

**DRAFT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO
EVALUATION OF 2016-2020 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK
BY UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM IN ARMENIA**

September - December 2020

General response to the evaluation

1. United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Armenia welcomes the final evaluation of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2020 that was commissioned by the UNCT and undertaken by an external, independent evaluation team from November 2019 to May 2020.
2. The UNDAF evaluation process was quality assured internally, supported by RCO, UNCT, the UN Armenia Inter-Agency M&E Group as well as UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia Evaluation Specialist.
3. Additionally, the UNDAF evaluation final report, along with other evaluation products, was submitted for external quality review and was assessed by Universalia independent quality control institution. The report, as assessed by Universalia, was rated “satisfactory” across all the dimensions of the assessment, while the “evaluation conclusion and lessons learnt” section was rated as “highly satisfactory”, exceeding UNEG standards for evaluation reports.
4. As the evaluation pointed out, UNDAF implementation has been flexible and responsive to the emerging priorities and challenges of the country during the period 2016–2020. UNCT has been, in general, effective in delivering results and contributing to progress under all UNDAF 2016-2020 outcomes, confirmed by positive changes in relevant statistical indicators linked with a credible contribution of UN to these changes. Strong sense of national ownership over the achievements under UNDAF 2016-2020 has been created through effective partnerships and active involvement of the national stakeholders in design and implementation of interventions of UN Agencies.
5. UNCT in Armenia is facing the challenges of engaging in more effective interactions between UN Agencies during planning and implementation of development initiatives; enhancing synergies between development interventions; operationalizing a more sound and strengthened system to monitor, report and communicate UNCT results to the national stakeholders and public at large; strengthening the UNDAF Management structures, including the Results Groups; mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women more effectively, to name just a few of the challenges.
6. UNCT agrees with all conclusions offered by the Evaluation and has prepared this Management Response Plan, outlining UNCT response to each recommendation and related follow-up mechanisms.

UNCT in Armenia Responses to 2016-2020 UNDAF Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Remain flexible and responsive to the needs and priorities of the citizens and authorities in Armenia, with due consideration of the emerging priorities, including enhancing youth programming, strengthening policy capacities in stages of the policy cycle, supporting the digitization agenda of the GoA, supporting the reform of public administration.			Accepted
Actions to be taken [Actions to be taken in response, broken down as appropriate]	Responsible entities	Timeframe	Resource implication [if any]
1.1. Plan and conduct consultations with a broad range of stakeholders, including thematic strategic planning workshops with resident and non-resident UN agencies, consultations with the GoA and other national partners, including civil society organizations, international finance institutions, development partners, private sector, academia and international NGOs, as well as generation of feedback of people living in Armenia, including young people.	RCO/UNCT	March – August 2020	Budget allocated for the design of the 2021-2025 CF
1.2. Establish annual and ad-hoc review procedures to monitor the progress of the CF and ensure continued relevance of the framework in the face of evolving national circumstances. This will include CCA refresh, focus group discussions with groups left behind, CF review (including CF adjustment to the impact of Covid 19 and Nagorno-Karabakh war) as well as reflection of the nationalized SDG indicators and targets in the CF, once the SDG nationalization is complete.	RCO/UNCT GoA	March – December 2020	10000 USD
Recommendation 2 Focus new Cooperation Framework (CF) on the most critical root factors impeding progress towards SDGs and inclusion of vulnerable groups, considering comparative advantages of UNCT in Armenia. It is recommended to prioritize long term interventions, clearly linked to SDGs and national priorities, with explicitly set results and focus on sustainability.			Accepted
Actions to be taken [Actions to be taken in response, broken down as appropriate]	Responsible entities	Timeframe	Resource implication [if any]
2.1 Identify the priorities of the 2021-2025 Cooperation Framework (CF) based on the robust analysis of country needs and opportunities, informed by the 2016-2020 UNDAF Evaluation, UN's Common Country Analysis (CCA), Socio-Economic Impact Assessment for Armenia, as well as vulnerability and other relevant assessments conducted by UN, IFIs and other stakeholders. (. The elaboration of the CF content will be sensitive to the evolution of the Armenia Transformation Strategy 2050, sectorial strategies and other national planning instruments.	RCO/UNCT GoA	March – December 2020	Budget allocated for the design of the 2021-2025 CF
2.2. Prioritize the desired development changes and pathways of change for the CF, with a focus on greatest possible impact for SDG achievement in the country, based on the analysis of the UN	RCO/UNCT	March – August 2020	

added value, convergence with national priorities, potential positive impact for the groups left behind or at risk of being left behind, reach, time sensitivity and transformational effect.			
Recommendation 3 Strengthen the functioning of the UNDAF/CF Steering Committee to ensure its strategic guidance. Strengthen the Results Groups as the main mechanism for UNDAF implementation. It is recommended to enhance and ensure genuine involvement of national partners in all activities, from planning to implementation of interventions within UNDAF/CF. Intensive joint planning should be strengthened through preparation of Annual/ Bi-annual Work Plans (WPs), setting the basis for holistic and integrated planning, programming as well as robust monitoring and reporting.			Accepted
Actions to be taken [Actions to be taken in response, broken down as appropriate]	Responsible entities	Timeframe	Resource implication [if any]
3.1. Establish Joint Steering Committee co-chaired by the RC and the most senior representative of the central Government counterpart for the UN system (membership and specific governance arrangements to be determined, including mechanisms for engaging key partners, such as civil society, development partners, private sector, etc.).	RCO, UNCT Government (DPM's office and MFA)	December 2020 – February 2021	NA
3.2. Identify and designate the Government co-lead and/or representative(s) for each Result Group in consultation with the DPM's office and MFA.	RCO, UNCT Government (DPM's office and MFA)	January – March 2021	
3.3. Explore opportunities (such as workshops, briefings at the RG level, etc.) to communicate the role and responsibility of national partners, i.e., government officials, in CF monitoring as part of the national SDG monitoring process..	RCO/UNCT	January -May 2021	8000 USD
3.4. Develop CF Annual/ Bi-annual Work Plans, transitioning from excel-based to digital planning, monitoring and reporting through UN INFO.	RCO/UNCT	January-March 2021	NA
Recommendation 4 Intensify UNCT normative work as one of its comparative advantages and further strengthen gender mainstreaming across UNDAF/CF outcomes, including more elaborated gender-specific targets and gender-disaggregated indicators in UNDAF/CF.			Accepted
Actions to be taken [Actions to be taken in response, broken down as appropriate]	Responsible entities	Timeframe	Resource implication [if any]
4.1. Integrate gender analysis across all sectors of CCA, including underlying causes of gender inequality and discrimination in line with SDG priorities and targeted gender analysis of those furthest behind.	RCO/Gender Adviser, iGTG, RGs	January – August 2020	NA

4.2. Ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women is clearly addressed through gender-specific outcomes and/or clearly evidence integration of gender across all outcomes. Similarly address the commitment to groups left behind.	RCO/Gender Adviser, iGTG, RGs	May – November 2020	
4.3 Track changes in gender equality across the CF lifecycle, in line with SDG targets, including SDG 5, through sex-disaggregated data.			
4.4. Integrate HRBA in the CF design and implementation, with each priority being informed by UPR recommendations.	RCO/UNCT	May 2020 – August 2021	
Recommendation 5 Strengthen monitoring processes, and annual results and gender-sensitive reporting practices. It is also important that UN Agencies allocate financial resources to support collection of data under specific indicators, as needed.			Accepted
Actions to be taken [Actions to be taken in response, broken down as appropriate]	Responsible entities	Timeframe	Resource implication [if any]
5.1. Establish inter-agency M&E group to enable more integrated, coherent and cross- agency approaches and support CF development, monitoring and evaluation effort as well as CF reporting through UN INFO and other channels.	RCO/UNCT	December 2020	NA
5.2. UN HoA to follow-up to ensure that Agency focal points to the inter-agency M&E Group have their responsibilities included in/annexed to formal job descriptions, annual performance appraisal instruments and reviews.	HoA	January- June 2021	
5.3. Develop the costed multi-year joint monitoring and evaluation plan for the CF with view to ensure that UNDS entity M&E plans are coordinated with and reflected in the CF M&E plan and are appropriately timed, sequenced and executed to contribute to CF annual reviews, annual UN country results reporting and the final CF evaluation.	RCO/UNCT, M&E Group	December 2020 – February 2021	
5.4. Organize capacity-building workshop for the Result Group focal points and the UN Inter-Agency M&E Group on the monitoring and evaluation of CF through the UN INFO.	DCO UN INFO Focal Point and RCO	January – February 2021	
5.5 Populate and Onboard UNINFO as the digital monitoring and reporting system for the CF; ensure the regular updating of the UN INFO with quality assured, entity-specific data and analysis.	RCO/UNCT, M&E Group	January 2021 - December 2025	
5.6. Develop Annual Funding Framework based on 2021-2022 Joint Workplan, including operational and communications budgets (estimates are included for outcomes and outputs, and the costing of inputs and services based on agency standard costs).	RCO, Results Groups, Communication Group, OMT and UNCT staff	December 2020 – February 2021	

5.7. Populate and manage the Annual Funding Framework for 2021-2022 in UN INFO.	RCO/UNCT, M&E Group	2021-2022	
Recommendation 6 UNDAF should include a clear and practical sustainability strategy under all outcomes and perform regular analysis of risks and assumptions. Also, it is recommended to develop a sound approach to measure capacity development across all priority areas and assess impact of these results. It is recommended that UNCT expands its partnership with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their capacities across main functional areas, including their watchdog role, while engaging them in policymaking processes, as well as support their engagement in the implementation of the SDG related priorities.			Accepted
Actions to be taken [Actions to be taken in response, broken down as appropriate]	Responsible entities	Timeframe	Resource implication [if any]
6.1. Ensure regular analysis of assumptions and risks as well as mitigation measures as part of annual CCA and CF refresh exercises, based on the SDG multi-dimensional risk framework.	RCO/UNCT	January 2021 – December 2025	NA
6.2. Identify and leverage different sources of financing and investment flows outside the UN system (domestic financing) to support the Government to sustainably finance national priorities to achieve the SDGs.	1`		
6.3. Develop the capacities of partners, including Government and civil society, across main functional areas as well as supporting their engagement in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the SDG related priorities.	UNCT	January 2021 – December 2025	Cost-sharing expected from UN agencies

