



Final Evaluation Report of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2016–2022 for Tajikistan (UNDAF)

Dushanbe, July 2021

Note:

The UNCT in Tajikistan has commissioned this independent final UNDAF 2016-2022 evaluation. The independent team of evaluation consultants implemented this evaluation.

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Executive summary

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Government of Tajikistan (GoT) in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team¹ (UNCT) have formulated the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) covering the period from 2016-2020 and further extended until 2022, as a mechanism to support achievement of Tajikistan's development priorities. The UNDAF contains six (6) strategic “outcomes” that were identified jointly by the Government of Tajikistan (GoT) and the UN, with involvement of civil society. The document described how the national stakeholders and the UNCT had planned to deliver on the commitments. The UNDAF provided for the management arrangements including jointly-owned coordination and implementation arrangements, partnerships, coordinated resource mobilization, and effective progress monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.

The **objectives of the evaluation** have been to assess whether UNDAF 2016-2022 made an effective, coherent, sustainable, and cost-efficient contribution to progress under UNDAF Outcomes, national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and also generate evidence and finding, identify the lessons learned and prepare recommendations for the forthcoming UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2026) to ensure more substantive integration of Agenda 2030 and development priorities for Tajikistan

This report presents findings, conclusions and recommendations from the independent UNDAF evaluation commissioned by the UNCT, and undertaken by an external evaluation team from March to July 2021.

The **primary users** of the evaluation's findings and recommendations are UNCT, and UN Agencies in Tajikistan, the GoT and key national and international development partners.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the final evaluation (FE) reflected the essentials of the contribution analysis (CA) intending to establish credible causal claims about interventions, their results and created changes, following a mixed-method approach to enable gathering of qualitative and quantitative information through a well-balanced combination of desk research and interviews with key informants, at various level of analysis. The FE covered the overall results framework of the 2016-2022 UNDAF, all programme- and activity-based contributions of the UNCT to UNDAF outcomes, and analysed activities and results of agencies without a formal country programme and non-resident agencies.

This approach served to identify challenges or obstacles that affected the progress and contribution towards the achievement of outcomes, while also suggesting a more substantive – follow-up analysis, when points of break in the contribution to outcomes were identified. The process considered the following areas of analysis: UNDAF relevance, progress towards the achievement of UNDAF outcomes (effectiveness) and its implementation framework (efficiency); transformation that UNDAF made (impact) and sustainability of these efforts. The evaluation analysed UN programming principles and cross-cutting issues. The findings served to define conclusions and prepare recommendations for the UNCT in Tajikistan.

FINDINGS

UN Agencies in Tajikistan through UNDAF 2016-2022 addressed specific developmental needs jointly identified with the national partners. UNDAF has been effectively guiding the work of UN Agencies, also reflecting international norms and standards and agreed goals and commitments for Tajikistan. Its outcomes have been

¹The UNCT refers to the totality of UN operations in Tajikistan by resident and non-resident agencies, funds and programmes.

and remained within the mandate of UN Agencies, reflecting the principle "leave no one behind" and addressing national development priorities and the needs of the people in Tajikistan.

UN Agencies have been flexible and responsive to the country's emerging priorities and challenges during the entire period of UNDAF implementation. The national partners recognized the efforts of UN Agencies in mainstreaming human rights and following no-one left behind principles. Also, UN in Tajikistan has successfully used a twin-track approach- UNDAF included a gender-specific outcome, combining it with gender-related activities under other strategic outcomes to ensure greater gender equality and women's empowerment.

UNDAF has served effectively as a partnership vehicle for the GoT and other actors to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) targets, ensuring that the rights and needs of the poor and people in vulnerable situations have been considered and addressed. Still, Tajikistan is facing challenges to ensure sustainable progress under some of the SDGs.

UN Agencies have been effective in delivering results and contributing to progress under all UNDAF 2016-2022 outcomes. UN Agencies demonstrated neutrality, impartiality, technical expertise and reputation in facilitating Tajikistan's progress in critical reform areas, linking them to SDGs. Also, factors such as active dialogue with the GoT, quick decision-making procedures, a strong partnership between the UN Agencies and national stakeholders and communication with international development partners have contributed to the effectiveness. Many UN interventions were verifiably effective regarding the achievement of their planned outputs. UN agencies have well-developed systems to measure their progress towards agencies-specific outputs, but the approach to monitoring actual contribution towards achieving UNDAF outcomes has been inconsistent and underdeveloped mainly due to the flaws in planning.

UN Agencies in Tajikistan have benefited from joint initiatives, addressing complex (sectoral) challenges and problems. Collective efforts of the UN Agencies in Tajikistan and the UN Resident Coordinator Office have been critical factors that contributed to a more coordinated approach, donor coordination and aid effectiveness in the UNDAF priority sectors.

UNDAF Tajikistan 2016-2022 has been implemented efficiently, following globally adopted procedures, adjusted to the specific context of Tajikistan. It included sound management, programming, and monitoring frameworks, aimed at "more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better performing United Nations Agencies in Tajikistan. The framework for effective management of UNDAF has been generally in place; still, some areas (such as steering and participatory planning, risk management, reporting and monitoring) would require improvements. Financial and human resources for the implementation of UNDAF 2016-2022 have been in general well-planned, corresponding to the needs of projects and programmes.

UN staff and partners displayed a positive perception of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in enhancing efficiency and strengthening communication and cooperation among UN Agencies and the national partners.

UNCT has considered sustainability of results from the UNDAF design stage, working to ensure national ownership through the involvement of national stakeholders (mainly as beneficiaries, or participants in different activities). The UNCT has effectively managed implementation of 2018 Mid-Term review recommendations to address the country needs. As a result of UN interventions, many national partners feel more confident to lead the development process. The UN system has the capacity to focus on complex, cross-sectoral policy advice functions and empower the state partners to deliver programmes.

UN Agencies have been steadily addressing the capacity needs of individuals to enable access to services (demand side) and enhance the quality of these services (supply side). The sustainability of capacities developed at the individual level is conditioned with a high likelihood that these capacities will remain available and will continue to be demanded upon the completion of the UNDAF cycle. UN Agencies were assisting national partner institutions to enhance operational efficiency, improve organizations capacities and modernize operational procedures, and processes. The assistance at institutional level responded to demands to reform the existing and introduce new (demanded) services.

UN Agencies assisted in enhancing policy processes in Tajikistan, through support to identify priorities and define appropriate measures. These efforts have been essential and improvements evident; still, capacity gaps remained, mainly related to horizontal and vertical policy coordination.

The recent political developments, effects of COVID19 pandemic socio-economic situation in Tajikistan, together with challenges that the reform of public institutions could bring, have been in general the main external factors to affect the sustainability of results

CONCLUSIONS

UNDAF 2016-2022 for Tajikistan has been relevant from the design throughout the entire period of its implementation, addressing development priorities and needs of the country and its citizens, while UN Agencies were effectively following their mandates and international norms and standards. UN Agencies have been flexible and reliable partners, highly accountable for progress under UNDAF outcomes. The joint UN efforts to address adverse effects of the COVID-19 under the Integrated Socio-economic Response Framework (ISEF) have been timely and effectively implemented, setting the basis for post-pandemic development.

Twin-track approach under UNDAF 2016- 2022 has contributed to mainstream gender and intersectionality more effectively, as well as design and implement different actions to empower women, men, girls and boys with different vulnerability needs in Tajikistan. Coordination and cooperation among the UN Agencies through the Results Group planning and implementation of Joint Work Plans (JWP) additionally contributed to effective gender mainstreaming and achievement of results.

UNDAF served as an effective platform for establishing and strengthening cooperation and coordination between UN Agencies, the authorities and other development partners in Tajikistan. This approach and has ensured UN in Tajikistan have been effective in ensuring progress under all UNDAF outcomes; especially important have been results achieved under the ISEF, a joint UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, UN could benefit from synergies and more effective interactions between UN Agencies during planning and implementation of development initiatives. Joint projects and initiatives have been an important delivery mechanism, however, there is a need for genuinely integrated joint programming. In this context, a strengthened UNDAF Joint Steering Committee could enhance synergies between development interventions, enable strategic positioning and provide guidance to UNCT on priorities, including changes and challenges, for future involvement. However, UN Agencies have not been accurate in planning and preparing the initial UNDAF budget, especially under some UNDAF outcomes, and the need remains to improve planning and budgeting practice.

UN has been an important development partner of the GoT and other national stakeholders, and contributed to progress that Tajikistan recorded under UNDAF 2016- 2022 outcomes (as presented in UNDAF reports). These results have been additionally supported through a strong sense of national ownership that has been created. UN has been effective in building partnerships and ensuring active involvement of the national stakeholders in design, and implementation of interventions of UN Agencies. Sustainability of these achievements (under UNDAF 2016- 2022) is expected, particularly at the systemic and institutional levels.

UN Agencies could benefit from a sound system to report and communicate results to the national stakeholders and public at large, presenting also accumulated effects and contribution to UNDAF 2016- 2022 outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of primary and secondary data served to define findings (and also concerns and challenges during UNDAF implementation) serving for conclusions. Considering these inputs, recommendations have been defined, as a framework for further consideration and follow up to UNCT/ UN Agencies and national stakeholders in Tajikistan.

The approach for the formulation of the recommendations that the FE followed (through the discussion with the national stakeholders and UN Agencies) has been instrumental in generating a greater sense of ownership while setting the ground for the next planning cycle.

The final evaluation team has formulated the following main recommendations:

R1: UNCT should remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the citizens and priorities defined in the national strategic documents in Tajikistan and continue with the activities and the efforts under the ISEF strategic areas.

UN should continue supporting the country's short-term priorities in the health sector, supporting national authorities to preserve the health system's capacity to provide non-COVID-19 related services and expand the reach and quality of services to address the needs of most vulnerable groups. In the longer term, the assistance from the UN should support structural reforms to enhance health sector resilience to disasters, also working on health system inclusion.

UN should continue assistance to national partners to expand social protection services by scaling up specific actions for groups at risk. Addressing issues related to migrations (including challenges for returnees and reintegration when appropriate) through a holistic approach and coordinated efforts.

UN should continue and expand support to enhance mechanisms and practices to prevent domestic, gender-based violence and other forms of violence and assist with establishing the system to provide the necessary support to survivors of violence.

The Final Evaluation Team (FET) recommends that the UN focus on economic recovery with a priority on "green" recovery to build environmental health and resilience in Tajikistan's society and economy, identifying the priority sectors for investments and improvements, encouraging the most environmentally responsible transformation.

UN should continue its support for improving good governance, including more flexible and responsive mechanisms and institutional coordination capacities. These results will contribute to a more integrated development process across government institutions. The FET recommends strengthening the role of non-government actors and civil society active in different governance areas and sectors, following the two-fold approach by continuing partnership and expanding support.

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of informed decision-making based on the availability of gender-disaggregated and locally representative data. UN should work with the national partners to ensure information on the most affected populations, including age groups, gender, or socio-economic or geographical distributions.

R2. The FET recommends that UN Agencies in Tajikistan prioritize long-term interventions, clearly linked to SDGs and national priorities, with explicitly set results and focus on sustainability. The inclusion of vulnerable groups should be considered as a programming principle, linking them with comparative advantages of UN Agencies in Tajikistan. The FET recommends focusing on identified SDG "accelerator" platforms

R3. UN Agencies/ UNCT together with GoT should work to strengthen functioning of the UNDAF Joint Steering Committee and ensure its strategic guidance for UNDAF implementation

R4. The FET recommends that UNCT intensify its normative work as one of UN comparative advantages and further strengthen gender mainstreaming across UNDAF outcomes

R5. The FET recommends that the UN Agencies explore and work on new partnerships and diversification of funding opportunities, especially through the involvement of private sector.

R6. The FET recommends that UNCT in partnership with the national stakeholders prepare clear and practical sustainability strategy under all outcomes and perform regular analysis of risks and assumptions.

List of abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AoS	Agency on Statistics under the President of Tajikistan
CA	Contribution Analysis
CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FE	Final Evaluation
FET	Final Evaluation Team
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Gross National Income
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Rights
ISEF	Integrated Socio-economic Response Framework
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organizations for Migrations
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MEDT	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTDP	Mid-term Development Programme
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NDS	National Development Strategy, 2016–2030
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMT	Operations Management Team
PHC	Primary Health Care
RC Office	The Office of the UN Resident Coordinator
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United National Country Team (UNCT)
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Guidelines
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WB	World Bank

Introduction

This document presents the results of the final evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2022 for Tajikistan. UNDAF is a strategic, medium-term results framework that describes the collective vision and response of the UN system to national development priorities and results based on normative programming principles, describing how UN Country Teams (UNCT) contributes to the achievement of development results in the country.

The UNCT and the Government of Tajikistan have reached the endpoint of the current UNDAF implementation. Therefore, they have agreed to conduct the final evaluation (FE) to assess the progress made on the results of the UNDAF during its entire period of implementation.

The Final Evaluation Team carried out this evaluation, following the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework - Internal Guidance, and adhering to UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, integrating human rights and gender equality principles and considering OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria. The Terms of Reference (ToR) set the overall framework for this evaluation.

The **structure of this evaluation report** is the following:

In the first chapter the authors provide the main information about Tajikistan, recent political developments and socio-economic situation, from a forward-looking perspective.

The second chapter provides details about the UNDAF 2016-2022, presenting its main strategic areas and outcomes.

In the third chapter of this document the purpose and the objective of the evaluation are outlined. In this chapter the users of the evaluation are clearly identified.

The fourth chapter presents the design and the approach of the evaluation. First it explains the methodology that was applied and presents the UNDAF evaluation matrix that has been applied. The matrix includes eight core evaluation questions designed to address the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The complete matrix is added to the annex of the report. This chapter also includes information about how data was collected and analysed. Finally, it addresses the question of limitations and risks as well as the risk mitigation strategies.

The results are presented in chapter five of the report. This chapter follows the structure of eight main evaluation questions and provides responses of the evaluation team with the data to support those findings.

Final, sixth and seventh chapters include conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations drawn from the results of the evaluation.

The last part of the report includes annexes, to facilitate better understanding of the evaluation assignment, details concerning the methodology that the Final Evaluation Team applied (including evaluation matrix and results framework) and brief biodata of the evaluation team.

1 Country background

Tajikistan is a landlocked mountainous country, classified as lower middle-income and with a low nominal GNI per capita, under \$1,300². The country scored 125th (out of 189) in the Human Development Index-HDI (0.668, 2019 results), being 70th in the Gender Inequality Index, and 93rd in the Global Gender Gap Index in 2019³.

² <http://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan>

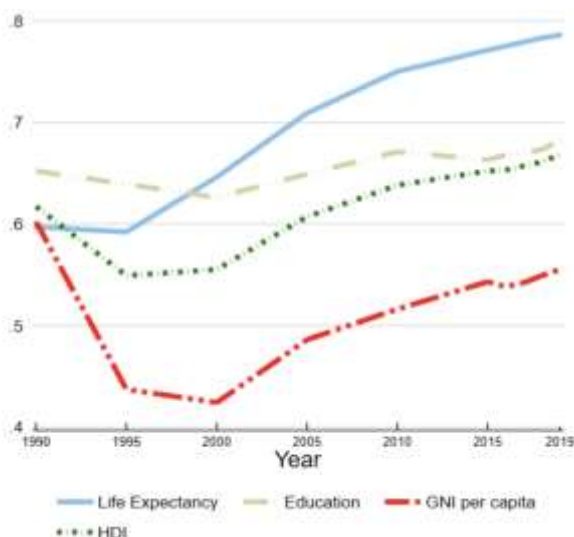
³ Human Development Report 2015 'Work for human development', briefing note for countries: Tajikistan. Access on: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/TJK.pdf, November 2016.

Tajikistan has a population of 9.538 million inhabitants, of which 73% are living in rural regions of the country. More than one third of all citizens are aged 0-14, which makes its population one of the youngest in Central Asia⁴. Also, the fertility rate (3.6 - It has declined: from 3.623 in 2015 to 3.585 in 2018) indicates perspectives for the population growth⁵.

Political developments in Tajikistan: Shortly after independence in 1991, civil and political conflict persisted until mid-1997, causing widespread loss of life and physical damage. It also resulted in a significant exodus of human resources, mainly from industry and public administration, and a serious deterioration in the quality of human capital. Uniquely among post-Soviet states, Tajikistan's transition from plan to market has in effect been delayed by a decade—until the turn of the century. Many first-generation reforms such as land and water use rights are just getting underway.

Political and administrative centralization unified the country and concentrated authority in the executive branch. The influence of the Presidency is far-reaching. President Emomali Rahmon—recently re-elected to a new term⁶—continues to dominate the political scene and his People's Democratic Party has a majority of seats in both houses of parliament (*Majlisi Oli*)⁷. Namely, the parliamentary elections were held in Tajikistan on 1 March 2020, and the People's Democratic Party won 47 of the 63 seats.

Graph 1. Overview of HDI for Tajikistan



Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-report>

The new cabinet was formed and several agencies were restructured with the aim of bringing more dynamism to government, particularly in the related energy and water sectors.

Poverty and social development: Tajikistan has achieved rapid poverty reduction over the past two decades, mainly due to a favourable external environment. Poverty fell from 37% in 2012 to 26.3% in 2019. The analysis of monetary poverty shows that deprivations have been higher for the population in the bottom 40% of the consumption distribution than for those in the top 60%⁸. Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in 2019 suggests that some 7.4%

⁴ World Bank, data access on: <http://data.worldbank.org/>, February 2021

⁵ Ibidem, WB

⁶ Following the Tajik presidential elections on 11 October, President Emomali Rahmon was elected for the sixth time with more than 90% of the votes,

⁷ http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2309_B.htm

⁸ World Bank, data access on: <http://data.worldbank.org/>, February 2021

of the population at national level are multidimensionally poor, while vulnerability to multidimensional poverty reaches over 21% (7.0 in urban and 24.3 % in rural areas)⁹.

In contrast to the decline in monetary poverty, Tajikistan has been less successful in improving the quality and accessibility of public goods and services. The country's multidimensional poverty index indicates that non-monetary deprivations in the country are widespread. Many residents are not satisfied with the quality of key public services, such as electricity, water, heating, and roads. Only three out of four persons have access to an improved water source essential for maintaining good health. Market accessibility mapping highlights the lack of infrastructure integration outside the largest cities¹⁰.

While Tajikistan registered sustained growth rates (although from a low base) through the past decade, significant gender inequalities remain. Tajikistan has a GII value of 0.314, ranking it 70 out of 162 countries in the 2019 index. The Government of Tajikistan is steadily working on the policies and laws to enhance its human rights agenda, including on prevention and response to violence against women and girls and other forms of gender-based violence. Tajikistan acceded (July 2014) to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified in 1993. The Law on the Prevention of Violence in the Family and the associated State programme for the prevention of domestic violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2014–2023 are the most recent milestones in the adopted comprehensive legislative framework to promote gender equality and fight discrimination against girls and women. However, the implementation is faced with a number of impediments, such as lack of capacities; uneven commitment of public and private stakeholders; considerable under-financing of programmes and action plans to address discrimination; the patriarchal and traditional structure of the society, political developments and the overall socio-economic situation that further undermines anti-discrimination measures.

Violence against women and girls remain a major challenge in the country. Family violence, and exploitation against women and girls is socially accepted and widespread with 80 per cent of women dealing with domestic violence within the family and only 6 per cent approaching law enforcement bodies or seeking the assistance of a lawyer. The prevalence of spousal violence has increased by 7% in the 5 years since the 2012 TjDHS.¹¹ Violence against women and girls is linked with health-related problems, since it has indisputable consequences and serious implications for current and future sexual and reproductive health (for example, pregnancy and delivery, HIV and related issues). In recent years, there has been a general trend towards an increase in the proportion of women among all new HIV infections, from 30.9 per cent in 2011 to 41.5 per cent in 2019. The discriminatory provisions of the Criminal Code under which criminal liability is provided for the infecting of someone with HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects women as well with most of the criminal cases in 2019-2020 were brought against women.¹² The average fertility rate in Tajikistan is 3.6 births per woman, which is higher than the global 2.5 births. In 2017, maternal mortality stood at around 17 per 100,000 births. Human trafficking as another form of GBV where both men and women are victims inside and outside of Tajikistan has been a challenge. Despite the state measures, women continue to be underrepresented in political and public life, including in the parliament, in executive bodies, including local executive and local self-governing bodies, and in the judiciary. Polygamy is prohibited by law however polygamy reportedly persists in practice, including due to large numbers of religious marriages (nikokh) putting women in a dependent and vulnerable position.¹³

There is also scarce data and analysis available on the intersection of GBV with disability, age, ethnicity and other vulnerability categories, which makes it difficult to have targeted intervention and protection for the most vulnerable.

Economic overview: Tajikistan's real GDP growth accelerated to 7.5% in 2019, up from 7.3% in 2018. A jump in exports and a recovery in remittances helped narrow the current account deficit, and the GDP recorded growth of 4.5% in

⁹ OPHI, MPI data access on https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CB_TJK_2019_2.pdf

¹⁰ World Bank, data access on: <http://data.worldbank.org/>, February 2021

¹¹ Tajikistan Demographic and Health survey, 2017

¹² Human rights of people living with HIV in Tajikistan, Article by Larisa Alexandrova, 2021

¹³ Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Tajikistan, ICCPR 2019

2020¹⁴. Export earnings rose by 9.4%, supported by higher shipments abroad of precious metals and electricity. On the supply side, growth was supported by both the tradable and non-tradable sectors, with the highest contribution from industry followed by agriculture and services.

Extensive male labour migration from Tajikistan affects gender relations, the gender division of labor, and gender roles. Women left behind are increasingly assuming responsibility for managing household assets (e.g., land, gardens, cattle, and infrastructure) in addition to domestic responsibilities (e.g., caring for children, the sick and the elderly, and fetching water and fuel). These tasks reduce women's opportunity to learn income-earning skills or participate in community decision-making.

The COVID-19 outbreak and the measures that have been initially imposed (e.g., closure of Tajikistan's borders with its neighbours, as well as the situation in the neighbouring countries) pose significant risks to the economy. The World Bank analysis indicated that the "outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Tajikistan has amplified its multi-faceted vulnerabilities and precariousness to shocks, impacting the country's economy and creating significant social and health sector pressures". Restrictions on labour mobility and economic activity at home and abroad have resulted in lower migrant remittances and in-country loss of jobs, weaker consumer demand, and reduced investments. The people in Tajikistan reported reduced food consumption. The lockdown measures prevented (previously returned) migrants from traveling abroad, which led to a significant increase in the unemployment rate¹⁵.

The pandemic exposed the country's already weak healthcare system to additional challenges. The authorities have responded to the economic fallout, deferring tax collections, easing monetary policy and boosting health and social spending. The crisis threatened to undo decades of development gains and potentially derail Tajikistan's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As highlighted in the previous paragraphs, GDP growth primarily benefited from the export of precious metals, whereas domestic demand collapsed by about 4% (compared to 2019 same period). This suggests that the pandemic's hit on domestic incomes and jobs was more severe than on the GDP growth rate. In 2020, a growing share of the population is projected to fall into poverty.

The agricultural and industrial sectors were the largest contributors to growth in the first nine months of 2020. Despite locust invasion in the country's southern regions, agriculture grew by 8.1% (y/y). Favourable weather conditions, new arable land development, and growing production capacity in the poultry sector helped boost total sector output. Industrial production grew by 10.7% (y/y), supported by food processing and metallurgical industries. The impact of the pandemic on the services sector was severe; for example, first nine months of 2020 recorded hotel occupation rates decline of 67%. On the demand side, cuts to public investment and disruptions to foreign investments led to a drop-in construction activity by 6.9% (y/y). More than half of construction is financed through the budget, a quarter by the domestic private sector, and about one-fifth by foreign investors.¹⁶

Economic growth is likely to start improving in the second half of 2021, assuming that a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available. Growth bounce-back in neighbouring countries, especially China and Russia, will help support trade activities, remittances inflows, and foreign investments. A likely rebound in global demand should increase Tajikistan's exports of commodities. The mining sector is expected to continue attracting most FDI inflows as economic growth firms up in the region. Migrant remittances are likely to strengthen once travel restrictions are eased, and access to foreign labour markets is restored. Projected consolidation of public finances will help keep the external deficit at a more sustainable level¹⁷.

The government has committed to fiscal consolidation in 2021 and over the medium term. The 2021 state budget plans to reduce the fiscal deficit by increasing tax collections and containing expenditures.

¹⁴ World Bank data access on: <http://data.worldbank.org/>, February 2021

¹⁵ According to the data from the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Tajikistan, the labour migration abroad decreased for 77% to the Russian Federation and 53% to the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2020. Moreover, over 350,100 employable migrant workers were unable to go abroad in 2020.

¹⁶ World Bank, data access on: <http://data.worldbank.org/>, February 2021

¹⁷ The analysis is based on the data from the World Bank

Resilience of population in Tajikistan: Tajikistan is particularly vulnerable to both economic and environmental shocks. It is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, including extreme weather events originating from changing climate as well as seismic activity. Given the high reliance on remittances, it is also susceptible to economic downturns in the Russian Federation. Reliance on food imports and external market variations, vulnerability to natural disasters, limited arable land, and a landlocked geographic location contribute to making Tajikistan vulnerable to external factors. Some of these risks could potentially derail the notable improvements in the wellbeing of the population seen over the past two decades.

The Government of Tajikistan and national stakeholders remained committed to the implementation of the SDGs as one of the most important tools for realizing comprehensive internal reforms and achieving progress in the main development areas. Tajikistan's National Development Strategy 2030 (NDS-2030) defined the framework for sustainable development of the country and the achievement of SDGs. There are difficulties to ensure reliable data created challenges to validate progress; still, the analysis of results under the UNDAF outcomes indicated that UNCT contributed to the country's advancement under (almost) all SDGs. Tajikistan's National Development Strategy 2030 (NDS-2030) set the two-fold objective, to ensure sustainable economic development and improve living standards of the population. The NDS-2030 has been focused on the achievement of four national strategic development goals: i) Ensuring energy security and efficient use of electricity; ii) Breaking the communication deadlock and turning the country into a transit country; iii) Ensuring food security and public access to quality nutrition and iv) Expanding productive employment. The need for further human capital development has been recognized as an integrated, intersectoral priority addressing education, health care, and social protection issues. The NDS-2030 implementation is following five-year Mid-term Development Programme (MtDPs) cycles. The Government of Tajikistan recognized crucial support from the UN to prepare the first (from 2016 until 2020) and the current, second MtDP (2021-2025).

The NDS-2030 has not been fully aligned with the SDGs. Namely, the Rapid Integrated Assessment (under the Voluntary National Report prepared in 2017 with support from the UN) showed that the NDS-2030 and MtDP (2016-2020) reflect 64% of SDG objectives (the review of eight national sector policies incorporated 78% of SDG objectives). The SDG nationalization process in Tajikistan is progressing, but gaps persist. The partners recognized the need to adopt a comprehensive national SDG roadmap, including a national financing framework with baselines, targets, critical data gaps. The UN in Tajikistan responded to this need and supported this process under a joint project titled "Financing SDGs in Tajikistan".

The authorities in Tajikistan reported some progress and achievements in areas related to SDGs; recognizing also contribution of UN Agencies. Between 2000 and 2019, the poverty rate fell from 83 percent of the population to 26.3 percent¹⁸, while the economy grew at an average rate of 7 percent per year. The country has ensured progress on eradication of extreme poverty (from 18 % in 2013 to 12% in 2018). Still, poverty remains to be a pressing problem for the country and it is expected that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic results in increased poverty within the country.

Improvements in health protection (e.g., programs for reduced child and maternal morbidity; efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other diseases) have been recorded. In 2020, the Government of Tajikistan approved the National Programme to Combat HIV and AIDS Epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan 2021 – 2025, along with the overall budget and Action Plan which includes the SDGs and other international human rights and HIV instruments¹⁹. In 2019, 1,320 new cases of HIV infection (adults and children) were registered in Tajikistan, which roughly corresponds to the number of cases in 2018 and 2017 (101 cases less than in 2018 and 115 cases more than in 2017). Of these new HIV cases registered in 2019, 772 were men (58.5 per cent) and 548 women (41.5 per cent). In recent years, there has been a general trend towards an increase in the proportion of women among all new HIV infections,

¹⁸ Poverty: Tajikistan | Asian Development Bank (adb.org)

¹⁹ The National Program to Combat the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome Epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan 2021 – 2025. This programme was approved by the decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 50 dated November 27, 2020.

from 30.9 per cent in 2011 to 41.5 per cent in 2019. Overall, the cases in the country amount to 14.5 per 100,000 population²⁰.

Graph 2 The status of SDGs in Tajikistan



(source: Snapshot from <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/tajikistan>)

Tajikistan has been selected as one of the global pilot countries for the national implementation of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (GAP), with a focus on strengthening health financing as an accelerator towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 on health and well-being for all. This process is supported by United Nations agency partners of the GAP and other development partners. The analysis reflected on the achievements towards SDG 3 to date, and the contributions from other sectors with a direct influence on the determinants of health, and flowed with a clearer definition of the priorities for action to accelerate the achievement of SDG 3 in Tajikistan, and an alignment of development partner support.

In achieving SDG 5 Tajikistan faces significant challenges²¹: the demand for family planning using modern methods is stagnating and ratio of female-to-male labour force participation rate that is decreasing. The improvement of score in seats held by women in national parliament remains difficult to achieve, despite some improvements. The challenge also remains in attaining the ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received due to stagnated progress.

Inclusion and integration of displaced persons and refugees in mainstream society are on a positive track, with improved/ clarified legal status, and access to some health care programs. Concerning gender equality, Tajikistan has adopted and initiated implementation of policy and legal frameworks for gender mainstreaming, including the prevention of gender-based violence²².

Also, the country is ensuring progress with the development of basic infrastructures and communal services. Despite considerable efforts and investment, lack of access to clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene continue to be major issues in Tajikistan, particularly in rural areas. Many residents rely on rivers and open ditches for drinking water. The challenge remains to ensure resources and funds for strategic and substantive investments in infrastructure and services; thus, mobilization of funds from national and international sources remains one of the stated priorities for the country.

²⁰ Human rights of people living with HIV in Tajikistan, Article by Larisa Alexandrova

²¹ Using 62 gender-specific SDGs indicators, Tajikistan shows low performance in 10.2 percent of indicators; medium performance in 14.3 percent of indicators; and high performance in 6.1 percent of indicators. For 69.4 percent of indicators the data is missing; more in Sustainable Development Report 2020

²² Important achievement has been with the sex ratio at birth in Tajikistan: the unfavorable situation of 114 boys/100 girls in 2010 has significantly improved reaching 110 boys/100 girls in 2017- ref to VNR, 2018

Graph 3 Progress under SDGs in Tajikistan



(source: Snapshot from <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/profiles/tajikistan>)

The country is moving towards more effective environmental protection, including the adoption of the critical policies to promote renewable energy production and enlargement of protected areas. These results and reported progress indicated that Tajikistan has successfully ensured increased access to basic infrastructures and services²³. As a signatory to the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC or Paris Agreement), Tajikistan is committed to international efforts of reducing or avoiding activities that contribute to climate change.

2 UNDAF for Tajikistan 2016- 2022

The Government of Tajikistan in collaboration with the UNCT formulated the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2022 as the mechanism to support achievement of the Tajikistan national priorities. The national development priorities for Tajikistan from the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 and Mid-term development programme 2016-2020 have been considered during the UNDAF preparation. The document reflected a full range of expertise and resources of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to deliver development results.

The UNDAF 2016-2022 was established around four distinct although interlinked areas of cooperation (pillars), further organized by six outcomes, which responded to the country's needs and made use of the UN's comparative advantages.

Democratic Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights

- **Outcome 1:** People in Tajikistan have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels.

Sustainable and equitable economic development

- **Outcome 2:** People in Tajikistan benefit from equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment; stable energy supply; improved access to specialized knowledge and innovation and a more favourable business environment, especially for entrepreneurs and farmers.

Social Development, Inclusion and Empowerment

- **Outcome 3:** People in Tajikistan benefit from quality, equitable and inclusive health, education and social protection systems.

²³ Ibidem, Voluntary National Review Tajikistan, 2017

- **Outcome 4:** The nutritional status of the people in Tajikistan is improved through stable access to sufficient, appropriate and safe food; improved child feeding practices; better water and sanitation and improved access to quality health care.
- **Outcome 5:** Women, youth, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence and discrimination, have a voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society.

Resilience and Environmental Sustainability

- **Outcome 6:** People in Tajikistan are more resilient to natural and man-made disasters and benefit from improved policy and operational frameworks for environmental protection and management of natural resources.

The UNDAF was first formulated to cover the years 2016 to 2020 and UNCT organized a mid-term UNDAF review (MTR) in 2018. In addition to acknowledging the effectiveness in delivery of results the MTR report provided conclusions and recommendations that served to revise the Results Framework benchmarks (indicators and targets).

UNDAF 2016-2020 was extended until 2021 to align with the Government's new Mid Term Development Programme. However, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the overall development scenery in Tajikistan; thus, UNDAF was extended until the end of 2022 to ensure a robust consultation process for the formulation of the next cooperation framework.

During the UNDAF implementation, the UN Agencies have delivered a total of 250 mil USD; based on the analysis of work plans and available financial data, the FET expects that the total budget will exceed 300 mil USD until the end of 2022.

3 The purpose, scope and objectives for the UNDAF final evaluation

3.1 The purpose of the UNDAF final evaluation

The purpose of this UNDAF evaluation has been to examine if and to what extent UNCT has prioritized support and contributed to the country's development and use the findings strategically to inform the process of developing the forthcoming UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the 2023-2026 programming cycle.

The primary users of the evaluation's findings and recommendations are UN Country Team and UN Agencies in Tajikistan as well as the Government of Tajikistan and key national and international development partners. As highlighted in the Terms of References, the findings will be the basis for the forthcoming UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2026), while the lessons learned from the evaluation and recommendations (based on conclusions) will facilitate UN interventions' alignment through more substantive integration of Agenda 2030, forming a strong coalition to support Tajikistan in reaching its SDG targets and commitments.

3.2 The scope of the UNDAF final evaluation

The ToR defined scope of the final evaluation, considering the following elements:

Progress towards outcomes: The evaluation assessed the results that UN Agencies in Tajikistan, individually and jointly, have achieved against the targets from the UNDAF 2016-2022 results framework. The FET considered the UN agencies without formal country programme initiatives, activities implemented as part of global or regional joint programmes and activities of agencies delivering remotely from regional hubs.

The final evaluation team also examined UNDAF programming principles (human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment- Annex 3, sustainability and resilience, accountability), overall strategies and outcome/output specific strategies included in the UNDAF itself. The FET paid particular attention to the UN Agencies response to the COVID-19 crisis in Tajikistan.

Timeframe. The final evaluation covered the entire period of UNDAF implementation (January 2016 to April 2021). The FET considered results and efforts from earlier years as well as findings of UN Agencies Outcome/Programme evaluations²⁴.

Geography. The main focus of the evaluation has been national level efforts and results; however, the evaluation also included sub-national level interventions as required.

Organization. The evaluation examined the steering and management structures for UNDAF implementation. Simultaneously, the FET considered technical support and oversight from regional and global UN structures.

3.3 Specific objectives of the UNDAF final evaluation

The ToR defined several specific objectives for this UNDAF evaluation:

- Assess performance of the UNDAF 2016-2022, its strategic intent, objectives and outcomes contained in the results framework, including the UNCT contribution to such results against evaluation criteria.²⁵
- Assess the extent to which the UN in Tajikistan has been successful in achieving UNDAF Outcomes as a contribution to national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Assess whether the strategic intent, principle and spirit of the UNDAF has been taken forward by UN entities and identify the factors that have affected the ability of the UN to deliver integrated policy and programme actions.
- Generate evidence and lessons learnt based on the assessment of the current performance of Outcomes and Outputs that inter alia, can be used to accelerate implementation of the current UNDAF in its final 18 months.
- Generate a set of impact stories on key strategic priorities such as UN Reform and UN results changing lives of people on the ground as well as a set of key advocacy messages on strategic UNDAF priorities.
- Provide a set of actionable recommendations based on credible findings, to be used for organizational learning, and identify lessons learned and good practices that will inform the new Cooperation Framework cycle 2023-2026, bearing in mind the new guidance for development of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in line with the ongoing UN Reform.²⁶

3.4 Management of the evaluation

The UN Tajikistan has established a management structure to guide implementation of the UNDAF evaluation. The roles included an evaluation steering committee, evaluation manager, consultation group, evaluation team, and evaluation advisor.

Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) is the Joint National Steering Committee of the UNDAF. The ESC has been the main decision-making body for the UNDAF evaluation, owing the results of this evaluation. The ESC provided endorsement of the process and validated the final deliverables of the evaluation. The ESC also endorsed the management response to the evaluation.

Evaluation Manager, the monitoring and evaluation focal point in the UNRCO, has been responsible for the day-to-day management of the process and adherence to the terms of reference.

²⁴ Formally, Impact can only be assessed after a certain period from the completion of UNDAF. However, the evaluation will follow an increasingly common approach to anticipate or forecast both impact, looking at different levels (systemic and policy, institutional and individual) and assessing if and to what extent changes have been ensured. More details are available in the UNDAF evaluation matrix.

²⁵ Evaluation criteria are in line with new OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria, from December 2019. Document available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

²⁶ For more information on new UN Cooperation Framework guidance, please follow the link: https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf

Evaluation Consultation Group has been established, chaired by a UNCT member and consisting of key representatives of the PMT and UNDAF Coordination and ME Group. This body provided a strategic overview and technical expertise of the evaluation process, reviewed the findings and followed up on the management response.

Evaluation Advisor from DCO HQ/RO has been providing quality assurance, while liaising with UNEG.

Final Evaluation Team has been established, consisting of three experts, the international team leader and two national technical experts.

4 Methodology for the final evaluation

The FET recognized the absence of a precise model to conduct UNDAF evaluations; still, the FET adhered to and implement UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards²⁷, and UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation²⁸, OHCHR Guidance on Human Rights-Based Approach to Data²⁹ as well as use UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator and its related scorecard³⁰.

4.1 Evaluability assessment

The FET performed UNDAF evaluability assessment³¹, measuring the extent to which UNDAF for Tajikistan 2016-2022 can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion³². During the desk phase, the FET assessed the nature of UNDAF design, answering the question if it is possible to evaluate it as it is described at present. The second dimension “in practice” evaluability, looking at the availability of relevant data to carry out this evaluation including the ability of the UNCT to provide it. A brief gender analysis at the inception stage has been carried out to develop the hypothesis around reflection of gender in the data and reports, gender analysis of the operational environment i.e., socio-political and cultural barriers for gender equality and existing progress. This was done in the context of actual usefulness of the UNDAF final evaluation, as indicated in the ToR. In general, positive findings and conclusion from the evaluability assessment served as the basis for formulation of its final evaluation approach, including specific elements of the evaluation framework.

This programmatic UNDAF evaluation followed the provisions and envisaged objectives from the ToR. The evaluation examined the stated UNDAF outcomes, including their relevance to current national context and global commitments of the country. The analysis reflected if and to what extent UNDAF contributed to national development priorities, by identifying changes over the period being evaluated and assess the progress considering available baseline information. The evaluation analyzed the efficiency of UNDAF implementation/ management arrangements. Part of these efforts will be to analyse the overall financial delivery behind UNDAF, from the viewpoint of planned, mobilized and delivered financial assistance.

In addition to identifying achievements, the evaluation identifies synergies, enabling factors, gaps, overlaps and missed opportunities. Therefore, independent evaluation process and findings served as an accountability tool, where independent expert view explored the extent of the results achieved to date and potential effects of the UN system in Tajikistan by the end of current UNDAF cycle, including key lessons learned and good practices for the UNCT and its partners from the current UNDAF cycle. It should advise on the overall strategic positioning of the

²⁷ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787>

²⁸ <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/1294>

²⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2148>

³¹ Rick Dr. Davis “Planning Evaluability Assessments, A Synthesis of the Literature with Recommendations, Report of a study commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID)”, Working Paper 40, October 2013- this document served as the basis for evaluability assessment

³² This is the OECD DAC definition; also this definition has been adopted by Including IFAD, UNODC, OECD, SIDA, ILO, DFID, NORAD and NDC

UNCT in Tajikistan and on priorities and considerations for future support, particularly serving to inform 2023-2026 UN Cooperation Framework design and implementation.

4.2 Methodological approach and evaluation criteria

Considering that the UNDAF outcomes (defined as "intended changes in development conditions in Tajikistan") have been set at the high level, requiring joint work of many partners, credible attribution of development changes to the UNCT has been challenging or in some cases impossible to establish³³. To address these challenges, the FET has developed a tailor-made methodology, that covered the overall results framework of the 2016-2022 UNDAF, all programme- and activity-based contributions to UNDAF outcomes by the UNCT and UNDAF implementation instruments. The FET also analyzed activities and results of agencies without a formal country programme, and consider activities implemented as part of global or regional programmes and projects, and the activities of non-resident agencies³⁴.

The methodology for the FE proposed has been based on the contribution analysis (CA), adjusted for the evaluation of complex programs³⁵ focusing to make credible causal claims about interventions and their results³⁶.

The evaluation paid special attention to the mainstreaming and application of the UNDAF programming principles in UNDAF design and implementation: human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, capacity development and inter-sectoral coordination as well as results-based management.

The following criteria have been included:

4.2.1 UNDAF RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

The review of UNDAF's relevance (and coherence) has examined its design process and real-time relevance. The review of the design phase explored the connection between the UNDAF outcomes and the national development priorities for Tajikistan and also its relevance to the citizens of the country, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups³⁷. In this context, the FET has been using HRBA approach and gender mainstreaming lenses to assess the appropriateness of the focus areas, outcomes, expected targets and indicators and internal consistency of UNDAF. Specific questions under relevance criteria were developed to explore issues around gender and inclusivity in the design and implementation of UNDAF.

The broad scope and thematic areas, as well as the long period covered by the evaluation required the analysis at the country level and the sectors relevant for UNDAF outcomes.

The **country level analysis** focused on the national strategic framework and reflect on the relevance and identify the factors that have influenced preparation of UNDAF, while also considering the specific development context and governance structure of Tajikistan. The analysis at this level set the stage to assess the process of UNDAF preparation and how the outcomes have been defined. The process started from the Common Country Analysis

³³ This challenge has been also recognized in the Terms of Reference for this assignment

³⁴ The proposed methodology will be to evaluate achievements from more cumulative perspective- e.g. the extent to which all these activities and results have been contributing to UNDAF outcomes, as described under the Methodology part of this document.

³⁵ Line Dybdal, Steffen Bohni Nielsen, Sebastian Lemire (Ramboll Management Consulting and Aarhus, Denmark): "Contribution Analysis Applied: Reflections on Scope and Methodology", The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation Vol. 25 No. 2 Pages 29–57 ISSN 0834-1516

³⁶ John Mayne: „Contribution analysis: Coming of age?“ from Evaluation, 2012, Sage Publication, DOI: 10.1177/1356389012451663.

Also, where a paucity of data necessitates a quick assessment of a contribution, this should be carried out using appropriate evaluation methodologies that identify contributions at the outcome level and ascertain the plausibility of causal relationships between activities and outcomes.

³⁷ This includes the following groups: women and girls; children; refugees; internally displaced persons; stateless persons; national minorities; migrant workers; disabled persons; elderly persons; HIV positive persons and AIDS victims; Yezidis and Kurds of local origin and Tajikistans, Yezidis and Kurds from Irak, Syria and other parts of the Middle East that fled from the wars, Assyrians; and lesbian, gay and transgender people.

(2014) and further continued through the analysis of the national strategic and policy documents, that set priorities and reveal development trends in Tajikistan during the formulation (in 2015) and implementation of UNDAF (from 2016 until mid-2021) and planned implementation for 2022. The analysis also considered the analytical and strategic documents of the international development partners active in Tajikistan.

Part of these efforts included review of the UNDAF's response to Tajikistan's changing development priorities, challenges and needs deriving from international norms and obligations and other planned and unplanned events.

The analysis at the level of UNDAF's thematic sectors reviewed the alignment of the outcomes with the sectoral priorities and also included the assessment of critical sector trends in Tajikistan. The evaluation analyzed the status of the UNDAF outcomes and the factors that were affecting progress towards the achievement of outcomes and assess the flexibility of the UNCT/ UN Agencies to respond to the changing environment and the needs (under each of the outcomes).

Important part of this analysis has been to review the UN response to the impact of COVID-19, under the Integrated socio-economic Framework (ISEF)

4.2.3 UNDAF EFFECTIVENESS- PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF UNDAF OUTCOMES

The FET assessed the overall advancement towards the achievement of the UNDAF outcomes targets, from the quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. The FET identified critical accomplishments towards the UNDAF outcomes and reflected on the challenges and obstacles of the UNDAF implementation. The FET presented, to the extent possible a "chain of causality" that reveals linkages between the results achieved within the context of UNDAF implementation and the progress that has been recorded under each of the UNDAF outcomes. The "contribution claim" was established, creating credible links between what UNDAF has achieved and progress under outcomes.

The FET was using UNDAF annual results reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020 as well as UNDAF mid-term review and reports per pillar, that have been complemented by the UN Agencies' annual progress reports, programme and projects evaluation reports and other documents. Furthermore, the FET reviewed financial plans, mobilized and delivered resources, in the context of achievement of outcomes, using triangulation of the collected information and use other sources of information as required during the review.

The FET focused on the indicators from the UNDAF Results Matrix, analysing their relevance, frequency of collection, reliability, disaggregation and quality. Also, the FET analyzed if the indicators are relevant in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other international commitments of the country.

Interviews with the key informants, focus group discussions and surveys with the stakeholder groups served to validate findings and substantiate conclusions and recommendations.

4.2.4 EFFICIENCY- UNDAF IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The FE analyzed present UNDAF implementation, including management system and delivery of results, and the existing monitoring and strategic reporting practices. The FET assessed the adequacy and efficiency of the UNDAF delivery mechanism, through the analysis of the application of UN Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The FE reflected on the role and functioning of the Joint Steering Committee as a mechanism of coordination, the functioning of the (Outcome) Results Groups and their role. Also, part of this efforts was to assess the degree of actual synergies established among UN agencies, involving concerted efforts to ensure effective and efficient planning and prioritization of activities and optimization of results.

4.2.5 IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY- ANALYSE TRANSFORMATION THAT UNDAF MADE

In the context of assessment of impact and transformation that UN Agencies in Tajikistan made through UNDAF implementation, the FET analyzed the extent to which the benefits and achievements ensured during the implementation of UNDAF, particularly answering if the positive results are likely to continue after the end of implementation cycle. The FE analyzed whether the longer-term influence of UNDAF on the wider development in Tajikistan has been ensured and reflect on the extent to which UNDAF contributed to systemic changes. Some of

the examples that will be considered will be if UNDAF contributed to changes in the legal framework, institutions, social and economic structures. Also, the FE analyzed if these changes can also be sustained at the level of the sector or country by analysing whether these changes integrate into an evidence-based and credible policy-making and implementation.

The FET highlighted a strong correlation between impact and sustainability since the explanatory variables are often the same for explaining impact and/or sustainability. In the context of the FE, the focus has been on sustainability; however, the FET assumed possible impact particularly on organizational development and improvement of policy processes in Tajikistan.

The FET analyzed the degree to which UNDAF has enabled innovative approaches and exchange of experience and expertise for institutional learning and development of national capacities of key national stakeholders, while assessing if UNCT's work through UNDAF could be scaled up or replicated. Part of these efforts will be to assess the ownership of results and sustainability of the partnerships established within the framework of UNDAF implementation.

4.2.6 ANALYSE UN NORMATIVE WORK, PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The evaluation analyzed the extent to which UNCT prioritized the needs of most vulnerable, the poor and marginalized. The analysis will reflect if these groups have benefited from the assistance, including accessibility and quality of this support. The evaluation assessed whether the human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, results-based management, capacity development, as the core UNDAF principles and UN normative work, have been considered and mainstreamed during the preparation and implementation. Furthermore, UNDAF 2016-2022 UNDAF brought forward a gender specific Outcome on the reduction of inequality and empowering of women. The FET has included in the evaluation framework gender equality - related questions under the outcomes and also specific gender related analytical part. Particular areas which were explored and assessed through specific evaluation questions included analysis and assessment of the extent to which UNDAF has been relevant for the achievement of the SDG targets, consideration of gender mainstreaming (and human rights-based approach) in the design and implementation phase, extent of implementation of recommendations from action plan of the UNCT SWAP gender scorecard assessment, existence of gender sensitive approach to budgeting under UNDAF, gender sensitivity in reporting and reflection of gender in UNDAF indicators, the extent to which UNDAF and UNCT in Tajikistan ensured that "no-one is left behind".

Interviews with the key informants, focus group discussions, including specifically with national stakeholders under each results group and separately civil society organisations, Gender Theme Group and surveys with the stakeholder groups served to validate findings and substantiate conclusions and recommendations.

Although presented separately, the analysis of the UN programming principles and UN normative work to meet UN standards and norms has been considered throughout the evaluation process (while analysing relevance, achieved results and sustainability). The FET analyzed if the UNCT adequately used results-based management to ensure a logical chain of results and establish a monitoring and evaluation framework and the efforts and quality of data collected and analyzed.

Also, the ToR highlighted the need for the FET to analyse other country-specific factors that have affected the performance of the UN Agencies and UN Country Team in the framework of UNDAF design and implementation. Specifically, this relates to the analysis of the ownership of results and effectiveness of partnerships and participation. Also, this part of the ToR planned for the assessment if the UNCT undertakes appropriate risk analysis, flexibility and responsiveness of UNDAF.

4.2.7 PREPARE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UN COUNTRY TEAM IN TAJIKISTAN

The FET prepared a report that will include findings, conclusions and provide actionable and constructive recommendations, and identify lessons learned and good practices that will inform new UNDAF cycle for the period 2023-2026 with this evaluation.

Based on the ToR and the desk analysis, the FET has defined the main evaluation questions.

Key Evaluation Questions (KQ)	Relevance	Coherence	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Sustainability	Gender/ SDGs	Catalytic
Key Question 1: Has UNDAF aligned its intervention with the national development priorities and needs of citizens in Tajikistan?	X	x					x	
Key Question 2: Has UNDAF been responsive to emerging national and sectoral priorities and flexible to changes that occurred during its implementation?	X	x						x
Key Question 3: Has UNDAF design and implementation considered SDGs and followed “no-one is left behind” and gender mainstreaming principles?	x						X	
Key Question 4: Have the UNCT/ UN Agencies been effective in delivering outputs and contributing to the achievement of UNDAF Outcomes?				X		x	x	
Key Question 5: Has the implementation of UNDAF been participatory, strengthening ownership of results?				X		x	x	
Key question 6: Has the implementation of UNDAF been efficient concerning management systems and tools and adherence to the work plans?			X			x	x	
Key question 7: What was the level of sustainability of achievements under UNDAF?						X	x	x
Key question 8: Has the UNCT during implementation of UNDAF contributed to an enabling environment including mechanisms for continuous improvements under outcomes/ areas of intervention in Tajikistan?					X	x	x	x

X- main evaluation criteria; x- contributing criteria

These questions were used for the preparation of the evaluation matrix. For each of these evaluation questions, the FET proposed indicators, judgment criteria, and sources of verification, that will be used to validate achievements and provide credible conclusions.

4.3 Data collection methods and instruments

The evaluation collected data for this evaluation from various sources including documents, key informant interviews and secondary data sets.

The final evaluation followed steps described below:

4.3.1 DOCUMENT REVIEW

The evaluation started with an initial review of the documents provided by the UN Agencies/ UN RC Office and accessed via open sources. A full list of documents consulted during the evaluation have been provided in Annex 4. The FE carried out following activities:

- Reviewed the UNDAF 2016-2022, with particular focus on the Results Matrix (the focus has been on the revised, post-MTR matrix), the priority areas and outcomes, including indicators, baselines and targets;
- Reviewed and analysed progress with relevance to achieving gender and rights issues;
- Analyzed progress reports and reviewed documented results from the UNCT/ UN Agencies operating in Tajikistan;
- Analyzed the Integrated Socioeconomic Response (ISEF), the strategic COVID-19 response of the UN Agencies to support socioeconomic recovery in Tajikistan and results that were achieved;
- Analyzed UN Agencies country programme and outcome evaluations
- Reviewed policies and strategies deriving from different governance levels and sectors thus analysing the overall environment in which UNDAF was implemented;
- Analyzed progress and reports on implementation of the international obligations of the country;
- Analyzed key socio-economic data and indicators for Tajikistan.

4.3.2 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION- KEY INFORMANTS' INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The FET has prepared specific interview guides to ensure systemic and uniform collection of data (Annex 1), asking (open-ended) questions and offering also opportunities for a more in-depth discussion about specific points related to UNDAF implementation and results. Especially important have been to discuss forward-looking opportunities and recommendations for the future interventions in the UNDAF-related areas. The FET used the same interview guides for key informants' interviews and group interviews.

The FET prepared brief interview notes, systemize, and bring together all data from the primary data collection in the evaluation matrix.

The **key informants' interviews** served to confirm hypothesis/ assumptions and the initial findings. The FET used tailor-made tools to collect evidence-based, reliable, solid, and comprehensive information about UNDAF 2016-2022. The COVID-19 pandemic has had severe impact on the overall situation in the world and posed strict limitations to the mobility of the FET, preventing and limiting in-person meetings. Therefore, the FET had online interviews with the stakeholders, including senior officials and key stakeholders. In addition, **group interviews** have been used as a tool for interviews with UN Agencies and project or programme teams, national institutions or organizations that were involved in the implementing project activities. This method was particularly useful for organizational teams as they enable complementarity of information and save time for repeating information which often happens when individual interviews are conducted with the teams engaged in the same organization or project.

Focused group discussions (FGD) were conducted separately with civil society organizations around strategic areas/ UNDAF outcomes in form of discussion and reflection (unlike the group interviews which collect many information from a group of informants from the same organization). This provided opportunity to get the information more in the form of dialogue, to get specific discussion on national contexts, and outcomes, and investigate how in such context's final beneficiaries, and especially vulnerable groups, benefited from UNDAF. The online format would even enable to organize FGDs with representatives of different parts of Tajikistan, in which UNDAF-related activities have been implemented.

Sampling: The FET selected interlocutors for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) purposefully from among the projects' key stakeholders. The FE selected FGD participants in consultation with UN RCO/ UN Agencies staff using stratified random sampling. This selection has been made by dividing beneficiaries into subgroups (strata) based on their

gender, the nature of their involvement in the UNDAF implementation under specific outcomes or the types of initiatives from which they benefited. The FET selected samples proportionally from the total number for each stratum.

The primary data collection process was organized between 12 April until 02 May 2021 and included consultations with 153 stakeholders (76 women and 77 men, including 51 participants in the focus group discussions, 28 women and 23 men), through in-person and group (thematic) interviews and focus group meetings with representatives of civil society organizations and members of the results groups under UNDAF outcomes.

The Table 2 provided a detailed overview of the type of stakeholders, with the majority being representatives of UN Agencies (Heads of Agencies, Programme Officers, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers) followed by representatives of the civil society and national authorities (representatives of the Government of Tajikistan and its ministries, regulatory and independent bodies, the Parliament), and international development organizations.

Table 2. Stakeholders interviewed during the Final evaluation

Types of stakeholders	Total number interviewees (including focus groups FG and group discussions GD)	#Male	#Female
UN Agencies	63 (27 GD)	28	35
Government of Tajikistan	30 (28 GD)	20	10
Donors/ development partners	9	6	3
Civil Society	51 (all FG)	23	28
Total	153 (106 FG/ GD)	77	76

The time constraints for this evaluation and the COVID19 restrictions prevented the FE team from meeting with representatives of groups which were often left behind. The FE was using meetings with the grassroots CSOs for proxy information about those "whose voice is normally not heard on UNDAF-related issues".

4.3.3 ON-LINE SURVEY

The FET developed specific questionnaires for on-line surveys, using advantages of the on-line research platforms. The surveys have been designed and implemented for national partners and stakeholders, UN programme and UN operations staff.

Sampling:

Two separate on-line surveys have been prepared and delivered to all UN Programme and UN Operations staff.

These online surveys yielded anonymous responses from 49 members of UN management and programme staff and 22 members of UN operations³⁸.

Selection of beneficiaries/ national staff for the on-line survey (depending on the decision for the data collection options) followed a mix of multi-stage cluster sampling and systematic sampling methods. The first stage was to select beneficiaries participating in different clusters of activities. The next stage was a systematic selection of survey participants through a random start followed by the sampling interval.

³⁸ The survey was distributed to all UN Programme and UN Operations staff

4.3.4 OTHER SECONDARY DATA SETS

The FET analysed and review other secondary data sets, including aggregated data on different governance and socio-economic, environmental, gender and other indicators for Tajikistan. The list of initially analyzed secondary data sets is provided in the Annex 5.

4.4 Data analysis

The scope, complexity, and the period covered by the evaluation (the focus was on UNDAF implementation from 2016 until mid-2021; there are remaining part of 2021 and the whole 2022 for UNDAF implementation) required an analytical approach deriving from UNDG evaluation guidelines and international practices. The evaluation team analyzed collected information and the Results Matrix through a causality model as a part of the overall contribution analysis complementing it with appropriate analytical approaches. Specifically, the FET used a mixed-method approach to gather qualitative and quantitative information to answer specific evaluation questions. The FET based desk research on collecting and analysing the secondary data, primarily UNDAF related documentation, annual progress reports and annexes. The FET considered information from governments and other reliable sources (e.g., CSOs, think tanks, other development partners, etc.). The FET collected primary data through in-person interviews and focus group discussion and on-line surveys, validating findings and conclusions from the desk phase, and gained a more in-depth analysis of the overall UNDAF implementation in Tajikistan.

This method enabled the FET to capture different perspectives through document review, interviews with key informants and focus groups. As indicated in the previous paragraphs, the FET triangulated all the collected information and validate findings using different sources.

The findings of the FE were that that UNDAF and the initiatives deriving from UNDAF³⁹ were relevant, necessary and sufficient to contribute to changes under the outcomes. The analysis of the Results Matrix enabled to better understand intervention logic of UNDAF and together with the analysis of the primary and secondary data, served to identify challenges or obstacles that affected the progress under outcomes. It also suggested a more substantive – follow-up analysis, when points of break in the contribution to outcomes were identified. The FE was using triangulation of the collected information and other sources of information at different stages of the process. Interviews with the key informants and skype interviews, together with discussions with the stakeholders served to identify findings and substantiate conclusions and recommendations. The initial findings, conclusions and recommendations have been discussed with the Evaluation Consultation Group and presented to the UNCT during the validation meeting. Another validation meeting has been organized with the national stakeholders from the Government of Tajikistan and other institutions. All the inputs and comments have been collected and reflected in the final version of the evaluation report.

4.5 Limitations

The final evaluation included a primary data collection phase (comprising of on-line and in-person interviews and FGDs), designed to complement document review and enable to collect in-depth information about the status of UNDAF outcomes. This phase also enabled to identify links between different programmes and issues impacting on achievement of UNDAF outcomes. However, this evaluation included limited time for primary data collection. Still, the need to combine in-person and on-line interviews resulted in extending this process to four weeks in total. The final list of key stakeholders for interviews has been agreed in cooperation with UNDAF RGs, while the involvement and importance of the stakeholders in the UNDAF development and implementation⁴⁰ has been the main determining criteria. Although the evaluation team discussed UNDAF

³⁹ In the absence of the Agency specific programmes— the factual contributions at agency outputs and outcome's levels

⁴⁰ A detailed list of interviewed people is provided in the Annex 4 to this document.

related issues with the representatives of different authorities, some of the local counterparts were not in the position to reflect on the cooperation and results appropriately.

The terms of reference were clear that the evaluation should not focus on specific programmes or projects. The UNDAF's effectiveness needed to be considered assessing the extent to which the UNCT contributed to or is likely to contribute to progress under outcomes. However, it was challenging to determine "specific extent of contribution" towards the UNDAF outcomes without providing references to particular achievements of specific programmes to illustrate this.

During the implementation of UNDAF, UN Agencies have produced critical and strategic results under outcomes, presented through annual UNDAF reports and UN Agency reports⁴¹. Thus, considering requirements from the ToR, and request for the length of the evaluation report as well as the timeframe for the final evaluation, it would be highly challenging to extract "the most important" achievements contributing to the behavioural level (policy implementation and delivery of public services) to then validate the contribution to the UNDAF outcomes⁴². The assessment of effectiveness and performance of UNCT relied on the indicators provided in the UNDAF Results Framework (revised after the MTR recommendations) and the agency contributions through the reported outputs and intermediate outcomes, along with the data sources suggested for verification of progress. The indicators were in the majority of cases relevant especially at the level of outputs (less so at the level of outcomes) adequately informing the analysis of achievements under outcomes. In some other cases, the data sources were not available or could not be used to compare current status and performance with baseline data. The effectiveness was also assessed considering other requirements and criteria from the ToR.

Financial figures and other information from UN Agencies to assess "value for money" have been available through the RC office and the evaluation team was using these figures.

Sustainability and impact are ex-post measures and ideally, measuring these dimensions require a time-period between two to five years after the completion of the UNDAF. Therefore, the evaluation approach was to anticipate or forecast sustainability and impact. The intention was to measure the extent to which the positive results achieved through UNDAF implementation are likely to continue after the end of the implementation cycle, and also if the longer-term influence on the development changes (in the specific sector) would have lasting nature.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The evaluation team followed closely the United Nations Ethical Guide for Evaluation in selecting interviewees, in interacting with them and in respecting their personal and institutional rights. They were assured that no attribution would be made to them if they did not want, they were chosen to ensure a fair representation of views in order to ensure a balanced perspective and, in the rare instances where potentially vulnerable groups were involved (e.g., persons with disabilities) the evaluation team was particularly conscious of compliance with ethical standards in interaction with them.

Generally, the evaluation team maintained an awareness of the United Nations Ethical Guidelines⁴³. Informed verbal consent was sought from stakeholders prior to asking any questions related to the UNDAF evaluation. To obtain consent, the evaluation team briefly explained the reasons and objectives of the evaluation, as well as the scope of the questions asked during the interview. Stakeholders had the right of refusal or to withdraw at any time. The evaluation team also ensured respondent privacy and confidentiality. Comments provided during discussions were aggregated to render impossible the identification of specific stakeholders. The

⁴¹ The FE did not have access to any UN Agency annual report- we had UNICEF reports/dropbox?

⁴² This could be mitigated to some extent through the analysis of case studies; however, this was not considered in the Terms of References and the proposed scope of the evaluation.

⁴³ United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation ((UNEG/FN/CoC [2008])).

evaluation team also ensured respondents are free to choose the language of interaction with the ET (English, Russian, Tajik) enabling inclusivity and respecting the needs of the respondents. The evaluation team was fully independent, unaware of any conflicts of interest for this work. During the overall process of the evaluation, the members of the evaluation team followed the principles of impartiality, credibility and accountability

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5 Presentation of findings

This part of the report provides findings from the desk analysis and the primary data collection phase, organized around evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions.

5.1 Relevance and coherence

Key Question 1: Has UNDAF aligned its intervention with the national development priorities and needs of citizens in Tajikistan?

Rel: The external intervention of UNDAF 2016-2022 under six outcomes, has been and remained within the mandate of UN Agencies, aligned with the national development priorities and the needs of the people in Tajikistan.

The UNDAF formulation has been comprehensive, reflecting appropriately priorities and needs of the country and its citizens and identifying adequately developmental responses.

The initial step in the identification of the needs of citizens was nation-wide consultations⁴⁴ on the Post-2015 agenda to garner inputs and ideas for the “The Future We Want”. This process reflected on the key development priorities for the country for the next five years⁴⁵. These efforts continued with preparation of an analytical and human rights-based Common Country Assessment (CCA)⁴⁶, structured along the broad pillars of United Nations development cooperation and human rights work with Tajikistan. The CCA provided an updated assessment of the needs and challenges in the country, with reference to the complex developmental trends related to social inclusion, health and education, economic empowerment and environmental issues, gender equality, politics and democratic governance. The analysis of the results of collaboration with the UN and a forward-looking recommendation in the Final Evaluation of UNDAF 2012-2016 complemented this analytical framework⁴⁷. Besides, UN representatives highlighted the value of other analytical reports, that presented achievements and challenges in Tajikistan, for the in-depth analysis of development landscape during UNDAF formulation⁴⁸.

UN Agencies long-lasting presence in Tajikistan⁴⁹ their mandates and achieved results additionally contributed to more substantive insight into development needs and challenges, especially for vulnerable and excluded groups.

UN Country Team ensured wide-ranging consultation with the main national partners, validating findings and conclusions from the analysis presented in the CCA and critical review of the UN’s work in the previous period. The Strategic Prioritization Retreat has been organized⁵⁰, involving almost one hundred participants (including

⁴⁴ The consultation process was all inclusive and more than 15,000 people in Tajikistan participated in national post-2015 consultations on development priorities after 2015- <http://untj.org/talk/index.php/brochures/76-brochures-eng>

⁴⁵ The priorities that have emerged during the consultations have been: 1) creating new jobs and raising employment; 2) fight against corruption and crime; 3) addressing inequalities and growing gaps among people; 4) strengthening health care system; 5) planning and implementing public policies through a holistic and strategic approach; 6) ensure gender equality; 7) improve and protect environment 8) improve public infrastructure, particularly roads; 11) improve quality of education; 12) anti-discrimination- ref to <http://untj.org/talk/index.php/brochures/76-brochures-eng>

⁴⁶ The Common Country Assessment for Tajikistan- adopted in September 2015

⁴⁷ <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/9264>

⁴⁸ Some of the most critical strategic documents have been Annual Progress Reports of the European Commission, the Internationally Monetary Fund analytical reports; the World Bank Partnership Strategy and Snapshots, SIGMA OECD analytical and monitoring reports, etc

⁴⁹ KII notes

⁵⁰ The SPR, organized under the auspices of the Joint Country Steering Committee, convened in November 2014- ref to UNDAF 1016-2022, page 15

several ministers, senior government officials, representatives of parliament, the judiciary and other institutions, heads and senior staff of UN organizations). The development priorities, linked with the mandate of UN and UN Agencies, have been grouped under the four strategic areas⁵¹ and defined the main structure and content of the UNDAF 2016–2022. Although broad in scopes these outcomes captured and reflected international norms and standards for economic and socio-cultural development, security, human rights and rule of law, health and environmental sustainability.

Rel2: UNDAF was guiding effectively the work of UN Agencies, also reflecting international norms and standards and agreed goals and commitments for Tajikistan.

UNDAF facilitated UN's leadership role in normative work in Tajikistan, in two interlinked areas: i) assisting the Government of Tajikistan and other national stakeholders to integrate the norms and standards into legislation, policies and development plans; and ii) supporting the GoT and others to implement legislation, policies and development plans based on the international norms, standards and conventions⁵².

For example, specialized agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) was supporting adoption of technical standards and codes of practice in the area of health and implementation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was working to adopt international labour standards drawn up by representatives of tripartite constituents (governments, employers and workers). UN Women supported the State to fulfil its commitment to the international human rights instruments and agreements: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Universal Period Review (UPR), Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), SDGs and UN system-wide accountability frameworks on gender mainstreaming: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been leading on normative work for migration-related matters. Other UN Agencies, such as UNICEF and UNDP, cooperated to achieve international standards in relation to child rights, poverty reduction, SDGs, democratic governance and response to crisis situations.

Rel3: UNDAF has generally aligned with the (broadly formulated) National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030

UNDAF was in general aligned with the National Development Strategy for the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030 (NDS 2030)⁵³, the overarching country's plan prepared in parallel with UNDAF. The overlapping period of preparation for these two documents did not contribute to stronger links between them. However, both strategic documents have been organized around the pillars of sustainable development, reflecting Sustainable Development Goals and addressing broad scope of (sectoral) challenges and needs of people⁵⁴.

The NDS 2030 set the strategic goals and measures for achieving long-term inclusive development of society in Tajikistan, while considering the actual developmental situation⁵⁵, the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 and other international commitments⁵⁶. The vision has been to preserve national unity, ensure security and implementation of the principles of social justice and economic efficiency, also working on the improvement of human wellbeing. Tajikistan should steadily grow into “a competitive country that

⁵¹ Notes from the Strategic Prioritization Retreat, 2015- Ref to UN Development Assistance Framework for Tajikistan

⁵² KII notes, UN Agencies

⁵³ https://nafaka.tj/images/zakoni/new/strategiya_2030_en.pdf

⁵⁴ The analysis of the National Development Strategy 2030 and the UNDAF 2016-2022 for Tajikistan

⁵⁵ This document, as the umbrella, horizontal and long-term development strategy of Tajikistan, analyzed human, social, natural and economic resources and defined the path for the establishment of strategic development priorities and targets in all critical areas of national interest.

⁵⁶ https://nafaka.tj/images/zakoni/new/strategiya_2030_en.pdf , “NDS-2030 also takes into consideration the Republic of Tajikistan's international commitments on the Agenda of the XXI century and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), approved at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2015”, page 5

provides decent living standards for population, equal opportunities for each person to realize potentials on the basis of equality, justice and respect for human dignity”.

Among the strategic goals of the NDS-2030 are institutional strengthening (of public administration and development of regions) and economic growth (*including economic competitiveness, employment, balanced regional development and green economy*). The NDS-2030 prioritized further development of the human capital in Tajikistan, through *improved health of citizens, inclusive and quality education and well-targeted social welfare system* and also strived for *cultural development* as a fundamental value of spiritual, social and economic progress. The NDS-2030 committed to strengthen and expand partnerships for sustainable development, globally and regionally. However, (the FE finds that) the NDS-2030 remained without (sufficient) strategic intent and a rather broad spectrum of priorities and activities.

The NDS-2030 is a lengthy document, overburdened with statistical information and details of analysis. Still, the document missed more substantive analysis of root-causes for listed issues and challenges, failing also to identify reasons for exclusions and structural challenges for the “groups left behind- vulnerable groups”. The NDS-2030 recognized existence of challenges in different areas a spectrum of “vulnerable groups⁵⁷” exposed to lack of social protection and inclusion. The document refers to “vulnerable groups” or “vulnerable stratus of population”, without indicating the who these people are; there are very few references to vulnerable children (orphans and children without parental support, children with disabilities and children at risk)⁵⁸. In connection to this, the NDS-2030 prioritized limited number of the exclusion and discrimination causes for the vulnerable groups. Almost all of these causes were related to social services (health, education and social protection). Still, the analysis did not include other reasons of exclusion related, for example, to domestic violence against women, access to justice and rule of law for the poor, remoteness and climate change.

Rel 4. UNDAF outcomes have been broadly formulated, resembling more impact level visions. Internal links among outcomes have been insufficient, affecting joint efforts and cross-outcomes synergies

Overall, the process of UNDAF formulation was sound, and the analysis of the situation in the country was comprehensive, following a bottom-up process of collaboration and involvement of policymakers from different levels and structures.

However, some weaknesses from the design phase have affected the coherence of the Results Matrix. The main shortcoming has been the absence of a robust “theory of change⁵⁹” (or similar and credible problem analysis tools). This had negative reflection on the formulation of UNDAF intervention logic, resulting in insufficient of UNDAF’s strategic focus.

In connection to this, the FET finds that the scope of UNDAF outcomes is set at the impact level⁶⁰. For example, the review of Outcome 1 underlines its broad scope including (essentially) long-term effects, but unrealistically limited to 2022⁶¹ (as set by UNDAF 2016-2022 timeframe). This outcome consists of interlinked but distinct components, all of them formulated at the impact level. The first component strives to ensure that rights of

⁵⁷ The Annex of the NSSD provided that the vulnerable groups remained Roma population, displaced persons from former Yugoslav, refugees coming to Tajikistan out of the region, persons in the statelessness risk, women in rural areas, disabled persons etc.

⁵⁸ NDS-2030, Page 63

⁵⁹ The latest UNDAF Guidance (from May 2017) set the mandatory requirement for preparation of Theory of Change https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-UNDAF_Guidance_01-May-2017.pdf

⁶⁰ The OECD DAC defines impact as “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended” and outcomes as “likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs”. The DAC definition draws attention to a longer time scale, in which short- and medium-term effects (outcomes) have played some part in the generation of “long-term effects ” (impacts). Considering these provisions,

⁶¹ The DAC definition draws attention to a longer time scale, in which short- and medium-term effects (outcomes) have played some part in the generation of “long-term effects” (impacts). It should be noted that the concept of a “long-term effect” does not define when in the overall results chain such an effect can begin, but highlights its duration.

people in Tajikistan are protected and benefits from improved access to justice. Achievement (or even progress) under this component remains beyond the scope of a single Outcome; namely, these are ultimate objectives (or even purpose) for each country. The remaining part of the outcome relates to “accountable, transparent, and gender responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels”. Thus, this component of Outcome 1 covers all the core institutions within the democratic governance system; these institutions have been UN partners, benefiting from different though mainly technical support. However, the commitment to ensure that these institutions (by 2022) become “accountable, transparent, gender responsive” remains impossible to ensure. Each of these characteristics/ qualities of governance institutions is already complex, associated with numerous issues and challenges. In the specific context of Tajikistan these are almost visions statements and desired scenarios, but certainly not possible to achieve within a short period until 2022.

The complexity of Outcome 6 is observed through two (impact-level) goals. Its first goal aims to ensure a more resilient population in Tajikistan to natural and man-made disasters. The second goal is set at an equally high level, and envisages establishment of policy and operational frameworks for environmental protection and management of natural resources. Despite possible links these are generally two separate goals.

The formulation of UNDAF outcomes has affected other elements of the Results Matrix (RM), especially, indicators and the benchmarks (baselines and targets). Still, the UN Agencies responded to the MTR’s recommendations and adopted a new set of indicators to measure progress under outcomes with a reference to UN’s work.

The sources of verifications to validate or measure indicators included encompassing data sets, national surveys or available reports and records. In some cases, UN Agencies reports and products have been highlighted as sources of verification; this could be potentially conflicting as transparent and accountable reporting practice advises to use independent sources of information or triangulate data to verify the progress⁶². Also, some of the identified indicators, including sources of their verification remained vague – with no clarity on their attainability, time-specificity and regularity, such as documents of the Government of Tajikistan, or some of its ministries, UN web-sites.

The RM did not include outputs as part of the structure; this was not required by the UNDAF development guidelines. Still, links between UNDAF outcomes and UN Agencies outputs have been generally established, facilitating assessment of effectiveness (validate progress and results). UNCT recognized that existence of lower-level elements within the intervention logic could be instrumental to monitor implementation, validate achievements and indicate progress under outcomes with stronger contribution/ attribution claims⁶³.

Key Question 2: Has UNDAF been responsive to emerging national and sectoral priorities and flexible to changes that occurred during its implementation?

Res1. UNDAF implementation has been flexible and responsive to the emerging priorities and challenges of the country during the period of implementation. Particularly responsive (and flexible) UNCT was during the COVID19 pandemic, preparing and implementing measures to counterbalance its adverse impact, through a comprehensive Integrated Socio-economic Framework (ISEF) for Tajikistan

The main factor that contributed to UNCT’s flexible and agile response during the implementation of UNDAF has been its active dialogue with the Government of Tajikistan and interaction with other stakeholders⁶⁴.

⁶² Please, see the EU Project Cycle Management Guidelines:

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/methodology-aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-200403_en_2.pdf

⁶³ KII UN Agencies

⁶⁴ KII national partners

Partners also highlighted generally efficient decision-making and dynamic communication with the Resident Coordinator⁶⁵ and UNCT. They have recognized their pro-active role in advocacy, and maintaining policy dialogue on core development issues. Knowledgeable and experienced staff of UN Agencies, and the project teams present at national institutions, according to the national partners⁶⁶, have been helpful in establishing active working ties with these institutions⁶⁷, contributing to well-targeted and flexible initiatives under UNDAF.

Examples of flexibility and responsiveness during UNDAF implementation are numerous; still, the partners highlighted the reaction of UN Country Team in Tajikistan over COVID19 pandemic. UN Agencies promptly mobilized its capacities⁶⁸ aiming to assist the country to “implement bold measures in early stages of the outbreak^{69”}.

The Integrated Socioeconomic Response Framework to COVID-19 (ISEF), has been developed as part of a broad partnership among the UN Country Team in Tajikistan, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and facilitated by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)⁷⁰. An in-depth overview of the impact of COVID-19 on critical economic and human development perspectives informed the preparation of the ISEF⁷¹. The Rapid Gender Assessment of the Situation and Needs of Women in the Context of COVID-19 in Tajikistan contributed to more-in depth understanding of gender specific vulnerabilities due to COVID-19 in the country and reflected in the ISEF. Beyond its immediate public health impact, the protracted nature of this pandemic has drastically slowed down the economy, with loss of jobs and tightening fiscal space. The GoT immediate measures⁷² have significantly impacted its fragile socio-economic landscape, with declining GDP⁷³ and significantly lower migrant remittances⁷⁴. Many households in Tajikistan are vulnerable to food insecurity and the early closure of schools prevented regular access to nutritious meals for school students⁷⁵. The schools have not been prepared to provide remote learning and this could be reflected in the children's education outcomes. A weak social protection system with limited coverage further compounds the socio-economic situation in the country.

In Tajikistan, from 3 January 2020 to, 6 June 2021, there have been 13,714 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 91 deaths, reported to WHO. As of 30 May 2021, a total of 91,775 vaccine doses have been administered⁷⁶.

In response to these challenges, that the unprecedented global crisis caused by COVID-19 created, the United Nations in Tajikistan mobilized its total capacity preparing the ISEF, with the focus on five main areas: i) Health

⁶⁵ KII national partners

⁶⁶ KII national partners

⁶⁷ KII national partners

⁶⁸ KII national partners

⁶⁹ Notes from the meetings with the RGs; also, KII national partners

⁷⁰ KII notes- UN Agencies and desk review findings

⁷¹ Reference to Impact of COVID-19 on Lives, Livelihoods and Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Tajikistan, September 2020, <https://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/library/impact-of-covid-19-on-lives-livelihoods-and-micro-small-and-me.html>. Also, the Rapid Gender Assessment, UN WOMEN, June 2020; Women's Time Use in Tajikistan, ADB, June 2020-<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/609486/womens-time-use-tajikistan.pdf>

⁷² The country has not introduced full lockdown; the measures include closing borders and airports and prevention of mass gatherings-

⁷³ Real GDP growth slowed to 4.2% year-on-year in the first nine months of 2020, compared to 7.2% a year earlier, ref to TAJIKISTAN-Economic Slowdown Amid the Pandemic, World bank – Country Economic Update, Fall 2020

⁷⁴ Restrictions on labour mobility and economic activity at home and abroad resulted in lower migrant remittances (more than 20% in the first quarter of 2020), loss of jobs, especially in the informal sector, and reduced investments- ref to World bank – Country Economic Update, Fall 2020

⁷⁵ According <https://www.wfp.org/countries/tajikistan> to the WFP data, 47% of people live on less than US\$1.33 a day and 30.1% of people are undernourished-

⁷⁶ <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/tj>

first; ii) Protecting People; iii) Macroeconomic Response; iv) Economic Recovery & Livelihoods and v) Social Cohesion.

The FET finds that the UN Secretary-General's COVID-19 response framework shaped the ISEF⁷⁷. In addition to responding to the challenges, the UN representatives recognized that preparation and implementation of the ISEF has been driven by "a vision based on the opportunity to build forward better in the aftermath of the crisis⁷⁸". They emphasized that the priority remains to accelerate achievement of SDG targets (and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development).

The on-going crisis could have additional adverse effects and the concerns are growing that the overall situation might further affect governance and reform processes. At the same time, the lack of basic services, declining household incomes and joblessness could erode social cohesion (including increased risks of domestic violence and gender inequalities).

The ISEF fully aligns with the national priorities and needs to address the adverse effects of COVID-19: Despite acknowledging the threat of the pandemic to the country rather late, the GoT has undertaken a range of measures to reduce the impact of external risks to the socio-economic situation. The ISEF reflects the priorities from the Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP)⁷⁹, designed through Whole of Government and Whole of Society multisectoral approach, involving relevant ministries and ensuring contributions from non-government actors and the private sector⁸⁰. The CPRP defined the objectives, policies and actions⁸¹ and implementing structures to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic⁸². The ISEF under the Priority 1⁸³ aligns with the CPRP's public health measures, divided into different streams of work including surveillance, case detection, logistics, and communication, aimed to supporting immediate Tajikistan's health system response to COVID-19⁸⁴.

One of the priorities identified in the CPRP is a multi-sector action to mitigate social and economic consequences of Covid-19. Following this provision, and the President's strategic decree "On Countering the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 Outbreak on the Republic of Tajikistan⁸⁵", the Prime Minister has endorsed a detailed action plan presented by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) for prevention and reducing the national economy's exposure to potential risks of Covid-19.

⁷⁷ A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, April 2020, more at:

<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf>

⁷⁸ KII notes, UN Agencies

⁷⁹ TAJIKISTAN COVID-19 COUNTRY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN- "Approved" Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, Olimzoda Nasim Hoja, 19 March 2020.

https://covidlawlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/TJK-COVID19-CPRP_19032020_Approved.pdf

⁸⁰ UN WHO has prepared the guidance document to assist the country to develop CPRP based on 10 pillars of COVID-19 operational response plan.

⁸¹ Building blocks of Tajikistan's response plans are as follows: 1. Country-level coordination 2. Risk communications and community engagement 3. Surveillance 4. Points of entry 5. Case investigation and rapid response 6. National laboratory system 7. Infection prevention and control 8. Case management 9. Multi-sectoral action to mitigate social and economic consequences 10. Logistics and supply management

⁸² The CPRP has been prepared in collaboration with WHO and other development partners

⁸³ The Pillar 1- Making essential health services available to those in need and strengthen health system and Pillar 2 Helping people cope through social protections and ensuring basic services and food security.

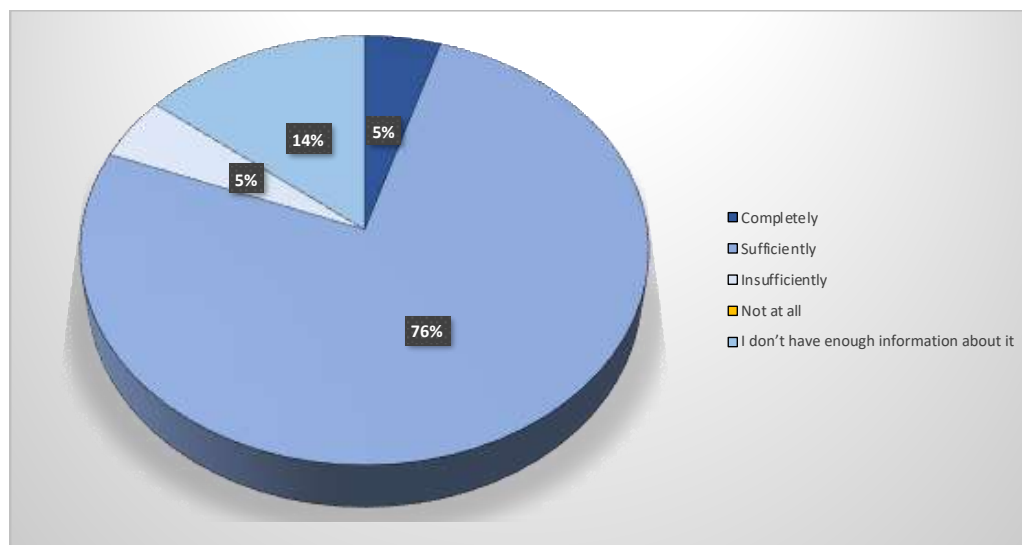
⁸⁴ The partners stated that the document could serve to adapt the National Action Plans for Health Security (NAPHS) and Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plans (PIPP) to COVID-19.

⁸⁵ #1544 -Decree of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On Countering the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 Outbreak on the Republic of Tajikistan' (dated June 5, 2020)

The ISEF (the pillars 3⁸⁶ and 4⁸⁷) is supporting implementation of the measures under this Action Plan; the Plan contains 23 actions for maintaining economic stability, implementing initiatives to boost local production also prioritizing food security and price stability of staple goods. It envisaged measures for ensuring timely delivery of social assistance and supporting vulnerable segments of the population. At the same time, the government has also provided a number of non-monetary support to the private sector and households, with a number of tax benefits to SMEs⁸⁸.

The representatives of the national institutions that participates in the survey have been generally affirmative regarding the alignment of UN activities with the needs and challenges that emerged due to COVID-19 effects. The large majority (79%) expressed positive opinion, but still high percentage did not have enough information about UN's activities and support.

Graph 4 National partners opinions on UN response to the immediate needs that COVID-19 created



Source: Tailor made on-line survey-

The ISEF is well-integrated in the on-going UNDAF 2016-2022- it's priority areas, outcomes and outputs are clearly linked to UNDAF outcomes: the ISEF large area of intervention under the *Health First* (and the Outcome 1: An effective response to the Covid-19 health crisis through improved surveillance, testing, and case management while building a more resilient national public health system) are linked with Outcome 3: People in Tajikistan benefit from quality, equitable and inclusive health, education and social protection systems. The FET finds that the results areas under one ISEF outcome are linked with different UNDAF outcomes. For example, the ISEF area *Protecting People* (and the associated outcome 2: Essential social services scaled up to protect the vulnerable and affected communities to cope better with the negative socioeconomic consequences of Covid-19) is generally associated with UNDAF Outcome 3 ("inclusive social protection system"). Still, its components (Result area 2.1: Food security monitored and measures introduced to address food insecurity among vulnerable households and Result area 2.2: Personal safety secured through improved sanitation at the household and workplace) are contributing to UNDAF Outcome 4 (The nutritional status of the people in Tajikistan is improved through stable access to sufficient, appropriate and safe food; improved

⁸⁶Creating livelihoods for men and women in new demand areas; supporting farmers; micro businesses, small- and medium-sized enterprises through economic recovery programs.

⁸⁷ Strengthening multilateral and regional response for inclusive development and green economy.

⁸⁸ The Tax Committee under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has also introduced moratorium on tax and audit inspections of businesses. The amended Tax Code of the Republic of Tajikistan is available, which is meant to provide further 'breathing space' for businesses which have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

child feeding practices; better water and sanitation and improved access to quality healthcare). Also, its component, Result area 2.5: Prevention and Response to GBV and protection of other vulnerable segments of the population strengthened, falls under UNDAF Outcome 5 (Outcome 5: Women, youth, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence and discrimination, have a voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society). The areas Macroeconomic Recovery and Economic Growth are directly linked with UNDAF Outcome 2 under the priority pillar Sustainable and equitable economic development.

- **There are other examples of the UN's flexibility and responsiveness during the implementation of UNDAF.**

The UN in Tajikistan has embarked into the Sustainable Development Goals Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (UN-MAPS). The analytical report has been produced, outlining the unfinished development agenda with implementation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and establishing linkages between political and development agenda for the country; namely, development reforms required for the achievement of the SDG targets (and the 2030 Agenda)⁸⁹. The areas of renewable and affordable energy and access to clean water together with rule of law and fundamental rights, social policy and employment were identified as accelerators for the SDGs achievement⁹⁰. The document also highlighted the importance of mainstreaming the "Leave no one behind" principle at all levels, engaging with the civil society and citizens in the processes of SDG planning and monitoring. These are also core areas of UNDAF support. Linking NDS2030, SDGs and the actual policy-making process in Tajikistan should facilitate sustainable development for the country and provide evidence-based recommendations and (practical) development solutions with the use of data science, behavioural insights and other innovative methods⁹¹. This approach will enable that UNCT together with the Government of Tajikistan and other stakeholders design "high-quality interventions that will benefit the people of Tajikistan and bring them closer to the Sustainable Development Goals achievement⁹²". In connection to this, the UN responded to the need to prepare a Voluntary National Review (VNR) followed by a presentation at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The main objective of the Review was to analyse the process of the SDGs implementation at the country level and the integration of the 2030-Agenda into the national development policy through broad participation of all counterparts.

Another example could be UNCT response to the increased inflow of refugees and migrants (primarily from Afghanistan) and asylum seekers and tailor-made support to the authorities to establish mechanisms and systems to address these challenges⁹³. These activities have been twinned with UN efforts to enhance institutional mechanisms and strengthen authorities' capacities in delivery of free legal aid support, migration and border management. The UN was working with the representatives of NGO and other stakeholders from the law enforcement, migration and asylum management, and social protection sectors. The objective of this support was to improve the identification, assistance, and referral of vulnerable refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

⁸⁹ The fulfilment of all the EU requirements under Chapter 27 on environment, for instance, will trigger the achievement of as many as 40 SDGs targets; Chapters 23 and 24 on justice, rule of law and human rights - 28 targets; Chapter 19 on social policy and employment- 12 targets.

⁹⁰ Catalytic policy solutions are needed for renewable energy, gender equality, regional development, and the education and employment of young people. The Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission held in 2016 highlighted unreach targets from the Millennium development Goals (MDGs) in health, education, and decent work.

⁹¹ The rankings showed SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 8 to be the most dependent on progress in other SDGs. Finally, the MAPS mission report recommended to address SDGs financing and domestic resource mobilization through more effective and transparent use of state funds and remittances.

⁹² Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) policy paper

⁹³ Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report- Universal Periodic Review, 2nd Cycle, 25th Session

In addition to these examples that presented UNDAF and UN Agencies responsiveness at level of programming, UN agencies were also flexible and responsive during implementation of projects and programs⁹⁴. The broad participation and different forms of involvement of the national partners, such as, for example, participating in steering and supervisory structures, benefiting or directly implementing activities, additionally contributed to UNCT responsiveness and adaptability. UNCT interventions have in general incorporated sufficient degree of flexibility during the planning and implementation to facilitate timely response to emerging changes and challenges⁹⁵.

Key Question 3: Has UNDAF design and implementation considered SDGs and followed “no-one is left behind” and gender mainstreaming principles?

Ensuring progress under the SDGs is inevitably linked with a *challenge to provide fair and redistributive policies* to facilitate deep transformations of economic, social and environmental systems in the country⁹⁶. Hence, integrated approaches to policy making and concrete measures to enhance policy coherence remain essential to maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs between economic, social and environmental policy objectives. The FE finds that the Government of Tajikistan in close partnership with UNCT and other national and international development partners, has been effective in introducing a new inclusive and SDG-centred policy making paradigm. The support from UNCT in preparing national policy and strategic documents has been highly valuable, as presented under the previous parts of this report⁹⁷. Still, it remains challenging to facilitate policy implementation and coordination due to limited technical and operational capacities within the Government, civil society and other governance actors in Tajikistan. These limitations include limited technical knowledge due to high staff turnover and constant rotation, high level of bureaucracy at the operational level, lack of coordination horizontal coordination from central to regional governmental bodies.

The *challenge to ensure more disaggregated and timely statistical data* to inform policies and reforms and evaluate their impact on various population groups in Tajikistan has been addressed by the authorities in Tajikistan, with support from UNCT.

Within the framework of a joint initiative and following the principle "leaving no-one behind", the United Nations country team in Tajikistan conducted a vulnerability mapping exercise. The Atlas's ultimate purpose is to inform and develop strategies, programmes, and policies geared towards vulnerability reduction and resilience-building efforts while facilitating the geographic prioritization of evidence-based interventions. The Atlas is complementing the national monitoring efforts of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UN is supporting the Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to implement the "Road Map" for monitoring the implementation of the SDG, focusing on 37 specific components. Also, UN supported preparation of the National Statistics Strategy 2019-2030 providing explicit references to gender statistics and SDGs. Particular focus done on interagency cooperation to establish the system of gender-sensitive indicators for conducting monitoring and assessment of NDS and SDG and adaptation of global indicators on the national level for measuring SDG's progress. Still, data-challenge in Tajikistan remains a problem: there is a lack of available data in monitoring a significant number of indicators⁹⁸; still, some sectors have taken on the challenge in addressing some of the data gaps. A lack of sub-regional disaggregated data

⁹⁴ KII notes with UN Agencies; KII notes with the authorities

⁹⁵ KII notes

⁹⁶ OECD (2018), Development Co-operation Report 2018 and IIASA (2018), Transformations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals: Report prepared by the World in 2050 Initiative, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria, <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/twi/Report2018.html>.

⁹⁷ Reference to the Annex 1 of this report

⁹⁸ Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (2018) Voluntary National Review. Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19586Tajikistan_VNR_2017.pdf

was noted, with a need to ensure effective data engagement at municipal levels. Lack of gender-disaggregated data across different sectors and lack of data on gender-specific results, for instance gender-based violence prevalence and response has been mentioned as an obstacle by national partners as well. ⁹⁹One of the challenges in accessing data is the weak coordination between data producers and those responsible for collation and dissemination.¹⁰⁰

Lnobi: UNDAF has served effectively as a partnership vehicle for government and other actors in their efforts to achieve the SDGs, while UNCT has been recognized as the main partner in this process

The implementation of UNDAF 2016-2022 has been inevitably linked with advancing achievement of the related and relevant SDGs. Contributing to implementation of UNDAF, UN Agencies have been also preparing agency-specific strategic plans, clearly indicating the main contribution to (relevant) SDGs.

For example, the WFP's 5-year Country Strategic Plan 2019-2024 (CSP)¹⁰¹ has been driven by SDG2, while also contributing to other SDGs. Another example could be the ILO's new Decent Work Country Programme for 2020-2024 with Tajikistan having particular focus on SDG1, SDG2 and SDG8. The 2016-2022 Country Programme for UNICEF Tajikistan aimed to accelerate progress towards the realization of the rights of all children by supporting relevant government policies, strategies, and initiatives, thus contributing to SDGs 1 to 6, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17.

UNDP in Tajikistan operates under its Strategic Plan 2018-2021¹⁰² organized around three pillars, eradicating poverty; ensuring structural transformations; and building resilience. To facilitate achievement of the SDGs and deliver on the 2030 Agenda, UNDP has identified Six Signature Solutions¹⁰³ fully in line with the SDGs, to generate integrated responses to development thus ensure stronger impact.

On an operational level, the FET finds that UN interventions have been effective in facilitating progress under SDGs. For example, the project Innovative solutions for nationalizing and localizing SDGs and economic empowerment of women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWD) has been focused to facilitate implementation of the SDGs at the local level, enabling participatory planning and implementation of sustainable and inclusive development strategies in the context of Agenda 2030. The underlying principle has been to ensure economic engagement of the most vulnerable population.

The joint UN initiative “Financing SDGs in Tajikistan”¹⁰⁴ has been designed to improve accountability and transparency of the government's budgeting practices to achieve the national SDG targets. In the process of achieving programmatic results, the focus will be to promote evidence-based policies and actions (based on SDG-related data) and build technical and managerial capacities, and partnerships for the achievement of SDGs with key government institutions. It will be anchored in the National Development Strategy for 2016-2030 of Tajikistan and with a clear commitment to leave no one behind. The UN in partnership with the GoT and other stakeholders is working on a systemic change, striving to embed the integrated resource mobilization strategy for SDG achievement in government systems. Part of these efforts should ensure that government policies reflect and mainstream the principles of gender equality, non-discrimination, and addressing vulnerabilities amongst the population.

⁹⁹ KII with national partners

¹⁰⁰ https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/ECISRegionalMAPS_report.pdf

¹⁰¹ <https://www.wfp.org/operations/tj02-tajikistan-country-strategic-plan-2019-2024>

¹⁰² <http://strategicplan.undp.org/>

¹⁰³ The Six Signature Solutions include: Keeping people out of POVERTY; GOVERNANCE for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, Crisis prevention and increased RESILIENCE; ENVIRONMENT: nature-based solutions for development; Clean, affordable ENERGY and Women's empowerment and GENDER equality

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.jointsdgfund.org/programme/financing-sdgs-tajikistan>

With UN support, the Voluntary National Review (VNR, 2017) was prepared and presented at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2017¹⁰⁵. The VNR outlined the strategic vision of the Government to nationalize the SDGs. The Government elaborated and adopted a new Action matrix for MtDP 2020 with SDG-aligned progress indicators and targets. All line ministries and stakeholders are currently reporting to MEDT as per the updated Matrix. Localization of the SDGs is at an early stage in the country, and district plans and projects need to incorporate SDGs.

The country has defined institutional mandates under the SDG implementation framework; however, organizational capacities remained weak. The National Development Council has been established with the principal coordination role for the NDS-2030 and SDG implementation. The President chairs the NDC, while the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) has the secretariat role and leading on planning, coordination, monitoring, and reporting on national development strategies and nationalized SDGs targets. The NDC included high-level representatives from selected Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, in association with other line ministries, is responsible for producing data on a limited number of the SDG indicators. In addition to existing sector committees, 13 inter-ministerial thematic working groups were established under the NDC to ensure alignment with the NDS-2030 and strengthen cross-sector coordination.

Lnob2: The rights and needs of the poor and people in vulnerable situations have been considered and incorporated during the design of UNDAF 2016-2022. Human rights mainstreaming and no-one left behind principles have been followed during the entire period of UNDAF implementation.

Formulation of UNDAF was driven by “human rights-based approach”, with a clear strategy to “centre on reaching vulnerable groups¹⁰⁶ and ensuring their rights”. UNDAF under all outcomes is addressing the needs of vulnerable population, effectively promoting the principle “leave no one behind”. Three strategic areas have included human-rights focus¹⁰⁷, while human rights have been explicitly mentioned under three outcomes¹⁰⁸. This focus on human rights principles and standards has further contributed and enhanced UNDAF’s relevance to the needs of all citizens in Tajikistan.

The period of UNDAF formulation (2015) was characterized with the country’s efforts to comply with the international human rights treaties and ratification of instruments¹⁰⁹. Signature and ratification of some of the core UN international human rights treaties and most of their additional protocols, Tajikistan¹¹⁰ assumed a legal obligation to implement, uphold and respect the rights reflected in those documents. However, different reports on the status of human rights in the country¹¹¹ highlighted insufficient efforts and weak capacities and

¹⁰⁵ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15283Tajikistan.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ The UNDAF provided that its approach and understanding of vulnerability is that is a state of high exposure to certain risks, combined with a reduced ability to protect or defend oneself against those risks and cope with their negative consequences”. Further to this, UNDAF highlighted that the vulnerable groups targeted by UN Agencies have been determined for each outcome.

¹⁰⁷ These strategic pillars are: I. Democratic Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights; III) Social Development, Inclusion and Empowerment and to some extent II) Sustainable and equitable economic development

¹⁰⁸ For example, Outcome 1: People in Tajikistan have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels; Outcome 2: People in Tajikistan benefit from equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment; stable energy supply; improved access to specialized knowledge and innovation and more favorable business environment, especially for entrepreneurs and farmers; Outcome 3: People in Tajikistan benefit from quality, equitable and inclusive health, education and social protection systems and Outcome 5: Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence, and discrimination, have a voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society

¹⁰⁹ All major human rights treaties and instruments were signed and ratified, but CPRD protocol and the Istanbul convention, which are in the process of ratification.

¹¹⁰ Tajikistan- status of ratification could be accessed on the web-site (accessed on 15.05.2021): https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=171&Lang=EN

¹¹¹ For example, the Freedom house Report Nations in Transit 2020 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/tajikistan/nations-transit/2020> and

commitment to put in place mechanisms for the effective protection of human rights. The country is facing challenges to implement mandates and legal provisions and ensure functioning of human rights protection¹¹².

The most significant human rights problems reported remain limited political rights and freedom of expression, including access to information, while the engagement of civil society in policy and decision-making processes remains rudimentary. The problem remains with law enforcement impunity with poor prisons conditions and torture and intimidations are frequently reported. Officials' use of government resources to maintain the political dominance of the ruling political party combined with the use of economic and political power by the country's elite to enrich supporters and corrupt the law enforcement and judicial systems. The limited judicial independence has additionally affected the human rights situation in the country. Domestic violence remained a problem, while an imbalance in the birth ratio of boys to girls pointed to gender-biased sex selection¹¹³. Labour market suffers challenges and requirements for regulations (for example, child labour is present, while the labour inspection system shows limited effectiveness). Statelessness and limitations to the right to seek asylum are serious concerns¹¹⁴.

UN Agencies remained highly responsive in addressing human rights issues and following the principle “no-one left behind”. UNDAF has well-identified vulnerable groups: women, children, youth, people with disabilities, elderly people, ethnic and sexual minorities; refugees, stateless persons, people who use drugs (PWUDs), people living with HIV (PLHIV), sex workers, etc; this was the initial step that facilitated support under UNDAF.

The Strategic pillar on Democratic Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights, under Outcome 1 planned and mobilized UN Agencies to work jointly with the national stakeholders on strengthening democratic governance in the country, including protection of human rights. UN Agencies in Tajikistan are committed to work in partnership and enhance coordination mechanisms within the system for protection of human rights and assisted with full implementation of international human rights obligations. Also, activities were implemented, and important results achieved to promote tolerance and non-discrimination, improve access to justice and protection mechanisms including free legal aid and prevention of corruption.

The country has been affected by high and persistent inequalities in different social spheres; however, the consensus has been expressed that “education, health care and access to other basic services give people, particularly children, the opportunity to reach their human potential and realize their life goals¹¹⁵”. This has been explicitly addressed under the large strategic pillar, Social Development, Inclusion and Empowerment. UN Agencies have been supporting national authorities, civil society and other partners to define an integrative and inclusive social protection system, ensuring universal coverage thus access to services for most excluded and vulnerable. The specific needs of vulnerable people were targeted through policies and programs in the areas of health, education and social protection. Important part of these efforts included support to strengthen implementation of the policies and programs for improved child rights; this particularly relates to the UN’s support to the Ombudsman for Children and implementation of its Strategy 2018-2020 “to ensure sanctions and remedies for the rights violations”. UN also assisted with the creation of a special unit dealing with the juvenile offenders in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and amendment of the Law on Order and

also the Human Rights Watch report on Tajikistan, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/tajikistan#> (accessed on 15 May 2021)

¹¹² More details could be distilled from the Human Rights Watch report 2016 and the Nations in Transit (2016), as indicated under the footnote 87

¹¹³ Nations in Transit- FreedomHouse and also in <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/Tajikistan> (accessed on 15.05.2021)

¹¹⁴ Based on Nations in Transit and ILO reports on Tajikistan

¹¹⁵ United Nations 2016 “Who is being left behind? Patterns of social exclusion”- <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/chapter3.pdf>

Conditions of Custody for suspects, alleged offenders and defenders. Other achievements included the adoption of the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights, that raised the age of marriage from 17 to 18 years.

UN supported preparation of the State Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, under which social and legal assistance to survivors of violence is provided.¹¹⁶ (More details are provided in other parts of this report).

UNCT through the UBRAF approach succeeded in ensuring that the rights of young women and girls living with HIV were identified as a priority in the new National Programme to halt HIV and AIDS Prevention for 2021-2025. According to the plan, a special focus has been made in decriminalizing HIV and other discriminatory legislation, improving prevention of vertical HIV transmission and maternal health services, and strengthening the provision of age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health services; raising awareness and prevention of HIV among youth, adolescents, young women, and girls; overcoming existing barriers and strengthening the supportive environment for an effective national response to HIV epidemic¹¹⁷.

In March 2018, the Government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). UN Agencies in Tajikistan have been working closely with Government agencies and civil society organizations to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and ensure their full inclusion in society¹¹⁸. Part of these efforts included disability assessment for service provision system reform, creating a basis for equal access to services and participation of PWDs. UN Agencies are working to address the rights of children with disabilities in a holistic way with both sectoral and cross-sectoral interventions, to support establishment of proper referral systems possessing the knowledge and capacity to serve children with disabilities and their families. Important results have been achieved at community level, engaging families, tackling discrimination and stigma, and encouraging the inclusion of girls and boys with disabilities and their full enjoyment of their rights.

Under this strategic pillar, Outcome 5 set the framework to work on greater gender equality and gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and eradication of domestic violence particularly focusing on care and support to survivors (more details under the Lnob3).

Lnob3: UN in Tajikistan has successfully used a twin track approach to ensure greater gender equality and empowerment of women: this included a gender specific outcome combined with significant focus on targeted work gender-related activities under other strategic outcomes.

The UNCT SWAP- Scorecard¹¹⁹ rated UNDAF 2016-2020 (and Outcomes and RM) as "Approaching Minimum Standards", second on the four-level indicator rating system¹²⁰ revealing scoring differences by different dimensions. UNDAF has scored "exceeding minimum standards" on Partnership, while three dimensions Programming, Leadership and Capacities reached "meeting minimum standards". The dimensions Communication and Knowledge Generation, Gender Parity, GTG Operations and Capacity Development scored "missing minimum standards"¹²¹.

¹¹⁶ The report is available/ via the web-site (accessed on 03.01.2020)

<https://www.unicef.org/Tajikistan/media/2116/file/Commitments%20under%20the%20Convention%20of%20the%20rights%20of%20the%20child-the%20state%20of%20fulfillment%20by%20Tajikistan.%20Ad%20Hoc%20public%20report.pdf>

¹¹⁷ The National Programme to halt HIV and AIDS 2021-2023 was endorsed by the government in February, 2021.

¹¹⁸ **KII notes—and focus group notes**

¹¹⁹ UNCT SWAP Scorecard Assessment is a globally standardized rapid assessment of UN country-level gender mainstreaming practice (on the UNDG methodology).

¹²⁰ UNCT SWAP-Scorecard Assessment Report and Action Plan, Gender Scorecard United Nations Country Team in Tajikistan, 2017-
<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNCT-SWAP-Tajikistan-Report-FV-.pdf> (visited 15.05.2021)

¹²¹ Ibidem- UNCT SWAP-Scorecard Assessment Report and Action Plan, Tajikistan

The report recognized results of UN on gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE), highlighting the need to work “collectively towards stronger gender-responsive and gender-transformative results for UNDAF, SDG Agenda 2030 and SDG 5 in particular¹²²”. The UN in Tajikistan used a twin-track approach to address gender equality and empowerment of women. This approach combined a standalone gender related outcome with mainstreaming gender throughout UNDAF, as the most effective way to achieve gender equality. Practically, UNDAF 2016-2022 included gender specific Outcome 5¹²³, highly important for generating sensitivity of gender mainstreaming and ensuring political commitment. UNDAF also included three Outcomes (1,2, and 3) that are either *gender sensitive or gender specific*, aligned with the UNDAF priority areas of intervention, SDGs and SDG 5 in particular¹²⁴. Hence, the twin-track approach ensured that gender has been considered under all outcomes¹²⁵.

UNDAF implementation included a Gender Thematic Group (GTG)¹²⁶; however, the main gender related activities across UNDAF outcomes have been with the respective Outcome Results Groups (ORG). The ORGs have ensured that the Joint Work Plans are gender sensitive.

The FET finds that the targets under UNDAF outcomes have captured limited “gender transformation”, reflecting “partially lasting changes in the power and choices women have over their own lives and tackle the root causes of inequality¹²⁷”. UNDAF outputs, indicators, and baselines have included references to gender equality, but the room for improvements and further advancement has been emphasized, especially for the next UNDAF planning cycle.

Lnob4. UNCT has used effectively the principles of environmental sustainability during design and implementation of UNDAF, contributing to achieve national development targets and international commitments of the country.

UNDAF 2016-2022 recognized the importance of environmental sustainability, highlighting the linkages between environment and development as preconditions for the achievement of national development priorities. To address environmental priorities, UNDAF included a specific strategic pillar, Resilience and Environmental Sustainability, with Outcome 6: *People in Tajikistan are more resilient to natural and man-made disasters resulting from improved policy and operational frameworks for environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources*. The formulation of Outcome 6 was rather broad and widespread, bringing together interlinked but still distinct elements of environmental sustainability and protection (including clean environment, conservation, optimal use and rehabilitation) and management of natural resources with the objective to enhance disaster risk management and resilience capacities.

The main references for UNDAF during its preparation have been the National Development Strategy 2030, the Living Standards Improvement Strategy of Tajikistan for 2013-2015, the National Development Strategy 2010-2015 and the National Disaster Risk Management Strategy 2010-2015. Whilst Tajikistan has a well-developed and inclusive national structure for disaster risk management, the challenges have been to shift the disaster response focus to reduction of risks. This strategic framework prioritized access to enhanced

¹²² Ibidem- UNCT SWAP-Scorecard Assessment Report and Action Plan, Tajikistan

¹²³ Outcome 5: Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence, and discrimination, have a voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society

¹²⁴ Ibidem, UNCT SWAP Scorecard Assessment Report, Tajikistan

¹²⁵ The development partners and participants in the discussions have emphasized that twin-track approach for gender equality can be significant entry point for accelerating development in Tajikistan- KII notes

¹²⁶ More details have been provided under part of Gender Mainstreaming the Gender part of this report and Annex 3 gender Mainstreaming Framework

¹²⁷ KII notes UN_01

economic opportunities in line with sustainable development principles, promotion of environmentally-sound technologies and effective management of natural resources.

National partners have repeatedly acknowledged UN Agencies as credible and efficient partners to the Government with capacity to mobilize technical expertise, knowledge and resources to support policy development and institutional strengthening in areas of environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster risk reduction, looking at social, environmental and economic sectors¹²⁸. UN was recognized as the major development partner promoting compliance with multilateral environmental agreements and global conventions; assisting the government in climate change and DRR negotiations; promoting the concept of Energy Efficiency in public, residential and industrial sectors; applying innovative cross-sectorial development approaches (i.e. ecosystem approach, integrated considerations of poverty and environment); and advocating Disaster Risk Reduction principles across the country¹²⁹.

However, sustainable economic growth and the health and wellness of the population are at risk from the degradation of water, air, forests, and agricultural land, and accelerated biodiversity loss. Due to its location in a mountainous and seismic zone, Tajikistan is disaster-prone and climate change is expected to cause an increase in the magnitude and frequency of climate-related hazards such as flooding and drought. This threatens agricultural productivity and food security and undermines resilience. Sustainable management of the country's natural resources will depend upon policy and regulatory change and capacity development for climate change adaptation and mitigation, more efficient use of ecosystem resources, especially water, effective disaster risk management and increased community readiness to respond to disasters and emergencies. Effective management for sustainable economic growth requires a functional, country-wide coordination mechanisms for 'horizontal' policy design and implementation among relevant institutions at all levels, focused on the interactions between environment, energy, agriculture, and livelihoods, especially for rural communities and vulnerable groups.

Lnob5. The UN's normative functions have been reflected in the ISEF: its five strategic pillars- reflect the UN's "building back better" and facilitate progress towards the SDG targets.

Covid-19 is endangering lives and livelihoods, with devastating effects on the poorest and most vulnerable people. The full effects of this global pandemic are still unfolding and uncertainty remains high. Yet the impacts on Tajikistan's society, economy and ecosystem will surely be felt for years to come. In this context, the "real time" assessment of the ISEF relevance confirmed that the areas remained true throughout its implementation, as justified in some of the key governmental action plans, strategic and policy documents. The program is coordinated with the Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to combat the spread of COVID-19, linked to the national Plan for Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 and to the Economic Plan of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) of the Republic of Tajikistan. To implement the plan, the MEDT sought financial and technical assistance from UN agencies and other development partners

UN has adopted "building back better" as the guiding principle to addressing challenges that COVID-19 imposed. On the operational level, the ISEF planned to "invest in building resilience to withstand future shocks and crises". The UN Agencies representatives recognized the importance of "whole of government approach" combined with broad partnerships. Namely, they indicated the need to rebalance the roles of the GoT and non-governmental actors (private sector, experts and civil society). The partners and participants in the survey stated that the ISEF has been designed to address root causes of inequality, vulnerability and discrimination. They also mentioned strengthening the core elements of good governance (transparency, greater accountability and inclusiveness), ensuring access to justice and protecting and promoting human rights.

¹²⁸ Notes, Focus Group under Outcome 6; minutes from the RG

¹²⁹ KII notes and Focus Groups meeting minutes

The FET finds that the ISEF has provided rapid response to immediate priorities during the first year of implementation, especially in the health sector. However, prioritizing the immediate interventions, UN has achieved the practical progress towards the "building back better" principle has been limited (under the ISEF itself). Still, considering broader UN support to Tajikistan, under UNDAF 2016-2022, has been effectively contributing to "building back better".

ISEF under its components is addressing the identified needs and priorities, especially of the most vulnerable and most-at-risk and remained well-aligned with the national efforts to address COVID-19 during its implementation thus far. The partners recognized that the ISEF has accurately identified priority areas of support and clearly established interventions under these areas¹³⁰. They have recognized that the Covid-19 has reinforced the need for cooperation and collaboration, both for immediate response and for longer-term recovery. Therefore, advancing development cooperation that is resilience-focused (and risk-informed) and climate-smart development will be vital for the efforts to build back better.

Besides, the recent Feedback on the Integrated Socioeconomic Response Framework (ISEF)¹³¹ recognized that its priorities and focus on critical areas have been well-established. In addition to immediate health-related assistance, the document emphasized the importance of the findings and proposed actions under the chapter "Protecting Citizens", especially for expanding basic social services to protect known vulnerable people and affected communities so that they can cope with the negative socio-economic impact of COVID-19. Facing a strong human toll of the pandemic, Tajikistan now must reckon with a dual challenge: address the new risks posed by Covid-19 and advance the fight against existing vulnerabilities

Lnob6. Tajikistan is still facing challenges to ensure sustainable results and progress under some SDGs.

Efforts to eradicate poverty (SDG1) have been addressed under UNDAF Outcome 3 (Social Development), Outcome 4 (Nutrition and Food Security) and Outcome 5 (Inclusion); still, the steady poverty rate (26.3% in 2019) persists indicating that a significant part of its population is still living under the national poverty line with high regional disparities; children are even more affected by poverty. In the area of education (SDG4), the objective to ensure literacy and completion of basic education has been achieved almost for the entire population in Tajikistan (98%). However, the poor quality of education since 1991 has reduced the skill level of younger people.

Children with disabilities continue to be the largest group out of school children despite the policy towards universal inclusive education (also relevant to SDG10), as per the feedback of different respondent Civil Society Organisations. In addition, according to UNICEF 86% of children of 3-6 years of age remain deprived of attending early childhood education services.¹³²

The perception of disconnect between education and employment remains high, resulting in high drop-out rates among young boys and girls (especially boys in rural areas): they leave formal education for employment. Access to preschool education remains a problem¹³³. The urban-rural disparity between school and preschool enrolment remains high (35.6 enrolment rate compared to 17 per cent in rural areas). Concerning the physical status of school buildings, the vast majority, almost 80% of school buildings in Tajikistan, do not conform to building codes and standards, putting a large number of students at risk¹³⁴. Under SDG2, Zero Hunger, the undernourishment is recorded amongst the general population of the country. Also, raising concern remains

¹³⁰ KII national partners, also results of the on-line survey

¹³¹ Prepared by the representative of the civil society from the Engineering Academy of the Republic of Tajikistan- available at <https://tajikistan.un.org/en/111650-feedback-integrated-socioeconomic-response-framework-isef>

¹³² <https://www.unicef.org/tajikistan/media/1121/file/ECE%20Factsheet%20Eng.pdf> . UNICEF prepared children's SDG Programme and it will require 16 bil USD for its implementation

¹³³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.ENRR?locations=TJ>

¹³⁴ More details at National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2030, September 2020 and Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis in 2020, more at <https://resources.norrag.org/resource/download/589/336>

malnutrition, for example, among adult women (micronutrient deficiencies in particular) and adolescents (obesity). Especially challenging for the country is child malnutrition¹³⁵, with a significant part of underweight and overweight children, with higher risk among children from the poorest households, rural children, and those whose mothers have only basic education. Specifically, more than 8 percent of children in Tajikistan are underweight and 6 percent are wasted. Wasting and underweight are more prevalent among children under two years, while stunting is prevalent among children aged 24-35 months. Three per cent of children were overweight or obese¹³⁶.

The health situation in Tajikistan (SDG3) shows disturbing signs, with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) reaching almost 80% of deaths¹³⁷, with premature mortality from all causes accounted for 32%¹³⁸

Regarding UNDAF Outcome 5 (SDG5) some important results have been achieved (as presented under the effectiveness part, and with more details under the Annex 1 of this report); still, women have low participation in economic, business¹³⁹ and political decision-making positions.

Under outcome 2, (SDG 8, 9, 10 and 11) decent employment twinned with migration, brain drain, lack of adequate rights protection for migrants abroad continues to be one of the major challenges for Tajikistan. People in Tajikistan, and especially migrants and refugees, continue to face difficulties with housing, decent employment, and livelihood opportunities. More efforts and allocation of state resources are required to facilitate local integration encouraging self-reliance and socio-economic integration, supporting employment and livelihood projects to minimize dependence on state social protection.

UNCT has been effective under Outcome 6; these results together with the efforts of the national stakeholders have created improvements at the level of the country. Still, despite these achievements there are priorities that would require attention. Tajikistan remains a water stressed country, due to inefficient use and management of water, while access to services in rural areas remains challenging (SGD6). Agriculture is the main user of water, and more than half of irrigation water is being lost. The country is at risk of deforestation (SDG15), use of solid fuel by population (SDG7), and deepening negative impact on the environment caused by mining activities.

5.2 Effectiveness

Key Question 4: Have the UNCT/ UN Agencies been effective in delivering outputs and contributing to the achievement of UNDAF Outcomes?

Effe 1. Drawing on the desk review and interviews with key informants- primary data collection, the evaluation team found key links between UN Agencies' main outputs and progress towards the outcomes.

UN Agencies in Tajikistan promoted and provided well-conceptualized support for institutional and policy reforms around sustainable and inclusive growth, social inclusion, and environmental governance, contributing to the enabling environment for improved services and human rights, ensuring that no-one is left behind. UN Agencies established a strong presence at national and sub-national levels, responding to national priorities and addressing the needs of people in Tajikistan.

¹³⁵ The estimation is that about 18% of children under 5 years of age are underweight, while another 14% of them are overweight

¹³⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/tajikistan/nutrition#:~:text=More%20than%208%20per%20cent,children%20aged%2024%2D35%20months.>

¹³⁷ The national statistics indicate that cardiovascular diseases have been cause of 48% of deaths, followed by malignancies with 20.5%.

¹³⁸ Again, non-communicable diseases have been the cause of 77 percent of these premature deaths.

¹³⁹ Women's wages on average are lower than men's wages by around 36 percent, while also women, especially, young women (15-24 years of age) are relatively more likely to be unemployed than men.

This part of the final evaluation report provides a brief overview of the strategic results at the policy, institutional and individual levels, while a more detailed presentation is in the Annex 1 and Annex 2 of this report.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Outcome 1: *People in Tajikistan have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels.*

UN Agencies in Tajikistan have been supporting national authorities to continue developing public administration capacities and strengthening legislative framework together with law enforcement abilities. Through the review of the Law on Civil Registry and preparation of the new Strategy of the Civil Registration System for 2020-2025 and strengthening key institutions, the UN has been at the forefront of reform of civil registry institutions and mechanisms in Tajikistan.

Assistance also included reforming the judiciary and building the capacity of the Ombudsman Office, including the Commissioner for Child Rights. The UN was active in improving access to justice and ensuring free legal aid through the State Agency for providing legal aid (SALAC) work, together with 37 state Legal Aid Centres across the country. The FET finds that the UN has been considering and mainstreaming gender equality practices in all governance-related activities.

Responding to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), UN Agencies facilitated the National Action Plan (NAP) for 2017-2020 development and assisted with adoption and implementation of other human rights instruments, (CEDAW, CRC, OPAC etc). These documents served also as advocacy and policy dialogue channels in respective areas ¹⁴⁰.

SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Outcome 2: *People in Tajikistan benefit from equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment, stable energy supply, improved access to specialized knowledge and innovation and a more favourable business environment, especially for entrepreneurs and farmers.*

UN in Tajikistan assisted in enhancing the business environment, working on the legislative framework, and supporting Government counterparts to aligning the national strategies with SDGs (for example, the Mid-term Development Programme 2021-2025 and also the National Concept of Digital Economy 2020-2040, the Export Promotion Strategy; National Investment Plan for Agricultural Sector, Migrant Labour and Development of Productive Employment of Population, Private Sector Development Strategy and National Food Safety Strategy). The UN supported national stakeholders in introducing facilities and creating a more favourable environment for livelihood improvement, considering the green economy throughout these efforts.

Under this Outcome, the UN provided support to vulnerable and excluded groups to integrate them into the socio-economic environment, testing and applying different support mechanisms.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on crop yields and livestock market resulting in an increase in retail prices of most staple foods and thereby worsening the nutrition of households in Tajikistan during 2020¹⁴¹. In response the UN provided technical expertise to the government on the monitoring of food prices and the supply chain and the timely release of staple foods from strategic reserves to stabilize prices. The UN also provided cash for work to vulnerable households, deployed locust resilience strategies and distributed

¹⁴⁰ More details are provided in the annex 1

¹⁴¹ <https://www.untj.org/2020annualreport/#s6>

high-quality potato seeds helped build small producers' capacity and improve their livelihoods in northern Shahrستان and central Nurobod districts¹⁴².

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT

Outcome 3: *People in Tajikistan benefit from quality, equitable and inclusive health, education and social protection systems*

Education sector:

UN contributed to the improvement of the strategic framework in the education sector, with the assistance for the preparation of the critical documents, such as the National Strategy for Education Development 2021-2030, the Twenty Years of the Study and Development of the Natural, Exact and Mathematical Sciences and the Government of Tajikistan School Feeding Strategy (2017 – 2027), adoption of roadmap 2020 for Sustainable Healthy Lifestyle education in secondary schools. UN's efforts contributed to some critical achievements, such as inclusive education, increased access and completion of education and promoted quality learning and skills development, focusing on teachers and learning outcomes and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). UNCT has been active in mainstreaming healthy lifestyles and WASH, safety and disaster risk reduction at schools. In the recent period, UNCT focused on continuous safe access to education ensured for all school-age children operationalizing the national education COVID-19 Response Plan.

UN Agencies have been active in advancing early childhood development. Another critical area has been inclusive education, where UN contributed to enrol 6, 139 children with disabilities in mainstream schools. UN is implementing important activities through a partnership with CSOs; however, this partnership needs further strengthening.

In the area of education, the UN provided technical expertise and coordination of drafting and full financing of the national education COVID-19 response plan. The main results included a nationwide back-to-school campaign, with training materials distributed to kindergartens, schools, EDC, and training programs on COVID-19 measures delivered to teachers and school community members. The UN worked with the national authorities to establish distance/ home-based learning opportunities, develop and broadcast TV lessons (including sign language for disability inclusion), and enable digital learning (a mobile app piloted in rural areas and subsequently rolled out nationally)¹⁴³.

Health sector

At the strategic level UN contributed to the finalization of the National Health Strategy for 2021-2030, and the National HIV program for 2020, as well as to the newly adopted program for 2021-2025¹⁴⁴, approval of the National Tobacco Control Law, launch of the National Immunization program 2020, the National HIV Program 2020 and the National Program on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (2017-2020). The efforts for Universal Health Coverage led to covering more than 170,000 women, men and children with health services, including PWD.

UN Agencies have contributed to the main improvements in sexual and reproductive health areas, improving the trend in maternal mortality rate, increasing use of contraception, improving birth spacing, and decreasing abortion rates. Important achievements are related to reducing non-communicable diseases. The UN has been working with the Government and other partners to integrate TB into Primary Health Care and has introduced the TB strategy. UN Agencies' continuous support to institutional capacity-building has resulted in improved capacities and frameworks for social/health service provision.

¹⁴² FAO Tajikistan- ref to Enhanced livelihoods of rural Tajik families help overcome the COVID-19 crisis-

¹⁴³ A total of 2.4 mil have been supported with distance learning- <https://www.untj.org/2020annualreport/#s6>

¹⁴⁴ The process of preparation of the National HIV Programme involved women living with HIV. S

The UN has been active in addressing HIV/ AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. This included efforts for enhancing policy related to case management of HIV infection in children and pregnant women, resulting in increased access for pregnant and HIV-positive women to antiretroviral therapy.

The burden of NCDs is increasing, linked to the ageing of the population and the increasing incidence of behavioural risk factors such as tobacco consumption, harmful alcohol use, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition. UNCT has been working with the government and other partners to integrate TB into Primary Health Care and has introduced the TB strategy. UNCT through Unified Budget Results Accountability Framework (UBRAF) has contributed to reducing new HIV infection among key population, as well as enhancing policy related to case management of HIV infection in children and pregnant women, resulting in increased access for pregnant and HIV-positive women to antiretroviral therapy. Among pregnant women living with HIV and who knew their HIV status at antenatal care, **81,6%** were accessing treatment or prophylaxis to prevent transmission of HIV to their children. Further, 79% people living with HIV reported being on care with ART by the end of 2020. As of January 01, 2021, total **9,599** HIV cases were registered, of them, 7,937 (including 3,576 female and **906** children under 15 years old) PLWH were receiving ART that consisted of **84,2%** attainment of the second 90% of Global Health Strategy¹⁴⁵

Further in the HIV-prevention area, UNCT supported building capacity of national institutions to provide client-tailored, integrated sexual and reproductive health services for women, youth and key populations. This assistance included building capacities of networks and organizations managed by women, youth, key populations and other specific groups to meaningfully participate in planning and implementing programmes that address their needs and vulnerabilities

The UN effectively supported public awareness activities for sexual and reproductive health and rights, non-stigma and discrimination of HIV and the requirements of key populations.

UN continued support to ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling online consultations with doctors through the telehealth initiative. Part of this support included capacity development of sexual and reproductive health service providers to provide alternative antenatal care, family planning and psychosocial support services. In addition, the UN has been working to ensure sexual and reproductive health information and services for women with disabilities (including the pandemic time)¹⁴⁶.

The UN has undertaken a flagship joint intervention on gender-based violence prevention in response to COVID. The health service providers have received specialized training to provide psycho-social support (PSS) and working on GBV prevention and awareness campaign. In parallel, national authorities have been working on new facilities, the Victim Support Rooms to provide women with short-term shelter.

The authorities in Tajikistan benefited from the UN assistance to establish a long-term system for effective management of medical waste in healthcare facilities and improve the capacities of healthcare workers to deal with epidemics¹⁴⁷.

The authorities in Tajikistan benefited from the UN assistance to establish a long-term system for effective management of medical waste in healthcare facilities and improve the capacities of healthcare workers to deal with epidemics¹⁴⁸.

Social Protection

¹⁴⁵ The data are provided from the latest Tajikistan report to Global AIDS Monitoring 2020 :

¹⁴⁶ Ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services during the COVID-19 pandemic in Tajikistan- UNFPA Tajikistan

¹⁴⁷ UNDP Tajikistan- Promoting Effective Medical Waste Management to Reduce COVID-19 Impact on Environment

¹⁴⁸ UNDP Tajikistan- Promoting Effective Medical Waste Management to Reduce COVID-19 Impact on Environment

UN Agencies supported participatory approach in developing key national strategies on HR: WLWH contributed to the new National HIV/AIDS Programme (2021-2025) (one of the WG on ARV was chaired by WLWH), as well as actively engaged its CSO partners and beneficiaries in the analysis of discriminatory policies in particular, the Law on Protection from Discrimination

The UNCT has been demonstrating strong commitments in assisting the Government in developing integrated social protection strategies. The State Programme of Social Protection of the Population is in the last preparatory phase, pending completion. As a result of UNCT support, the MoHSPP adopted the 'Charter of the Sample Centres of Social Support' in April 2017, as the first step towards the transformation of Social Assistance at Home Units (SAHUs) and started piloting the new regulations for SAHU. UN contributed to improved national engagement in school meals through launching the School Meals Strategy 2027 leading to a 7% increase in primary grades students receiving daily hot meals in schools.

With UN assistance, Baby Homes were formally transformed into the Family and Child Support Centres nationwide, which also required reallocation of the budgetary resources at the local level to new types of services. Number of children receiving family and community-based care are increasing. Overall, the number of children in institutional care in Tajikistan reduced from 247 children per 100,000 in 2019 (8,818 children) to 237 children per 100,000 child population in 2020 (8,554 children)¹⁴⁹. This experience is an important lesson for Government of Tajikistan and can be applied to further transformation of residential care institutions.

The UN advocated for changes in approaches to social assistance resulting in applying the per capita metric. Another notable contribution in this section included increased access and coverage of vulnerable groups of population to protective programmes by 60% (mainly cash assistance and in-kind support). Access to social protection services for 2000 asylum seekers and refugees has been established.

UN Agencies supported the Tajikistan Emergency COVID-19 project¹⁵⁰ and its component on emergency cash payments to families with children living below the poverty line. Namely, complementing this initiative, the UN provided messages about good nutrition and parenting practices that help children stay healthy and grow to their full potential¹⁵¹. The UN also supported small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and large companies to implement policies to protect jobs and vulnerable workers.

Outcome 4. *The nutritional status of the people in Tajikistan is improved through stable access to sufficient, appropriate and safe food; improved child feeding practices; better water and sanitation and improved access to quality health care*

The partners highlighted the important role of UN Agencies in building the local capacities to address the issues of stunting (decreased from 26% in 2012 to 17% in 2017), underweighting and wasting. Despite decreasing trend of prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight; still, prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies (anaemia, Vit A, iodine deficiencies etc.) is not improving.

UN assisted in the preparation of some of the national policies such as: National Food Fortification Law, 2019; Food Safety Program of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2019-2023; National Program to Promote Healthy Diet and Prevent Obesity 2020-2024; National 1,000 Days Communication Programme, 2020-2025.

¹⁴⁹ UNICEF Tajikistan

¹⁵⁰ More than 42,000 vulnerable households received one-time cash transfers of 500 TJS and social protection was expanded to cover additional districts and vulnerable households in the 2021 budget with the goal of national expansion, signaling a long-term shift by the government to expand social protection and protect those left farthest behind. This initiative is financed by a grant from the World Bank at the amount of \$11.3 million and implemented by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Tajikistan.

¹⁵¹ <https://www.unicef.org/tajikistan/stories/cash-assistance-struggling-families-tajikistan-amid-coronavirus> and <https://www.untj.org/2020annualreport/#s6>

COVID-19 has worsened the state of food insecurity across Tajikistan and exacerbated malnutrition among struggling families. Malnutrition poses huge risks to children's health and wellbeing, worsens health and education outcomes across the board, and prevents children from reaching their full potential as adults.

UN has contributed largely to increased multi sectoral coordination to improve nutrition, including through the support to the National Nutrition Forum and the formulation of the Common Results Framework of the National Scale-Up Nutrition Movement that aims to improve children's nutrition status. The National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (2020 – 2025), a cross-sectoral programme on nutrition, has been developed and approved.

The UNCT contributed to the progress in regulating the water sector in Tajikistan. At the national level, being the flagship for Water Sector Reforms, the UNCT supported the Coordination Platform on drinking water supply and sanitation resulting in the introduction of amendments to the laws and adopting by-laws to streamline the implementation of water and sanitation policies. This includes for example the adoption of Law "On drinking water and wastewater" in July 2019, and the norms and standards for construction of water facilities, water tariff regulations and efforts to decentralize rural drinking water supply systems to list a few. Access to clean drinking water has considerably improved compared to 2016, with 96.5% urban and 72% rural population having access to potable water.

Part of the ISEF efforts included UN's continued support to schoolchildren from the most vulnerable families, including the time of schools' suspension and early summer break: during last year, UN distributed school meals and take-home rations for the most vulnerable school children in grades 1-4 across 2,000 schools¹⁵². The take-home rations provided nutrition for 120,000 individual household members in 52 districts. The national partners stated that resuming school feeding, especially during COVID-19 has been highly important for the country, recognizing that "ensuring sufficient, diverse and nutritious food contributes to strengthening children's immune system and increases their capacities to cope with other diseases as well¹⁵³".

Outcome 5. *Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence and discrimination, have a voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society.*

UN has played an important role in helping the authorities at different levels in Tajikistan to identify strategic issues, ensure commitment and achievement of normative standards (through programming and implementation) and design and promulgate laws and policies at different levels that foster gender equality and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

At the systemic level, the FE finds that UNCT contributed to strengthening gender-related policies and laws, such as the State Program on Education, the National Plan for Combatting Human Trafficking for 2016-2018 and the State instructions for the internal affairs agencies for the prevention, elimination and response to domestic violence.

UN contributed to the national mechanisms and institutions, such as strengthening the national emergency obstetric care system and developing the maternal death surveillance and response system. Some of the important results included implementation of the near-miss cases review and the analysis and improvement of the provision of gender-sensitive integrated SRH services, including victim support rooms, by primary health care facilities. UN assisted with the adoption of the "Guidance on the strengthening of health sector response to gender-based violence that defined essential service packages and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for health, police and psycho-social sectors with relevant state agencies are among one of the notable results in this direction.

UN Agencies supported participatory approach in developing key national strategies on HR: WLWH contributed to the new National HIV/AIDS Programme (2021-2025) (one of the WG on ARV was chaired by WLWH), as well as actively engaged its CSO partners and beneficiaries in the analysis of discriminatory policies in particular, the Law on Protection from Discrimination.

¹⁵² UN reported delivery of a total of 855,113 primary children meals (434 thousand boys and 414 thousand girls) and 240,000 primary children take home rations as alternative to meals (122,400 boys and 117,600 girls)- <https://www.untj.org/2020annualreport/#s6>

¹⁵³ KII national partners and FGD on education

UN played an important role in signing of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) by Tajikistan in 2018 and development and approval of the Roadmap for ratification of the UNCRPD by Tajikistan. UN generated an evidence through carrying out the Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours and Practices related to persons with disabilities, with focus on children and women with disabilities. Based on the evidence generated the media and social mobilisation interventions are carried out to promote the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, with focus on children and women with disabilities in Tajikistan.

RESILIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Outcome 6: *People in Tajikistan are more resilient to natural and man-made disasters and benefit from improved policy and operational frameworks for environmental protection and management of natural resources.*

UN has been collaborating with the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoES) and Committee for Environmental Protection (CfEP) to align the programmatic interventions with the national strategies on disaster risk reduction (including the alignment with the Sendai Framework). The actual work on the ground included 20 most vulnerable districts in which disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation interventions have been prioritized, including conservation and sustainable use of the natural resources. Part of these efforts also covered climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management frameworks.

UN Agencies have contributed to the development of the Mid-Term Programme 2020-2023 of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, building on the nationwide multi-hazard risk assessment and supporting the implementation of Sendai commitment

UN Agencies have supported Committee of Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan in development and approval of Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, under #643, from 2 November 2015, on “Measures on implementation of Vienna Convention on Ozone Layer protection and implementation of Montreal Protocol on ozone depleting substances”

Effe 2. Active dialogue with the GoT, and strong partnership between the UN Agencies and national stakeholders together with effective communication with international development partners contributed to responsiveness under UNDAF

The national stakeholders highlighted that profound understanding of the country-specific constraints and development needs, together with demonstrated partnership building abilities¹⁵⁴ and "proven impartiality and independence"¹⁵⁵ shaped UN's comparative advantages. Also, the UN's knowledgeable and experienced staff on the ground¹⁵⁶, together with generally effective decision-making of UN Agencies and formulation of (appropriate) responses to challenges¹⁵⁷ contributed to delivery of results. However, despite these swift responses from UN Agencies on demands and development needs, the GoT did not follow adequately. The FET has identified cases of significant delays and even cancellation of already agreed initiatives and UN assistance in the specific areas.

Regular exchange of information and identification of opportunities and interaction among UN Agencies, especially at the senior level, have been some of the positive factors for the delivery of results¹⁵⁸. In this

¹⁵⁴ KII notes, national partners

¹⁵⁵ this has been a dominant opinion among the authorities, civil society and also international development organizations- reference to the KII notes from the interviews with the national stakeholders and international partners

¹⁵⁶ KII notes- national partners

¹⁵⁷ KII notes- national partners

¹⁵⁸ KII national partners and UN staff

context, the majority of the management and programme staff (a total of 55%) have positive perception about communication and cooperation among UN Agencies in Tajikistan (nearly 30% stated it is “excellent” and very good and 25% marked it fair). However, a high percentage of UN staff that participated in the survey stated that communication and cooperation need improvements. They have recognized “a certain level of rivalry among the agencies, which is not conducive to joint planning or UNDAF implementation”, as UN Agencies are competing for their space in the development community, for funds and financial resources.¹⁵⁹

The majority of participants (39 out of 49) could not identify areas under which UNDAF/ UN Agencies were underperforming (answered that they do not know) and six answered negatively. The comments from the survey participants have been linked to the need to improve performance under the “Delivering as one” framework, especially highlighting the need to benefit from joint advocacy and greater collaboration among UN agencies (to avoid overlaps). Some of the respondents emphasized the need for the more active involvement of civil society in planning and programming (and not only in the delivery of activities). The survey participants stated the approach to respond to all requests from the GoT frequently results in loss of strategic intent. Joint efforts could be a strong tool for addressing the plethora of problems that most vulnerable groups and those left behind face: more could be done on social inclusion of different vulnerable groups, education and health, rural and regional development.

The survey results and inputs from individual interviews with UN agency managers showed that more efforts should be put in planning the following UNDAF to better reflect both – individual agencies mandates and joint programs.¹⁶⁰

Besides, different timings in strategic planning and programming cycles among UN Agencies (some of them start earlier, without following UNDAF timelines), together with specific mandates have been some of the factors that limited the coherence¹⁶¹ and alignment between the UN Agencies. This has affected the ability of UN Agencies for joint programming based on commonly identified problems and set priorities. Some examples to consider joint programming could be improving access to the public services and equality for vulnerable groups; overall poor state of affairs in labour rights’ protection; gender equality and prevention of domestic violence, among other¹⁶².

Effe 3. The national authorities and partners have been aware of the work of the respective UN Agencies they cooperate with; however, the awareness of UN’s mandate and the activities of (other) UN Agencies has been generally limited¹⁶³ .

The awareness of specific initiatives of UN Agencies, knowledge about achieved results and progress in the areas of intervention, largely depends on the extent of involvement of (national) partners in the actual implementation of these initiatives. Examples could be beneficiaries of different capacity development interventions, or new equipment, processes and policies; partners at the steering or managerial levels, etc. Still, they have shown limited knowledge of a broader UN assistance planned under UNDAF. There is also limited awareness of the obligations of the national partners in the context of UNDAF implementation

Still, suggestions were made to advance these achievements through stronger links with the SDGs, and SDG targets when defining new (UNDAF related) initiatives. Shifting leadership responsibility in the implementation of UNDAF towards the national authorities could also enhance UN comparative advantages.

¹⁵⁹ Results of the questionnaires for UNCT management and programme

¹⁶⁰ Results of the questionnaires for UNCT management and programme

¹⁶¹ Findings from the KII notes suggest that UN Agencies could not give due attention to coherence between the relatively large number of interventions under UNDAF

¹⁶² KII notes with the national partners; FGDs with CSOs

¹⁶³ Quadrennial comprehensive policy review(QCPR) survey, as a mechanism through which the UN General Assembly assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of UN operational activities for development and establishes system-wide policy orientations, showed low-level of understanding amongst governmental partners on the UNs/Agencies mandate and work.

Besides, UN in Tajikistan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) arranged the national Dialogue to explain partners on various aspects of work and arrangement in Tajikistan.

The priorities are to further improve inter-agency cooperation and strengthen relationships with all development partners.

Effe 4. UN Agencies have experience in designing and implementing joint initiatives; However, more substantive joint programming approach was missing, while joint initiatives were mainly opportunity-driven

Following guidance on the joint programming, UN Agencies in Tajikistan have gained positive experience with pursuing joint projects and programmes¹⁶⁴. The implementation of this UNDAF included a few well-designed and targeted joint interventions in the areas of social inclusion of vulnerable groups, migrations, border management, etc (more details provided in the Annex 6). Development of the Country Gender Equality Brief as joint UN exercise to map the legislation, policies and sex-disaggregated data on GEWE in Tajikistan is another example of joint cooperation specifically around the gender dimension and principle of LNOB.

All these efforts created a basis for solidarity and complementarity between agencies¹⁶⁵. Still, the process of joint programming lacked cohesiveness at the planning stage¹⁶⁶. Most interview respondents from the UN system as well as 55% online survey respondents believe that there should be more joint programming in the work of the UN system in Tajikistan. The effective joint programming could be especially important to ensure full achievement of “Leave no one behind” principle, preventing the risk that some vulnerable groups might be forgotten or missed, due to individual agencies’ (focused) mandates. Joint programming could have particular relevance and importance in meeting SDG targets and addressing more priorities, through coherent and coordinated efforts of UN agencies¹⁶⁷.

Still, UN respondents have highlighted difficulties in conceptualization and frequent issues in implementation of joint projects and programmes¹⁶⁸. The FET finds that joint projects have been mainly designed as a response to the funding opportunities, rather than planned in advance.

Key Question 5: Has the implementation of UNDAF been participatory, strengthening ownership of results?

Own1. Joint and individual UN Agencies initiatives in Tajikistan have strengthened national stakeholders’ participation for the achievement of results.

The FET finds various forms of national partners involvement, from involvement in coordination forums and steering and advisory structures to involvement in direct implementation of activities.

For example, the National Forum on Rule of Law has been organized to identify, discuss and prioritize policy measures for addressing emerging issues on rule of law and access to justice, including relevant to GBV. This

¹⁶⁴ A Guidance Note on Joint Programming was issued by the UNDG in 2003, and a revised version in 2014. The Note provides the rationale for joint programming i.e., pooling of resources for greater effectiveness, defines joint programmes, describes the steps for joint programming and provides guidance on how to develop and manage a joint programme, and indicates fund management options for joint programmes

¹⁶⁵ KII notes- UN Agencies

¹⁶⁶ Ibidem, The Final Evaluation UNDAF 2012- 2016

¹⁶⁷ United Nations Development Group, United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidance, New York: United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, 2017, 30. As the UNDAF guidelines clearly specify: *joint programming is the collective effort through which UN organizations and national partners work together to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate activities aimed at effectively and efficiently achieving the SDGs and other international commitments within the framework of the UNDAF and the joint workplans*

¹⁶⁸ KII notes UN Agencies- most common problems is that division of tasks between UN Agencies exist, and frequently joint projects are implemented without a proper or any cooperation among the participating agencies. The primacy of the respective UN Agencies, in selection of project staff or reporting, over the management of Joint Initiatives have been some of the critical points.

unique platform gathered policymakers, lawyers, academia, CSOs and businesses. The reports stated that "this intersectoral engagement resulted in establishing the independent Agency for Implementation of Judicial Decision concerning law enforcement in domestic violence cases.

UN Agencies in Tajikistan have been supporting partnerships around the Coalition of NGOs "From equality De-Jure to Equality De-Facto". The UN contributed to enhanced national participation and a stronger sense of ownership by working with the Committee on Women and Family Affairs, international organizations and CSOs. These efforts for active national involvement contributed to more coordinated, strategic programming and monitoring of the progress on SDGs 5 and 16.

Following provisions of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, the CEDAW and UPR action plans, UNCT helped establish a high-level platform for multi-sectoral coordination on GBV. UN has helped CSOs in developing alternative/shadow reports to UN treaty bodies. UN Agencies have been working jointly to improve policies for PWD, supporting Tajikistan in joining UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The various analytical reports recognized weak capacities, poor collaboration and cooperation, and prevailing limited interest among institutions responding to Human Rights issues, including GBV. This challenging situation also emphasized the importance of the GBV-related coordination efforts as a multi-sectoral response to operationalizing domestic violence prevention law. The evaluation report stated that the "work of UNCT helped to bring relevant actors together in a meaningful and organized manner, increasing coordination in addressing GBV cases and providing bases for other specific policy instruments". The multi-sectoral working group's recommendations facilitated the Government's decision to create three working groups to revise the Prevention of Domestic Violence law. The report recognized that the development and endorsement of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for health sector professionals is a significant step in enhancing the quality of services and strengthening the referral system. It also stated that the "promotion and drafting of SOPs for law enforcement and social workers is another critical step in gradually achieving the goal of creating an effective sectoral response mechanism". The joint work of UN Agencies resulted in the establishment of a Government Working Group to advance policies compliant with Gender Equality Principles in line with Universal Periodic Review Cycle 2 recommendations.

Draft Anti-Discrimination Law and National HR Strategy. After the second cycle of UPR, Executive Office of the President has been coordinating the development of the National Human Rights Strategy up to 2030 (NHRS) as well as a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. NHRS focus on strengthening social protection for vulnerable groups, eliminating discrimination, ensuring equality, fundamental freedoms and economic and social rights. Currently, the Government is working on the corresponding national action plan (NAP) to NHRS. UN support ensured an inclusive process of development of both documents with participation of CSOs. At the same time, it is a protracted process and it is still not clear when the documents will be adopted.

Own2. UN supported national stakeholders to establish more effective donor coordination in the UNDAF priority sectors.

The effectiveness of international development aid requires its alignment with national (development) strategies, institutions and procedures¹⁶⁹; The NDS 2030 positioned as an umbrella, horizontal and long-term development strategy of Tajikistan, defined principles, strategic goals and measures for a longer-term socio-economic and inclusive development. However, the NDS remained a generic document, with broadly defined priorities. The coordination of the NDS implementation was assigned to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. The Ministry suffers from limited number of skilled professionals for coordination and development programming¹⁷⁰, being also exposed to high turnover of qualified staff and frequent changes

¹⁶⁹ The Paris Declaration stated the requirement for international development partners to base their assistance entirely on the aims and objectives of the country. More available at: Survey on monitoring the Paris declaration: Making Aid More Effective-<http://www.oecd.org/publications/2008-survey-on-monitoring-the-paris-declaration-9789264050839-en.htm>

¹⁷⁰ KII- Ministry

in its environment has affected dynamics of external actors and the alignment, coordination and effectiveness of development assistance to Tajikistan¹⁷¹, also affecting initiatives under UNDAF.

The general strategic and legal frameworks for coordination of development assistance have been defined, and tools and approaches for coordination designed. However, the country still needs to work to assume responsibility for coordination and oversight of donor activities, thus reinforcing the Government's ownership over development processes. The FET finds that UN in Tajikistan, together with other development partners, is steadily working to contribute to national donor coordination mechanism, by enhancing the capacities of the national relevant institutions (the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT), State Committee on Investments and State Property Management (SCISPM), Executive Office of the President (EOP) and Economic Advisor to the President) to implement its functions related to international development cooperation and humanitarian aid delivery¹⁷². UN supported the National Development Council (NDC) under the President of Tajikistan to develop a new Regulation and creation of 13 WGs to support NDS/SDGs implementation.

The Development Coordination Council (DCC) was established to facilitate information exchange and collaboration within the development community, as well as foster dialogue on shared priorities with the Government of Tajikistan¹⁷³. The DCC functions as development partners' coordination mechanism with the GoT in support of the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 and the Mid-term development Strategy 2021-2025.

Following the provisions from these strategic documents, the DCC's structure covers relevant sectors in thirteen working groups that fall under three pillars (Infrastructure, Human Development and Economy and Private Sector Development). Working groups serve as platforms for members to exchange information on current and future projects, discuss and articulate a common position on issues, and engage with the government on policy dialogue. Each working group defines its objectives, scope of activities, membership, and frequency of meetings. However, national participation in these working groups is limited or even national counterparts are not participating existent, causing that national ownership and nationally driven development processes are absent. These coordination efforts are important; however, without involvement of national partners and decision makers, sustainability and long-term impact could be compromised.

5.3 Efficiency

Key question 6: Has the implementation of UNDAF been efficient concerning management systems and tools and adherence to the work plans?

Effi1. UNDAF for Tajikistan has been designed to cover the period from 2016 until 2020 and mid-term review has been carried out, recommending to extend UNDAF until end of 2021. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused that the UNCT in cooperation with the GoT decided to pursue extension until the end of 2022.

A forward-looking Mid-term review (MTR) of UNDAF 2016-2020 was conducted jointly by the UNCT and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (June 2018) with the objective was to assess progress on implementation of UNDAF and its relevance to the current national context and global commitments of the country. The MTR also reviewed the effectiveness of UNDAF management arrangements and the status of the UNDAF budget.

¹⁷¹ OECD report on harmonization of development assistance provided analytical overview of the main challenges in donor coordination; more details have been available at Survey on monitoring the Paris declaration: Making Aid More Effective

¹⁷² KII_017

¹⁷³ More details- <https://untj.org/dcc/>

The MTR recommended to review UNDAF indicators and results framework and ensure that it is aligned with the SDGs and national indicators from strategic and policy documents. The MTR recommended to respond to migrations issues that the country is facing and explore opportunities to expand interventions in the area of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) based on experiences and results of the past and current activities in the health and education sectors.

The MTR also recommended to extend UNDAF 2016-2020 for an additional year, until 2021, ensuring full alignment with the National Mid-Term Development Programme 2021-2025. The objective was to ensure coherence and alignment with the key national priorities. Considering this recommendation, the first extension has been requested, ensuring more effective and relevant support of national development priorities and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030¹⁷⁴.

Still, the COVID-19 pandemic created uncertain circumstances, preventing UNCT from organizing wide and effective consultations with the partners and stakeholders. The MEDT endorsed the request for a one-year extension (until the end of 2022). The next UN sustainable Development Cooperation Framework will cover the period of 2023-2026, aligning it with the timing and priorities of the MTDP 2021-2025, National Development Strategy for the period up to 2030¹⁷⁵.

Effi2. UNDAF included sound management, programming, and monitoring frameworks¹⁷⁶, aimed at “more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better performing United Nations Agencies in Tajikistan¹⁷⁷” and the procedures for UNDAF implementation have been adjusted to the country-specific context.

UNCT strived to strengthen national ownership and leadership and contribute to sustainability of results, through "involvement of the Tajikistan authorities from all governing levels, in line with their competences¹⁷⁸"

The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) was established to provide strategic guidance and oversight during the implementation of UNDAF 2016-2022¹⁷⁹. The representation in the JSC has been generally satisfactory: as planned, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade of RT and the UN Resident Coordinator co-chaired the JSC, with representatives of the respective line ministries and heads of UN Agencies acting as members. However, the JSC did not include representatives of non-governmental partners.

The analysis of meeting minutes (including participation in one of the JSC meeting¹⁸⁰) showed that the JSC members remained formally involved, without genuinely active role in providing strategic leadership during UNDAF implementation¹⁸¹, missing to ensure strategic support and inputs throughout UNDAF implementation¹⁸².

Joint Result Groups: UNDAF rightly recognized Joint Result Groups (JRG) as a mechanism to support implementation of the UNDAF through joint planning, monitoring activities and reporting on progress. UNDAF established JRGs under each outcome, involving UN Agencies and the national stakeholders, representatives

¹⁷⁴ Letter nr 01/1-31 from the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, dated 14.05.2019.

¹⁷⁵ Letter nr 06/1-23, from the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, addressed to the UN RCO, dated 10.08.2020

¹⁷⁶ UNDAF Tajikistan 2016-2022

¹⁷⁷ UNDAF Tajikistan 2016-2022

¹⁷⁸ KII notes with UN Agencies

¹⁷⁹ Terms of References for the Joint Steering Committee have been prepared

¹⁸⁰ The FET participated in the JSC meeting organized in April 2021.

¹⁸¹ The initial JSC meeting was organized in person and only two other meetings of the JSC have been organized on-line.

¹⁸² KII notes

from the respective sectors. Concerning leadership, the high-level representative of the designated UN Agency and representative of the national stakeholders/ Government of Tajikistan co-chaired the JRGs.

The JRGs planned to meet regularly and operate on the basis of bi-annual work plans, with the role to tracking and reporting on progress¹⁸³ against planned activities and results, identifying lessons and good practices.

The importance of genuine engagement of UN Agencies and national stakeholders in the RGs (and UNDAF implementation) could not be overstated, as precondition for national ownership and participation. However, the JRGs were not in reality functional to deliver the assigned tasks to the expected quality. The FET finds the frequent changes among the RG's members (representing the national stakeholders). Also, the JRG's had limited influence during planning and preparation of work plans: the approved work plans resemble list of initiatives and activities that each UN Agency planned under respective outcome¹⁸⁴, while integrated development planning was not in place. Still, some improvements have been presented through the 2021-2022 Joint Work Plans, elaborated with the objective to ensure "Delivering as on UN" principle, and included joint indicators, targets and activities. Still, activities of some UN Agencies have been presented as individual tasks (specific for these agencies); the UN stated that this practice reflected "mandate of that particular UN Agency and focus on specific vulnerable group of people (stateless people, migrants, PLHIV, schoolchildren, etc.)"¹⁸⁵.

The challenge to capacitate JRGs and ensure continued and genuine involvement, further affected by regular staff turn-over (UN Agencies and state institutions) had also a negative impact on monitoring and reporting on progress under UNDAF pillars and outcomes. Also, the on-going UN Reform and delinking process, introduced a new monitoring/reporting system, new guidelines and approaches; this new approach has been recently launched and introduced without due orientation process¹⁸⁶.

Also, it affected regular communication and coordination of efforts/ activities of UN Agencies and other development partners.

Effi3. The framework for effective management of UNDAF has been generally in place; still, some areas would require improvements.

UNCT in Tajikistan has been following standard management procedures during the entire period of UNDAF implementation. The FET has analyzed the following actions.

Operations Management Team (OMT): has been established to assist UNCT in making operations cost-efficient, contributing to the effective and efficient implementation of UNDAF. The OMT has prepared the UNCT Business Operations Strategy (BOS)¹⁸⁷; but the results remained mainly at the level of common premises and services.

Thematic and experts' groups: UNCT responded to the MTR recommendations to expand the "thematic areas matching strategic priorities, and respond to opportunities for UNDAF in-depth discussions on opportunities for synergies, complementation, and joint programming." The desk materials provided that thematic working groups on gender and HIV-AIDS have been established. Besides, the Youth Committee is under the establishment, as the ToR is developed, reflecting UNDAF joint youth interventions. The MTR stated that these technical and thematic groups have "facilitated UNDAF implementation through the assistance to the ORGs and JSC and increased efficiency in achieving results and the UN system's ability to track progress under UNDAF". However, the MTR did not provide evidence to validate and confirm these statements. Therefore,

¹⁸³ The annual results reporting at the pillar level has been the task assigned to the RGs; furthermore, it was envisaged for the RGs to use regularly a web-based UNDAF Monitoring and Evaluation tool (to be developed by the UNRC Office).

¹⁸⁴ KII notes- UN Staff/ members of the RGs

¹⁸⁵ KII notes- UN Agencies

¹⁸⁶ KII notes- UN Agencies.

¹⁸⁷ To "pursue higher quality, more productive, and cost-efficient support services in procurement, human resources, ICT, finance, logistics and transport, and the management of the UN House

the FET collected additional primary and secondary data to analyse and assess working groups' activities and results: the FET finds that the role of the WGs has been underutilized, meeting on an ad-hoc basis. The FET could not find evidence that the WGs ensured innovative practices, improved cooperation, and contribution to the progress in these thematic areas.

The majority of UN programme staff marked positively (satisfactory and fair) communication and cooperation among UN Agencies; however, the relative majority recognized needs for improvements. The participants in the survey stated that potential of thematic working groups and UNDAF RG groups have been underutilized.

Monitoring system: UNDAF 2016-2022 provided for a flexible implementation approach to ensure its relevance and responsiveness to Tajikistan's economic, political or social situation. Within this context, an effective monitoring and evaluation (ME) system was suggested¹⁸⁸, to compare and ensure progress against expected results. The source for the monitoring system has been set in the UNDAF Results Matrix (RM). Following recommendations from the MTR, the RM indicators, baselines, and targets have been revised to capture contribution of UN Agencies to outcomes and the country's development objectives. Also, UNDAF envisaged use of biannual work plans as a more operational point of reference. However, the challenges with the preparation of the JWPs (indicated in the previous paragraphs of this report- suboptimal planning) have affected monitoring and reporting. Still, the FET finds that the 2020 UNDAF Progress report introduced new reporting practice, focused on development changes under outcomes¹⁸⁹.

The Coordination/M&E Group was established¹⁹⁰, following the ToR. The UNDAF Coordination/M&E group including national RGs have been engaged in the Mid-term review and RRF revision. Also, the Coordination/M&E group was involved in 2020 UNDAF JWPs formulation with integration of ISEF action plan. All these processes have been discussed during UNDAF Coordination/M&E group meetings and action points agreed. Due to pandemic situation in 2020, there was no possibility for arranging Coordination/UNDAF M&E group and thus with the launch of UNINFO¹⁹¹, the sessions within UNDAF Coordination/M&E group, Regional DCO and DCO were conducted nearly every month. The partners recognized that the Coordination/M&E Group remains an important support for the implementation of the next strategic framework: technical advice and inputs from the Coordination/M&E Group could improve critical deliverables, such as formulation and finalization of annual/ bi-annual Work Plans (particularly regarding indicators, baselines and targets) as well as UNDAF Annual (results-based) Reports¹⁹².

Graph 5. Opinion of UN Staff on cooperation and communication among UN Agencies

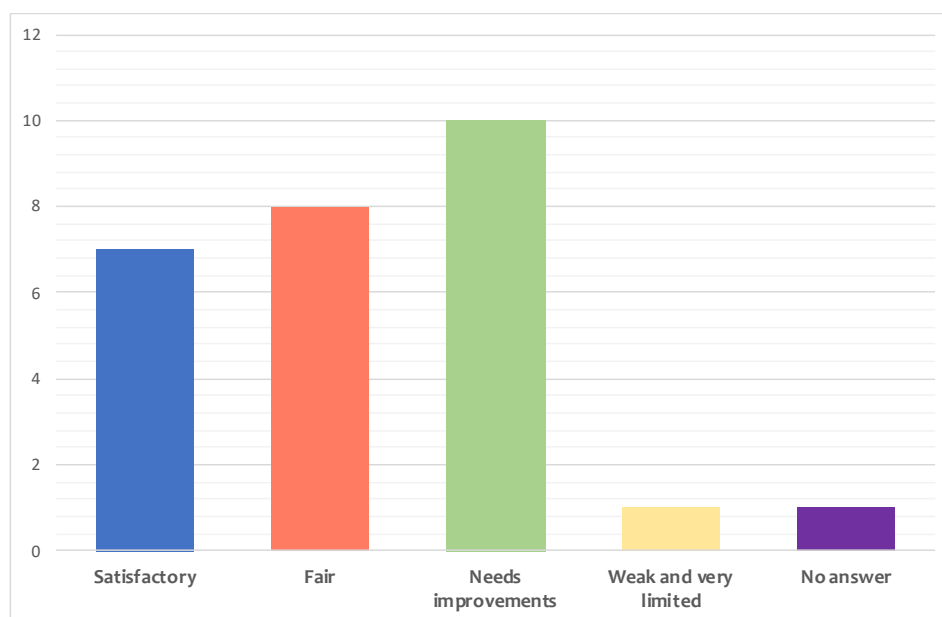
¹⁸⁸ UNDAF Tajikistan 2016-2020, Part V, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting, Page 35

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.untj.org/2020annualreport/>

¹⁹⁰ KII notes UN_03

¹⁹¹ The UN partners recognized duplication of efforts related to UNINFO – and ISEF reporting. UN Agencies report to their HQs and then a similar set of indicators under the UNINFO require to insert data, instead the latter feeding directly from the global repository. Besides, these are not synchronized/coordinated in time, e.g govt and agencies annual reporting happens in early months of the following year whereas UNINFO requires reports by end of December

¹⁹² KII UN_03, KII_UN04



Source: Results of the on-line survey- UN Programme and Operations staff

Reporting: UNDAF envisaged annual reporting on results under each of its pillars and outcomes. Three available reports (2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020) have provided some information about critical and strategic achievements of UN Agencies during that period of implementation. In 2019 following MTR recommendation, the UNCT has developed a UN System-wide mid-term UNDAF Results Report to show the progress achieved towards the set targets. The on-line reporting format for the latest UNDAF-2020 report has shown significant improvement, from the content and design sides. The report has provided links between outcomes and outputs with well-established internal coherence and credible links to reflect on progress under UNDAF outcomes. The FET was using these reports as the main source of information to validate progress or effectiveness of UN Agencies during UNDAF implementation. The FET complemented these initial findings and information with the data sources from UN Agencies (specific annual and quarterly reports, evaluations, studies and other reports). This approach has enabled the FET to fill the gaps, reconstruct assumptions and assess the achievements more accurately.

External Communication: UNDAF envisaged the establishment of UN Communication Group (UNCG), as the main support for "communications and advocacy play in achieving the UNDAF outcomes and promoting the image of a strong and unified UN system in Tajikistan". UNCG was established to integrate and coordinate communication work across UN agencies. The Group was composed of communication experts and focal points from UN Agencies. The UNCG has prepared a Communication strategy. UNCG has been sharing and disseminating information on joint UN initiatives and the results achieved under UNDAF through the UN Website, mass media, and social media. However, the stakeholders have recognized that these communication channels have been insufficient and sub-optimal to support development efforts: the existing communication, according to the UN staff, is rather formal than constructive¹⁹³, lacking strategic support role, without considering people at the centre of every action/ intervention¹⁹⁴.

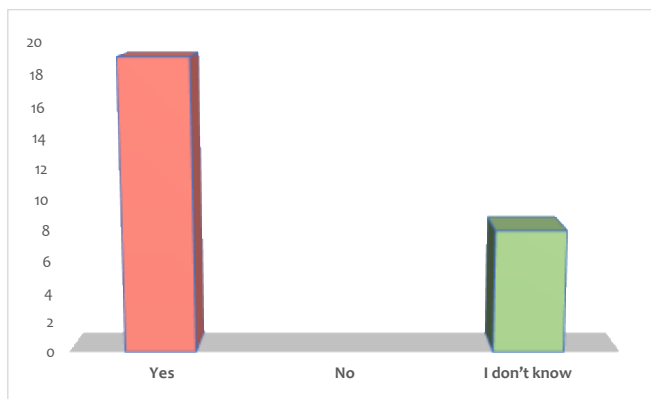
Effi4. The survey revealed a positive perception of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in strengthening communication and cooperation among UN Agencies and with the national partners.

¹⁹³ On-line survey, UN Programme Staff

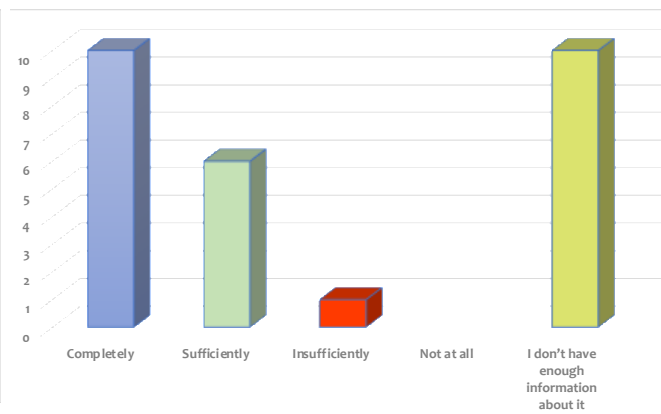
¹⁹⁴ Ibidem, results of the On-line survey, UN Programme Staff

The implementation of UNDAF 2016-2022 has coincided with the start of the UN System reform. One of the main focuses of the reform has been to strengthen development coordination, centred around the UN Resident Coordinators and ensure greater accountability of the UNCT for implementation of UNDAF and its annual plans. The large majority of survey respondents stated that the UN RC Office contributed to improved cooperation and communication among UN Agencies and greater effectiveness and efficiency during UNDAF implementation.

Graph 6 UN RC Office contribution to improved cooperation and communication among UN Agencies



Graph 7 UNRC Office contribution to communication with the national partners



Source: Results of the on-line survey- UN Programme staff

Also, the UN programme staff that participated in the survey stated that the RC Office contributed to more effective communication with the national partners and a more appropriate response to the country's needs; however, there was a significant part of the survey participants that did not have enough information about this.

Effi5. Financial and human resources for the implementation of UNDAF 2016-2020 have been in general well-planned, corresponding to the needs of projects and programmes. The financial resources planned for implementation of UNDAF have been almost mobilized and delivered to a large extent within the first three years of UNDAF implementation (as per available financial figures), with some disparities among the outcomes.

The analysis of documents indicates that the financial and human resources for the implementation of UNDAF in Tajikistan have been in general available in a timely manner, corresponding to the needs of the action, and planned and implemented activities. The budget planned for implementation of UNDAF has been almost fully ensured (already within the first four years of UNDAF implementation). However, there are significant differences among the UN Agencies in mobilizing and delivering resources for UNDAF implementation. The financial and narrative reports indicate that resources have been used efficiently, in line with the approved plans, and with the focus on the achievement of results. UNCT in Tajikistan has been following “delivery as one” standard operating procedures during the period of UNDAF implementation. This included the following actions: Operating as one, Monitoring and Reporting.

UNDAF 2016-2022 highlighted the need to adopt a flexible implementation approach, ensuring responsiveness and relevance vis-à-vis social issues, economic and political changes. The effective monitoring and evaluation (ME) system was required, based on the Results Matrix (RM), its indicators, baselines, and targets.

The FE finds that the UNCT followed MTR recommendations and revised indicators from the RRF, and monitoring protocols, roles and responsibilities have been improved. The FE will need to verify if the M&E Plan

has been in place, and the extent to which this plan captured or measured (actual) contribution of UN Agencies to progress under outcomes

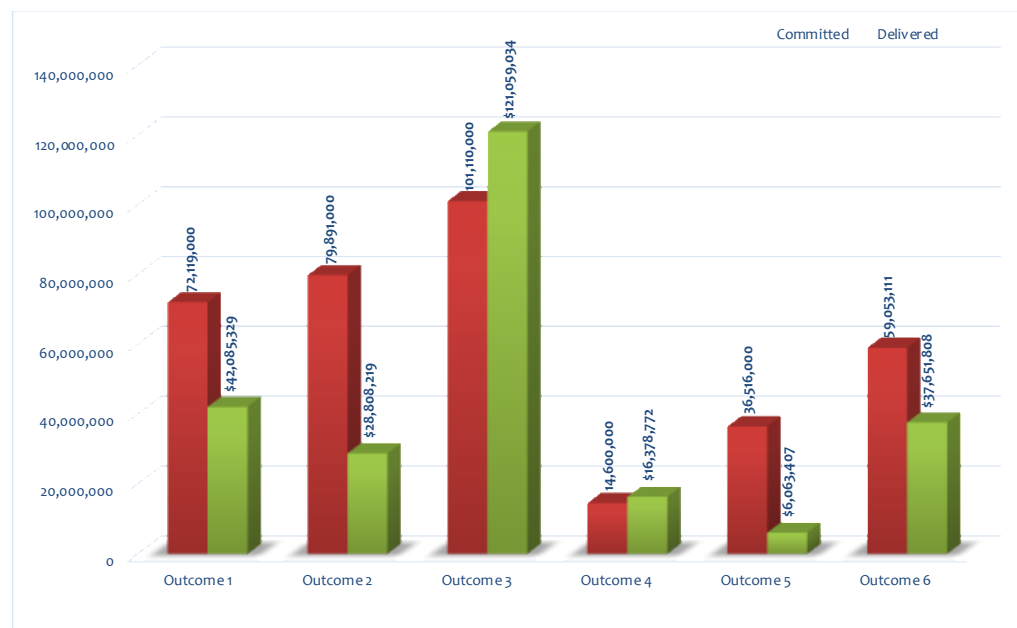
Delivery of funds for UNDAF implementation: The planned (“targeted”) amount for the implementation of UNDAF is set at very high 363,289,111 USD, while the planned amount of the core (regular UN agency) resources is 50,623,631 USD.

Table 3: Committed vs delivered funds under UNDAF outcomes, 2016-2020

Committed vs Delivered 2016-2020			
Outcome	Committed	Delivered	Delivery in %
Outcome 1	\$ 72,119,000	\$ 42,085,329	58%
Outcome 2	\$ 79,891,000	\$ 28,808,219	36%
Outcome 3	\$ 101,110,000	\$ 121,059,034	120%
Outcome 4	\$ 14,600,000	\$ 16,378,772	112%
Outcome 5	\$ 36,516,000	\$ 6,063,407	17%
Outcome 6	\$ 59,053,111	\$ 37,651,808	64%
Total	\$ 363,289,111	\$ 252,046,569	69%

The analysis of the delivery figures showed that nearly 73% of the planned budget was mobilized and 69% delivered during 2016-2020. These figures indicate that the UN Agencies have been poorly planning the overall budget- the funds planned under Outcome 2 and Outcome 5 have been especially unrealistic.

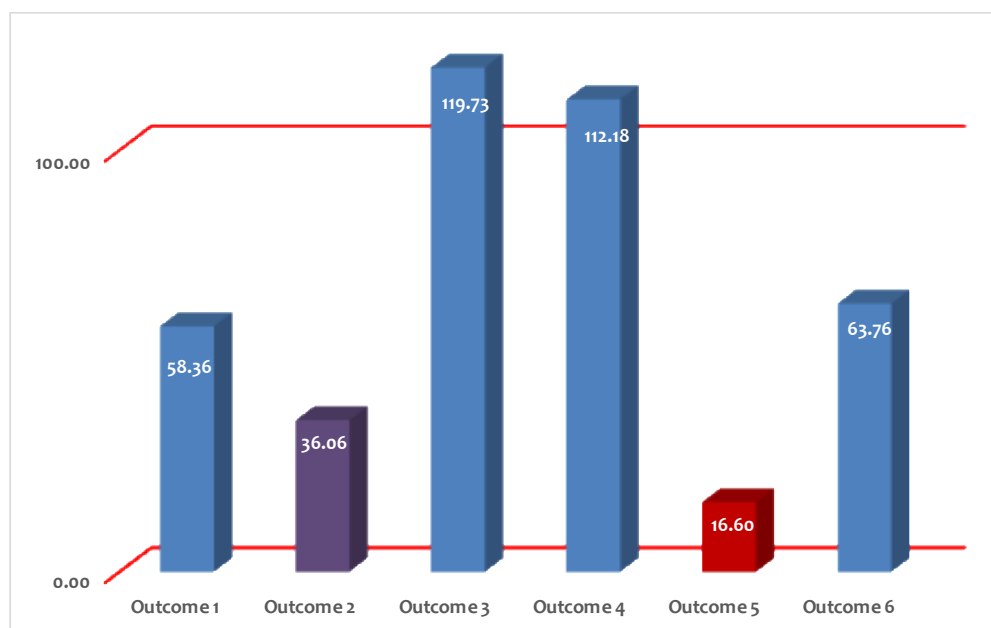
Graph 8 Planned vs delivered funds under UNDAF outcomes



Source: UN RCO

The FET analysed delivery in percentages (delivered vs planned resources) and significant differences emerged across outcomes. Delivery under Outcome 3 exceeded planned target for 20% and under Outcome 4 for 12%. However, delivery under Outcome 5 reached only 16.6% from the targeted amount.

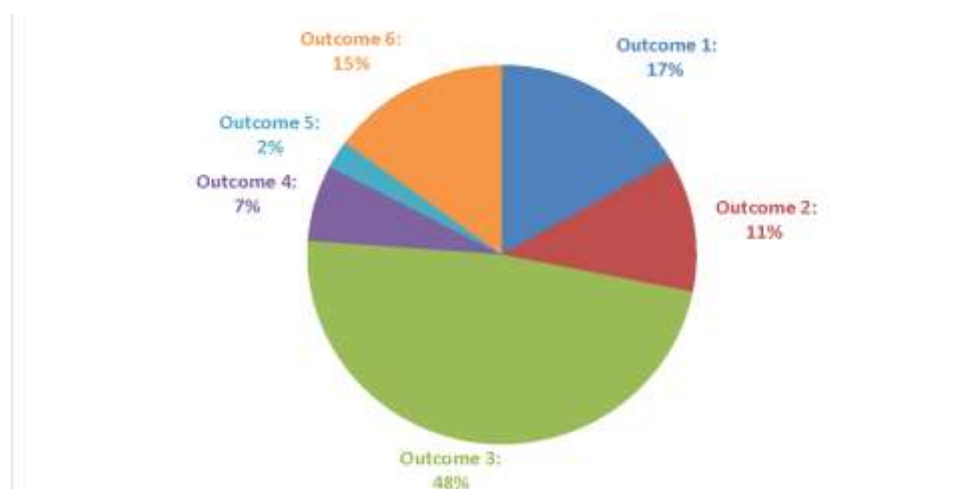
Graph 9: Delivery under UNDAF outcomes (%)



Source: UNRCO

At the same time, the funds delivered under Outcome 3 represented impressive 48% of the overall delivered UNDAF budget (Outcome 5 represented 2% and Outcome 4- 7% in the total delivered UNDAF funds)

Graph 10: Delivery under each outcome as % of total



Source: UNRCO

This similar situation has been reported during the MTR, as at the mid-term point: under Outcome 3, UN Agencies mobilized for the first two years a total of 55% of the targeted amount (101,1 mil USD), and delivered 47% of this targeted amount (more than 86% of the mobilized and budgeted resources). Although the MTR highlighted, for example, that Outcome 5 was behind the target with only 9% mobilized and even less delivered resources (4%), the UN Agencies did not re-consider plans and revise the budget/ planned resources under this and other outcomes.

The FET analyzed UN Agencies' delivery, identifying significant differences

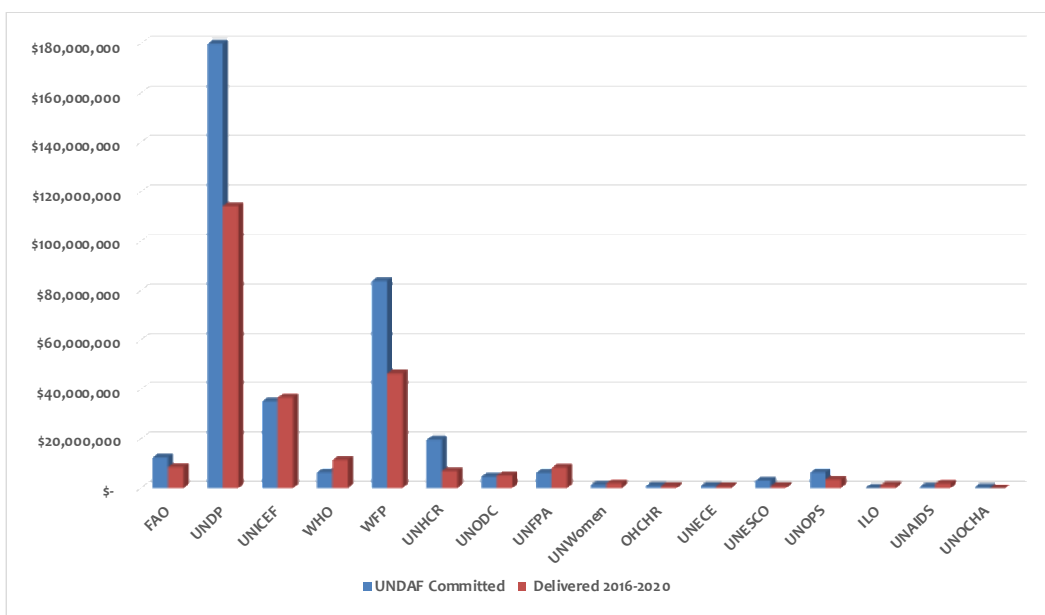
Table 4 : Planned vs delivered resources by UN Agency

Agency	UNDAF Committed	Delivered 2016-2020	Balance of 2016-2022	% of Delivery
FAO	\$ 12,500,000	\$ 8,668,140	-\$3,831,860	69.35
UNDP	\$ 180,000,000	\$ 114,311,393	-\$65,688,607	63.51
UNICEF	\$ 35,335,000	\$ 36,836,892	\$1,501,892	104.25
WHO	\$ 6,500,000	\$ 11,576,266	\$5,076,266	178.10
WFP	\$ 84,000,000	\$ 46,500,379	-\$37,499,621	55.36
UNHCR	\$ 19,750,000	\$ 6,999,961	-\$12,750,039	35.44
UNODC	\$ 4,800,000	\$ 5,221,686	\$421,686	108.79
UNFPA	\$ 6,340,000	\$ 8,488,851	\$2,148,851	133.89
UNWomen	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 2,026,202	\$626,202	144.73
OHCHR	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 880,585	-\$119,415	88.06
UNECE	\$ 930,000	\$ 728,000	-\$202,000	78.28
UNESCO	\$ 3,084,111	\$ 874,928	-\$2,209,183	28.37
UNOPS	\$ 6,500,000	\$ 3,556,840	-\$2,943,160	54.72
ILO	\$ 100,000	\$ 1,198,099	\$1,098,099	1,198.10
UNAIDS	\$ 650,000	\$ 1,912,520	\$1,262,520	294.23
UNOCHA	\$ 400,000		-\$400,000	
IOM	0	\$ 2,087,575	\$2,087,575	
UNRCCA	0	\$ 178,251	\$178,251	
Total	\$363,289,111	\$ 252,046,568	-\$111,242,543	69.38

Source: UN RCO

Three UN Agencies, UNDP, WFP and UNHCR delivered considerably less than initially planned (more than 115 mil USD). For example, UNDP delivered a total of 114 mil USD but 65 mil USD less than budgeted (63.51%). WFP delivered 55.36% of planned budget (a total of 46.5 mil out of 84 mil USD planned) and UNHCR reached only 35% from the planned budget. Still, some agencies have been more realistic concerning planning, mobilization and delivery of resources (UNICEF- 109% and WHO- 178%).

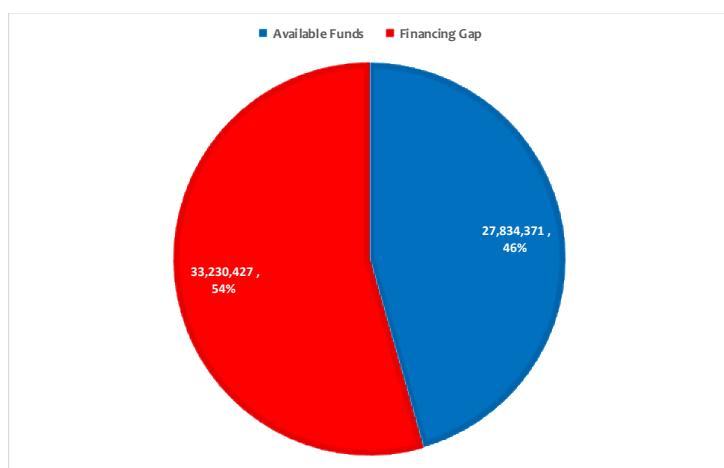
Graph 11 UN Agencies- planned vs delivered funds for UNDAF implementation



- The swift reaction of UN Agencies to re-programme some of the available resources and mobilize additional funds to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, under the ISEF, but funding gap remained.

The 2020 UNDAF progress report stated that “during 2020 the UN demonstrated a high capacity to work closely together in an integrated fashion to respond to crisis through the Integrated Socio-Economic Framework (ISEF) and through support to government vaccination distribution planning. Thus, implementation of the priority measures under the ISEF envisaged a total of USD 61,419,798, with available 28,204,371 and funding gap of 33,215,427.

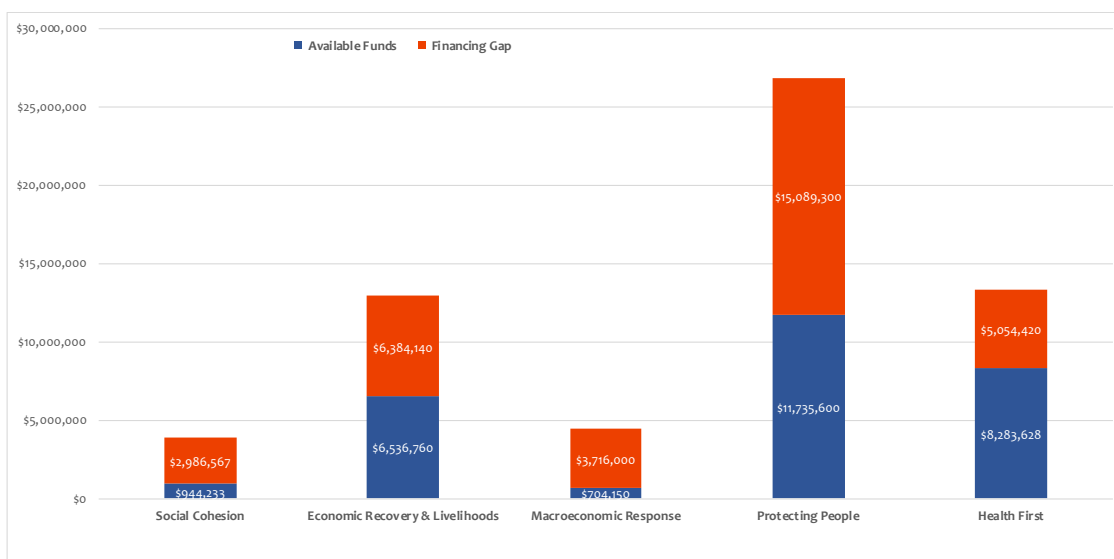
Graph 12 ISEF Available funds and funding gap



Source: UN RCO data

Programmatically, the largest part of the budget has been planned for activities under the Protecting people (app 27 mil USD) followed by the Health first (app 13,3 mil USD) and Economic recovery and livelihoods (app 12.9 mil USD).

Graph 13 Available funding and gaps for ISEF priority areas



The ISEF budget analysis by UN Agencies shows similarities to UNDAF budgeting. The financial figures for three agencies, UNDP with the highest budgeted amount, WFP and FAO, displayed significant financing gaps. The UNDAF 2016-2022 budget analysis shows that these Agencies, despite substantial contribution to the overall delivery under UNDAF, have been the "main reason" for the discrepancy between planned and mobilized/delivered resources.

Graph 14 ISEF planned vs available funds, UN Agencies



The extent to which UNDAF facilitated the identification of and access to new financing flows at scale for national partners could not be verified or confirmed. Partnerships between UN Agencies and international development organizations/ donors have been satisfactory-to-efficient¹⁹⁵. Some UN Agencies have been highly effective in mobilization of (extra budgetary) funds and resources, even exceeding plans. Clearly articulated priorities of the Government of Tajikistan in the early stage of UNDAF, flexibility and responsiveness of UN Agencies and strategic partnerships (with the GoT¹⁹⁶ and international donors¹⁹⁷) have been some of the most important factors that have influenced the mobilization of resources.

UN Agencies have benefited from “non-traditional” development partners the funding from Russian Federation has emerged as one of the main sources for mobilization¹⁹⁸.

To continue implementation of activities under the ISEF, UN Agencies have to ensure agile and well-planned resource mobilization approach. The recent UN analysis indicated that the world was already falling behind in

¹⁹⁵ The FET could not identify any means to measure objectively, on the basis of solid evidence, documentation or analysis (including triangulation), whether UNCT contributed to the identification of and access to new financing flows at scale for national partners. Consequently, the only sources of information for assessing efficiency gains were the UN officials and staff members and representatives of non-UN organizations who were interviewed in depth.

¹⁹⁶ KII notes GoA

¹⁹⁷ KII notes DP_01, DP_02

¹⁹⁸ KII notes UN_01, UN_02, UN_04

efforts to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and take climate action. The pre-crisis data¹⁹⁹ showed that one in five countries – representing billions of people – were likely to see average income per person stagnate or decline in 2020. Many more will likely struggle as the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic hit and test countries' resilience.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has called for a large-scale, coordinated and comprehensive multilateral response amounting to at least 10% of global GDP and launched a USD\$2 billion global humanitarian response plan for the most vulnerable countries. This could be an additional funding opportunity for UN Agencies in Tajikistan. Also, exploring partnerships with private sector for funding the post -COVID recovery remains priority.

Effi 6. UNDAF has in general contributed to greater clarity and transparency of results achieved and resources used; however, UN Agencies and national partners have been less effective in communicating achievements under UNDAF

The feedback received from several key informants consulted during the evaluation revealed a limited sense of mutual accountability between the Government and the UN Agencies for the achievement of UNDAF results. However, these were joint responsibilities, at least at levels of outcomes. Still, the primary and secondary evidence indicate that the UN Agencies, the Government and other stakeholders did not work in partnership to tackle development priorities and challenges. Their collaboration has not been made more strategic by UNDAF and its mutually agreed results. The selection and choice of projects and programmes also illustrate this: in many instances, new initiatives were dictated by the opportunities (emerging needs, new funding sources) rather than by a genuine contribution to UNDAF outcomes²⁰⁰.

Effi7. UNDAF did not include a sound risk management and mitigation strategy. The actual management/ mitigation of risks was at the level of projects and programs

Critical to the achievement of results is sufficient identification of assumptions and risks and their management or mitigation. Operational risk analysis is adequately supported corporately within UN agencies by their specific risk management system. Still, UNDAF did not indicate any risk analysis in its design, apart from a list of risks and assumptions included in the Results Matrix. This list is incomplete, missing some critical and impactful risks. The Results Matrix did not prioritize risks based on the degree of probability and possible impact. Also, the explicit risk mitigation/ management strategy for UNDAF was not established, nor put in place during the implementation, even when it became clear that some risks have occurred.

There are examples of other risks developed during UNDAF implementation period in the area of justice, human rights, public administration, decentralization, health sector, education, environment management, etc. The evaluation identified numerous examples of UN management intervention for overcoming the effects of risks, barriers and constraints. For example, joint efforts to address implications of the COVID-19 through the Integrated Socio-Economic Framework (ISEF); enhanced policy dialogue with underperforming partners; intensified negotiations on sensitive issues (e.g. in the gender mainstreaming or prevention of domestic violence, for example); development of assistance planning instruments to ensure mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues (e.g. migration, gender); reorienting the focus of intervention towards areas which are not dependent on particular reforms (e.g. management of natural protected areas, strategic environmental assessment, etc). Still, the lack of a coherent risks mitigation strategy to address the risks left outcome-level interventions in a reactive position, with possibilities to compromise efficiency.

¹⁹⁹ The 2020 Financing for Sustainable Development Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development https://developmentfinance.un.org/sites/developmentfinance.un.org/files/FSDR_2020.pdf

²⁰⁰ Formally, each project/ new initiative should have link to the respective UNDAF Outcomes. UN Agencies and national partners agree on this. However, during implementation there are no references to UNDAF outcomes, or credible contribution claims between the result of the project and UNDAF outcomes

Risks have been, however, well managed at the level of UNDAF outputs- namely, specific projects or programmes that UN Agencies implemented or implementing. This lower-level approaches included risks assessments, risks logs, risks reporting and reviewing processes.

The Results Framework provided relatively weak analysis of assumptions²⁰¹: some of them are more pre-conditions as if not realized, those may put under a question the whole intervention; the best examples could be those related to commitment of the government and other stakeholders. There are also assumptions that need to be more specified to serve as a specific driver – a relatively independent supporting factor for the outputs to contribute to the outcomes and the latter - to the impacts. One of the examples for this statement could be “Adequate budget allocation for law and policy implementation”.

The lessons learned during the implementation of UNDAF 2016-2022 has been that UNCT in Tajikistan need to prepare a sound review of assumptions and risk analysis on all critical dimensions and propose appropriate mitigation measures, as essential part of the next programming cycle.

5.4 Sustainability

Key question 7: What was the level of sustainability of achievements under UNDAF?

The central idea of the UNDAF's assistance was to leave the legacy and improve the situation under UNDAF outcomes; thus, these efforts have been inevitably linked with the need to formulate and implement adequate actions to ensure sustainability of achievements at different levels. Within this context, the final evaluation team assessed the likelihood of continuation of the UNDAF positive results, reflecting on the longer-term effects on broader development process in Tajikistan²⁰².

Susi. UN Agencies have considered sustainability of results from the UNDAF design throughout implementation phases.

Design and implementation of UNDAF have been participatory, with strong involvement of national stakeholders in different capacities (as beneficiaries or participants in initiatives, partners during the implementation or involved in strategic steering of initiatives), creating sense of ownership. The UN stakeholders stated that “the demand to ensure sustainability of UNDAF results has been considered from the design stage”²⁰³.

More senior decision-makers have been better informed and aware of UNDAF (and initiatives of UN Agencies), expressing positive opinion concerning their UNDAF experience, from involvement during UNDAF formulation to implementation. National partners have been involved in the initiatives of UN Agencies²⁰⁴, as beneficiaries, implementers or members of the advisory or steering structures. This approach has been critical to ensuring awareness of the national stakeholders about achievements and results in their respective areas of work.

Still, national stakeholders (especially at operational level) often associate UN with (their partner) UN Agency and have limited insight in the broader (UNDAF) framework and activities and achievements of other UN Agencies in Tajikistan²⁰⁵.

²⁰¹ Assumptions are events or circumstances that are expected to hold true or occur during the lifecycle of UNDAF

²⁰² The strong correlation between impact and sustainability is evident since the explanatory variables are often the same in explaining the impact and (or) sustainability. Sustainability is an ex-post measure, thus, ideally, measuring impact and sustainability in the context of UNDAF requires a time-period between two to five years after the completion of its cycle. However, this final evaluation adopted the approach to anticipating sustainability and forecast possible impact. The final evaluation has analyzed if the beneficiaries could continue to work without external intervention that has been available and provided within the scope of UNDAF implementation.

²⁰³ This has been a common opinion of the national partners and also the staff from UN Agencies

²⁰⁴ KII notes with the national partners

²⁰⁵ KII notes with the national partners

Sus2. UN Agencies have been steadily addressing capacity needs of individuals to enable access to services (demand side) and enhance the quality of these services (supply side). The sustainability of capacities developed at individual level is conditioned with a high likelihood that these capacities will remain available and will continue to be demanded upon the completion UNDAF cycle.

During the implementation of UNDAF, building the capacities and removing obstacles affecting the lives of the end beneficiaries have been in the core focus. A particular attention has been on the capacities to deliver services for socially excluded and marginalized groups. UN Agencies have been effective in providing tailor-made capacity development assistance, balancing between strategic priorities and demands in line with mandates of partners organizations²⁰⁶. The FET finds positive evidences of capacity development for public employees or employees in charge of delivery of services under all outcomes²⁰⁷. Some of the examples could be support to civil registry services to respond to the population's needs both through developing capacity among stakeholders and employees to implement the electronic system of Civil Registration (in all 68 civil registration offices across the country) and functioning of pilot One Stop Shop Civil Registration Offices. UN in Tajikistan advocated to include equitable access to justice and proceed with implementation of the rule of law reform priorities, developing capacities on several levels, including employees from state institutions (Judges, Bailiffs, ZAGS (civil registry), jamoats (local self-governance), public notaries, and the Ombudsman's Office (using formal trainings, study tours, functional reviews and technical assistance).

UN assisted advancing capacity development programs that offer quality education and developmental opportunities for children in Tajikistan, equipping them with the necessary skills and competencies to unlock their potential and help them thrive in life. UN assisted educational institutions to improve the quality of education by strengthening pre-service and in-service training of educators to equip them with the competencies needed to engage students in active learning and learner-centred teaching in an inclusive educational environment. This is helping to address the educational needs of various children, including boys and girls with disabilities in mainstream schools. Also, part of the efforts to improve the quality of preschool education included development of teachers' capacities, including teaching and learning materials, for children with intellectual, physical, visual and hearing/speech impairments, and children with disabilities from the spectrum of autism. Also, technical skills of employees in the network of social welfare and child care institutions and social service providers have been addressed with objective to provide quality social welfare and child care services.

Support to the professionals from the public health system has been provided with the focus on different aspects of and services for early childhood development and modern practices in research and prevention of non-communicable diseases. Also, important (and to large extent innovative) capacity development activities were designed and delivered within the scope of creating professional cadre to provide social services for migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons.

The specialized programs to develop and operationalize a comprehensive Integrated border management system in Tajikistan has been designed and implemented including the use and maintenance of the specialised equipment for the border agencies' staff. In connection with this, capacities of civil society representatives have been addressed to improve the identification, assistance and referral of vulnerable migrants (including potential victims of trafficking in human beings).

UNDAF provided examples of capacity development for institutions dealing with prevention of Gender-based violence, and addressed capacity challenges of young people and other groups at risk to become more active in the society. Some examples could be economic development and business capacity strengthening, social

²⁰⁶ The expectation has been that the end-beneficiaries, especially from the most vulnerable groups, would have better opportunities and increased abilities to actively participate in mainstream society, through access and quality of social services (health, education, and social protection) and social inclusion measures, greater economic and employment opportunities access to justice, participation and influence on different policy and decision-making processes and active participation in development processes.

²⁰⁷ This was documented to some extent in UNDAF progress reports and with more details in UN Agency progress reports

integration and participation and greater involvement and empowerment of the civil society (example CSO advocacy for Spotlight approval, CSO themselves developed and with UN support implemented 16 Days activities, etc.).

Sus3. UN Agencies were assisting national partner institutions to enhance operational efficiency, improve (internal) organisations and procedures, and modernize processes. The assistance at institutional level responded to demands to reform the existing and introduce new (demanded) services

The evaluation analyzed the results achieved by UN Agencies in the context of improved performance of the institutions in Tajikistan²⁰⁸, including sustainability of these results. The limited time for this evaluation and lack of the baseline data on organizational performance before the assistance of the UN Agencies were the main limiting factors. Therefore, the analysis was based on data collected through interviews with these organizations, their partners and beneficiaries, further supporting these findings through documented results of UN assistance. These primary and secondary data sources, together with factor-based analysis, served to determine the effectiveness of UN assistance in achieving the organizational strategic objectives and improving delivery of services (some examples could be single window for civil registration, Legal Aid services, business incubators to support start-ups, and other)

The examples of contribution of UN Agencies to organizational development and reinforcement of capacities of national institutions are numerous²⁰⁹, under all outcomes. However, for the purpose of providing solid findings and evidences, the FET has identified some of the examples, while more details are provided in the different parts of this report, with more detailed overview of activities and results that UN Agencies achieved during UNDAF implementation.

Institutions with the education system in Tajikistan have been capacitated to deliver core services in line with the inclusive education policies, mainly targeting vulnerable children. UN, perceived as an advocate of inclusive education, has been leading to achieve maximum participation in the educational process. In Tajikistan, UN is supporting efforts to make all schools truly inclusive and child-focused, addressing the inability of some schools to include children with disabilities or from minority groups. The focus has been on the entire education systems, to improve (and where necessary, transform), education policies, provision, inclusion, and quality. Building on its strong and trusted relationships with governments, UN was working on to strengthen evidence-based policy and planning for a more equitable and quality education system. UN was leading support to enhance the capacity of educators to shift to learner-centred pedagogy across the country. These efforts included support to educational institutions to improve the quality of education by strengthening pre-service and in-service training of educators to equip them with the competencies needed to engage students in active learning and learner-centred teaching in an inclusive educational environment²¹⁰. This is helping to address the educational needs of various children, including boys and girls with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Capacities of the national institutions within the disaster management system have been enforced, to timely react and reduce risks of disasters and also design and implement sound environmental policies. For example, the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Tajikistan was established as part of the State Commission for Emergency Situations of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Platform serves a consultative and advisory body for coordination of activities of government entities and international organizations working on disaster risk management in Tajikistan. The capacity building of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is supported by UN in Tajikistan²¹¹

²⁰⁸ More details have been provided under the effectiveness part of this report

²⁰⁹ Reference could be to the Effectiveness part of this report

²¹⁰ Ref to the evaluation of UNICEF Country Programme and also interviews with the key stakeholders

²¹¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/tajikistan/national-platform-disaster-risk-reduction-tajikistan>

UN provided policy support to the Government to enhance the business environment and advance SDGs, focusing on export promotion, private sector development, and digital economy (with consideration of COVID-19 context). The results at the institutional level also included organizational development of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs), as UN strived to increase their knowledge, skills, marketing and exporting capacities. UN expanded innovative partnerships to deliver hands-on assistance to the most vulnerable groups and improve access to entrepreneurs to business counselling and financing.

UN has been active in strengthening governance institutions in Tajikistan, from the public administration²¹² and justice system²¹³. Overall, UNCT has been active in developing capacities of these institutions to plan strategically and develop policies and strategies, assisting in different stages of policy cycle. The stakeholders recognized “highly valuable was UN assistance to increase understanding and mainstreaming of gender policies in the work of these institutions”²¹⁴. Important contribution of the UN Agencies has been to local governance institutions in the country, specifically focusing on the institutions closest to citizens to become pro-active and inter-connected with increased capacity to facilitate citizens participation and deliver improved services. UN was working to strengthen leadership mechanism and improve organisation, while also providing them with the tools “to engage the community, involve women, include the most vulnerable, make joint decisions, and carry out their ideas”²¹⁵. Sustainability of the accountability and participation mechanisms is likely to be ensured through more active participation of citizens in policymaking, budget formulation, and allocation of resources for strategic plans and strategic priorities. Furthermore, UN was supporting local authorities to implement community-based approach for reduction of vulnerabilities and enhance the resilience of population, particularly from rural areas²¹⁶.

UN has been supporting the Government to improve nutrition, water, sanitation and health standards in schools, and strengthen the institutional and management framework for the delivery of nutritious meals in schools in Tajikistan. UN was advocating for healthy diets and supporting development of technical capacities for food preparation (e.g., to grow its own gardens and establish their own bakeries and canteens).

The national partners have reported the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions that benefited from support provided within the UNDAF has increased; “support from UN Agencies has been and will remain critically important in the future period for further improvement of performance and functioning of the institutions in Tajikistan”²¹⁷.

In terms of sustainability of GEEW results, UN contributed to bringing explicit reference to gender statistics in Statistics Strategy. Further, the focus on interagency cooperation to establish the system of gender-sensitive indicators for conducting monitoring and assessment of NDS and SDG and adaptation of global indicators on the national level for measuring SDG’s progress makes gender considerations more sustainable in collecting, analysing and reporting on data. Other examples contributing to sustainability in the gender dimension include UN efforts to facilitate harmonization of administrative data on VAWG and suggestions for amendments of the domestic violence legislation.

²¹² UN has been continuously providing support to development of operational and technical capacities of ministries and governmental agencies- ref to UNDAF progress reports

²¹³ This was done through improvement of capacities of institutions within the legal aid system in Tajikistan, Ombudsman- Human Rights Defender Office, and other justice system organizations. Assistance has been in more specific areas, such as for example, to prevent violence, abuse and neglect of children and respond to violations of children’s rights.

²¹⁴ KII national partners

²¹⁵ Reports received from UN Agencies- documents prepared for the FE mission

²¹⁶ This violent extremism has been approached comprehensively and included both, religiously-motivated extremism and far-right nationalist extremism that may lead to violence and terrorism, more details available at UNDAF Annual Results Reports.

²¹⁷ KII notes

5.5 Impact

Key question 8: Has the UNCT during implementation of UNDAF contributed to an enabling environment including mechanisms for continuous improvements under outcomes/ areas of intervention in Tajikistan?

Imp1. UN Agencies assisted to enhance policy processes in Tajikistan, through support to identify priorities and define appropriate measures²¹⁸. These efforts have been important and improvements evident; still, capacity gaps remained, particularly related to horizontal and vertical policy coordination

The national partners stated that UN Agencies have provided "valuable inputs and technical support to bring policy decision forward and initiate the policy development process", highlighting also the importance of human rights-based approach²¹⁹ in policy making. Namely, UN Agencies have re-emphasized the importance to follow human rights-based approach, international norms and standards in identifying needs and designing policies in UNDAF-specific sectors (provided in the following paragraphs under his heading).

The partners recognized benefits from the UN Agency technical assistance to develop various needs-based interventions aligned with international norms and standards and commitments of the country. Some examples of UNCT support to planning and development of national policies could be technical and financial assistance and advocacy on the system of free legal aid that resulted in the government's adoption of a new Law on Legal Aid. The new Law included a budgetary commitment to finance 20 percent of the system from the state budget.

In the context of development planning, UN provided technical assistance and worked closely with the Government on the development and launch of the Mid-term Development Programme (MTDP) 2021-2025 "to ensure mainstreaming of SDGs, inclusion of export promotion, national investment planning, productive employment development, private sector development, food security and digitalization"²²⁰.

Preparation of the Country Gender Equality Brief has been a joint UN exercise to map the legislation, policies and sex-disaggregated data on GEWE in Tajikistan. In line with SDGs 2030 Agenda and principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB), the Country Gender Equality Brief (CGEB) attempts to summarise different, often multiplied, challenges and discriminations of women from marginalized or vulnerable communities in Tajikistan. The CGEB also included the assessment of Tajikistan's progress in achieving GEWE. UN has provided technical assistance and advocacy for the significant step of the government's adoption in February 2020 of the National Plan of Action for ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities²²¹. In this area, UN assisted to advance national policy and legal frameworks including Health Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, National Tobacco Control Law, National HIV Program 2020, National Immunization Program 2020 and other strategies and multisectoral action plans

UN also assisted to reinforce environmental protection and disaster risk reduction through the preparation and implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2019²²²-2030, while the Law on Drinking water amended to ensure more adequate water supply within the country²²². Also, the country is working to put in

²¹⁸ The evaluation analysed the extent of UNCT's contribution to improved policy making and implementation under UNDAF outcomes and focus areas of intervention, analysis also if these improvements would remain in place after the completion of the UNDAF cycle. The final evaluation has used the policy cycle model for this analysis, focusing on its interlinked elements: policy feasibility and decision, policy research and development together with the decision on instruments, implementation, monitoring and lessons learned to feed the next cycle.

²¹⁹ KII notes GOV

²²⁰ UNDAF Annual Report 2020

²²¹ UNDAF Annual Report 2020

²²² UNDAF Annual Report 2017/ 2018

place a system for environmental data collection; however, it remains challenging to ensure adequate national capacities to implement and manage policy making process without external support.

However, the challenges for implementation of the policies have been related to operationalize, translate policies into actions, connect adequately with public funds and ultimately monitor and report on the progress. The adoption of the specific SDG targets for Tajikistan, including country specific indicators and targets and regular reporting mechanisms, have been recognized as a possible positive support to policy processes, including policy coordination.

Imp2. The recent political developments, effects of COVID19 pandemic on the overall socio-economic situation in Tajikistan, together with challenges that the reform of public institutions could bring, are some of the main external factors to affect sustainability of results

The stakeholders have identified the obstacles and resistance to implement reforms together with weak horizontal coordination of policies and weak institutional and individual capacities of different tiers of governance structures in Tajikistan, as the main factors that could affect sustainability of results.

Public institutions in Tajikistan embarked on reform process; still, the turnover of the skilled employees mainly from the technical positions in these institutions, inadequate strategic guidance, lack of skilled staff and financial resources, heavy bureaucracy, limited autonomy and slow pace of reforms have been the main obstacles to fully integrate and sustain results, especially for public system institutions.

6 Conclusions and lessons learned

The opening part of this chapter includes a brief overview of the findings that have been generated during the evaluation.

- Overall, UN Agencies in Tajikistan through UNDAF 2016-2022 addressed specific developmental needs jointly identified with the national partners.

UNDAF implementation has been flexible and responsive to the emerging priorities and challenges of the country during the period entire implementation. Also, the principle to "leave no-one behind" has been mainstreamed, ensuring that needs of different groups in Tajikistan have been in focus throughout UNDAF implementation.

- UN Agencies have been effective in delivering results and contributing to progress under all UNDAF 2016-2022 outcomes.

UN Agencies demonstrated its neutrality, impartiality, technical expertise and reputation in facilitating Tajikistan's progress in critical reform areas (linked to SDGs). Also, factors such as active dialogue with the GoT, quick decision-making procedures, a strong partnership between the UN Agencies and national stakeholders and communication with international development partners have contributed to the effectiveness.

UN Agencies in Tajikistan have benefited from joint initiatives, addressing complex (sectoral) challenges and problems. Collective efforts of the UN Agencies in Tajikistan and the UN Resident Coordinator Office have been critical factors that contributed to a more coordinated approach, donor coordination and aid effectiveness, in the UNDAF priority sectors.

Many UN interventions were verifiably effective regarding the achievement of their planned outputs. UN agencies have well-developed systems to measure their progress towards agencies-specific outputs, but the approach to monitoring actual contribution towards achieving UNDAF outcomes has been inconsistent and underdeveloped mainly due to the flaws in planning.

- UNCT assisted in improving and strengthening policy processes in Tajikistan in all strategic areas and under all UNDAF outcomes. This support to policy development and strategic planning continued to be highly valuable to the Government of Tajikistan, starting from identifying priorities and defining appropriate measures. Still, policymaking and implementation, and particularly policy coordination remain areas for further improvements requiring additional technical assistance.

UN Agencies have been steadily addressing capacity needs for delivery of quality services, particularly for socially excluded and marginalized groups, using capacity development and transfer of knowledge (through direct interaction/ involvement of the key national stakeholders) to support SDG nationalization and operationalization in Tajikistan, being at the forefront of the SDG achievement process.

- UNCT has considered sustainability of results from the UNDAF design stage, working to ensure national ownership through the involvement of national stakeholders (mainly as beneficiaries, or participants in different activities). As a result of UN interventions, many national partners feel more confident to lead the development process. The UN system has the capacity to focus on complex, cross-sectoral policy advice functions and empower the state partners to deliver programmes.
- Although the development realities of Tajikistan and the needs of vulnerable groups require improved multi-sectoral partnerships, overlaps or missing links can result from inflexible interpretations of the mandates of UN agencies.

The rights and needs of the marginalized and people in vulnerable situations have been considered, and mainstreaming of human rights and following of no-one left behind principles have been ensured during the entire period of UNDAF implementation.

UN Agencies in Tajikistan used a twin-track approach to address gender equality and empowerment of women, placing focus on targeted work for greater gender equality under all strategic pillars and outcomes.

- UNDAF Tajikistan 2016-2022 has been implemented efficiently, following globally adopted procedures, adjusted to the specific context of Tajikistan. Still, strategic and operational structures were underperforming, affecting planning, coordination, cooperation and reporting under UNDAF

The financial resources for implementation of UNDAF have been optimistically planned; still, UN Agencies mobilized during the first three years and delivered to a large extent.

6.1 Conclusions

The analysis of collected information from primary and secondary sources served to formulate the following conclusions:

CONCLUSION 1. UNDAF 2016-2022 for Tajikistan has been relevant from the design throughout the entire period of its implementation, addressing development priorities and needs of the country and its citizens.

(based on findings under the Relevance - findings Rel1, Rel2, Rel3 and Rel4)

UNDAF remained relevant during the entire period of implementation (2016- 2022), and UN Agencies have been in general effective in conceptualising assistance aligned with the needs of the country and its citizens. The flexibility and responsiveness of UNCT to the emerging needs of the Government of Tajikistan, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Integrated Socioeconomic Response Framework additionally confirmed relevance of UNDAF, effectively contributing to the national development priorities.

The importance of UN programming through the next strategic planning cycle, especially to addressing adverse impact of COVID-19 in different sectors, remains high.

CONCLUSION 2. UN Agencies were effectively following their mandates, international norms and standards, while being flexible and reliable partners, highly accountable for progress under UNDAF outcomes.

(based on findings under the Relevance, especially Res1, and the Lnob,1, Lnob2, Lnob3 and Lnob4N and the Preliminary analysis under the Agenda 2030)

UN Agencies have been responsive, flexible, and adaptive, capable to establishing and strengthening partnerships with authorities, civil society and other (national and international) development actors. Long-term presence in Tajikistan and technical capacities of UN staff have been additional factors that contributed to the achievement of results and progress under outcomes.

UN Agencies with normative mandate have been effective in integrating (some of the) international norms and standards into Tajikistan's legislation, policies and development plans. Still, this remains an area for improvement.

CONCLUSION 3: The joint UN efforts to address adverse effects of the COVID-19 under the Integrated Socio-economic Response Framework (ISEF) have been timely and effectively implemented, setting the basis for post-pandemic development.

The ISEF for Tajikistan has been designed to respond to immediate needs and priorities. Still, the UN has been equally looking beyond immediate recovery towards longer-term development goals and the Agenda 2030, prioritizing five broad recovery areas- health systems, social protection, jobs, the economy (including the green economy), and overall resilience.

CONCLUSION 4. UNDAF provided an effective platform for establishing and strengthening cooperation and coordination between UN Agencies, the authorities and other development partners in Tajikistan

(based on findings under the- Effe2, Effe3 and Effe4 and the Own1 and Own 2)

UNCT has been supporting authorities in Tajikistan to strengthen coordination of development assistance to the country, also involving other development partners. The capacitated UN Resident Coordination Office and involvement of the Resident Coordinator has further enhanced coordination efforts and contributed to effectiveness of assistance delivered under UNDAF.

CONCLUSION 5: UN in Tajikistan have been effective in ensuring progress under all UNDAF outcomes; especially important have been results achieved under the ISEF, a joint UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, UN could benefit from synergies and more effective interactions between UN Agencies during planning and implementation of development initiatives, working also on genuinely integrated joint programming (as direct boost to the relevance and effectiveness of UN support.)

(based on findings under the Effectiveness, especially Effe 1-3 and the Lnob 1, Lnob2 and Own 1, Own2)

The interactions among UN Agencies have remained confined mainly to information sharing or eventually resolving issues. Day-to-day communication among the different UN Agencies has been more on the operational side (e.g., operational issues around “UN House” as shared office space). Collaboration between UN Agencies and various project implementation teams, such as exchange of experience, joint initiatives in the specific sectors, sharing lessons learned, and information has been underutilized, although being an important opportunity to development initiatives.

UN Agencies in Tajikistan have experience with preparation and implementation of UN Joint Projects and Programs, achieving important results but with varying degree of efficiency. There are opportunities for UNCT to utilize more substantively and strategically the joint interventions to address complex and interlined challenges with strong reference to the national SDG targets.

CONCLUSION 6: Strengthened UNDAF Steering Committee could enhance synergies between development interventions, enable strategic positioning and provide guidance to UNCT on priorities, including changes and challenges, for the future involvement.

(based on findings under the Efficiency, especially Effi1 and Effi2)

UNDAF Steering Committee is the essential mechanism to involve high-level national partners, provide strategic guidance and coordinate development interventions during the entire period of UNDAF implementation. The SC remains an effective forum for greater involvement of the high-level national partners to genuinely drive development efforts, ensuring at the same time strong national leadership, promoting partnership and boosting ownership.

CONCLUSION 7: UN Agencies have not been accurate in planning and preparing the initial UNDAF budget, especially under some UNDAF outcomes, and the need remains to improve planning and budgeting practice.

UN Agencies mobilized and delivered more than 250 mil USD during UNDAF implementation (2016-2020). Implementation of the activities to address effects of the COVID-19 under the Integrated Socio-economic Response Framework has increased delivery in the last year of UNDAF implementation. Despite this boost to mobilization and delivery of resources, UN Agencies remained significantly below initially planned budget. These figures showed generally weak planning and budgeting practices, that are not evidence and analysis based.

(based on findings under the Efficiency, especially Effi4)

CONCLUSION 8. Implementation of priority interventions and achievements of UN Agencies contributed to progress that Tajikistan recorded under UNDAF 2016- 2022 outcomes

(based on findings under the Effectiveness- especially Effe1 and the Impact, especially I2, I3 and I4)

Support from UNCT to authorities and other stakeholders in Tajikistan was critical in many sectors, bringing concrete, visible results at individual, institutional and systemic level and ensuring progress towards outcomes²²³. UN is regarded as an independent, fair and impartial partner, making also noteworthy contribution to confidence-building of the national partners for planning and implementing development interventions. Important results have been also achieved for the population, such as for example school feeding program. UN Agencies have been an important partner in providing assistance to development of national capacities under all UNDAF outcomes; however, the absence of systemic approach to measure capacity development effects and changes has been missing.

Specific aspects of the future support would depend on substantive problem analysis and priority setting, continuation of assistance will be required in the UNDAF priority areas, considering to further enhance sustainability prospects and “institutionalize” the progress in these areas.

CONCLUSION 9. Strong sense of national ownership over the achievements under UNDAF 2016- 2022 has been created through effective partnerships and active involvement of the national stakeholders in design and implementation of interventions of UN Agencies. Sustainability of these achievements (under UNDAF 2016- 2022) is expected, particularly at the systemic, policy, and also at institutional levels

(based on findings under the Impact, especially I1, I2, I3, I4 and I5 and the Effectiveness- Effe1)

UNDAF has been implemented through different initiatives of UN Agencies, prepared and implemented in cooperation with national authorities and key stakeholders. Their involvement in the planning processes and specific steering and management arrangements during implementation of these initiatives (“output level”) have been satisfactory. These factors have contributed to increased sense of ownership and participation.

Certain external factors pose risks on sustainability of results. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the overall socio-economic and political situation in Tajikistan could affect results achieved thus far. Security situation within the region and protracted conflict in Afghanistan could be some of the main external risks.

The readiness and commitment of the Government to implement reforms is declared, but the implementation is at slower pace. This situation could be further affected by insufficient capacities within public institutions; weak coordination and limited funds for implementation of policies and strategies. Also, depopulation of certain regions in the country and out-of-the country migrations could have high impact on the future of Tajikistan.

CONCLUSION 10. UN Agencies could benefit from a sound system to report and communicate results to the national stakeholders and public at large, presenting also accumulated effects and contribution to UNDAF 2016- 2022 outcomes.

(based on findings under the Efficiency, especially Effi1-7, the Relevance -Rel1, Rel2 and Rel4 and Lnob2 and Lnob3)

UNDAF included a Results Framework (RF), as a basis to reflect on the engagement on UN Agencies and measure performance under specific outcomes. Although the RF included a set of indicators, these indicators only moderately captured UN contribution to progress under outcomes, also failing to reflect and measure cumulative effects of different initiatives under the same outcomes.

UNDAF annual reporting practice has improved, and included results-oriented focus revealing critical links between UN Agencies interventions and achieved progress under outcomes.

CONCLUSION 11. Twin-track approach under UNDAF 2016- 2022 has contributed to mainstream gender more effectively, and design and implement different actions for empower of women in Tajikistan. Coordination

²²³ More details are provided in the Annex 1 and Annex 2 to this report

and cooperation among the main development partners in Tajikistan through the Gender Thematic Group additionally contributed to effective gender mainstreaming and achievement of results.

(based on findings under the Lnob1 - the Relevance, especially Rel2 and Rel 3 and the Effectiveness, especially Effe1)

Following twin-track approach, UNCT in Tajikistan contributed to overall satisfactory gender mainstreaming within UNDAF 2016- 2022. In addition to one gender-specific outcome, awareness of gender equality and actions to mainstream gender have been in general present under other outcomes. UN Agencies have also included gender equality in their country programs. Still, some of the weaknesses in the current UNDAF have been insufficiently gender-sensitive indicators, reflecting on monitoring and reporting practice. Also, gender sensitive programming has been in general underutilized.

6.2 Lessons learned

The following lessons have been generated during the implementation of UNDAF 2016- 2022 in Tajikistan

- UNDAF can be a powerful instrument to lead collective and coordinated efforts of UN agencies in supporting achievement of national development priorities, initiating and following on reformers. Strategic focus and linking every intervention to the SDGs and national priorities, with clearly set targets view of sustainability remain crucial factors to success.

Large multi-annual interventions proved to be highly effective in delivering results; these interventions set the stage for more comprehensive strategic and programming approach, commitment of the counterparts that lead to substantial changes and progress under the outcomes. UN Agencies in Tajikistan have been successful in delivering results within smaller scale interventions. Therefore, development gains could be ensured through balancing between short term interventions and more strategic initiatives that are addressing root causes of inequality.

- Providing focused expertise and policy advice on specific reform priorities under the NDS2030, UN Agencies in Tajikistan added value and contributed to reform efforts and results in the delivery of public services. The actual sustainability of these results at the level of public institutions and the overall system of public administration would depend on the government's capacity to implement new assignments and functions and benefit from gained knowledge. Equally important remains to enhance the ability and commitment of authorities to strengthen transparency and ensure stakeholders' participation (in the policy making and decisions).

UN Agencies in Tajikistan provided an agile response during the COVID19 pandemic, preparing and implementing a comprehensive Integrated Socioeconomic Response Framework (ISEF). The document is anchored to the Prime Minister's Action Plan to combat the spread of Covid-19 and is linked to the "Tajikistan Covid-19 Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP)", also prepared with the UN support, and the Ministry of Economic Development & Trade (MEDT's) economic plan. ISEF Tajikistan is structured into five strategic pillars that are underpinned by "building back better" and help achieve SDGs.

The focus has been to ensure that the essential health services available to those in need and strengthen health systems, and provide social protection, basic services and food security. It also included promotion of social cohesion and community actions for recovery, while working on economic recovery and multilateral and regional response for inclusive development and green economy.

UN's support through the ISEF will become more relevant if assessed and adjusted at the mid-point of implementation. This would help to timely respond to changes in the overall socio-economic environment, revisit priorities and adjust its benchmarks.

- Tajikistan has limited capacities within the public service that can deliver Government reforms, its programs and policies. Therefore, the importance of UN Agencies support to the national partners cannot be overstated, adding value providing focused expertise and policy advice, and, when needed, pilot innovations and demonstrate effective solutions through interventions on the ground. One of the examples could be the joint initiative of the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations for the establishment of the Integrated Socioeconomic Response Framework to address adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. This approach has ensured that priorities have been jointly identified and timely addressed.
- The FE learned that there had been a very wide, transparent and participatory process of formulation of the logic of the UNDAF, and, also, that during this process the variety of proposals by the participants needed a steering and narrowing down the number of offered Outcomes and indicators. While this approach is appropriate to keep the scope of UNDAF and its matrix readable and perceivable by the partners, it would have been reasonable to further develop the matrix to include the level of Outputs, i.e., deliverables under the full or almost full control of the agencies, as also a basis for more realistic formulation and planning of Outcomes. The level of Outputs would allow reflecting on two important things for an accomplished and balanced logic: i) the collective Outputs, which would become the basis for formulation of agencies' country programmes' (for those undertaking country programming after the approval of UNDAF) theories of change and results matrices, and ii) relevant indicators and assumptions, which could have served both for the agencies' country programmes and for the monitoring, risk management, reporting and evaluation by the UNCT.

Identifying To identify any “combined” or “similar” Outputs among those planned by the agencies, which would serve as a path for a possible joint (whether ad-hoc or planned) delivery.

- The “twinning-like” projects, where the competent UN institutions, agencies and experts make available relevant and proven experience and help with the local institutions policy-legal and institutional framework have notable system-building effects (Strengthening the civil registration system in Tajikistan, for example). Bringing competent national experts from the country or diaspora additionally contributed to greater effectiveness of the assistance and progress under outcomes, also advancing capacities within the country in the specific areas of UNDAF.
- Positive aspects of UNDAF implementation have been responsiveness to the priorities and needs of the country and the authorities. However, the pressure from authorities to deliver on ad-hoc requests, pushes UN Agencies to be reactive (rather than proactive) and deliver actions essentially outside of the agreed scope of services. Thus, assistance delivered by UN Agencies should be based on partnerships and agreed plans, with clear objectives in sight.
- Involving and contributing to a better coordination between the state counterparts engaged in the same sector or horizontal area proves to be beneficial for improved commitments, effectiveness and sustainability (e.g., interventions in early childhood development and education; support to the health sector). However, focusing on systematic development and using new solutions proved to have catalytic effects on the overall improvements within respective sectors. For example, focusing on systemic developments for competitiveness, investments and economic development (e-governance, innovative solutions) could contribute to a new quality shift and delivery of improved services

7 Recommendations

The analysis of primary and secondary data served to define findings (and also concerns and challenges during UNDAF implementation) serving for conclusions. Considering these inputs, recommendations have been defined, as a framework for further consideration and follow up to UNCT/ UN Agencies and national stakeholders in Tajikistan.

The approach for the formulation of the recommendations that the FE followed (through the discussion with the national stakeholders and UN Agencies) has been instrumental in generating a greater sense of ownership while setting the ground for the next planning cycle.

The final evaluation team has formulated the following main recommendations, organized in the priority order:

<p>Recommendation 1: (for: UNCT in Tajikistan; Government of Tajikistan and the main governance actors CSOs in Tajikistan</p>	<p>UNCT should remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the citizens and priorities defined in the national strategic documents in Tajikistan and continue with the activities and the efforts under the ISEF strategic areas.</p> <p>UN should continue supporting the country's short-term priorities in the health sector (such as for example extensive vaccination campaigns). Simultaneously, UN should support national authorities to preserve the health system's capacity to provide non-COVID-19 related services and expand the reach and quality of services to address the needs of most vulnerable groups. In the longer term, the assistance from the UN should support structural reforms to enhance health sector resilience to disasters, also working on health system inclusion.</p> <p>UN should continue assistance to national partners to expand social protection services by scaling up specific actions for groups at risk- some examples could be enhancing the resilience of the education system to the crisis and improving the education system's ability for inclusion, especially of vulnerable groups and children with disabilities.</p> <p>Addressing issues related to migrations (including challenges for returnees and reintegration when appropriate) through a holistic approach and coordinated efforts of different sectors (governance and human rights, social services and inclusion, security and other) need to be considered.</p> <p>Also, the FET recommends that the UN continue and expand support to enhance mechanisms and practices to prevent domestic, gender-based violence and other forms of violence and assist with establishing the system to provide the necessary support to survivors of violence.</p> <p>The FET recommends that the UN focus on economic recovery with a priority on "green" recovery to build environmental health and resilience in Tajikistan's society and economy. A possible intervention area could be to support GoT and other stakeholders to define future economic recovery programs focusing on ensuring progress towards protecting the environment and tackling climate change and the objectives set in Agenda 2030. UN should strive to integrate nature-based solutions and circular economy principles, green financing, and green conditionalities during the planning and implementation of these activities.</p> <p>Considering already existing, significant regional development differences, with even more negative perspectives, UN Agencies together with the Government of Tajikistan and other stakeholders, should explore options for</p>
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	<p>SDG-focused and area-based development programming to achieve local tangible results and combat the existing challenges. UN Agencies should analyze regional vulnerabilities, as identified in the Vulnerability Atlas, to prioritize areas for intervention.</p> <p>The FET recommends that the UN supports government and other stakeholders to identify the priority sectors for investments and improvements-- including health, social protection, IT infrastructure for education and the economy, and green incentive programs encouraging the most environmentally responsible transformation.</p> <p>Tajikistan needs to be very selective for its financial support measures and be very efficient in targeting those most in need. The UN should support the GoT to design a support scheme to protect the newly vulnerable population exposed to the risk of poverty resulting from COVID-19.</p> <p>UN should continue its support for improving good governance, including more flexible and responsive mechanisms and institutional coordination capacities. These results will contribute to a more integrated development process across government institutions.</p> <p>UN should work on strengthening policy capacities in all of the policy cycle stages (including policy planning, coordination, monitoring, reporting and evaluation) remains priority, and links with the NDS-2030, and SDGs should serve as the basis for policy planning. UNCT should work to ensure that policy implementation is based on sound gender sensitive costing, with predictable financing sources.</p> <p>In this context, the FET recommends exploring opportunities and advocate for strengthening the role of non-government actors and civil society. Some of the areas could be enhancing capacities of CSOs for policy-making processes and participation in the delivery of public services, enhancing capacities to competently engage in policy dialogue and strategic planning in the priority areas related to the NDS-2030 and SDGs.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of informed decision-making based on the availability of gender-disaggregated and locally representative data. UN should work with the national partners to ensure information on the most affected populations, including age groups, gender, or socio-economic or geographical distributions.</p> <p><i>(linked to Conclusions 1, 2, 3 and 4 and other Conclusions and lessons learned relevant)</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 2: (for UNCT in Tajikistan)</p>	<p>The FET recommends that UN Agencies in Tajikistan prioritize long-term interventions, clearly linked to SDGs and national priorities, with explicitly set results and focus on sustainability. The inclusion of vulnerable groups should be considered as a programming principle, linking them with comparative advantages of UN Agencies in Tajikistan.</p> <p>The FET recommends focusing on investment in human capital, that could make great use of the demographic dividend to overcome poverty, achieve priorities of the NDS-2030 and make a considerable contribution to SDGs accomplishment. Under the overarching concept of overcoming</p>

	<p>inequalities, prioritizing the elimination of regional discrepancies and multidimensional poverty and continuing social development capacities will boost this (expected) progress towards the SDGs. Other spheres for acceleration include the energy sector, gender equality and the youth as factors, which can have a multiplicative effect and maximally impact the accomplishment of various goals and objectives.</p> <p>These “accelerators” platforms provide solid foundations for new programming cycle and preparation of the UN Strategic Development Cooperation Framework. It should be complemented by the Common Country Assessment and prioritize root causes/barriers to progress towards SDGs and inclusion of vulnerable groups.</p> <p><i>(linked to Conclusions 1 and 2; other Conclusions and lessons learned relevant)</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 3: For</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Agencies in Tajikistan • Government of Tajikistan <p>Other partners (as required)</p>	<p>UN Agencies/ UNCT together with GoT should work to strengthen functioning of the UNDAF Joint Steering Committee and ensure its strategic guidance for UNDAF implementation, through regular meetings and involvement of senior level representatives.</p> <p>UNCT should strengthen the UNDAF Results Groups as the main mechanism for UNDAF implementation, involving UN senior level and technical staff. It is also important to ensure that national stakeholders from governing and non-governance structures take the role in the RGs. The FET recommends to have smaller number but more competent and involved members of the Working groups.</p> <p>The FET recommends to strengthen intensive joint planning through preparation of Annual/ Bi-annual Work Plans (WPs), setting the basis for holistic and integrated planning and programming.</p> <p><i>(linked to the Conclusion 4, Conclusion 7; other conclusions could be relevant)</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 4: (UNCT in Tajikistan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Tajikistan and the main governance actors- the Parliament of Tajikistan, judicial institutions and other independent and regulatory bodies <p>CSOs in Tajikistan</p>	<p>The FET recommends that UNCT intensify its normative work as one of UN comparative advantages and further strengthen gender mainstreaming across UNDAF outcomes.</p> <p>The FET recommends that UNCT enhances its support to the authorities in Tajikistan and other stakeholders to understand, grasp and implement (international) norms and standards, as required by international charters and agreements. It is particularly important to assist to integrate the norms and standards in public policies, laws, strategies and development plans, supporting also implementation.</p> <p>Part of these efforts should be to advance planning practice and mainstream gender equality and empowerment of women in all activities and initiatives across all UNDAF outcomes and focus areas. It is recommended to follow gender transformative approach in all interventions, include more elaborated gender-specific targets and gender disaggregated indicators in UNDAF.</p> <p><i>(linked to Conclusions 2 and 9 and other conclusions)</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 5: For:</p>	<p>The FET recommends that the UN Agencies explore and work on new partnerships and diversification of funding opportunities.</p> <p>The need for additional funding, especially in the post-COVID-19 recovery will increase. The FET recommends that UN Agencies explore other funding</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UN Agencies in Tajikistan 	<p>opportunities and work on involvement of private sector is funding and implementation of development initiatives.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UN Agencies in Tajikistan ● Government of Tajikistan ● Judiciary institutions ● Parliament of Tajikistan ● Regulatory and oversight independent bodies ● CSOs 	<p>The FET recommends that UNCT in partnership with the national stakeholders prepare clear and practical sustainability strategy under all outcomes and perform regular analysis of risks and assumptions</p> <p>The FET recommends to develop a sound approach to measure capacity development across all priority areas and assess impact of these enhanced capacities.</p> <p>At the current stage of development of systems, structures and capacities of the authorities within three branches of power, it is important to consider and provide a longer-term and needs-based capacity development assistance. Especially important remains to continue work on the development of capacity for policy making and implementation in Tajikistan.</p> <p>The role of the national stakeholders in the implementation of UNDAF could not be overstated- it is recommended to enhance and ensure genuine involvement of national partners in all activities, from planning to implementation of interventions within UNDAF.</p> <p>The FET recommends UNCT to expand its partnership with CSOs, to strengthen their capacities across main functional areas, while engaging them in policy-making processes and delivery of public services. Also, it is recommended to strengthen the watchdog role of the CSOs for competent monitoring of development processes, policies, and strategies thus competently involve in the implementation of the SDG related priorities.</p> <p><i>(linked to the Conclusion 2, Conclusion 7, also other conclusions could be relevant)</i></p>