



**UNITED NATIONS  
BHUTAN**

Leaving No One Behind



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# Evaluation Report

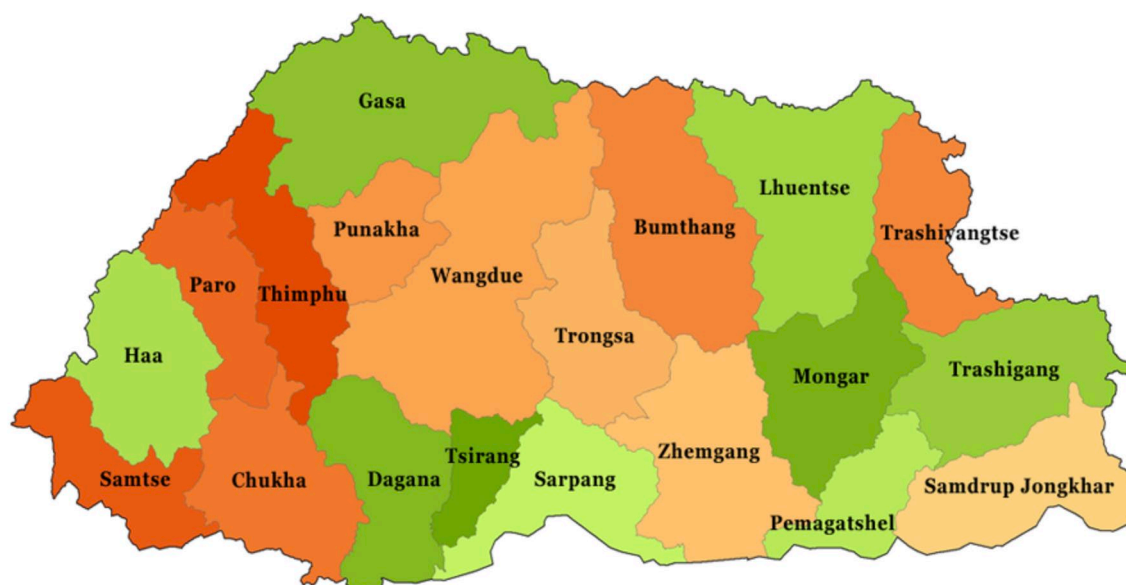
**United Nations Sustainable  
Development Partnership Framework  
(UNSDPF) 2019-2023**

June 2023

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<b>Key Information about the Evaluation</b>	
<b>Object of Evaluation</b>	<b>United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) for Bhutan 2019-2023</b>
<b>Type of Evaluation</b>	<b>Final Evaluation</b>
<b>Country</b>	<b>Kingdom of Bhutan</b>
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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFHS	Adolescent Friendly Health Services
AFP	UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes
ARR	Annual Results Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
BSDS	Bhutan Statistical Database System
BTI	Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index
BVS	Bhutan Vaccine System
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CICL	Children in Conflict with the Law
CICT	Case Investigation and Contact Tracing
CIMS	Crime Information Management System
CMT	Crisis Management Team
CPB	Country Programme Board
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DES	Department of Engineering Services
DET	Disability Equality Training
DEWA	Dashboard to Enhance Well Being for All
DPG	Development Partners' Group
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECP	Economic Contingency Plans
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FYP	Five Year Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GLOF	Glacial Lake Outburst Floods
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GNHC	Gross National Happiness Commission
GNI	Gross National Income
HACT	United Nations Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HDI	Human Development Index

IATT	Inter-Agency Task Teams
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
iCTG	Mobile Cardiotocography Devices
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	international Financial Institutions
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC-IG	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JAWP	Joint Annual Work Plans
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KW	Kilowatt
LDC	Least Developed Country
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Questioning
LMIC	Lower Middle-Income Country
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MPNDSR	Maternal, Perinatal and Neonatal Death Surveillance and Response
MSME	Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NCHM	National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology
NCWC	National Commission for Women and Children
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NFS	National School Feeding Programme
NKRA	National Key Results Areas
NLC	National Land Commission
NPRP	National Preparedness and Response Plan
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OG	Outcome Group
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMT	Operations Management Team
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PSEAH	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RC	Resident Coordinator
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation

RG	Results Group
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RMNCAH	Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health
RNR	Renewable Natural Resources
RSEIA	Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SERP	Socio-Economic Response Plan
SITAN	Situation Analysis
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UN OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UN Technology Bank	United Nations Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCG	UN Communications Group
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	UN Development System
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIC	United Nations Information Centres
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

UNSDPF	United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework for Bhutan
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VG	Vulnerable Group
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
Y-PEER	Youth Peer Education Network



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the independent final evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) for Bhutan 2019-2023 which was commissioned by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Bhutan in close partnership with the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and was conducted by a team of two independent evaluators. This report's main finding and recommendations are formulated to inform the preparation of the upcoming UNSDCF.

This evaluation's findings are organized in the following four sections: i) **Relevance** (the extent to which the UNSDPF has been relevant to the country's priorities and needs); ii) **Effectiveness** (whether the UNSDPF has contributed towards development results for the country), including an overview of the impact of the UN work in the country; iii) **Coherence** (whether the implementation of the UNSDPF has been coherent); iv) **Efficiency** (whether the delivery of UNSDPF results has been efficient); and, v) **Sustainability** (whether UNSDPF results are sustainable).

### Relevance

The UNSDPF has been effective in addressing national priorities and the country's needs, with a strong focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged people. With the overall goal of supporting “A just, harmonious and sustainable Bhutan where no one is left behind,” the UNSDPF has been fully aligned with the RGoB's 12th FYP. UNSDPF has also been aligned with the UN's programming principles - human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment; sustainability and resilience; and accountability. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the UNSDPF implementation, necessitating flexibility and adaptation. For all the challenges presented by the crisis, it has created an opportunity for the UN agencies to rally together in response as one body – a real embodiment of the “One UN” approach. UN's response was developed on the basis of extended research on the impacts of COVID-19 across a range of areas of direct interest to the UN. SERP was exemplary – well-formulated, action-oriented, costed, timely, evidence-based and well-coordinated by the UNRCO. The COVID-19 response was guided by the “leave no one behind” principle, focusing on the needs of vulnerable populations.

### Effectiveness

UNSDPF is an outcome-focused framework that aims to address the country's development needs and priorities. It is based on the Common Country Analysis (CCA) of 2018, which was prepared through consultations with the RGoB, development partners, civil society, academia, and the private sector. The UNSDPF includes a Theory of Change (TOC) and a results framework with four outcomes, 11 outputs, and corresponding indicators, baselines, and targets. While the UNSDPF's results framework is flexible and has been adapted to changes required by the evolving situation, particularly the emergency situation triggered by the pandemic, it needs to be more inclusive and involve more meaningful indicators that are directly related to the activities of the UN system.

The UN system has established a joint monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to assess its contributions to the Royal Government of Bhutan's 12th Five-Year Plan and the country's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN's M&E framework is aligned with the country's Development Evaluation Policy and the national M&E system established by the

Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) Secretariat. However, there are challenges with the quality and alignment of UNSDPF indicators and targets, as well as data collection and analysis due to a weak PME team, insufficient agency capacity, and limited data availability and analysis capacities at the national and sub-national levels. The UN agencies have advocated for greater investments by the government in the production of high-quality statistics and supported the government's efforts to improve the national data systems, including the development of the Bhutan Statistical Database System and the online SDG reporting dashboard, DEWA. The UN is in a good position to provide more support and guidance to national counterparts in tracking the progress of SDGs and improving reporting under the UNSDPF, including synchronization of reporting systems and onboarding all relevant UN agencies to the UNINFO system.

The UN has played a significant role in supporting the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) across various sectors, including data and statistics, human rights and gender equality, good governance, inclusive economic growth, climate change and environmental sustainability, disaster risk resilience, and inclusive and equitable social development. This has been achieved through a wide range of projects and programs that align with Bhutan's national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the area of data and statistics, the UN has helped the RGoB develop a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), establish the Bhutan Data Portal, and build capacity for data analysis and reporting. This has enabled Bhutan to improve its data management and monitoring of progress towards the SDGs. In the human rights and gender equality sector, the UN has supported Bhutan in developing and implementing policies and strategies aimed at promoting human rights, gender equality, and the empowerment of vulnerable groups. Key contributions include the development of the National Gender Equality Policy, support for civil society organizations (CSOs) in advancing gender equality, and assistance in drafting the National Prevention and Response Strategy to combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP). In the area of governance, the UN has focused on strengthening democratic institutions, promoting decentralization and civic participation, and enhancing the delivery of justice services. Key initiatives include capacity building for parliamentarians, the amendment of the Local Government Act, and the development of the first-ever Justice Sector Strategic Plan. In the climate change and disaster risk reduction sector, the UN has supported Bhutan in developing its 2nd Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and National Adaptation Plan (NAP), improving capacities for disaster preparedness and response, and promoting climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable land management practices. This has resulted in increased resilience for vulnerable communities and a more robust agricultural sector.

### Coherence

UNSDPF mandates joint planning, implementation, and reporting, and establishes various coordination structures, such as the Country Programme Board (CPB), the UN Country Team (UNCT), Outcome Groups (OGs), and Inter-agency Thematic Groups. However, while these structures have generally functioned well, there are some challenges that require attention, such as inconsistent operating procedures among thematic groups, weak PME Team, unclear ToRs for OGs, high transaction costs for small agencies, and limited understanding of the benefits of coordination among some agency staff. The UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO) has played an important role in coordinating and supporting these structures, but its core capacities need to be strengthened to meet its responsibilities effectively.

The joint planning process is carried out by the four OGs that develop Joint Annual Work Plans (JAWPs) with the full involvement of government counterparts. The JAWPs ensure that the activities of UN agencies contribute to the annual results of respective government institutions and the achievement of national priorities. However, joint programming and implementation remain a challenge due to the agencies' reliance on their own programmatic frameworks. Although coordination has improved, evaluation participants noted the need for a greater role by the OGs in the planning process and joint programming, as well as a greater focus on joint implementation. Donors also see joint programming as an important aspect of the UN's work in Bhutan, and the UNRCO could play a greater role in encouraging UN agencies to undertake joint programming.

### Efficiency

The UNSDPF was designed to lower transaction costs and improve efficiency under a joint cooperation framework with the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB). The document presented a budget with an estimated total cost of USD 121 million, of which USD 63 million has been spent from 2019-2022. The UN agencies reacted quickly to the COVID-19 crisis by repurposing planned activities to align with immediate COVID response. The rate of delivery was high, with an overall delivery rate of 92%. While some output budgets may not have been realistic, the planning and execution of budgets were adequate. Going forward, it will be useful for the UNCT to establish monitoring mechanisms and improve systems for evidence-based programming and implementation. The UNRCO could use the UNINFO tool to track program expenditures more accurately by SDG area.

The UNSDPF has increased operational efficiencies and reduce costs by taking an integrated programming approach across four outcome areas. The UN system in Bhutan benefits from housing most UN agencies under one roof, allowing for cohesive working, sharing of resources, and pooling of services. The COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for the UNCT to adopt new approaches and technologies, such as the use of digital solutions, and to engage in trilateral partnerships between the RGoB, the UN, and the private sector. However, challenges were identified with regards to the lengthy and complicated procedures for the release of funds, difficulty in adjusting projects funded through global programs, and high turnover of OG's focal points which has weakened institutional memory and coordination.

### Sustainability

The sustainability of funding for the UN programme is a significant challenge due to the country's expected graduation from the LDC status in 2023, which may lead to a decrease in development finance. Core funding from UN agencies is insufficient, and the private sector in the country is weak, representing no significant potential as a source of funding for the UN Programme. Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for additional sources of financing, such as partnerships with IFIs and government cost-sharing. To ensure sustainability, the UN needs to expand its financial capacity and pursue stronger partnerships with the private sector. The engagement of the RGoB with the UN under the UNSDPF framework is crucial for sustainability as government ownership of joint activities ensures the durability of the results. Government partners have benefited from UN support, and the majority recognize that the UNSDPF promotes ownership of UN programmes by the Government.

The engagement of government, non-governmental, and development partners is crucial for the success of the UNSDPF. The engagement of RGoB with the UN is a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of the UNSDPF. The UNCT has ensured strong engagement of the Government in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of the UNSDPF. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have also been important implementing partners of the UN system in Bhutan. While the private sector is in an embryonic state in Bhutan, UN agencies have provided support in skills development, diversification of trade, development of value chains, and improvement of the trade and investment regulatory framework. The Development Partners' Group (DPG) provides development partners, government bodies, and civil society organizations with a platform to share updates about their programs and the situation in the country, and the UN system plays a key role in development effectiveness and coordination in the country. There are opportunities for the UN system to further support the government in improving its coordination capabilities, enhancing operational approaches, and strengthening implementation efficiencies to ensure better SDG outcomes and accelerated LDC graduation.

The evaluation identified the following recommendations for the attention of the UNCT and other stakeholders.

<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 1</b>  <i>Maintain the Program's Relevance through Continued Alignment with National Priorities</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), it is recommended that the UN continue its support in the current priority areas, in line with the RGoB's five-year plans.</li> <li>• The UN is well positioned to provide continued support for RGoB's 13<sup>th</sup> FYP, which will further outline priorities for the country and the UN system.</li> <li>• The preparation of the new upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) should be conducted with the full engagement of national stakeholders, including government and non-governmental entities.</li> <li>• The UN should conduct a gender assessment of the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to understand their performance against minimum standards for GEWE and identify opportunities for joint programming and capacity building events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 2</b>  <i>Strengthen the Programme's Intervention Logic and Results-based Management Directed at the UNCT</i></p>
<p>In the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the UNCT in Bhutan should create a comprehensive results framework aligned with the country's SDG framework, complete with indicators, baselines, and targets defined upfront. This framework should include quality data and indicators that can be disaggregated by gender and other key demographics, focusing on vulnerable groups. The UNCT should also develop metadata for the UNSDCF indicators to facilitate data management.</p> <p>Other key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure full involvement of national counterparts, especially implementing partners, in the development and revision of the results framework.</li> </ul>

- Improve the alignment between individual agencies' M&E systems and the UNSDPF's M&E framework.
- Support the RGoB in establishing a system for tracking SDG progress, and provide guidance to national counterparts in tracking progress to accelerate SDG achievement.
- Make the UNINFO system fully effective by automating it and ensuring that UNSDPF results are regularly updated as part of the reporting process.
- Achieve better alignment and coordination of reporting procedures between the agency and UN levels.
- Continuously track financial resources mobilized and spent, establish a process for collecting, storing, analyzing, and reporting financial information effectively using the UNINFO platform, and monitor the process continuously, providing necessary training to UN agencies as needed.
- Strengthen the joint results groups' capabilities to identify and analyze outcome and output indicators and plan interventions under the UNRCO's coordination. Organize joint trainings on RBM matters for relevant agency staff.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**  
*Strengthen the UNSDPF Infrastructure for Inter-agency Cooperation*  
*Directed at the UNCT*

- Conduct an assessment of the UN coordination infrastructure to streamline existing groups and enhance their operations and results.
- Strengthen all outcome and thematic groups procedurally by drafting comprehensive Terms of Reference, completing membership appointments, providing necessary information to members, and offering effective administrative support. Ensure that thematic groups relevant to the country context are fully operational.
- Communicate the appointment of co-chairs and co-facilitators of Outcome Groups (OGs) effectively to all relevant parties, especially government counterparts.
- Encourage UN agencies to actively engage with joint coordination structures, with non-resident agencies committing sufficient resources and staff to the in-country coordination process.
- Make OGs fully functional with regular meetings based on clear agendas and sufficient information sharing. Strengthen the UNRCO's secretarial support for OGs and ensure that co-chairing UN agencies provide necessary leadership.
- Enhance the Project Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Team as a forum for tracking and monitoring UNSDPF indicators. Coordinate M&E staff and systems across individual agencies and organize trainings for M&E experts. Establish a clear division of labor between OGs and the PME team for tracking UNSDPF implementation.
- Address high turnover of OG focal points in collaboration with the RGoB and UNCT. Develop a system for storing OG-related information to maintain institutional memory effectively. Create an orientation package for incoming co-chairs and co-facilitators of OGs and designate a focal point to provide necessary information.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**  
*Enhance Joint Planning and Implementation*  
*Directed at the UNCT*

- Ensure full involvement of responsible government officials and co-facilitators in the preparation of Joint Annual Work Plans (JAWPs) and the allocation of funds.
- Strengthen the UNRCO's role in the planning process, facilitating better harmonization across agencies, improved communication, and information flow among agency staff on planning

matters. Monitor agencies' planning processes and timelines, provide regular updates, and identify opportunities for inter-agency consultations.

- Facilitate a more harmonious alignment of UN planning processes with government planning approaches at sectoral and national levels through the UNRCO.
- Promote joint programming by identifying and institutionalizing incentives for agencies to engage in joint programs.
- Support the process with training for agency staff on modalities and approaches to joint programming through the UNRCO.
- Raise awareness among UN staff members about the UN reform and its implications for joint delivery. Facilitate this process with targeted training and team-building activities at the UN level through the UNRCO.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**  
***Strengthen Joint Resource Mobilization Efforts***  
***Directed at the UNCT***

- Strengthen the UNCT's resource mobilization approach by launching the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) with an attached solid Resource Mobilization Strategy.
- Encourage UN agencies to approach resource mobilization in a more coordinated and cooperative manner to avoid overlaps.
- Enhance the UNRCO's role in coordinating resource mobilization among agencies, ensuring harmonization of efforts.
- Diversify the UNCT's resource base and strengthen partnerships with development partners, pursuing government co-financing more systematically as an integral part of the UN's resource mobilization strategy, and exploring joint implementation opportunities with International Financial Institutions (IFIs).
- Utilize Outcome Groups to track the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**  
***Strengthen Engagement with Civil Society, Private Sector and Development Partners***  
***Directed at the UNCT***

Civil Society

- Acknowledge CSOs as valuable implementing partners in Bhutan and engage them directly in areas where they have a stronger presence than the government, such as supporting vulnerable groups, while clarifying modalities for direct engagement with the RGoB.
- Strengthen UNCT's engagement with civil society by adopting a more coherent and harmonized approach across agencies in designing and delivering support, particularly capacity-building assistance.
- Explore opportunities for systematically engaging civil society within UN joint coordination structures and increase efforts to consult CSOs in UN-led processes.
- Promote the involvement of CSOs in policy dialogue, policymaking, and legislative processes, and consider establishing a platform for regular interactions and consultations among UN, Government, and CSO representatives.

Private Sector

- Enhance UNCT's engagement with the private sector to promote sustainable development-friendly business practices and tap into private sector resources for addressing development challenges.

- Collaborate with the RGoB to identify innovative methods for channeling private sector resources and contributions towards development initiatives. Engage with relevant government structures, the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and business associations to create incentives for private sector involvement in development activities.

#### Development Partners

- The UN should strengthen its role in facilitating coordination and cooperation between development partners and the government and national stakeholders.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the independent final evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) for Bhutan 2019-2023 which was commissioned by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Bhutan in close partnership with the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and was conducted by a team of two independent evaluators. This report's main finding and recommendations are formulated to inform the preparation of the upcoming UNSDCF.

The UNSDPF is a medium-term strategic planning document that articulates the collective strategic vision of the UN system and RGoB for the period 2019-2023. It lays out the activities to be implemented by the UN system in partnership with RGoB and in close cooperation with international and national partners. UNSDPF's overall goal "*A just, harmonious and sustainable Bhutan where no one is left behind*" directly supports the achievements of RGoB's 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (FYP), covering the period 2019-2023 and beyond. This report presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

### 1.1 Overview of evaluation objectives and scope

The final evaluation assessed the achievement of expected results and the extent to which UN's contribution to national development under the UNSDPF 2019-2023 has been relevant, effective, coherent, sustainable, and cost-efficient. The Terms of Reference for the final evaluation determined the following specific objectives for the evaluation process:

- To assess UNSDPF's contribution to national development results.
- To provide recommendation to strengthen the "*Delivering as One*" approach.
- To assess the level of 'UN reform 'integration in the implementation arrangement of the UN System in Bhutan.
- To identify the area of cooperation where UN Bhutan continue to remain relevant to the National priorities and SDGs in the new UNSDCF.
- To provide actionable recommendations to further strengthen the existing operational structures and interagency tasks teams in the implementation of the UNSDPF.
- To reach conclusions concerning UN's contribution, in relation to the UN systems value-add to the country looking forward to the new UNSDCF.

The evaluation examined the progress made by the UN system and national partners in the implementation of the UNSDPF during the 2019 – 2022 period and provides an assessment of the UN agencies' joint contributions towards national priorities and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The evaluation was comprehensive, focusing on the activities, achievements and results of all UN agencies, funds and programmes (AFPs) operating in Bhutan, including those activities that were implemented as part of global or regional interventions. The evaluation assessed how UNSDPF results addressed inequalities (focusing on the *Leave No One Behind* principle, and building the country's resilience to humanitarian emergencies), and cross-cutting issues (human rights, conflict sensitivity, youth, gender equality and women's empowerment, disability inclusion, environmental sustainability), as well as promoting innovative approaches and deepening strategic partnerships.



This report's main finding and recommendations are formulated to inform the preparation of the upcoming UNSDCF and support the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) in the coordination of its implementation. At the same time, some of the recommendations may be valuable to individual UN agencies. Lastly, the report aims to inform RGoB and other implementing partners about what worked well and less well in the current UNSDPF and what are the areas that require further attention.

## 1.2 Overview of the evaluation methodology

A more detailed description of the methodology used for this evaluation is provided in the annexes of this report. The evaluation was conducted by a team of two independent experts who worked closely with the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), UNCT and other UN structures in the country. The evaluation was conducted in line with the guidelines for the Evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).<sup>1</sup> It was based on the evaluation criteria and definitions of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC)<sup>2</sup> and followed norms and standards established by the UN Evaluation Group. The methodology consisted of mixed methods and involved the use of commonly applied evaluation tools such as documentary review, questionnaires, interviews, surveys, focus group discussions, information triangulation, analysis and synthesis.

A participatory approach was used for data collection and analysis process, as well as the formulation of recommendations and lessons learned. The data collection process for this evaluation took place in the period December 2022 – January 2023. The evaluation engaged all UN agencies through agency questionnaires. An individual questionnaire with the UNRCO was also conducted. Additionally, 12 key UN staff members, seven Government officials and four development partners participated in the online survey organized for this evaluation. Additionally, individual meetings with key Government institutions were organized by the evaluators, as well as a focus group discussion with representatives of civil society. The evaluators engaged development partners, representatives of human rights institutions and civil society organizations through semi-structured interviews. The views of stakeholders obtained through primary data collection, were supplemented with information collected from secondary sources, which included background documents on the national context, national strategies and policies, UNCT documents and agency programme and project documents, annual work plans, reports, assessments and other relevant documents.

All possible efforts were made to minimize potential limitations to the evaluation process. A challenge encountered during the evaluation process was the change of the international evaluator half-way through the process due to the inability of the first evaluator to continue the assignment. This change delayed the process and made it impossible for the international evaluator to conduct field visits and have in-person interviews with key stakeholders. These in-person interviews were conducted by the national evaluator. To further mitigate this limitation, the evaluation team made use of a number of data collection instruments to enable the engagement of a greater number of stakeholders – the most crucial of these instruments were surveys with staff members from UN agencies and government organizations engaged in

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<sup>1</sup> Link [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Link [here](#).

the implementation of activities with UN agencies. A more detailed description of the evaluation scope, purpose, objectives and methodology is described in this report's annexes.

### **1.3 Report structure**

The following chapter of this report provides a description of the country context in which the UNSDPF was implemented. The third chapter briefly summarizes the operations of the UN system in Bhutan. The fourth chapter presents the report's main findings and consists of five parts corresponding to the standard evaluation dimensions: relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency and sustainability. The fifth chapter summarizes the main conclusions and lessons learned drawn from this evaluation and provides a set of recommendations for the consideration of the UNCT, RGoB and other partners. Additional information supporting the arguments made throughout the document is provided in the annexes attached to this report. The annexes include crucial information about the methodology employed in this evaluation.

## 2. COUNTRY CONTEXT

Bhutan is a small, mountainous, landlocked country in South Asia, located in the eastern Himalayas, bordered by India and China. According to the latest data from the Bhutan living standard survey by the National Statistical Bureau (2022) Bhutan is home to a total estimated population of 650,118 (332,885 female, 317,233 male)<sup>3</sup> spread over approximately 38,390<sup>4</sup> square kilometers, with about 71 per cent of its land under forest cover.<sup>5</sup> The country's unique philosophy of '*Gross National Happiness*' which is coined as a term by the 4th King of Bhutan in 1972 and strongly resonates to the SDGs, is a good prelude to Bhutan's efforts to achieve sustainable development using a holistic approach. In the next subsections, a few dimensions of Bhutan's development are summarized.

### 2.1 Political and Institutional context

Over the course of the past 14 years, Bhutan has undergone a significant and largely peaceful transition from an absolute monarchy to a direct constitutional monarchy. A draft constitution was released to the public in 2005, and was officially adopted on July 18, 2008, following extensive public consultations. For the first time, the country's elections were held in 2008 through universal suffrage. The Parliament now consists of the upper and lower house, National Council and National Assembly respectively. The separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judiciary was laid out in the 2008 Constitution, which is ever evolving. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Royal Audit Authority play an important role in the system of checks and balances on the exercise of power. On the other hand, the Supreme Court enjoys credibility as a guardian and interpreter of the constitution. Courts at all levels of the judicial system have demonstrated independence, although they have been criticised for slow delivery and inadequate transparency. In the BTI Transformation Index,<sup>6</sup> Bhutan's score for the Rule of Law is 7.5 out of 10. Bhutan has improved political participation and has so far had three peaceful elections, with the fourth election scheduled for 2023. Freedom House has given a score of 3 out of 4 to Bhutan as it pertains to free and fair elections for the current head of government.<sup>7</sup>

The current status of the key governance indicators from the World Bank, Freedom House and Transparency International is summarized in Table 1 below. The World Bank Governance Indicators<sup>8</sup> show that between 2016 and 2021, there has been progress in Voice and Accountability, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption, with a slight regression in Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism. Freedom House's indicators between 2017 and 2022 reflect no change in Political Rights and Civil Liberties Ratings, while Aggregate scores for Political Pluralism, Associational and Organizational Rights, Rule of Law, and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights improved, with a regression in the Functioning of Government subcategory. Transparency International's

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<sup>3</sup> Link [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> Link [here](#).

<sup>5</sup> Link [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> The BTI Transformation Index analyzes transformation processes toward democracy and a market economy in international comparisons and identifies successful strategies for peaceful change. Link [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> Link [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> Link [here](#).

Corruption Perception Index demonstrated progress from 2016 to 2021, with an improved score and ranking, indicating a trend of improved governance over the years.

**Table 1: Governance Indicators**

<b>World Bank Governance Indicators</b>			
Estimate of Governance (ranges from approximately -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong) governance performance)			
<b>Governance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline (2016)</b>	<b>Most Recent Value (2021)</b>	<b>Direction</b>
Voice and Accountability	-0.03	0.23	Progress
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism	1.12	0.97	Regress
Government Effectiveness	0.56	0.80	Progress
Regulatory Quality	-0.67	-0.37	Progress
Rule of Law	0.53	0.64	Progress
Control of Corruption	1.14	1.55	Progress
<b>Freedom House</b>			
<b>Governance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline (2017)</b>	<b>Most Recent Value (2022)</b>	<b>Direction</b>
Political Rights Rating	3	3	No Change
Civil Liberties Rating	4	4	No Change
Aggregate score for the Electoral Process	10	10	No Change
Aggregate score for the Political Pluralism and Participation subcategory	10	12	Progress
Aggregate score for the Functioning of Government subcategory	9	8	Regress
Aggregate score for the Political Rights category	28	29	Progress
Aggregate score for the Freedom of Expression and Belief subcategory	9	9	No Change
Aggregate score for the Associational and Organizational Rights subcategory	4	5	Progress
Aggregate score for the Rule of Law subcategory	6	9	Progress
Aggregate score for the Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights subcategory	8	9	Progress
Aggregate score for the Civil Liberties category	27	32	Progress
<b>Transparency International</b>			
<b>Governance Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline (2016)</b>	<b>Most Recent Value (2021)</b>	<b>Direction</b>
Corruption Perception Index	Score: 65/100 Rank: 27/176	Score: 68/100 Rank: 25/180	Progress

## 2.2 Key socio-economic challenges

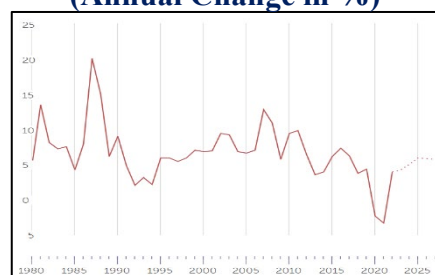
Bhutan's Human Development Index (HDI<sup>9</sup>) value for 2021 was 0.666, which is slightly higher than both the average value for the countries in the medium human development group (0.636), and the average value of South Asia as a region (0.632). Its current ranking is 127 out of 191 countries. Between 2010 and 2021, Bhutan's HDI value changed from 0.581 to 0.666, a considerable increase.

While Bhutan is one of the smallest economies in the world, it is also one of the fastest growing economies, and is considered by the World Bank's classification as a Lower Middle-Income

<sup>9</sup> Human Development country data for Bhutan can be found [here](#).

Country (LMIC).<sup>10</sup> In the pre-pandemic period, rapid economic growth in Bhutan contributed to substantial poverty reduction over the last decades, successfully eliminating extreme poverty in the country – with the national poverty rate declining from 23% in 2007 to 8% in 2017<sup>11</sup>. Unemployment rates have declined from 4% in 2009 to 2.5% in 2019<sup>12</sup>. Gross National Income (GNI)<sup>13</sup> has been on an increasing trend in the last decades, from US\$ 1.26 billion in 2009 to US\$ 2.4 billion in 2019. Annual real GDP growth averaged 7.5 percent since the 1980s, driven by the public sector-led hydropower sector and strong performance in the services sector, including tourism. Even though GDP growth reached an all-time low during 2020, it has continued to increase since, and the projections are optimistic. A visual representation of this trend is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Real GDP growth (Annual Change in %)**



These achievements have contributed to a significant milestone for Bhutan – the expected graduation from LDC status in December 2023, which symbolically coincides with the end of the implementation of the country’s 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (12 FYP).

For all the improvements Bhutan has made in the past few decades, the COVID-19 pandemic represented a major setback with the effects it had on all socio-economic dimensions. In 2020, the economy experienced a 10.1%<sup>14</sup> contraction as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions which impacted the supply chains, disrupted the tourism sector, and resulted in an exodus of expatriate workers, leading to a shortage of workers. According to World Bank’s Bhutan Development Update of April 2022, several sectors were severely hit by the pandemic. The industry sector contracted by 5.5% during the Fiscal Year 2020/2021. Even though there was an increase in the hydropower sector, this could not make up for the sharp contracting of the construction, manufacturing and mining sectors. The services sector output fell by 2.2%, mostly related to the closure of tourism-related services. The demand, private investment and consumption contracted sharply as well, given the containment measures as well as actual and expected lowering of income. Meanwhile, average inflation increased from 3% in Fiscal Year 2019/2020 to 8.2% in Fiscal Year 2020/2021, driven by an increase in food prices.

Vulnerability in Bhutan is a result of several factors, including the high reliance of GDP, exports and government revenue on a single sector, hydropower; the high reliance on one major trading partner, India; vulnerability to climate change; etc. The continued reliance on one specific sector<sup>15</sup> and one major trading partner<sup>16</sup> makes the country vulnerable to sectoral and external shocks, as was the case during the latest setbacks produced by the COVID-19 crisis. As for the vulnerability to climate change, Bhutan is exposed to earthquakes, flooding, wildfire, landslides, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) and windstorms. The country’s urban areas are vulnerable to urban flooding (infrastructure destruction, water contamination) and extreme heat in the south (droughts, fires). Bhutan’s Climate Risk Country Profile projects an annual average

<sup>10</sup> Link [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Bhutan Development Report 2019, published by the World Bank (link [here](#)).

<sup>12</sup> Unemployment Rates as a percentage of the total labour force, World Bank (link [here](#)).

<sup>13</sup> GNI, Atlas method (current US\$), World Bank (link [here](#)).

<sup>14</sup> World Bank GDP Growth Rates (link [here](#)).

<sup>15</sup> Hydropower is estimated to account for 27% of Bhutan’s revenue and about 14% of its GDP. In fact, Bhutan produces so much energy from hydropower that about 80% of its surplus power is exported to India.

<sup>16</sup> India is estimated to account for close to 80% (78.8%) of Bhutan’s exports.

temperature rise of 4.5°C, greater than the global average, and an increase in precipitation. Agriculture<sup>17</sup> is a high priority for the RGoB given its economic significance and the number of livelihoods that depend on it. As the impact of climate change on agriculture is significant, climate changes may cause further job losses and forced displacements.

Unemployment rates worsened due to the pandemic, reaching 4.3% in 2021. Bhutan's youth, with a high level of 93%<sup>18</sup> literacy, found itself with a staggering 20.9%<sup>19</sup> unemployment rate during 2021. The total number of emigrants leaving the country at mid-year 2020 was 51,998 representing about 5.2% of the whole population<sup>20</sup>. Bhutan was already operating with limited human capital, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The massive emigration of its most productive demographic has now made this issue worse. For instance, Bhutan has a doctor for every 5,000 residents<sup>21</sup>, as opposed to the World Health Organization's recommendation of one doctor per 1,000 people.

Unequal accessibility to the justice system, especially in rural areas, has made this portion of the population more vulnerable. Especially women and children are often the most vulnerable, particularly to domestic violence, the incidence of which has increased during the lockdowns. Considering the already stigmatized topic, the new circumstances have further increased the number of unreported incidences. According to a study by the National Commission for Women and Children in Bhutan, two in five victims of physical and/or sexual violence (41.4%) do not report their experiences to anyone, only 11% contact the police. There is persistent inequality of genders in the country, as the Gender Inequality Index rank of 98 out of 191 countries suggests as well. Bhutan's Global Gender Gap index ranking dropped from 93 in 2013 to 130 in 2021. Women scored lower than men in the education, good governance, community vitality and psychological well-being categories in the gross national happiness index. In particular, gender parity at the tertiary education level remains a national concern.

While Bhutan has stepped onto the international stage as the first country to become carbon negative, it is now faced with the pressure to accelerate economic growth, which adds the additional layer of adaptation and mitigation and its vast costs. The Socio-Economic impact of Covid has brought about a new dimension of challenges to the country.

### **2.3 State of the Sustainable Development Goals**

Bhutan has made significant progress towards the achievement of SDGs. The country follows the Gross National Happiness (GNH) philosophy, which is well aligned with the sustainable development goals and principles. As the country prepares for its LDC graduation by 2023, a 21st Century Economic Roadmap is currently under formulation. Meanwhile, emphasis on improved efficiency and sustainable use of natural resources will be reinforced by the recently developed Sustainable Consumption and Production Strategy. A national climate change policy, REDD+ strategy, and updated environment strategy, among others, have been adopted as part of efforts to manage climate change impacts. Bhutan has submitted its Third National Communication to the UNFCCC and is developing its second Nationally Determined

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<sup>17</sup> Arable land is scarce, amounting to less than 8% of the country's territory, nevertheless, it is a significant contributor to the national economy, employing 55.78% of the population (IFAD).

<sup>18</sup> Literacy rate, World Bank (link [here](#)).

<sup>19</sup> National Statistics Bureau, Bhutan.

<sup>20</sup> According to the UN International Migrant Stock.

<sup>21</sup> <https://kuenselonline.com/on-doctor-shortage/>



Contribution alongside sectoral low-emission strategies. Gender climate analyses have been initiated; and a roadmap for disaster risk management is in place. The Dashboard to Enhance Well Being for All (DEWA) platform serves as an integrated dashboard for monitoring the GNH, SDGs and other development indicators.

However, impacts of the pandemic have been deep and far-reaching for the country and its progress to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Before the pandemic, the Kingdom was on track to achieve the majority of the SDGs, but in the SDG tracking published in the 2021 Voluntary National Review (VNR) several SDGs were considered to be “at risk” – namely SDG 1 ‘No Poverty’; SDG 4 ‘Quality Education’; SDG 8 ‘Decent Work and Economic Growth’; SDG 10 ‘Reduced Inequalities’; SDG 17 ‘Partnerships for the Goals’. Nonetheless, even while considering the setbacks produced by the pandemic, according to the SDG data available for Bhutan the current SDG Index Score<sup>22</sup> is 70.5 out of 100; and the Spillover Score<sup>23</sup> is 93.6.

Currently, SDG 12 is considered to be achieved; for SDG 7 challenges remain but it is on track to achievement; for SDGs 1, 11, 16 challenges remain and they are moderately improving; for SDG 13 challenges remain but it is stagnating; for SDG 4 significant challenges remain but it is on track to achievement; for SDG 6, 9, 17 significant challenges remain but they are moderately improving; for SDG 10 significant challenges remain; for SDG 8 major challenges remain but it is on track to achievement; for SDGs 2, 3, 5 major challenges remain but they are moderately improving; for SDG 15 major challenges remain but it is stagnating; for SDG 14 no information is provided. A visual representation of this information is provided in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Overview of Bhutan's SDG Achievements**



## 2.4 COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic was a significant shock for the world, and Bhutan was no exception. The country did not have a fully equipped medical infrastructure to handle the crisis effectively. Nonetheless, the measures taken to contain the pandemic were immediate and firm. As soon as the first case was detected in March 2020, surveillance activities were immediately

<sup>22</sup> The overall score measures the total progress towards achieving all 17 SDGs. The score can be interpreted as a percentage of SDG achievement. A score of 100 indicates that all SDGs have been achieved.

<sup>23</sup> The Spillover Index assesses spillovers along three dimensions: environmental & social impacts embodied into trade, economy & finance, and security. A higher score means that a country causes more positive and fewer negative spillover effects.

strengthened in all 20 districts with the creation of district-based Case Investigation and Contact Tracing (CICT) teams. Travel bans and lockdowns ensued, vaccination campaigns were fruitful and overall Bhutan had 62,521 cumulative cases and 21 cumulative deaths, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The RGoB prepared the National Preparedness and Response Plan (NPRP) for COVID-19 with the objective of enhancing the health sector's capacity for surveillance, early detection, control and prevention, response, and recovery from the outbreak. UN agencies developed a joint response framework aligned with the "UN Framework for the Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19," including short-term measures to mitigate negative social and economic consequences and medium- to long-term investments to strengthen the capacity of national institutions to re-build and be resilient to future crises.<sup>24</sup>

But even with the swift response, Bhutan faced four significant COVID-19 outbreaks. The closing of borders and banning of travel immediately stopped all tourist-related activities, and arrivals dropped by 91 per cent from 315,599 visitors in 2019 to 29,812 visitors in 2020.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, gross receipts were down by 92 per cent, reaching USD 19.84 million in 2020 from US\$ 225.87 million in 2019. Direct revenue also declined by 90.4 per cent to US\$ 2.76 million in 2020 from 23.42 million in the previous year. The pandemic also had disproportionate impact on the Bhutanese employed in the tourism sector leading to lay-offs and temporary closure of tourism businesses and other tourism related enterprises. Exports and imports decreased significantly as a result of weak foreign and domestic demand and trade disruptions. The construction sector experienced difficulties due to increases in construction material prices and labour costs, with a considerable number of workers laid off.

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<sup>24</sup> The key areas of the socio-economic response were: i) Health First: Protecting health services and systems during the crisis; ii) Protecting people: Social protection and basic services; iii) Economic recovery: Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the most vulnerable productive actors; iv) Macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration; v) Social cohesion and community resilience; vi) Communications and Data, M&E, Learning 4 COVID.

<sup>25</sup> According to the Tourism Council of Bhutan.



### 3. UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY

#### 3.1 Programme Overview

As a medium-term strategic planning document, the UNSDPF articulates the collective vision of the UN system in support of Bhutan’s goal of achieving a successful and smooth transition from the LDC status. The document outlines the activities to be implemented by the UN in partnership with the RGoB and other national and international partners. Based on the overall theory of change, the UN was envisaged work towards four concrete outcomes to contribute to Bhutan being a just, harmonious and sustainable country where no one is left behind. These four outcomes are interlinked and inter-dependent, and they are presented in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: UNSDPF Outcomes**

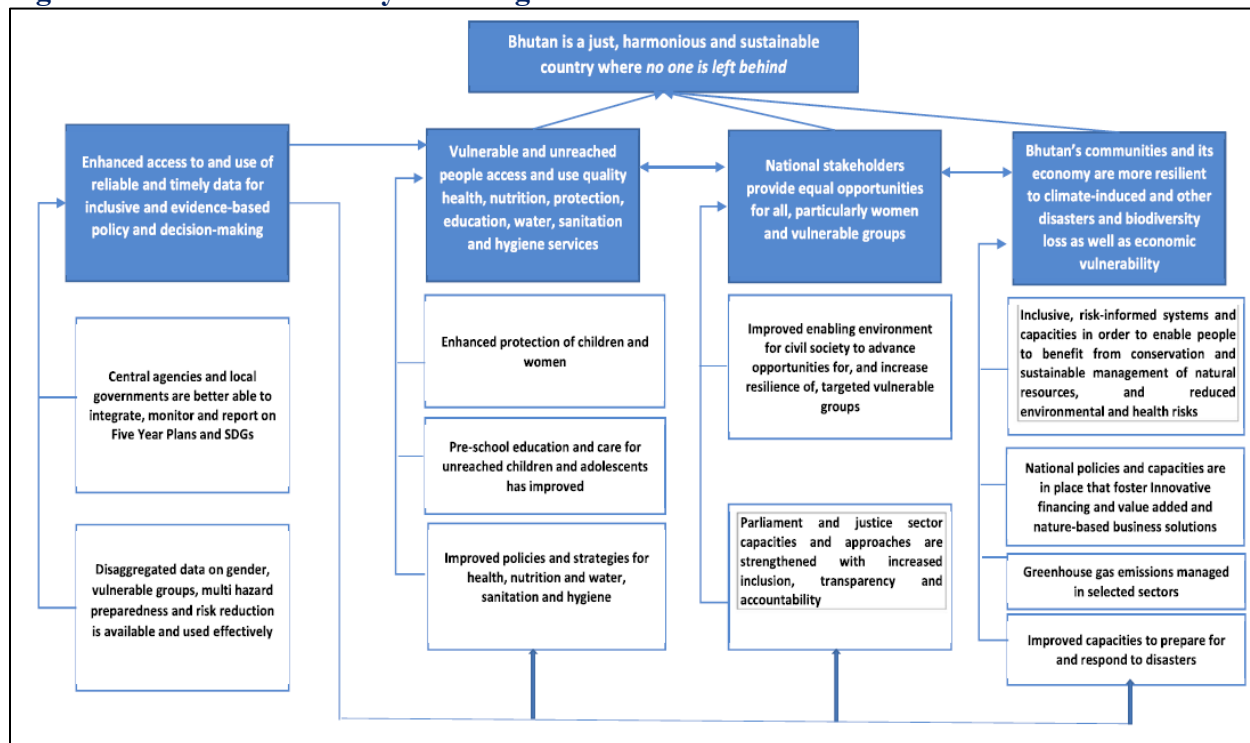


The UNSDPF is one of the first in a new generation of UN frameworks that respond to the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). It is also one of the first frameworks that is based on the revised guidance of the UN Sustainable Development Group for simpler, more strategic, outcome-focused frameworks. While the UN system in Bhutan has “Delivered as One” since 2008, with joint annual work plans agreed and signed by the RGoB and the UN, the UNSDPF goes a step further: it defines joint outputs by all UN agencies to prepare for a time when there may not be any agency-specific country programmes, making the UNSDPF the central programming tool of the UN. Furthermore, the UN’s overall goal supports Bhutan in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, a global commitment to support the special development needs of least developed countries.

The UN’s strategic priorities were identified on the basis of a Common Country Analysis, consisting of five analytical modules led by UN agencies with specific in-depth knowledge and expertise. The country analysis underpinned the development of the UNSDPF, which was done jointly by the UNCT in close consultation and coordination with the RGoB.

As mentioned above, the UNSDPF is underpinned by a Theory of Change, schematically presented in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4: UNSDPF’s Theory of Change**



The ToC includes assumptions and risk of the framework. The underlying assumption of the ToC is that Bhutan will be able to avoid or mitigate key risks. The table below shows the key risk/assumptions and the respective mitigation measures identified in relation to UNSDPF’s ToC.

**Table 2: Type of Risk/Assumption and Mitigation Measures**

Type of risk/ assumption	Risk mitigation measures
<b>Major earthquake or other natural disasters reverse development gains and changes priorities.</b>	
<i>Environmental</i>	fast-tracking of disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response measures
<b>Urbanization is poorly managed, leading to increased vulnerabilities in urban centres</b>	
<i>Strategic</i>	assist vulnerable sections of society
<b>Hydropower does not bring the expected financial resources, leading to a funding gap for implementation of government policies and programmes</b>	
<i>Macroeconomic</i>	provide technical support to the RGoB in tapping into additional sources of development financing, better use of existing sources, and strengthening Public Finance Management and tax collection systems
<b>There is increasingly better and more disaggregated data and information on vulnerable and unreached people as well as climate change available, but uptake is slow and/or cultural barriers do not result in changed policies and programmes.</b>	

Type of risk/ assumption	Risk mitigation measures
<i>Organizational</i>	continuous advocacy by the UN in collaboration with national partners to support culture change
<b>Despite increasing fiscal decentralization, local capacities to implement remain weak and may undermine integrated development solutions</b>	
<i>Organizational</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support by the UN to develop local capacities</li> <li>• close monitoring of national plan</li> </ul>
<b>The RGoB limits the ability of the UN to bring in external, international expertise to work on major dev. challenges</b>	
<i>Organizational</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• close collaboration with RgoB</li> <li>• ensure frequent, clear &amp; results-based demonstration of the added value of the UN's support to Bhutan</li> </ul>
<b>The reform of the UN system leads to major organizational changes in the UN</b>	
<i>Organizational</i>	close monitoring and continuous planning to implement the reform of the UN system
<b>The presence of the UN is altered, limiting capacities to implement the UNSDPF as originally intended</b>	
<i>Organizational</i>	strong adaptive management and annual review and update of the UNSDPF and its theory of change

Source: UNSDPF for Bhutan document, 2019-2023.

Based on the 2017 UN Comparative Advantage Analysis and the 2017 Common Country Analysis, the UN has a comparative advantage in five areas in supporting Bhutan's transition from an LDC: impartiality; the use of systems thinking to tackle complex challenges; the ability to take risks in testing new approaches; the capacity to convene and manage multi-dimensional partnerships; and coordinated response capacity in times of disaster.

- **Impartiality:** The UN is uniquely placed to support the mainstreaming and adoption of international human rights norms and standards in Bhutan. It is an effective, impartial convener of a wide range of national and international partners, particularly with regional neighbours and through South-South cooperation. The UN provides support to national statistical data collection, especially for data on vulnerable groups and SDG performance.
- **System thinking to tackle complex challenges:** Jointly, the UN offers solutions on a wide range of issues. It is well placed to tackle complex development problems that cut across multiple sectors, including systems thinking. The UN not only has access to in-country expertise of resident agencies, but can also support Bhutan tap into the diverse and deep expertise of non-resident UN agencies. In addition, the UN can facilitate access to regional and global knowledge networks for the RGoB, civil society and academia.
- **Taking risks in testing new approaches:** Working towards GNH and the SDGs requires deliberate, calculated investments in identifying and testing new ways of triggering innovation. Jointly, the UN has increasing experience in proto-typing and testing innovations – including technological innovations, adaptive programming, data innovations and alternative sources of financing.

- **Capacity to convene and manage multi-dimensional partnerships:** The UN system has decades of experience in effectively working with multiple partners, stakeholders and development partners. It will effectively support the emphasis on enhanced cooperation, coordination, consolidation (‘Triple C’) in the 12th FYP that requires working across different sectors and ministries in complex collaborative settings. This includes successfully leveraging of financial and other resources through global partnerships.
- **Coordinated response capacity in times of disaster:** The UN brings global and regional expertise to ensure sustainability and resilience is integrated into national activities through risk-informed programming. The UN is in a unique position to ensure that the right arrangements are in place for a timely, effective and coordinated response from the international community in times of disaster. The UN works closely with the RGoB to align international and national emergency coordination structures, strengthen post disaster needs assessment capacity and to develop and implement disaster contingency plans.

The table below shows UNSDPF’s outcomes and output, and the respective participating agencies.

**Table 3: UNSDPF Outcome and Outputs**

<b>Outcome 1: Enhanced access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision-making</b>
<i>Participating Agencies: UNFPA (Lead), FAO, ITC, UNCDF, UNDESA, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UN Women, WFP, WHO.</i>
<b>Output 1.1:</b> Central agencies and local governments are better able to integrate, monitor and report on the Five-year Plans and SDGs
<b>Output 1.2:</b> Disaggregated data on gender, vulnerable groups, multi-hazard preparedness and risk reduction is available and used effectively
<b>Outcome 2: By 2023, vulnerable and unreached people access and receive quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene services</b>
<i>Participating Agencies: UNICEF (Lead), UNCDF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, WFP, WHO</i>
<b>Output 2.1:</b> Enhanced protection of children and women
<b>Output 2.2:</b> Pre-school education and care for unreached children and adolescents have improved
<b>Output 2.3:</b> Improved policies and strategies for health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene
<b>Outcome 3: By 2023, National stakeholders strengthened to provide equal opportunities for all, particularly women and vulnerable groups</b>
<i>Participating Agencies: UNDP (Lead), UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, WFP, WHO</i>
<b>Output 3.1:</b> Improved enabling environment for civil society to advance opportunities for, and increase resilience of targeted vulnerable groups
<b>Output 3.2:</b> Parliament and justice sector capacities and approaches are strengthened with increased inclusion, transparency and accountability
<b>Outcome 4: By 2023, Bhutan’s communities and its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss as well as economic vulnerability</b>
<i>Participating Agencies: UNDP (Lead), FAO, IFAD, ITC, UNICEF, UN Environment, UNOCHA, WFP</i>
<b>Output 4.1:</b> Inclusive, risk-informed systems and capacities in order to enable people to benefit from conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, and reduced environmental and health risks

<b>Output 4.2:</b> National policies and capacities are in place that foster innovative financing and value added and nature-based business solutions
<b>Output 4.3:</b> Greenhouse gas emissions managed in selected sectors
<b>Output 4.4:</b> Improved capacities to prepare for and respond to disasters

### 3.2 UN Agencies Operating in the Country

Bhutan became the 128<sup>th</sup> member of the United Nations in September 1971 and the Office of the United Nations in Bhutan was established in early 1974. Since then, the country has hosted many UN agencies, funds and programmes that together have supported the government to deliver national development programmes to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people of Bhutan. The UN system in Bhutan currently comprises nine resident agencies and twenty-two non-resident agencies. The table below shows the list of UN agencies with operations in the country, divided into resident and non-resident agencies.

**Table 4: UNSDPF Resident and Non-Resident Agencies**

<u>Resident Agencies</u>	<u>Non-resident Agencies</u>	
1. FAO	1. IOM	12. UNDESA
2. ITC	2. UNOPS	13. UN Technology Bank
3. UNICEF	3. UNWTO	14. UNESCO
4. UNCDF	4. OCHA	15. UNV
5. UNODC	5. ICAO	16. UN Habitat
6. UNDP	6. UNIDO	17. ITU
7. UNFPA	7. UNIC	18. WIPO
8. WFP	8. IFAD	19. UNEP
9. WHO	9. UNCTAD	20. OHCHR
	10. UNAIDS	21. UN OHRLLS
	11. UNESCAP	22. UN Women

The overall contribution of the UN system in the country is reviewed in the “Effectiveness” section of this report under the sub-section “Main Achievements”.

### 3.3 UN Coordination Mechanisms in the Country

Coordination among UN agencies and national partners in the context of the UNSDPF has taken place through a number of mechanisms and structures that have facilitated the implementation of the programme. The following are the key joint structures established by the UN system in Bhutan.

**Country Programme Board:** The Country Programme Board is the highest level of oversight of the UNSDPF. It is responsible for steering and monitoring the UNSDPF implementation toward the agreed outcomes. The RGoB is represented in the Country Programme Board at the highest level and takes full ownership of its work. The board meets annually to review the progress of the UN’s implementation, as well as plans for the following year. The board consists of the heads of

relevant government agencies, representatives of civil society organizations, academia and the UN. Membership of the board is agreed upon jointly with the GNHC. The Country Programme Board has been co-chaired by the Secretary of GNHC and the UN Resident Coordinator (RC).<sup>26</sup> Under the civil service transformation reform of 2022, GNHC was dissolved and its functions were transferred to the Department of Macro Fiscal and Development Finance (DMDF) in the Ministry of Finance.

***UN Country Team:*** The UN Country Team (UNCT) consists of the UN system heads or deputies of agencies and local representatives of non-resident UN agencies. Its function is to provide oversight of the UNSDPF implementation and coordination mechanisms, including the Joint Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation team, UN Communications and the Operations Management Team. The UNCT is led by the UN Resident Coordinator and meets twice a year. The UNCT works closely with the UNRC to take appropriate action when acting on behalf of the team. Together, they make decisions on joint programmatic and financial matters relating to programming activities.

***UN Resident Coordinator:*** The UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) is the in-country designated representative of the Secretary-General for development operations. The RC coordinates the UNCT and plays a central role in facilitating the coordination of UN operational activities at the country level in support of national priorities and capacity development. The UNRC is supported by the UNRCO in her/his functions.

***Outcome Groups:*** Four Outcome Groups (OGs) – one for each UNSDPF outcome – are responsible for and oversee the outcomes and the implementation of the UNSDPF. These groups are responsible for developing and adapting the Joint Annual Work Plans and monitoring progress through the Joint Annual Progress Reports. They consist of relevant RGoB programme staff, UN agency programme staff, including that of non-resident UN agencies, representatives of Civil Society Organizations and academia that contribute to the four outcomes. The OGs are co-chaired by heads of the most relevant RGoB agencies – agreed upon jointly with GNHC - and UN Heads of Agencies. Membership of the Outcome Groups is based on relevance to the outcome and agreed upon jointly with the GNHC.

***Inter-Agency Task Teams:*** Inter-Agency Task Teams (IATT) manage joint programmes. Except for the team on Disaster Preparedness, these teams were set up for a limited time to deliver time-bound results. These IATTs report to the chairs of the most relevant outcome group.

### 3.4 UN's COVID-19 Response

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, RGoB and the UNCT moved quickly and pro-actively to respond to the emergency. The support in response to the COVID-19 crisis provided by the UNCT under the coordination of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) is reviewed in greater detail in section 4.1.2. of this report. The UN system led by UNDP partnered with the National Statistics Bureau (NSB) to conduct a ***Socio-Economic Impact Assessment on Tourism and Affiliated***

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**Sectors.**<sup>27</sup> This exercise aimed to gain an understanding of the overall nature of impact of the COVID-19 crisis on tourism and related services, the hardest hit area of the economy so far. This review targeted especially social and economic vulnerabilities of affected individuals, their coping abilities, and alternative employment preferences.

The assessment and other analyses pointed to several directions for supporting the Government and UNCT’s COVID-19 response. They balanced both immediate policy responses with a long-term economic vision. UN agencies developed an initial joint response framework aligned with the government plans and priorities. This approach was captured in the “*UN Bhutan COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan*”<sup>28</sup> (Bhutan’s SERP also known locally as the “*Shield*”). This initial framework included both short-term measures to mitigate negative social and economic consequences along with medium to long-term investments to strengthen the re-build and resilience to future crises. The following figure summarized SERP’s pillar and principles.

**Figure 5: Principles and Pillars of Bhutan’s SERP**



<sup>27</sup> National Statistics Bureau and UNDP (2020), Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (RSEIA) on Tourism and Affiliated Sectors

<sup>28</sup> Link [here](#).



## 4. MAIN FINDINGS

This report’s findings are organized in the following four sections: i) **Relevance** (the extent to which the UNSDPF has been relevant to the country’s priorities and needs); ii) **Effectiveness** (whether the UNSDPF has contributed towards development results for the country), including an overview of the impact of the UN work in the country; iii) **Coherence** (whether the implementation of the UNSDPF has been coherent); iv) **Efficiency** (whether the delivery of UNSDPF results has been efficient); and, v) **Sustainability** (whether UNSDPF results are sustainable).

### 4.1. RELEVANCE

The assessment UNSDPF’s relevance is conducted against the following four criteria:

- Alignment with and responsiveness to national priorities;
- Flexibility and responsiveness to the COVID-19 crisis;
- Perceptions of the value of UN contributions;
- Compliance with the UN’s four programming principles.

#### ***Evaluation Questions:***

- ***To what extent has the UNSDPF addressed national development priorities, policies and needs, and challenges identified in the Common Country Analysis?***
- ***To what extent the UN system remained responsive to emerging and unforeseen development needs of the country and the people, especially of the most vulnerable and those left furthest behind?***
- ***To what extent has the CF contributed to the promotion of and integrated gender equality and women empowerment, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability?***

#### 4.1.1. Alignment with and Responsiveness to National Priorities

Bhutan’s unique development philosophy of maximizing GNH resonates with the SDGs and forms the basis of the country’s Five-Year Plans. The overarching objective of the current FYP (12<sup>th</sup> FYP 2018-2023) is “*Just, harmonious and sustainable society through enhanced decentralization,*” which underpins the importance of the “*leaving no one behind*” principle. The FYP outlines 17 National Key Results Areas (NKRAs), of which 10 are directly aimed at leaving no one behind. The Plan aims to foster inclusive socio-economic development, strengthen governance, preserve and promote culture, and protect the environment. It prioritizes the well-being of citizens, striving for equitable distribution of economic benefits, promoting good governance, and enhancing the quality of life by implementing sustainable development policies. The plan also emphasizes the importance of decentralization, giving local governments more autonomy in decision-making.

With the overall goal of supporting “*A just, harmonious and sustainable Bhutan where no one is left behind,*” the UNSDPF is fully aligned with the RGoB’s 12<sup>th</sup> FYP. As the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP was formulated with both the GNHC and SDGs as the basis, the UNSDPF articulates the collective



vision of the UN system in Bhutan for 2019-2023 in support of the country's achievement of its GNH vision and SDGs, as well as graduation from the LDC category in a sustainable manner. The UN agencies will be further supporting the RGoB in the development of its 13<sup>th</sup> FYP.<sup>29</sup> The UNCT developed the UNSDPF in close collaboration with the RGoB and other national partners. Its preparation was informed by the Common Country Analysis (CCA) 2018, which identified Bhutan's key development challenges, priorities and needs. The CCA process encompassed extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders such as government, private sector, civil society, development partners, academia, and the media. The linkages between the UNSDPF outcomes, the SDGs and national priorities are illustrated in Figure 6 below.

The following analysis demonstrates this alignment across UNSDPF's four outcome areas:

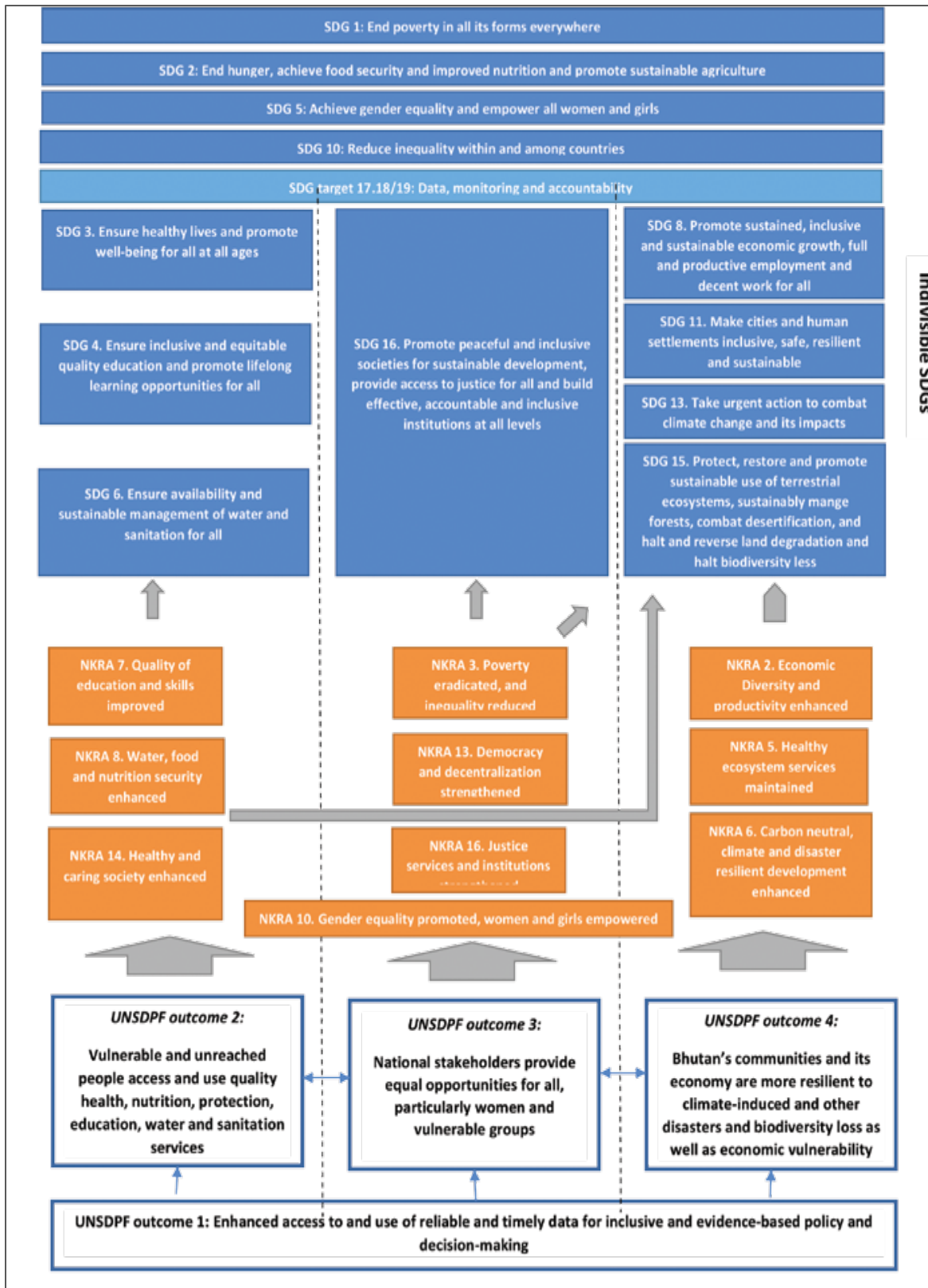
- **Data and Policy:** The UN's support for data management and policy-making has been aligned with the 12th Five-Year Plan's emphasis on evidence-based policy, inclusive social development, and good governance. By enhancing data collection, management, and accessibility, the UN has helped RGoB in implementing data-driven policies that address socio-economic issues and promote the wellbeing of the population.
- **Essential Social Services:** The UN's contributions to the education and health sectors, as well as support for vulnerable groups, have been aligned with the 12th Five-Year Plan's objectives to improve the quality of life, promote social inclusion, and reduce poverty. By supporting the improvement of social services and data-driven interventions, the UN helps Bhutan achieve its goals of providing quality education, healthcare, and support for vulnerable populations.
- **Governance:** The UN's support for enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public service delivery have been aligned with the 12th Five-Year Plan's focus on good governance. By supporting the professionalization of evaluation processes and strengthening the capacity of local governments, the UN has helped the RGoB improve governance and further the democratic foundations of Bhutanese society.
- **Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction:** The UN's assistance in disaster risk management, climate change adaptation, and mitigation has been aligned with the 12th Five-Year Plan's focus on environmental sustainability. By supporting Bhutan's efforts to assess and reduce the impacts of climate change and disasters, the UN helps the country maintain its commitment to environmental conservation and long-term sustainability.

Overall, the UN's activities in Bhutan have been in line with the country's 12th Five-Year Plan, reinforcing and enhancing the RGoB's efforts to achieve its development objectives.

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<sup>29</sup> CPB meeting notes – CPB meeting of 18 February 2022.

**Figure 6: Linkages between the UNSDPF Outcomes, SDGs and National Priorities**



#### 4.1.2. Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged the implementation of the UNSDPF and tested the responsiveness of the UN system to the country's changing needs. In the face of the crisis, the UN remained a strong partner for Bhutan, channeling technical expertise through its networks and securing assistance for vaccines, medical equipment, and other health aids, in addition to supporting the broad socio-economic response. The following are brief overviews of UN's response to the COVID-19 crisis in Bhutan.

- ***Programmatic and Policy Response*** – As the pandemic hit the country, the UN demonstrated flexibility by quickly formulating a joint response framework – the “*UN Bhutan COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan*” (SERP). SERP was later integrated into the UNSDPF, ensuring complete alignment with RGoB's new plans and priorities. The revised UNSDPF – with support from eight resident and six non-resident agencies – included both short-term measures to mitigate negative **health, social and economic consequences** and medium to long-term investments to **strengthen the capacity** of the country to build forward better and ensure resilience to future crises. The revised UNSDPF complemented and supported the Government's response plans such as the National Preparedness and Response Plan (NPRP), Economic Contingency Plans (ECPs), and other recovery initiatives. Its preparation was informed by socio-economic impact analyses, and internal reviews of programme activities for relevance within the changing environment unfolded by the pandemic. Furthermore, the UNCT conducted two rounds of repurposing the Joint Annual Work Plans for 2020 and 2021 to the COVID-19 response requirements. Under the social protection cluster, a National Child Protection and Gender-based Violence COVID-19 Response Plan was developed and implemented through the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and CSOs. The UN agencies conducted a range of rapid assessments of the pandemic's impact on various sectors such as tourism, education, agriculture, and the vulnerable groups. These assessments were instrumental in supplying RGoB and development partners with the required data for joint interventions aimed at alleviating the impact of COVID-19 crisis with focus on vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind. Furthermore, the UNCT was quick in repurposing funds to address the immediate impact of COVID-19. Activities that did not directly respond to combating the pandemic were dropped and new activities were identified and supported by reprioritizing the resources or mobilizing additional resources for a scaled-up COVID-19 response.
- ***Operational Response*** – The flexibility of the UNCT enabled timely support to Bhutan during the pandemic. The UN system in Bhutan adopted an inter-agency approach and collective action in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The UNRCO coordinated the response through the Crisis Management Team (CMT) which involved the full membership of the UNCT. With the input of the agencies, the UNRCO prepared monthly Situation Reports (SitReps), which were shared with development partners and the Government to harmonize the COVID-19 response in the country. Projects were designed and implemented under two months to support vulnerable women and youth after increasing evidence emerged of their situation in the wake of the pandemic. The UN facilitated faster access to medical services by introducing an

innovative One-Stop Crisis Seal at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital. This work allowed survivors of Gender-based Violence to access medical services in a short span of time by enabling the hospital employees and doctors to prioritize their cases. The UN's support for persons with disabilities was also the result of agile programming, delivering support within a month of receiving the request. In support of the vulnerable groups, the UN partnered with the Judiciary of Bhutan to initiate e-litigation to ensure access to justice and uninterrupted essential social service during the pandemic, while at the same time worked with the Parliament to develop a Comprehensive Plan on Parliament Functionality during emergencies. Similarly, in the education sector, the UN supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) to ensure continuity of school learning during the nationwide lockdowns by developing an Education-in Emergencies COVID-19 Response Plan and Guidelines for re-opening schools and instituting the 'New Normal Curriculum'. It also supported MoE to carry out the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers training which equipped teachers to better use information and communications technology in delivering the new curriculum. Support was further provided to ensure nutritional intake, particularly in remote schools through the school feeding programme. A joint UN-RGoB platform brought together various stakeholders to co-design a portfolio of solutions to address youth unemployment which stood at 22.6% during the pandemic. The platform catalyzed the partnership to transform the digital job ecosystem, which in turn became an investment priority of the RGoB. To provide immediate jobs to the affected and to enhance Bhutan's food production and self-sufficiency, the UN supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests in introducing commercial farming in the Paro District. It helped to engage unemployed individuals from the tourism sector, farmers groups and cooperatives and 445 individual farmers in large scale vegetable production on 3,439 acres of land. Further, the UN supported the livelihoods of 170 people and their families by engaging them in the enhancement of existing tourism facilities and upskilling and reskilling programs as part of their support to the RGoB's ECP initiative for tourism resilience. In addition, to meet the need for financial resources for both the COVID-19 response and long-term development priorities, the UN launched a Joint SDG Fund Programme aimed at making a transformative contribution to the way Bhutan finances its development, especially to support Bhutan's goals of long-term financial sustainability, social spending that benefits all people, and green finance to protect the environment and respond to climate change.

- **Health Response** – The UN provided comprehensive emergency support to the RGoB during the pandemic. The health response was led by WHO and UNICEF in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH). It included support for the protection of the Bhutanese population from COVID-19, ensuring continuity and the provision of regular health services, and overall health system strengthening beyond the immediate crisis, including building linkages between health and environmental outcomes. Health and nutrition initiatives and public awareness campaigns were conducted and critical medical supplies including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), COVID-19 testing kits, laboratory supplies, cold chain equipment, WASH supplies, and learning and communication materials were delivered to health facilities, schools and other institutions. The UN was instrumental in ensuring vaccines were procured and delivered on time despite supply chain disruptions. The UN supported the establishment of the Bhutan Vaccine System (BVS) which contributed to the smooth and effective vaccination of 93% of the population in a record two weeks' time. The UN also

supported MoH in strengthening surveillance and contact tracing. Other activities included the establishment of the Health Emergency Operation Center, provision of diagnostic services through medical camps, introduction of a pilot e-health system using mobile cardiocography devices (iCTGs) to reach pregnant women with quality gynecological and obstetric services, establishment of Health Help Centre to ensure continuity of emergency services amidst heightened demand during the pandemic, and provision of Electric Cookers to improve the health and well-being of cooks and to maintain kitchen hygiene standards to meet increased feeding requirements during the pandemic for hospital in-patients and attendants.

The UN further supported the development of the National Contingency Plan to ensure the availability of essential health services in the wake of the pandemic as an overarching guide for hospitals and primary health centers, alongside regularly published operational guidelines on the evolving epidemiological profile of the COVID-19 transmission across the globe. The UN also supported the acceleration of the new Mother and Child Health Policy, assessment of the prevalence and prevention of major non-communicable diseases and associated risk factors, development of the National Health Service and Health Workforce Standards to meet workforce needs in the country, alignment of human resources to support the Health Strategic Plan and the National Strategic Nursing and Midwifery Plan, and the development of the National Strategy on Healthy Aging. The UN also supported with a Training of Trainers on Integrated Care for Older People, as well as in-service and pre-service training on the Low-Dose High-Frequency Technique. It also supported the conduct of several studies, including the National Health Accounts, Cross Programmatic Efficiency Analysis, and Workload Indicators of Staffing Needs.

Overall, implementing partners (governmental and non-governmental) involved in this evaluation acknowledged UN's contributions and commended UNSDPF's flexibility to respond to emerging priorities during the crisis. About 66% of UN staff members surveyed for this evaluation believed that *“the UNSDPF has been flexible enough to respond to the changing context in Bhutan, especially in light of COVID-19”*. On the other hand, all 7 government officials who responded to the online survey for this evaluation agreed that *“the UN System has been flexible enough to respond to the changing context in Bhutan, especially in light of COVID-19”*.

While the COVID-19 pandemic hampered the implementation of many activities, it also presented an opportunity for the UNCT to programme differently, using innovative strategies and technologies to adapt its operations so as to mitigate the pandemic's effects. This meant incorporating new approaches and technologies in ways that would also help after the crisis, such as the use of digital solutions for information-sharing, inter-agency coordination, and service delivery. The pandemic also brought to the fore the role of CSOs in reaching remote and scattered populations with essential service delivery and the provision of care during disasters and in times of emergency. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for a new and efficient modality for releasing funds directly to the CSOs for the implementation of emergency interventions on the ground. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for fostering trilateral partnerships between the RGoB, the UN and the private sector, such as the successful development of the Gaykid City Bus application tool.

For all the flexibility displayed by the UNCT at the time of COVID-19, the projects funded through the global programmes were difficult to modify to the ever-evolving situation. The repurposing of funds proved a long and cumbersome process. Many processes took longer than expected due to the challenges presented by the pandemic including procurement processes, seeking clearances and government approvals and the mobilizing of funds which in some cases resulted in activities remaining unfunded in the 2021 Annual Work Plan.

#### **4.1.3. Perceptions of the Value of UN Contributions**

The relevance of the UNSDPF was also assessed on the basis of perceptions of the stakeholders engaged by this evaluation. From the perspective of UN staff members, the UNSDPF is for the most part relevant and has contributed to the coordination of the UN system in the country. All agency staff members who participated in the anonymous survey organized for this evaluation responded that “*the UNSDPF has adequately reflected Bhutan’s national needs and priorities*”. Similarly, all 7 government officials responding to the evaluation survey agreed that the UNSDPF has adequately reflected national needs and priorities. Furthermore, all 12 UN agency respondents stated that “*the UNSDPF has addressed the needs of women, children and the most vulnerable groups in Bhutan*”. Similarly, among all government officials who responded to the evaluation survey there is full consensus that the UNSDPF has addressed the needs of women, children and the most vulnerable groups. Further, all 12 UN agency staff participating in the survey responded that “*the UNSDPF has been relevant to the work of my agency*”, while also all 7 government officials surveyed stated that the UNSDPF has been relevant to the work of their organizations. So, when it comes to the UNSDPF as a framework of cooperation, there is broad agreement among UN staff members and government officials that the UNSDPF has been relevant to country needs, needs of vulnerable groups and the work of individual agencies.

However, when it comes to the practical effects of the UNSDPF on the way UN agencies work together in Bhutan, the degree of agreement is less significant among UN staff members. Only about 50% of survey respondents from the UN agencies think that “*the UNSDPF has created a clearer division of labour among UN agencies in Bhutan*”. Similarly, only about 50% of UN respondents agree that “*the UNSDPF has created complementarities among UN agencies in Bhutan*”. On the other hand, about 83% of survey respondents from the UN agencies believe that “*the UNSDPF has contributed to improved synergies in the achievement of results between UN agencies*”. About 66% think that “*the agency I work for frequently uses the UNSDPF document to plan its activities*”. So, from the perspective of UN staff members, the UNSDPF is used by the agencies and has enabled complementarities and synergies.

From the perspective of government counterparts, 84% of respondents believe that “the UN System has created complementarities/harmonization among UN agencies in Bhutan”. For RGoB, the framework is relevant and a useful instrument of coordination for the UN system and between the UN and RGoB.

Overall, the national partners find the “*Delivering as One*” approach a positive step in the right direction, particularly for resource mobilization, effective coordination and impactful contribution to the country’s development needs. Respondents to the evaluation survey shared that as there is



only one overall framework, it serves as a good guide for all. The joint UNSDPF framework with one common budget, joint workplan, joint review, and joint monitoring and evaluation has helped the UN and its partners to set clear goals and achieve better coordination of resources and provision of coherent assistance. It has also enabled clearer communication channels which have facilitated the coordinated implementation of planned activities.

#### 4.1.4. Compliance with UN’s Four Programming Principles

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has identified four programming principles, with “*leaving no one behind*” as the overarching principle that unifies the UN’s programming, policy and advocacy efforts. The UN’s pledge to leave no one behind is in turn underpinned by other programming principles such as **human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment; sustainability and resilience; and accountability**.<sup>30</sup> This section outlines how the UN system in Bhutan has promoted these principles in its current programming cycle (UNSDPF 2019-2023).

##### Leave No One Behind (LNOB)

The work of the UN system in Bhutan for the period 2019-2023 has been driven by the overarching goal of achieving “*a just, harmonious and sustainable Bhutan where no one is left behind*”.<sup>31</sup> In both its regular programmes prior to the onset of the pandemic and in its response to the COVID-19 crisis, the UN system has focused first and foremost on those left furthest behind.<sup>32</sup> To ensure that no one is left behind, the UN used an integrated programming approach across the priority areas to achieve results in the four outcome areas (as shown in the figure below).

**Figure 7: UNSDPF’s Integrated Programming Approach Outcomes**



The UN’s adherence to the LNOB principle is manifested across sectors/focus areas. In the current programme, the UN has championed gender equality and human rights, the lifeblood of sustainable

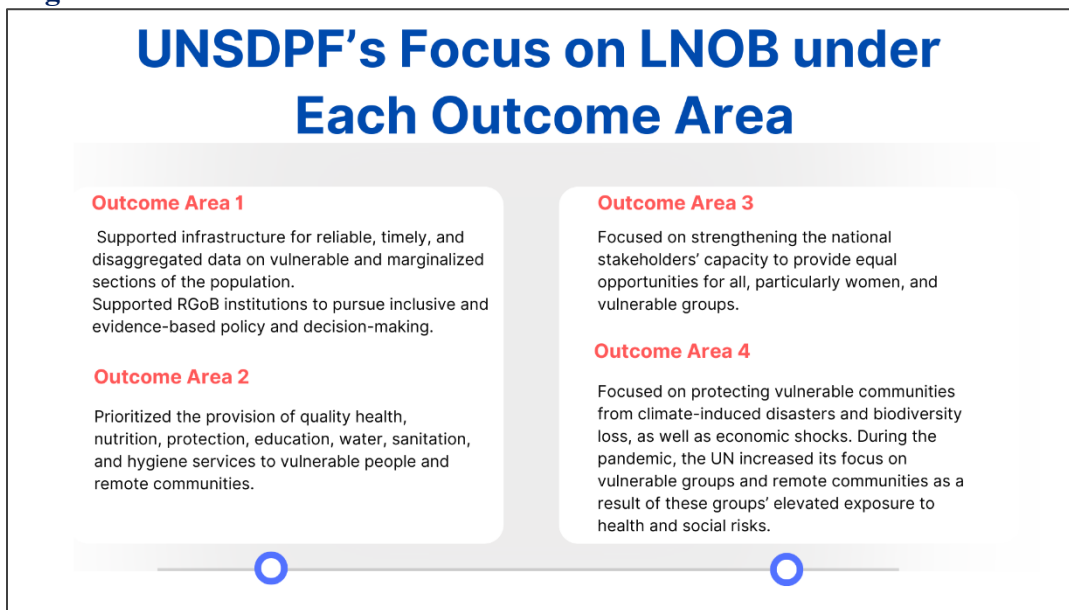
<sup>30</sup> UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-1-Programming-Principles.

<sup>31</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> FYP defines a just society as one where every citizen has equitable access to resources & opportunities to pursue and realize individual & national aspirations. GNH as the philosophy & policy approach of Bhutan underpins the importance of LNOB. The 12<sup>th</sup> FYP has defined 17 NKRAAs, ten of which directly aim at LNOB.

<sup>32</sup> In 2016, Bhutan identified 14 socio-economic groups as being at risk of being left behind.

development, hand in hand with good governance. To channel the necessary support to vulnerable groups in a coordinated fashion, has UNCT established several dedicated inter-agency groups such as the *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Task Team*, *Disability Task Team*, and the *Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Team*. These structures are established to coordinate the work of the UN system in each of the key areas related to the LNOB principle. The work of these groups is summarized in the “Programme Overview” section of this report. The rest of this section presents the key highlights of UN’s work in relation to the LNOB principle. As shown in the figure below, for each outcome area UNSDPF’s main focus has been on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups such as children, youth, women, persons with disabilities, people at social risk and those living with health challenges.

**Figure 8: UNSDPF’s Focus on LNOB**



The rest of this section of the report provides a brief assessment of the compliance of the work of the UN system in Bhutan with the following LNOB principles: (1) Human Rights, (2) Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, (3) Sustainability and Resilience, and (4) Accountability.

### **1. Human Rights**

The UNSDPF was designed to address discrimination and inequalities, meet the essential needs of vulnerable people, tackle extreme poverty, enable voice and participation, and promote equitable and inclusive decision-making. As such, the UNSDPF is anchored on a strong human-rights-based approach.

Upon the official visit of the Arbitrary Detention Working Group in 2019, the UN system, and OHCHR in particular, have elevated their engagement with Bhutan on human rights issues. The UN has supported the engagement of government bodies, civil society and rights-holders with the international human rights mechanisms, including processes related to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), etc. In particular, the UN has supported the Government in its engagement with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. In the



context of the UPR, the UN has supported the mapping of the recommendations for follow-up and implementation through the agencies' programmes.

The table below lists the human rights related conventions signed or ratified by Bhutan, which provide the basis for the interaction of the UN agencies with national partners.

**Table 5: Human Rights related Conventions Signed by Bhutan**

Name of Human Rights Convention	Year of signature and/or ratification
Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination	1973 (s)**
Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women	1980 (s), 1981(s)
Convention on the Rights of the Child	1990 (s), 1990 (r)
International Conference on Population and Development	1994 (s)**
Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	2005 (s), 2009 (r)
Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	2005 (s), 2009 (r)
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	2010 (s) **
SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia	2002 (s), 2005 (r)
SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution	2002 (s), 2003 (r)

\*\*As of 2022, Bhutan has not ratified the Convention.

The table below shows the UNSDPF outcomes that directly contribute to the fulfillment of commitments emanating for Bhutan from key human rights conventions.

**Table 6: UNSDPF's Contribution to the Fulfillment of Human Rights Conventions**

UNSDPF Outcomes	Recommendations based on Human Rights Conventions
1. Enhanced access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>: Recommendations 8(b), 9(a) to (d), 10(a) and (b), 39(b)</li> <li>• <i>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2016)</i>: Recommendations 9(a), 13 (b), (c), (d), 17 (c) and (d), 19(e); 21(b), (c), 25(b), (c), 31, 33, 35, 37(a), 41</li> </ul>
2. Vulnerable and unreached people access and receive quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>: Recommendations 5, 6, 7, 8(a), (c), 11(a), 15(a) and (b), 17(a) and (b), 28(a) and (b), 29, 30, 32(a) to (h), 34, 35(f), (g), 42(a), (b) (c), 44(a), (b), (c)</li> <li>• <i>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2016)</i>: Recommendations 17(a) and (b), 25(a), (c), (d), 29(a), (b), 37(c), 44</li> </ul>
3. National stakeholders strengthened to provide equal opportunities for all, particularly women and vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>: Recommendations 10(b), (c) 12, 13(a) and (b), 16(a), (b), (c), 18(a), (b), 21, 22(a), (b) (c), 24(a) to (f), 26, 27, 33, 35(a) to (e), 39(a), (c) to (g), 40, 41, 46(a) to (d), 47(a) to (f), 48(a) to (e), 49, 50, 51, 52, 53</li> <li>• <i>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2016)</i>, recommendations 9(b), 11(a), (b), (c), 13(a), 15, 19(a) to (e), (f), 21(a) and (d), 23(a), (b), (c), 27(a), (b), (c), 31, 37(b), Optional Protocol 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 46</li> </ul>

4. Bhutan’s communities and its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss as well as economic vulnerability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>, recommendations 36(a), (b), (c), 37</li> <li>• <i>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2016)</i>: Recommendations 35</li> </ul>
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Recognizing the critical role of the *Parliament* for the realization of human rights, the UN has supported the capacity development of parliamentarians on specific issues, including human rights, gender, justice, and social protection.<sup>33</sup> The UN’s support for the Parliament’s Business Continuity Plan helped parliamentarians to exercise their critical oversight, legislative and representational functions during the pandemic. The UN supported Members of Parliament and members of the LGBTQ community to participate in the Global LGBTQ forum. The UN has also facilitated the discussion of the UPR between Members of Parliament and local CSOs. Further, the 2004 Penal Code was successfully amended in 2020 to de-criminalize same-sex relations and increase the penalty for rape in the Civil and Criminal Procedure Code.

In the *judiciary sector*, UN’s interventions included: (1) enhancing the capacity of the Bench Clerks on the “Interpretation of Laws”; (2) development of the Justice Sector Strategic Plan; (3) development of a child-centered curriculum and a family law course based on international and national standards; (4) assessment of options for the diversion<sup>34</sup> of “*children in conflict with the law*” (CICL) and standardization of procedures for the effective rehabilitation of CICL; (5) production of a policy brief on child-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection in Bhutan<sup>35</sup> in partnership with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG); and, (6) establishment of an e-litigation system<sup>36</sup> and the country’s first official Legal Aid Guidelines.

To improve *access to quality social services for unreached children and adolescents* including children with disabilities,<sup>37</sup> the UN has supported the RGoB to develop policies and strategies for water, sanitation and hygiene. The UN also supported the upgrading of the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) which provides systematic and quality data for critical indicators on disability, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health status, and the dietary habits of school children. The UN has also provided support for food fortification,<sup>38</sup> health systems<sup>39</sup> and the development of the National Education Assessment Framework to improve learning outcomes

<sup>33</sup> The UN has supported the conduct of an assessment for the establishment of a joint center for both Houses of Parliament. This support has made the Parliament’s operations more efficient and has enhanced its capacity to carry out its core functions.

<sup>34</sup> The goal of diversion is to remove youths as early in the juvenile justice process as possible to avoid later negative outcomes associated with formal processing, such as increased odds of recidivism, stigmatization/labeling, and increased criminal justice costs

<sup>35</sup> The brief advocates for child-sensitive cash transfers in Bhutan through the introduction of a universal child benefit.

<sup>36</sup> The judiciary was able to conduct 13.5% of the total court hearings virtually in 12 different courts in 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Around 600 children, including children with disabilities, gained access to early and inclusive learning programmes.

<sup>38</sup> Proven strategy to address micronutrient deficiencies by adding essential vitamins & minerals to commonly eaten staple foods to improve nutrient intake

<sup>39</sup> Based on primary health care and universal health coverage which includes access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, especially for adolescents and youth.

and integrated life skills-based comprehensive sexual education into the mainstream school curriculum.<sup>40</sup> The Adolescent Friendly Health Services modules and Bachelor of Arts in Social Work were introduced into diploma courses and college education curriculums. In an effort to create a more inclusive service delivery program for vulnerable populations, National Midwifery and Family Planning Service Standards were revised by including specific guidelines for the adolescent and LGBTIQ community. The UN also supported the acceleration of a new Mother and Child Health Policy by assessing emergency maternal obstetric and neonatal care services.

The UN has also provided support to ensure *protection for children and young people*, including monks and nuns. The UN advanced upstream policy efforts to tackle inequality, especially with respect to women and girls.<sup>41</sup> Bhutan's first ever National Child Policy and National Youth Policy was developed.<sup>42</sup> The early identification and safe referral of child protection has been developed to better inform stakeholders on existing national child protection laws, rules and regulations.<sup>43</sup> Further, the UN facilitated the education of young people in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and GBV prevention through support for the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER) network.<sup>44</sup>

The UN also supported the RGoB and CSOs in creating an enabling environment for advancing the *rights of Persons with Disabilities* (PwDs). The National Policy for PwDs was approved in 2019. The capacity to mainstream disability across all sectors, including education, health, access to finance and infrastructure was improved through the adoption of the Action Plan for the National Policy for PwDs. The Action Plan laid the foundation for adopting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which RGoB is yet to ratify. The UN supported CSOs in designing and piloting the Disability Equality Training (DET) and ensured that 16 of the 20 districts have reached the target of having at least one SEN School.<sup>45</sup> The DET model gave PwDs the platform to share their experiences and raise awareness of their challenges, helping participants take concrete actions towards inclusion.<sup>46</sup> The rights of PwD have also been enhanced through teacher training and parenting education. The UN has ensured that inclusive education principles are integrated into the 18-month Post Graduate Diploma in Education. In addition, the Disabled

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<sup>40</sup> UN provided support in conducting Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Schools in communities & monastic institutions to enable young people and adolescents to make informed choices about their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and supported the development of policies & guidelines for these institutions and CSOs.

<sup>41</sup> This is articulated in National Key Result Area 10

<sup>42</sup> These policies promote integrated services, protection and empowerment of children, adolescents and youth.

<sup>43</sup> With the support from UN, child protection has now enabled monks and nuns to recognize and report issues of violence, abuse, and exploitation.

<sup>44</sup> The Youth Peer Education Network is a comprehensive youth-to- youth initiative connecting thousands of young people to promote healthy life styles and to empower young people at different levels through peer-to-peer approach.

<sup>45</sup> Through this initiative, physiotherapists and caretakers have received training on wheelchair package services for Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>46</sup> A report by UN Partnership on Rights of PwDs, DETs led to a marked increase in confidence levels of participants in providing services to PwDs, with 100% increase in participants responding "very confident" in providing services to wheelchair users, 300% increase for those providing services to hearing impaired, 177% increase for those providing services to blind & 200% for those providing services to people with an intellectual disability.

People's Organization of Bhutan was established<sup>47</sup> and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy was adopted by the UNCT.

To combat *Trafficking in Persons (TIP)*, the landmark Bhutan Penal Code (Amendment Act) was adopted in 2021.<sup>48</sup> The UN organized capacity building workshops for judiciary officials and launched an official Training Manual.<sup>49</sup> The National Prevention and Response Strategy was also drafted, and the UN supported the development of a National Action Plan to prevent and counter TIP in Bhutan. The UN also supported the launch of the first-ever Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for a Multi-sectoral Response to TIP<sup>50</sup> which was approved by the Cabinet in 2019.

With regard to the *elderly population*, the UN supported the development of the National Strategy on Healthy Aging and organized a Training of Trainers on Integrated Care for Older People. Further, the UN supported the preparation of the study "*The Current Situation and Future Prospects of the Elderly: Bhutan Ageing Report, 2022.*"

During the *COVID-19 pandemic*, the UN supported the provision of accessible, equitable and quality healthcare, education and nutrition services to children, adolescents, women and hard-to-reach population groups. A National Child Protection and Gender-based Violence COVID-19 Response Plan was developed and implemented with UN's assistance.<sup>51</sup> The UN also supported the submission of the first-ever Civil Society Report and Children's Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. To ensure child-friendly justice delivery during pandemic, the UN supported the National Commission for Women and Children to develop guidelines on "*COVID-19 and Children Deprived of Liberty*". The UN also assisted with the development of the Case Management Guidelines for Child Protection and Gender-based Violence.<sup>52</sup> Further, to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and services for women and children, the UN assisted the Royal Bhutan Police in improving the reporting of women and children related cases in the Crime Information Management System (CIMS). In addition, to ensure access to legal services during the pandemic<sup>53</sup> UN supported the development of an e-litigation system. To reach the most vulnerable, the UN supported CSOs to deliver targeted approaches to livelihood support.<sup>54</sup> Continuity of school learning was ensured during the nationwide closure of schools due to COVID-19. The UN contributed to an Education-in-Emergencies COVID-19 Response Plan. This work included the development of guidelines for re-opening schools/centers and the adaptation of curricula to ensure continuity of school learning. The UN facilitated faster access to medical

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<sup>47</sup> Six CSO's working in the disability space now operate under this umbrella.

<sup>48</sup> This strengthened Bhutan's capacity to effectively prevent & counter TIP, protect & assist survivors, in line with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish TIPs.

<sup>49</sup> Objective of the training was to enhance capability & skills of judges to effectively detect TIP cases & implement anti-trafficking legislation.

<sup>50</sup> Through these SOPs, 37 individuals were trained.

<sup>51</sup> Its implementation facilitated delivering of quality gender & child-responsive services during pandemic. In response to 53% increase in reported GBV cases during 2020, UN supported in establishment of shelter homes & 24-hour help-desk services with focus on case management & psychosocial support.

<sup>52</sup> Multi-sector Ending Violence Against Children campaign focusing on physical & sexual violence, online safety and mental health was rolled out in 2022 with UN support.

<sup>53</sup> benefitting over 300 people. The judiciary was able to conduct 13.5% of the total court hearings virtually in 12 different courts across the country.

<sup>54</sup> UN supported the Disabled People's Organization to create 4 small businesses for 30 PwD.

services through the introduction of an innovative One-Stop Crisis Seal at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital.<sup>55</sup> To protect children and women, operational guidelines<sup>56</sup> were developed and implemented to ensure access to essential maternal health care. Further, the UN supported a pilot e-health system using mobile cardiocography devices (iCTGs) in support of “reaching every pregnant woman with quality gynecological and obstetric services through iCTG.” The UN also supported the emergency services (Health Help Centre) with critical IT equipment to ensure business continuity amidst heightened demand during the pandemic. During the pandemic, the UN supported shelter homes and 24-hour help-desk services. It also supported an advocacy campaign on the International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women.<sup>57</sup>

With regards to the perceptions of UNSDPF stakeholders, a significant number of UN staff and development partners involved in this evaluation believe that the UN has played an important role in the promotion of human rights. For example, about 83% of UN staff responding to the online survey agreed with the statement that “*the UNSDPF has adequately incorporated human rights as a cross-cutting principle*”. As for government officials responding to this evaluation’s survey, 72% agreed that the UNSDPF has adequately incorporated human rights as a cross-cutting principle in the activities of the UN agencies. When broken down in the rights of specific vulnerable groups, the response of UN staff members is more diverse. For example, about 92% of staff members thought that “*the UNSDPF has adequately incorporated gender equality as a cross-cutting principle*”. About 75% believed that “*the UNSDPF has adequately incorporated the rights of children/youth as a cross-cutting principle*”. And about 75% of respondents thought that “*the UNSDPF has adequately incorporated the rights of PwDs as a cross-cutting principle*”. As for government officials responding to the evaluation’s survey, all of them agreed that the UNSDPF has adequately incorporated gender equality and right of children and PwDs as a cross-cutting principle.

## **2. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**

Since the closure of the UN Women office in Bhutan in 2018, UNDP has been leading the UN’s thematic group on gender. The UN’s contribution to *Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment* (GEWE) reached a new milestone with RGoB’s endorsement of the Gender Equality Policy in 2019, followed by the development of the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality. The Gender Equality Policy provides a broad framework for policies, programmes, and practices that promote equal rights, opportunities, and benefits for women and men in the family, community, workplace, and in the society at large.<sup>58</sup> The UN also facilitated the inclusion of female perspectives in the drafting of the 10<sup>th</sup> Periodic Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

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<sup>55</sup> This allowed GBV survivors to access medical services in a short span of time by enabling hospital employees and doctors to prioritize their cases. Sensitization workshops for hospital employees were also conducted, which aided in successful implementation of the service.

<sup>56</sup> It provided continuity of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child health and nutrition services during the pandemic and women who were detected with cervical cancer. More than 12,000 women continued to receive treatment services during pandemic.

<sup>57</sup> This action brought together decision and policymakers to invest in prevention of sexual harassment and GBV initiatives.

<sup>58</sup> The Policy forms the basis for the pursuit of equal opportunities for women & men to achieve their full potential and benefit equitably from social, economic, and political development in the country.



Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) report.<sup>59</sup> The UN supported the Election Commission of Bhutan to create an enabling environment for the participation of women in elections. The voter education activities contributed to an increased women-voter turnout in the local elections of 2021.<sup>60</sup>

UN's pilot project on the primary prevention of Gender-based Violence (GBV)<sup>61</sup> supported the testing of localized adaptations of evidence-based primary prevention at the community level by targeting adolescents and caregivers.<sup>62</sup> Further, the UN supported the development of SOPs and related tools on GBV to ensure the coordination and referral processes, information sharing, and accountability measures for service providers for women and children in need. Clinical management of GBV and essential service packages were implemented in regional hospitals. Similarly, the UN also supported the strengthening of the mechanisms and procedures for the protection of victims and survivors of GBV through the development and implementation of a GBV Contingency Plan.<sup>63</sup> A significant contribution has been the support in the development of Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policies in academic institutions which are being advocated as a national policy by higher level authorities and institutions. Other contributions include contribution to gender policies, inclusion of gender in youth policies and other strategies. Strengthening awareness about GBV, its prevention and care seeking has been described in the preceding sections and has contributed to establishing a continuum of care across multiple sectors and constituencies. The partnerships established through RENEW and youth networks contribute to building accountability to end GBV. The UN has also supported the private sector in creating a more female-friendly work environment by facilitating an ongoing dialogue for a more inclusive, healthier and fairer work environment for women. Several training programs were organized, targeting 140 business leaders and individuals from the private sector. This made private sector operators commit to creating company-specific policies to promote equality in the workplace.

While the UN's work on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment has provided important contributions for the country, it would be beneficial for the UNCT to conduct a gender assessment of the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in order to understand in more detail the UN system's performance in the country against minimum standards for GEWE. The UN agencies should also seek to identify opportunities for joint programming and joint capacity building events with a focus on GEWE.

### ***3. Environmental and Community Sustainability and Resilience***

UN's support in the area of *Environmental Sustainability* has addressed gaps in climate change adaptation and disaster risk management (primarily, awareness, coordination and preparedness).

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<sup>59</sup> The process resulted in RGoB's commitment to prepare a high-quality report scheduled for submission to CEDAW Committee in 2022.

<sup>60</sup> In the 2021 local government elections, female representation increased by one-fifth compared to the previous elections.

<sup>61</sup> In Bhutan, the bulk of protection systems concentrate on secondary & tertiary prevention or response services where assistance arrives after the violent act has already occurred.

<sup>62</sup> This approach brings transformational social change in attitudes, behavior, and actions towards gender equality and prevention of GBV.

<sup>63</sup> In this context, the UN supported 300 groups of vulnerable women impacted by COVID-19 with livelihood skills.

The main areas of focus have been: (1) completion of the “Climate Risk Assessment”; (2) refinement of the earthquake impact assessment modelling methodology; (3) preparation of the 72-hour Rapid Assessment Approach enabling predictions of the impact of future disasters; and, (4) development of Climate Resilient Road Construction guidelines.<sup>64</sup>

The UN supported the development of Bhutan’s first National Adaptation Plan (NAP).<sup>65</sup> To support its implementation, a concept note on “*Climate Adaptation, Resilience and Engagement in Local Government*” was submitted to and approved by the GEF. The UN also supported Bhutan’s “Direct Access to Climate Financing” for locally led adaptation, by assisting the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation’s accreditation with the Green Climate Fund. In addition, the UN supported the development of the Roadmap for Disaster Risk Management in Bhutan (Towards a Safer and Resilient Bhutan) and the establishment of the National Logistics Preparedness Working Group. As a result, a National Action Plan was developed to further enhance the country’s logistics preparedness in the face of future disasters and emergencies. The UN also supported the development of the second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), informed by low emission development strategies in key priority sectors of human settlements, transport, industry, and agriculture.<sup>66</sup> To enable Bhutan to develop gender-responsive climate policies, institutions, mitigation and adaptation strategies, the UN supported the government to conduct an in-depth assessment of the linkages between Gender and Climate Action.

The UN also made contributions towards making the economy, foremost agriculture, more robust and making Bhutan’s vulnerable communities more resilient to climate-induced disasters and biodiversity losses. The UN provided support to farmers to become more resilient to climate induced shocks by scaling up climate resilient technologies and practices<sup>67</sup> and by transforming the food system through appropriate adaptation of farming systems.<sup>68</sup> The UN Food System Summit 2021 dialogues resulted in the submission of Bhutan’s pathway document “*Food Systems for Gross National Happiness – transformative pathways for Bhutan.*” The UN also supported the revision of the Renewable Natural Resources Strategy 2030, in line with UN’s aim to support the development of a holistic food system approach in Bhutan.<sup>69</sup> To reduce human-wildlife conflict, the UN supported the RGoB to develop a new institutional framework using a science-based safe-system intervention.

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<sup>64</sup> The guidelines provide design standards to ensure climate-informed road infrastructure development.

<sup>65</sup> NAP was informed by gender sensitive vulnerability assessments undertaken in priority sectors of Agriculture, Forest and Biodiversity, Health, and Water. In addition to setting the adaptation priorities for medium-long term, NAP served as important national instrument to mobilize international climate financing.

<sup>66</sup> The RGoB submitted its NDC to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and it now serves as an investment framework for Bhutan.

<sup>67</sup> One of UN’s strategies for climate-resilient food systems was to support food self-sufficiency and promote Renewable Natural Resources, while ensuring sustainable resource management in Bhutan’s 12th FYP.

<sup>68</sup> This included distribution of green technologies to farmers, saving them both time and money, helping safeguard Bhutan’s biodiversity and reducing pressure on Bhutan’s natural resources. As a result, farmers obtained secure access to climate-proof irrigation channels that enable crop diversification, resulting in greater income opportunities.

<sup>69</sup> The strategy aimed to ensure food and nutrition security, boosting GDP contribution of Renewable Natural Resources, business & employment generation, rural prosperity & urban wellbeing, sustainable natural resource management and Bhutan’s carbon neutral status. The UN supported the drafting of the marketing strategy steering the Renewable Natural Resources sector towards market-oriented production and inclusive business opportunities.

The UN also provided support in building the meteorological and weather forecasting capacity of the National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology (NCHM), enabling tailored climate products and services for farmers, helping them make critical decisions, climate informed decisions regarding agricultural practices. With support of the UN, the National Land Commission was able to use drones in surveying inhospitable and unfriendly topographical areas. These aerial images from drones were integrated with surveying workflows to perform various surveys, mapping and remote sensing analysis. The UN also supported the development of a GIS-based building inventory system.<sup>70</sup> Under the “*Capacity building in Disaster Resilient Construction*” initiative, the UN supported the training of construction experts on topics such as ‘seismic resilient stone masonry construction,’ ‘confined masonry construction,’ and ‘windstorm resilient roofing systems.’<sup>71</sup>

#### **4. Accountability**

The UN supported the development of the first-ever Governance Framework for CSO engagement, which promotes CSOs as equal partners on key matters such as justice, governance, and anti-corruption. To expand the civil space in the country, two major activities were undertaken in 2021 – the amendment of the CSO Bill and the formulation of the Guidelines for CSO-Government collaboration.<sup>72</sup> Further, through its Democracy Fund, the UN enabled elected leaders, educators, and underserved groups to enhance their analytical skills. This was in line with the national priority to deepen democratic culture through enhancing civic awareness, democratic governance, and citizen participation in decision-making.

The UN also supported the strengthening of the capacities of key institutions that ensure public accountability in Bhutan – this included the Parliament and the Judiciary. The focus of this support has been in enhancing transparency, accountability, and integrity measures for a fair and just society. The interventions have contributed to the creation of equal opportunities for all, through an equitable and inclusive legal and policy environment and by building a more inclusive and participatory system through a variety of dialogues and space-enhancing initiatives. The UN has facilitated the Parliament and the justice sector institutions to have meaningful engagement with citizens, which has led to increased inclusion, transparency, and accountability.<sup>73</sup> The UN also supported an assessment for establishing a joint center for both Houses of Parliament, making the Parliament’s operations more efficient and enhancing its capacity to discharge its core functions. In addition, the UN’s support for the Business Continuity Plan of the Parliament helped ensure critical oversight and legislative and representational functions during the pandemic.

One of the cornerstones of UN’s support has been the partnership with the media. The UN collaborated closely with the Journalists’ Association of Bhutan, Bhutan Media and Communications Institute, Bhutan Media Foundation and Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy. The UN contributed with capacity building support for journalists and organized a

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<sup>70</sup> It was developed in 3 districts and an earthquake risk analysis was conducted and shared with relevant stakeholders. The project was implemented by the Department of Engineering Services with funding support from the UN.

<sup>71</sup> A total of 1,883 (189 female) artisans, engineers, technicians, instructors, trainees, and local leaders were trained.

<sup>72</sup> Government- CSO collaboration was aimed at achieving the broad goals of GNH in the country.

<sup>73</sup> Thanks to this support, the Parliament institutionalized for the first time public hearings and conducted the first public hearing session which was broadcast live on national television and on social media platforms.



series of events to engage mainstream media freelancers, independent filmmakers, and social media influencers on climate reporting. Further, UN’s engagement with the Bhutan Media Foundation and World Wildlife Fund led to the initiation of Breakfast Meetings with Climate Action journalists and workshops on the SDGs and Climate Change to bring stakeholders together to discuss key issues. Through this partnership, the membership of the Journalist Association of Bhutan has now been extended beyond the mainstream media.

Leading by example, the UN has promoted accountability in the area of environmental protection. UN agencies have committed to replacing fossil fuel consuming vehicles with eco-friendly hybrid/electric cars.<sup>74</sup> The UN invested in a 10 kW Solar PV grid-tied system that has generated over 35,000 units of electricity to date. In line with Business Operation Strategy 2.0, the installation of a photovoltaic solar system offset 100% of the electricity consumption of the UN House in 2021. This initiative makes the UN House the first carbon neutral office in Bhutan. The 83 KV grid rooftop solar PV system and the 20 KW space heater use innovative energy efficient measures and encourages offices and other institutional buildings to replicate the initiative.<sup>75</sup> The UN also launched the “Greening the Blue” initiative aimed at discontinuing the use of plastic in the UN House and hotels contracted by the UN agencies.<sup>76</sup> These actions are testament to the UNCT’s commitment to promote sustainable development through a more climate-smart manner when it comes to business operations.

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In summary, the UNSDPF has been relevant to national priorities and the country’s needs. A key feature of the work of the UN system in Bhutan has been its significant focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged people. The UN system has placed a strong emphasis on “*Leaving No One Behind*” principle, both in its regular programme prior to the pandemic and in its response to the COVID-19 crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the UNSDPF implementation, requiring flexibility and adaptation. For all the challenges presented by the crisis, it has created an opportunity for the UN agencies to rally together in response as one body – a real embodiment of the “*One UN*” approach. UN’s response was developed on the basis of extended research on the impacts of COVID-19 across a range of areas of direct interest to the UN. SERP was exemplary – well-formulated, action-oriented, costed, timely, evidence-based and well-coordinated by the UNRCO. The COVID-19 response was guided by the “leave no one behind” principle, focusing on the needs of vulnerable populations.

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<sup>74</sup> Implemented trial launch of WFP Fleet Management System in order to streamline carpooling solutions and created a virtual connectivity network with its local bank to reduce carbon footprint by drivers travelling to bank by 95%.

<sup>75</sup> This initiative will save over USD 7,000 in annual energy costs and will help the government export surplus energy to India resulting in the mitigation of 132.62 tons of carbon dioxide per year. The office also began a partnership with Bhutan Power Corporation for grid integration.

<sup>76</sup> This initiative has eliminated the consumption of 2,400 plastic bottles per month.

## 4.2. EFFECTIVENESS

This section presents an assessment of the effectiveness of the work of the UN system under the UNSDPF. The first part provides a quick assessment of the design of the programme. The second part provides a discussion of the way in which the UN system measures, tracks and reports results. The third part provides a broad overview of UN’s major contributions in each of the UNSDPF outcome areas.

### ***Evaluation Questions:***

- ***To what extent has the UNSDPF reached the targeted beneficiaries and institutions and contributed to achieved expected results outlined in the results framework (Outcome and Output)?***
- ***To what extent has the UNSDPF strengthened the position, credibility, and reliability of the UN system as a partner of the government and other actors, and has served as an effective partnership vehicle?***

### 4.2.1. Programme Design

The UNSDPF is one of the first in a new generation of UN frameworks that respond to the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).<sup>77</sup> It is also one of the first frameworks that is based on the revised guidelines of the UN Sustainable Development Group for simpler, more strategic, outcome-focused frameworks. While the UN system in Bhutan has “*Delivered as One*” since 2008 with joint annual work plans agreed and signed by the RGoB and the UN, the UNSDPF goes a step further: it defines joint outputs for all UN agencies in an effort to make the UNSDPF the central programming tool of the UN.<sup>78</sup>

Overall, the UNSDPF document is well-formulated and provides a comprehensive analysis of the country context, especially in the areas covered by UN activities. The document identifies with clarity the country’s development needs and priorities and outlines UN’s strategic approach to addressing them. The document also provides a good description of the main institutional arrangements for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the UNSDPF.

The UNSDPF document does not provide a detailed description of the formulation process, making it difficult to assess the extent to which national governmental and non-governmental partners were genuinely involved in the design of the framework. However, based on the feedback received for this evaluation, it appears that the formulation of the UNSDPF has not been fully inclusive. From the perspective of UN staff members, the formulation of the UNSDPF should have been more participatory and open to external partners – only 50% of UN staff members responding to the evaluation survey stated that “*the UNSDPF was planned in a participatory fashion between UN agencies, Government bodies and non-governmental stakeholders*”. Similarly, only 43% of

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<sup>77</sup> The quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) is the mechanism through which the General Assembly assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of the UN operational activities for development, and it establishes system-wide policy orientations for operational activities for development and country-level modalities of the UN.

<sup>78</sup> Annex 1: UNSDPF for Bhutan (2019-2023) document.

government officials responding to the evaluation survey agreed that the UNSDPF was planned in a participatory fashion between UN agencies and Government bodies.

### Theory of Change

UNSDPF was underpinned by a Theory of Change, which was prepared based on the Common Country Analysis (CCA) of 2018 that consisted of five analytical modules<sup>79</sup> that were led by UN agencies with in-depth knowledge and expertise in the respective areas. The CCA was conducted on the basis of consultations with the RGoB, development partners, civil society, academia and the private sector. The TOC is aligned with the overarching framework of the “Agenda 2030” and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness (GNH) principles of responsible, sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development. It has also fully incorporated the concept of leaving no one behind. Furthermore, the ToC has given due consideration to the feasibility of identified objectives, UN’s comparative advantage and the UN’s positioning vis-à-vis other development partners. However, the ToC could have been further developed and refined to reflect more clearly the links between the challenges faced by the country, planned strategic interventions, expected outcomes and impact.

### Results Framework

The UNSDPF document includes a results framework envisaged to enable the UN system to measure and track results at the national level on a regular basis. The results framework constitutes the basis on which the UNSDPF outcome groups have developed annual joint work plans (AJWPs) for each outcome area. The UNSDPF results framework includes four outcomes, 11 outputs and the corresponding indicators, baselines and targets.<sup>80</sup> A quick assessment of quality of output indicators shows that most indicators meet the SMART criteria.<sup>81</sup> However, some implementing partners interviewed for this evaluation noted that some of the indicators were vague and difficult to report against. The quality of indicators has been a main theme of CPB meetings, with repeated suggestions to improve the quality of indicators.<sup>82</sup> Also, some UN agencies noted that there is not always a good match between the UNSDPF indicators and the indicators used by the agencies in their country programmes, which makes the aggregation of results challenging. Also, the definition of baselines and targets remains incomplete, with four baselines missing<sup>83</sup> and seven out of 81 targets not set.<sup>84</sup>

The results framework has been flexible and has been adapted to changes required by the evolving situation, particularly the emergency situation triggered by the pandemic. UN agencies developed an initial joint response framework— “*UN Bhutan COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan*” (Bhutan’s SERP)— that included Bhutan’s localized UNCT response across five pillars and aligned with the Government’s new plans and priorities. Consequently, funds were reappropriated

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<sup>79</sup> The Population Situation Analysis 2017, Vision 2030, Comparative Advantages of UN Agencies, Capacity Assessment, and Development Finance Assessment.

<sup>80</sup> Annex 1: UNSDPF for Bhutan (2019-2023) document.

<sup>81</sup> SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

<sup>82</sup> See for example the CPB meeting notes from 18 February 2022.

<sup>83</sup> The baselines are either not available or marked as “*pending*”.

<sup>84</sup> Some of the targets in the results framework are marked “*TBD*” (to be determined).

to implement activities in response to the COVID-19 emergency. Similarly, indicators under different outputs were either revised or removed/replaced to meet emerging and unforeseen development needs, especially of the most vulnerable and those left furthest behind. The table below shows the number of UNSDPF output indicators that were changed over time, while the outcomes and the outputs remained the same.

**Table 7: UNSDPF's Outcome and Output Indicators**

<b>Outcomes &amp; Outputs</b>	<b>No of indicators as per the UNSDPF document</b>	<b>Change in Indicators</b>
<b>Outcome 1</b>		
<b>SDG and Outputs</b>		
SDG 17	1	No of indicators = 2 (One new indicator added)
Outcome 1.1	1	Revised
Output 1.1	4	Two indicators (1.1.1 and 1.1.4) were revised
Output 1.2	4	Indicator 1.2.4 was revised and indicator 1.2.3 was removed
<b>Outcome 2</b>		
SDG 3	1	Revised/new indicator
SDG 16	1	Removed
Outcome 2.1	1	
Outcome 2.2	1	
Outcome 2.3	1	
Outcome 2.4	1	
Outcome 2.5	1	
Outcome 2.6	1	
Outcome 2.7	1	
Outcome 2.8	1	
Outcome 2.9	1	New indicator/revised
Outcome 2.10	1	New indicator/revised
Output 2.1	5	11 indicators. Six new indicators added
Output 2.2	6	One indicator revised and one new indicator added
Output 2.3	12	20 indicators (eight more indicators added)
<b>Outcome 3</b>		
SDG5	1	
Outcome 3.1	1	
Outcome 3.2	1	
Outcome 3.3	1	
Outcome 3.4	1	Revised
Outcome 3.5	1	
Output 3.1	2	
Output 3.2	5	Two indicators removed
<b>Outcome 4</b>		
SDG 1	1	
SDG 15	1	
Outcome 4.1	1	
Outcome 4.2	1	
Outcome 4.3	1	
Outcome 4.4	1	Revised

<b>Outcomes &amp; Outputs</b>	<b>No of indicators as per the UNSDPF document</b>	<b>Change in Indicators</b>
Outcome 4.5		New indicator
Output 4.1	5	Increased to 6 indicators - One new indicator added
Output 4.2	5	Increased to 11 indicators (new indicators added)
Output 4.3	3	
Output 4.4	4	

At the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the outcome groups performed a review of the UNSDPF workplan, indicators, and activities, which resulted in the adjustment of some targets to ensure a more effective monitoring of progress under the UNSDPF. This adjustment was necessary to address the evolving needs during the pandemic, especially the needs of vulnerable groups. Implementing partners interviewed for this evaluation noted that a comprehensive consultation with stakeholders was not carried out while revising UNSDPF activities and indicators. Subsequently, these partners found out later that some of the revised indicators were vague and difficult to report against.

Three key observations may be drawn from the analysis of the UNSDPF’s results framework. First, for a framework of this importance, it will be essential for the UNCT to develop a complete results framework, with all baselines and targets determined and defined upfront in alignment with the country’s SDG framework. Second, the current number of output indicators is excessive and represents a burden for the UNCT, and especially the outcome groups and the PME thematic group, in their efforts to track progress and report on achievements. Third, the development and revision of the results framework should be done with the full involvement of the national counterparts, especially the implementing partners.

For the upcoming development cooperation framework, UNCT and RGoB should identify a smaller number of more meaningful and better-defined indicators which are directly related to the activities of the UN system. A reduced number of indicators will make the monitoring process more manageable. It will also be important to select indicators for which there is reliable data and that can thus be tracked and have a baseline. It will also be essential to identify indicators that can be disaggregated, not only by gender, but also by other key demographics (given UNSDPF’s focus on vulnerable groups). Furthermore, it will be useful for the UNCT to develop meta-data for the UNSDCF indicators, which will help to organize, locate, understand, and manage data sets.<sup>85</sup>

**4.2.2. Monitoring & Evaluation and Reporting**

The discussion of UNSDPF’s design and results framework in the previous section leads to the discussion of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes put in place by the UNCT to track the implementation of the UNSDPF and report on achievements made jointly by the agencies.

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<sup>85</sup> Metadata is used to describe various aspects of a data set, such as its creator, creation date, format, keywords, or other relevant attributes. By providing context and additional details about the data, metadata helps users to find, access, and effectively use the data, while also enabling better data management and interoperability between different systems.

## M&E System

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is the basis by which the UN assesses its contributions to RGoB's 12<sup>th</sup> FYP and the country's SDGs targets. The monitoring and evaluation of the UNSDPF is a joint responsibility of the RGoB and the UNCT, under the coordination of the Country Programme Board and the outcome groups (OGs). The UN system in Bhutan has also established a Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) team whose purpose is to provide technical support to OGs by monitoring results across outcomes for higher level impact of the UNSDPF, especially for vulnerable groups.

For the monitoring of the achievement of UNSDPF's objectives the UNCT relies on the UNINFO,<sup>86</sup> as well as the national M&E system established by the GNHC Secretariat. The latter is the standard system for monitoring Bhutan's development plans. The UN's M&E framework is aligned with the country's Development Evaluation Policy,<sup>87</sup> which applies to all development plans, projects, programmes and policies implemented by agencies or organizations within and outside the government.<sup>88</sup> Individual UN agencies have their own M&E systems, which in some cases are not aligned with the UNSDPF's M&E framework.

The key UNSDPF structures for the M&E process are the OGs. These groups are primarily focused on the collection and sharing of data, tracking of indicators and preparation of annual UNSDPF reports. They are also engaged with the tracking of SDGs and capacity building initiatives at the level of the UN.<sup>89</sup> The M&E framework is updated annually by the OGs. Based on the input of the OGs, the UNCT and UNRCO track the achievement of UNSDPF indicators on an annual basis. The UNCT through its annual planning and review process formulates annual updates on UNSDPF's results and resources framework.

The UNSDPF has been useful for reporting the efforts and achievements of the UN system in the country. The common planning and reporting framework has enabled the UN agencies to consolidate multiple actions under the same umbrella. It has also allowed the UNCT to share with partners the high-level priorities of the UN-RGoB collaboration.

For all the strengths of the monitoring and reporting mechanisms put in place by the UNCT in Bhutan, there are also some challenges pointed out by the participants of this evaluation.

- There is a need to strengthen the quality of UNSDPF indicators, baselines and targets and improve the alignment of the M&E systems of individual agencies with UNSDPF's M&E framework.
- The UNSDPF process has lacked a strong M&E group that brings together the agencies' M&E specialists and provides guidance and quality assurance to the UNCT's M&E activities. The PME team has yet to become a forum where vibrant discussions on the

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<sup>86</sup> UN INFO is a planning, monitoring and reporting system to track how the UN system at the country level supports governments to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>87</sup> Along with corresponding Development Evaluation Protocols and Guidelines.

<sup>88</sup> However, the UN reserves the right to follow UN evaluation standards for both internal and decentralized evaluations.

<sup>89</sup> The UN has supported the development of the SDG dashboard.

tracking and monitoring of UNSDPF indicators take place. A strong PME team will be necessary for a more effective coordination of M&E systems across agencies. This team could also coordinate and organize training for the agencies' M&E experts. Some UN agency staff suggested that the PME team should be strengthened, especially its coordination function across the M&E systems of individual agencies.

- Participants of this evaluation also noted the need for a clear division of labour between the OGs and the PME task when it comes to the tracking of UNSDPF's implementation.
- The automated UN-INFO has still to become fully effective. The UN system in Bhutan started using the UNINFO system only in mid-2021. The UNRCO and the UN agencies need to work together to ensure that UNSDPF results are updated in UN-INFO as part of the annual reporting process.
- The tracking of progress on the SDG's is at the initial phase.
- Some agencies find UNSDPF's reporting requirements burdensome, especially in the case of smaller agencies with one or two staff dedicated to Bhutan. This points to the need for better alignment and coordination of reporting procedures between the agency and UN levels. Such coordination could be facilitated through the establishment of an M&E group.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The coordination of data collection and reporting among the resident and non-resident agencies is a challenging process, given the multitude of stakeholders involved. Several challenges compound this process in the context of the UNSDPF.

- First, as noted previously, the PME team remains weak, especially in its coordination function across the M&E systems of individual agencies.
- The UNINFO global planning, monitoring and reporting system is not fully operational yet.
- There is also insufficient capacity at the level of agencies, especially smaller ones, to report results at the outcome level and link activities to broader societal and institutional changes. Activity level reporting remains more of a norm, although attempts have been made to enhance the quality of reporting.
- The challenges with indicators, baselines and targets noted in the sections above are further compounded by the lack of data on the indicators identified in the UNSDPF results framework. For many relevant indicators disaggregated data are not available. These limitations create inconsistencies in reporting, which consumes a lot of time for validation and adjustments to reach consistency.

The availability of data at the national level is a challenge, especially at the outcome level due to the lack of national data and changes in the methodologies of data collection and analysis. Several evaluation participants expressed concerns about the availability and quality of data, particularly administrative data collected and reported by various government institutions. Some of these data lack standard definitions, methodology and protocols for quality assurance. There are also limited capacity within national institutions to use the available evidence for policy planning. Even where data is available, the capacities to use that data for making evidence-based decisions for policy



planning and programme designing at the national and sub-national levels are limited. The lack of data analysis and interpretation capacities, particularly at sub-national level is challenging for effective policymaking.

UN agency staff raised the need for greater investments by the Government in the production of high-quality statistics. This is also a recurring theme in the CPB discussions. UN agencies have advocated for the “*statistics bill*” that will elevate the importance of data in the country’s policymaking process.<sup>90</sup> There is a need to strengthen the Government’s government information systems and monitoring capacities. Some interviewees pointed out the need to urgently proceed with the next round Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), as an essential source of information about poverty and vulnerabilities in Bhutan and a key requirement for tracking the country’s progress with the SDGs.<sup>91</sup>

In the current programme cycle, the UN has supported for the Government’s efforts to improve the national data systems. For example, the UN has supported the National Statistical Bureau develop a concept for establishing the Bhutan Statistical Database System (BSDS), which provides the foundation for further support in this area. UNDP has supported the government’s efforts to integrate, monitor and report on the SDGs, mainly through the establishment of an online SDG reporting dashboard titled DEWA (*Dashboard to Enhance Well Being for All*).<sup>92</sup> UNFPA has provided crucial support for the development of Bhutan’s statistical database system and the conduct of the census and national health survey. UNICEF has supported the conduct of the Gender Programmatic Review, Country Program Evaluation and Situation Analysis (SITAN), which identifies the deprivations, needs of the vulnerable groups. In partnership with GNHC, UNDP completed the National Vulnerability Baseline study, which identified 14 vulnerable groups. Further, to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and services for women and children, the UN has assisted the Royal Bhutan Police in improving the reporting of women and children related cases in the Crime Information Management System (CIMS).

The UN is well-positioned to continue its support for RGoB’s efforts to improve national data systems. This work should include not only the National Statistics Bureau (NSB), but also other key agencies which have a role in the data generation business. Quality data can be used not only to ensure better targeting of interventions and monitoring of results of UN’s work, but will also contribute to improving the availability and quality of data in the country. Given the gaps in data availability, UN support for the generation of statistics will have a strong positive effect on the policy making process. The UN is in a good position to provide more support and guidance to national counterparts in the tracking the progress of SDG, to help programme implementation in accelerating the achievement of SDGs.

The UN system should first strengthen its own data infrastructure, including the coordination and data aggregation mechanisms across, operability of the UN-Info system, definition of indicators, baselines, targets, etc. Training will be needed for this, which ideally should be organized jointly

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<sup>90</sup> See notes from the CPB meeting of 18 February 2022.

<sup>91</sup> The last Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) survey was conducted in 2010. UNFPA and UNICEF supported the conduct of the survey. MICS covered 45% of household-based survey indicators.

<sup>92</sup> <http://dewa.gov.bt/>

by the agencies and coordinated by the UNRCO. For the upcoming development cooperation framework, UNCT and RGoB should identify a smaller number of more meaningful and better-defined indicators which are directly related to the activities of the UN system. It will also be important to select indicators for which there is reliable data and that can thus be tracked and have a baseline. It will also be essential to identify indicators that can be disaggregated, not only by gender, but also by other key demographics.

### Joint Reporting

There is also room for improving reporting under the UNSDPF. Currently, implementing agencies are required to report to both the UN agencies and the RGoB, which follow different reporting systems and timelines. Synchronization of these reporting aspects could help reduce duplication of efforts, reduce reporting burden, and enhance efficiencies. Furthermore, the need of the UN agencies to report in parallel to their headquarters on their specific mandates overpowers the need for a joint reporting. Also, the contributions of UN agencies that are not party to the UNSDPF should be included in the UNCT's reporting.

The integration of the reporting system in the UN-INFO is still under way. The system currently captures reporting for 2021 and planning for 2022. There is also a requirement to use the system for capturing information in normative areas (youth, gender, PSEA and human rights and disability). The SERP reporting 2020-2021 was conducted through the UNINFO system. Due to weak onboarding of the UN agencies to the UNINFO system, agencies resort to report manually during the mid-term and annual reporting phase. Furthermore, the need to manually input financial data into the system makes it an unattractive process. Getting all relevant UN agencies onboard with the UNINFO will strengthen considerably the data management process and reporting under the UNSDPF.

### **4.2.3. Main Achievements**

The data in Table 8 below presents the analysis of the achievement of outcomes which were identified in the results framework of Bhutan's UNSDPF. There are four outcome groups (OG) with a total of 27 outcome indicators. The outcomes are classified into fully achieved, partially achieved (on track), not achieved (constrained), and no data. Here's a summary of the data:

- OG 1: Out of 3 outcome indicators, 1 (33%) is fully achieved, 1 (33%) is partially achieved, and 1 (33%) is not achieved. There is no data missing.
- OG 2: Out of 11 outcome indicators, 4 (36%) are fully achieved, and 7 (64%) are partially achieved. None are not achieved, and there is no data missing.
- OG 3: Out of 6 outcome indicators, 2 (33%) are fully achieved, 1 (17%) is partially achieved, and none are not achieved. However, 3 (50%) have no data.
- OG 4: Out of 7 outcome indicators, 2 (29%) are fully achieved, none are partially achieved, and 1 (14%) is not achieved. There are 4 (57%) indicators with no data.

Across all outcome indicators, 9 (33%) are fully achieved, 9 (33%) are partially achieved, 2 (7%) are not achieved, and 7 (26%) have no data.

**Table 8: Analysis of Outcome Indicators**

Outcome	Outcome Indicators	Fully Achieved		Partially Achieved (on Track)		Not Achieved (Constrained)		No data	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
OG 1	3	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%	0	0%
OG2	11	4	36%	7	64%	0	0%	0	0%
OG 3	6	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%	3	50%
OG 4	7	2	29%	0	0%	1	14%	4	57%
<b>All Outcome Indicators</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>26%</b>

The data in Table 9 below presents the analysis of the achievement of outputs which were identified in the results framework of Bhutan's UNSDPF.

**Table 9: Analysis of Outcome Indicators**

Outcome Group	Outputs	Output Indicators	Fully Achieved		Partially Achieved (On track)		Not Achieved (Constrained)		No data (%)	
			Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
OG1	1.1	4	0	0%	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%
	1.2	3	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	0	0%
OG2	2.1	12	10	83%	0	0%	0	0%	2	17%
	2.2	8	4	50%	4	50%	0	0%	0	0%
	2.3	20	14	70%	3	15%	1	5%	2	10%
OG3	3.1	2	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
	3.2	4	2	50%	1	25%	0	0%	1	25%
OG 4	4.1	6	4	67%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%
	4.2	11	5	45%	6	55%	0	0%	0	0%
	4.3	3	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%
	4.4	4	3	75%	0	0%	0	0%	1	25%
<b>Total Output indicators</b>		<b>77</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8%</b>

The table above shows that the majority of the indicators (60%) are fully achieved, while 30% are partially achieved, and a small proportion (3%) are not achieved. The data reveals that OG2 has the highest level of fully achieved output indicators, particularly in Output 2.1 with 83% completion. On the other hand, OG1 and OG3 have a more balanced distribution between fully achieved and partially achieved indicators. In terms of missing data, 8% of the output indicators have no information, with OG3 and OG4 presenting the highest percentages of missing data at 25% and 25% respectively in some of their outputs.

The rest of this section provides a broad analysis of the main contributions of UN agencies at the output level under four outcome areas: (1) Data and Policy; (2) Essential Social Services; (3) Governance; and, (4) Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, identified in the UNSDPF for Bhutan (2019-2023) document. It also includes the contributions made through the SERP

(described in the previous sections). This section of the report is prepared based on the UNCT Annual Results Reports (ARRs 2019, 2020 and 2021).

## 1) **Data and Policy**

In the *Data and Policy* area, the UN supported the RGoB in enhancing access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision making. In partnership with government bodies, the UN supported the RGoB's digitization agenda as follows:

- a) Developed an *integrated digital platform* “*Dashboard to Enhance Wellbeing of All*” (DEWA),<sup>93</sup> which significantly strengthened the capacity of the RGoB to collect, manage and integrate socio-economic data, enabling the Government to present an evidence based VNR of the SDGs.<sup>94</sup> The UN also supported the conduct of a Data Users' Satisfaction survey to understand data needs of the public and developed a National Statistical Quality Assurance Framework, along with a set of statistical standards and codes to improve access to reliable data. The UN further supported the RGoB to establish the Bhutan Statistical Database System and upgrade the existing Local Government portal. It also helped national counterparts digitalized the civil registration system, applying citizen-centric design principles that resulted in a 40% reduction in turnaround response time to the citizens.
- b) In the *education sector*, an online M&E system that integrated education, health, and nutrition data for 170,000 school children was rolled out,<sup>95</sup> a digital Menu Optimizer Tool<sup>96</sup> for school children was launched, the Education Management Information System<sup>97</sup> (EMIS) was upgraded to enhance the central and local governments' capacities to use data to develop policies that support vulnerable children.
- c) In the *health sector*, to increase awareness on Bhutanese fertility trends (which remain below the replacement level of 2.1) and aging population, the UN assisted in publishing and disseminating the Population Projection Report (2017-2047).
- d) In the *agriculture sector*, the UN supported the strengthening of agricultural monitoring and reporting systems by developing a Mobile Operational Data Acquisition Platform for future improvements.
- e) In the area of *human settlements*, the UN supported the production and distribution of thematic reports on migration, urbanization, and demographic dividends alongside policy briefs to guide government planners and inform policymakers on future planning and resource allocation.

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<sup>93</sup> An integrated data system that provides critical evidence for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda by tracking the progress of GNH and FYP priorities.

<sup>94</sup> The report (Bhutan's Voluntary National Report) was presented for the second time at High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2021.

<sup>95</sup> System replaces paper-based reporting. Integrates data across health, agriculture, and education sectors to monitor children's health and nutrition indicators and provides more robust and integrated data and evidence for effective multi-sectoral policy and program development.

<sup>96</sup> Using an algorithm, the tool calculates the most cost-efficient and nutrient-rich menu with the highest proportion of local food, thereby addressing both malnutrition while creating an increased demand for local farm produced food.

<sup>97</sup> The updated EMIS is expected to provide systematic and quality data to generate critical indicators on disability and WASH, health status, and the dietary habits of school children and enable enhanced reporting on SDGs and 12<sup>th</sup> FYP indicators.

- f) As part of the *economic recovery* efforts, the UN supported the conduct of a Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on the tourism sector with individuals, households, and businesses engaged in the sector. In addition, it also carried out two value chain analysis on horticulture and textile handicrafts to increase evidence for programs and plans to support MSME development.
- g) To enhance data preparedness for *disaster risk management*, the UN supported the development of an Earthquake Impact Assessment Model,<sup>98</sup> established a Rapid Assessment Approach<sup>99</sup> that estimates the likely impacts of disasters to coordinate response within 72 hours, and helped the government to form the first National Logistics Preparedness Working Group.<sup>100</sup> In addition, to enhance evidence-based programming, 160 planners were trained on the use of demographic data and evidence from census and surveys, enabling local-level planners to provide focused interventions at the community level.
- h) In support of *vulnerable groups*, with the support of the UN, the first thematic report<sup>101</sup> on adolescents and youth was produced, which examined issues and challenges faced by them and recommended the need for effective policies and additional investments. In addition, the UN strengthened data sources at the sub-national level to better identify vulnerable children by developing the capacity of dzongkhag administrations and communities in planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring to achieve results for children and adolescents. Further, an outline of the “*Current Situation and Future Prospects of the Elderly: Bhutan Ageing Report, 2022*” was also developed by National Bureau of Statistics with the support of the UN.
- i) Finally, to strengthen the overall evaluation processes, the UN supported the conduct of a situation analysis of the Evaluation Association of Bhutan to further professionalize evaluation processes. To improve data accuracy of vulnerable groups (VGs), a desk-review mapping exercise of VGs to assess overlaps and gaps between VGs as identified by the GNHC and those identified through the UN Secretary General’s Socio-Economic Response Framework was also carried out.

## 2) Essential Social Services

In the area of *Essential Social Services*, the UN’s support to the RGoB focused on ensuring that quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water, sanitation, and hygiene services continue to be accessed by people of Bhutan, particularly by the most vulnerable and unreached population. The main achievements in this outcome area are highlighted below, along with specific data presented in Box 1.

- a) The UN’s support in the area of *health, hygiene, water and sanitation* included the acceleration of the new Mother and Child Health Policy; development of the National Contingency Plan to

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<sup>98</sup> The Model explores potential impact of earthquakes at district-level. This informs district-level contingency planning and disaster risk management, thus reducing risks associated with earthquakes at the community level.

<sup>99</sup> The 72-hour RAA includes a spatial database with geo-referenced vulnerability layers including demographics, poverty, food insecurity, and access to roads, health stations and schools.

<sup>100</sup> The National Action Plan was developed to further enhance country’s logistics preparedness for future disasters and emergencies.

<sup>101</sup> The Report recommended establishing a dedicated National Youth Fund as one of the flagship projects of the SDGs 2030.

ensure availability of essential health services in the wake of the pandemic as an overarching guide for hospitals and primary health centers; establishment of the Bhutan Vaccine System (BVS); and the establishment of the Health Emergency Operation Center. The UN's contribution in the area also included strengthening surveillance and contact tracing and supplying PPEs, COVID-19 testing kits, laboratory supplies, cold chain equipment, WASH supplies, and learning and communication materials to health facilities, schools, and other institutions.

In addition, the UN developed and implemented the Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategy, supporting the provision of diagnostics services through medical camps and treatment of women detected with cervical cancer; introduced a pilot e-health system using mobile cardiotocography devices (iCTGs) to reach pregnant women with quality gynecological and obstetric services; supported the establishment of Health Help Centre to ensure continuity of emergency services amidst heightened demand during the pandemic; established an integrated health facilities system to help collect real time information to monitor and detect COVID-19 cases; and provided Electric Cookers to improve health and well-being of cooks and to maintain kitchen hygiene standards to meet increased feeding requirements during the pandemic for hospital in-patients and attendants.

Further, the UN supported in assessing prevalence and prevention of major non-communicable diseases and associated risk factors; developed the National Health Service and Health Workforce Standards to meet workforce needs in the country; aligned human resources to support the Health Strategic Plan and the National Strategic Nursing and Midwifery Plan. In addition, the UN also supported the development of the National Strategy on Healthy Aging, completed TOT on Integrated Care for Older People and assisted in conducting several studies, including the National Health Accounts, the Cross Programmatic Efficiency Analysis, Workload Indicators of Staffing Need, and implemented both in-service and pre-service training on Low-Dose High-Frequency technique.

- b) In the area of *nutrition*, the UN supported the expansion of the National School Feeding Programme, including the development of the National School Nutrition and Feeding Strategy (2019-2030); developed national standards for fortified rice to ensure safety and quality of rice consumed through the NSF Programme; developed the National Food and Dietary Guidelines for school-aged children; introduced fortified rice in select private schools, hospitals and colleges; and conceptualized series of initiatives to improve health and nutritional status of women, children, and adolescents.

The UN also supported the RGoB with technical assistance to develop food safety guidelines; procured equipment to facilitate better storage conditions and provided training to warehouse and store staff to better manage the National Food Stocks Reserve of essential food commodities. During the pandemic, the UN continued to support the development of advocacy materials and in carrying out social media campaigns on healthy eating for children. The UN also carried out health and nutrition public awareness campaigns and provided capacity development in the form of trainings and simulation exercises to build the overall health system over the longer-term, beyond the immediate crisis.

- c) To enhance *protection of children, adolescent, youth and women*, the UN assisted the RGoB to develop the first National Child Policy and reviewed the National Youth Policy; delivered training package with tools on early identification and safe referral of child protection;



finalized a Multi-sector Ending Violence Against Children campaign focusing on physical and sexual violence, online safety and mental health; supported the submission of first-ever Civil Society Report and Children's Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child;<sup>102</sup> provided technical assistance to NCWC and CSOs to develop and implement a National Child Protection and Gender-based Violence COVID-19 Response Plan which saw 53% increase in reported Gender-based Violence cases during 2020. The UN also supported the RGoB to establish shelter homes and 24-hour help-desk services, focusing on case management and psychosocial support as part of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In addition, the UN facilitated the introduction of a One-Stop Crisis Seal Service at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital, allowing survivors of GBV to access medical services in a short span of time by enabling the hospital employees and doctors to prioritize their cases. The UN further assisted the CSOs to deliver targeted interventions to improve the livelihood of the survivors of GBV.

To strengthen protection services to vulnerable groups, increased awareness on Trafficking in Persons using social and mass media at the national level led to the amendment of the definition of Trafficking in Persons under Section 154 of the Penal Code of Bhutan, bringing it in line with the Palermo Protocol definition of the term. In addition, the UN supported upstream work on public finance for children and social protection by establishing new partnerships at both the central and sub-national levels, supporting development of these policies, capacity building on social policy and the development of policy briefs and investment cases.

- d) With regard to *improvement of education and care for unreached children and adolescents*, UN contributed towards improving access to quality and equitable education;<sup>103</sup> developed a National Education Assessment Framework; provided life skills education in schools and monastic institutions to ensure continued delivery of sexual and reproductive health information and services apart from integration of life skills-based comprehensive sexual education into the mainstream school curriculum.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, a 'New Normal Curriculum' was put in place after the pandemic;<sup>105</sup> supported the RGoB in piloting the Caring for Caregiver Package;<sup>106</sup> supported the development of Multi-Sectoral ECCD Strategic Action Plan and Early Childhood Intervention Package; and supported the National Parenting Education Programme. The UN also assisted in revising the National Midwifery and Family Planning Service Standards to include specific guidelines on the provision of Family Planning Services to the adolescent and LGBTIQ community. Additionally, for long-term sustainability, the UN integrated Adolescent Friendly Health Services (AFHS) modules into diploma courses of community health, nursing, and midwifery; integrated GBV into Bachelor and Diploma

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<sup>102</sup> Supported RGoB to enhance its commitments to safe motherhood, family planning, and GBV by financing the International Conference on Population and Development, SDG Plan of Action, and Harnessing the Demographic Dividend.

<sup>103</sup> The UN focused on enhancing quality inclusive education for vulnerable children.

<sup>104</sup> Empowerment of young people and adolescents to make informed choices about their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) by conducting a Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Schools Program in communities and monastic institutions and development of policies and guidelines for implementation in these institutions and in CSOs.

<sup>105</sup> The UN assisted in carrying out Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers training which equipped all teachers to better use information and communications technology in delivering the new curriculum.

<sup>106</sup> Introduced across three districts which also made Bhutan to become the first country in Asia to pilot the programme.



programs for Public Health, Nursing, and Midwifery; and introduced Bachelor of Arts in Social Work at the Samtse College of Education.

### **Box 1: UN's Support for Social Services**

#### ***Health***

- *In 2020, the UN supplied 3,500 testing reagents, 1,920 N95 masks, 440 protective gloves, 5,600 sanitary products, 1,000 litres of hand sanitizer, 25,000 surgical gloves and 25,000 surgical gears to support health workers.*
- *Sixty-six quarantine facilities across the country were provided with sanitary products to maintain menstrual hygiene.*
- *65% of new-borns and 53% of mothers received postnatal care, 85.5% children under 1 year of age received DTP 3rd dose vaccination, 96.5% children aged 6-23 months received micronutrient powder (MNP) supplementation.*
- *In 2021, 94.5% of the population (combined adults and children 12-17 years) was vaccinated with double dose and similarly, 99.6% of the first priority group were vaccinated with the booster dose.*
- *In 2021, mass handwashing stations were installed in 48 Primary Health Facilities and five Youth Centers and provided soap and hand-hygiene communications to 105,033 people, including 95,321 children in 475 schools. Close to 9,000 pre-schoolers were provided with COVID-19 preventive items such as soap, disinfectant and hygiene communication materials.*
- *In 2021, improved care for young people through delivery of adolescent-friendly health service standards was extended to 36 staffs across 17 districts.*
- *65.4% of eligible women received contraception, and the adolescent birth rate remained at 28.4% and early marriage at 26%.*
- *54,463 children, parents and caregivers received mental health and psychosocial support services in 2021. Similarly, 616 accessed child protection services.*
- *An online campaign to address mental health, resulted in doubling cases received by the Ministry of Education and NCWC's helplines – from 204 cases received March-August 2020 to 528 cases in the month of the campaign alone (mid-October to mid-November).*
- *In 2021, provided more than 2,400 PPEs to MCH and frontline healthcare workers and disseminated risk reduction communications resulting in increased vaccination uptake. Similarly, 19 nurses across 17 districts hospitals were trained in rights-based family planning services leading to improved family planning services for women including expanded contraceptive choices.*

#### ***Hygiene, water and sanitation***

- *Contributed to certification of open defecation free status in 26 blocks.*
- *58,260 people benefited from 100% improved sanitation and 96% of population obtained improved access to sanitation facilities.*

- 9,381 children in 20 schools and 5,289 children in 65 monastic institutions benefitted from quality WASH services in year 2021.

### **Nutrition**

- The National School Feeding Programme was expanded further by including 13,000 children in 115 additional schools from remote parts of the country.
- In 2021, 14,200 students in 87 schools benefitted from improved nutrition due to rollout of the School Meal Planner (SMP) PLUS tool, with 20% more produce sourced from local farmers, making school meals 15% cheaper. Body Mass Index collected from 83,754 school children showed boarding students who receive 3 school meals a day were healthier than the day students.

### **Protection**

- In 2020, the UN in partnership with the RGoB and CSOs offered platform to 1,200 youth from different backgrounds to provide inputs to the Youth Policy.
- Through the National Training Package on Child Protection, the UN trained more than 1,280 child monks and 235 nuns living in monastic institutions and nunneries to recognize and report issues of violence, abuse, and exploitation.
- The UN further strengthened the child justice system resulting in 516 children who came in contact with the law benefit from child-friendly interventions and 123 children were cautioned and diverted from formal judicial proceedings.
- In the area of youth engagement, around 12,692 youth volunteers (6,623 F) in offline and online civic engagement initiatives, and 3,811 volunteers (213 F) were trained as communicators to disseminate lifesaving messages during the pandemic.
- 220 front liners (40% F) including the police, health officials, local government officials, education officials, patrol officers and Desupps (Civil volunteers) were trained in GBV awareness through the UN led rollout of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Prevention and Response to GBV.
- About 600 members (242 F) of district women and children committees and front-liners in all 20 districts and four municipalities, were trained in early identification and safe referrals (EISR) of child protection cases and GBV.
- More than 3,500 people living in temporary dwellings in high-risk areas were provided with information regarding COVID-19 and GBV prevention.
- More than 19,625 representatives from the monastic institutions, MSTFCBSS members, LGBTQ community and youth were trained in GBV, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and referral systems for survivors.
- 25% of district hospitals implemented clinical protocols for the management of GVB.

### **Education and care for vulnerable and the unreached**

- ECCD net enrolment rate increased to 23.5% for male and 23.9% for female. The UN supported in establishing an ECCD Centre in 2019 for more than 15 children of the nomads. The Centre caters to 64 households with a catchment area of three villages.

- *In 2019, 600 children, including children with disabilities, gained access to early & inclusive learning programmes and environments. Similarly, in 2021, six schools were added for children with disabilities, providing access to special education for an additional 150 students with disabilities.*
- *In 2019, the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER) model implemented in 16 colleges and institutions, continued to provide peer to peer support in a safe environment. Likewise, support to ensure continued education of young people in SRHR and GBV prevention through support for the Y-PEER network across 19 colleges and vocational institutions, and the development of an e-course training module benefited more than 1,500 young people.*
- *As a result of training on SOPs for Prevention and Response to GBV in 2021, 597 social service workers, including monks and nuns were capacitated to identify and support survivors of violence, abuse, and neglect.*
- *The UN support to Disabled People’s Organization in 2021, created four small businesses for 30 people with disability of which 15 were women. This strengthened the focus among Development Partner’s to ensure no-one is left behind.*
- *In 2021, 20,824 young people participated in skilling and engagement programmes. Further, 10 journalism lecturers and 17 journalists were trained in multimedia journalism.*
- *24,774 children (12,502 F) and 16,606 parents and caregivers received remote counseling and psychosocial support and 1,750 children (713 F) were taught to stay safe while accessing online education. In addition, 10% of the social service workforce were equipped with skills to recognize and respond to child protection issues.*
- *In 2019, 36 students (25 F) enrolled in Bachelor of Arts in Social Work at the Samtse College of Education.*

### 3) **Governance**

In the area of governance, the UN support focused on strengthening democratic institutions, supporting decentralization, broadening civic space for participation, supporting the achievement of gender equal elective offices, promoting women’s participation at decision making levels, and enhancing delivery of justice services, particularly for vulnerable groups.

To enhance the capacity of the *Parliament*, the UN supported parliamentarians on specific issues, including human rights, gender, and justice. Two Members of Parliament (MP) attended Parliamentary Engagement on Human Rights to better understand the role of the Parliament in enhancing human rights, monitoring and implementing the SDGs through the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP. With support from the UN, the RGoB participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the Universal Periodic Review process in 2019, and it worked closely with its counterparts in the Parliament to build a more inclusive and participatory system through a variety of dialogue and space-enhancing initiatives that enabled the development of essential processes such as public hearings and moving motions

guidelines.<sup>107</sup> Due to this, for the first time, the Parliament institutionalised public hearing in 2020, and established a Joint Centre for both Houses of Parliament to achieve operational efficiency in delivering its core functions; and developed a Business Continuity Plan to ensure critical oversight, legislative, and representational functions during the pandemic. To promote decentralization and participation, the UN supported the amendment of the Local Government Act 2009,<sup>108</sup> which resulted in a more inclusive local decision-making environment for previously marginalized groups.

To strengthen integrity and promote transparency and accountability of the *justice sector*, the UN supported the development of the first-ever Justice Sector Strategic Plan. Bhutan's judicial system bench clerks from the courts across the country were trained in “Interpretation of Laws”. An e-litigation system was developed along with the establishment of the first official Legal Aid Guidelines.<sup>109</sup> Partnership between ACC, CSOs, businesses, and youth was established. To combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP), Bhutan Penal Code (Amendment Act) was adopted,<sup>110</sup> a multi-stakeholder response to TIP with a range of impact-oriented activities was initiated, capacity building workshop for judiciary officials were provided and an official training manual<sup>111</sup> was launched. The UN further supported the drafting of the National Prevention and Response Strategy and the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) to prevent and counter TIP in Bhutan. Apart from the above, the 4<sup>th</sup> Cohort Training on Social Policy was hosted in 2019 which strengthened individuals' knowledge of Social Policy, Protection, Analysis, and Review.

The UN's contribution in the area of *gender* included enhancing the RGoB's capacity to mainstream gender equality across all its work through the new National Gender Equality Policy, strengthening the mechanisms and procedures for the protection of victims and survivors of GBV.<sup>112</sup> It also supported CSOs to build resilience in targeted vulnerable groups to deliver livelihood and skills training, as well as conducting awareness campaigns on sexual and reproductive health. In addition, the Business Integrity Initiative of Bhutan was started to support election reporting and voter education, contributing to an increased women-voter turnout in 2021.

To enable CSOs to *advance opportunities and increase resilience of vulnerable groups*, the UN supported the development of the first-ever Governance Framework for CSO Engagement (2019); supported finalization of the CSO Engagement Programme in anti-corruption, justice, and governance (2021); supported tabling of the CSO Bill amendment in the Parliament; and supported the development of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities.<sup>113</sup> The UN also contributed

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<sup>107</sup> Public hearings and forums were organized involving Parliamentarians, the public sector Local Government, and academia.

<sup>108</sup> The UN provided technical backstopping in electoral and decentralization issues to support the amendment of LG Act 2009.

<sup>109</sup> which helped deliver a pilot program providing legal aid to 10 vulnerable women by engaging professional lawyers to assist. This pilot program instilled confidence in the RGoB to adopt a national legal aid system.

<sup>110</sup> The amendment strengthened Bhutan's capacity to effectively prevent and counter TIP and to protect and assist survivors, in line with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

<sup>111</sup> The training was developed with the objective of enhancing the capability and skills of judges to effectively detect TIP cases and implement anti-trafficking legislation.

<sup>112</sup> GVB Contingency Plan was developed and implemented to provide livelihood skills to 300 vulnerable groups of women impacted by the pandemic.

<sup>113</sup> This Action Plan lays the foundation for adopting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which RGoB is yet to ratify to ensure that PwDs are not left behind.

to developing an SOP for a Multi-sectoral Response to Trafficking in Persons and implementing the Primary Prevention Pilot Project on Ending GBV. It further supported the development of the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality in 2021 to ensure effective implementation of the Gender Equality Policy; amendment of the 2004 Penal Code;<sup>114</sup> supported the NCWC in developing Guidelines on “COVID-19 and Children Deprived of Liberty;” assisted the Royal Bhutan Police in improving the reporting of women and children related cases in the Crime Information Management System (CIMS); carried out assessment on the diversion of children in conflict with the law (CICL) to help standardize procedures and design diversion programmes for effective rehabilitation of CICL; and produced a policy brief on child-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection in Bhutan in partnership with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG). Further, in partnership with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, the UN also supported the RGoB to successfully host the second South Asia Religious Leaders’ Platform for Children to discuss the role of religious leaders and groups in advancing children’s rights. Other UN support in this area included supporting the Members of Parliament and members of the LGBTQ community to participate in the Salzburg Global LGBTQ forum, in addition to supporting the presentation of the first ever alternate Universal Periodic Report (UPR) by local CSO, the Tarayana Foundation, which enabled robust participation and in-depth discussion by Members of Parliament and other key stakeholders during the legislative change process.

### **Box 2: UN’s Support in the area of Governance**

- *Voter education contributed to an increased women-voter turnout (increased by one-fifth) compared to the previous election and tripled the female Gup (Head of a village block) representation in 2021.*
- *Through e-litigation system, judiciary was able to conduct 13.5% of the total court hearings virtually in 12 different courts across the country in 2021. It also ensured continued access to legal services during the pandemic, benefitting over 300 people.*
- *516 children who came in contact with the law benefited from child-friendly interventions and 123 children were cautioned and diverted from formal judicial proceedings.*
- *The UN and its partners offered a platform for 1,200 youth from different backgrounds to provide their inputs during the review of the Youth Policy. Similarly, in 2019, the Vibrant Youth Practitioner for Accountability Club trained 145 students on social accountability tools.*
- *To mark 30th anniversary of Bhutan ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a Decree was issued by His Holiness the Je Khenpo (Chief Abbot) calling on all duty bearers to ensure the wellbeing of Bhutan’s children.*
- *In relation to SOPs for Multi-sectoral Response to Trafficking in Persons, 37 individuals were trained in 2019 to strengthen the coordination mechanisms of stakeholders working on this critical issue.*

<sup>114</sup> The UN’s sustained advocacy and programmatic support to the Parliament resulted in the amendment of 2004 Penal Code, which de-criminalized same sex relations and increased penalty for rape in the Civil and Criminal Procedure Code.

- *Capacity building for 187 multi-stakeholder frontliners across 9 districts provided on implementation of SOP to address TIP.*
- *4,223 youth were provided with knowledge on TIP reporting mechanisms and support services were available in the country through 17 awareness programs across various educational institutions.*
- *The primary prevention pilot project on ending GBV in 2019 engaged 152 adolescents and 140 community caregivers in Babesa, Thimphu, contributing towards developing an evidence-based integrated framework to prevent and respond to GVB incidences.*
- *300 vulnerable women impacted by COVID-19 received livelihood skills as part of the GVB Contingency Plan implementation.*
- *Through National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 14,000 PWD (representing 2% of the population) received dedicated support through its initiatives.*
- *Disability Equality Training (DET) led to enhanced level of service delivery confidence by participants to PwDs (a 100% increase in participant confidence in providing services to wheelchair users, a 300% increase in confidence of participants in providing services to hearing impaired, a 177% increase in confidence providing services to the blind, and 200% increase in confidence providing services to people with an intellectual disability.*

#### **4) Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction**

In the area of climate change and disaster risk reduction, the UN's key contribution has been in making the economy, particularly the agriculture sector more robust, and the vulnerable communities more resilient to climate-induced disasters and biodiversity loss. The key contributions are highlighted below:

- a) The UN's support in the area of *climate change* included supporting the development of Bhutan's 2<sup>nd</sup> Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)<sup>115</sup> and the development of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP).<sup>116</sup> Further, a concept note on "Climate Adaptation, Resilience and Engagement in Local Government" to upscale the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility was submitted and approved by GEF. Additionally, the UN also supported Bhutan's 'Direct Access to Climate Financing' for locally led adaptation, by assisting the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation's accreditation with the Green Climate Fund. To strengthen resilience and manage biodiversity loss, the UN supported the RGoB in integrating environmental concerns into national and sectoral plans and strategies and ramping up support to conservation efforts, bringing nearly 360,000 hectares of forests under participatory sustainable management regime. The UN also contributed to establishing waste segregation stations to manage organic waste, supported Bhutan's efforts to transition to electric cars, and developed biogas plants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The UN also

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<sup>115</sup> informed by low emission development strategies in key priority sectors of human settlement, transport, industry and agriculture. The NDC was submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and will serve as an investment framework.

<sup>116</sup> The NAP was informed by gender sensitive vulnerability assessments undertaken in the priority sectors of Agriculture, Forest and Biodiversity, Health, and Water.



helped to put in place clear institutional arrangements and legislation for public financing during emergencies – supported the development of an Emergency Health Financing Strategy in response to the pandemic.

- b) *To improve capacities to prepare for and respond to disasters*, the UN supported the RGoB to develop the Roadmap for Disaster Risk Management in 2019. Further, in liaison with the academia, the UN carried out an Earthquake Impact Assessment Modelling Study, supported the Logistics Infrastructure Needs Assessment, and helped to set up the National Logistics Preparedness Working Group. In collaboration with the Department of Engineering Services (DES), the UN supported the development of a GIS-based building inventory system for Paro, Punakha and Trashiyangtse. It also supported the Department of Disaster Management to strengthen the disaster management contingency planning, budgeting and in establishing linkages to the national plans. Additionally, the UN spearheaded a mapping exercise among key disaster risk management stakeholders (UN and other development partners) to find synergies and opportunities for joint programming to harness coordination and amplify the impacts of the DRM interventions in the country.

As part of disaster preparedness capacity building initiative, particularly in the construction sector, the UN trained artisans, engineers, technicians, instructors, trainees, and local leaders in seismic resilient stone masonry, confirmed masonry construction, and windstorm resilient roofing systems. Capacity of the National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology in meteorological and weather forecasting was strengthened.<sup>117</sup> Drones were provided to NLC as part of the efforts to improve GLOF early warning system. Similarly, drones were provided to the National Land Commission (NLC) for surveying inhospitable and unfriendly topographical areas,<sup>118</sup> along with capacity building on the use of drones.

*To improve livelihoods through climate resilient and nature-based solutions*, the UN supported climate resilient initiatives at the farm level by supporting climate smart agriculture through the promotion of improved agro-ecological practices. The UN contribution in this area included bringing more than 3,000 acres of agricultural land under sustainable land management, promoted organic agriculture practices and converted approximately 200 kms of irrigation canals using climate-resilient technology. This greatly reduced the workload of women having to carry out routine maintenance, allowing them to engage in more profitable economic activities. More than 1,000 farmers received capacity development in production planning, post-harvest management techniques, business management, and market linkages. In addition, the UN supported the development of the Climate Resilient Road Construction Guidelines and the institutionalization of framework to manage human-wildlife conflict using a science-based safe-system intervention. The UN Food System Summit 2021 generated state level dialogues that resulted in the submission of Bhutan’s pathway document, “Food Systems for Gross National Happiness – transformative pathways for Bhutan, the revision of the RNR Strategy 2030 and in drafting the RNR Marketing Strategy. The UN further supported small and medium business enterprises in enhancing their business environment by facilitating

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<sup>117</sup> Which enabled tailored climate products and services for farmers, helping them make critical decisions, climate informed decisions regarding agricultural practices.

<sup>118</sup> The aerial images from the drone were integrated with surveying workflows to perform various surveys, mapping and remote sensing analysis.



Foreign Development Investment, exploring markets for Bhutanese products such as textile through targeted promotion, and provided trade-related technical assistance and supported the improvement of upstream trade and investment regulatory frameworks.

### **Box 3: UN's Support in the area of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction**

- *Supported the operationalization of three biological corridors with enhanced governance capacity, ensuring long-term ecological services.*
- *UN provided USD 3 million to RGoB for the transition to electric cars which enabled more than 300 taxi operators to trade their fossil-fueled vehicles in for electric cars and increased the loan equity for electric cars up to 70%, which enabled the transition to Green House Gas emission-free public transport, and to developed Energy Efficiency Roadmap.*
- *By replacing conventional taxis with electric vehicles, 29.35 tonnes less of carbon dioxide was used as part of an UN-supported low emission transport project.*
- *Around 160 biogas plants were established to sustainably manage animal manure.*
- *The Earthquake Impact Assessment Modelling Study quantified for the first time, potential earthquake impacts in terms of fatalities, injuries and displaced persons in Bhutan's 20 districts in a number of scenarios.*
- *A total of four capacity strengthening programs related to disaster risk management were completed despite the pandemic.*
- *Disaster Management Officers and District Statistical Officers from all districts were trained on how to update their district specific Disaster Management Contingency Plans (DMCPs) to enhance practicality and ensure implementation.*
- *Capacity strengthening of the DDM in disaster data management resulted in completion of 'Climate Risk Assessment and Refinement of PRA Methodology', an earthquake impact assessment modelling and the launch of the 72-hour Rapid Assessment Approach, enabling predictions of the impact of future disasters, which also comprised a core part of the COVID-19 response plan.*
- *28% of the total farming population (127,072) can now tackle poverty through sustainable management of their natural resources due to inclusive, multi-hazard and risk-informed systems and capacity in place.*
- *The UN handed over eight mobile storage units to the Government (4,000 MT of additional storage build to strengthen the national emergency food reserve) and trained 95 government officials (50 from the DDM and frontline volunteers) on handling and setting up the units during the pandemic.*
- *A total of 1,883 (189 F) artisans, engineers, technicians, instructors, trainees, and local leaders were trained in 'seismic resilient stone masonry construction', 'confined masonry construction' and 'windstorm resilient roofing systems' through the 'Capacity building in Disaster Resilient Construction' initiative.*
- *More than 86,705 people benefited from climate resilient natural resource management solutions such as sustainable forest management, land management and smart agriculture technologies. In 2021, additional 407,955 hectares of forest area under a participatory*

*management regime, through the implementation of 26 Local Forest Management Plans which are now operational. It provides access to 158,353 cubic meters of timber annually.*

- *147 farmers' groups comprising 1311 farmers secured access to sustainable income through market linkages to schools and hospitals (73% female and 27% male).*
- *Transformation of the food system through appropriate climate adaptation of farming systems included distribution of green technologies to over 2,000 smallholder farmers*
- *Due to climate resilient infrastructure support from the UN, another 40,367 people now have secure access to climate-proof irrigation channels that enable crop diversification, resulting in greater income opportunities.*
- *More remote communities can gain access to a marketplace for their agricultural goods and services due to 316 kilometers of climate-resilient farm roads and gewog connectivity roads.*
- *1,435 farming communities were trained on production planning, post-harvest management techniques, and business management to make the intervention sustainable.*
- *A total of 2,187 farmers benefited from 335 kilometers of electric fencing and farm level water harvesting systems.*
- *As of 2021, a total of 19,354 men and 41,521 women benefited from climate resilient infrastructure and sustainable natural resource management technologies.*
- *15 social entrepreneurs were provided opportunity to promote Bhutanese textiles in new overseas markets, generating renewed interest and orders from France, the UK and Germany.*
- *More than 200 public and private sector stakeholders including 50 women were trained on trade negotiations, business advocacy, public-private dialogue, investment regulations, trade facilitation, market access.*
- *These communities are all linked to the school feeding programme. In 2020, 1,190 smallholder farmers (833 f) produced 194MT of fresh vegetables and sold 144MT of their produce and earned BTN 7.89 million, benefitting both the farming communities and the students.*

\* \* \*

In summary, the UN has provided key contributions in the areas of data and statistics, human rights and gender equality; good governance; inclusive economic growth; climate change and environmental sustainability; disaster risk resilience; and inclusive and equitable social development. The UN strived to ensure that the people of Bhutan had equitable access to quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene services during the pandemic. Overall, national partners noted that the UN contributions are in key priority areas for the country. There were no major suggestions or recommendations for shifting the focus of UN interventions into new areas not covered by the current programme. Also, no unanticipated effects of the work conducted under the UNSDPF were reported by stakeholders.

In the upcoming programme cycle, the UNCT should maintain a similar list of priorities in line with RGoB's five-year plans. However, it needs develop a complete results framework, with all indicators, baselines and targets determined upfront in alignment with the country's SDG framework. Care should be taken to identify sound indicators that meet the SMART criteria. Further, the UNCT and RGoB should select indicators for which there is reliable data and that can thus be tracked and have a baseline. It will also be essential to identify indicators that can be disaggregated, not only by gender, but also by other key demographics. The UN system should first strengthen its own data infrastructure, including data aggregation mechanisms, operability of the UNINFO system, etc. Training will be needed for this, which ideally should be organized jointly by the agencies and coordinated by the UNRCO. There is also a need to strengthen the capabilities of the OGs and PME to identify and analyse outcome and output indicators, plan interventions, prepare effective reports, and other functions.

### 4.3. COHERENCE

This section provides an assessment of the coherence with which UNSDPF has been coordinated, planned and implemented.

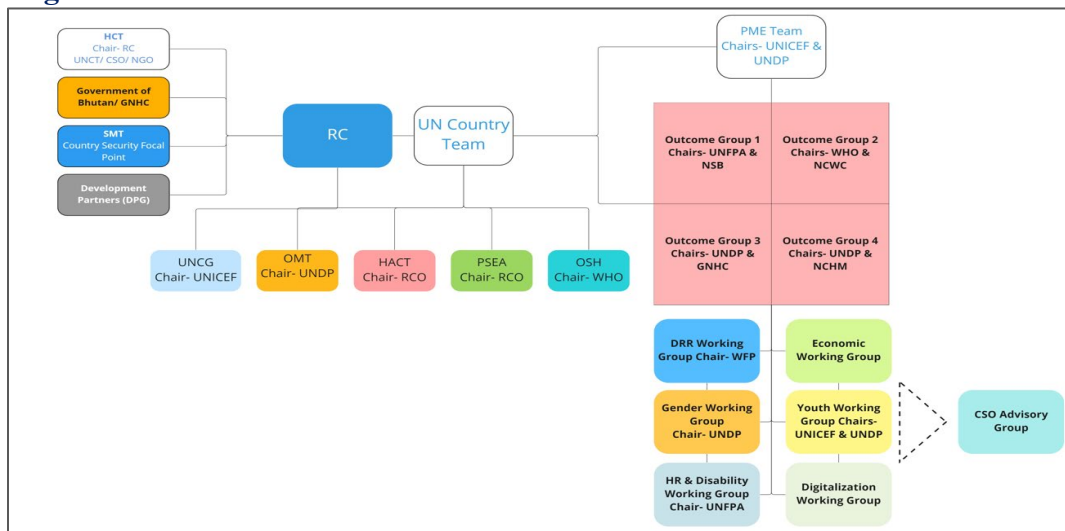
**Evaluation Questions:**

- *To what extent has the UNSDPF strengthened the coherence of support by UNCT members and sought partnership with government and other stakeholders to deliver inclusive, quality, integrated, SDG-focused support?*
- *To what extent has the UN member agencies contributed to functioning and consolidation of the UNCT coordination mechanisms (UNCT, DPG, IATT, Outcome Groups, PME, OMT, etc.) to deliver on the UNSDPF in the spirit of the UN Reform and how can it be improved?*

#### 4.3.1. Quality of Coordination under UNSDPF

With UNSDPF’s approval and RGoB’s formal endorsement of it, the UN agencies (both resident and regionally based ones) adopted the “*Delivering as One*” approach, which mandates joint planning, implementation and reporting.<sup>119</sup> As this report’s programme overview section noted, the UNCT has established the institutional foundations for the coordination of UN agencies and RGoB institutions under the UNSDPF framework. The question is how these structures are operationalized and utilized by the UN agencies and their national counterparts. This question will be at the centre of this section of the report. The focus of the assessment here will be on the quality of coordination and cooperation in the framework of the UNSDPF. The figure below shows the UN coordination infrastructure in Bhutan.

**Figure 9: UN Coordination Infrastructure<sup>120</sup>**



<sup>119</sup> This was one of the main motivations behind the recent UN reform agenda and the restructuring of the UNRCO institution.

<sup>120</sup> This structure is as of July 2022.

The following is an overview of the operation of the joint structures based on the information collected for this evaluation.

### Country Programme Board

As the highest-level structure of the UNSDPF, the Country Programme Board (CPB) is responsible for steering and overseeing the implementation of the UNSDPF. The Board consists of the heads of the relevant government agencies, representatives of civil society organizations, academia and the UN.<sup>121</sup> Membership to the Board is agreed upon jointly by the UNCT and GNHC. The CPB meets on an annual basis, with four meetings organized in the current programme cycle. The main issues discussed in the CPB meeting include progress made towards the achievement of UNSDPF objectives, planning for each consecutive year and the approval of AJWP adjustments resulting from emerging needs.

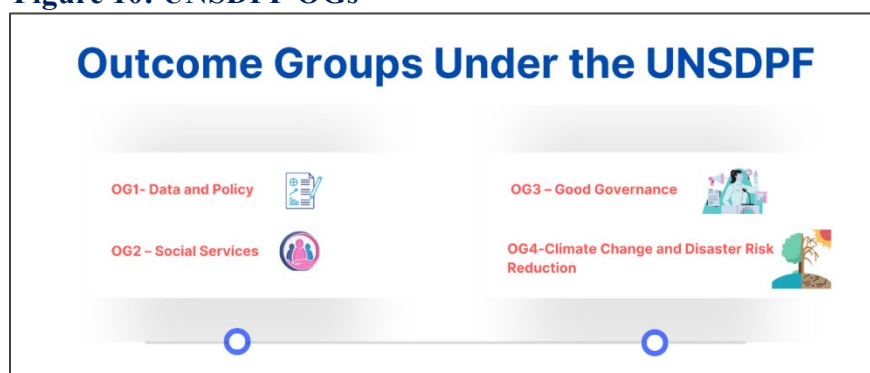
### UN Country Team (UNCT)

The UNCT consists of the heads or deputies of the resident UN agencies and local representatives of non-resident UN agencies. The UNCT is led by the UNRC and meets monthly. The UNCT represents the forum where the agencies make decisions about joint programmatic and financial matters arising in the process of implementing the UN's Management and Accountability System. The UNCT oversees the functioning of coordination mechanisms, including joint planning, monitoring and evaluation, communications and operations. UNCT meetings are also used to share agency updates and updates on the country context. During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNCT meetings were used for the provision of updates on the situation and UN's joint response.

### Outcome Groups

The UN system in Bhutan has established four Outcome Groups (OGs) – one for each UNSDPF outcome area. They are shown in the figure below.

**Figure 10: UNSDPF OGs**



<sup>121</sup> Key national institutions represented in the CPB include: GNHC, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, National Environment Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tarayana Foundation.

These groups facilitate the coordination of the UNSDPF. They are responsible for the preparation of Joint Annual Work Plans (JAWP) and reports for the respective outcome areas. They consist of relevant UN agency programme staff, (including staff from non-resident agencies), RGoB officials, and representatives of civil society organizations and academia. The OGs are co-chaired by UN agency heads and heads of the most relevant RGoB organizations. The agencies currently co-chairing the OGs are shown in the figure below. Similarly, there are four co-facilitators from the UN agencies and the RGoB – agreed upon jointly with GNHC. OGs’ membership is based on relevance to the outcome area and is agreed jointly by the UNCT and GNHC.

**Figure 11: Leading Agencies for OGs<sup>122</sup>**



OGs meet twice a year – in the middle and at the end of the year. The following are the dates of OG meetings in the current programme cycle.

**Figure 12: OG Meetings**



The OGs’ major contributions are related to planning, monitoring and reporting processes. The OGs develop Joint Annual Work Plans, which lay out costed outputs, activities and the Common Budgetary Framework. Non-resident UN agencies are involved in the preparation of JAWPs, which enables them to coordinate their in-country activities with the other UN agencies. The OGs

<sup>122</sup> This was the situation as of July 2022.

undertake mid-year and annual reviews of progress made with the implementation of the JAWPs and prepare joint annual progress reports.

The development of JWPs by the OGs allows for a comprehensive process of joint programming, facilitating communication with government counterparts and development partners. Similarly, the contributions of OGs to annual reporting allow for the development of a single document that shows the work and results of the entire UN development system in the country. This process also allows for the communication of results in a consolidated fashion to the government, development partners and the general public.

UN agencies think that the number of OGs is sufficient for ensuring coordination. However, their effectiveness needs to be further strengthened. Despite the overall positive feedback received during this evaluation about the functioning of OGs, UNSDPF stakeholders highlighted the need to further strengthened these groups.

- Some UN agencies do not participate effectively in the OGs. This is especially the case when a smaller agency participates in more than one OG and their interests lie primarily in the core area in which they operate. National partners reported that they face challenges when they work with non-resident UN agencies.
- Some national partners reported that sometimes OG meetings are organized without sharing sufficient information with the concerned government officials. Also, the preparation of JAWPs and the allocation of funds is sometimes done without the full involvement of responsible government officials/co-facilitators. National partners suggested the need to strengthen the role of OG co-chairs and co-facilitators based on clear ToRs for their roles.
- Another challenge noted by evaluation participants has been the high turnover of OG's focal points both in the Government and UN agencies, which has weakened institutional memory and has negatively impacted coordination. On the other hand, national partners informed that when new co-chairs take over their function, there is no orientation for them, making it difficult for the new appointee to understand the programme and provide meaningful input. There is no contact point or an official forum where they may seek help when required, which creates inefficiencies and implementation delays. For instance, some national partners informed that they were unable to understand the UNSDPF operational procedures, how the indicators were set, how to assess outputs and report against the framework outcomes. One of the participants informed that it took him a while to even familiarize himself with the acronyms in the UNSDPF document.<sup>123</sup> To mitigate this issue, evaluation participants suggested the establishment of a forum/platform where stakeholders (PME, PMU, UN, RGoB, co-chairs, co-facilitators) can seek information when necessary. The forum could also serve as a platform to meet members from other

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<sup>123</sup> One of the co-facilitators said, “Sometimes when I review the AWP, I am unable to understand how the indicators are set and how they relate to outputs and outcomes. In such cases, I call my colleagues in the government and the UN to obtain background information.”



implementing agencies to develop a support network, share implementation experiences, clarify doubts, take inspiration, discuss common issues and find collective solutions.

### Inter-agency Thematic Groups

The UN system in Bhutan has established several inter-agency thematic groups to facilitate the coordination of UN agencies across key thematic areas. These groups are shown in Figure 10 above. Some of these groups are mandated under the UNSDPF and some are created on an ad hoc basis. The following are the main thematic groups reported by the participants of this evaluation.

- ***UN Communications Group (UNCG)*** – Currently chaired by UNICEF, this group carries out joint communications in support of the UNSDPF activities. The work of this group is guided by an annual joint communications workplan. The UNCG has prepared a draft communications strategy which remains unapproved.
- ***PME Team*** – Currently chaired by UNICEF, the PME Team is mandated to support the capacity of the UN to manage for results and provides technical support to the UNCT and OGs on matters related to monitoring and evaluation.
- ***Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Task Team*** – Since the closure of the UN Women office in Bhutan in 2018, UNDP has been leading this thematic group, which is dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women for gender. According to evaluation participants, this has been one of the most active groups under the UNSDPF.
- ***Disability Task Team*** – Currently chaired by UNFPA, this thematic group had successfully carried out joint resource mobilization for a UNPRPD project. Evaluation participants reported that this been active primarily during the lifetime of the above-mentioned project.
- ***Youth Empowerment Group*** – Based on feedback for this evaluation, this thematic group seems to be latent.
- ***SDG and Data Task Team*** – This group was subsumed into the OG1 on data since the focus of both groups was quite similar.
- ***Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Team*** – Based on feedback for this evaluation, the disaster preparedness and response group has not been active recently.
- ***HACT Working Group*** – This group has organized annual trainings to ensure that implementing partners are well informed of operational rules and procedures.
- ***Operations Management Team (OMT)*** – This group generates efficient business solutions to support the programmatic implementation of the UNSDPF. The team develops an Annual Business Operations Work Plan derived from the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) of the UNSDPF. UNDP coordinates and leads the provision of common back-office support based on a fee-for-service model. The team consists of UN agency operations staff and is led by UNDP with support from a Common Services Officer. This group has undertaken joint business solutions, such as greening the UN house and the car pool initiatives. OMT has managed to achieve cost savings and greater efficiencies for the agencies.
- ***Crisis Management Team (CMT)*** – In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the UNCT established the CMT to facilitate the coordination of the UN's response as outlined in the SERP. The CMT included the membership of the UNCT and was coordinated by the

UNRCO. This group was a good practice resulting from the pandemic as it greatly improved inter-agency coordination in a time of crisis.

The performance of the inter-agency thematic groups has been mixed. Some groups were reported by agency representatives to be more active than others and have produced better results. The more active ones reflect the areas in which cooperation and coordination is relatively strong. The active groups have functioned with a fixed periodicity of meetings and have played an important role in the coordination of the UN agencies. Agency representation in the active groups has been consistent and strong. The COVID-19 response was the best example of coordination by the UNCT using the Crisis Management Team.

For all the benefits of the joint coordination structures outlined above, there are challenges with their functioning that require greater attention from the UNCT and UNRC.

- First of all, there is a need for consistency in how the various thematic groups operate. A decision needs to be made whether the groups that are inactive should be maintained or disbanded.
- There is also a need for stronger links between the thematic groups and OGs.
- Further, the OGs do not have clear Terms of Reference for how they should operate. Also, the frequency at which these groups meet varies.
- The PME group was reported by evaluation participants to being weak and not pro-active. First, there is no clear division of responsibilities between OGs and PME when it comes to tracking and monitoring of activities. Second, there has been no clear division of labour between the PME Team and OG1 when it comes to matters related to data and monitoring.
- Some evaluation participants reported that similar coordination mechanisms impose heavy transaction costs for small agencies. For example, thematic groups such as those on disability, gender, HACT, OMT, PME, UNCG, while having improved coordination impose on participating agencies high administrative and transaction costs. These coordination mechanisms pose a burden on agency staff through the requirements to attend various meetings.
- Furthermore, some agency staff displayed limited understanding of the gains of coordination, an indication of the need for greater information and awareness on the benefits of cooperation under the UNSDPF.

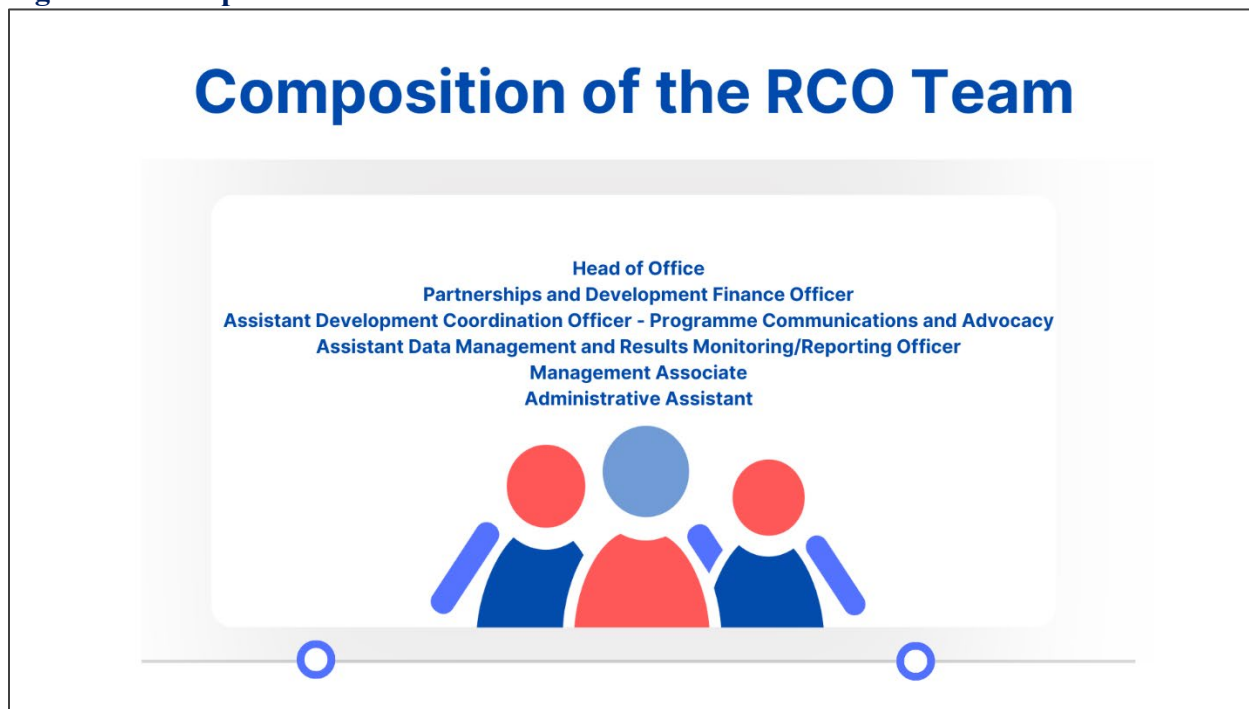
Clearly, there is a need for a systematic examination of all existing thematic groups with a view to streamlining and optimizing the overall functioning of the coordination infrastructure. Starting from 2022, the UNRCO has sought to create a more consistent coordination structure by developing ToRs for the various groups, sharing appointment letters to members, and most importantly by appointing chairs of working group at the level of agency representatives. The UNRCO is also seeking to create stronger links between the results group and the thematic groups. This is work in progress that should be escalated in the coming programme cycle. The upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) presented an opportunity for the UNCT to assess the performance of the inter-agency coordination infrastructure and identify necessary improvements.

## UN Resident Coordinator Office

Another key UNSDPF coordination structure has been the institution of the UNRC and the UNRCO. The UNRC has played a crucial representation role on behalf of the system and has advocated on behalf of the agencies. The UNRCO has played an important role in ensuring stronger coordination between UN agencies among each other and with RGoB institutions. In addition to its regular coordination functions, the UNRCO played a crucial role in the coordination of formulation and coordination of the Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan in response to the COVID-19. Also, the UNRCO also played a crucial coordinating role in the monitoring of SERP and the reporting to the global UN system. The UNRCO also supported the resource mobilization effort to fund the plan. The UNRCO has also led the production of regular COVID-19 situation reports for development partners and has maintained a dataset of COVID-19 statistics for the country which was updated daily.

The UNDS reform has enabled the UNRCO to strengthen its human resource capacities and turn into a fully-fledged institution. Currently, the UNRCO has six core staff in the office. These positions are shown below.

**Figure 13: Composition of the UNRCO Team**



Although following the UNDS reform the capacities of the UNRCO have been strengthened, its responsibilities have also increased. From the perspective of the UNRCO, its core capacities are insufficient to carry out all the duties and responsibilities. The UNRCO currently does not have an Economist, although it is part of the approved structure. The UNRCO needs to be strengthened with skilled human resources to efficiently coordinate and support the country. Further, the UN agencies, especially the non-resident agencies, should understand better the role of the UNRCO and embrace the UN reform and the new role of the UNRC.

### 4.3.2. Programme Planning and Implementation

This section examines the way in which the UNCT has planned and implemented jointly under the UNSDPF (the M&E and reporting functions were reviewed in this report's previous section on Effectiveness). The degree to which the UN agencies are capable to plan and implement jointly is an element of coherence due to avoidance of overlaps, better sharing of practices and lessons, greater specialization and better use of comparative advantages.

#### Joint Planning

As noted previously in this report, planning in the context of the UNSDPF is carried out by the four OGs which develop Joint Annual Work Plans (JAWP) with the full involvement of government counterparts. These plans identify costed outputs and activities, which are underpinned by the annual Common Budgetary Framework. Non-resident UN agencies are also engaged in the formulation of JAWPs, which helps them coordinate their in-country activities with other agencies. By virtue of their alignment with the Government's annual plans, the JAWPs ensure that the activities of the UN agencies contribute to the annual results of the respective government institutions and the achievement of national priorities. They enable the UN agencies to strengthen the coherence of their interventions, coordinate activities around the delivery of the four UNSDPF outcomes, avoid duplication of effort and improve transparency and accountability.

JAWPs are launched at the beginning of each year for 18 months on a rolling basis, spanning the period January – June (following year). This was done in order to seek alignment with the government fiscal year planning - June to July of the following year.. The OGs undertake mid-year and annual reviews of their plans and implementation and prepare annual progress reports based on the calendar year. When needed, the JAWPs are adjusted – this usually takes place during the mid-year review. This was particularly the case during the COVID-19 crisis. The UNCT acted promptly by developing the SERP and imbedding SERP indicators into the UNSDPF framework. Furthermore, the UN also adapted its annual plan and programmes in line with the SERP in response to the Government's needs.

The UNCT has committed to developing work plans based on outputs delivered by the UN agencies based on their comparative advantages. UN agencies participating in this evaluation indicated that the UNSDPF serves as a reference document for most of their programmatic work. However, although coordination has improved as a result of the UNSDPF, joint programming in practice is more a result of concrete opportunities for financing, joint actions and common interests. For the UN agencies, the most essential planning tools remain their own planning frameworks, agreed with the respective partner ministries. Furthermore, while the JAWPs have improved coordination within the UN system, evaluation participants reported that some agencies initiate programmes on their own without consultation or coordination with other agencies through the joint structures. The lack of coordination was also noted by the 2022 UNFPA country programme evaluation which noted that *“another challenge noted from the discussions with UNCT members, is the lack of division of labour that has created confusion in responding to RGOB requests - agencies with easy access to funds responding to requests, sometimes without*

*consultation with the agency under whose mandate the technical area falls*".<sup>124</sup> Some evaluation participants also noted that the GNH agency took a long time to approve the JAWPs, which delays implementation and reduces the flexibility of the plans.

Participants of this evaluation pointed out the need for a greater role by the OGs in the planning process and, particularly, joint planning, rather than just monitoring and reporting, which is the case currently. The role of the OGs in planning should be strengthened to ensure that planning under the UNSDPF is not done as the sum of agency plans, but as a process that consolidates and integrates the efforts of the agencies. Furthermore, the UNCT should promote a higher degree of awareness among UN staff members about the UN reform and its implications for joint delivery. The UNRCO is well-positioned to facilitate this process through some targeted training. Further, the agencies should interact, communicate and collaborate more effectively on the planning process. The UNRCO could facilitate a more harmonious alignment of UN planning processes with government planning approaches at the sectoral and national level.

### Joint Implementation

Despite the joint planning in the form of the JAWPs described above, the implementation of the UN programme in Bhutan is primarily done individually by the agencies on the basis of their own country programmes (or sometimes regional programmes). Most cooperation and coordination among agencies take place at the level of information-sharing, with less effort invested in the formulation of joint programmes/projects. In the current programme cycle, the UN has delivered four joint programmes shown in the table below.

**Table 10: Joint Programmes of UN Agencies in Bhutan**<sup>125</sup>

No.	Project	Budget (USD)	Implementation Period	Lead Agency	Agencies
1	Building a Bhutan Integrated National Financing Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gross National Happiness (GNH).	872,050	January 2021 – June 2023	UNDP	UNICEF, UNRCO
2	The Secretary-General's Multi-Partner Trust Fund allocation will help the short and longer-term impacts of the pandemic in Bhutan - Protecting livelihoods and reinforcing the tourism	300,000	May- December 2020	UNDP, WFP, UNICEF	UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, UNRCO

<sup>124</sup> UNFPA Bhutan, 7th Country Programme Evaluation 2019-23, Evaluation Report, October 2022, page 37.

<sup>125</sup> Based on data provided by UNRCO.

No.	Project	Budget (USD)	Implementation Period	Lead Agency	Agencies
	and agriculture sectors in Bhutan Education Continuity in response to COVID-19				
3	UNPRPD Multi-Partner Trust Fund Project: Advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in Bhutan	400,000	July 2018- January 2021	WHO, UNDP, UNICEF	UNRCO
4	Hear, Listen, and Speak Programme for all Bhutanese Children	3,400,000	October 2021- December 2024	UN Technology bank for LDCs (UNTB)	UNICEF, UNRCO (non UN-Medtronic Labs, Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss)

Despite improvements in coordination, joint programming and implementation still remain a challenge. They primarily result when donors prefer a programme that engages more than one UN agency. UNDP’s Independent Country Programme Evaluation conducted in parallel to this evaluation noted the untapped potential for joint programming and implementation between the UN agencies.<sup>126</sup> Development partners see joint programming as an important aspect of the UN’s work in Bhutan. As one donor representative put it, “*joint programming will definitely, be important for these agencies with overlapping areas of work. Aside of reducing duplication, this will also reduce transaction costs for RGOB, especially at a time when Bhutan plans to graduate out of LDC status*”. The UNRCO could play a greater role in encouraging UN agencies to undertake joint programming.

\* \* \*

In summary, the collaborative approach to the UN's country presence and the configuration of the UNCT in the current program cycle is highly regarded by the RGoB, national stakeholders, and development partners for its ability to harmonize the UN's programming, communication, advocacy, and reporting. However, agency cooperation and coordination have largely focused on information sharing rather than establishing a strong base of joint programmes grounded in

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<sup>126</sup> The following is an excerpt from UNDP’s 2022 ICPE - “*Despite being the largest agency in Bhutan 131 and agency lead of two of the four outcomes of the UN’s Partnership Framework, joint initiatives are rare amongst UN agencies, including in common areas of work such as with FAO in the areas of sustainable agriculture and forest management and with WFP in the area of disaster risk management (DRM). Further harmonization is required within the UN Agencies, including with non-resident agencies, to normalize and enhance joint approaches, including joint programming and resource mobilization. When it comes to non-resident agencies, there is scope for UNDP to strengthen its partnerships. For example, ILO could become a strong partner in terms of youth employment, UN Women with regards to gender equality and GBV, FAO in the field of sustainable agriculture, forest management, and GHG estimation in agriculture, forestry and other land use sector*”.

complementarities. The agencies continue to rely on their own programmatic frameworks, agreed upon with their respective line ministries, as their most critical planning tools.

While UN agencies express a desire for stronger coordination and collaboration among themselves, the quality of such coordination largely depends on their incentives to engage and the capacities and resources available to them. Resident and larger agencies have greater capacity to effectively participate in coordination mechanisms, whereas smaller agencies may be willing to engage but have limited capacity to do so. Additionally, some agencies lack a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of coordination, underscoring the need for greater information and awareness on the advantages of cooperation within the framework of the UNSDPF.

Greater efforts are required to strengthen the coordination of OGs, given the high turnover of focal points both from the UN and the Government. OGs have been mainly concerned with the development of JWPs, mostly based on individual agency activities, monitoring indicators and providing input for reporting. The OGs could be incentivized by the UNCT to engage more proactively in joint programming. It will also be useful to streamline and optimize the thematic groups. Also, UNRCO's capacities required for coordination could be further boosted.



## 4.4. EFFICIENCY

UNSDPF was motivated by the need to lower transaction costs and improve efficiencies under a joint cooperation framework with RGoB. This section provides an assessment of the efficiency with which the UNSDPF resources have been mobilized and executed.

### *Evaluation Questions:*

- *To what extent were the resources (financial/technical/human) efficiently used and adapted to the implementation modalities in the COVID-19 context?*
- *To what extent did the UNSDPF implementation reduced transaction costs for partners through greater UN coherence and discipline?*

### 4.4.1. Resource Mobilization and Budget Execution

#### Resource Mobilization

The UNSDPF document presented a budget (referred to as the Medium-term Common Budget Framework), which provided the RGoB, the UN agencies, and bilateral and multi-lateral development partners with an overview of the required and available resources to support implementation of planned outcomes and any funding gaps. The budget presented in the UNSDPF document upon its approval is shown in the figure below.

**Figure 14: Mid-Term Common Budgetary Framework for 2019-2023**

Outcome	Total Planned Budget	Regular Resources	Other Resources	Gap (to be mobilized)	Gap as % of Requirement
Outcome 1	5,260,000	720,000	1,900,000	2,640,000	50
Outcome 2	34,821,656	9,063,992	6,659,947	19,097,717	55
Outcome 3	9,781,101	2,980,336	1,018,265	5,782,500	59
Outcome 4	71,016,800	1,542,000	32,865,850	36,608,950	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,879,557</b>	<b>14,306,328</b>	<b>42,444,062</b>	<b>64,129,167</b>	<b>53</b>

\*Excludes financial and/or technical support from UNADIS, UNCDF, UNDESA, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNOCHA, UNOPS and UNV. It also does not include what is required for UN business operations.

The UN agencies were quick in reacting to the COVID-19 crisis by adjusting their programming and budgets. At the request of the RGoB, the UN agencies did two rounds of repurposing of planned activities to ensure that the UN support was well aligned with immediate COVID response. Some agency staff noted that the pandemic shifted resources to the emergency response and derailed the mobilization of resources for pre-COVID programmes. A good practice of the

UN system during the pandemic was the coordinated resource mobilization effort tapping multi-partner trust funds.

In the framework of the JAWPs, each OG has defined annual resource requirements, core and non-core agency contributions per output and the annual funding gap as a contribution to the Annual Common Budgetary Framework. However, evaluation participants noted that the costing of outputs may not have been realistic because of the lack of certainty about how much resources the UN system could actually mobilize.

Documents reviewed for this evaluation mention the existence of a joint fund called “*UN Bhutan Country Fund (One Fund)*” co-chaired by the GNHC and the UN, which was set up as a pooled mechanism to receive contributions from multiple financial partners. However, there is no evidence of any funding being channelled through this instrument yet. The UNSDPF document also envisaged the development of a joint Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Strategy. This strategy was not formulated in the course of the current programme, but the UNCT has plans to develop it in the upcoming cycle. The development of the resource mobilization strategy will be an important step for the UN system in Bhutan. It should identify options to strengthen partnerships and increase resources available for UN programmes by leveraging additional financing for SDGs. The strategy should outline the principles and approaches in the process of joint resource mobilization and partnership building. These principles should streamline resource mobilization efforts, bring about greater efficiency and coordination and avoid unnecessary competition among agencies.

### Budget and Expenditure

One aspect of efficiency is the adequacy of planning. Adequate planning is an essential prerequisite for efficient implementation because it allows organizations to sequence measures accordingly and allocate funding appropriately. One indicator of the quality of planning is the rate at which the budget is executed. The execution rate indicates the amount of money that was spent compared to what was planned initially. When expenditure deviates substantially from the plan, the implication is that planning has not been adequate.

The following two tables present financial delivery data for the UNSDPF from 2019 to December 2022. They show the planned budget, expenditure, and delivery rate for the four outcome areas. The second table (Table 10) shows the same information for each year.

**Table 11: UNSDPF Budget and Expenditure (in USD)**

UNSDPF Financial Delivery from 2019 until Dec 2022					
UNSDPF Outcome	Planned Budget (USD)	Utilized (USD)	Transferred (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Delivery Rate
1. Data and Policy	1,274,514	735,796	279,194	1,014,990	80%
2. Essential Social Services	45,228,439	32,903,689	6,013,053	38,916,742	86%
3. Governance	2,680,132	2,224,142	317,746	2,541,888	95%
4. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	40,636,297	31,318,783	8,598,998	39,917,781	98%
<b>Total</b>	<b>89,819,382</b>	<b>67,182,410</b>	<b>15,208,992</b>	<b>82,391,400</b>	<b>92%</b>

**Table 12: UNSDPF Budget and Expenditure (in USD) by Year**

UNSDPF Financial Delivery in 2022					
UNSDPF Outcome	Planned Budget (USD)	Utilized (USD)	Transferred (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Delivery Rate
1. Data and Policy	90000	49,726	10,583	60,309	67%
2. Essential Social Services	6,794,035	3,874,575	2,386,854	6,261,429	92%
3. Governance	619,564	608,985	124,723	733,708	118%
4. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	15,015,796	12,486,550	1,913,890	14,400,440	96%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,519,395</b>	<b>17,019,836</b>	<b>4,436,050</b>	<b>21,455,886</b>	<b>95%</b>
UNSDPF Financial Delivery in 2021					
UNSDPF Outcome	Planned Budget (USD)	Utilized (USD)	Transferred (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Delivery Rate
1. Data and Policy	52500	43,500	9,000	52,500	100%
2. Essential Social Services	9,469,724	8,007,550	923,534	8,931,084	94%
3. Governance	731,595	445,131	133,633	578,763	79%
4. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	7,025,571	5,278,682	1,312,715	6,591,397	94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,279,390</b>	<b>13,774,863</b>	<b>2,378,882</b>	<b>16,153,745</b>	<b>93%</b>
UNSDPF Financial Delivery in 2020					
UNSDPF Outcome	Planned Budget (USD)	Utilized (USD)	Transferred (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Delivery Rate
1. Data and Policy	228,264	167,239	26,870	194,109	85%
2. Essential Social Services	21,091,100	15,782,413	1,109,203	16,891,616	80%
3. Governance	648,347	504,792	30,411	535,203	83%
4. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	13,785,669	10,110,748	4,219,384	14,330,132	104%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,753,380</b>	<b>26,565,192</b>	<b>5,385,868</b>	<b>31,951,061</b>	<b>89%</b>
UNSDPF Financial Delivery in 2019					
UNSDPF Outcome	Planned Budget (USD)	Utilized (USD)	Transferred (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Delivery Rate
1. Data and Policy	903,750	475,331	232,741	708,072	78%
2. Essential Social Services	7,873,580	5,239,151	1,593,462	6,832,613	87%
3. Governance	680,626	665,234	28,979	694,213	102%
4. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	4,809,260	3,442,803	1,153,009	4,595,812	96%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,267,216</b>	<b>9,822,519</b>	<b>3,008,191</b>	<b>12,830,709</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>89,819,382</b>	<b>67,182,410</b>	<b>15,208,992</b>	<b>82,391,400</b>	<b>91.73%</b>

The following are some key takeaways on UNSDPF’s financial delivery for each outcome area:

1. Data and Policy: With a planned budget of \$1,274,514, the expenditure was \$1,014,990, resulting in a delivery rate of 80%.
2. Essential Social Services: The planned budget was \$45,228,439, and the expenditure reached \$38,916,742, leading to a delivery rate of 86%.
3. Governance: With \$2,680,132 as the planned budget, the expenditure amounted to \$2,541,888, resulting in a high delivery rate of 95%.
4. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management: The planned budget was \$40,636,297, and the expenditure was close at \$39,917,781, achieving a 98% delivery rate.

The total planned budget for all four outcomes was \$89,819,382, with an expenditure of \$82,391,400, leading to an overall delivery rate of 92%. Furthermore, the above table shows that there have been varying delivery rates across four key outcomes. In 2019, the overall delivery rate was 90%, with Governance showing the highest rate at 102%. In 2020, the total delivery rate dropped to 89%, while Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management had the highest rate at 104%. The delivery rate increased in 2021 to 93%, with Data and Policy reaching a 100% rate. Finally, in 2022, the total delivery rate climbed to 95%, and Governance had an impressive 118% rate. Across the entire period from 2019 to 2022, the combined delivery rate was 91.73%, indicating a generally high level of efficiency in utilizing resources for the targeted outcomes.

Going forward, it will be useful for the UNCT to track expenditure at the level of the UN on a regular basis. For this it should establish the right monitoring mechanisms to be able to track overall expenditure across agencies. The agencies should cooperate by providing the information to the UNRCO on a regular basis and assisting with the analysis. The UNINFO tool could be used to track programme expenditures more accurately by SDG area, but it will require the establishment of an effective process around data collection and reporting. Efforts for better tracking of financial information should be combined with work on improving systems for evidence-based programming and implementation which will be discussed further in this report.

#### **4.4.2. Operational Efficiencies**

The UNSDPF takes an integrated programming approach across four outcome areas.<sup>127</sup> The main goal of this approach is to help the UN agencies harmonize their business operations and increase efficiencies and reduce costs. Furthermore, the majority of UN agencies in Bhutan are housed under one roof and therefore the UN system in Bhutan enjoys a comparative advantage when it comes to agencies working cohesively together, sharing resources and pooling services such as reception services, facility management and other common services. This mode of operation goes towards the “*Delivering as One*” approach.

While the COVID-19 pandemic hampered the implementation of many activities, it also presented an opportunity for the UNCT to programme differently, using innovative strategies and

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<sup>127</sup> The four integrated programming priority areas are capacity development, coherent policy work, testing new ways of working, and partnerships.

technologies to adapt its operations so as to mitigate the pandemic's effects. The UN agencies adopted new approaches and technologies, such as the use of digital solutions for information-sharing, inter-agency coordination, and service delivery. The pandemic also brought to the fore the role of CSOs in reaching remote and scattered populations with essential service delivery and the provision of care during disasters and in times of emergency. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for a new and efficient modality that involved releasing funds directly to the CSOs for emergency implementation on the ground. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for fostering trilateral partnerships between the RGoB, the UN and the private sector, such as the successful development of the Gaykid City Bus application tool.

During interviews with UN agency staff, Government officials, civil society representatives and development partners, several challenges were identified with regards to the operational procedures of the UN system in Bhutan.

- Some evaluation interviewees raised concerns about the lengthy and complicated procedures for the release of funds, which requires the release form to be reviewed by multiple stakeholders such as the implementing partners, GNHC and the UN agencies. This long process increases the administrative burden for the implementing partners and creates implementation delays.
- Furthermore, for all the flexibility displayed by the UNCT at the time of COVID-19, the projects funded through the global programmes were difficult to adjust to the ever-evolving situation and for them the repurposing funds proved a long and cumbersome process. Many processes took longer than expected due to the challenges presented by the pandemic including procurement processes, seeking clearances and government approvals and the mobilizing of funds which in some cases resulted in activities remaining unfunded in the 2021 Annual Work Plan.
- As noted previously in this report, another challenge has been the high turnover of OG's focal points both in the Government and UN agencies, which has weakened institutional memory and has negatively impacted coordination. Additionally, there is no orientation for Government officials participating in the joint structures, making it difficult for new appointees to understand the programme and provide meaningful input.

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In summary, the total planned budget for all four outcomes was \$89,819,382, with an expenditure of \$82,391,400, leading to an overall delivery rate of 92%. The Covid-19 crisis forced the agencies to re-program and re-channel funds to response-related activities. The UNCT has not yet developed a joint Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Strategy, which should be imperative for the upcoming programme cycle. As for operational efficiencies, the COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for the UNCT to programme differently, using innovative strategies and technologies to adapt its operations so as to mitigate the pandemic's effects. Nevertheless, the UNSDPF face challenges the lengthy and complicated procedures for the release of funds which increases the administrative burden and creates implementation delays. Also, the frequent change in the leadership of outcome groups has contributed to some delays, such as the approval of JAWPs.

## 4.5. SUSTAINABILITY

The focus of this section will be on two key factors of sustainability: i) sustainability of programme funding; and, ii) meaningful engagement of partners.

### ***Evaluation Questions:***

- ***What mechanisms, if any, has the UNSDPF established to ensure socio-political, institutional, financial, and environmental sustainability of the achieved results? To what extent has the UNSDPF contributed to building national and local capacities and ensuring long-term gains?***

The UNSDPF has established several mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of achieved results in socio-political, institutional, financial, and environmental domains. These mechanisms include:

1. **Resource Mobilization:** The UNCT, coordinated by the UNRCO, has made efforts to diversify and expand funding sources. This includes primarily partnerships with development partners, but also some engagement with the private sector to address funding gaps.
2. **Engagement of Government Partners:** The UNCT has engaged with RGoB in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of the UNSDPF. This engagement has led to government ownership of joint activities, ensuring the durability of the results.
3. **Engagement of Non-governmental Partners:** The UNCT recognizes the importance of engaging Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the private sector and development partners in the UNSDPF.

All these mechanisms and factors will be analysed in the rest of this section of the evaluation report.

### 4.5.1. Sustainability of Funding of UN Programme

With Bhutan's expected graduation from the LDC status in 2023, the availability of development finance is expected to decrease.<sup>128</sup> In the words of one donor representative participating in this evaluation, "*moving forward, development assistance will definitely drop, especially after 2023 when Bhutan will graduate from the category of Least Developed Countries. On the other hand, if*

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<sup>128</sup> As a country moves up the income ladder and becomes more developed, it may no longer be eligible for certain types of concessional financing, which are loans or grants that have more favorable terms than market-rate loans. Many development agencies provide grants to LDCs to support various types of development programs, such as education, health, or infrastructure. However, these grants may not be available to countries that have graduated from the LDC category, as they are intended for countries with the greatest development needs. Development banks such as the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank provide highly concessional loans to LDCs that have low levels of income and debt. These loans typically have low or zero interest rates, long repayment periods, and may include a grace period before the repayment begins. However, as countries graduate from the LDC category, they may no longer be eligible for these highly concessional loans and may need to seek financing from other sources. Many LDCs are eligible for debt relief programs that cancel or reduce their external debt. However, as a country becomes more developed, it may no longer be eligible for debt relief programs and may need to repay its debt in full.

*there is no significant increase in the domestic revenue, the country will face various challenges including widening of public/external debts, reserve issue and so on*". Another donor representative noted that *"As countries, including Bhutan, recover from the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, we feel that Bhutan will have to intensify its efforts to diversify resource mobilization and expand project-based financing support and partnership especially in the areas of climate action, renewable energy, transforming education through digital and other infrastructure projects"*.

At the same time, core funding from the UN agencies is insufficient to meet the demand they face from their counterparts and beneficiaries. Another challenge is the weakness of the private sector, which remains unable to contribute to social or environmental causes, and thus does not represent significant potential as a source of funding for the UN programme. Indeed, the limited availability and sustainability of development finance for the country emerged as one of the main challenges identified by participants of this evaluation which has major implications for the sustainability of UN's work in the country. The resource limitation becomes obvious when looking at the table below which shows the distribution of resources across the four outcome areas for the years 2022 and 2023.<sup>129</sup> As shown in the table, for outcome areas 1 and 3 resources have been very limited compared to outcomes 2 and 4.

**Table 13: Resource Distribution by Outcome Area**

<b>Total Resource Summary</b>			
<b>Outcome Group</b>	<b>Financial Support Summary (USD)</b>		
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Total</b>
Outcome Group 1	90,000	20,000	110,000
Outcome Group 2	5,076,334	369,500	5,445,834
Outcome Group 3	608,703	10,000	618,703
Outcome Group 4	14,310,998	4,665,522	18,976,520
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>20,086,035</b>	<b>5,065,022</b>	<b>25,151,057</b>

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for additional sources of financing. Measures towards this should be outlined in a Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy which should be developed by the UNCT with the coordination of the UNRCO. Going forward, the UN system needs to expand its financial capacity to respond to the demands of national partners for support and expertise. The UN should also explore in a systematic and well-coordinated fashion opportunities for partnerships with IFIs. An example of this is the collaboration with the Asian Development Bank in the framework of the Joint SDG Fund Programme that supported Bhutan's goals of long-term financial sustainability, social spending that benefits all people, and green

<sup>129</sup> From a presentation from 4th Country Programme Board Meeting, 18 February 2022.



finance to protect the environment and respond to climate change.<sup>130</sup> In the upcoming programme cycle, the UN system should also explore and promote government cost-sharing as a way of funding high-impact programmes appreciated by national partners. The UN should also pursue stronger partnerships with the private sector to address funding gaps for the planned outcomes and related programmes and projects. Different models and incentives that have worked elsewhere could be explored for this.

#### 4.5.2. Engagement of Government Partners

The engagement of the RGoB with the UN under the UNSDPF framework is a key factor of the sustainability of the latter because government ownership of joint activities ensures the durability of the results. The 2030 Agenda requires the UN to adopt a modular approach to country presence, where the configuration of the UNCT—their composition, skill sets, functions and focus—is driven by the government and national stakeholders based on their nationally-defined plans and priorities in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. In keeping with this requirement, the UNCT has ensured strong engagement of the Government in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of the UNSDPF. In the online survey organized for this evaluation, about 57% of participating government officials (a total of seven) agreed with the statement “*the UNSDPF promotes ownership of UN programmes by the government*”.

The RGoB is represented in the Country Programme Board, demonstrating high level of engagement and representation. The board consists of the heads of relevant government agencies, representatives of civil society organizations, academia and the UN. Membership to the Board is agreed upon jointly with the GNHC. The Board is co-chaired by the UNRC and the Secretary of the GNHC. In addition, each OG is co-chaired and co-facilitated by government officials appointed by the RGoB. Government representatives involved in this evaluation reported that one of the significant and welcome change has been the appointment of co-chairs and co-facilitators which has improved UNSDPF planning and reporting.

Government partners across a range of institutions have benefited from UN support. According to the survey with government officials answered by 7 civil servants, the majority of government entities engaged in project implementations and benefit from capacity building activities and support in policy formulation. Also, according to the survey, 72% of civil servants recognize that the UNSDPF promotes ownership of UN programmes by the Government and 57% considered that UNSDPF results are sustainable given the financial resources mobilized so far.

The Government’s focal point for the UNSDPF in the current programme cycle has been the GNHC. Under the Civil Service Reform Bill of 2022, GNHC has been dissolved and its functions are transferred to the Cabinet and the Ministry of Finance.

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<sup>130</sup> Through this programme, the UN supported the RGoB in providing technical assistance in instituting innovative financing mechanism such as sovereign bonds, biodiversity funds through the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) and supporting the joint initiative to strengthen capacity in macroeconomic forecasting and modelling.

### 4.5.3. Engagement of Non-governmental Partners

#### Civil Society

Bhutan's civil society ecosystem is not as vibrant as its immediate neighbours' such as India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Nonetheless, the CSOs in Bhutan are key development partners of the UN system. The UN recognizes the importance and need for active CSO engagement in the UNSDPF. From the UN's perspective, the engagement of CSOs with the UNSDPF has been a priority for the formulation and implementation process. CSOs were engaged in the preparation of documents such as the CCA and SERP, where issues and challenges faced by them and their beneficiaries were identified for possible interventions. CSOs have also been important implementing partners of the UN system in Bhutan. For example, in 2022 the UN system had 15 CSOs as implementing partners, compared to 28 government implementing partners.<sup>131</sup> During the COVID-19 crisis, the UN found the engagement of CSOs beneficial in supporting vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, LGBTQI, women and children due to their presence in remote and sparsely populated areas. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for a new and efficient modality that involved releasing funds directly to the CSOs for emergency implementation on the ground.

In the current programme cycle, the UN has delivered a series interventions targeting the capacity development of civil society. Through its Democracy Fund, the UN supported the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy to strengthen democracy by enabling elected leaders, educators and underserved groups (women/girls, taxi drivers, people with disability) to enhance analytical skills. This project was coherent with the national priority of deepening democratic culture by enhancing civic awareness, democratic governance, and citizen participation in decision-making. The UN supported the Anti-Corruption Commission in drafting the CSO engagement strategy for anti-corruption, justice and governance, which was adopted in 2020. Another example is the UN's continued partnership with Loden Foundation on the Bhutan Dialogues – a public forum for dialogues, discourse and mindful listening focused on the country's development issues and challenges. Further, the UN supported the RGoB undertake two major initiatives for strengthening civil space in 2021 – the amendment of the CSO (Amendment) Bill by the Parliament of Bhutan and the formulation of Guidelines for CSO-Government collaboration. Other UN initiatives include the roll out of UN Partner Portal and a leadership workshop for the heads of CSOs. The UN had also envisaged the establishment of a “*CSO Collaboration Framework*” that would create an enabling environment for CSOs to collaborate with the RGoB to deliver key services to vulnerable groups and provide citizens with a platform to engage in decision-making. However, its establishment was hampered by the COVID-19 crisis. The UN has also supported leading national CSOs such as the Loden Foundation, Thimphu Tech Park, Bhutan Youth Development Fund, and SABAH Bhutan to develop entrepreneurship among youth and women while promoting innovation, digital entrepreneurship and green business.<sup>132</sup> In the area of health, partnerships with CSOs, such as RENEW, have opened up possibilities to strengthen the collaboration between the

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<sup>131</sup> Presentation from 4th Country Programme Board Meeting, 18 February 2022.

<sup>132</sup> See UNDP's 2022 ICPE, paragraph 1, page 41.

CSO and the Ministry of Health in response to GBV and expanding the scope of collaboration with non-health sector agencies that monitor and support survivors of GBV.<sup>133</sup>

These efforts have contributed to strengthening the country's civic space. However, beyond these consultations, there are no formal structures for the engagement of the UNCT as a whole with CSOs. The UN is in the process of establishing a CSO Advisory Group. This is an important step that should be completed with the launch of the new programme cycle. Furthermore, civil society representatives involved in this evaluation raised the need for greater and more direct engagement of CSOs in the activities of UN agencies. As one evaluation participant from the civil society put it "*UN agencies seldom gives direct financial support to CSOs. They work more closely with the government agencies*". The established channel of UN's support to CSOs in Bhutan is through the government mechanism such as the funds cannot be directly transferred to CSOs but through government systems, which limits engagement with CSOs and adds transaction costs to project management including monitoring and reporting.

CSOs involved in this evaluation provided several suggestions for further strengthening the engagement of civil society with the UN system in Bhutan. The following are some key suggestions.

- To increase the involvement of CSOs in policy dialogue/policy making and legislative process.
- To provide platforms for frequent UN, Government, and CSO interactions and consultations.
- To recognize CSOs as valued implementing partners of the RGoB.
- To involve CSOs in the regional, as well as international/global platforms.
- To increase UN's direct engagement with CSOs and not route the partnership through the government in areas where CSOs have a stronger presence than the government, such as in the area of supporting vulnerable groups.

### Private Sector

Another important section of the society that has the potential to play a greater role in the country's development process is the private sector. The private sector is in an embryonic state in Bhutan and, given the size, UN's engagement with it has been limited. Another limitation is the established channel of engagement through the government mechanism. Apart from few consultations during the CCA as part of stakeholder groups and engagement during the COVID-19 in providing essential services to vulnerable groups,<sup>134</sup> the overall engagement of the private sector by the UN system under the UNSDPF has been minimal, due to its weak, small and fragmented presence.

Nevertheless, some major milestones were achieved in improving policy/regulatory environment for the private sector. UN agencies such as UNDP, UNESCAP and ITC have provided support in skills development, diversification of trade, development of value chains and improvement of the trade and investment regulatory framework. The UN supported the revision of the Public-Private

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<sup>133</sup> UNFPA Bhutan, 7th Country Programme Evaluation 2019-23, Evaluation Report, October 2022, page 38.

<sup>134</sup> Private sector was involved in procuring and distributing essential food items, medicines, masks, testing kits, and other protective items during the pandemic.

Partnership (PPP) Policy which aims to leverage private sector financing and partnerships to revitalize the economy and help finance fiscal deficit. The policy incentivizes partnerships between the Government and the private sector in building back better and encouraging private financing for the realization of the SDGs. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for fostering a trilateral partnership between the RGoB, the UN and the private sector for the development of the Gaykid City Bus application tool. In partnership with the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industries and the National Commission for Women and Children, the UN has promoted the mainstreaming of gender equality in the private sector. To create a more female-friendly work environment, the UN assisted with an assessment of four major companies in 2021. The outcome of the exercise helped to establish an ongoing dialogue with the private sector for a more inclusive, healthier and fairer work environment for women. The private sector has been a recipient of training programs under the UNSDPF.<sup>135</sup> The UN provided training for over 200 public and private sector participants, including 50 women on trade negotiations, business advocacy, public-private dialogue, investment regulations, trade facilitation, and market access post COVID-19. UNDP's project "Bhutan Sustainable Low-emission Urban Transport Systems" introduced an innovative financial mechanism, involving the Royal Bank of Bhutan, which provided taxi drivers with subsidies and loans to help purchase electric vehicles (EVs). The private sector, along with the government, developed the charging infrastructure to support the increasing EV adoption.

The upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) must prioritize the private sector, both in terms of making businesses more receptive to the sustainable development agenda and utilizing private sector resources for development programming. To effectively channel private sector resources and contributions towards the country's development objectives, the UN and RGoB must collaborate to identify ways of engaging the private sector. The UNCT should facilitate strategic partnerships that encourage private sector involvement in development activities in the country. Moving forward, it will be crucial for the UNRCO and UNCT to collaborate with relevant RGoB structures, the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and business associations to create incentives for private sector engagement in development activities.

#### **4.5.4. Engagement of Development Partners**

The physical presence of development partners in Bhutan is quite limited. Aside from the UN agencies, the main development partners include Japan's International Cooperation Agency, the European Union, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. The Government of India also has a large development assistance programme for Bhutan. Most development partners are located in embassies in neighboring countries. Until July-August 2022, GNHC was the focal point for the UN agencies and bilateral donors. With the phasing out of the GNHC, the Ministry of Finance has been appointed the focal point for development agencies. For the multilaterals like ADB, WB, and IMF, the Ministry of Finance has always been the counterpart. RGoB organizes at least one meeting with all donors annually.

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<sup>135</sup> Training programmes targeting 140 business leaders across the private sector were offered resulting in new commitments made by private sector companies to create company-specific policies for equality in the workplace.

A key mechanism for the coordination of development effectiveness is the Development Partners' Group (DPG),<sup>136</sup> which provides development partners, government bodies and civil society organizations with a platform to share information. At the same time, it provides development partners with opportunities to forge partnerships and create synergies with each other. The topics covered in DPG meetings have ranged from the socio-economic response plan of the UN during COVID-19, Bhutan's vaccination roll-out plan, food system pathways for the development of agriculture as well as a presentation on Bhutan's Macroeconomic Performance and Outlook developed by the Ministry of Finance focusing on the risks and challenges, both externally and internally, in the context of negative growth in the economy.<sup>137</sup>

The UN system is a key contributor of development effectiveness and coordination in the country. The meetings of the Development Partners Group are coordinated by the UNRCO. These meetings are organized on a bi-monthly basis. DPG meetings involve also the main non-UN development partners, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Union and embassies of donor countries located in Delhi, Bangkok and Dhaka. The four donor representatives engaged in this evaluation highly valued the role of the UN in development effectiveness, especially the organization of the DPG meetings. In the words of one donor representative, *"the UN Development Partners' Group meetings and strategic discussions are a good example of how the UN is facilitating and leading development coordination among partners in Bhutan. We hope that there will be more such interactions to improve collaboration going forward"*. Another donor representative noted that *"the UN Resident Coordinators (current and earlier one) have been playing an active role to facilitate donor coordination. During the pandemic, the UN RC's office organized virtual consultations. All UN agencies plus other donors participate in these meetings"*. Another donor representative noted that *"the role being played by UN's Resident Coordinator in facilitating open dialogue between development partners and between the development partners and RGoB, is much appreciated"*.

UN's partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have been limited. Engagement with IFIs has been strongest in the area of financing. The UN, the Asian Development Bank and the RGoB launched a joint initiative to strengthen capacity in macroeconomic forecasting and modelling. Through this initiative, the UN has supported the RGoB in instituting innovative development financing mechanisms such as sovereign bonds and biodiversity funds through the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN).<sup>138</sup> The UN has also collaborated with the Asian Development Bank in jointly conducting a sector diagnostics of gender quality in selected sectors.

There are opportunities for a more active role of the UN in strengthening development effectiveness in Bhutan. The UN system can further support the government in improving its coordination capabilities. With the transformation in the Government, there is now an opportunity

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<sup>136</sup> This group is an information sharing and not a decision-making forum.

<sup>137</sup> UNCT, ARR, 2021.

<sup>138</sup> This initiative analyzed current forecasting approaches, mapped data availability and needs, and developed new models to complement existing government methods. Specifically, the initiative helped the RGoB to: (1) simulate the relationships and interactions between different sectors of the economy; (2) estimate economy-wide impacts of shocks, including scenarios related to the impact of COVID-19; (3) model the multi-dimensional effects of different policy actions; (4) and adapt simulations to changes in assumptions and circumstances. The resulting new approach to macroeconomic forecasting supports future evidence-based decision making, including helping to prepare for future shocks and understand the impacts of different policy responses across dimensions of the economy.

to assist the RGoB to institute stronger and innovative donor coordination and enhance operational approaches, deepen joint financing initiatives, strengthen implementation efficiencies and harmonize reporting requirements for better SDG outcomes. Furthermore, in their respective sectors, the agencies can play a major role in the coordination of development assistance, taking into account existing coordination platforms. There are also opportunities for stronger cooperation with the IFIs to ensure complementarity and greater development impact.

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To summarize, the limited availability and sustainability of development finance in Bhutan poses a significant challenge for the UN system. In the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the UN should explore and promote government cost-sharing and stronger partnerships with the private sector, individual donors, and corporate partners to address funding gaps for planned outcomes and related programs and projects. While civil society and the private sector have been given opportunities to play a role in the current cooperation framework, there is potential for greater and more systematic engagement with both these actors. Additionally, there is an opportunity for the UN to play a more significant role in development effectiveness by further supporting the government in enhancing its development coordination capabilities.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation has assessed key aspects of the collective effort of the UN system in Bhutan and its national counterparts towards the achievement of the country's development priorities and SDGs. The report provides a summary of the UN's main achievements in the country and key challenges encountered by the UN system and its partners. Also, based on the evidence, analysis and findings presented throughout this report, this evaluation provides the following recommendations for the consideration of the UNCT in Bhutan, RGoB and other counterparts.

### Relevance

- The United Nations' activities in Bhutan are well-aligned with the country's 12th Five-Year Plan, effectively supporting the Royal Government of Bhutan's efforts to achieve its development objectives in areas such as data and policy, essential social services, governance, and climate change and disaster risk reduction.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in supporting Bhutan's changing needs, by providing comprehensive emergency support, implementing innovative strategies and technologies, and collaborating with various stakeholders to mitigate the pandemic's effects and enhance the country's resilience.
- The UNSDPF is perceived by stakeholders as relevant and valuable in addressing Bhutan's national needs, the needs of vulnerable groups, and promoting cooperation among UN agencies, while also contributing to resource mobilization, effective coordination, and impactful contributions to the country's development through the "Delivering as One" approach.
- A key feature of the UNSDPF has been its focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups – children, youth, older people, women, persons with disabilities, people at social risk or/and with health challenges, vulnerable farmers, etc. Such focus has enabled the UN to be largely compliant with the “*LNOB*” principle that underpins the work of the UN globally. The UN's multifaceted approach to gender equality, environmental sustainability, and community resilience has made significant progress in Bhutan, fostering policy development, capacity building, and collaboration across sectors.
- The UN has played a significant role in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Their efforts have resulted in the endorsement of the Gender Equality Policy and the development of the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality. The UN has also facilitated the inclusion of female perspectives in the drafting of the CEDAW report and supported the Election Commission of Bhutan in creating an enabling environment for the participation of women in elections. Additionally, the UN has undertaken several initiatives to prevent gender-based violence and has supported the private sector in creating a more female-friendly work environment. Overall, the UN's contributions have been significant, but there is still much work to be done to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in Bhutan.



## RECOMMENDATION 1

### *Maintain the Program's Relevance through Continued Alignment with National Priorities*

- For the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), it is recommended that the UN continue its support in the current priority areas, in line with the RGoB's five-year plans.
- The UN is well positioned to provide continued support for RGoB's 13<sup>th</sup> FYP, which will further outline priorities for the country and the UN system.
- The preparation of the new upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) should be conducted with the full engagement of national stakeholders, including government and non-governmental entities.
- The UN should conduct a gender assessment of the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to understand their performance against minimum standards for GEWE and identify opportunities for joint programming and capacity building events.

### **Effectiveness**

- While well-formulated and comprehensive, UNSDPF would have benefited from an improved Theory of Change, and a more streamlined, meaningful, and manageable results framework with the full involvement of national counterparts. The monitoring and evaluation processes within the UNSDPF in Bhutan have been instrumental in tracking progress, yet there is room for improvement in data quality, alignment of individual agency M&E systems, and the utilization of the UNINFO system to enhance the effectiveness of joint reporting and decision-making.
- Going forward, the UNCT needs to strengthen the data infrastructure, including data aggregation mechanisms, operability of the UN-Info system, definition of indicators, baselines, targets, etc. There is also a need to strengthen the capabilities of the joint results groups to identify and analyse outcome and output indicators, plan interventions, etc.
- The UN's contributions to Bhutan have focused on four key areas—Data and Policy, Essential Social Services, Governance, and Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction—resulting in strengthened data management, improved access to social services for vulnerable populations, and enhanced preparedness for disasters and climate change. The UN system in Bhutan has provided contributions in the respective outcome areas of statistical development, human rights and gender equality; good governance; sustainable, equitable and inclusive economic development; climate change and environmental sustainability and resilience; and, inclusive and equitable social development. Recognizing the crucial role that the Parliament plays, the UN has enabled diverse groups to engage with Parliamentarians in a national dialogue and policymaking. Similarly, emphasis was given to the justice sector reform, aimed at promoting rule of law and establishing a more humane, accessible, responsive and accountable criminal justice system. In the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the priorities to be addressed by the UN-RGoB partnership will be similar to this cycle's.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

### ***Strengthen the Programme's Intervention Logic and Results-based Management Directed at the UNCT***

In the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the UNCT in Bhutan should create a comprehensive results framework aligned with the country's SDG framework, complete with indicators, baselines, and targets defined upfront. This framework should include quality data and indicators that can be disaggregated by gender and other key demographics, focusing on vulnerable groups. The UNCT should also develop metadata for the UNSDCF indicators to facilitate data management.

Other key actions:

- Ensure full involvement of national counterparts, especially implementing partners, in the development and revision of the results framework.
- Improve the alignment between individual agencies' M&E systems and the UNSDPF's M&E framework.
- Support the RGoB in establishing a system for tracking SDG progress, and provide guidance to national counterparts in tracking progress to accelerate SDG achievement.
- Make the UNINFO system fully effective by automating it and ensuring that UNSDPF results are regularly updated as part of the reporting process.
- Achieve better alignment and coordination of reporting procedures between the agency and UN levels.
- Continuously track financial resources mobilized and spent, establish a process for collecting, storing, analyzing, and reporting financial information effectively using the UNINFO platform, and monitor the process continuously, providing necessary training to UN agencies as needed.
- Strengthen the joint results groups' capabilities to identify and analyze outcome and output indicators and plan interventions under the UNRGO's coordination. Organize joint trainings on RBM matters for relevant agency staff.

## **Coherence**

- The UNSDPF has established an institutional foundation for coordination between UN agencies and RGoB institutions. However, there is a need for further optimization and streamlining of coordination mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of the joint structures and address challenges faced by smaller agencies.
- While the UNCT has made progress in joint planning and coordination under the UNSDPF, there is a need for stronger collaboration, enhanced joint programming, and more efficient implementation to fully leverage the UN agencies' comparative advantages and minimize overlaps and inefficiencies.

## **RECOMMENDATION 3**

### ***Strengthen the UNSDPF Infrastructure for Inter-agency Cooperation Directed at the UNCT***

- Conduct an assessment of the UN coordination infrastructure to streamline existing groups and enhance their operations and results.
- Strengthen all outcome and thematic groups procedurally by drafting comprehensive Terms of Reference, completing membership appointments, providing necessary information to members, and offering effective administrative support. Ensure that thematic groups relevant to the country context are fully operational.
- Communicate the appointment of co-chairs and co-facilitators of Outcome Groups (OGs) effectively to all relevant parties, especially government counterparts.
- Encourage UN agencies to actively engage with joint coordination structures, with non-resident agencies committing sufficient resources and staff to the in-country coordination process.
- Make OGs fully functional with regular meetings based on clear agendas and sufficient information sharing. Strengthen the UNRCO's secretarial support for OGs and ensure that co-chairing UN agencies provide necessary leadership.
- Enhance the Project Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Team as a forum for tracking and monitoring UNSDPF indicators. Coordinate M&E staff and systems across individual agencies and organize trainings for M&E experts. Establish a clear division of labor between OGs and the PME team for tracking UNSDPF implementation.
- Address high turnover of OG focal points in collaboration with the RGoB and UNCT. Develop a system for storing OG-related information to maintain institutional memory effectively. Create an orientation package for incoming co-chairs and co-facilitators of OGs and designate a focal point to provide necessary information.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

##### ***Enhance Joint Planning and Implementation***

##### ***Directed at the UNCT***

- Ensure full involvement of responsible government officials and co-facilitators in the preparation of Joint Annual Work Plans (JAWPs) and the allocation of funds.
- Strengthen the UNRCO's role in the planning process, facilitating better harmonization across agencies, improved communication, and information flow among agency staff on planning matters. Monitor agencies' planning processes and timelines, provide regular updates, and identify opportunities for inter-agency consultations.
- Facilitate a more harmonious alignment of UN planning processes with government planning approaches at sectoral and national levels through the UNRCO.
- Promote joint programming by identifying and institutionalizing incentives for agencies to engage in joint programs.
- Support the process with training for agency staff on modalities and approaches to joint programming through the UNRCO.
- Raise awareness among UN staff members about the UN reform and its implications for joint delivery. Facilitate this process with targeted training and team-building activities at the UN level through the UNRCO.

## **Sustainability**

- Despite challenges in sustainable funding, opportunities exist for resource mobilization through joint strategies, partnerships, and private sector engagement, which are crucial for the sustainability of UN programs in the country. The elements should become an integral part of UN's resource mobilization strategy.
- With regards to engagement of non-governmental partners, although civil society and the private sector have been enabled to play a role in the current cooperation framework, there is potential for greater and more systematic engagement with both these actors.
- There are also opportunities for a greater role of the UN in supporting the Government in improving development coordination in the country. Also, Bhutan has the opportunity to access climate financing as a potential source of funding, but given the number of stakeholders involved, it is crucial for the government to take a leadership position. The UN can enhance the ability of national organizations to secure climate financing.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

#### ***Strengthen Joint Resource Mobilization Efforts Directed at the UNCT***

- Strengthen the UNCT's resource mobilization approach by launching the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) with an attached solid Resource Mobilization Strategy.
- Encourage UN agencies to approach resource mobilization in a more coordinated and cooperative manner to avoid overlaps.
- Enhance the UNRCO's role in coordinating resource mobilization among agencies, ensuring harmonization of efforts.
- Diversify the UNCT's resource base and strengthen partnerships with development partners, pursuing government co-financing more systematically as an integral part of the UN's resource mobilization strategy, and exploring joint implementation opportunities with International Financial Institutions (IFIs).
- Utilize Outcome Groups to track the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

#### ***Strengthen Engagement with Civil Society, Private Sector and Development Partners Directed at the UNCT***

#### **Civil Society**

- Acknowledge CSOs as valuable implementing partners in Bhutan and engage them directly in areas where they have a stronger presence than the government, such as supporting vulnerable groups, while clarifying modalities for direct engagement with the RGoB.
- Strengthen UNCT's engagement with civil society by adopting a more coherent and harmonized approach across agencies in designing and delivering support, particularly capacity-building assistance.

- Explore opportunities for systematically engaging civil society within UN joint coordination structures and increase efforts to consult CSOs in UN-led processes.
- Promote the involvement of CSOs in policy dialogue, policymaking, and legislative processes, and consider establishing a platform for regular interactions and consultations among UN, Government, and CSO representatives.

#### Private Sector

- Enhance UNCT's engagement with the private sector to promote sustainable development-friendly business practices and tap into private sector resources for addressing development challenges.
- Collaborate with the RGoB to identify innovative methods for channeling private sector resources and contributions towards development initiatives. Engage with relevant government structures, the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and business associations to create incentives for private sector involvement in development activities.

#### Development Partners

- The UN should strengthen its role in facilitating coordination and cooperation between development partners and the government and national stakeholders.

Overall, the UNCT in Bhutan has made noteworthy progress in strengthening its capacity to implement in a coherent, coordinated, and integrated manner under the UNSDPF framework in the current program cycle. The UNDS reform has played a crucial role in invigorating the coordination and coherence of the UNCT in the country. It has improved the awareness and understanding of the "*joint delivery*" approach among UN agencies, as well as the coordination and joint implementation structures that have been reviewed in this report. The UNRCO has also been able to acquire the human resources required for more effective coordination of the UNCT.

As Bhutan graduates from the LDC status in 2023, the partnership with the UN system will enter a new phase. This will coincide with the beginning of the new cycle of the UN programme for the country. Certainly, there will still be challenges to joint implementation as "*One UN*". While many of them are beyond the control of the UNCT, achieving gradual improvement within the boundaries of what is possible will be important. The UNCT and its national partners have made important steps in this direction, especially with the establishment of the inter-agency institutional infrastructure. However, the opportunities for strengthening inter-agency cooperation are there and can be capitalized more effectively. Although the COVID-19 crisis created significant challenges for the UN system, as for all other development actors in the country, it also created an opportunity for the UN agencies to rally together in response as one body – a real embodiment of the "*One UN*" approach.

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This evaluation also provides an opportunity for drawing some important lessons from the experience of the UNCT with the current programme. The following are a couple of key lessons from the perspective of the evaluators.

**Lesson 1:** The lesson learned from the evaluation is that the COVID-19 pandemic presented both challenges and opportunities for development projects. While some projects faced difficulties in implementation, others were able to adapt and even thrive in the face of the crisis. Specifically, the pandemic highlighted the capacity of the civil society sector to deliver essential services to remote and scattered populations during times of emergency. This underscores the importance of investing in and supporting civil society organizations, particularly in disaster-prone areas, to improve preparedness and response efforts. Furthermore, the pandemic also presented an opportunity for new and efficient project implementation modalities, such as releasing funds directly to CSOs for emergency response on the ground. This approach can help ensure that resources are quickly and effectively directed to those in need, particularly in crisis situations where time is of the essence.

The pandemic also created opportunities for fostering trilateral partnerships between the government, the UN, and the private sector. The development of the Gaykid City Bus application tool is a successful example of such a partnership. These types of partnerships can help leverage the resources and expertise of multiple sectors to address complex development challenges. The pandemic highlighted the need for resilience and flexibility in development programming. Projects and programs need to be designed with the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and respond quickly to emerging needs. This requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation, as well as effective communication and collaboration among partners. Furthermore, the pandemic underscored the importance of investing in digital technologies and connectivity, particularly in remote and underserved areas. The development of tools such as the Gaykid City Bus application demonstrates the potential for technology to improve service delivery and connect communities with critical resources.

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has taught the UNCT valuable lessons about the importance of collaboration, innovation, and adaptability in development programming. As it moves forward with the new programme, it will be important for the UNCT to incorporate these lessons into its approaches to ensure that the UN and its counterparts are better prepared to address future challenges and build more resilient communities.

**Lesson 2:** One lesson drawn from this evaluation is related to the challenges of modifying projects funded through global programmes in response to the COVID-19 situation. Global programmes are designed to address specific development challenges, with clearly defined objectives and outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges and necessitated changes in the way development projects were implemented. However, the process of modifying these projects to respond to the pandemic was often difficult and time-consuming. For example, the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was difficult to modify to the ever-evolving COVID-19 situation.

One possible way to address this challenge is to build flexibility into project design from the outset. This could involve incorporating contingency planning into project design and budgeting, as well as identifying alternative approaches that can be quickly deployed in response to changing circumstances. Another approach could be to establish more streamlined processes for modifying project plans and budgets in response to unexpected events. This could involve setting up a rapid

response fund that enables project managers to quickly access additional funding to address emerging needs. Additionally, global programmes could consider establishing a set of guidelines or best practices for modifying project plans in response to external shocks, such as pandemics or natural disasters.

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for greater flexibility and adaptability in development programming. By building in flexibility from the outset, and establishing streamlined processes for modifying project plans in response to unexpected events, global programmes can better respond to emerging challenges and ensure that development programming remains relevant and effective in a rapidly changing world.



# **ANNEXES**

## ANNEX I: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the evaluation’s objective, scope, and methodology, data collection and analysis process carried out for the preparation of this report. In addition, this section outlines the major limitations encountered during the evaluation process.

### Overview of evaluation objectives and scope

The evaluation assessed the achievement of expected results and the extent to which UN’s contribution to national development under the UNSDPF 2019-2023 has been relevant, effective, coherent, sustainable, and cost-efficient. The Terms of Reference for the final evaluation (included in Annex XI) determined the following specific objectives for the evaluation process:

- To assess UNSDPF’s contribution to national development results.
- To provide recommendation to strengthen the “*Delivering as One*” approach.
- To assess the level of ‘UN reform ‘integration in the implementation arrangement of the UN System in Bhutan.
- To identify the area of cooperation where UN Bhutan continue to remain relevant to the National priorities and SDGs in the new UNSDCF.
- To provide actionable recommendations to further strengthen the existing operational structures and interagency tasks teams in the implementation of the UNSDPF.
- To reach conclusions concerning UN’s contribution, in relation to the UN systems value-add to the country looking forward to the new UNSDCF.

The evaluation provides an assessment of the UN agencies’ joint contributions towards national priorities and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The evaluation was comprehensive, focusing on the activities, achievements and results of all UN agencies, funds and programmes (AFPs) operating in Bhutan, including those activities that were implemented as part of global or regional interventions. The evaluation assessed how UNSDPF results addressed inequalities (focusing on the *Leave No One Behind* principle, and building resilience to humanitarian emergencies), and cross-cutting issues (human rights, conflict sensitivity, youth, volunteerism, gender equality and women’s empowerment, disability inclusion, environmental sustainability), as well as promoting innovative approaches and deepening strategic partnerships.

Furthermore, the evaluation report’s main finding and recommendations are formulated to inform the preparation of the upcoming UNSDCF and support the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) in the coordination of its implementation. At the same time, some of the recommendations may be valuable to individual UN agencies. Lastly, the report aims to inform Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and other implementing partners about what worked well and what are the areas that require further attention.

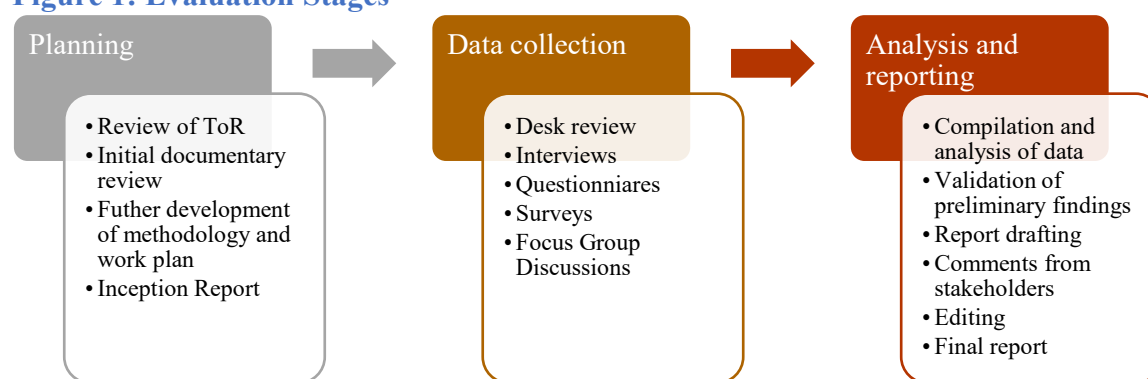
### Overview of the evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by a team of two independent experts who worked closely with the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), UNCT and other UN structures in the country. The evaluation was conducted in line with the guidelines for the Evaluation of the United

Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).<sup>1</sup> The evaluation was based on the evaluation criteria and definitions of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC)<sup>2</sup> and followed norms and standards established by the UN Evaluation Group. The methodology consisted of mixed methods and involved the use of commonly applied evaluation tools such as documentary review, questionnaires, interviews, surveys, focus group discussions, information triangulation, analysis and synthesis.

Evaluation activities were organized according to the following stages: i) planning; ii) data collection; and, iii) data analysis and reporting. The figure below shows the three stages and the main activities under each of them.

**Figure 1: Evaluation Stages**



The main activities undertaken by the team under each stage can be summarized as follows:

### **Evaluation Planning**

**Process Planning:** The evaluative work that led to the present evaluation report relied on an initial attempt at this evaluation by a team of two evaluators, of whom the national evaluator continued into the process that led to the preparation of this evaluation report. The international evaluator who was involved in the preparation of this report was replaced. As such most of the planning and preparation phase was reinitiated. This renewed process kicked off with a start-up teleconference with the UNRCO, elaborating on the evaluation's overall purpose and expected approach. This was followed by a review of the ToR, programme documents and relevant literature. Finally, the Inception Report was developed in cooperation with UNRCO and with the input of the Evaluation Reference Group.

<sup>1</sup> Link [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Link [here](#).

**Geographical Focus:** The geographical focus of the evaluation included the whole country, as the benefits of the UNSDPF have accrued to communities throughout the country.

**Stakeholders Analysis:** For the purpose of the evaluation, a variety of stakeholders were considered during the inception phase, such as the UNRCO, resident and non-resident UN agencies, Government counterparts and beneficiaries, CSOs and other development partners. From the point of view of the use of evaluation, UNRCO is the most influential and interested stakeholder, having a coordination role in terms of implementing the Deliver as One approach and highly interested in extracting lessons and improving delivery of UNSDPF. The UN agencies involved in the implementation of UNSDPF are clearly affected by the recommendations which are going to be formulated through the Evaluation Report. Government counterparts, being the owners of nationalized SDGs, were equally important to the evaluation process.

**Sampling Strategy:** To evaluate the UNSDPF, a mixed-methods sampling strategy was employed, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Stakeholders were divided into relevant strata, and random sampling was conducted within each stratum to ensure representation from all key stakeholder groups. Purposeful sampling was also used for qualitative data collection, selecting individuals or groups with specific knowledge, experience, or involvement in the UN program. As a result of this approach, the following government entities were identified as key partners of the UNSDPF. A detailed list of representatives of the following organizations was created by the evaluators with the assistance of the RCO consisting of 46 individuals.

- National Statistics Bureau (NSB)
- National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC)
- GNHC Program Coordinators
- Department of Disaster Management (DDM)
- National Assembly of Bhutan (Parliament)
- Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC)
- GNHC SDG
- Ministry of Education (MoE)
- National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology (NCHM)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forest (MoAF)
- Ministry of Health (MoH)

The following civil society organizations were identified as key partners of the UNSDPF.

1	Persons with disabilities	Ability Bhutan Society (persons with disabilities)
2	Sexual and gender identities	Lhak-Sam
		Queer Voices of Bhutan
		Pride Bhutan
3	Disadvantaged youth	Nazhoen Lamtoen
		Bhutan Youth Development Fund

		Organization for Youth Empowerment
4	Gender, income status and geographical location	RENEW
		Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs
		Tarayana Foundation
		SABAH Bhutan

Also, all UN agencies under the UNSDPF and all development partners with active involvement in the country were included in the list of stakeholders. A detailed list of representatives of the UN agencies and donor agencies was created by the evaluators with the assistance of the RCO.

**Data Collection**

The data collection process for this evaluation took places in the period December 2022 – January 2023. Previous data collection activities had taken place in mid-2022. A participatory approach was used for data collection and analysis process, as well as the formulation of recommendations and lessons learned.

***Documentary review***

Documentary evidence was collected from various sources and included the following (a list of key documents used for this evaluation is provided in Annex VI):

- Background documents on the national context, including Government reports, national strategies and policies prepared by the government and documents prepared by international partners during the period under review;
- UNCT documents and agencies’ programme and project documents, including preparatory phase documents, annual reports, etc.;
- Reviews and evaluations of the agencies’ programmes; and
- Independent research reports and academic publications on various subjects.

Through the documentary review, the evaluators collected secondary information regarding the current output and outcome indicators as specified in the results matrix, took stock of the progress in achieving the planned targets in relation to the baseline indicators and, from such evidence, established the extent to which the strategic interventions have been effective. Considering the scope of the evaluation, the large number of stakeholders involved in implementation as well as time limitations, a rigorous attribution of impacts by UN agencies was not feasible. Nevertheless, factors favoring (or resisting) change were taken into consideration.

The evaluation also utilized the information generated by various evaluations and assessments that had been conducted thus far by the UN agencies. In particular, the evaluation incorporated the findings of agency evaluations, as well as technical assessments and reports from the agencies, to ensure that the review takes a comprehensive account of the progress. In particular, use was made of the draft evaluation for UNFPA. Also, interviews were conducted with the evaluation teams of

the country programmes of UNDP and WFP (no draft reports were available from these teams at the time of the evaluation).

### ***Primary data collection***

An initial questionnaire targeted the UNRCO to collect preliminary information to set the stage for the evaluation. This questionnaire helped the evaluators lay the groundwork for the evaluation process by developing a deeper understanding of the situation based on the perspectives of the UNRCO and identified a number of parameters that were necessary for the subsequent data collection and analysis work. This questionnaire is included in Annex IV of this report.

In addition to the above-mentioned questionnaire with the UNRCO, a questionnaire was used to collect additional key information about the operations of UN agencies active in the country. The questionnaire solicited the collective response of the agencies – one per agency. In contrast to the survey with UN staff described above, this questionnaire was more substantive in nature and explored more in-depth positioning and other strategic aspects of UN agency programmes. The questionnaire was focused on a more detailed description of agency programmes, such as results, achievements, challenges, opportunities, etc. Additionally, 12 key UN staff members, seven Government officials and four development partners participated in the online survey organized for this evaluation. Additionally, interviews with key Government institutions, as well as a focus group discussion with representatives of civil society, were organized by the evaluators – the list of participants these interviews and the focus group discussion with civil society is provided in Annex VIII of this document. The evaluators engaged development partners, representatives of human rights institutions and civil society organizations through semi-structured interviews. The views of stakeholders obtained through primary data collection, were supplemented with information collected from secondary sources, which included background documents on the national context, national strategies and policies, UNCT documents and agency programme and project documents, annual work plans, reports, assessments and other relevant documents. Annexes 8, 9 and 10 show the stakeholders who were involved in the evaluation process. Also, the questionnaires and online surveys utilized for the evaluation are included in annexes 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Overall, the evaluation combined quantitative and qualitative research methods based on data collected and analyzed from different sources. The evaluation sought to collect, use and report disaggregated data wherever possible. The aspects of human rights and gender equality were assessed and taken into consideration throughout all the evaluation process. In addition, where possible, special attention was given to the inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, to mitigate potential barriers and sources of exclusion, such as unequal power relations.

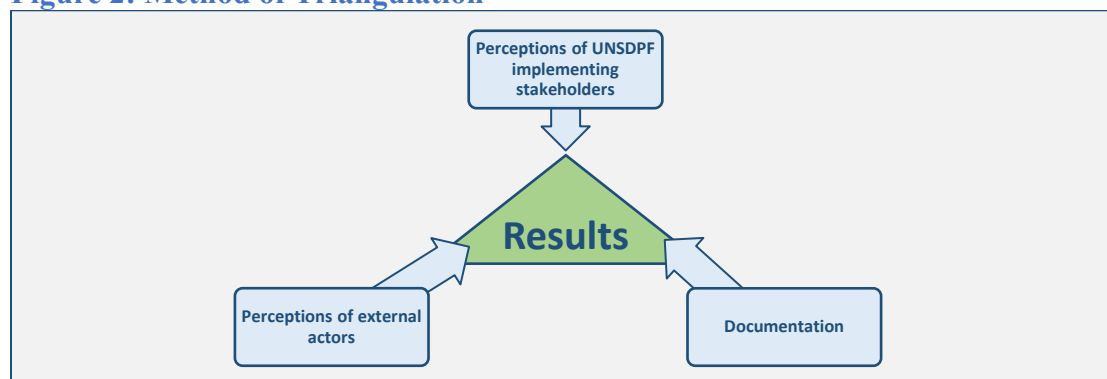
### **Data Analysis**

All findings are supported with evidence. Information obtained through the documentary review, surveys, FGDs and interviews was triangulated against available documented sources, and then synthesized using analytical judgement. The method of triangulation is shown in Figure 2 below.

Inductive analysis methods were used to narrow down the key units of analysis and provide detailed understanding of the available programme. As such, the following types of analysis were conducted:

- Content analysis was used to flag diverging views and opposite trends, constituting the raw material for crafting preliminary observations that were subsequently refined to feed into the draft and final review reports.
- Thematic analysis allowed data to be categorized by themes, specifying new additional sub-themes that were not within the research framework during the designing phase. Data was synthesized under the new captured sub-themes by comparing the similarities and differences among perceptions provided by targeted groups, articulating the key content of each theme in terms of its significance to the research questions.
- Contribution analysis enabled the identification of the contribution of the UN agencies working under the UNSDPF to the achievement of development results related to UNSDPF outcomes and national priorities.

**Figure 2: Method of Triangulation**



The analysis phase involved a number of complementary components. First, the evaluation reviewed progress towards the relevant outcomes and the main outputs based on indicators included in the UNSDPF. Second, the method of triangulation was used to verify the information gathered. This enhanced data reliability of findings through multiple data sources, bringing as much evidence as possible into play from different perspectives in the assessment of hypotheses and assumptions. In the assessment of the outcomes, an attempt was made to attribute the results to the programme when feasible: when not feasible, contribution analysis was used. The focus of the analysis was on operational aspects of the UN programme, relevance to national priorities and UN country positioning, partnerships, acceleration of SDGs, etc.

The analysis was conducted on the basis of the criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency outlined in the ToR and reproduced in the box below (discussed earlier).



## Box 1: Evaluation Criteria

### **Relevance**

- To what extent has the UNSDPF addressed national development priorities, policies and needs, and challenges identified in the Common Country Analysis?
- To what extent the UN system remained responsive to emerging and unforeseen development needs of the country and the people, especially of the most vulnerable and those left furthest behind?

### **Coherence**

- To what extent has the UNSDPF strengthened the coherence of support by UNCT members and sought partnership with government and other stakeholders to deliver inclusive, quality, integrated, SDG-focused support?
- To what extent has the UN member agencies contributed to functioning and consolidation of the UNCT coordination mechanisms (UNCT, DPG, IATT, Outcome Groups, PME, OMT, etc.) to deliver on the UNSDPF in the spirit of the UN Reform and how can it be improved?

### **Effectiveness**

- To what extent has the UNSDPF reached the targeted beneficiaries and institutions and contributed to achieved expected results outlined in the results framework (Outcome and Output)?
- To what extent has the UNSDPF strengthened the position, credibility, and reliability of the UN system as a partner of the government and other actors, and has served as an effective partnership vehicle?
- To what extent has the CF contributed to the promotion of and integrated gender equality and women empowerment, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability?

### **Efficiency**

- To what extent were the resources (financial/technical/human) efficiently used and adapted to the implementation modalities in the COVID-19 context?
- To what extent did the UNSDPF implementation reduced transaction costs for partners through greater UN coherence and discipline?

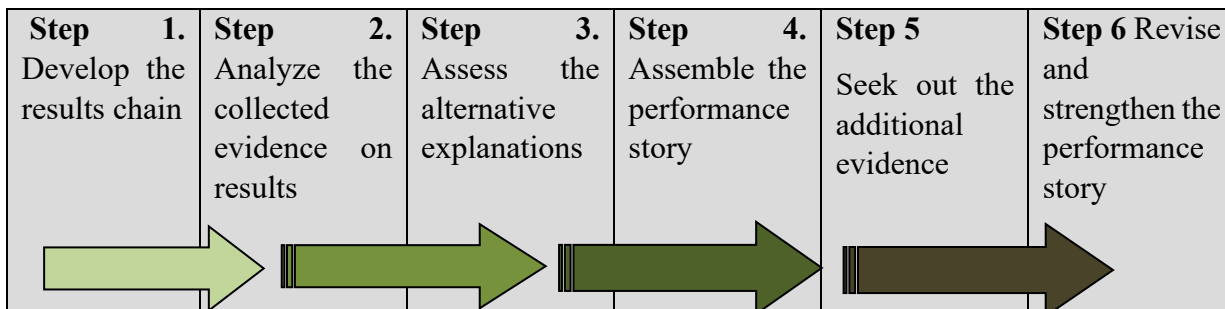
### **Sustainability & Impact**

- What mechanisms, if any, has the UNSDPF established to ensure socio-political, institutional, financial, and environmental sustainability of the achieved results? To what extent has the UNSDPF contributed to building national and local capacities and ensuring long-term gains?

Figure 3 shows the steps that were taken for the analysis. The content analysis covered aspects of UNSDPF formulation, including the extent of stakeholder participation during the formulation

process; replication approach; design for sustainability; linkages between the programme components; adequacy of management arrangements, etc. The ToR where the scope and main steps of the evaluation process were laid out are attached in Annex XI.

**Figure 3: Steps in Analysis Process**



## EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

A limitation of this evaluation was the inability of the international evaluator to conduct a field mission and have in-person interviews with key stakeholders due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To mitigate this limitation, the evaluators focused on documentary evidence – especially project progress reports. Further, the evaluation experts made use of detailed questionnaires for key stakeholders and followed up with remote interviews. In addition, surveys, interviews and FGDs were arranged, making sure that insightful perspectives were captured, as needed. Also, the national evaluator conducted interviews in with national stakeholders.

Another limitation was the low response rate to the online surveys used for this evaluation. As a mitigation measure, multiple reminders were sent to stakeholders and more focus was placed on interviews and questionnaires/surveys. The survey with Government officials was shared by the RCO, with several reminders. The survey with UN agency staff was shared by the RCO several times with multiple reminders to all participants.

## GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ETHICS

**Evaluation Governance:** The management structure to guide the implementation of the UNSDPF 2018-2022 evaluation included an *evaluation reference group*, an *evaluation manager*, an *evaluation consultative group*, and an *evaluation team*.

**Quality Assurance:** Technical evaluation capacities within the UN development system at the country, regional and global levels, such as the expertise of monitoring and evaluation specialists working at the country level and regional evaluation advisors were used as needed and to the extent possible to ensure the quality of the evaluation deliverables. The Evaluation Team was responsible for addressing all the recommendations for quality improvement of the deliverables received as part of the review process. The quality of the evaluation was ensured through a rigorous and inclusive process and was assessed against the UNSDPF quality criteria.

**Ethics:** The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation<sup>3</sup> and the United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines.<sup>4</sup> Specific commitments will include:

**Independence and Impartiality:** The evaluation experts remained independent from the UN at all times.

**Credibility and Accountability:** The evaluation experts aimed at using best review practices to the best of their abilities at all times and ensure that all deliverables were met in the timeframes specified, or that UN was advised ahead of time so that mitigating action can be taken.

**Accuracy, completeness and reliability:** During the desk review and data collection and analysis phases, the evaluation experts ensured that all evidence is tracked from its source to its use and interpretation.

**Confidentiality, anonymity and avoidance of harm:** The evaluation experts kept the information that they received through surveys and interviews confidential. They ensured that sensitive information could not be traced to the source and only present the findings derived from surveys and interviews in aggregate form. They strictly adhered to the ‘do no harm’ principle in the evaluation process and analyzed with particular caution any data received from vulnerable or marginalized individuals or groups.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

The report begins with an introductory section that provides a description of the evaluation process, as well as of the purpose and scope of the evaluation. The second chapter provides an overview of the country context. The third chapter provides an overview of the UNSDPF and the UN programme. The fourth chapter presents the main findings of the report and consists of five parts: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The fifth chapter summarizes the main conclusions, identifies key “lessons learned” from the UNSDPF implementation of the evaluation, and provides a set of recommendations for the consideration of the Country Team and UNSDPF stakeholders. Additional information supporting the arguments made throughout the document is provided in the annexes attached to the report. Data collected through the evaluation and included in this report is gender-disaggregated wherever possible.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

## ANNEX II: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Indicators/Descriptors	Data Collection Methods	Sources of information	
<b><i>RELEVANCE: of the UN system support and alignment of interventions with the country's national priorities and international commitments</i></b>				
<p>EQ1</p> <p>To what extent has the UNSDPF addressed national development priorities, policies and needs, and challenges identified in the Common Country Analysis?</p>	<p>Has the United Nations system supported achievement of national development goals and targets, in alignment to relevant national plans and frameworks?</p> <p>Has the United Nations system supported achievement of outcomes established in the UNSDPF? What were the gaps? Has the United Nations system addressed key issues and development challenges identified by the United Nations Common Country Assessment?</p> <p>Has the United Nations system support prioritized and extended in such a way to leave no one behind?</p> <p>How/to what degree the UNSDPF outcomes were used by UN agencies and Government to fulfil human rights obligations of country and attain SDGs? Has the United Nations system contributed to the realization of international human rights and gender equality norms as well as to national and local strategies to advance human rights and gender equality?</p>	<p>Evidence of consistency between the outcomes and specific interventions and the national priorities and targets identified in the country policy papers and strategies.</p> <p>Common understanding amongst stakeholders about the expected and actual links between results and selected national priorities</p> <p>Stakeholders can identify actual or potential areas of divergence between the national strategies and results and strategies</p>	<p>Mapping of situation and contextual analyses</p> <p>Documentary review focused on links between key national strategies and results matrix; minutes/reports of strategic planning consultation events</p> <p>Questionnaire Interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Round tables</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>Government officials</p> <p>Outcome Groups</p> <p>CSO and private sector representatives</p> <p>Donors/International development partners representatives</p>

<p>EQ2</p> <p>To what extent the UN system remained responsive to emerging and unforeseen development needs of the country and the people, especially of the most vulnerable and those left furthest behind?</p>	<p>Was the results matrix sufficiently flexible and relevant to respond to new issues and their causes as well as challenges that arose during the cycle?</p> <p>Has the United Nations system remained responsive to emerging and unforeseen needs of the country and the people?</p> <p>Has the United Nations system paid proper attention to emergency needs in the case of the COVID-19 crisis, while balancing the other development cooperation priorities with the crisis response?</p> <p>Has the United Nations system paid proper attention to regional and cross-border issues of importance?</p>	<p>Evidence that outcome coordinators, in liaison with UN agencies, could adapt results and strategies to new situation and had flexibility to reallocate resources as required to achieve the desired outcomes</p> <p>Evidence that the UNCT was open and responsive to the need/requests to adapt the UNSDPF design</p>	<p>Documentary review focused on the annual reviews and progress reports</p> <p>Interviews with key informants</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>Government officials</p> <p>Outcome Groups</p>
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***COHERENCE: of the UN system support***

<p>EQ4</p> <p>To what extent has the UNSDPF strengthened the coherence of support by UNCT members and sought partnership with government and other stakeholders to deliver inclusive, quality, integrated, SDG-focused support?</p>	<p>Has the United Nations system collectively prioritized activities based on the country needs rather than on the availability of resources, and reallocated resources according to the collective priorities if necessary?</p>	<p>The level of coordination/cooperation among UN agencies in the country? How does the principle Deliver as One is being pursued in practice?</p> <p>Usefulness of the current UNSDPF for the coordination of UN agencies?</p> <p>Synergies among the UNSDPF programmes and UN agencies?</p> <p>Are UNSDPF outputs adequately costed? Have the</p>	<p>Evaluation Questionnaire for UN agencies</p> <p>Focus Group Discussion with the UN Country Team, Operations Management Team and Result Groups</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews with Government officials, CSO representatives and development partners</p>	<p>UNSDPF Results Matrix (with updated monitoring indicators); Joint Work Plans and Common Country Reports</p> <p>Minutes of the Joint Steering Committee meetings</p> <p>UN agencies' staff, including UNRCO, RGs, OMT etc.</p>
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		agencies mobilized adequate financial resources thus far in the cycle for the achievement of UNSDPF commitments?		Government officials  CSO representatives  Other development partners
EQ5  To what extent has the UN member agencies contributed to functioning and consolidation of the UNCT coordination mechanisms (UNCT, DPG, IATT, Outcome Groups, PME, OMT, etc.) to deliver on the UNSDPF in the spirit of the UN Reform and how can it be improved?	Has the UNSDPF 2019-2023 contributed effectively to the collective prioritization of activities and reallocation of resources according to the collective priorities by providing clarity and transparency of results achieved and resources used? Has the UNSDPF 2019-2023 strengthened the coherence of support by UNCT members towards the common objectives and to deliver quality, integrated, SDG-focused policy support? Has the UNSDPF 2019-2023 reduced transaction costs for partners through greater United Nations coherence and discipline? Was the UNSDPF 2019-2023 supported by an integrated funding framework and by adequate funding instruments? What were the gaps? Have the UNSDPF 2019-2023 implementation and coordination mechanisms contributed effectively to the achievement of established outcomes?	Any Resource Mobilization Strategy at the level of the UNCT, so that resource mobilization is coordinated among the agencies? How useful has the strategy been to resource mobilization efforts? If not, would you see benefits in having one? Does your UNCT have a Joint Communications Strategy? How useful has the strategy been to joint communication efforts? How does UNRCO participate in donor coordination with non-UN development partners in the country?	Evaluation Questionnaire for UN agencies  Focus Group Discussion with the UN Country Team, Operations Management Team and Result Groups  Semi-structured interviews with Government officials, CSO representatives and development partners	UNSDPF Results Matrix (with updated monitoring indicators); Joint Work Plans and Common Country Reports  Minutes of the Joint Steering Committee meetings  UN agencies' staff, including UNRCO, RGs, OMT etc.  Government officials  CSO representatives  Other development partners

***EFFECTIVENESS: contribution of UNCT to the achievement of the UNSDPF planned outcomes***

<p>EQ6</p> <p>To what extent has the UNSDPF reached the targeted beneficiaries and institutions and contributed to achieved expected results outlined in the results framework (Outcome and Output)?</p>	<p>To what level has the UN system reached the purpose and the expected results as stated in the UNSDPF, including those on gender equality? To what extent is the UNSDPF on track to achieve planned results (including intended and unintended)?</p>	<p>Objective comparison of actual outputs achieved against the set targets, including consideration of annual adjustments</p> <p>The actual outputs are likely to make a significant contribution towards the expected outcomes</p> <p>There are positive trends in the outcome indicators</p> <p>Plausible evidence that UN-supported results under the UNSDPF have made a contribution to national priorities and change</p> <p>Stakeholders at both the strategic and programmatic levels can offer examples of for how institutional and/or behavioural changes resulting from UNSDPF have influenced concrete changes in national development situation and indicators</p>	<p>Documentary review focused on annual reviews and progress reports; contribution of UNSDPF results and strategies to national development priorities and indicators</p> <p>One-pager Questionnaire Interviews</p> <p>Focus groups Round tables</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>Government officials</p> <p>Outcome Groups</p> <p>CSO and private sector representatives</p> <p>Donors/International development partners representatives</p>
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<p>EQ7</p> <p>To what extent has the UNSDPF strengthened the position, credibility, and reliability of the UN system as a partner of the government and other actors, and has served as an effective partnership vehicle?</p>	<p>Which are the main factors that have contributed positively or negatively to the progress towards the UNSDPF outcomes and national development goals?</p> <p>What challenges have been faced?</p> <p>What has been done to address the potential challenges/problems? What has been done to mitigate risks?</p>	<p>Factors (including challenges) identified and rated as promoting or diminishing the effectiveness of the UNSDPF</p> <p>Evidence of UN agencies of making good use of facilitating factors and country context (operating space) to achieve outputs and contribute to the attainment of planned outcomes</p> <p>Assessment of assumptions and risks in the overall UNSDPF and results chain</p> <p>Evidence that assumptions and risks were considered during programme reviews and for progress reporting</p>	<p>Mapping of factors which promoted or impeded the progress against intended results for contribution analysis</p> <p>Documentary review focused on annual reviews and progress reports, risks and assumptions, risks analyses, evaluation reports</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>Outcome Groups</p> <p>UN Outcome coordinators</p> <p>UN Communications Team</p> <p>CSO and private sector representatives</p> <p>International development partners representatives</p>
<p>EQ8</p>	<p>How did the UN promote national execution of human rights programmes and / or the use of national expertise and technologies, the realization of human rights and promoting gender equality? Did the UNSDPF effectively use the principles of environmental sustainability to strengthen its contribution to national development results? To what extent did UNSDPF strengthen national capacities for data</p>	<p>UNSDPF strategies, results and indicators address the standards of ratified human rights treaties by the country and major recommendations of treaty body reports</p> <p>UNSDPF strategies, results</p>	<p>Documentary review focused on the overall UNSDPF design and on the target groups identified in UNSDPF, annual work plans, programme reviews and progress reports</p> <p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>Outcome Groups</p> <p>CSO and private sector representatives</p>

	<p>collection and analysis to ensure disaggregated data on the basis of sex, migration status, geographic location, and other grounds and did those people exposed to discrimination and disadvantage benefited from priority attention?</p>	<p>and indicators are informed by key human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, participation and inclusion.</p> <p>UNSDPF strategies, results and indicators have been informed by gender analysis</p> <p>Stakeholders are able to provide examples about how UNSDPF strategy and delivery was informed and adapted to address environmental sustainability concerns</p> <p>Where relevant, UNSDPF indicators are disaggregated by gender, age, income levels and geographic location</p>	<p>Interviews with key informants</p> <p>Focus groups</p>	<p>International development partners representatives</p>
EQ9	<p>monitoring/evaluation of the UNSDPF 2019-2023.</p>	<p>Evidence that UNSDPF promoted effective partnerships and strategic alliances around its main outcome areas and national development goals (e.g. within the government, national partners, donors and other</p>	<p>Documentary review focused on the UNSDPF and preparatory documents and reports on UNCT comparative advantages;</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>Government officials</p> <p>Outcome Groups</p>

		<p>international development partners)</p> <p>Stakeholders consider partnerships established for the implementation of the UNSDPF to be both an essential prerequisite and modality of achieving successful results</p> <p>Stakeholders are able to provide examples of successful results obtained through partnerships</p> <p>Evidence that programmatic work under each outcome was informed by an understanding of the major capacity assets and constraints of implementing partners</p>		
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***EFFICIENCY: extent to which outcomes have been achieved at reasonably low cost and maintenance of minimum transaction costs***

EQ10  To what extent were the resources (financial/technical/human) efficiently used and adapted to the implementation modalities in the COVID-19 context?	How has the UN system mobilized and used its resources (human, technical and financial) and improve inter-agency synergies to achieve its planned results in the current UNSDPF cycle?	<p>Efficiency gains achieved through synergy (concerted efforts to optimise results and avoid duplication)</p> <p>Examples of cross-practice collaboration and cross-agency</p>	Document review and system analysis focused on the management, monitoring and quality assurance arrangements and responsibilities, TORs and actual performance for progress	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>Government officials</p>
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		<p>harmonization and programme and policy coherence</p> <p>Programme management arrangements (outcome and Outcome Groups) produced:</p> <p>a. Efficient joint programming processes by UN agencies and implementing partners</p> <p>b. A regular, user-friendly stream of information and data about progress against the plan</p> <p>c. Actionable lessons and good practices for consideration by the UNCT and the government</p>	<p>monitoring, learning and reporting</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Round tables</p>	<p>UN Chairs of Outcome Groups</p> <p>UN outcome coordinators</p> <p>Operations Management Team</p> <p>Communications Team</p> <p>CSO and private sector representatives</p> <p>International development partners representatives</p>
<p>EQ11</p> <p>To what extent did the UNSDPF implementation reduced transaction costs for partners through greater UN coherence and discipline?</p>	<p>Have the resources been used efficiently? In what ways could transaction costs be reduced? How well have the various activities, including those aimed at improving gender equality, transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness? (in comparison to the plan)</p>	<p>Evidence of efficient management and benefits of Deliver as One approach</p> <p>Outcome budgets are broadly in line with scale and scope of expected results</p> <p>Perceptions about costs vs. benefits of results and the efficiency of</p>	<p>Document review focused on the UNCT budget, annual changes through work plans, financial analysis and delivery rates for the outcomes from programme reviews and progress reports</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>UN Chairs of Outcome Groups</p> <p>UN Outcome Coordinators</p>

	<p>Were the management and administrative arrangements sufficient to ensure efficient implementation of the programme?</p>	<p>implementation modalities used (avoiding waste and duplication)</p> <p>Perceptions about the financial costs of UN programmatic assistance vs those of other international partners</p> <p>Timeliness and quality of outputs and use of resources</p>		
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***SUSTAINABILITY: extent to which the obtained benefits (results) have continued, or are likely to continue, after the intervention has been completed***

<p>EQ13</p> <p>What mechanisms, if any, has the UNSDPF established to ensure socio-political, institutional, financial, and environmental sustainability of the achieved results? To what extent has the UNSDPF contributed to building national and local capacities and ensuring long-term gains?</p>	<p>Has the United Nations system support extended in such a way to build national and local capacities and ensure long-term gains?</p> <p>How will the UNSDPF ensure sustainability of its results and impacts (i.e. strengthened capacities, continuity of use of knowledge, improved practices, etc.), including those aimed at improving gender equality?</p> <p>Has the United Nations system leveraged all sources of financing and investments, rather than relying mostly on donor funding for its activities, to ensure the scale of impact necessary for attaining the 2030 Agenda?</p> <p>How was the UN able to form and maintain partnerships with</p>	<p>Triangulation of perceptions about the sustainability of results/benefits</p> <p>Evidence of exit strategies and measures undertaken by UNCT to ensure sustainability of results (legal/policy, financial and institutional)</p>	<p>Document review focused on institutional measures in place or expected that will help to sustain UNSDPF results/benefits</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Workshops</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNCT</p> <p>Government officials</p> <p>Outcome Groups</p> <p>CSO and private sector representatives</p> <p>Donors/International development partners representatives</p>
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	government institutions, civil society, private sector, and development actors including bilateral and multi-lateral organizations, civil society organisations and the private sector to leverage results? How have the programming principles been mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the programme?			
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## ANNEX III: KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED FOR THE EVALUATION

### General:

- Agency Annual Reports
- Joint Work Plans (2019-2022)
- Meeting Minutes of the Country Programme Board and other joint outcome and thematic groups
- Country Programme Board Presentations
- Other Presentations

### Specific:

- 8th and 9th CEDAW Periodic Report of the Kingdom of Bhutan
- Bhutan's Voluntary National Review Report 2018
- Bhutan's Voluntary National Review Report 2021
- FAO, Country Programming Framework 2019-2023
- FAO, Farmer's Day 2020
- FAO, MTR of Country Programme Framework 2019 - 2023
- FAO, Report on Large Cardamom in Bhutan 2020
- FAO, RGoB, Behaviour Change Communication Strategy July 2018 - June 2023
- MoEA, UNDP, Diagnostic Trade Integration Study Update (DTISU) 2020
- MoH, UNICEF, Bhutan Every Newborn Action Plan 2016-2023
- NSB, Disability Statistics Report 2021
- RGoB - UNICEF Programme of Cooperation 2019-2021 Mid-Term Review Report 2021 2021
- RGoB, Second Nationally Determined Contribution 2021
- RGoB, Third National Communication to the UNFCCC 2020
- RGoB, Twelfth Five Year Plan 2018-2023
- RGoB, UNDP, Rapid Socio-economic Impact Assessment of Covid-19 on Bhutan's Tourism Sector 2020
- RGoB, UNDP, Social Experiment on Household Waste Management 2021
- Twelfth Five Year Plan 2018-2023 Mid-Term Review
- UN, Comprehensive Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Least Developed Country Category 2021
- UNCDF, A Review of the Performance and Potential of the LoCAL Mechanism 2021
- UNDP Country Programme Document 2019 - 2023
- UNDP, Bhutan Gender Analysis 2021
- UNDP, Bhutan Partnerships and Communications Strategy and Action Plan (PCAP) 2021
- UNDP, Parliament of the Kingdom of Bhutan, Bhutan National Human Development Report 2019
- UNDP, Systems Approach to Youth Unemployment in Bhutan 2021
- UNICEF, Disability-Inclusive Education Practices in Bhutan 2021
- United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework 2019-2023 for Bhutan Document
- UN Bhutan COVID-19 Socio- Economic Response Plan
- WHO Country Cooperation Strategy 2020-2024



## ANNEX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE WITH UN AGENCIES

### Overall Instructions

The UN RCO, in coordination with the UN Country Team (UNCT) and close collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB), are in the process of conducting a final evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) 2019-2023.

The evaluation's scope will be comprehensive, in the sense that it will cover all strategic areas of the UNSDPF. The final evaluation will examine progress for the 2019 – 2022 period and will also take into account the activities planned by the UN agencies for the next year. The evaluation will be carried out jointly with the stakeholders and the overall approach will be participatory and orientated towards learning on how to jointly enhance development results at the national level.

To facilitate the data collection process, the evaluators have designed this survey which is intended to gather the views of the **whole agency**, rather than those of a single individual. As such, it is recommended that this questionnaire is filled collectively on the basis of group discussions. Please, provide as many details as you can.

You are kindly invited to complete this questionnaire by **18 November**. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Responses will be combined through our analysis and reporting so that individual responses are not identifiable to any individual. Thank you!

1. Please name your agency.
2. What is the timeframe of your agency's current programme?
3. To what extent is your agency's programme aligned with the UNSDPF?
4. To what extent do you think the UNSDPF is aligned with national priorities identified in key national strategic plans/documents (particularly, in your area of activities/specialization)?
5. Does your agency refer to (make use of) the UNSDPF for the development and implementation of its programme?
6. To which UNSDPF outcome areas has your agency contributed in this programme cycle? Please, provide a brief description of your agency's main areas of work.
7. What, in your view, is the main driver of your agency's programme positioning? a) Availability of funding? b) Opportunities offered by specific government/non-government partners to assist them in a particular area? c) Principled decision of the management to allocate resources where the real needs are? d) Other _____  If it is the latter point, how do you determine what the "real" needs are?
8. Following up on the question above, please, provide a brief description of your agency's main contributions/achievements in each relevant outcome area (main activities and results).
9. What achievements can be attributable to your agency's work?
10. How has your agency supported the country's achievement of commitments and obligations under international and regional agreements and the SDGs?
11. Have results been unsatisfactory in any areas, and why? What have been the main challenges with the UNSDPF implementation?
12. To what extent have the outcomes that were generated been sustainable? To what extent are the results owned by beneficiaries?
13. To what extent is the effective implementation of national policies, programmes and plans that you have promoted/supported a challenge? How does your agency ensure that policies, programmes and plans that you have promoted/supported get implemented?
14. How does your agency ensure that the initiatives that get piloted under the UNSDPF successfully get scaled up?
15. How has your agency cooperated within the UNCT on the promotion and achievement of particular SDGs (based on the national SDG framework)?

16. How have your agency's interventions mainstreamed the five programming principles: Human Rights & Human Rights Based Approach, Gender, Environmental Sustainability, Result Based Management and Capacity Development?
17. Please, describe how your agency's programme has focused on vulnerable groups and has been implemented in line with the "leave no one behind" principle?
18. Have you conducted a gender assessment of your programme during the current UNSDPF cycle?
19. Has your agency faced challenges in determining programme indicators that measure changes in gender equality and women's empowerment? If yes, what was the solution?
20. To what extent has your agency applied gender-sensitive approaches in the implementation of activities? Is there a mechanism in place that ensures gender mainstreaming of activities?
21. Has your agency had any gender-related capacity building activities for its staff during the current UNSDPF cycle?
22. What planning instruments/tools does your agency use for planning activities with specific national institutions/bodies? I.e. project document, annual work plan, bi-annual, work plan, etc.
23. How do you assess/evaluate the results of your work? Has your agency conducted any programme evaluation in the current UNSDPF cycle?
24. How useful has the current UNSDPF infrastructure been for the coordination of UN agencies? How has it contributed to achieving better synergies among the UNSDPF programmes and UN agencies?
25. How active and important has the role of the UNRCO been for ensuring stronger coordination among the UN agencies?
26. Does your agency participate in any UNSDPF Outcome Groups? If so, please, list them. Also, indicate which of them your agency chairs (if any). How useful have these groups been in improving inter-agency coordination?
27. Does your agency participate in any UNSDPF thematic groups (i.e. Operations Management Group, Communications Group, etc.) or any other joint UN groups? If so, please, list them. Also, indicate which of them your agency chairs (if any). How useful have these groups been in improving inter-agency coordination?
28. Is there a need to streamline the thematic groups in order to make the coordination structure more efficient?
29. To what extent does your agency have access to and make use of data at the UNCT-level to understand what progress is being made by the UNCT as a whole?
30. To what extent is there an adequate and well-functioning monitoring system in place, including gender equality and LNOB monitoring?

31. How the current UNSDPF design, implementation and reporting has been aligned with your own agency processes and mechanisms?
32. Has your agency mobilized adequate financial resources thus far in the cycle for the achievement of its UNSDPF commitments?
33. To what extent does the allocation of resources by your agency reflect the varied needs of national priorities and targeted groups including those directed for gender equality and other vulnerable groups?
34. Are UNSDPF outputs adequately costed?
35. Does your agency have a Resource Mobilization Strategy? Is it in any way coordinated with any other agency? Is resource mobilization coordinated/harmonized at the UNCT level in any way? If so, what are the mechanisms for coordination?
36. Are there more efficient ways and means of delivering more and better results (at output level) with the available inputs? What cost-efficiency measures could be introduced without impeding the achievement of results?
37. How does your agency participate in development effectiveness coordination with non-UN development partners in the country? To what extent does the UNCT have a harmonized/coordinated approach in its participation in donor coordination in the country?
38. To what extent have UNSDPF activities, processes and systems been flexible and adaptive to respond to new needs and emerging priorities?
39. To what extent have approved plans (JWP) been flexible for adjustments? What mechanisms are in place to adapt existing activities to emerging priorities?
40. Are there areas where you think your agency could play a larger role, which it is currently not playing? If that is the case, what is the reason that your agency has not been able to play that role?
41. What are the new and emerging needs/assistance areas for your agency to address to serve these new objectives/priorities?
42. To what extent does your agency operate at the sub-national level? Please, describe your agency's engagement with local (sub-national) governments, civil society and private sector.
43. In the context of the UN reform, what capacity building areas activities would benefit your agency to better respond to changing dynamics?
44. What has been the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of your agency during 2020? How has your agency coped with its repercussions and addressed these changes in context?
45. Are there any Joint Programmes in which your agency has been involved in during the current UNSDPF cycle? What are the areas in which your agency was involved in joint programmes? With which other agencies were the joint programmes implemented?

46. Are there any good practices of inter-agency coordination and joint impact that you wanted to highlight in particular?

47. What else would you propose to strengthen the relevance/usefulness of the current UNSDPF as well as of the next UNSDPF?

## ANNEX V: ONLINE SURVEY FOR UN STAFF

### Overall Instructions

The UN RCO, in coordination with the UN Country Team (UNCT) and close collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB), are in the process of conducting a final evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDPF) 2019-2023.

The evaluation's scope will be comprehensive, in the sense that it will cover all strategic areas of the UNSDPF. The final evaluation will examine progress for the 2019 – 2022 period and will also take into account the activities planned by the UN agencies for the next year. The evaluation will be carried out jointly with the stakeholders and the overall approach will be participatory and orientated towards learning on how to jointly enhance development results at the national level.

To facilitate the data collection process, the evaluators have designed this survey which is intended to gather the views and perceptions of UN staff on the overall relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the UNSDPF. As you are part of the UN family and given your direct knowledge of the work of the UN in the country, your participation in this final evaluation through the completion of this survey is very important and will be greatly appreciated.

The survey should take about **20 minutes** to complete. Wherever there is an opportunity for a write-in response, you are encouraged to make reference to a specific activity or project. If for any reason you cannot respond to a question, please select "Don't know". We kindly request that you complete this survey by 18 November. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Responses will be combined through our analysis and reporting so that individual responses are not identifiable to any individual. Thank you!

## 1. Background Information

### 1.1 Which UN Agency do you work for?

- FAO
- ILO
- OHCHR
- UN Women
- UNAIDS
- UNCTAD
- UNDP
- UNEP
- UNESCO
- UNFPA
- UNHCR
- UNICEF
- UNIDO
- UNODC
- UNRCO
- UNV
- WFP
- WHO
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 1.2 In what capacity do you work for the UN?

- Head of Agency/Management
- Programme
- Operations (Finance, Procurement, HR, etc.)
- Communications
- M&E
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 1.3 Which of the following inter-agency groups are you a member of? (Please select all that apply)

- UNCT
- Outcome Groups
- PME Group
- TG on Disability
- UN communication Group
- HACT working group
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 1.4 How long have you been working with the UN in Bhutan?

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1-2 years
- More than 2 years but less than 5 years
- More than 5 years

### 1.5 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

**2. Questions on UNSDPF Relevance**

Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
2.1 I am familiar with the UNSDPF and its content					
2.2 The UNSDPF has adequately reflected Bhutan's national needs & priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3 The UNSDPF has addressed the needs of women, children and the most vulnerable groups in Bhutan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.4 The UNSDPF has been flexible enough to respond to the changing context in Bhutan, especially in light of COVID-19	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.5 The UNSDPF has been relevant to the work of my agency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.6 The UNSDPF has created a clearer division of labor among UN agencies in Bhutan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.7 The UNSDPF has created complementarities among UN agencies in Bhutan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.8 The UNSDPF was planned in a participatory fashion between UN agencies, Government bodies and non-governmental stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**2.8 Are there any priority areas that should have had a stronger focus in the current UNSDPF and/or should be added to the next one?**

Please provide 1-2 areas if applicable.

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**2.8 Are there any priority areas that should NOT have had a stronger focus in the current UNSDPF and/or should NOT be added to the next one?**

Please provide 1-2 areas if applicable.

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**2.9 If you have any additional thoughts on UNSDPF's relevance, please add them here:**

○ Answer \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. Questions on UNSDPF Appropriateness/Effectiveness

Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
3.1 The UNSDPF objectives/targets my agency is involved in are realistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.2 The UNSDPF objectives/targets my agency is involved in are on track to be achieved by the end of the current cycle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.3 The UNSDPF has contributed to improved synergies in the achievement of results between UN agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.4 The UNSDPF has created a UN system that is more effective than the work of individual agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.5 The UNSDPF has adequately incorporated the leave no one behind as a cross-cutting principle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.6 The UNSDPF has adequately incorporated human rights as a cross-cutting principle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.7 The UNSDPF has adequately incorporated gender equality as a cross-cutting principle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.8 The UNSDPF has adequately incorporated the rights of children/youth as a cross-cutting principle/area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.9 The UNSDPF has adequately incorporated the rights of PwDs as a cross-cutting principle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.10 The UNSDPF has adequately incorporated environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting principle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.11 The UNSDPF has adequately treated the regional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

and cross-border issues of importance					
3.12 The UNSDPF implementation has adequately incorporated capacity building as a cross-cutting principle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.13 The UNSDPF implementation has adequately incorporated results-based management (RBM) principles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**3.11 Which are the three top areas where the UNSDPF has provided the greatest contribution to the development and implementation of national policies or SDGs?**

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**3.12 What are the main sources of funding for your agency’s activities in the current UNSDPF cycle?**

- Core (own funding)
- Vertical Funds (i.e. GEF, GFATM, etc.)
- Donor funding
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- I am not sure

**3.13 How does your agency’s funding situation compare to the last UNSDPF cycle?**

- Better
- Same
- Worse
- Don’t know

**3.14 What are the main challenges related to funding for your agency?**

- Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**3.15 What would be the factors that have so far positively affected the achievement of UNSDPF results?**

Please provide 1-2 factors if applicable.

Factor 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Factor 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**3.16 What would be the factors that have so far negatively affected the achievement of UNSDPF results?**

Please provide 1-2 factors if applicable.

Factor 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Factor 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**3.17 If you have any additional thoughts on UNSDPF’s effectiveness, please add them here:**

- Answer \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Questions on UNSDPF Coherence

Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
4.1 The system in place to monitor the achievement of joint UNSDPF results (including for gender equality and other cross-cutting themes) has been adequate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.2 The UNSDPF has enabled an appropriate analysis of risks and has led to appropriate actions to ensure that results to which it contributed are not lost	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3 The allocation of resources under the UNSDPF has reflected the varied needs of national priorities and targeted groups, including those directed at gender equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.4 My agency has mobilized enough resources to achieve the UNSDPF outcome/output targets we support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5 UNSDPF enabled the national partners to mobilize additional financial resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5 UNSDPF resources (money, expertise, time, administration) have been allocated efficiently and reduced transaction costs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.6 Pertinent information on the UNSDPF has been readily available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.7 Information sharing on the UNSDPF has been transparent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate the following statements from your perspective:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
4.8 The RCO has played a crucial role in coordinating agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.9 The reform of the RCO function is a positive development that will	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

strengthen UN coordination and effectiveness					
4.10 The objectives pursued by my agency are adequately reflected in the UNSDPF	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
4.10 The agency I work for frequently uses the UNSDPF document to plan its activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.11 The agency I work for uses the UNSDPF document to plan Joint-Programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.12 The agency I work for actively communicates with other UN agencies on work related to UNSDPF	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.13 The UNSDPF Joint Steering Committee has convened regularly and has been an important instrument of UN-RGoB cooperation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.14 The UNSDPF Result Groups have enhanced inter-agency cooperation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.15 The UNSDPF Result Groups have enhanced UN-RGoB cooperation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.16 Work around the Sustainable Development Goals is well coordinated among UN agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.17 The findings and recommendations from the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) process on accelerating SDGs have been integrated programmatically and are being addressed by the agency I work for	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**4.18 Please provide your perspective on the tools currently used for planning and reporting. How effective and efficient are they?**

**4.19 In relation to the previous question, how familiar are you with UNINFO as a means of planning and reporting? How often do you use it and incorporate it in your day-to-day? Do you find the system to be an effective pool of information?**

**4.20 Please provide the list of Joint Programmes or initiatives in which your agency has been involved in during the current UNSDPF cycle.**

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**4.21 Following up on the previous question, in which areas there is potential for more joint programming with other UN agencies?**

Please provide 1-5 areas if applicable.

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 5: \_\_\_\_\_

**4.22 Can you provide any specific examples of inter-agency coordination or cooperation that reduced duplication, generated economies of scale or resulted in development synergies and effective delivery of the UNSDPF?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4.23 What have been your agency's key activities and contributions in the acceleration of SDGs in the country? Have you cooperated with other agencies in this area?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4.24 How would you rate your agency's cooperation with the following entities and institutions?**

Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:

	NON-EXISTENT	WEAK	SATISFACTORY	STRONG	VERY STRONG
Other UN agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Central government/Partner Ministry/Agency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local governments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civil Society Organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bilateral donors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multilateral Development Banks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**4.25 What are the main challenges related to coordination among UN agencies?**

Please provide 1-4 areas if applicable.

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 4: \_\_\_\_\_

## **5. Questions on UNSDPF Support of Transformational Change**

Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
5.1 UNSDPF promotes ownership of UN programmes by the government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.2 UNSDPF enabled attraction of additional resources (private investment, citizen engagement) for the realization of 2030 Agenda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.3 The UNSDPF results are sustainable given the financial resources mobilized so far	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.4 My agency develops exit strategies to ensure results are sustained over time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.5 My agency's work in building capacities of government institutions will lead to sustainable results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.6 Vulnerable groups have become more vocal, resilient and better represented through UNSDPF	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

**6.1 What changes or recommendations should be made to the current UNSDPF programming and management to support the realization of the UNSDPF outcomes by the end of the cycle?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6.2 What changes should be made to support the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals by the end of the current cycle?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6.3 Are there any additional comments you wish to make for consideration by the evaluation team? (up to 200 words)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your kind participation!**

## ANNEX VI: ONLINE SURVEY WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

### Overall Instructions

The UN RCO, in coordination with the UN Country Team (UNCT) and close collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB), are in the process of conducting a final evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDPF) 2019-2023.

The evaluation's scope will be comprehensive, in the sense that it will cover all strategic areas of the UNSDPF. The final evaluation will examine progress for the 2019 – 2022 period and will also take into account the activities planned by the UN agencies for the next year. The evaluation will be carried out jointly with the stakeholders and the overall approach will be participatory and orientated towards learning on how to jointly enhance development results at the national level.

To facilitate the data collection process, the evaluators have designed this survey which is intended to gather the views and perceptions of key government officials who are familiar with or have been involved with the UNSDPF on the overall relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the UNSDPF. Your participation in this final evaluation through the completion of this survey will be greatly appreciated.

The survey should take about **20 minutes** to complete. Wherever there is an opportunity for a write-in response, you are encouraged to make reference to a specific activity or project. If for any reason you cannot respond to a question, please select “Don't know”. We kindly request that you complete this survey by 18 November. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Responses will be combined through our analysis and reporting so that individual responses are not identifiable to any individual.

Thank you!

**1.1. Please, name your institution here.**

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**1.2 What is your gender**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

**1.3 Do you work for a national-level or sub-national level organization?**

- National Level
- Sub-national Level
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**1.4 Title/Position:**

- Head
- Deputy head
- Technical level
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**1.5 For how long have you been working in your current position?**

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1-2 years
- More than 2 years but less than 5 years
- More than 5 years

**1.6 Which UN Agency have you worked directly with or you are familiar with as a result of cooperation? You may choose more than one option.**

- FAO
- ILO
- IOM
- ITC
- OHCHR
- UN Women
- UNAIDS
- UNCTAD
- UNDP
- UNEP
- UNESCO
- UNFPA
- UNHCR
- UNICEF
- UNIDO
- UNODC
- UNRCO
- UNV
- WFP



- WHO
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**2.1 Please, describe the way/circumstances in which you were involved with any of the UN agencies? (i.e. project implementation, joint activity, training, etc.).**

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**2.2 For how long have you cooperated with the UN system (any of the UN agencies)?**

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1-2 years
- More than 2 years but less than 5 years
- More than 5 years

**2.3 If you are a member of any of the joint UN-Government UNSDPF structures, please specify it below.**

- UN-RGoB Country Programme Board
- Development Partner Group Meeting
- Project Steering Committee
- Other (please, specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- None

**2.4 Has the UN system cooperated with your organization? If so, from your experience, what have been the main achievements/results of UN’s contribution to or cooperation with your organization (please, provide as much detail as possible)?**

- Answer \_\_\_\_\_
- Don’t know/not sure

**Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:**

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
2.1 The UN System is a credible and reliable partner supporting Bhutan in achieving Agenda 2030 objectives	○	○	○	○	○
2.2 The UN System has adequately reflected Bhutan’s national needs & priorities	○	○	○	○	○
2.3 The UN System has addressed the needs of women, children, stakeholders and the most vulnerable groups in Bhutan	○	○	○	○	○
2.4 The UN System has been flexible enough to respond to the changing context in Bhutan, especially in light of COVID-19	○	○	○	○	○

2.5 The UN System has been relevant to the work of my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.6 Strategic interventions pursued by UN agencies were effective in reaching SDG targets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.7 The UN System has created complementarities/harmonization among UN agencies in Bhutan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.8 The UNSDPF was planned in a participatory fashion between UN agencies and Government bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**2.5 What priority areas should the UN system address going forward?**

Please provide 2-3 areas if applicable.

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:**

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
2.10 The UNSDPF objectives/targets my organization is involved in are on track to be achieved by the end of the current cycle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.11 The UNSDPF has contributed to improved synergies in the achievement of results between UN agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.12 The UNSDPF has adequately incorporated human rights as a cross-cutting principle in the activities of the UN agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.13 The UNSDPF has adequately incorporated gender equality and right of children and PwDs as a cross-cutting principle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**3.1 Which are the three top areas where the UN system has provided the greatest contribution to the development and implementation of national policies or SDGs?**

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**3.2 What are the main challenges UN agencies face in relation to mobilizing funding for activities in your area?**

○ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**3.3 What are the factors that have so far positively affected the achievement of UNSDPF results?**

Please provide 1-2 factors if applicable.

Factor 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Factor 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**3.4 What are the factors that have so far negatively affected the achievement of UNSDPF results?**

Please provide 1-2 factors if applicable.

Factor 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Factor 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:**

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
3.5 The M&E system in place to monitor the achievement of joint UNSDPF results (including gender equality monitoring) has been adequate	○	○	○	○	○
3.6 Pertinent information related to the UNSDPF has been readily available by the UN to my agency/organization	○	○	○	○	○
3.7 Information sharing by the UN with non-UN stakeholders on the UNSDPF has been transparent	○	○	○	○	○

**Please rate the following statements from your entity's perspective:**

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
3.8 The Country Programme Board has convened every year and has been an important instrument of enhanced UN-RGoB cooperation	○	○	○	○	○

3.9 Work around the Sustainable Development Goals is well coordinated among UN agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
---	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

**4.0 Can you provide any specific examples of coordination or cooperation between UN agencies that reduced duplication, generated economies of scale or resulted in development synergies and effective delivery of the UNSDPF?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4.1 How has the UN system contributed to the acceleration of SDGs in the country? Have you cooperated with any agencies in this area?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4.2 What are the main challenges related to coordination among UN agencies?**

Please provide 1-4 areas if applicable.

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**4.3 What are the main challenges related to coordination between UN agencies and your organization?**

Please provide 1-4 areas if applicable.

Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Area 4: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please rate the following statements from your agency's perspective:**

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
4.4 The UNSDPF promotes ownership of UN programmes by the government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5 The UNSDPF results are sustainable given the financial resources mobilized so far	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**4.6 What changes or recommendations should be made to the UN system on the current UNSDPF to support the realization of the UNSDPF outcomes by the end of the cycle or to promote the partnership between the Government and the UN?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4.7 What changes should be made to support further progress on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by the end of the current UNSDPF cycle?**

---

**4.8 Are there any additional comments you wish to make for consideration by the evaluation team? (up to 200 words)**

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**Thank you for your kind participation!**

## ANNEX VII: ONLINE SURVEY FOR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

### Overall Instructions

The UN RCO, in coordination with the UN Country Team (UNCT) and close collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB), are in the process of conducting a final evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) 2019-2023.

The evaluation's scope will be comprehensive, in the sense that it will cover all strategic areas of the UNSDPF. The final evaluation will examine progress for the 2019 – 2022 period and will also take into account the activities planned by the UN agencies for the next year. The evaluation will be carried out jointly with the stakeholders and the overall approach will be participatory and orientated towards learning on how to jointly enhance development results at the national level.

To facilitate the data collection process, the reviewers have designed a series of surveys intended to gather the views and perceptions of key UN staff, government officials, representatives of CSOs and donor community who are familiar with or have been involved with the UNSDPF on the overall relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the UNSDPF. Your participation in this final evaluation through the completion of this survey will be greatly appreciated.

The survey should take about **15 minutes** to complete. **This survey is individual.** Wherever there is an opportunity for a write-in response, you are encouraged to make reference to a specific activity or project. If for any reason you cannot respond to a question, please select “Don't know”. We kindly request that you complete this survey **by 18 November**. **The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Responses will be combined through our analysis and reporting so that individual responses are not identifiable to any individual.**

Thank you!

**1.1. Please, name your organization here.**

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**1.2 Title/Position:**

- Head
- Deputy head
- Technical level
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**1.3 For how long have you been working in your current position?**

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1-2 years
- More than 2 years but less than 5 years
- More than 5 years

**1.4 How is development assistance coordinated in Bhutan? What are the structures of donor coordination? How well are they functioning?**

- Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**1.5 What is the role of the RGoB in the coordination of development effectiveness? Is the RGoB playing a leadership role in the process? Are there any Government-led structures of donor coordination?**

- Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**1.6 Has the UN system played any role in facilitating development coordination? How actively and constructively has the UN participated in donor coordination?**

- Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Please select ONE answer for each question that best reflects your perception of the following statements:**

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW
1.7 The UN programme in Bhutan has been focused on issues that are crucial to the country's development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.8 The UN system in Bhutan has adequately addressed the needs of women, children, and the most vulnerable groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.9 The UN programme in Bhutan has been synergetic to the efforts of development partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.0 The UN system in Bhutan has operated as one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.1 Coordination and cooperation among UN agencies in Bhutan has been strong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.2 Joint programming among UN agencies has been a key feature of the UN system in Bhutan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3 The UN system in Bhutan has adequately informed development partners about its activities and results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.4 The UN system in Bhutan has been flexible in its response to the changing context in the country, especially in light of COVID-19	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**2.5 What would you identify as the UN’s strengths and key areas of competency in Bhutan?**

○ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**2.6 Do you think there are opportunities for more joint programming by UN agencies?**

○ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**2.7 How does the development assistance/financing landscape look like for Bhutan going forward? What are the main trends and challenges?**

○ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**2.8 As the UN will start the preparation of its new cooperation framework for Bhutan, where (in which areas) do you see interest in working with UN agencies going forward?**

○ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**2.9 Are there any additional comments you wish to make for consideration by the evaluation team?**

○ Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your kind participation!**



## ANNEX VIII: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED IN INTERVIEWS AND THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

### List of Participants in Semi-Structured Interviews

No.	Persons	Organization
1.	Mr. Phub Sangay, Offtg. Director	National Statistics Bureau (NSB)
2.	Mr. Birkha Gurung, Sr. Planning Officer	National Statistics Bureau (NSB)
3.	Ms. Ugyen Tshomo, Offtg. DG	National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC)
4.	Mr. Kinley Dorji, Sr. Program Officer, Children Division	National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC)
5.	Mr. Tshelthrim, Sr. Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Division	Ministry of Education (MoE)
6.	Mr. Binod Sunwar, Dy Chief Planning Officer	Ministry of Education (MoE)
7.	Phurba, PPD, (SDG Focal)	Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC)
8.	Dhendrup Tshering, Programme Coordinator	Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC)
9.	Tshering Choden, Programme Coordinator	Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC)
10.	Nima Phuntsho Sherpa, PPD Sherub Gyeltshen, Project Manager, GCF Climate Resilient Agriculture Project	Office of Attorney General (OAG)
11.	Sonam Delek	National Assembly of Bhutan (NAS)/Parliament
12.	Mr. Karma Dupchu, Director, (Co- Chair Outcome 4)	National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology (NCHM)
13.	Mr. Tshering Wangchuk, Dy. Chief Program Officer, DDM (Co facilitator Outcome 4)	Department of Disaster Management (DDM)
14.	Tshering Dorji, Programme Officer	Department of Disaster Management (DDM)
15.	Sonam Tshewang, Executive Engineer	Department of Disaster Management (DDM)
16.	Mr. Pema Bazar, Sr. Planning Officer (Co-facilitator Outcome 4)	GEF, LDCF, PMU, GNHC
17.	Chencho Lhamu, Member of CSO Board	Bhutan Centre from Media and Democracy (BCMD)
18.	Sonam Pem Executive Director	Tarayana Foundation
19.	Roseleen Gurung	Tarayana Foundation
20.	Kinley Zam, Sr. Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Division	Ministry of Health (MoH)

21.	Tashi Tshomo, Department of Public Health	Ministry of Health (MoH)
22.	Eunyoung Koh	Korea International Cooperation Agency

<b>List of CSOs who participated in the Round Table Meeting/FGDs</b>		
<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Thematic groups</b>	<b>Name of CSOs</b>
1	Persons with disabilities	Ability Bhutan Society (persons with disabilities)
2	Sexual and gender identities	Lhak-Sam
		Queer Voices of Bhutan
		Pride Bhutan
3	Disadvantaged youth	Nazhoen Lamtoen
		Bhutan Youth Development Fund
		Organization for Youth Empowerment
4	Gender, income status and geographical location	RENEW
		Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs
		Tarayana Foundation
		SABAH Bhutan

## **ANNEX IX: LIST OF RESPONDENTS TO THE UN AGENCY QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. ESCAP
2. UNICEF Bhutan Country Office
3. UNCDF
4. UNFPA
5. IFAD
6. WFP
7. UNDP
8. UNEP

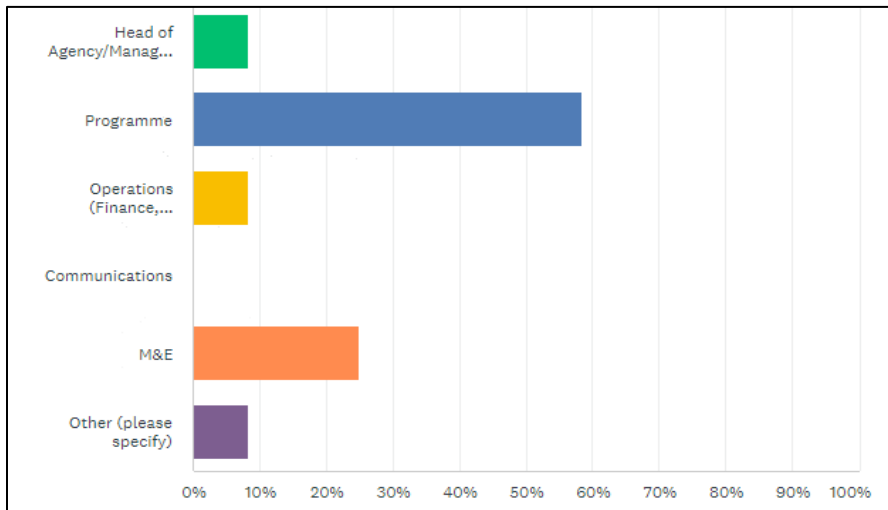
## ANNEX X: RESPONDENTS TO THE ONLINE SURVEYS

### Survey for UN Agency Staff

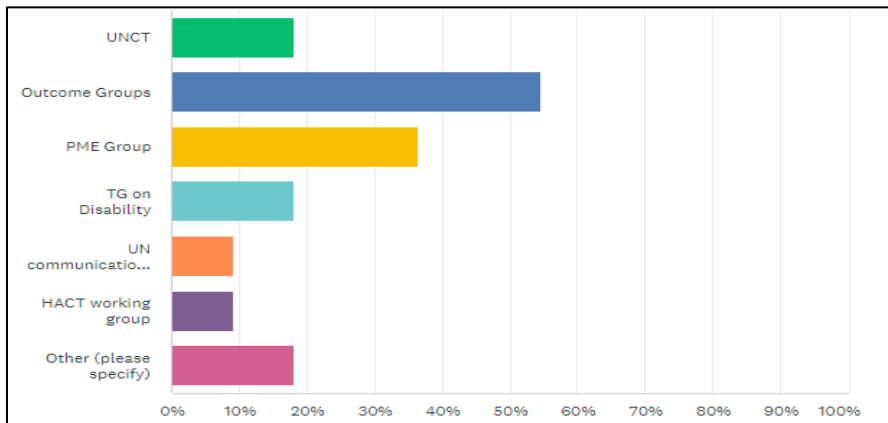
**Respondents from the following agencies:**

1. ESCAP
2. FAO
3. UNDP
4. UNICEF
5. UNODC
6. WFP
7. RCO

**Interviewees from the following positions:**



**Interviewees from the following inter-agency groups:**



### **Survey for Government Officials**

#### **Respondents from the following institutions:**

1. Mongar Dzongkhag
2. Department of Agricultural Marketing & Cooperatives
3. School Health and Nutrition Division (SHND)
4. Department of Agriculture
5. Bhutan Transparency Initiative
6. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. Ministry of Finance

### **Survey for Development Partners**

#### **Respondents from the following institutions:**

1. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
2. SAARC Development Fund
3. Austrian Coordination Office, Thimphu
4. Asian Development Bank

## ANNEX XI: EVALUATION'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

### **TORs for a Consultant [Evaluation Team Leader]**

#### 1. Duties and Responsibilities (Scope of work: description of services, activities or outputs)

Full Term of Reference of Evaluations UNSDPF Bhutan (2019-2023) including;

- Evaluation criteria and preliminary evaluation questions
- Evaluation approach, methodology, quality assurance, and assessment
- Evaluation process
- Workplan and indicative time schedule of deliverables
- Management of the evaluation
- Bibliography

### Introduction

This United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDPF) articulates the collective vision of the UN system and the Government of Bhutan for 2019 – 2023. The overall goal of the United Nations' support to Bhutan with the timeframe is to support “A Just, harmonious and sustainable Bhutan where no one is left behind”. In support of the Royal Government of Bhutan's (RGoB) achievement of its 12th FYP and beyond, the UN's strategic priorities outline to support the people of Bhutan by focusing first on those furthest behind, specifically the 14 Socio-Economic groups identified as being at risk of being left behind. The Government's 12th FYP (2019-2023) was also formulated with both GNH and the SDGs as a guiding basis in its preparations, Bhutan's development programmes continue to be highly aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

An evaluation of the UNSDPF is commissioned by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Bhutan in close partnership with the RGoB and will be conducted by a team of independent evaluators. The independent evaluation of the UNSDPF is a mandatory system-wide country-level evaluation that adheres to the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and also conducted in line with the guidelines for the Evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), September 2021. The evaluation is a critical instrument to ensure the accountability of the development system for its collective contribution to a country's SDG achievement. It supports learning and informs decisions regarding the design of subsequent UNSDCF cycles. It includes a focus on development results and the identification of internal and external gaps and overlaps, encompassing a critical appraisal of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) process, the theory of change, design and implementation, the application of the guiding principles, and the Funding Compact and Management Accountability Framework (MAF).

The evaluation terms of reference set out the details of the evaluation process, methodology, deliverables, and management arrangements, including quality assurance mechanisms. The country lead process will be a transparent and inclusive process with robust quality assurance. There will be technical support

provided by the UN Development Coordination office (DCO) and United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and Pacific (UNEDAP) to ensure independence, credibility, and utility of evaluation.

## Country Context & UNSDPF Highlights

### Country context

Bhutan is one of the smallest economies in the world, it is also one of the fastest growing economies, and is considered by the World Bank's classification as a lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC). A combination of prudent fiscal and monetary policy, as well as robust investments in hydropower has largely facilitated its growth over the years. Bhutan's progress in human development has also been significant, having achieved or surpassed targets in five of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and is ranked in the medium HDI category. As a testament to the tremendous socioeconomic progress made over the decades, Bhutan is expected to graduate from the UN's Least Developed Countries (LDC) category in 2023, with the RGOB 12th FYP marked as the "the last mile to LDC graduation". Bhutan during its first VNR exercise in 2018, presented the 12th FYP as its first major step towards implementing the SDGs and most indicators assessed on track. In July 2021, during the second VNR exercise given the significant impact of the pandemic on education, livelihoods, economy and revenue landscape, it is likely that progress of several related SDGs is "at risk" today i.e. SDGs 1, 4, 8, 10, 17. The theme of reporting was on transformational processes that build on past achievement and draw lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic—as Bhutan works to "build back better" while also moving ahead towards LDC graduation, the SDGs and GNH. The government with the partnership of UN also developed the "Dewa Platform", an integrated dashboard to monitor GNH, SDGs and FYP progress. The VNR process also highlights that there is broad agreement on the need to strengthen awareness of the SDGs, and on a need for planners and implementers to be more conversant with the "language of the SDGs".

COVID 19 impact on Bhutan is deep and far-reaching, like many other countries in the Global context. While GDP had grown from three percent in 2018 to 5.46 percent in 2019, and was projected to grow to 6.9 percent in 2020, growth projection decelerated to -6.1 percent by year-end with strict implementation of pandemic containment measures. A large number of people dependent on tourism and allied sectors were displaced, and many Bhutanese working overseas returned home. Overall unemployment reached 5 percent in 2020 as compared to 2.7 percent in 2019; and youth unemployment, a long-standing concern, has reached an all-time high of 22.6 percent as compared to 11.9 percent in 2019. Domestic violence and protection issues have reportedly increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. Issues of online safety, cyber security and the digital divide were highlighted, as education and public services went online. Concerns over food and nutrition security were amplified as weaknesses in value chain management and distribution became apparent. The health system's capacity to deal with a prolonged pandemic is an additional concern—with epidemiological changes already placing pressure on the sustainability of free healthcare services.

Meanwhile, Bhutan remains highly vulnerable to climate change impacts and natural disasters, which pose serious threats to its nature-dependent livelihoods and hydropower and agriculture-based economy. As it maintains its carbon neutral status in the face of mounting pressure to accelerate economic growth, the additional burden of adaptation and mitigation entails huge costs. The Socio-Economic impact of Covid has brought about a new dimension of challenges to the country.

## UNSDPF highlights

The UNSDPF also represents the UN's commitment to advancing the Implementation approaches of UN Reform, Delivering as One (DaO) to drive joint and comprehensive UN work planning and monitoring for results, integrating the full range of UN national and international partners' expertise and experience, facilitating the application of normative programming principles in alignment with national development priorities.

Participating in the Framework are 31 UN Agencies of which 9 are resident agencies: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Program (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), 22 Non-Resident Agencies: IOM, UNOPS, UNWTO, OCHA, ICAO, UNIDO, UNIC, IFAD, UNCTAD, UNAIDS, UNESCAP, UNDESA, UN Technology Bank, UNESCO, UNV, UN Habitat, ITU, WIPO, UNEP, UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN OHRLS, UN Women.

Based on which the UN aims to mobilize and invest an estimated USD 120 million to achieve results in four outcome areas, by 2023:

**Outcome 1:** The RGoB uses more reliable and timely data on people at risk of being left behind for evidence-based policy and decision-making.

**Outcome 2:** Vulnerable and unreached people\* access and receive quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene services.

**Outcome 3:** RGoB institutions provide equal opportunities for all, and women and vulnerable groups hold leaders accountable; and

**Outcome 4:** Bhutan's communities and its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss as well as economic vulnerability.

The four outcomes through its integrated programming and joint programming approach contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Bhutan, building on Bhutan's international human rights commitments and supporting the Government's 12th Five Year Plan. The government and UN agencies formulate and review the Joint annual workplans under these outcomes. The progress under the four outcome groups is monitored and reported at Joint (Government and UN agencies) review meetings held every six months. Furthermore, the annual progress is captured in the Annual Results Report and reported to the Country Programme Board annually.

The UNSDPF did not have a mid-year review conducted, since the development of Socio-Economic Response Plan of (SERP) was developed through a consultative process in Feb 2021 and few SERP indicators were also incorporated in the UNSDPF results reporting framework. UNICEF and WFP have conducted mid-term evaluation of their Strategic plan, and there are also small Programme and project evaluations reports which can be used for desk review.

The evaluation needs to take into consideration the following contextual factors that affected the UNSDPF implementation:



- I. The need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 affected the priorities and implementation of the UNSDPF. The government's shift in priority to immediate response to COVID, which influenced the UN annual programming cycle in 2020 and 2021 to undergo 2 rounds of repurposing exercises and a shift in the timeline of planning and implementation.
- II. With national restriction on trade and movement due to COVID, has delayed targeted deliverables of projects and programmes.
- III. The changing development finance landscape, and its impact on resource mobilization for the UNCT.

## Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

The primary **purpose** of the UNSDPF Evaluation is to:

- I. Promote greater learning and operational improvement: The evaluation will provide important information and learning to strengthen programming, planning and decision making to improve coordination at the country level.
- II. Support greater accountability of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to UNSDPF stakeholders: The process will provide evidence of results achieved and assess the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions used in the implementation of the UNSDPF and fix accountability to the UNCT.
- III. Provide evidence to inform the design and coordination of the next UNSDCF (2024-2028). The evaluation process will provide the UN country team (UNCT) an opportunity to reflect on the way they have been supporting the country's development process.

The **objective** of the evaluation includes:

- a. To assess the contribution of the UNSDPF to national development results.
- b. To provide recommendation to strengthen the 'delivering as one' approach.
- c. To assess the level of 'UN reform' integration in the implementation arrangement of the UN System in Bhutan.
- d. To identify the area of cooperation where UN Bhutan continue to remain relevant to the National priorities and SDGs in the new UNSDCF.
- e. To assess and provide actionable recommendations to further strengthen the existing operational structures and interagency tasks teams in the implementation of the UNSDPF.
- f. Reach conclusions concerning UN's contribution, in relation to the UN systems value-add to the country looking forward to the new UNSDCF.

In addition, the evaluation will assess the extent to which the UNSDPF priorities shifted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the way the UN system in Bhutan adapted to the changed programming context to effectively and impact deliver as one within the context of the newly emerging priorities and environment. The UNSDPF evaluation is being conducted in the penultimate year of CF as per the UNEG guidelines.

Scope

The UNSDPF 2019-2023 evaluation will cover a period from 1st quarter of 2019 to the 1st quarter of 2022. The evaluation will cover all UN contributions to UNSDPF outcomes made through programmes, projects and activities supported by the UNCT and non-resident UN agencies, including activities implemented as part of global or regional programmes and projects. It should not seek to conduct a full evaluation of individual programme projects or activities of UNCT members, but rather synthesize and build on the agency programme and projects evaluations and other evaluative evidence.

The evaluation will be a comprehensive and strategic assessment of the UNSDPF's /UN Bhutan's contribution to the achievement of national priorities, the SDGs and the strategic relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability of the UNSDPF. It should focus on the effectiveness of the UNSDPF operational structures including the governance structure and mechanisms, task teams and workplans. Also identify areas of impact which require collective strategic actions to create value and position the UN system in Bhutan as an impactful partner to the government. Emphasize on identifying the need to bring in support from new relevant UN agencies at the country level, in the government priority area of digitalization, youth, economy etc.

The evaluation will address how far results dealt with overall inequalities (focused on leaving no one behind principle, and building resilience to humanitarian emergencies), and in the application of the cross-cutting elements of the UNSDF (human rights, conflict sensitivity, youth, volunteerism, and gender equality and women's empowerment, disability inclusion, environmental sustainability), as well as promoting innovative approaches, and deepening strategic partnerships.

The geographic coverage of the evaluation includes UN's partners in all 20 districts have taken place. The evaluation will cover all levels of partnership and contributions of stakeholders to achievement of UNSDPF outcomes (government, community, CSO, private sector, etc.).

The evaluation will be used by the various stakeholders of the UNSDPF 2019-2023, including the UNCT, RGOB, donors, development partners and implementing partners. A detailed stakeholder mapping will be carried out by the evaluation team during the inception phase to inform the primary and secondary users of the evaluation results.

The inception phase of the evaluation will further define and narrow the scope of the evaluation to meet the stated objectives and ensure that the evaluation is feasible given the resources and time available. Also, the provinces and thematic areas to be covered during the evaluation would be explicitly detailed in the inception phase.

## 1. Ultimate result of service (Included in JO Posting)

**The Evaluation Team Leader** leads the entire evaluation process, working closely with all team members. He/she will conduct the evaluation process in a timely manner and communicate with the Evaluation Manager on a regular basis and highlight progress made/challenges encountered. The Evaluation Team Leader will be responsible for producing the inception report and the draft and final evaluation reports, ensuring quality of these deliverables.

### **Specific roles:**

- I. Liaise closely with the Evaluation Manager on the over all process of the Evaluation
- II. Lead and coordinate with the National consultant for the data collection phase and include the National context analysis.
- III. Seek clearance required for evaluation and collect high quality data from field.
- IV. Lead data analysis, drafting of the report, agreement on key findings with UNCT, lessons learned, conclusion and recommendations.
- V. Support the stakeholder consultation to gather feedback and finalize the report.
- VI. Make a presentation of preliminary finding to the evaluation reference group.

The Team should be built with due consideration to:

- Cultural and language balance;
- Gender balance;
- Coverage of relevant subject areas of work by UNCT member agencies;
- Coverage of key cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability; and
- Collective knowledge of the national context in various areas of UN work

2. Title & ID number of programme/project (budget line - cost center/fund)

- UNSDPF 2019-2023 Evaluation

Report Coding block:

**SB-011942.04.03.01**

3. Is any other department or office of the Secretariat or any other organization of the United Nations involved in similar work to the best of your knowledge? (no)

4. travel to work location is 'not applicable.'

5. Output/Work assignment (Details of work to be delivered, expected delivery date and payment amount in total)

The Service Provider shall be paid the consultancy fee upon completion of the following milestones:

- Phase 1 after Completion of the data collection phase.
- Phase 2 Power Point presentation containing initial evaluation findings to facilitate validation of the preliminary findings: and
- Phase 3 after approval of the final evaluation report that includes an executive summary, infographics to be used for publication; and a PowerPoint presentation used to share findings with the stakeholder and for use in subsequent dissemination events.

Evaluation deliverables

Evaluation products expected for this exercise are: 1) Data collection; 2) a PowerPoint presentation containing initial evaluation findings to facilitate validation of the preliminary findings; 3) the final report of the evaluation with up to three revisions (complete first draft to be reviewed by the Consultative Group along with Evaluation Manager and DCO Evaluation Advisors; the second draft to be reviewed by the ERG) that includes an executive summary; 4) infographics to be used for publication; a PowerPoint presentation to be used to share findings with the stakeholders and for use in subsequent dissemination events. Outlines and descriptions of each evaluation product are meant to be indicative, and include:

- **Data collection phase:**

- Identification of data gaps and a proposal to address any limitation identified.
- conduct a stakeholder analysis followed by ample in-country consultations with all key stakeholders, to ensure that their views on issues that need to be considered, potential sub-questions, etc. are incorporated into the UNDAF evaluation.
- an elaboration of the evaluation questions into methodological sub-questions (by programme or project, by data-collection method, etc.).
- sources and methods for collecting data for each methodological sub-question; and
- a concrete plan of evaluation activities and a timeline, possibly with a tentative list of interviews to be arranged or plans for travel to other locations (e.g., municipalities, project sites).

- **PowerPoint presentation:** Initially prepared and used by the evaluation team in their presentation of the preliminary findings to the evaluation commission and the consultative group, a standalone PowerPoint will be submitted to the Evaluation Manager as part of the evaluation deliverables.

- **Evaluation report:** The evaluation report should be written clearly and concisely that allows readers to easily follow its logic. It should not be overly filled with factual descriptions, especially those available elsewhere. The focus of the report should be to present the findings, the conclusions, and the recommendations in a logical and convincing manner. It should contain:

- what was evaluated and why (purpose and scope);
- how the evaluation was conducted (objectives and methodology);
- what was found and on what evidence (findings and evidence/analysis);
- what was concluded from the findings and in response to the main evaluation questions (conclusions).
- what was recommended (recommendations). Recommendations should be developed for the purpose, to help the UNCT to improve its support towards the achievement of national goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, recommendations:
  - must logically follow the findings based on evidence and the conclusions drawn from them, with their rationale clearly explained.
  - must be relevant to the country context and to the improvement of the UN system support towards the achievement of national goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.
  - should be developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders to ensure the relevance and feasibility of the actions to follow.
  - recommendation should be clear on who needs to implement them and
  - must not be overly prescriptive to allow the UNCT to design concrete actions for implementation in the management response.
- what could be usefully learned, if any (lessons learned).

Short, summarizing reports for executive decision-makers and general readers, complemented by studies containing evidence and analysis will be submitted together with the report. In short, the evaluation report should adhere to the [https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/DCO-WG-UNSDG\\_CF/\\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B3123732D-4FD7-43C4-92C4-9131EB1DA160%7D&file=QA\\_Checklist\\_CF\\_Evaluation\\_Reports\\_March%202022.docx&action= default&mobileredirect=true&cid=cfad33-fd3c-4de9-9a54-91688775b670](https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/DCO-WG-UNSDG_CF/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B3123732D-4FD7-43C4-92C4-9131EB1DA160%7D&file=QA_Checklist_CF_Evaluation_Reports_March%202022.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&cid=cfad33-fd3c-4de9-9a54-91688775b670)

**Data and infographics:** Data, live data tables and infographics will be submitted to the evaluation management team as part of the evaluation deliverables.

The inception and evaluation reports will be produced jointly by the members of the evaluation team and will reflect their collective understanding of the evaluation. All deliverables listed will be written in English. If the Evaluation Manager, Evaluation reference Group and the consultative group finds that the reports do not meet the required standards, the evaluation team will make the edits and changes needed to align the report to the required standards.

#### 6. Expected Duration (start and end date)

35 working days over a three-month period from 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2022- 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2022 .

#### 7. Work Location

Teleworking

#### 8. Qualifications/special skills (Education/Language/ work experience)

- a. Advanced university level of education in evaluation or field(s) relevant to one or more UNSDPF evaluations areas of work. Where possible/suitable PhD level preferred for the Evaluation Team Leader;
- b. Minimum 10 years of proven experience in conducting evaluations of complex programmes and themes relevant to the UNSDPF;
- c. Experience and background in gender equality/gender analysis and gender responsive and disability inclusive evaluations.
- d. Good understanding of the SDGs, other relevant regional or global frameworks and their implications for development cooperation; Good understanding of multilateralism and the role of the UN System in development cooperation in the context of the country in question;
- e. Understanding of UN Reform and its implementation implication at the country level;
- f. Demonstrated analytical capacity, particularly in the case of the Team Leader, including on political economy and financing for development;
- g. Sound knowledge of the country context and an in-depth understanding of at least one area of work of UNCT members; collectively, Evaluation Team members should broadly cover all areas of UNCT activity;

- h. Demonstrated ability to write and communicate clearly in languages (English and Dzongkha).English for international consultant and both Dzongkha and English for National Consultants.
- i. No conflict of interest such as recent or expected employment by UNCT members or implementing partners, private relationships with any UNCT members of staff or government counterparts or implementing partners; participation in the design, implementation or advising UNSDPF evaluations being evaluated, among others). Any potential conflict of interest should be declared by candidates during the application process.

Skills:

- Experience of leading evaluation team and engagement in UNDAF evaluation.
- Knowledge and experience working with a UN country team or any other UN agency
- Sound knowledge and experience of United Nations Evaluation Groups (UNEG) norms and standards.

## ANNEX XII: ALIGNMENT OF UNSDPF OUTCOMES WITH SGDS

UNSDPF OUTCOMES	SDGs
<p><b>UNSDPF Outcome 1:</b> Enhances Access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere;</li> <li>• SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;</li> <li>• SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;</li> <li>• SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;</li> <li>• SDG 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all;</li> <li>• SDG 8: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour;</li> <li>• SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries;</li> <li>• SDG 11: Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women;</li> <li>• SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;</li> <li>• SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;</li> <li>• SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;</li> <li>• SDG target 17.18/19: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts / By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries</li> </ul>
<p><b>UNSDPF Outcome 2:</b> Vulnerable and unreached people access and use quality health, nutrition, protection,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere;</li> <li>• SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;</li> </ul>

UNSDPF OUTCOMES	SDGs
education, water and sanitation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;</li> <li>• SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;</li> <li>• SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;</li> <li>• SDG 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all;</li> <li>• SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries;</li> <li>• SDG target 17.18/19: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts / By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries</li> </ul>
<p><b>UNSDPF Outcome 3:</b> National stakeholders provide equal opportunities for all, particularly women and vulnerable groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere;</li> <li>• SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;</li> <li>• SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;</li> <li>• SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries;</li> <li>• SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;</li> <li>• SDG target 17.18/19: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts / By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries</li> </ul>
<p><b>UNSDPF Outcome 4:</b> Bhutan’s communities and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere;</li> </ul>



UNSDPF OUTCOMES	SDGs
<p>its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss as well as economic vulnerability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;</li> <li>• SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;</li> <li>• SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;</li> <li>• SDG10: Reduce inequality within and among countries;</li> <li>• SDG 11: Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women;</li> <li>• SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</li> <li>• SDG13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;</li> <li>• SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;</li> <li>• SDG target 17.18/19: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts / By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries</li> </ul>

## ANNEX XIII: ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Outcome One						
By 2023, there is enhanced access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision-making UNFPA (Lead), FAO, ITC, UNCDF, UNDESA, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UN Women, WFP, WHO						
	Indicator	Baseline		Progress		
		Year	Units	2020	2021	2022
SDG 17	System in place to integrate, monitor and report on Five-Year Plans and the SDGs (DEWA)	2020	0	Ongoing	Completed	Functional DEWA Dash (Achieved)
	<b>SDG target indicator 17.18.2.</b> Bhutan has national statistical legislation or policy that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	2017	No	Ongoing	Final draft Statistics Bill Submitted to the Cabinet Secretariat in May 2020.	Draft submitted to Cabinet on May 2021
1.1	Robust system in place for identifying, mapping and prioritizing vulnerable populations for assistance during a disaster	2018	No	Ongoing	DDM capacitated in active	DDM capacitated in actively maintaining
<b>Output 1.1: Central agencies and local governments are better able to integrate, monitor and report on Five-Year Plans and the SDGs</b>						
1.1.1 (N)	National Health Management Information System (HMIS) incorporates all MCH global indicators	2018	0% (No)	Ongoing	Partially	Partially
1.1.2	Number of central agencies and local government plans which have integrated SDGs	2018	1	Ongoing	2	2
1.1.3	Bhutan has methodologies for integrated and coordinated value chain analyses to support economic diversification in horticulture and handicrafts	2017	No	Ongoing	NA (constrained)	NA (constrained)
1.1.4 (N)	Number of sectors with strengthened national capacity to address data and analytics gaps to inform evidence based planning, ICPD and Census related policy briefs	2018	1	Ongoing	[thematic report (Young people), used during	[thematic report (Young people), used during
<b>Output 1.2: Disaggregated data on gender, vulnerable groups, multi hazard preparedness and risk reduction is available and used effectively</b>						
1.2.1	Data on impact of climate change by gender generated and analyzed	2018	No	Ongoing	Completed	Completed
1.2.2	Policies and programmes are influenced by analysis and advocacy to reduce child poverty	2018	poverty analysis/advocacy		Intermediate (constrained)	Intermediate (constrained)
1.2.3 (N)	Integrated digital school-based health, nutrition and education monitoring and reporting system rolled out nationwide and adopted into a national Management Information System	2018	No	Ongoing	school health and nutrition monitoring	school health and nutrition monitoring

By 2023, vulnerable and unreached people access and receive quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water sanitation and hygiene services UNICEF (Lead), UNCDF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, WFP, WHO						
<b>Related national development priority or goal (NKRAs): 3. Poverty eradicated and inequality reduced, 7. Quality of education and skills improved; 8. Water, food and nutrition security enhanced; 10. Gender equality promoted, women and girls empowered; 13: Democracy and decentralization strengthened; 14: Healthy and Caring society enhanced; 16: Justice services and institutions</b>						
SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13						
	Indicator	Baseline		Progress		
		Year		2020	2021	2022
SDG 3(N)	Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease a) Total mortality due to rheumatic heart disease, ischemic heart disease b) total mortality due to cancer	2020	a) 19 b) 149 c) 11 d) 204		a) 16 b) 127 c) 14 d) 198 (AHR 2021)	c. 14 d. 103 (HMIS)
2.1	Percentage of private expenditure (OOP) on health as % of total health expenditure	2015-16	2015: 20%	13.2% (NHA 2017-2018)	15.40%(NHA 2019-2020)	15.40%
2.2	Percentage of mothers/newborns receiving postnatal care	2012	41% / 30%	53% (mothers) 65% (Children)	53% (mothers) 65% (children)	79.8% (mothers) 73.6% (newborn)
2.3	Contraceptive prevalence rate	2012	65.6%	65.4%	65.40%	65.40%
2.4	Percentage of women aged 20 – 24 who were married before 18 years old	2012	25.8%	25.8%	25.80%	25.80%
2.5	Percentage of rice consumed in Bhutan per year that is fortified with micronutrients	2017	0.7%	0.8%	6%	13%
2.6	ECCD Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) (overall/boys/girls)	2018	19.2% / 19.2% / 19.1%	23.49% / 23.92%	27.81 (29.02/26.62) (constrained)	38.6%/38.5/38.7
2.7	Percentage of people using basic sanitation services	2017	63%	84%	96%	96.00%
2.8	Percentage of students from class PP to 12 covered by National School Nutrition Programme	2017	43%	52%	60.40%	60.60%
2.9 (N)	Percentage of women aged 25-65 years who were screened for cervical cancer	2019	66%	66%	45.6% in 15-69 yrs. 82% in 30-49 yrs	77% (30-65 years)
2.10 (N)	Adolescent birth rate	2018	28.4%	28.4%	28.4% (constrained)	14.2

Output 2.1: Enhanced protection of children and women						
2.1.1	Bhutan has a draft National Child Policy	2018	No	Yes	Yes	yes
2.1.2	Percentage of district hospitals implementing clinical protocols for the management of gender-based violence	2015	8%	25%	45% Punakha, Zhemgang, G/thang	40%
2.1.3	for women and children in difficult circumstances through fully functional Women and Child Welfare Committees	2018	4	24	24	24
2.1.4	Percentage of social service workforce <sup>39</sup> equipped with skills to recognize and respond to child protection issues	2018	5%	10%	27.20%	52.5%
2.1.5	Number of mothers, fathers and caregivers reached through parenting programmes	2018	5,069	16606	23196	39,187
2.1.6	National mechanism exists to engage multiple stakeholders, including civil society, faith-based organizations, and men and boys, to prevent and address gender-based violence	2018	No		Yes	yes
2.1.7 (N)	Number of beneficiaries of psychosocial support services related to the COVID-19 pandemic	Beginning of 2020	0	28352 (14162 F)	2916 (M: 206 F:2710)	2916 (M: 206 F:2710)
2.1.8 (N)	a) Ensured continued functioning of shelters for victims of violence and expand their capacity	2019	a) No b) No	a) Yes b) Yes	a) Yes b) Yes	a) Yes b) Yes
2.1.9 (N)	pandemic, fight against COVID-19 related domestic violence, and other forms of discrimination, (a) Community organization representing other at-risk population (b)	2019	a) No b) No c) No d) No (2019)	a) 1 b) 1		
2.1.10(N)	participation of at-risk populations and groups, Number, a) National	2019	a) 0 b) 0			
2.1.11(N)	Enhance National stakeholder's knowledge to prevent and combat Trafficking in Persons	2019	agencies: 8 b) number of	a) 22 b) 577	a) 26 b) 4455	a) 26 b) 4455
2.1.12 (N)	Number of communities with high levels of adolescent pregnancies implementing evidence-based programmes to reduce early and unplanned pregnancies and empower adolescents		No. of communities: 0		2	5
Output 2.2: Education and care for unreached children and adolescents has improved						
2.2.1	Number of schools implementing standards for inclusive education	2018	18	24	26	26
2.2.2	a) comprehensive sexuality and b) life-skills education[7]	2015	a) 25% b) 0%	a) 20% b) 10.5%	a) 29% b) 19%	a) 34% b) 24%
2.2.3	Number of monastic schools and nunneries offering literacy and numeracy curriculum (monastic schools/nunneries)	2018	35/15	22/5	44/19 (constrained)	44/19
2.2.4	Number of communities with high levels of adolescent pregnancy, implementing evidence based programmes to reduce early and unplanned pregnancies and empower adolescents	2017	0	2	3	5
2.2.5	National learning assessment system revised	2018	No	NEAF developed and launched	NEAF developed and revised	NEAF developed and revised
2.2.6	Number of boys and girls enrolled in Community Learning Centres	2018	208	352 (33M & 319F)	348(40m &308F)	318
2.2.6(N)	Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning or in case of schools reopening, including inschool learning	2020	17993	180000	168324	180000
2.2.7(N)	Number of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control)	1. Beginning of 2020	0	609	603	609

Output 2.3: Improved policies and strategies for health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene						
2.3.1	Number of district hospitals offering integrated comprehensive adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services	2017	7	20	25	54
2.3.2	Number of health facilities[8] that have at least one health staff trained on EENC and KMC package	2018	10	20	21	52
2.3.3	Percentage of hospitals with at least 3 service providers trained on rights based and gender responsive standards of contraceptive information and services	2017	0%	47%	47%	47%
2.3.4	Number of service delivery points (hospitals, BHUs and ORCs) that provide counselling for IYCF and hygiene promotion	2018	9	235	235 (all health facilities)	289 Fully achieved
2.3.5	Bhutan has a regulatory and compliance framework in place for fortified foods	2018	No	Partially Achieved	Partially Achieved	Fully Achieved
2.3.6	Bhutan has standards for fortified rice, including its raw materials (fortified rice kernels (FRK), and raw rice)	2018	No	Yes	Yes	Fully Achieved
2.3.7	Bhutan has a national school feeding and nutrition strategy	2018	No	Yes	Yes	Fully Achieved
2.3.8	Bhutan has improved behavioral change communication material for better dietary and health practices for school children and communities	2018	No	No	No	No
2.3.9(N)	Percentage of health facilities providing cervical cancer screening services	2018	20% (hospitals)	100% Hospitals	100% (all hospitals)	100% hospital
2.3.10(N)	No of Digital solutions adopted to address the COVID-19 pandemic (a: E-governance system, b: Digital Health System)	2020	a) 0 b) 0	14 (MoH-6, E-gov-8)	1 (Digital Health system) UNDP	2 (Digital Health system) UNDP
2.3.11(N)	a) Vaccination Programmes b) Maternal Health inpatient	2020	b) 2470 c) 3360	a) 9,645 under five children with DPT b) 10071		a)9112
2.3.12(N)	services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of health worker and type of support (through provision of immunization training and supplies)	2020	0	49 hospitals, 186 PHC		
2.3.13(N)	since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of support a) Connecting CHWs to GBV prevention and response information and services	2020	b) 1500 c) 9000	a) N/A b) 200 HWs with PPE c) 106 RCCE materials		Achieved 1500 PPEs and RCCE materials
2.3.14(N)	Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	2020	0	95145	105033	232,052
2.3.15(N)	a)with a set of core essential services to be maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic defined	2020	a) No	YES (Operational guideline RMNCH)	YES (Operational guideline RMNCH)	73 health staffs trained on EENC & KMC
2.3.16(N)	Percentage of population reached with COVID-19 Vaccine	2020	0	N/A (COVID-19 vaccination schedule in 2021)	94.5% (adult and children 12-17 years)	98%
2.3.17(N)	Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services	2020	0	500000	500000	515,000
2.3.18(N)	Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) actions	Beginning of 2020	0	25000	30000	
2.3.19(N)	Proportion of Health Facilities implementing People Centered Care (PCC) in four selected districts (Bumthang, Dagana, Gasa and Trongsa)	2020	0	On going, will start from March	9 Dzongkhags	51
2.3.20(N)	Health facilities with operational health emergency contingency plan	2017	26	96 HF as of 2020	90	98

By 2023, national stakeholders provide equal opportunities for all, particularly women and vulnerable groups UNDP (Lead), UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, WFP, WHO						
	Indicator	Baseline		Progress		2022
		Year		2020	2021	
SDG 5	Portion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in	2018	28.8%	The conversation on the inclusion of this indicator in the MICS4HS is still in progress.		National Health Survey (to be published in 2022)
3.1	GNH Index on good governance	2015	0.077	data to be collected from next GNH survey	Data to be collected from next GNH survey	GNH Survey report not yet published
3.2	Gender Inequality Index	2016	0.477	0.421	2021 HDI slated for release in second quarter of 2022	0.415
3.3	National Integrity Score	2017	7.89	7.97	7.97 (no new assessments done)	(National Integrity Assessment not done)
3.4(N)	Citizens' confidence in judicial services	2017	67.77%	Data to be collected from next Bhutan Living Standard Survey		61.4% (81% of target)
3.5	Number of girls and boys who have experienced violence reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services	2018	470		2978 (737 M, 243 F, 3 CwD)	2243 (1001 M, 1242 F)
<b>Output 3.1: Improved enabling environment for civil society to advance opportunities for, and increase resilience of targeted vulnerable groups</b>						
3.1.1	Number of gender-responsive policies and legislation in place	2018	1.DVP Rules & Regulations 2015	Policy 10 gender Equality Policy	No legislations/ policies passed in 2021	10 (2021)
3.1.2	Number of civil society organizations enabled to advance opportunities for target groups, and increase resilience of women, youth, vulnerable groups	2018	0	8	Adding to the previously engaged CSOs, the UN Women is currently engaged with 10 CSOs in Bhutan.	8 (80% of target)
<b>Output 3.2: Parliament and justice sector capacities and approaches are strengthened with increased inclusion, transparency and accountability</b>						
3.2.1	Number of multi-stakeholder dialogues with engagement of Parliamentarians and representatives of women, youth, vulnerable groups	2018	0	4	not reached as the number remained at 4.	6 (75%)
3.2.2	Number of laws reviewed and proposed for harmonization with new International Conventions, Covenants, Treaties, Protocols and Agreements entered into by Bhutan	2017	9	11	12	13
3.2.3	3.2.3 A policy or legal framework or strategy on legal aid in place	2018	No		Guidance on Legal Aid has been developed with UN Women.	policy/strategy underway
3.2.4	Percentage of law enforcement and justice professionals equipped with skills to deal with: (a) child offenders and; (b) child victims	2018	23.6%	31%	With COVID-19 related restrictions, it has been	

By 2023, Bhutan's communities and its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss as well as economic vulnerability UNDP (Lead), FAO, IFAD, ITC, UNICEF, UN Environment, UNOCHA, WFP						
Related national development priority or goal (NKRAs): 2. Economic Diversity and Productive Capacity Enhanced; 3. Poverty Eradicated and Inequality Reduced; 5. Healthy Ecosystem Services Maintained; 6. Carbon Neutral, Climate and Disaster Resilient Development Enhanced						
SDG 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15						
	Indicator	Baseline		Progress		2022
		Year		2020	2021	
SDG 1	<b>SDG target indicator 1.2.1.</b> Percentage of population living below the national poverty line	2017	8.2%	8.2%	8.20%	12.4 %
SDG 15	<b>SDG target indicator 15.1.1.</b> Forest area as a proportion of total land area	2016	71%	71%	71%	71%
4.1	GNH index on ecological diversity and resilience	2015	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094
4.2	GNH index on standard of living	2015	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083
4.3	Multi-dimensional poverty index	2017	5.80%	5.8%	5.80%	5.8%
4.4(N)	Emergency Preparedness and Capacity Index (EPCI)	2019	9	On track	0	9
4.5(N)	Percentage increase in income of farmer group members	2016	BTN 44,077/year/HH	On track	0	20%
<b>Output 4.1.: Inclusive, risk-informed systems and capacities in place to enable people to benefit from conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, and reduced environmental and health risks</b>						
4.1.1	Number of climate-risk informed biological corridors operationalized	2018	0	2	2	4
4.1.2	Number of hectares of forest area brought under participatory sustainable management regime	2017	357,915	407955	407955	422,168
4.1.3	a) irrigation channel made more resilient to climate variability and change b) access roads made more resilient to climate variability and change	2018	a) 153 b) 0	a) 196 b) 281	a) 222 b) 367	a)319.24km b) 436.81km
4.1.4	resilience through UN interventions (a. sustainable forest management, biological corridors; b. resilient irrigation, access roads)	2018	a) 0 (b) 0	a) 52829 b) 34555	a) 86765 (F 42521) b) 40367 (F 19354)	a)81,584; b) 51,079
4.1.5	Animal Nutrition Lab (ANL) at National Research Centre for Animal Nutrition equipped for feed and fodder analysis	2018	No	On track	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
4.1.6(N)	Number of beneficiaries of social protection schemes and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic, disaggregated by type of programme, territory (rural/urban), sex, age group and at-risk population	2019	0	On track		a). 97 b). 4
<b>Output 4.2.: National policies and programme foster food self-sufficiency, innovative financing, an inclusive business environment and improved livelihoods through climate resilient value chains and nature-based solutions</b>						
4.2.1 (N)	Number of financing strategies and instruments applied to leverage innovative and diversified sources of finance	2018	2	New	9	11
4.2.2	Number of enterprises created and/or owned by women and youth generating sustainable livelihoods	2018	1	15	41	46
4.2.3	Rural Development and Training Centre equipped with protected and precision farming technology	2018	No	Yes (on track)	Yes	yes
4.2.4	Number of farmers trained in production planning, post-harvest techniques, farmer organization and business management and linked to schools	2018	0	1435 (Constrained)	1959	4290
4.2.5	Number of export markets/countries to which new sales have been made by Bhutanese producers	2018	0	3 (On track)	3	3
4.2.6 (N)	during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Number, Micro, small, medium enterprises (MSME)	2020	a) 0 b) 0	On track	b)271	a) 21, b) 1043
4.2.7(N)	COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on vulnerable groups (Tourism), directed at-risk populations. a) Gender Sensitive impact assessment	2020	a) No b) No	On track		a) yes b) yes
4.2.8(N)	Number of local farmer groups linked to schools/institutes	2019	110	On track	147	219
4.2.9(N)	capacity to report on RNR statistics including farmer income, job creation and production volume by commodities	2019	non-existence of formal M&E	On track	basic modules for agriculture	1
4.2.10(N)	Percentage of perishable food in the national school nutrition programme procured from local farmers.	2019	36%	On track	64%	80%
4.2.11(N)	livelihoods by addressing food supply bottlenecks a) improve protective measure for food supply workers	2020	a) 0 b) 0	On track	b) 2648	b)2648

Output 4.3.: Greenhouse gas emissions managed in selected sectors						
4.3.1	practices a) organic farming	2018	a) 23,530 b) 23,930	a) 23630 b) 8190 (On track)	a) 23630 b) 10017	a) 23,680 b) 9,266
4.3.2	Number of facilities to safely manage solid waste to reduce emissions	2018	1	180	187	187
4.3.3	Zero or low emission vehicles uptake	2018	99	105 (Constrained)	289	289
Output 4.4.: Improved capacities to prepare for and respond to disasters						
4.4.1	Percentage of farmers in target districts who have access to climate/natural disaster advisory services for agriculture planning and decision-making	2018	0%	On track	40.1	40.1%
4.4.2	Humanitarian staging areas with minimum response equipment at critical locations	2018	0	On track	1	1
4.4.3	Earthquake Impact Model developed for Bhutan to assess likelihood and scale of impacts of earthquakes.	2018	0	1	1	1
4.4.4	DMCP and SOPs tested through simulation exercises	2018	1	Constrained	0	0



## ANNEX XIV: ANALYSIS OF OUTPUT INDICATORS

Outcomes	Indicators	S	M	A	R	T	Notes
<b>OUTCOME 1.</b> By 2023, there is enhanced access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision-making	Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has national statistical legislation or policy that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has capacity to independently identify, map and prioritize vulnerable populations within 72 hours of a disaster	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 1.1: Central agencies and local governments are better able to integrate, monitor and report on Five-Year Plans and the SDGs	Health and Education Information management systems incorporate relevant SDG and other global indicators	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of central agencies and local government plans which have integrated SDGs	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has methodologies for integrated and coordinated value chain analyses to support economic diversification in horticulture and handicrafts	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	72-hour emergency assessment approach established in DDM	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 1.2: Disaggregated data on gender, vulnerable groups, multi hazard preparedness and risk reduction is available and used effectively	Data on impact of climate change by gender generated and analyzed	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Policies and programmes are influenced by analysis and advocacy to reduce child poverty	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-64 years subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by intimate partner in the previous 12 months	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Integrated digital school-based health, nutrition and education monitoring and reporting system rolled out nationwide and adopted into a national Management Information System	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	

Outcomes	Indicators	S	M	A	R	T	Notes
<b>OUTCOME 2.</b> By 2023, vulnerable and unreached people access and receive quality health, nutrition, protection, education, water sanitation and hygiene services	Mortality between 30 and 70 years of age from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory diseases (male/female)	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of private expenditure (OOP) on health as % of total health expenditure	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of mothers/newborns receiving postnatal care	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Anemia prevalence in children and adolescents	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Contraceptive prevalence rate	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	Specification of diversified targets for urban and rural areas would have been beneficial.
	Percentage of women aged 20 – 24 who were married before 18 years old	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	Specification of diversified targets for urban and rural areas would have been beneficial.
	Percentage of rice consumed in Bhutan per year that is fortified with micronutrients	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	ECCD Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) (overall/boys/girls)	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of people using basic sanitation services	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	School Feeding Programme converted to a National School Nutrition Programme	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of students from class PP to 12 covered by National School Nutrition Programme	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has a draft National Child Policy	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	

Outcomes	Indicators	S	M	A	R	T	Notes
Output 2.1: Enhanced protection of children and women	Percentage of district hospitals implementing clinical protocols for the management of gender-based violence	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of districts and municipalities/Thromdes that implement SOP on case management for women and children in difficult circumstances through fully functional Women and Child Welfare Committees	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of social service workforce equipped with skills to recognize and respond to child protection issues	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of mothers, fathers and caregivers reached through parenting programmes	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 2.2: Education and care for unreached children and adolescents has improved	Number of schools implementing standard for inclusive education	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of educational and monastic institutions implementing gender-responsive a) comprehensive sexuality and b) life-skills education	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of communities with high levels of adolescent pregnancy, implementing evidence based programmes to reduce early and unplanned pregnancies and empower adolescents	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	Specification of diversified targets for urban and rural areas would have been beneficial.
	Number of monastic schools and nunneries offering literacy and numeracy curriculum (monastic schools/nunneries)	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	National learning assessment system revised	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of boys and girls enrolled in Community Learning Centres	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 2.3: Improved policies and strategies for health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene	Percentage of district hospitals offering integrated comprehensive adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of health facilities that have at least one health staff trained on EENC and KMC package	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of 23 hospitals with at least 3 service providers trained on rights based and gender responsive standards of contraceptive information and services	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	

Outcomes	Indicators	S	M	A	R	T	Notes
	Effective vaccine management (EVM) composite country score >80%	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Proportion of infants born to pregnant women living with HIV tested for HIV within their first two months of life	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of service delivery points (hospitals, BHUs and ORCs) that provide counselling for IYCF and hygiene promotion	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has a regulatory and compliance framework in place for fortified foods	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has standards for fortified rice, including its raw materials (fortified rice kernels (FRK), and raw rice)	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has a national school feeding and nutrition strategy	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has improved behavioral change communication material for better dietary and health practices for school children	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of perishable food in the National School Nutrition Programme procured from local farmers	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of schools with access to safely managed WASH facilities (water/toilet/hygiene)	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
<b>OUTCOME 3.</b> By 2023, national stakeholders strengthened to provide equal opportunities for all, particularly women and vulnerable groups	Portion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	GNH Index on good governance	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Gender Inequality Index	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	National Integrity Score	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Public satisfaction in Justice services	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of girls and boys who have experienced violence reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of gender-responsive policies and legislation in place	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	

Outcomes	Indicators	S	M	A	R	T	Notes
Output 3.1: Improved enabling environment for civil society to advance opportunities for, and increase resilience of targeted vulnerable groups	Number of civil society organizations enabled to advance opportunities for target groups, and increase resilience of women, youth, vulnerable groups	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 3.2: Parliament and justice sector capacities and approaches are strengthened with increased inclusion, transparency and accountability	Number of multi-stakeholder dialogues with engagement of Parliamentarians and representatives of women, youth, vulnerable groups	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of formal interactions between the justice sector, communities, and representative of target groups per year	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of laws reviewed and proposed for harmonization with new International Conventions, Covenants, Treaties, Protocols and Agreements entered into by Bhutan	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	A policy or legal framework or strategy on legal aid in place	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Percentage of law enforcement and justice professionals equipped with skills to deal with: (a) child offenders and; (b) child victims	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
<b>OUTCOME 4.</b> By 2023, Bhutan's communities and its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss as well as economic vulnerability	% of population living below the national poverty Line	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Forest area as a proportion of total land area	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	GNH index on ecological diversity and resilience	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	GNH index on standard of living	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Multi-dimensional poverty index	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Bhutan has strengthened capabilities to prepare for and respond to disasters	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 4.1.: Inclusive, risk-informed systems and capacities in place	Number of climate-risk informed biological corridors operationalized	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of hectares of forest area brought under participatory sustainable management regime	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	

Outcomes	Indicators	S	M	A	R	T	Notes
to enable people to benefit from conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, and reduced environmental and health risks	Kilometers of irrigation (a) and access roads (b) made more resilient to climate variability and change	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of people who benefit from improved natural resource management and climate resilience through UN interventions (a. sustainable forest management, biological corridors; b. resilient irrigation, access roads)	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Animal Nutrition Lab (ANL) at National Research Centre for Animal Nutrition equipped for feed and fodder analysis	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 4.2.: National policies foster innovative financing, an inclusive business environment and improved livelihoods through climate resilient and nature-based solutions	Number of financing solutions applied to leverage innovative and diversified sources of finance	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of enterprises created and/or owned by women and youth generating sustainable livelihoods	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Rural Development and Training Centre equipped with protected and precision farming technology	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of farmers trained in production planning, post-harvest techniques, farmer organization and business management and linked to schools	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of export markets/countries to which new sales have been made by Bhutanese producers	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 4.3.: Greenhouse gas emissions managed in selected sectors	Acres of agriculture land brought under sustainable and climate resilient management practices (a. organic farming, b. sustainable land management)	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Number of facilities to safely manage solid waste to reduce emissions	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Zero or low emission vehicles uptake	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
Output 4.4.: Improved capacities to prepare for and respond to disasters	Percentage of farmers in target districts who have access to climate/natural disaster advisory services for agriculture planning and decisionmaking	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	Humanitarian staging areas with minimum response equipment at critical locations	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	

Outcomes	Indicators	S	M	A	R	T	Notes
	Earthquake Impact Model developed for Bhutan to assess likelihood and scale of impacts of earthquakes	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	
	DMCP and SOPs tested through simulation exercises	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	

