

Annex 6: Quality Assurance at the Regional Level

The primary role of the regional UNDG teams is to provide leadership, strategic guidance and support to Resident Coordinators and UNCTs for the achievement of country level results. As outlined in the MAS, the Regional UNDG Teams have four core functions:

- Provision of technical/programme support to Resident Coordinators and UNCTs;
- Quality assurance support and advice on common country programming (e.g., the UNDAF, the Delivering as One process);
- Performance management and oversight of Resident Coordinators and the UNCTs; and
- “Trouble shooting” in complex country situations, dispute resolution, etc.

In line with current institutional arrangements, the main actors involved in providing quality support and advice from the regional level are:

- The **Regional UNDG Team**, composed of the directors of the regional offices of UNDG member agencies, provides policy and strategic advice to UNCTs. Additionally, they are the senior liaisons/focal points where UNCTs can address higher level issues as they arise.
- The inter-agency **Peer Support Group** comprises experienced UN staff delegated by the regional bureaux/offices of UNDG organizations. While the composition of the groups varies among regions, they in general provide strategic and technical support to UNDAF processes.
- The **convening agencies** are members of the Peer Support Group that serve as focal points for one or more UNDAF roll-out countries.
- The **Peer Support Group chairperson** coordinates the group and its members.

Quality assurance services at country level are linked to the main steps in the UNDAF process, as entry points. Quality is assessed against the UNDAF quality criteria (see Annex 1). Experience demonstrates that high-quality UNDAF documents depend on the quality of UNDAF roadmaps and CCA exercises, rigorous analysis of UNCT members’ comparative advantages, well-planned and executed strategic planning retreats, and synchronized support to UNCTs from the regional and headquarters levels. All of these require early and sustained engagement by the Peer Support Group.

For all steps in the UNDAF process, on behalf of the Regional UNDG Teams, the Peer Support Group will engage to:

- **Provide advice**, based on UNDG guidelines, and global and regional strategic priorities, lessons and good practices, on **how to strengthen UNDAF processes and products**, with a particular focus on priority-setting and policy dialogue;
- **Consolidate and synthesize regional analyses** to support country analysis, strategic planning and a dynamic policy environment at the country level;
- Support data capacity-building, indicator development and evaluation advisory services in connection with on-going UN system-wide efforts on data, including at the global level;
- **Provide concise written feedback to UNCTs** on key programming documents, such as draft CCAs and UNDAFs, pertaining to the strategic direction and content of UNDAF preparations;

- **Support UNCTs to improve continuity in the UNDAF process** by helping to connect major findings and conclusions from one step to the next (for example, supporting UNCTs to consider studies or results from analytical exercises during the CCA and strategic planning steps);
- **Provide and/or facilitate the delivery of technical assistance**, such as through advisory missions or training, including on the three core programming principles;
- **Maintain an inventory of available technical expertise in the region**, with a focus on the programming principles and other thematic issues;
- **Document and disseminate good examples** and lessons learned, share high-quality UNDAFs prepared by roll-out countries, and assist the Regional UNDG Team to gauge the effectiveness of UN reform tools and mechanisms;
- Upon request, **support UNCTs with technical assistance for the annual UNDAF reviews and during the implementation phase** of the UNDAF;
- Upon request, provide advice or technical assistance on the **design of UNDAF evaluations**, including through the identification of consultants, and the review of terms of reference and draft evaluations towards ensuring application of UN Evaluation Group guidelines; and
- Provide feedback/advice on the One UN Country Results Report.

The following table describes specific quality assurance activities at country level carried out by Peer Support Group members, per the four main UNDAF steps. This is not an exhaustive list, and actual activities in each region will be tailored to particular country situations and needs.

Quality assurance activities by Peer Support Groups

1. Roadmap

- Support the organization of and participate in UNDAF regional workshops, and participate in country roadmap workshops; offer advice per UNDAF guidelines, and lessons and good practices;
- Assist UNCTs to assess and prioritize their capacity needs for carrying out the UNDAF process, particularly for strategic priority-setting and in terms of the programming principles;
- Emphasize the importance of, and advocate for, an objective exercise to identify UNCT comparative advantages with the inclusion of the entire UNDS; and
- Review the roadmap and provide feedback to the UNCT.

2. CCA

- Provide, if requested and as needed, subject matter/technical expertise drawn from UNDG agencies;
- Review the strategic direction of the CCA as a basis for providing strategic guidance to the UNCT on substantive and methodological issues, and in terms of identifying the UNCT's comparative advantages and value-added;
- Monitor and, upon request, participate in country analysis exercises as outlined in UNDAF roadmaps;
- Participate in and support in-country workshops on the three core programming principles of the UNDAF;
- Provide comments on the CCA; and
- Support comparative advantage exercises.

3. Strategic planning

- Provide, if requested and as needed, technical expertise drawn from Peer Support Group/UNDG agencies/experts in undertaking prioritization exercises for the UNDAF;
- Help to resolve differences in terms of prioritization within the UNCT, and between the UNCT and government;
- **Circulate, coordinate and consolidate inputs from Regional UNDG Teams and provide concise comments on the draft results matrices and UNDAFs, including a review of the application of the programming principles;** and
- Assess the UNDAF by using the quality criteria in Annex 1.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

- Monitor the application of the UNDAF M&E plans by inter-agency mechanisms and processes;
- Participate in annual reviews;
- Provide comments on UNDAF progress reports; and
- Participate in UNDAF evaluations.

In line with good practices already being carried out, Peer Support Groups should provide concise feedback to UNCTs on the strategic direction of their UNDAF preparations and the strategic content of their documents, including lessons and advice on ways to identify and position UNCT comparative advantages. This includes specific technical or policy-oriented guidance to ensure analytical consistency and coherence. Every country situation is different, and **regular feedback from UNCTs is essential** to sustain a dialogue about progress, challenges and potential roadblocks, and to tailor quality assurance activities to specific situations and needs.

Regions enjoy the **flexibility** to organize and structure their available resources and people to best deliver quality assurance services to roll-out countries. In response to unique regional and country situations, the organization, resourcing and specific terms of reference for quality assurance activities and actors will vary. Organizational headquarters must reflect their commitment to quality assurance of the UNDAFs in job descriptions and **performance appraisals** as agreed in the MAS.