indicators are able to be tracked regularly, information for some outcome level indicators¹⁸ is not readily available annually, limiting tracking consistency for these indicators. While recognizing the benefits to global tracking, limitations in definitions and applicability of indicators in some country contexts were noted, and regional levels in particular identified challenges with indicators not well representing the work undertaken at that level.

The Zimbabwe CP is reporting on 59 indicators across six outcomes. Data collection for the Results Framework indicators is informed by the Methodological Notes provided by Secretariat on interpretation of indicators, sources of data, frequency of collection and disaggregation.

RUNOs and CSOs were trained on reporting in line with the Methodological Notes. Activity reach and results framework templates have been completed on a quarterly basis and reviewed by each RUNO team followed by a second review by the SI M&E Specialist. Upon consolidation of inputs, a validation meeting has been convened with the M&E Specialist, SI Coordinator and technical team to interrogate data validity and verify supporting evidence.

(Zimbabwe Testing Mission)

Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Milestone 2021	Results 2021	Cumulative Results	Target
1.1: Proportion of countries with laws and policies on VAWG/HP in place that adequately respond to the rights of all women and girls, including exercise/access to SRHR, and are in line with international HR standards and treaty bodies' recommendations. <i>23 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	17%	30%	43%	43%	39%
1.2: Proportion of target countries that have national/and/or/sub-national evidence-based, costed and funded action plans and M&E frameworks on VAWG/HP are in place that respond to the rights of all women and girls and are developed in a participatory manner. <i>23 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	National Level				
	57%	78%	74%	74%	74%
	Sub-National Level				
	22%	30%	35%	35%	43%
1.3: Proportion of target countries that have laws and policies in place that guarantee the ability of women's rights groups, autonomous social movements, CSOs and women human rights	83%	92%	100%	100%	92%

¹⁸ For example, outcome indicators 3.1 Percentage of people for whom it is justifiable for a man to beat his wife/intimate partner; 3.2 Percentage of people for whom FGM or child marriage are justifiable; 4.1 Number of women and girls, who report experiencing physical or sexual violence and seek help, by sector.

defenders/feminist activists to advance the human rights agenda. <i>12 programmes measuring this indicator</i>					
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Pillar 2: Institutions

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Milestone 2021	Results 2021	Cumulative Results	Target
2.1: Proportion of countries with a functioning regional, national and/or sub-national coordination and oversight mechanisms at the highest levels for addressing VAWG/HP that include representation from marginalized groups. <i>29 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	% of Spotlight programmes with a coordination mechanism				
	41%	66%	86%	86%	83%
	Proportion that includes representation from marginalized groups				
	50%	84%	92%	92%	92%
2.2: Percentage of national budget being allocated to the prevention and elimination of all forms of VAWG/HP <i>18 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	Is there a national budget allocation?				
	56%	72%	89%	89%	89%
	What is the percentage of national budgets being allocated?				
	0.08%	0.44%	0.67%	0.67%	0.98%
2.3: Extent to which VAWG/HP is integrated in 6 other sectors (health, social services, education, justice, security, culture) development plans that are evidence-based and in line with globally agreed standards. <i>20 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	Proportion of countries with adequate level of integration				
	15%	40%	35%	35%	55%

Pillar 3: Prevention

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Milestone 2021	Results 2021	Cumulative Results	Target
3.1: Percentage of people who think is justifiable for a man to beat his wife/intimate partner <i>25 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	29%	26%	26%	26%	24%
3.2: a) Percentage of people who think it is justifiable to subject a woman or girl to FGM (in areas where FGM takes place) b) Percentage of people who think it is justifiable to subject a woman or girl child marriage.	FGM (<i>5 programmes measure this indicator</i>)				
	39%	36%	39%	39%	32%
	Child Marriage (<i>10 programmes measure this indicator</i>)				
	18%	18%	16%	16%	12%
3.3: Proportion of countries with at least 3 evidence-based, transformative/comprehensive prevention strategies/programmes that address the rights of those marginalized and are developed in a participatory manner <i>15 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	20%	47%	60%	60%	80%

Pillar 4: Services

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Milestone 2021	Results 2021	Cumulative Results	Target
4.1: Number of women and girls, including those facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination, who report experiencing physical or sexual violence and seek help. <i>22 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	Women				
	85,330	160,317	153,942	334,217	553,528
	Girls				
	12,014	25,611	69,425	100,816	110,064
4.2: a) number of VAWG cases reported to the police; b) number of cases reported to the police that are brought to court; and c) number of cases reported to the police that resulted in convictions	Reported				
	59,116	63,590	199,595	372,471	266,085
	Brought to Court				
	TBD	TBD	18,130	36,420	TBD

of perpetrators. <i>17 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	Convictions				
	4,542	8,811	4,690	7,942	24,329
4.3: Proportion of countries where a dedicated VAWG management information system (MIS) is in place at national level which can measure number of women/girl victims/survivors of violence that have received quality, essential multi-sectoral services. <i>9 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	11%	33%	67%	67%	78%

Pillar 5: Data

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Milestone 2021	Results 2021	Cumulative Results	Target
5.1: Existence of globally comparable data on the prevalence (and incidence, where appropriate) of VAWG/HP, collected over time. <i>25 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	Prevalence				
	56%	68%	68%	68%	92%
	Incidence				
	40%	68%	72%	72%	84%
5.2: Proportion of countries with publicly available data, reported on a regular basis, on various forms of VAWG/HP (at least on intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, harmful practices when relevant, and trafficking and femicide) at country level.	IPV (<i>20 programmes measuring this indicator</i>)				
	60%	80%	75%	75%	85%
	FGM (<i>8 programmes measuring this indicator</i>)				
	25%	50%	75%	75%	75%
	Child Marriage (<i>12 programmes measuring this indicator</i>)				
	50%	67%	58%	58%	83%
	Femicide (<i>12 programmes measuring this indicator</i>)				
	50%	50%	58%	58%	58%
5.3: National statistics related to VAWG/HP incidence and prevalence are disaggregated by income, sex, age, ethnicity, disability, and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. <i>13 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	Family Violence (<i>6 programmes measuring this indicator</i>)				
	50%	33%	50%	50%	83%
	Trafficking (<i>2 programmes measuring this indicator</i>)				
	50%	50%	50%	50%	100%
	46%	54%	62%	62%	92%

Pillar 6: Women's Movements

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Milestone 2021	Results 2021	Cumulative Results	Target
6.1: Number of women's rights organisations, autonomous social movements and relevant CSOs, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/ marginalization, which increase their coordinated efforts to jointly advocate on ending VAWG. <i>25 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	516	810	802	2,508	3,113
6.2: Proportion of countries where there is an increased use of social accountability mechanisms by civil society to monitor and engage efforts to end VAWG. <i>18 programmes measuring this indicator</i>	11%	78%	50%	50%	94%
6.3: Number of women's rights organisations, autonomous social movements and CSOs, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple	189	421	1,056	2,283	1,039

and intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalization, report having greater influence and agency to work on ending VAWG. <i>22 programmes measuring this indicator</i>					
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The SI draws on SDG indicators to measure impact as established in the Global Results Framework, identifying two direct and one indirect indicator applicable to all countries:

Direct

SDG 5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical and/or, sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner, in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

SDG 5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner since age 15 in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

Indirect

SDG 16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

In addition, three of the five regions have identified additional impact indicators related to specific areas of focus:

Africa - Direct

SDG 5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

SDG 5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age

SDG 5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

Asia - Indirect

SDG 16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population by sex, age, and form of exploitation

Latin America - Indirect

SDG 16.1.1. Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age

Monitoring of results against impact level indicators has been complicated by the nature of the changes tracked and the frequency of data collection. Available evidence does not support assessment of higher-order impact as there is inadequate data available to draw on to track trends for selected SDG indicators over the four-year SI program period. A review of available data on SDG indicators identified as direct impact indicators for the 26 program countries shows that 2018 baseline data is available for SDG 5.2.1 for all countries; no data is available for SDG 5.2.2. Baseline data for indirect impact indicator SDG 16.2.3 is available for 15 program countries. SDG data is also incomplete for regional level impact direct and indirect indicators. Refer to Annex B for details.

Evaluation of collective results is further exacerbated by variations in start and end times of different programs within the initiative that has implications on the periods of time within which results could be achieved. Country programs in Africa and Latin America started in January 2019¹⁹ while country

¹⁹ With the exception of the Ecuador program that started in November 2020.

programs in the Caribbean, Asia and Pacific regions didn't start until January 2020²⁰. The Latin American regional program began in June 2019, while the other four regional programs only started in July 2020.²¹

In short, assessing the impact of the initiative as a whole presents a challenge to the evaluation on several fronts:

- Limited availability and frequency of monitoring for impact indicators;
- Variable durations for different country and regional programs;
- Complications with interpreting meaning of impact-level data trends related to prevalence and reporting;²²
- Issues with defining levels of attribution and contribution of the SI.

Furthermore, comprehensive data collected against the six pillars does not identify the extent to which outputs and outcomes have contributed to 'transformative change'.²³ Interactions or relationships between pillars has not been assessed. Understandings of what constitutes a transformative result is dependent on both context and individual interpretations. Despite beliefs among many stakeholders interviewed that the initiative has made an important contribution to transformative change, interviews revealed that a common understanding and definition of transformative change was lacking amongst stakeholders at all levels.

The initiative's financial monitoring system was built to allow for reporting of inputs, rather than outcomes and outputs. While this allowed for greater flexibility for programs to respond more nimbly to changing contexts and emerging opportunities, the lack of results-based budgeting limits the availability of information to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of activities linked to expenditures.

While monies were disbursed to programs holistically, investments by pillar were targeted at the planning stage of programs, subject to revisions during implementation. The pillars and their share of planned cumulative SI investments as of December 2021 as shown below show that over 50 percent of funding was planned for Pillars 3 and 4, with each of the other four pillars receiving roughly between 10 and 15 percent of planned investments.²⁴

²⁰ With the exception of the Afghanistan program that started in November 2020.

²¹ The Safe and Fair regional program, designed before the start of the SI, began in January 2018.

²² For example, rising rates of prevalence may be a sign of greater awareness of rights, changing attitudes and growing confidence in national responses so that documented prevalence rates may well rise as a result of increased reporting.

²³ UN Women's [Handbook on Gender Mainstreaming for Gender Equality Results](#) (2022:42) identifies gender transformative results as those that promote changes in sociocultural norms, values, attitudes and practices as well as formal and informal power structures and processes. Other definitions include: change at a systems level; involvement of multiple actors; fundamental disruption to the status quo; change that is sustained over a long period of time.

²⁴ Financial monitoring systems do not allow for tracking of actual expenditures by pillar. Data comes from budgeted funds in approved Phase I+II budgets for programs in Africa and Latin America, and from the most recent annual workplan data for Phase I programs in the Caribbean, Central Asia and Afghanistan, as well as Ecuador and the Africa Regional Program. Data for the Caribbean Regional Program, Grenada, Haiti, Pacific Regional Program, and Samoa comes from approved Phase I budgets. Data does not include the two funds or the Safe and Fair program.

Table 3 – SI Investments by Pillar

Share of Spotlight Initiative Investment by Pillars to End 2021 ²⁵	
Spotlight Initiative Pillars	Cumulative Share of Investments 31 Dec 2021
1. Policies and Legislation (Legislative and legal frameworks in line with international human rights standards)	9.5 %
2. Institutions (National and sub-national institutions plan, fund and deliver programmes that prevent and respond to VAWG)	9.8 %
3. Prevention (Gender equitable social norms and practices)	27.6 %
4. Services (Available, accessible, acceptable, and quality essential services for long-term recovery from violence)	27.4 %
5. Data (Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on VAWG)	11.0 %
6. Women’s Movements (Women’s rights groups, autonomous social movements and women’s rights organizations more effectively influence GEWE and end of VAWG)	14.7 %

Summary Findings Evaluability

The below table lays out the key findings and the associated design implications for the evaluation, drawing off of the evidence as laid out above and in related annexes.

Table 4 – Design Response to Evaluability Findings

Evaluability Key Findings	Design Response²⁶
<i>Design and Theory of Change</i>	
<p>Strengths: The SI design and TOC lays out a clear framework to support a theory-based evaluation of key results in relation to objectives at the outcome and output level, providing the basis for tracking of data against targets established in the Global Results Framework at the levels of outcomes and outputs.</p> <p>Limitations: The framework does not establish clear linkages between impact level indicators and outcome/output level results nor does it identify how pillars may interact for synergistic effects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation will be theory-based, utilizing available quantitative and qualitative data supplemented with qualitative data from country case studies and regional missions to identify higher-order changes influenced by pillar-specific work and/or broader design approaches. • Participatory evaluation workshops at country level will draw on a ‘most significant change’²⁷ methodology to understand SI contributions to transformative change. • Findings from case studies and regional missions will be further supported and nuanced by questionnaires.
<i>Scope of Programming</i>	
<p>Strengths: The governance and management structures at global, regional and national levels are well established and documented. Operational and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The methodology will ensure careful selection of case study countries to allow for representation of diverse contexts at country levels (see section on sampling methodology). Analysis will consider

²⁵Spotlight Initiative, Global Annual Report 2021:65-6.

²⁶ Refer to section on ‘Evaluation Approach’ and Annex A for further elaboration of design.

²⁷ The MSC methodology is a qualitative and participatory form of evaluation based on the collection and selection of stories of reported changes. The methodology will be adapted and tailored during the start-up phase of the evaluation – see Annexes A and D for more details.

programmatic guidance, agreements and protocols are in place.

Limitations/Complications: The geographical coverage of the initiative is broad and complex encompassing country-level programming, country-level inputs (grants), regional programming and global initiatives. Means by which the three levels (global, regional, country) are expected to be mutually reinforcing are not well articulated. A broad range of stakeholders are involved at all levels. Program start and end times are inconsistent.

the impact of variable program durations on results achieved.

- The evaluation will include missions to each of the five regional programs to explore the extent to which synergies existed across levels and the achievement of results within program timeframes.
- The design will allow for a wide body of stakeholder views to be heard all levels including:
 - Representatives of the European Union at global, regional and country levels;
 - Representatives of the UN EOSG at Deputy and Director levels;
 - Representatives of the four core UN RUNOs (UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP);
 - Representatives from the other seven RUNOs;
 - Members of the Global, Regional and Country Level Civil Society Reference Groups;
 - Representatives of MPTFO; MTOFEVAW, WPHF
 - Representatives of DCO;
 - SI Secretariat Staff across various functions in the Management and Technical Unit;
 - UN Resident Coordinators at country level;
 - Spotlight Initiative Coordinators and other designated staff at country and regional levels;
 - UNCT HOAs at country level for RUNOs;
 - Technical staff of UN implementing agencies at country level;
 - High level Government delegates participating on steering committee and other initiatives at country level;
 - Representatives from implementing partners (government, non-government, private, academia, etc.) at country and regional level;
 - Participants and beneficiaries at country level.

Data and Information Availability

Strengths: A large body of documentation is available to the evaluation that elaborates the design and implementation process of the initiative. Internal monitoring and externally led assessments provide qualitative insights; tracking against the global results framework offers quantitative data at output and outcome level that appears reliable.

Limitations: Impact level data generally is not able to show trends against selected SDG indicators. Available data against the six pillars does not identify the extent

- The evaluation will utilize available quantitative and qualitative data supplemented with qualitative data from country case studies and regional missions to identify higher-order changes influenced by pillar-specific work and or broader approaches.
- The evaluation will draw in synthesis of findings and lessons from completed studies against each AOI.
- Participatory evaluation workshops at country level will draw on a ‘most significant change’²⁸

²⁸ The MSC methodology is a qualitative and participatory form of evaluation based on the collection and selection of stories of reported changes. The methodology will be adapted and tailored during the start-up phase of the evaluation – see Annexes A and D for more details.

to which outputs and outcomes have contributed to 'transformative change'. The monitoring system does not link outputs and outcomes to financial investments, making it impossible for direct measures of efficiency and effectiveness against spending at a granular level.

methodology to understand SI contributions to transformative change.²⁹

- Information from case study countries will be contrasted against information from one non-program countries in each region to offer a point of comparison.
- Evidence of broader impact and sustainability will be gleaned from 'before' and 'after' assessments of key planning documents that guide the work of UN entities, UNCTs and the EU.
- Results from case studies and regional missions will be further supported and nuanced by questionnaires.

VI. Issues Identified from Primary Research: interviews and field testing

Key Informant Interviews: global, regional, country

A total of 43 interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders to inform the evaluation design, identify key issues and offer guidance on filling gap areas of understanding around the initiative. The list of interviewees was selected in consultations between the SI Secretariat and the Systemwide Evaluation Office. Interviews were conducted with members of the Secretariat, European Union, UN Entities and Offices, Global and Regional Civil Society Reference Group, UN Resident Coordinators and SI Technical Coordinators and Teams at country and regional levels. See Annex I for full listing.

Interviewees were asked to weigh in on how they would define 'success' for the Spotlight Initiative and where the final evaluation should focus, building on what is already known about the initiative. Discussions centered on stakeholder perspectives of incremental and foundational change in many cases, noting that success may be foundational and incremental, as a means of reaching the end goal of transformational change. The below word cloud offers a quick depiction of the most commonly offered ideas of how the SI should consider success from amongst the stakeholders interviewed during the scoping phase.³⁰

²⁹ Working definitions of key concepts such as 'transformative change' and 'collaborative partnerships' will be developed during the planning phase of the evaluation and further refined as needed based on piloting feedback.

³⁰ The visual offers a depiction of the most widely shared ideas from stakeholders interviewed as per Annex I. Larger font designates ideas that were put forth most frequently. Ideas that were submitted by a single stakeholder were not included in this representation. The visual should be viewed as illustrative based on a sample of 43 interviewees; it does not represent the full spectrum of stakeholder views.

Figure 4 - What Does Success Look Like for the Spotlight Initiative?



The above representation is noteworthy for the focus on ways of working as key measures of success. Key informant interviews also yielded important insights into what selected stakeholders hoped to gain from the final evaluation, bearing in mind the existing and on-going bodies of work to monitor and evaluation different aspects of the initiative. While a wide range of ideas emerged, a synthesis of those ideas most opined is shared below.

- **Did it make a difference?**
 - Updated results (outcome and output)
 - Impact – systemic changes
- **Was it worth the effort and complications?**
 - Value of a comprehensive approach
 - Cost of a comprehensive approach
 - Efficiency and effectiveness of management and operations
- **Did it benefit from and contribute to UN reform?**
 - Impediments to UN coherence
 - Benefits from reform process
 - Contribution to strengthened reform
- **Is it sustainable?**
 - Government ownership; political will
 - MS funding commitments and modalities
 - UN commitment to integrated approach
 - Ownership of the brand/approach
 - CSO capacities and engagement
- **What has been learned to take forward?**
 - Management and architecture
 - Global-regional-country interface

- Tradeoffs between rigidity and flexibility
- Proof of concept

Interviewees further highlighted the importance of considering the following areas of inquiry in the evaluation design.

Design and Set-Up Phase

- TOC design process and technical collaboration
- Proof of concept of SI design
- Selection criteria and scope of geographic coverage (country and regional)
- Timelines for establishing operations and programs at country and regional levels
- Flexibility of design to fit diverse contexts
- Processes to establish and codify operations and new ways of working

Management and Operations

- Efficiency and effectiveness of implementation modalities
- Reporting lines
- Structures

Civil Society Engagement

- Development and integration of CSO role and engagement at all levels
- Impact of results groups models – good practices and challenges
- Sustainability of capacities supported; evidence of movement building

Leadership and Architecture

- Efficiency of Secretariat set-up
- Review of country and regional level architecture
- Importance of high-level ownership in EOSG and EU
- Extent to which SI demonstrated and contributed to UN reform

Results and Effectiveness

- Proof of concept of TOC – how results differ from siloed approaches
- Review of robustness of monitoring systems and reporting
- Quantitative data does not tell complete story of impact
- Evidence of innovative approaches making an impact
- Evidence of catalytic changes and programs going to scale
- Extent to which global indicators well represented regional level work
- Evidence of synergistic interactions between country and regional levels

Sustainability

- Evidence may be found in government ownership and increased budget for GBV
- Capacities of critical stakeholders
- New ways of working (UN internally and with external stakeholders)

Field Testing of Methodology in Zimbabwe

As part of the scoping and evaluability assessment, the Team Leader and Director a.i. of the Systemwide Evaluation Office conducted a four-day mission to the Zimbabwe CP to check the viability of the proposed AOIs and conduct field testing of the tools and methodology. The mission included:

- review of country-level documentation and data;

- interviews with 59 (40 female; 19 male) stakeholders from the United Nations, Civil Society, European Union, Government, Private Sector, Innovators (Youth) and Academia; and
- site visits to two projects (One-Stop-Center and Safe Market) that included discussions with local government representatives, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

Discussions were held with a wide range of stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the evidence available at country level, identify gap areas, and target the best means of generating new evidence as needed. The inquiry focused on understanding the best approach to take at country level to address the seven areas of investigation and key evaluation questions. Attention was given to assess stakeholder understanding of ‘transformational change’ and ways in which it may be recognized and measured.

At the close of the mission, further inputs were sought from the Programme Management Unit to inform the evaluation matrix and methodology as well as to develop the case study design and protocols, guidelines for regional missions and guidelines for non-program country missions (see Annexes D, E and F).

Key Takeaways from Zimbabwe Scoping

Information obtained during the mission to Zimbabwe confirmed the logic of the seven areas of investigation. Overall, the focus was found to be appropriate and to offer a strategic framework to evaluate the initiative that could effectively build on the existing knowledge base. At the same time, interviews with key stakeholders highlighted some important areas to fine-tune the inquiry and ensure that cross-cutting issues are addressed. Tools have been adjusted accordingly and changes have been reflected in the evaluation matrix.

The mission highlighted the importance of ensuring that the evaluation methodology was both structured and adaptable to take into account national and regional contexts that significantly influence the framing of ‘success’ in different contexts. The inquiry also reinforced the understanding of the multiple levels of complexity of the SI environment that must be considered in the evaluation design.

Selected issues highlighted during field testing are identified below:

Programme Design

- Design flexibility and adaptability
- Mobilizing/creating high-level political will at start (impact on policy influence)
- Planned interactions/influences between country and regional programs

Management and Operationalization

- Influence of large-scale funding accessed via central level
- Role of start-up phase to establish operations
- Problem solving systems differences between RUNOs

Governance, Leadership and Coherence

- Steering Committee - extent to which Government led processes
- Formal communication systems and accountability – RC; RUNO HOAs; technical team
- Understanding issues of SI branding and stakeholder visibility

- UN-EU-Government interaction and leadership models under SI – extent to which players functioned as partners especially regarding policy dialogues
- Influence of the SI architectural structure on communications and coherence
- Frequency of meetings of key bodies (Steering Committee, Technical Team) *“Different actors did their part and we met often enough to hear from each other – we did not drift. It was a concrete partnership.”*

Results and Progress

- Outcome and output indicators show progress, but not higher order change – there is a story behind the numbers *“If you look at numbers only, you are going to miss the point.”*
- Most significant changes seen differently by different stakeholders and may be around individual lives or national systems and broader processes (e.g. strengthened networks uniting for a common goal; increased actions and mutual accountabilities; empowered government system; formal government ownership; awareness and attitudinal changes; women’s representation in decision-making processes).
- Different understanding of ‘transformational change’ among stakeholders
- Importance of assessing extent to which work with non-traditional stakeholders (e.g. private sector, youth, religious leaders) influenced outcomes and worked synergistically for change
- Extent to which programs have gone to scale for broader reach and impact

Especially in COVID times, economics were very hard for people, and Spotlight wasn’t just about GBV cases, but also about empowerment of women - psychologically, emotionally, economically. Maybe the project came at the right time; helped people at a tough time. There is more impact than what you will see. (CSO Stakeholder, Zimbabwe)

UN Reform and New Ways of Working Together

- Role of the technical team³¹ in fostering integration collaboration and coherency
- Role of SIC hard and soft skills to effectively coordinate
- Importance of internal UN accountability structures (Technical Team/PMU/HOA/RC/RCO)
- Differences in different entity experiences and motivations around mandates and available resources
- Extent to which initiative demonstrated added value of integrated programming
- External perceptions of UN functioning under SI. *‘It’s not business as usual. You feel it at all levels.’*

Sustainability and Forward Looking

- Evidence greater UN focus and coherence on EAWG in UNSDCF, JWPs, SNs, CPDs
- Evidence of how SI was articulated with EU country programmes and Gender Action Plan III Country Level Implementation Plans
- How Spotlight influenced in-country donor coordination and policy dialogues with Governments on GBV issues and beyond
- Policies and legislation seen as sustainable by nature
- Knowledge products, SOPs, manuals seen to have extended relevance
- Role of economic empowerment to sustain impact
- Government ownership and commitment of resources important measure of sustainability

Lessons Learned for Models of Integrated Programming

- Value of the comprehensive whole systems approach to complex issues
- Effectiveness of architecture of SI to bring together agencies
- Opening Government dialogue with diverse developing partners including CSO and private sector

³¹ The technical team in Zimbabwe was comprised of staff from each of the RUNOs.

- Importance of networking, collaboration and accountability between stakeholders throughout program
- Trade-offs between scope of geographic focus and breadth of coverage
- Impact of the HQ-centric model on UN-EU operations at country level – need to consider standards around communications and visibility
- Linkages between three levels (global, regional, country) – interactions and extent to which synergies were created

Cross-Cutting Areas

- Focus on inclusion and identification of groups most left behind in design and architecture of SI: PWD, LGBTIQ, youth and other vulnerable groups
- Impact of innovative approaches and value for money
- CSO roles on NRG and as IPs (and both); issues around involvement and compensation
- NRG structure and impact on CSO collaboration and coherence of work
- Interlinkages between RRG and NRG
- Sustainability of CSO ‘movement’ and ways of working in the absence of financing

VII. Areas of Investigation and Evaluation Matrix

The following AOIs and associated EQs were identified for the final evaluation based on the background reading, analysis of evaluative evidence and interviews with selected stakeholders across the initiative to identify the most important focus areas. Proposed AOIs and methodologies were further interrogated and refined based on the scoping mission to Zimbabwe.

Given the unique nature of the program and the multiple complexities of the programming environment, the AOIs take a strategic view to add to existing information and focus on higher-order issues regarding the design and operationalization of the initiative in the context of ongoing UN reform.

AOI 1 – Programme Design

Q1: What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the design of the SI, including the whole systems approach and six pillars with cross-cutting principles? How has the SI design process and programme scope influenced results, coherence³², stakeholder participation and flexibility/suitability to global, regional and national context?

Rationale and benefits: The SI is a unique program, the scale and structure of which has never before been applied to efforts to tackle GBV. It is important to understand how the design of the program influenced the results achieved in order to offer information for further work to EVAWG and other complex development challenges. Better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the program design will support key stakeholders in accelerating action toward achieving SDG5 and SDG16 over the decade of action.

AOI 2 – Management and Operationalization

³² Internal coherence under AOI 1 looks at whether the design of the different program elements (pillars in the case of the SI) are coherent (reinforcing and non-contradictory) with each other.

Q2: What have been the strengths demonstrated and the challenges encountered as a result of the processes established and resources put in place at the HQ (including SIS), country and regional levels including management and administrative systems (e.g. architecture, personnel, capacities, finances)?

Rationale and benefits: The SI put into place innovative management and oversight systems to operationalize the program and ensure accountability. A better understanding of the most efficient and effective architecture will help to support further work to expand integrated and joint programming to address complex development challenges.

AOI 3 – Governance, Leadership and Coherence³³

Q3: Has SI programming been coherent at country, regional and global levels? Were the right stakeholders (including marginalized groups) engaged and to what extent have key actors at all levels demonstrated the required engagement, ownership and shared responsibilities and decision-making?? What is the evidence of collaborative partnerships between UN, Government, EU and CSOs?

Rationale and benefits: Innovative models of shared governance and leadership across a range of stakeholders put into place for the SI can help to inform good practices for new ways of working together for a common goal.

AOI 4 - Results and Progress

Q4: Have the results achieved by the SI provided a robust proof of concept for the TOC and the six pillars whole systems approach with cross-cutting principles, including evidence of progress against the Results Framework plus other results such as SDG localization/acceleration; innovation; qualitative significant changes; and the impact/reach of advocacy, communications and knowledge management to influence change?

Rationale and benefits: The final evaluation of results is an important for ensuring ultimate accountability for investments and commitments made under the initiative. Evidence that elaborates on the effectiveness of the comprehensive model to impact change processes and achieve transformational change is important to inform future work to eradicate violence against women and girls while serving as the final measure of accountability for the initiative.

AOI 5 - UN Reform and New Ways of Working Together³⁴

Q5: To what extent has the SI been able to operate as a shared system to achieve a common purpose? In particular, how has UN reform supported the initiative and how has the SI supported reform? Is there credible evidence of a collaborative systems approach to working internally and with external stakeholders on the Initiative (and beyond)?

Rationale and benefits: The initiative was structured to leverage ongoing UN reform while helping to accelerate integrated work as part of the reform process. The evaluation provides an

³³ The evaluation relies on the OECD definition of coherence as ‘the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution’ ([OECD ilibrary, ‘Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully’](#) accessed March 2023). External coherence under AOI 3 refers to the initiative fit with external programmes, policies and initiatives at country, regional and global levels.

³⁴ AOI 5 looks at internal coherence and the strategic and operational management of SI within the context of UN Reform.

opportunity to better document the extent to which the UN was able to model new ways of working, demonstrating what has worked and what has not worked to further the reform process and assess benefits and trade-offs. Findings will help to reveal whether comprehensive programs and collaborative efforts can contribute to better results than piecemeal approaches.

AOI 6 – Sustainability and Forward Looking

Q6: To what extent has the initiative demonstrated sustainable changes in line with plans including evidence of institutionalization and ownership? What are the risks of a return to less joined approaches?

Rationale and benefits: Understanding of the extent to which the investments put into place have the potential to sustainably change systems and hold the potential for long-term impact will provide valuable lessons on the most effective and efficient means of tackling GBV.

AOI 7 - Lessons Learned for Models of Integrated Programming

Q7: What are the key strengths and weaknesses in design, systems, targets, operations, management structure, architecture and donor base of the SI that have implications for design of other complex programs (including VAWG) and UN reform? How can these lessons be applied at all levels?

Rationale and benefits: The SI provides a valuable learning opportunity that draws on the large-scale, complexity and unique approach of the program to inform further work. The UN, Donors, Government, CSO and other stakeholders may draw from lessons learned to accelerate progress toward SDGs and operationalize integrated programs to address GBV and other complex development challenges.