**North Macedonia United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025**

**Governance mechanisms**

*Approved by UNCT on 5 November 2020*

The Republic of North Macedonia and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 is executed under the overall coordination of the **UN in North Macedonia** – represented by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) – and the **Government of North Macedonia** – represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Individual UN entities work in coordination with their respective government counterparts. To ensure coherence of SDCF implementation, coordination will take place at the following levels:

* 1. **between the UN System and the Government** to assess and report on progress, share information and coordinating where multiple UN entities work with the same Government stakeholders;
  2. between the **UN System and other development partners** that share common priorities;
  3. **internally within the UN System**

## Joint Government-UN Steering Committee

The Joint Government-UN Steering Committee (JSC) is the highest SDCF governing body that provides strategic direction and oversight, and monitors and reviews the overall performance and progress. The JSC is co-chaired by the UN RC, on behalf of the UN, and MFA, on behalf of the Government. The JSC is composed of ten members: UN RC and four other UNCT members that may be appointed on a rotational basis; and MFA and four other Government representatives that may also be appointed on a rotational basis.

Upon agreement of co-chairs, individual JSC meetings can include other key development partners, such as the IFIs, bilateral development partners and donors, representatives of the private sector, civil society, youth and other groups.

Detailed Terms of Reference can be reviewed in **Annex 1**

**UN Country Team**

UNCT is the main UN mechanism in country for inter-agency coordination and decision-making. It is led by the RC and composed of the representatives of UN entities carrying out strategic and operational activities for development in North Macedonia, irrespective of their physical presence in the country.[[1]](#footnote-2)

The entities represented in the UNCT have two interrelated sets of accountabilities as defined by the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) of the UN Development and RC System: to the RC for results as defined in the SDCF and/or other UNCT agreements; and to their respective entities on their mandates.

**Programme Management Teams**

Comprised of senior programme staff the Programme Management Team (PMT) is a newly established UN entity, that will serve as the internal quality assurance mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of the SDCF. The PMT will provide technical advice to the SDCF Results groups and advisory support to the UNCT. The PMT will also advise UNCT on opportunities and challenges in the evolving local and regional environment.

Terms of Reference for the PMT can be reviewed in **Annex 2**

**Outcomes results groups**

UNCT may decide to create further sub-groups (SDCF Outcome results groups) dedicated to individual SDCF results, monitoring, ensuring technical coordination, coherence, relevance and effectiveness of activities related to the achievement of outcomes; and to ensure synergies across outcomes. They may include participation by the Government, civil society and other stakeholders; and should, to the extent possible, coordinate with the existing national thematic coordination mechanisms.

SDCF Outcome results groups plan, record progress, challenges, opportunities and new learning; and provide feedback on SDCF implementation. By constant monitoring of SDCF results through its subsidiary bodies and sub-groups and upon their advice, UNCT recommends course corrections to the SDCF JWPs through the Joint Steering Committee.

Terms of reference can be reviewed in **Annex 3**

UNCT delivery of SDCF is also supported by:

* 1. **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Group**, responsible for planning of the monitoring of the SDCF, data collection and analysis.
  2. **UN Communications Group** (UNCG), responsible for communicating UN results and advocating for development change.
  3. **UN Operations Management Team** (OMT), composed of UN entities’ operations focal points, provides support and advice to the UNCT on common business operations and measures to improve efficiency in delivery on UN programmes and activities in the country by harmonizing business operations. Measures include, but are not limited to common back office services, as much as possible, to undertake common procurement, recruitment, logistics, ICT and other services.

UNCT may also assign the SDCF-related tasks to the already existing *thematic groups* for the purpose of mainstreaming cross-cutting and guiding principles across SDCF and individual outcome areas. These groups may discuss programmatic issues and make recommendations to UNCT.

* **Human rights and gender mainstreaming** (existing, would have slightly changed mandate in light of the changes in the outcomes)
* **Air pollution** (existing, expected to become more active)
* **Refugees and migration** (existing, active)

Operational support (all groups are existing already; they are functional and active):

* **M&E**
* **Communications**
* **Business operations (OMT)**

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**Figure 1: Visual presentation of the SDCF governance structure**

PMT

M&E

**Annex 1: Terms of Reference Joint Government-UN Steering Committee**

**Memberships**

The JSC is composed of ten members: UN RC and four other UNCT members that appointed on a rotational basis; and MFA and four other Government representatives also be appointed on a rotational basis. All UNCT members and interested relevant Ministers or designates can attend the meetings.

Upon agreement, individual JSC meetings can include other key development partners, such as the IFIs, bilateral development partners and donors, representatives of the private sector, civil society, youth and other groups.

**Co-lead:** Minister of Foreign Affairs & UN Resident Coordinator

**Purpose**

The Joint Government-UN Steering Committee (JSC) is the highest SDCF governing body that provides strategic direction and oversight, monitors and reviews the overall performance and progress, ensure its alignment to evolving country context, national, regional and international development processes, mechanisms and goals, and links with other processes (such as the National Voluntary Review and EU accession-driven development reforms). JSC supports resources mobilization for the Cooperation Framework as well as development financing opportunities.

**Key Tasks (as per the guidelines, to be localized)**

* Review and endorse the roadmap for the next Cooperation Framework cycle.
* Review and endorse the planned annual results by the UNCT considering the evolving country context.
* Review UNCT joint resources mobilization strategies and recommend and support opportunities for funding of the Cooperation Framework and leveraging financing for 2030 Agenda in the country.
* Direct the adjustments in the Cooperation Framework through a formal revision and/or through annual results planned for the following year, informed by the evolving country contexts and recommendations of the UNCT.
* Review UNCT mid-year progress, challenges, opportunities and recommend measures for strengthening continued UN relevance and effectiveness in support of national priorities.
* Facilitate resolution of any external challenges that the UN country team may face in executing the Cooperation Framework.
* Review and endorse the annual UN Country Results Report for publication and dissemination.
* Assumes the role of or appoint an Evaluation Steering Committee to perform the following duties:
  + Appoint an Evaluation Manager.
  + Establishes a multi-stake-holder consultative group to liaise with the Independent evaluators;
  + Approve the Terms of Reference for the Independent evaluation of the Cooperation Framework.
  + Commission and receive the inception, progress and final reports of the independent evaluation of the Cooperation Framework.
  + Develop and adopt a dispute resolution mechanism for the evaluation process.
  + Review and endorse the proposed management response and action plan for the independent evaluation of the Cooperation Framework.

**Frequency of Meeting:** Twice a year

**Annex 2: Terms of Reference Programme Management Team**

**Membership**: Most senior programme manager (Deputy Representative/Deputy Head of Office or Head of Programme or Programme Officer - 1 member per UN entity). Depending on the agenda, each entity can ensure additional targeted participation of technical staff.

**Co-lead:** Two UN entities at a time, revised annually. RCO provides secretariat support.

**Background and purpose:**

The Programme Management Team (PMT) serves as the internal quality assurance mechanism for the design, implementation and monitoring of Cooperation Framework. It provides technical advice and support to UNCT and results groups on programmatic opportunities and challenges, with an overall aim of ensuring programmatic coherence. It is a platform that contribute to ensuring efficient use of the coordination structures and increased coherence across outcomes, as well as closer integration of entities’ initiatives and collaboration on various themes that may benefit from joint programming and common/coherent approach.

PMT is accountable to UNCT. UN Outcome result groups, M&E group and the UN Thematic groups will address their appeals to PMT for coordination, coherence, technical and programmatic quality assurance and oversight.

**Key Tasks**

Under overall leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator and UNCT, PMT will perform the following tasks:

1. Provide **programmatic oversight, quality assurance, coordination and guidance on the SDCF design and implementation**with inputs from all SDCF Outcome Results Groups and Monitoring &Evaluation (M&E) Group, as needed. Specifically:
   1. Review *planning, monitoring and reporting timelines*, including for assessment, analysis, and capacity building requirements for effective implementation of the SDCF and recommend to UNCT for consideration and approval;
   2. *Coordinate joint UN analytical work* (e.g. CCA annual updates, thematic assessments or analysis); preparation of policy briefs or advisory papers on various political or programmatic topics;
   3. Review coherence among the outcome results groups, especially on issues that cut-across several outcomes and integration of the 6 UN principles;
   4. *Undertake regular horizon scanning and advise UNCT on opportunities and challenges* in the evolving local and regional environment; and advise the SDCF Outcome Results groups on programming opportunities or required adjustments in the relevant outcomes;
   5. Provide *guidance and oversight to the M&E group* in developing and implementing MEL framework and plans for effective monitoring and evaluation of the UNSDCF;
   6. Provide *support to the UNCT and guidance to result groups to ensure a coherent, inclusive, relevant and substantive UN programmatic approach* in support of national priorities and in consultation with the relevant national counterparts.
   7. *Coordinate the UNSDCF Joint Mid-year, yearly and Mid-Term reviews* with government and development partners and provide *quality assurance* of SDCF Outcome Results Groups progress and UNSDCF evaluation *reports* after they have been reviewed by the Monitoring &Evaluation Group, to be submitted and presented at UNCT meetings and subsequently to the Joint Steering Committee;
   8. Provide support to the UNCT in *preparing for the Joint Steering Committee Meeting*.
2. Provide support to the UNCT and guidance to the SDCF Outcome Groups and M&E group to facilitate a **system-wide approach to the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals** including on promoting a coherent engagement with government on SDG policy support and training and SDG country progress monitoring.
3. Coordinate, review and quality assure critical **programme documents and comprehensive strategic papers** that cut across pillars and ensure that the UN adopts, presents and communicates a holistic approach to programming (ex. development of the National Development Plan);
4. **Cross-agency programmatic coordination**
   1. Ensure improved cross-agency coordination and promotion and exploration of synergies among UN entities and Outcomes to achieve UNSDCF results;
   2. Aim to *minimize programmatic duplication* and maximize any complementarities between UN agencies
   3. Support the UNCT in developing *common responses/approaches* to the Government on programmatic matters affecting the UN system
5. Identify and pursue opportunities for **joint initiatives, including potential joint programmes**; Create a platform through which additional opportunities for joint programming can be identified, guidance provided on joint implementation, and solutions optimized
6. Undertake regular **financial landscape analysis and stakeholders/partnerships analysis** for SDCF funding and financing for SDG achievement in North Macedonia
7. Provide **internal knowledge management advice** to UNCT (including results groups) on programming issues of common interest such as:
   * 1. progress towards SDGs coordination and implementation;
     2. partner management;
     3. programme risk management;
     4. budgeting principles;
     5. joint programming modalities;
     6. implementation of the UN reform;
     7. national development planning and other emerging issues.
8. Strengthen **joint outreach and partnerships with national authorities**, civil society, think thanks, private sector, development partners, other stakeholders at national and sub-national levels, as/if delegated by the UNCT;
9. Undertake any **other pertinent tasks** as requested by the UNCT as and when the need arises.

**Frequency of meetings, decisions**

PMT meets per agreed schedule, at least once a month (2nd Thursday of the month) and at least one week prior to UNCT meeting to process and recommend appeals/issues for further UNCT endorsements or make endorsements of decisions which are technical in nature; meetings will be announced at least one week in advance.

The agenda is prepared by the co-chairs, in consultations with UNRCO and PMT members, who may suggest additional agenda items.

Decision making is based on consensus. If no consensus is reached, the decision making will be escalated to UNCT level. Meeting notes with key decisions/recommendations/actions will be prepared and submitted to the UNCT as well as recorded in IT tool that will be created for this purpose to track the follow up and the implementation of the decisions.

PMT’s functioning will be reviewed annually or upon request by UNCT and necessary adjustments made.

**Annex 3: Terms of Reference SDCF Outcome Results Groups**

**Membership:**

The SDCF Outcome Results Groups are constituted at outcome level of the Cooperation Framework. The Results Groups comprise of professionals at any programme level from all UN entities, RCO and technical level professionals from the relevant government counterparts and implementing partners. To keep transactional costs at a minimum and for equal representation, each UN entity will be expected to nominate one member to an outcome group relevant to the outcome they will be supporting the Cooperation Framework implementation.

[List of all the UN entities physically present and those not physically present that contribute to outputs under the outcome]

[List of Government entities/partners that are part of this results groups]

**Co-Chairs:** 2 Heads of UN entities that are contributing to results in the outcome area. The co-chairs may be rotated on an annual basis to give all results group members, including those not physically located in the country, an opportunity to lead the priority area. At any one rotation, one of the co-leading agencies must be physically present in country. The UNCT shall designate the co-leads ensuring there is balanced distribution of UN entities across all UN results and other groups.

**Purpose of the SDCF Outcome Results Groups**

The Results Groups will aim to ensure a coherent UN system-wide approach of analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring vis-à-vis an outcome. They promote complementarity and synergies and reduce overlaps and gaps within and across priority/outcome areas.

**Key Tasks**

They include but not limited to the following:

1. Contribute to the preparation and annual updates of the Common Country Analysis to inform the UN development support to the country.
2. Prepare and update annually the UN joint work plan and funding framework for achieving the Cooperation Framework outputs.
3. Identify opportunities for joint programmes and programming and design relevant instruments (e.g. joint programmes; integrated policy support; joint advocacy, etc).
4. Engage in joint and/or coordinated resources mobilization from national stakeholders/development partners as appropriate in support of outputs within the priority areas.
5. Engage in joint policy deliberations and advocacy with national Government and other stakeholders on key issues within priority area to advance the 2030 Agenda/SDGs.
6. Ensure that UN Info information related to the joint work plan and progress in its implementation is updated monthly.
7. Engage in joint/interagency monitoring exercises as needed to establish and/ verify results as needed or appropriate.
8. In liaison with the Operations Management Team and the UN Communication Group - monitor resource requirements, mobilization and allocation, as well as financial delivery through Joint Workplans.
9. Perform periodic and annual review of collective progress on achieving results within and across priority areas.
10. Contribute to drafting of inputs to the UN country results report related to the specific priority areas.
11. Support evaluation of the Cooperation Framework and contribute to management response and action plans.

**Frequency of meeting:** Every two months at a minimum, though the group may choose to meet more frequently.

**Annex 4: Terms of Reference MEL Group**

**Membership:** M&E Officers (most senior level) or M&E Focal points of all UN entities and RCO.

**Co-lead**: UN entity representative on a rotational basis

**Purpose:**

The MEL Group ensures coordination, coherence and effectiveness in monitoring, evaluation and learning amongst UN entities implementing the Cooperation Framework. This includes ensuring that UN entity individual monitoring, evaluation and learning plans and activities are well coordinated with and support that of the Cooperation Framework.

**Key Tasks**

These include but are not limited to the following:

1. Contribute to preparation of UN common country analysis through a systematic data collection and analysis
2. Contribute to Government national situational analysis and statistics.
3. Ensure completeness of the results framework of the new Cooperation Framework, and its alignment to the national SDG indicator framework.
4. Collect baseline and progress data to enable effective reporting on the Cooperation Framework in UN info.
5. Engage in joint/interagency monitoring exercises as needed to establish and/ verify results as needed or appropriate.
6. Document learning and good examples and practices in implementation Of the Cooperation Framework.
7. Periodically prepare UN Info reports for each Results Group and highlighting areas where corrective action is required.
8. Review the UN country results reports to ensure that data reported is correct.
9. Ensure the UN entity monitoring, evaluation and learning activities are coordinated – integrated where possible - and coherent with the Cooperation Framework monitoring, evaluation and learning activities.
10. Support final evaluation of the Cooperation Framework by making sure necessary evidence on each indicator as well as UNCT reports and sources of information are prepared well in advance.
11. Support National Voluntary Review processes as may be needed, including to bring in evidence from UN sources e.g. UN CCA, evaluations and studies.

**Frequency of Meetings:** Monthly

1. UN entities with physical presence in North Macedonia: FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNEP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women and WHO. UN entities with operational development activities in North Macedonia without physical presence: UNECE, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNDRR and UN-Habitat. UNCT North Macedonia membership includes the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), although not signatories of the SDCF. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)