

ANNEX 4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is conducting an evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021, adopted by the UNDP Executive Board in 2017. The IEO conducts Strategic Plan evaluations (SPE) every (4) years, towards the end of each program cycle.²¹ The SPE constitutes the key assessment of UNDPs overall vision, set against its strategic and institutional goals. This is the 3rd in the series of SPEs and will provide an overall assessment of the current UNDP strategy, drawing on a rich evidence base of independent thematic and country level evaluations carried out by the IEO. The evaluation is summative, to the extent that it considers the work of the organisation under the current strategic plan since 2018, and formative, in the expectation that its conclusions and recommendations will be of use in the development of the next UNDP strategic plan 2022 – 2025. The evaluation will be presented to the UNDP Executive Board at its annual session in June 2021, in sequence with the presentation by UNDP management of a draft new strategic plan.

This evaluation covers the first strategic plan of UNDP following adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. The current strategic plan sets out a vision for the evolution of UNDP, responding to a changing development landscape and the evolving needs of partners to implement the SDGs. It has been developed and is being carried out in the midst of the Secretary General’s reform for the repositioning of the UN development system²², which included the delinking of the resident coordinator function from UNDP. These events are of pivotal importance for UNDP’s mandates and positioning in a changing global development landscape.

In this regard, the evaluation will focus on the vision set out in this Strategic Plan, and the extent to which UNDP programming at global and country levels is changing in response to the priorities set out in the Plan. The evaluation seeks to determine whether the changes introduced to operationalize the strategic plan are helping improve UNDP’s way of delivering and accelerating results towards the fulfilment of the SDGs.

Context: The Strategic Plan 2018-2021

This section briefly explains the vision of the Strategic Plan for the evolution of UNDP as an integrated offer to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

The overarching vision of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 at the impact level committed to *“help countries to achieve sustainable development by eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions and accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development and building resilience to crises and shocks.”*²³

²¹ The previous UNDP IEO evaluation of the UNDP strategic plan 2014-2017, and accompanying management response, can be accessed through the following link: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7850>

²² General Assembly resolution on repositioning of the UN development system, adopted in May 2018 in the context of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (A/res/72/279).

²³ DP/2017/38. UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021.SP vision.

More concretely, the Strategic Plan aimed to describe how UNDP would support programme countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and fulfil commitments under related agreements²⁴ and international legal and normative frameworks, framed around the following programmatic offering:

Three broad **development settings**²⁵ :

- **1: Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions** through multisectoral, integrated solutions for the provision of adequate employment and incomes for men and women, addressing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment and providing basic social protection and effective services and infrastructure, particularly for people with disabilities. Also, by establishing and maintaining inclusive, responsive and accountable governance at national and local levels.
- **2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development** by addressing inequalities and exclusion, transitioning to zero-carbon development and building more effective governance systems that respond to megatrends such as globalization, urbanization and technological and demographic changes. Inclusive and accountable governance being a key driver of structural transformation; with reducing gender inequality and empowering women and girls also serving as important means to accelerate sustainable development.
- **3: Build resilience to shocks and crises** by supporting Government efforts to return to sustainable development pathways, while increasing their abilities to proactively manage risk and strengthen resilience to future crisis; building on the foundations of inclusive and accountable governance, together with a strong focus on gender equality and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups.

The offer is elaborated in **six signature solutions**, with an assumption that UNDP works with others in the United Nations (UN) system, including specialized agencies, to help member states achieve the SDGs. In particular, UNDP is expected to work closely with the other New York based agencies on common results, as elaborated in the **Common Chapter** of the Strategic Plans of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women.²⁶

Six **signature solutions** are defined as UNDP core areas of work across the three development settings:


- 1: Keeping people out of poverty.
- 2: Strengthen effective, inclusive and accountable governance.
- 3: Enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies.
- 4: Promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet.
- 5: Close the energy gap.
- 6: Strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Each signature solution is intended to be applicable across the contexts of the three development settings, with differentiated approaches for each. The signatures are supposed to demonstrate how the core competencies of UNDP will be reoriented in line with the Strategic Plan's new vision and approach. Each

²⁴ Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; Paris Agreement; Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; New Urban Agenda; Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

²⁵ These are called outcomes in the IRRF and theory of change presented by the organization, even though they are worded as actions.

²⁶ DP/2017/38, UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, p.3, Common chapter to the Strategic Plans of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women.



signature solution is built on a theory of change with a mix of interventions designed to achieve progress towards key Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

To deliver against this set of outcomes and signature solutions, the Strategic plan introduced a new set of delivery mechanisms through the establishment of **the global development advisory and implementation services platform and the country-level support platform**, both aimed to combine systems, services, knowledge and skills to change how UNDP organizes and deploys its assets and capabilities to achieve greater integration and improve efficiency and development effectiveness.


The global development advisory and implementation services platform aims to provide high-quality technical and policy advisory support to country platforms and UNDP country programmes; and to support UNDP global knowledge, innovation and partnership-building efforts within the UNDS, as well as with IFIs and a wide range of other partners. The global platform is expected to bring together the existing policy and technical advisory expertise in UNDP to develop and apply signature solutions across the three development contexts, working through the country support platforms and broader UNDP country operations. This pool of expertise was to be stationed globally, regionally and at country level using business models that could ensure efficient, scalable and cost-effective delivery of services for different country contexts. A core responsibility of the global platform is to facilitate UNDP efforts to capture, disseminate and help implement these solutions through South-South and triangular cooperation approaches. The global platform is also intended to drive innovation. The global platform is designed to be supported by the operational infrastructure of UNDP with capacities in human resources management, finance, procurement, information and communication technology, legal affairs, security and administration.

The country support platforms are intended to help craft country- and context-specific solutions to a range of challenges, addressing critical bottlenecks and accelerators, supporting governments to strengthen the alignment of national development plans, budgets and implementation systems with the Sustainable Development Goals and creating effective mechanisms for multi-stakeholder, "whole-of-society" approaches to the Goals. They are offered by UNDP as additional technical capacity at the country level to address complex, multisectoral development challenges that require integrated responses across multiple agencies. The country platform approach is intended to build on prototypes and early stage pilots in operation in some parts of the world, including solutions UNDP built for the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations Development Group Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support ("MAPS") initiative.

The strategic plan defined two interconnected streams of work to improve the **UNDP business model**²⁷ as well as evolve and innovate future business models for UNDP, with the improvement expected to adapt underlying ways of working and build capacities required to provide an integrated service offer.

The **performance stream** is focused on improving (a) project delivery and cost recovery; (b) cost effectiveness and efficiency; and (c) operational service arrangements supporting the wider UN system. The **innovation stream** is focused on exploring new ways of doing business through idea generation at country and regional levels, business case development, testing, iterative improvement and scaling up or down when feasible. **Innovation labs** are the mechanism through which ideas are expected to surface and develop, with different country offices or units taking the lead based on their expertise, and country

²⁷ UNDP defines its business model as the combination of systems, processes, instruments, partnerships and financing that effectively and efficiently support the delivery of programmes and projects.



context. Innovation is expected to permeate all areas of the organization, leading to process efficiencies and improved institutional performance.

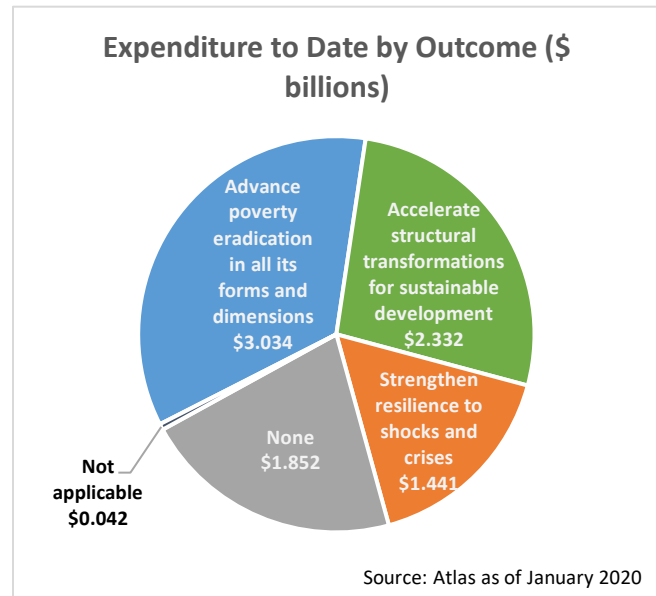
These platforms and work streams were envisaged as **institutional enablers** helping UNDP deliver on its programmatic offering in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and in the context of a reformed United Nations Development System. To reflect this, the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) of the strategic plan framed these expectations under 3 outcomes reflecting UNDP organisational performance:

- **Accelerated delivery of top-quality programmatic results for the SDGs** through evidence-based performance analysis and decision making at all level; developing cross-cutting approaches that are fully integrated into UNDP programmes and projects; and high-quality audits and evaluations producing implementable solutions. UNDP is expected to coordinate with governments to expand South-south cooperation, and further engage with civil society, the private sector and International Financial Institutions, to promote “whole of government” and “whole of society” approaches, in response to complex development issues.
- **Organizational efficiency and effectiveness for programme delivery** with UNDP being recognized as a development partner of choice; for developing cost sharing agreements and projects ensuring full cost recovery; for quality and efficient management services to support programme delivery; for efficient professional and transparent procurement and value for money; and UNDP equipped with a talented and diverse workforce.
- **Organizational service arrangements for UN System-wide results, coordination and coherence** with UNDP acting as a backbone for the Resident Coordinator System and servicing UN system agencies, including through the development of common UN approaches facilitating efficient and accelerated joint delivery against sustainable development objectives to integrate SDG delivery through country and global support platforms for integrated solutions.
- A **Common Chapter**²⁸ was included to the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women reflecting on the commitment of the four agencies to work better together, with a view to achieving greater coherence in results and committing to the reform agenda laid forward by the General Assembly through the QCPR resolution 71/243 in 2016. This common chapter to the strategic plans of the four agencies defines expectations both in terms of programmatic areas to be collectively pursued and to strengthen the way they work together to achieve greater synergies and efficiencies.

²⁸ DP/2017/38, UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, p.3, Common chapter to the Strategic Plans of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women.

The **Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF)** translates the Strategic Plan into a set of development and organizational results that show how UNDP will use resources entrusted to it by Member States and others to deliver on its mandate and vision. The Strategic Plan indicates that a total of USD 2.8 bi of regular resources and USD 20 bi of other resources were estimated to implement the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021.

According to data in ATLAS in early 2020, the organization had a budget of about 13 billion for the first two years of the Strategic Plan and executed by the end of 2019 nearly 9 billion dollars.



Since 2018, United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform has taken centre stage by repositioning UN development assistance to member states, within the context of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Review of Operational Activities for Development (QCPR), and in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda²⁹. The repositioning effort is changing the way UN country teams operate. Most notably for UNDP, the repositioning includes the establishment of a revised Resident Coordination Function under the direct oversight of the UN Deputy Secretary General. UNDP is no longer responsible for the RC system, and the transition has led to the recruitment of a new generation of UNDP Resident Representatives, along with a realignment of staff capacities in country offices. Financing the new UN RC configuration includes a doubling of the UNDP cost-sharing contribution to the UN system, from US\$5.14m in 2018 to US\$10.3m in 2019. The renewal of UNDP management at country level, the servicing of new coordination and consultation mechanisms, and higher transaction costs related to the repositioning have placed significant pressure on UNDP’s business continuity and delivery capacities during the first 2 years of the strategic plan 2018-2021 and these pressures are expected to continue for its whole duration³⁰.

Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The *purpose* of the evaluation is to strengthen UNDP’s accountability to global and national development partners, including the Executive Board; to support the development of the next strategic plan 2022-2025; and to support organizational learning. The primary users of the evaluation are the UNDP staff at all levels and the UNDP Executive Board. The evaluation will be presented to the Executive Board at its annual session in June 2021.

The following are the key *objectives* of the evaluation:

²⁹ On 31 May 2018, Member States adopted Resolution 72/279

³⁰ Update on the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 72/279 on Repositioning of the UN Development System Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS – Second Regular Session 2019

- To assess UNDP performance in delivering on its strategic plan goals, while identifying contextual, strategic and operational factors that are positively and/or negatively affecting results.
- To formulate recommendations for UNDP consideration in the next strategic plan 2022-2025.

Scope and Key Evaluation Questions

The scope of the evaluation covers the period 2018 to mid- 2020. The scope encompasses the overarching vision of the Strategic Plan as well as the organisational performance under it. Vision and performance are considered in light of the changing context for UNDP, including adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, and the Secretary General’s reform of the United Nations Development System. The evaluation will consider how the Strategic Plan has been operationalised, the effectiveness of key institutional enablers established, and progress on against planned outcomes. The evaluation will assess whether the current Strategic Plan:

- Offers a **coherent vision, purpose and sense of mission** for the organization;
- Is recognised across the organisation as a **guide for action** helping countries meet their development needs, especially pertaining to the SDGs, and taking into account stakeholder expectations for services from UNDP;
- Is **contributing to improved development results** within the three broad development settings stipulated in the Strategic Plan.

The scope of the evaluation rests on assumptions, set out in the UNDP Strategic Plan Theory of Change, that there is an **operational environment** for the Strategic Plan to positively impact change on the ground. Accordingly, the evaluation will assess:

- How changes in the **external environment** have affected programme results, especially the introduction of Agenda 2030 and UNDS repositioning,
- Whether changes to the **internal environment** are undergirded by effective structures, reforms, systems and business models, making UNDP more **fit for purpose**, and helping accelerate **results** towards fulfilment of the SDGs;

It is recognized that some initiatives and mechanisms launched by UNDP during this strategic plan period are at an early stage of development, and more time will be required to demonstrate change and results. Consideration of achievements under the current Strategic Plan through its three broad development settings will be framed acknowledging the limited timeframe for results. When assessing performance, the evaluation will take as an input the results of the Mid-term review of the strategic plan by UNDP management, which is scheduled to be presented to the Executive Board at its annual session in June 2020.

The Common Chapter of the Strategic Plan that pertains to UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women is the subject of a separate joint evaluation requested by the Executive boards of the four agencies that will be presented at the same annual session 2021. The present evaluation will consider common chapter aspects of the Strategic Plan based on the results of the parallel joint evaluation.

Box 1. Key Evaluation Questions

Overarching questions: *To what extent has UNDP reframed its service offering under the Strategic Plan; and is it becoming a more nimble, innovative and effective organisation, better able to help member states achieve the 2030 agenda?*

1. Does the SP offer a coherent vision, purpose and sense of mission that is helping guide the organization to better support member state development in the current global context?

- How has UNDP clarified its role as an integrator, promoting “whole of government” and “whole of society” responses?
- To what extent has UNDP, through this Strategic Plan, set the stage for a more nimble and innovative organisation, able to respond quickly and effectively to evolving development challenges?
- How is UNDP under this Strategic Plan continuing to emphasise its long-standing objective to support the poorest of the poor and most marginalized members of society, under the principles of leaving no one behind?

2. Is UNDP effectively supporting SDG fulfilment through the Strategic Plan?

- What is the current scope of UNDP SDG support to member states? How is it helping member states as SDG ‘integrator’?
- To what extent has UNDP effectively supported countries to translate the SDGs into national and sub-national plans and budgets, raising public awareness and establishing practices for monitoring and reporting; identifying country-specific actions that will boost progress across several SDGs; and providing policy support?
- How and to what extent have old and new UNDP initiatives introduced during the period of the strategic plan (VNR, MAPS, SDG acceleration, global and country support platforms and others) supported the development of whole of government and whole of society approaches to respond to the SDG?
- What are the key lessons learned from UNDP SDG support that should be addressed in the new SP?

3. To what extent was UNDP able to adapt its business models to respond to the vision of the strategic plan 2018-2021 and to respond to the internal and external changes in context?

- How and to what extent was UNDP able to adapt its operational and programmatic capacity to deliver and accelerate results towards the fulfilment of the SDGs across the broad spectrum of countries where UNDP operates, taking into account stakeholder expectations for services from UNDP? What is working where and why to make UNDP more *fit for purpose*? What is not working where and why?
- How and to what extent has UNDP been able to adapt its business models in response to the reforms of the repositioning of the United Nations Development System? To what extent has the repositioning of the UNDS affected UNDP’s role of operational backbone to the UN and its partners?
- Were there any missed opportunities in the changes of the external environment which the SP could have taken into account during its design and/or implementation?



Evaluation Methodology

This section presents the methodologies to be used for the evaluation, including data collection and analysis methods. The chosen methods take into account the context and complexity of UNDP development support in over 160 countries; and the interconnected nature of the various initiatives launched through the strategic plan.

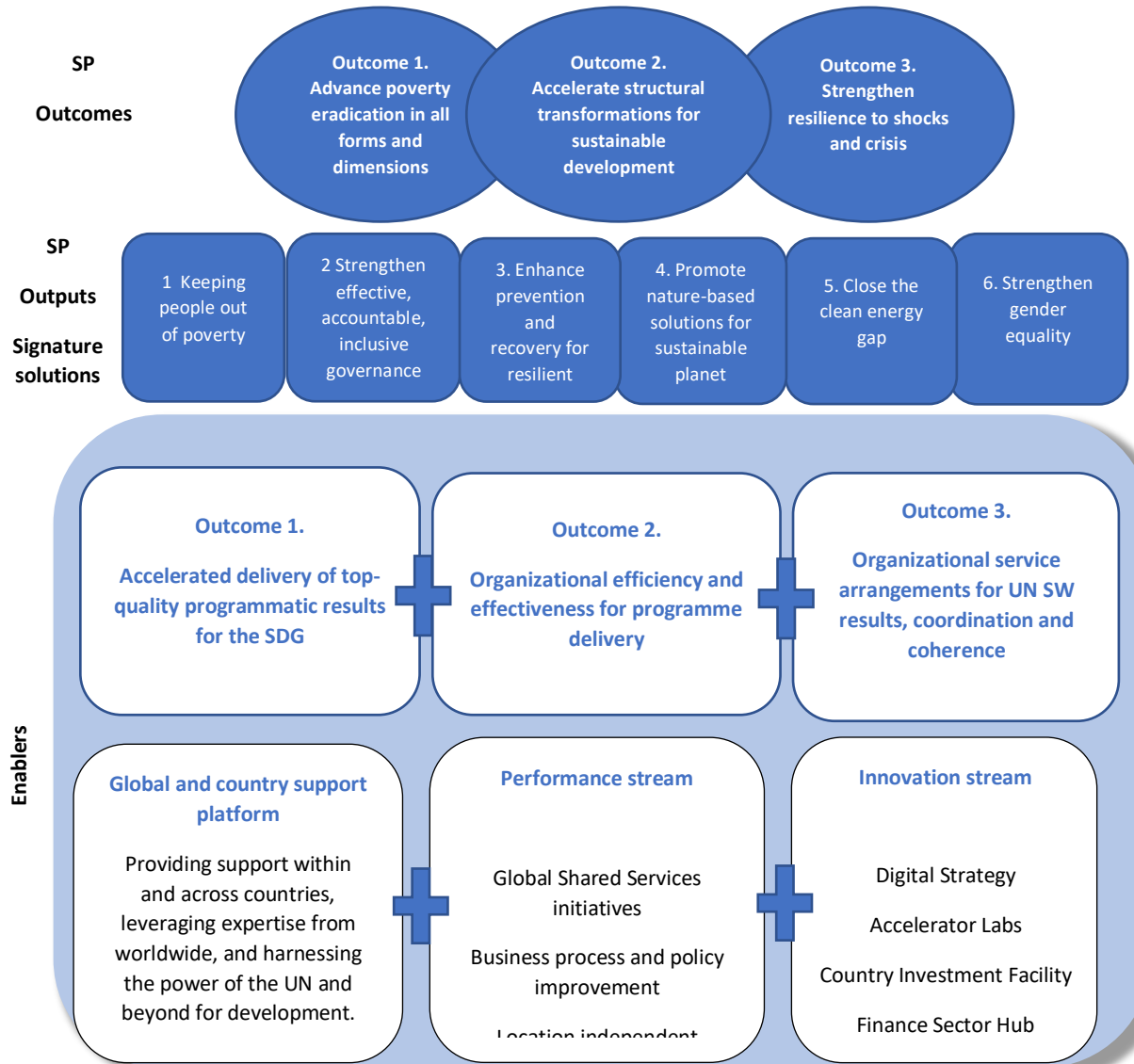
The evaluation will follow a systems approach that is theory- driven,³¹ and based on the abridged Theory of Change below, which was included when the Strategic Plan launched. Drawing from the ‘realist’ methodological approach, the evaluation will assess whether the different interacting and interdependent enablers effectively connect and integrate through a web of relationships to deliver on the vision of the Strategic Plan.³²

³¹ Theory-based evaluations are usually based on a theory of change that seeks to explain causality and changes, including underlying assumptions.

³² What is shown as “outputs” and “outcomes” in the TOC are in fact “actions” a deficiency in the design of the SP, but for the evaluation the verbs will be adjusted and considered as outputs and outcomes.

Bridged Theory of change of the Strategic plan 2018-2021

To help countries to achieve sustainable development by eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development and building resilience to crises and shocks Support Sustainable Development and progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda



Key Assumptions / potential accelerators :

1. SP offers clear guide for action framing the integrator and operational bacl roles of UNDP
2. Integrated solutions enable/accelerate SDG fulfillment
3. GEWE accelerates SDGs
4. Country platforms help countries design and deliver integrated solutic complex development problems
5. GPN organizes and deploys assets and capabilities for integration and imp efficiency and effectiveness
6. Renewed business model improve cost-efficiency and effectiveness
7. Changing culture enable responsible risk taking and decision making to innovation
8. Improved capabilities and empowerment to meet the SDGs

Key risks / potential inhibitors :

1. Shocks and crisis threatening sustainability
2. Hostility to multilateralism
3. Insufficient human & financial resources/ model
4. Fragmentation of development actors with UN agencies working in silos
5. Cultural and religious value system influencing political agendas that affect gender, environment and funding
6. Risk avert organization culture
7. Repositioning of the UNDS

a. Evaluation Methods

The evaluation will use both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis and take an iterative systems and complexity thinking and theory-based approach to gather multiple perspectives to address the objectives of the evaluation with a realist³³ lens, considering the internal and external contexts, mechanisms and outcomes. The mixed methods of data gathering will be matched with appropriate analytical approaches, including artificial intelligence³⁴, to test the assumptions, accelerators and inhibitors of the TOC to answer the key evaluation questions. Primary and secondary evidence collected will be triangulated to ensure accuracy, consistency and the necessary analytic depth to produce credible findings.

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 as the new virus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. As of March 2020, strict travel restrictions and confinement measures are being implemented in all affected regions; and thus, limiting the ability of the evaluation team members to plan for in-country missions and for face to face interview meetings. While these extraordinary circumstances present a critical limitation for the conduct of the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, the evaluation will seek to rely extensively on secondary evidence available through existing evaluations, internal assessments, and it will conduct remote interviews and engagements with stakeholders.

Depending on the evolution of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation may be complemented with specific in country case studies, and in-person data collection activities in regional hubs and global services centres of UNDP in the second half of 2020, as was initially planned during the design of this evaluation.

In this regard, the evaluation will conduct desk review of existing evaluative evidence from a select number of IEO thematic and Country Programme evaluations (ICPEs), OAI audits and corporate surveys that were conducted in 2017 – 2019, having in mind that some of the programmes may have started prior to the period of the strategic plan. The assessment will consider the extent to which the programmes were realigned to the SP, the SDGs and the UNDS repositioning.

In addition, the desk review will consider UNDP's self-reporting data from the Results Oriented Annual Reports (ROARs), the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF), portfolio analysis platform and financial information from the ATLAS enterprise resource planning system (UNDP's financial management system), as well as the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, and other corporate level documentation available. Data from self-assessments will be validated against IEO evaluations and web scrapping of the intranet content.

Preliminary results and trends emerging from the desk review will be validated and complemented with additional primary data collection mostly through remote semi-structured interviews with senior management of the organization, Regional Bureaus, Country Offices, partners, leading experts, thought

³³ Pawson and Tiley (1997) realist evaluation approach seeks to identify what works, for whom, in what respects, to what extent, in what contexts and how with focus on the mechanisms, contexts and outcomes and their relationships.

³⁴ The evaluation used supervised and unsupervised ML analyzing trends by applying NLP techniques such as sentiment analysis in evaluations. A tool for data labeling was developed to extract and label findings, conclusions, and recommendations from ICPEs and thematic evaluation.

leaders, donors and members of the Executive Board³⁵. To complement these and develop additional insights, the evaluation will seek to leverage UNDP's Global Devhub Platform to run targeted online consultations, dialogues and workshops with internal and external stakeholders and will seek additional opportunities to administer online surveys, to close any eventual gaps of triangulation and to add depth to the understanding of the factors influencing success and failure. Following a similar approach and data collection tools, the evaluation will conduct desk-based country case studies to generate more in-depth insight, which may include a self-assessment process through questionnaires followed by validation through documentary evidence and remote interviews.

The analysis and synthesis of data will also seek opportunities to make use of machine learning as feasible building on the collated results from the Results Oriented Annual Reports conducted by BPPS and additional supervise machine learning of select evaluations conducted by IEO.

Proposed methods and sources for the evaluation		
Method	Sources	Coverage
Desk studies	Statistical analysis of factors influencing results and meta synthesis of thematic evaluations and Independent Country Programme Evaluations undertaken between 2018-2020 and select audits conducted by OAI	SP 2014-2017 evaluation Joint Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness Poverty reduction in LDCs, MIC Inter-Agency Operational Services Inter-Agency Pooled Financing Common Chapter evaluability Conflict Prevention and Recovery 3RP DRR & CCA Synthesis of country programme evaluations Select audit reports form OAI
Meta Synthesis of IEO ICPES		ICPE Africa- Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Cote d' Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe Arab States- Bahrain, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Yemen Asia and Pacific- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Iraq, Indonesia, Maldives, Malaysia, Seychelles, Timor-Leste Europe and CIS- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Turkey,

³⁵ AI may also be applied to interview data and triangulated against trends of available surveys.

		Kazakhstan, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan Latin America and Caribbean- Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela
Online consultations via Global Dev Hub	Internal and external stakeholders	Communities of practices and online discussion rooms will be established and moderated by the evaluation team to consult stakeholders.
Surveys and trend analysis		Trend analysis of GSS, Partnership Surveys, Operational Services + (new surveys to close gaps of triangulation)
Semi-structure Interviews and focus groups workshops remotely conducted		With senior managers, donors, development experts, EB committee

b. Evaluation Phases

The evaluation will be divided into four main phases:

Phase 1: Preparatory scoping and inception (December 2019 – February 2020)

Internal consultations: This *phase* will include consultations with the Executive office and Bureaus at Headquarters to further map issues to be assessed and to identify relevant documents, literature and stakeholders to consult. During inception, the TOC will be further detailed and tools for data collection and analysis developed.

Phase 2: Desk Review (February – May 2020)

- **Desk Review** will include a financial flow and programmatic trajectory/trend analysis and the tagging/labelling of data for supervised machine learning and meta-synthesis of a wide range of UNDP’s evaluations and audits to help answer the key evaluation questions. The meta-synthesis will include all country programme evaluations conducted by IEO from 2018 onwards³⁶, and IEO corporate/thematic evaluations to collect information on the Key Evaluation Questions, placed within an analytical framework based on the theory of change. Desk Review will also attempt to further detail the Theory of Change and assumptions to be tested, which will inform the evaluation’s analysis. This review will provide an assessment of the potential range and quality of the secondary data available for use by the evaluation, including an identification of key gaps to be addressed with additional data collection. It will also help to determine the extent and coverage of evaluative evidence available for the design of the country case studies.

³⁶ The assessment will have to keep in mind that all CPDs will have been approved before the current SP and may not have had time to fully align.

- **Meta-analysis of existing surveys for trend analysis** will be conducted of the Global Staff Surveys and the partnership surveys. Part of the operational services/Pooled financing Evaluations surveys will be compared with other surveys conducted by the organization to assess services provided to UN agencies.
- **Review of MTR findings:** The evaluation team will analyse and take into account UNDP's mid-term review of the strategic plan, to be presented to the Executive Board in June 2020. This management-led analysis is expected to provide crucial background data, including interim IRRF results, ROAR analysis and partnership survey results.

Phase 3: Field Data Collection (June– September 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have a significant impact on data collection methods. The evaluation team is preparing for limited primary data collection and will focus on virtual consultations through the UNDP Global Dev Hub, surveys, and remote interviews

Travel permitting, limited case studies will be conducted in alignment with the ICPEs conducted between June and September of 2020 to provide in-depth insights on the uptake of the Strategic plan on the ground. Additional field visits to regional and global hubs may be conducted for validation of preliminary findings, if possible. Other data collection instruments will be considered at this stage to enhance the availability of evidence such as web-based surveys and cyber metric analysis, if needed.

Phase 4: Analysis, Synthesis and Quality assurance (October 2020 – February 2021)

- **Analysis** of the triangulated evidence will be organized into key findings using a systems approach to report on the key evaluation questions and also referencing the value added of the current SP in comparison with the previous SP; and to what extent the recommendations of the previous SPE have been implemented.
- **Synthesis of the analysis** will feed conclusions in response to the evaluation questions and forward-looking recommendations.
- **Quality assurance** of the report will be conducted in line with IEO charter. The draft report will be first peer reviewed by IEO senior evaluators and in sequence quality assured by an external advisory panel that will be formed - comprised of senior thematic area experts and evaluators.
- **Factual corrections** will be provided by UNDP management in review of a semi-final draft report before a final draft is submitted to the Executive Board in June 2021, accompanied by a management response from UNDP.

Evaluation Timeframe

The evaluation will be presented to the second regular session in June 2021 and prior to that at an informal Executive Board session in late May 2021. This requires report completion (following all review processes) by end-February 2021, to comply with Executive Board secretariat deadlines and allowing ample time for UNDP preparation of its management response. A draft report will be shared with UNDP Management and programme units in December 2020.

Evaluation process, timeframe with key milestones		
Evaluation Process	Month	Milestone
Design/ Team Composition	January -February 2020	TOR review, Team recruited
Data collection and analysis	March- May 2020	Desk review, machine learning qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis
	June- September 2020	Stakeholder and partner interviews, case studies, (travel permitting) country field visits from June onwards.
Synthesis and report writing	September– October 2020	Draft report with findings, conclusions and recommendations
Quality assurance	12 November 2020	Zero Draft submitted for internal and external advisory panel review
Management Review, Report adjustments / management response	11 December 2020	1st draft submitted for UNDP management review
	11 January 2021	Comments from management incorporated
	26 February 2021	Final draft report, EB paper and management response submitted for editing
Final submission to EB website	May 2021	Final report and management response uploaded on EB website
EB presentation	June 2021	Report presented at the EB session in June 2021



Evaluation Management Arrangements

The IEO will conduct and manage the evaluation, including establishing a quality assurance system. It will coordinate and liaise with UNDP management and programme units, relevant agencies at headquarters and regional institutions. The evaluation team will provide status updates after each phase of the evaluation, to feed the development of the draft strategic plan. IEO will ensure the evaluation is conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System, as approved by the members of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

UNDP Management at headquarters, regional hubs and country offices are expected to help facilitate full access to data and stakeholders. A substantive focal point at headquarters should be identified to help coordinate information requests from the team, ensuring timely delivery of finance and programme information, to facilitate the review of draft deliverables, and to facilitate meetings with the UNDP staff, partners and programme stakeholders. UNDP management at regional hub and country office levels shall assign person(s) to facilitate and coordinate the itinerary and related logistics of evaluation team in-country missions. As approved in IEO's charter, support to evaluations conducted by IEO is an organizational responsibility and accordingly staff time used to support evaluations is not eligible for reimbursement. In accordance to the Evaluation Policy UNDP management has the responsibility of reviewing drafts of the Terms of Reference (TOR) and evaluation reports, in addition to ensuring timely availability of the management response to all evaluation recommendations. The management response to this evaluation is expected to be taken up in the next UNDP strategic plan, a draft of which is planned to be presented to the Executive Board at the same 2021 Annual Session where this evaluation is to be presented.

An external advisory will be formed – comprised of senior thematic area experts and evaluators that will review and comment on the overall design of the evaluation as set out in the TOR and provide a substantive review of the draft evaluation report.