



**Executive Board of the
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Programme, the United Nations
Population Fund and the United
Nations Office for Project Services**

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NOTE ON UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS: The narrative of the Regional Programme Document (RPD) and Annex A (results and resources framework) should not exceed a combined total of 8,000 words. Other annexes are not included in the official word count.

The distribution of 8,000 words between the narrative section and the RRF is at the discretion of the Bureau. Nevertheless, it is recommended that a minimum of four pages is set aside for the RRF. This can help ensure that the RPD communicates UNDP's contributions to results using clear indicators, baselines, targets and sources of information.

The narrative section and annex A (RRF) will be translated. Other annexes will not be translated. RPD narratives and RRFs that exceed 8,000 words in length incur additional cost. Bureaus cannot, therefore, adjust the font or margins when completing the document. Documents that do not adhere to format will not be appraised.

[Session] of (year)

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Country programmes and related matters

Draft regional programme document (for [name of region]) (Duration)

Content

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Annexes

- A. Results and Resources Framework
- B. Fully-costed Evaluation Plan

Attachments

- I. Resource Mobilization Target (RMT) Table (FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY)
- II. One page diagram of the programme's theory of change (FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY)

I. Programme Rationale (based on past performance, lessons learned and theories of change)

This section establishes the rationale for UNDP's programme priorities. This rationale should be based on a well-articulated theory of change *built on and linking* three key elements: first, a brief analysis of regional/global context; second, key successes and shortfalls during the preceding RPD cycle and what this reveals about what worked and what did not citing evidence from evaluations and other authoritative sources; and, third, opportunities for effecting development change that play to UNDP's comparative advantage, as articulated in the Strategic Plan.

Theory of change problem analysis helps identify key causal factors contributing to the core development issues. Within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), these factors represent the overarching challenges impeding SDG achievement, be they related to lack of economic opportunities, social exclusion or environmental and climate-related vulnerabilities. The immediate, underlying and root causes at the center of the analysis will help to explain the programme priorities articulated in Section II and in the RRF. The analysis should specify how women, as well as different marginalized groups are affected and are affected differently by development challenges, and if there are causes that are unique to these groups, requiring specific solutions. A sound, evidence-based causal analysis, drawing from UNDP or partner's analytical work, must be supported by systematic references to evidence and its sources, including evaluation.

Suggested content:

- (a) State the overarching development challenge(s) related to achieving the SDGs and explain the principal causes with a focus on the 2-4 issues that relate to UNDP's mandate and comparative advantage in the region. Describe how this connects with the analysis of the development challenges, keeping in mind the vision and outcomes of the Strategic Plan and the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs. Systematically identify relevant gender dimensions of critical development issues (gender analysis should be done previous to the writing of this section). Disaggregate all statistics/data by sex and other relevant characteristics such as target groups/areas if available to ensure that no one is left behind. Highlight data needs and capacities for SDG monitoring, and possible options to address them.
- (b) Briefly elaborate the alignment or lack thereof between SDG goals and targets and priorities, plans and strategies. Highlight key steps in the process required to integrate the SDGs in plans and budgets. Systematically highlight regional institutional and coordination mechanisms to drive the change required for implementing and monitoring the SDGs. The discussion of the institutional architecture should highlight how to improve horizontal coordination between central ministries and agencies, and vertical coordination between central and local administrative levels for effective implementation of the SDGs. State how the country is applying multi-stakeholder approach to implement the SDGs at both national and sub-national levels with the specific roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders such as government, civil society, parliamentarians, academia and the private sector.
- (c) State the 2-3 major outcome-level results/changes to which UNDP made a significant contribution during the preceding RPD cycle. What worked and what did not work? Why? Cite evaluative and any other available authoritative source of evidence including gender assessments/evaluations/audits.
- (d) Taking your lead from (a) and (b), explain the opportunities open to UNDP to effect development change *at scale* to achieve the vision and outcomes of the Strategic Plan. Referring to the theory of change developed for the Strategic Plan, explain where UNDP is best placed to assist, noting the role of the UN system as a whole and specific other UN agencies and development partners (such as bilaterals and the World Bank). This

part is critical as it highlights UNDP's comparative advantage, showing what will be different in the new cycle and how we are building on our strengths (in other words, what will UNDP adjust owing to contextual changes, results achieved, and lessons learnt?).

II. Programme Priorities and Partnerships

This section presents the programme priorities that UNDP proposes to focus on in support of regional priorities during the next RPD cycle. It should explain how the causal analysis described in the previous section translates into identified solution pathways that will be the focus of a coherent strategy to support partners in achieving the SDGs. Development solutions that focus specifically on the needs and concerns of women as well as different marginalized groups should be highlighted, including the promotion of gender equality. Programme priority areas should state clearly their alignment to respective Strategic Plan outcomes and the relevant SDGs and be based on the logic, rationale and opportunities described in section I. Outcome statements need not be elaborated in this section as these would be stated in full in the Results and Resources Framework of the RPD.

Attention needs to be paid to the Quality Standards for Programming (<https://poppp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPRoot.aspx>) that draw on the design parameters of the Strategic Plan.

The quality criteria of UNDP's Quality Standards for Programming are:

- Strategic
- Relevant
- Principled
- Management and Monitoring
- Efficient
- Effective
- Sustainability and National Ownership

The identified priorities will form the basis for the outcomes of the RPD. This section will, therefore, provide a brief description of each of these programme components. Drawing from the solution pathways developed in the theory of change, the description must indicate briefly but substantively *how* UNDP intends to assist the regional/global partners to address the relevant priority, explaining the mix of strategies that will be utilized to support the achievement of results, and elaborating on related assumptions about how and why these strategies will lead to change. In so doing, it will be essential to show how UNDP will lead or significantly contribute to an integrated UN response, and the role of other partnerships connected directly to the achievement of results, especially with other UN funds, agencies and programmes, and through South-South Cooperation (SSC) and triangular co-operation.

Suggested content:

- (a) What are the 2-4 programme priorities that UNDP will focus on during the next cycle? Drawing from the theory of change, explain why these programme priorities were chosen to best address the overarching development challenge(s), referring to the causal relationships in the selected solution pathways and articulating the key assumptions about how change will happen. The interlinkages across the different pillars of sustainable development – economic, environmental, and social – need to be specifically considered in articulating these programme priorities. Highlight *as specifically as possible* the strategies UNDP intends to use to obtain desired results. These strategies will reflect our approaches – such as policy research and advocacy or capacity development – but as they relate to the particular priority rather than in a generic sense. What is described here should be consistent with the indicative regional programme outputs in the RRF. Make clear how UNDP will support transformative and measurable

changes in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women under each programme priority. Emphasize how UNDP commits to ensuring a focus on leaving no one behind.

- (b) State how these programme priorities align with, or mutually complement, other country, regional and global efforts by UNDP to support regional priorities. Explain how these priorities work together to form a coherent strategy to support SDG achievement and monitoring.
- (c) Identify the main partnerships which are critical to achieving the programme priorities and/or will be focus of UNDP support such as South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Describe the partnerships with other UN agencies, departments, funds and programmes around the achievement of results, based on comparative advantage. A clear focus needs to be elaborated on how partnerships will be initiated or deepened with a broad range of stakeholders -- private sector, civil society, parliamentarians – at national and subnational levels, for progressing towards the SDGs. This is neither a listing exercise nor a place for broadly formulated references to working with X or Y. These partnerships must be seen as integral to the strategies being proposed to achieve results. Therefore, they should be presented within the text describing those strategies, rather than in a separate paragraph. The key will be to explain whom we want to work with, on what, and to what end. Insights for this will come from looking at the role of partnerships in the context of theories of change.

III. Programme and Risk Management

This section lays out the specific management initiatives that will achieve programme efficiency and effectiveness in the pursuit of development results. It will also underscore how management arrangements will reflect a risk-informed perspective so that UNDP can minimize the likelihood of any disruption to the programme and pursue opportunities to maximize benefits for the targeted groups. In this regard, the section underscores specific risks (threats and opportunities) in the programming environment and their significance in relation to expected programme outcomes, drawing on the assumptions and risks identified through the theory of change. As such, depending on context, areas highlighted could include managing partnerships differently, decentralizing programme management, adjusting the choice of HACT arrangement, diversifying resource mobilization efforts, making structural changes, social and environmental impact assessment and management, grievance mechanisms and dispute resolution, and other relevant actions.

Suggested content:

- (a) Include reference to HACT and direct project costing where relevant. Suggested language: “Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), with be used in a coordinated fashion with other UN agencies to manage financial risks. As per Executive Board decision DP/2-013/32 cost definitions and classifications for programme and development effectiveness will be charged to the concerned projects.”
- (b) How will local, national and international partners participate to ensure mutual accountability? How did national partners participate in the design of the new programme?
- (c) What are the major programmatic risks which may impact on achievement of programme priorities? Are there any risks that the programme itself may cause to vulnerable populations and the environment? Do not list risks but include a short analysis of the most significant risks, including those central to the theory of change, and how programme/project design and management will ensure these risks are addressed adequately. Specifically highlight potential social and environmental risks

and impacts noting a commitment to apply UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards and Accountability Mechanism as tools to help manage these risks.

- (d) What early warning and risk management arrangements are in place to anticipate any significant change in circumstances (e.g., risk monitoring, grievance mechanism)? What contingencies have been built into the programme to ensure these issues can be addressed? How will this influence adjustment of strategy (e.g. modification of theory of change and programme activities, dispute resolution and selection of implementing modalities for the programme (e.g., DIM for advisory support, electoral projects, vertical funds; fast track procedures for rapid response)?
- (e) What steps will the Bureau take to ensure programme and project quality, effectiveness and efficiency is improved since the last cycle? How will risks be monitored to inform implementation?
- (f) **Standard clauses to be written into the RPD verbatim:**
 - “This regional programme document outlines UNDP’s contributions to regional results and serves as the primary unit of accountability to the Executive Board for results alignment and resources assigned to the programme. Accountabilities of managers at the country, regional and headquarter levels with respect to regional programmes is prescribed in the organization’s [Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures](#) and the [Internal Control Framework](#).”
 - “In accordance with Executive Board decision DP/2-013/32, all direct costs associated with project implementation should be charged to the concerned projects.”

IV. Monitoring and Evaluation

This section outlines the approach to monitoring and evaluation of programme implementation, with a strong focus on **monitoring, data collection, analysis and reporting**.

The Evaluation Plan should be used to elaborate on aspects related to evaluations. This section will highlight the processes, tools and stakeholders that will support the development and operationalization of data collection and monitoring mechanisms for the programme, in line with the Results and Resources Framework. It should reflect how data and evidence will be systematically collected over the course of programme implementation to monitor results progress against agreed indicators. It should indicate how the evaluation function and other sources of information will be used, through on-going learning and adaptation, to strategically shape policy advice and advocacy, and programme design and implementation. As part of this effort, the section should include plans for a systematic, multi-year policy research and knowledge management agenda that can sustain UNDP’s advisory and programme management functions on an on-going basis, utilizing high quality, peer reviewed evidence.

In looking at data issues, this section also needs to highlight how UNDP will work with other UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral partners to strengthen M&E and, more broadly, statistical, systems so that *partner capacities* for analysis, reflection and learning with regard to monitoring sustainable development progress can be built-up over time.

The ideal mix of RPD outcome and output indicators should reflect the monitoring of SDG progress through a combination of the relevant *corporate* IRRF outcome indicators (data for which can usually be accessed from already available global data sources) and a select number of [region-specific and] SDG indicators, as relevant. This is to maximize linkages between the regional/global programme and corporate performance monitoring

frameworks, and to rationalize the overall number of outcome indicators. If IRRF outcome and output indicators are *not* included in the RPD RRF, adequate justification should be provided (e.g., lack of credible data, insufficient periodicity in the update of the data to be relevant to the planning period in question, etc.) When necessary, proxy [and/or region-specific] outcome indicators can be used in cases of weak data sources for IRRF indicators, until partner data sources are sufficiently strengthened.

Suggested content:

- (a) What globally available and/or regionally or nationally-owned sources of data, analysis and evidence will be used to track UNDP contributions to regional results?
- (b) If there are issues with globally available or regional or national data (availability, quality, periodicity of update, reliability, disaggregation by sex), how will this be addressed? (including through partner capacity development for monitoring, assurance and evaluation)
- (c) What traditional and innovative methods will be used to make monitoring and assurance more inclusive, and to obtain data at useful intervals? Who will participate in generating and reviewing data, and subsequent decision making?
- (d) Please indicate that the UNDP Gender Marker will be used to monitor regional programme expenditures and improve planning and decision-making.
- (e) How will the cost of data collection, monitoring and assurance be met?
- (f) What would be the most relevant multi-year policy research and knowledge management agenda during the RPD cycle? How will such an agenda engage with national, regional and international academic institutions, research bodies, think tanks and, indeed, other development partners in advancing cutting-edge research? What would be the role of South-South and Triangular cooperation in advancing UNDP's thought leadership?

Guidance:

The number of RPD outcomes should not exceed five (5.) These outcomes **do not need** to be copied verbatim from the Strategic Plan, but they **must be clearly linked to Strategic Plan outcomes.**

If the gender dimension is not visible at the level of outcomes, it should be explicit at the output level: includes specific gender equality outputs, indicators and targets. Ensure that indicators and targets are gender sensitive and/or have data disaggregated by sex. Include provision to ensure adequate human and financial resources to monitor and report on gender-related progress towards results. The RPD should include sufficient budget allocation inputs to effectively implement actions and achieve results related to gender equality and women's empowerment, and ensure adequate human and financial resources to monitor and report on gender-related progress towards results **(remember that the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy requires that at least 15% of UNDP's budget should be invested on gender specific interventions.)**

ANNEX A: RESULTS AND RESOURCES FRAMEWORK *(to be an integral and translated part of the RPD that is translated and submitted to the Executive Board)*

Related SDG: <i>(Related to SDGs that are most relevant to the outcome)</i>				
REGIONAL/GLOBAL PROGRAMME OUTCOME #1: <i>(Does not need to be verbatim with the UNDP Strategic Plan, but must be closely connected to a SP Outcome)</i>				
RELATED STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME: (from strategic plan 2022-2025, if known)				
OUTCOME INDICATOR(S), BASELINES, TARGET(S)	DATA SOURCE AND FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES	INDICATIVE REGIONAL/GLOBAL PROGRAMME OUTPUTS <i>(including indicators, baselines targets)</i>	MAJOR PARTNERS / PARTNERSHIPS FRAMEWORKS	INDICATIVE RESOURCES BY OUTCOME (US\$)
<p><i>Indicator: Regional programmes will adopt outcome indicators from the Strategic Plan/IRRF along with selected relevant programme-specific indicators unless justified otherwise. In cases of weak data sources for IRRF outcome indicators, bureaus may adopt proxy outcome indicators until partner data sources are sufficiently strengthened.</i></p> <p><i>Baseline:</i></p> <p><i>Target:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i><u>All indicators, baselines and targets should be disaggregated by sex and other targeted groups, when relevant.</u></i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cite sources of data for each indicator that will generate evidence base for measuring outcome-level change.</i> <i>If data and/or disaggregated data is unavailable at the time of programme formulation, this should be noted here and a brief explanation of when, how and which partner will devise the baseline.</i> 	<p><i>Output 1.1: Outline indicative UNDP outputs that support achievement of the outcome, along with indicative output indicators to measure progress in delivering them. To be finalized with partners during preparation of operational documents.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Indicative Indicator 1.1: Baseline: Target: Data source, frequency</i> <p><i>Special emphasis should be paid to including gender-explicit indicators, as well as sex-disaggregated indicators, targets and baselines</i></p>	<p><i>Identification of key government, UN, civil society, private sector, donor and other development partners and /partnership frameworks involved in programming in this sector or area and with whom UNDP will collaborate to achieve the results.</i></p>	Regular
				Other
<p><i>[...] Repeat as necessary – ensuring no more than FIVE outcomes are included.</i></p>				Regular
				Other

ANNEX B. FULLY-COSTED EVALUATION PLAN *(for submission to the Executive Board as an annex to the RPD but not translated)*

UNDAF (or equivalent) Outcome	UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome	Evaluation Title	Partners (joint evaluation)	Evaluation commissioned by (if not UNDP)	Type of evaluation	Planned Evaluation Completion Date	Estimated Cost	Provisional Source of Funding
Copied verbatim from the RPD	Cite relevant Strategic Plan outcome	E.g. Mid-term outcome evaluation: Energy and Environment Portfolio	List all partners. E.g. UN organizations; government partners, such as national ministry; donor; etc.	E.g. Ministry of Environment; GEF	E.g. RPD, outcome, thematic, programme / project, GEF, etc. Note: Evaluative exercises may vary in size and scope but they should all help produce intelligence outcome-level performance. All evaluations should meet UNEG gender standards.	E.g. June 2024 Note: Timing and nature of evaluation to be determined by performance and learning needs based on testing of theory of change that underpins strategy towards each outcome	Consider the following expenses: Evaluators and external advisers, and expenses related to their duties; expert advisory panel members (if any); travel; stakeholders consultations; data collection, and analysis tools and methods; supplies (office, computer, software, etc.); communication costs; publication and dissemination	E.g. project budget; donor; M&E budget; etc.

ATTACHMENT III. ONE PAGE DIAGRAM OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE FOR THE PROGRAMME
(See ToC guidance for more information)