

MOPAN ASSESSMENT REPORT

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# United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

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 MOPAN

Published 2025

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# United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

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MOPAN is the only collective action mechanism that meets member countries' information needs regarding the performance of multilateral organisations. MOPAN provides comprehensive, independent, and credible performance information through its institutional assessment report to inform members' engagement and accountability mechanisms.

MOPAN's assessment reports tell the story of the multilateral organisation and its performance. The reports support members' decision making regarding multilateral organisations and the wider multilateral system by detailing the assessment's major findings and conclusions, along with the organisation's performance journeys, strengths, and areas for improvement.

This document is published under the responsibility of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). MOPAN is an independent body that is governed by a Steering Committee composed of representatives of all its member countries and served by a permanent Secretariat. The Secretariat is hosted at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and is bound by its administrative rules and procedures. It is independent in terms of financing and the content and implementation of its work programme.

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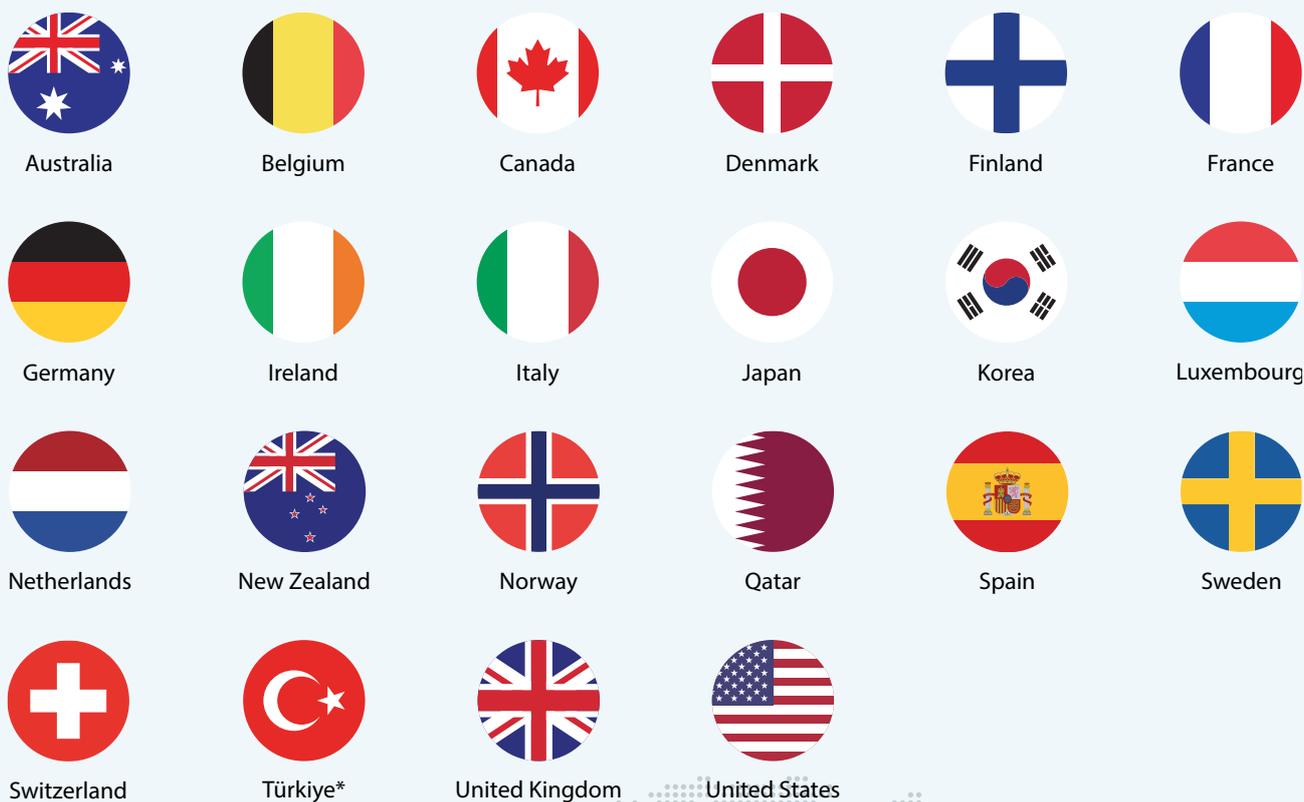
# PREFACE

## ABOUT MOPAN

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) promotes an effective multilateral system, trusted to deliver solutions to evolving global goals and local challenges. As at 1 January 2025, it comprised 22 members, including one observer state (Figure 1).

MOPAN members share a common interest in assessing the performance of the major multilateral organisations they fund given their mandate, operating model and the contexts in which they work. A MOPAN assessment report provides a diagnostic assessment, or snapshot, of an organisation and tells the story of its current performance, within its mandate. Box 1 describes MOPAN’s mission and vision.

FIGURE 1: MOPAN MEMBERS (AS AT 1 JANUARY 2025)



\*Türkiye is an observer.



**Chad, 2024 – Neonatal medical unit for displaced women at Farchana camp.**

Midwives funded by UNFPA and IRC speak to Sudanese refugees on the importance of good health practices at a health centre in the Farchana refugee camp. Since the beginning of the conflict in Sudan in April 2024, there has been a continuous influx of refugees and returnees.

Photo: © UNFPA Chad/ Karel Prinsloo

### Box 1: MOPAN’s Mission and Vision

MOPAN is a network of members who assess multilateral organisations, shape performance standards, and champion learning and insights to strengthen development and humanitarian results and promote accountability.

Capitalising on the Network’s unique cross-multilateral system perspective and expertise, MOPAN members work together to deliver relevant, impartial, high-quality, timely performance information as a public good through an inclusive and transparent approach.

MOPAN’s performance information mitigates risks, informs decision-making and supports change. It helps to increase knowledge and trust amongst stakeholders, and ultimately to achieve a stronger, better performing multilateral system.

MOPAN’s shared vision is to promote an effective multilateral system, trusted to deliver solutions to evolving global goals and local challenges.

MOPAN’s assessments provide a comprehensive overview of organisational effectiveness, including how an organisation is positioned to address its current and future challenges. They support MOPAN members in their governance and decision-making for the multilateral organisations they fund. They also support the leadership of multilateral organisations in implementing reforms that reflect multilateral good practices.

MOPAN also produces a range of analytical insights into the multilateral system. For the full range of its performance evidence and analysis see <https://www.mopanonline.org/>

To ensure that findings are based on strong evidence and resonate with an organisation and its stakeholders, MOPAN assessments are conducted rigorously and collaboratively.

This report is composed of an analysis summary and a technical and statistical annex.

### Part I: Analysis Summary

- *Performance at a Glance* provides an overall summary of the assessment.
- *Chapter 1: Introducing UNFPA* provides key information about the organisation being assessed, including its mandate, governance structure, business model and operations.
- *Chapter 2: Assessment conclusions and future trajectory* lays out the assessment's overall conclusions and identifies forward-looking considerations for the organisation and its governing body.
- *Chapter 3: Findings and Ratings* describes the assessment's findings against MOPAN's framework and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- *Chapter 4: About this Assessment* provides information about the methodology and approach, including timelines for implementation and key activities.

### Part II: Technical and Statistical Annex of UNFPA Assessment available online contains:

- *Annex A: Performance analysis* describes the analysis underlying the assessment ratings.
- *Annex B: Evidence list of documents.*
- *Annex C: Results of MOPAN partner survey.*



#### Zambia, 2024 – Session on ending GBV and child marriage

Diana Sikkabbubba, field coordinator at Lifeline/Childline Zambia (centre), during an awareness raising session on ending child marriages and gender based violence. The session is taking place in Namalyo village, Hakunkula area, in Zambia's Southern Province which is located 30km from the nearest health facility.

Photo: © UNFPA / Zambia/Julien Adam

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The MOPAN assessment of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) was conducted under the overall strategic guidance of Suzanne Steensen, Head of the MOPAN Secretariat, and Patrick Saez, Senior Policy Advisor provided peer review. Jolanda Profos managed and guided it.

MOPAN is very grateful to Cyril Prissette and Virginie Poyetton from Switzerland and Hannele Tikkanen, Antti Virtanen, and Heini Korhonen, from Finland for championing this assessment on behalf of the MOPAN membership.

The assessment was conducted in cooperation with EY (formerly Ernst and Young). Arnauld Bertrand (Team Leader) led the assessment supported in the leadership team by Alison King as Lead Evaluator and Michael Reynolds as Quality and Advisory Expert for the final report. A core team comprised of Jérémie None (Manager), Marjana El Harrade (Senior Evaluator) also supported the assessment and contributed to the final report, with the contribution of Nadine Puechguirbal (PSEAH Expert) for sections related to PSEAH. The report also benefited from an external peer review conducted by John Hendra. Moira Reddick conducted quality assurance of the sections related to sexual misconduct.

Cristina Serra-Vallejo from the MOPAN Secretariat managed the partner survey and with Corentin Beudaert-Ugolini from MOPAN, supported its implementation and finalisation.

Camille Hewitt prepared the report for publication. Deborah Glassman proofread/copy edited it, and Baseline Arts Ltd provided the layout and graphic design. David Añonuevo produced the web infographics and data visualisations.

MOPAN would like to convey its appreciation to Klaus Simoni Pedersen and Nasiba Kasymova from UNFPA, who co-ordinated the process and provided substantive feedback on the report.

This assessment would not have been possible without the close engagement and valuable contributions from many UNFPA senior officials and technical staff as well as representatives of development partners who participated in interviews and the survey.

Finally, MOPAN is grateful to all of its Steering Committee representatives for supporting this assessment, and to its member countries for their financial contributions, which made the report possible.

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## HISTORY OF MOPAN ASSESSMENTS FOR UNFPA

This is the fourth assessment MOPAN has conducted for UNFPA. Earlier assessments were carried out in [2010](#), [2014](#) and [2017-18](#).

The 2017-18 UNFPA assessment covered headquarters (HQ), and regional and country office presence. It coincided with the last two years of the UNFPA 2014-17 Strategic Plan and the preparation for and the first six months of implementation of the 2018-21 strategic plan.

It found that UNFPA's strengths rely on a clear, focused, results-oriented strategy, human resources functions, improvements in knowledge management and evaluation processes. In addition, its communications about its expertise and results are accessible, financial and risk management systems are robust, and there is an active commitment to partnership synergies in the UN and humanitarian fields.

It raised some areas for improvement. These include disbursement delays affecting implementation and insufficiently fast humanitarian supplies procurement, in addition to relationships or partner concerns that are not systematically addressed by reviews and engagement with partners at country level. Finally, there is underexploited potential in terms of population data analytics or capacity-building interventions.



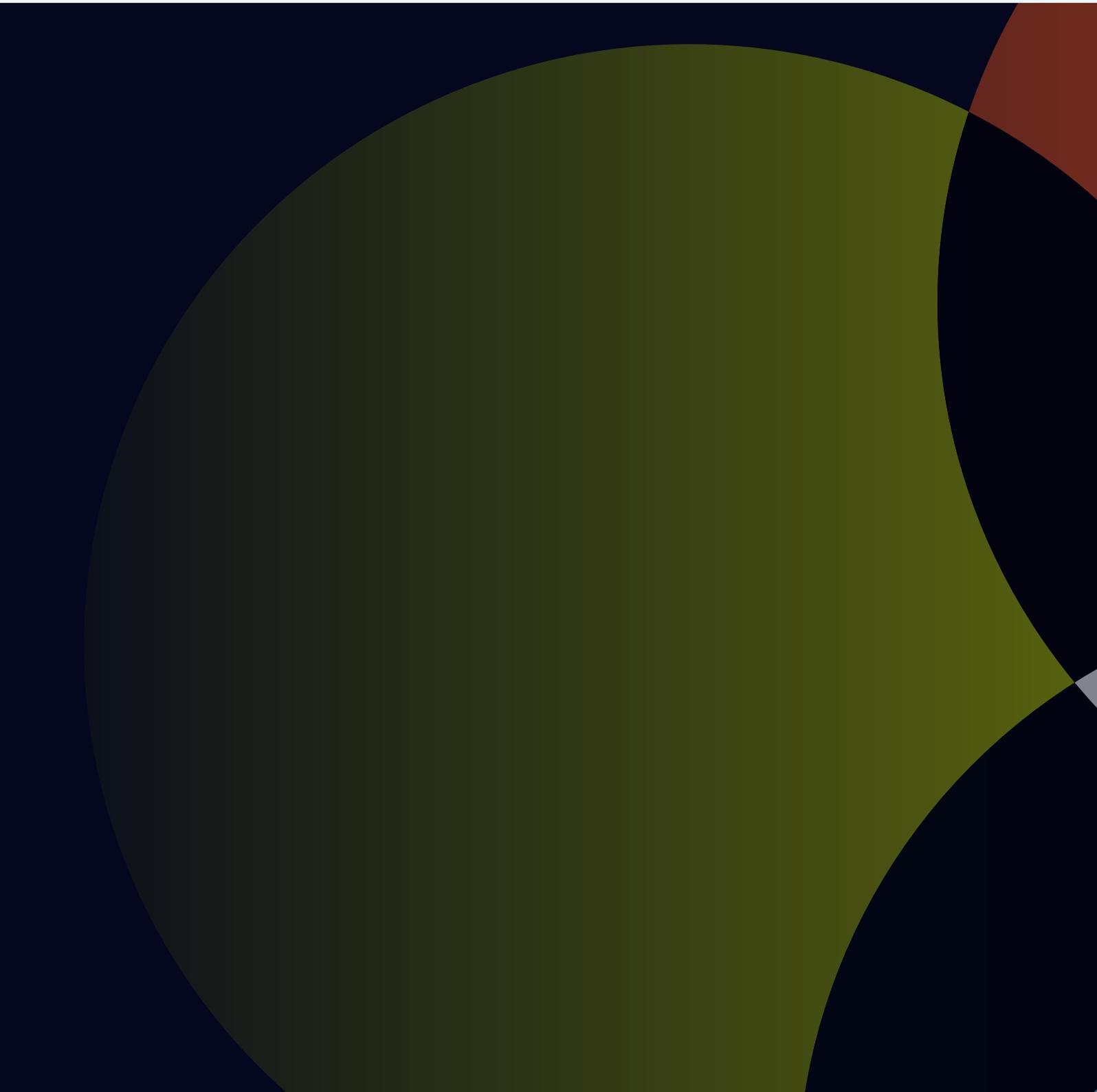
**Palestine, 2024 - UNFPA-supported Mobile Healthcare Teams in the West Bank**

Mobile healthcare teams, operated by the Palestinian Medical Relief Society with support from UNFPA, deliver services to vulnerable and isolated communities throughout Area C of the West Bank.

Photo: © UNFPA Palestine / Lisa Sabella

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to Affected Populations	<b>MOPAN</b>	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
<b>ACABQ</b>	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions	<b>MTR</b>	Mid-term Review
<b>ACA</b>	Agency, Choice and Access	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence	<b>OAIS</b>	Office of Audit and Investigation Services
<b>CPD</b>	Country Programme Document	<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>CPE</b>	Country Programme Evaluation	<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>CPM</b>	Career and Performance Management	<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>CSPs/RISPs</b>	Country Strategy Papers/Regional Integration Strategy Papers	<b>PSEAH</b>	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and Sexual Harassment
<b>EB</b>	Executive Board	<b>QCPR</b>	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council	<b>RBM</b>	Results-Based Management
<b>ERM</b>	Enterprise Risk Management	<b>SCMU</b>	Supply Chain Management Unit
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>FP</b>	Family Planning	<b>SEA/SH</b>	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/ Sexual Harassment
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation	<b>SIF</b>	Strategic Investment Facility
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence	<b>SRH</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health
<b>GBVIMS</b>	Gender-Based Violence Information Management System	<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>GFF</b>	Global Financing Facility	<b>STI</b>	Sexually Transmitted Infections
<b>HACT</b>	Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>HDP</b>	Humanitarian-Development-Peace	<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters	<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>HRBA</b>	Human-Rights-Based Approach	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>IATI</b>	International Aid Transparency Initiative	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development	<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>IEO</b>	Independent Evaluation Office	<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>IFI</b>	International Financial Institution	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>IL</b>	Institutional Leads	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization	<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>IP</b>	Implementing Partner	<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>IPRMPs</b>	Integrated Partnership and Resource Mobilisation Plans	<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>IRRF</b>	Integrated Results and Resources framework	<b>UNSDG</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
<b>JIU</b>	Joint Inspection Unit	<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator	<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave No One Behind	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>MAF</b>	Management and Accountability Framework	<b>3TRs</b>	Three Transformative Results
<b>MDB</b>	Multilateral Development Banks		
<b>MH</b>	Maternal Health		
<b>MI</b>	Micro-Indicator		
<b>MO</b>	Multilateral Organisation		



**UNFPA**  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





**Mozambique, 2023 – Caesarian section mobile operating theatre in Montepuez district, Cabo Delgado**

With a great number of health facilities damaged or limited in operation as a result of insecurity in Cabo Delgado, the surgical mobile unit has become critical in providing emergency and life-saving obstetric care for conflict-affected pregnant women, mothers and their newborns, including C-sections. The UNFPA-supported surgical mobile unit – including the purchase of the vehicles, running costs and training of medical personnel is funded by the Governments of the United Kingdom and Austria, as well as from the Central Emergency Response Fund (UN CERF). Photo: © UNFPA Mozambique/Mbuto Machili

# UNFPA: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW

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UNFPA's mission is to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled, including in humanitarian settings. To achieve this, the organisation's strategic plan 2022-25 focuses on three transformative results (3TRs): ending preventable maternal deaths, addressing unmet needs for family planning, and eliminating gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), with a commitment to prioritising populations left behind.

The context in which UNFPA operates has become more challenging over the last years. Economic uncertainty, the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts and humanitarian crises have added to the anxieties provoked by declining and ageing populations. Moreover, UNFPA faces pushback against its mandate in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRSH), and a difficult financial and political environment for issues related to gender equality more broadly.

Despite these constraints, UNFPA has successfully delivered most of the outputs of its strategic plan, even if achieving the 3TRs and the related SDGs by 2030 will require a significant effort, as the slowing progress on the 3TRs shows.

As UNFPA develops its next strategic plan, it now has an opportunity to revisit its strategic priorities and transformative goals and consider strengthening its work on population change. UNFPA can show significant successes in mobilizing resources for its work and promising efforts in moving from funding towards funding and financing. It can point to significant effort and success in the move from funding towards funding and financing. In the current financial environment, diversifying funding sources must remain a priority.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND STRENGTHS

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The MOPAN assessment underscores UNFPA's resilience and adaptability in a complex global environment. Since the last MOPAN assessment, UNFPA has made substantial progress in many areas, achieving most of its outputs from the 2022–25 strategic plan. The quality of care it delivered stood out as did its work with adolescents and youth and its work on policies and accountability.

UNFPA has successfully transformed itself into a development-humanitarian organisation. A new, dedicated output on humanitarian action and a clear commitment to prioritise populations left behind is part of its strategic plan 2022-25. In 2023, UNFPA provided lifesaving SRHR and GBV services including emergency obstetric care and GBV protection to millions in 50 crisis-affected countries. Safeguarding past achievements during crises and attaining transformative results in complex environments has become more important for UNFPA. Its funding earmarked for humanitarian action has grown significantly and thus allowed UNFPA to further solidify its presence within the international humanitarian sphere in SRHR and GBV.

UNFPA has decentralised its operations to foster agility and build effective partnerships. It has delegated greater programmatic and financial responsibility to regional and country offices, enhancing its ability to respond to crises such as COVID-19 and improve partnerships and humanitarian actions. As part of its HQ Optimisation initiative, UNFPA is consolidating divisions and relocating many posts to Nairobi in order to bring the organisation closer to those it serves.

UNFPA plays a key role in the UN development system reform. It has contributed to UN system-wide effectiveness by aligning with member state expectations and the 2030 Agenda and by strengthening coordination, collaboration and

generating knowledge. UNFPA also plays a key role in UN joint programmes and inter-agency mechanisms, including in the protection from sexual misconduct.

UNFPA has also demonstrated remarkable success in its resource mobilisation. Revenues have grown by 52.7% from 2014-23. Humanitarian funding has steadily increased, reflecting UNFPA's expanding role in crisis response. UNFPA has also strengthened its partnerships with international financial institutions (IFIs) and private donors. At the same time, it has also been able to achieve significant operational efficiencies.

Lastly, the organisation demonstrates strong accountability. This is apparent in its uptake of lessons learned and of recommendations from evaluations as well as in its recent investments to strengthen risk management (with a new enterprise risk management policy) and independent oversight.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Although UNFPA delivered on most of its planned strategic outputs despite a challenging environment, progress towards the 3TRs and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has slowed. The reduction of unmet family planning needs and of maternal mortality has stagnated and significant disparities persist in vulnerable regions. The progress in addressing GBV has not been sufficient. Continuing these efforts while considering other pressing issues will be a difficult balance. It will require revisiting strategic priorities and taking innovative approaches in diversifying funding sources and forging stronger partnerships.

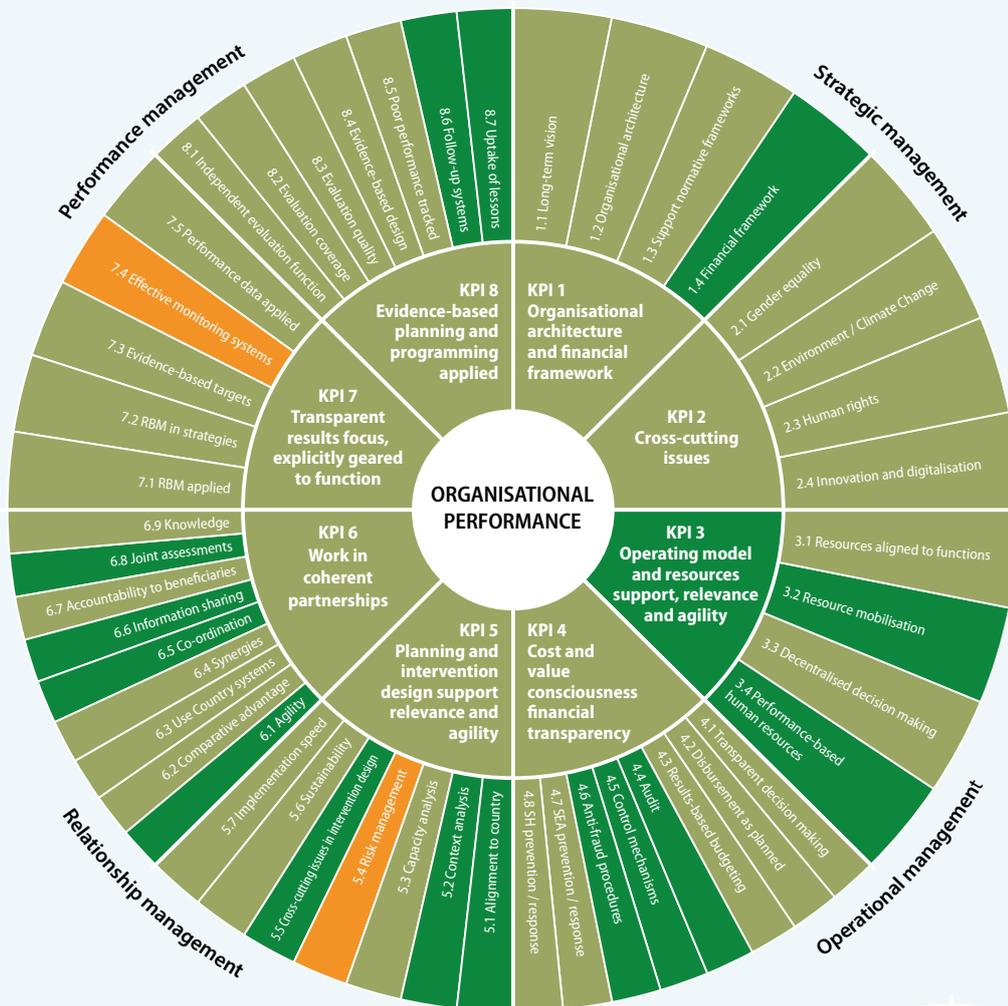
The 2026-29 strategic plan presents an opportunity for UNFPA to revisit its strategic focus to ensure that it remains relevant for the future. The focus on 3TRs has concentrated the organisation's efforts on key areas but has also limited its engagement in broader SRHR issues such as HIV prevention, cervical cancer, and infertility, and broader reproductive health concerns that UNFPA would be well-placed to address. Its output on population data and demographic change was the only that was merely partially achieved. Meanwhile, ageing populations, low fertility rates, and outmigration are becoming pressing concerns. Broadening UNFPA's scope in SRHR and reaffirming its core mandate in population and development could enhance its relevance, impact and visibility.

Furthermore, there needs to be greater emphasis on cross-cutting issues such as innovation, climate change, and digitalisation. Having launched an innovation strategy supported by the UN Equalizer Accelerator Fund, UNFPA should now focus on creating a consistent approach to innovation and digital transformation across the organisation. A strategy for addressing the intersection of climate resilience and reproductive health would also be valuable. It could help make programming climate-resilient, adapt health systems adequately and prepare for emergencies.

While UNFPA has mobilised resources successfully, its growing reliance on earmarked resources and the possible withdrawal of key donors leave it financially vulnerable. In 2023, 98% of core funding came from just 20 donors, underscoring the need for greater diversification. Building on the new strategy for financing the ICPD Agenda, UNFPA must continue to strengthen innovative financing mechanisms and partnerships with emerging donors, IFIs, and the private sector, and leverage domestic public and private finance in programme countries.

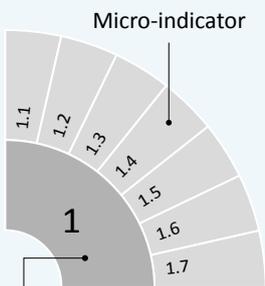
UNFPA can also make improvements to its operations. One priority should be to make its work more enduring. While its efforts in capacity building and advocacy are promising, the financial dependency of partners and lack of clear exit strategies pose a risk to the long-term impact of UNFPA's work. Related to this, UNFPA has yet to link its humanitarian and development work better. Another priority is to improve its approach to results-based management (RBM), which remains heavily focused on outputs rather than on outcomes, and to complete the roll-out of its new risk strategy in all country programmes. There are also gaps in resources for the collection and use of data and in monitoring and evaluation, which vary across regions. Addressing them would further strengthen decision-making, transparency and accountability.

FIGURE 2: UNFPA'S PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY



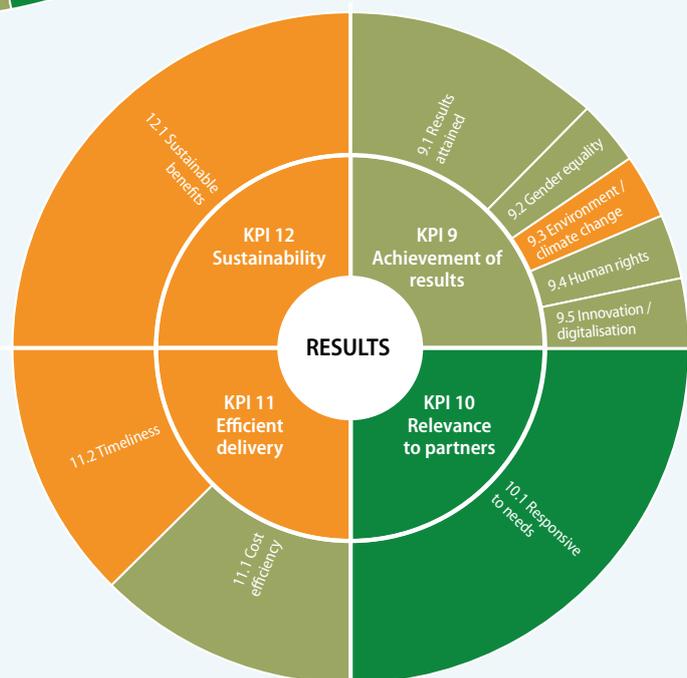
**DISCLAIMER:**  
 Each organisation MOPAN assesses has a unique mandate, business model and operating environment. In the dynamic context of multilateral development and cooperation, expectations and good practices change over time. The MOPAN framework reflects this unique context and evolution across different types of multilateral organisations. Comparisons across assessments are thus strongly discouraged. For more information on the rationale underlying MOPAN's assessment ratings, see Chapter 4 of this report or the online technical annexes.

**How to read these charts**



Key Performance Indicator

- **Highly satisfactory** (3.51-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.51-3.50)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.51-2.50)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.50)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**



For a summary of UNFPA's strengths and areas of opportunity, see Box 2.

### Box 2. Main strengths and areas of opportunity

#### Main strengths

- UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2022-25 and long-term vision are strongly aligned with the SDGs through the transformative results.
- Building on the successes of previous reforms, UNFPA continues to be a fundamental pillar of the ongoing repositioning of the UN development system.
- UNFPA has further solidified its presence within the international humanitarian sphere in SRHR and GBV.
- The organisation demonstrates strong accountability in its uptake of lessons learned and of recommendations from evaluations.
- UNFPA has issued its first ERM policy and invested significantly in independent oversight functions.
- UNFPA's decentralised structure fosters agility and effective partnerships, as exemplified by its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Areas of opportunity

- Reaffirming UNFPA's core mandate in population and development would require a strong focus at the strategic and intervention levels.
- While maintaining a focus on the transformative results, broadening UNFPA's scope would be necessary to encompass other SRHR issues within the framework of universal health coverage.
- Strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and reflecting it better in UNFPA's programme design process.
- Building on the new strategy for financing the ICPD Agenda, actively pursuing strategies to increase new funding from governments in the form of domestic resources and leverage additional development financing resources would be necessary.
- Although UNFPA's Social and Environmental Standards Policies contain provisions regarding AAP, the organisation does not yet have framework and guidance for AAP.

## METHODOLOGY

The approach to MOPAN assessments has evolved over time to adjust to the needs of the multilateral system. The MOPAN 3.1 Approach is the latest iteration and was taken in this assessment. Three lines of evidence informed this assessment. These included a document review (252 reviewed documents), a partner survey (216 respondents with a 43% response rate), and interviews (112 interviewees) of UNFPA senior management and staff from HQ, regional and country offices, PSEA, EB members) and consultations (with the EB, institutional leads of the assessment).

The assessment began in November 2023. It consisted of four phases: inception, evidence collection, analysis, and reporting (See Chapter 4).

# INTRODUCING UNFPA





The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was established in 1969 as **the United Nations’ leading agency for sexual and reproductive health and rights**. Renamed in 1987 as the United Nations Population Fund, it is one of the world’s largest supporters of population data collection (administrative data, censuses and surveys).

## MISSION AND MANDATE

**The Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Programme of Action of the 2030 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)** endorsed by 179 member states in Cairo in 1994, drive **UNFPA’s mandate**. Its mission is to create a world “where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled”. To achieve this, UNFPA operates in both development and humanitarian settings.

**In 2018, UNFPA defined a strategic focus on “three transformative results,” (3TRs)** The aim was to end, by 2030, (i) unmet need for family planning (FP), (ii) preventable maternal deaths, and (iii) gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and child, early and forced marriage, in support of SDGs 3 (good health and wellbeing) and 5 (gender equality). This new orientation aimed at reinforcing UNFPA’s work in FP, maternal health (MH), GBV and harmful practices, which was not new for the organisation.

**The UNFPA strategic plan 2022-25 is the second of three consecutive strategic plans** (2018-21; 2022-25; 2026-29) leading to 2030 and the achievement of the transformative results. It defines the organisation’s intentions to achieve six interconnected outputs in the areas of policy and accountability, quality of care and services, gender and social norms, population change and data, and humanitarian action, and adolescents and youth (UNFPA, 2021).

**To enhance implementation and performance and accelerate progress towards the transformative results, the strategic plan lists 12 strategic shifts (Box 3).**

**In addition, it identifies six accelerators:** i) human-rights-based and gender transformative approaches; ii) innovation and digitalisation; iii) partnerships, South-South and triangular cooperation, and financing; iv) data and evidence; v) leaving no one behind (LNOB) and reaching the furthest behind first, resilience and adaptation, and vi) complementary among development, humanitarian action, and peace-responsive efforts.

**Furthermore, while committed to working within the UNDS and contributing to its reform efforts, UNFPA (and UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women) dropped the common chapter** that aimed to ensure the operationalisation of the UNDS repositioning reform (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, 2020). **This was an integral part of their respective strategic plans** 2018-21 outlining how the New York-based funds and programmes intended to work together to provide coherent support to achieve the SDGs. The UNDS reform efforts requested by the EBs of UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women, were operationalised in 2022 in the respective **integrated results and resources frameworks (IRRF)** of the strategic plan 2022-25 in common and complementarity indicators to measure common and complementary results.

### Nepal, 2023 – UNFPA support following earthquake

After the initial magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck Karnali Province in western Nepal on 3 November 2023, a series of over 350 aftershocks further degraded already partially damaged homes and buildings, forcing people to sleep outside in freezing overnight temperatures. An estimated 250,000 people were affected in Jajarkot and Rukum West, the two most distressed districts. UNFPA provided medical tents to two damaged health facilities with birthing centres in Jajarkot to ensure the provision of reproductive and maternal health care continued. Reproductive health kits, including individual delivery kits for pregnant women and medicines and supplies for midwives and health facilities to ensure safe births, including the management of miscarriages and obstetric emergencies, along with dignity kits and supplies for the clinical management of rape, were distributed. Photo: © UNFPA Nepal/Bikash Karki

### Box 3. UNFPA Strategic plan 2022-25 Strategic Shifts

1. Aligning organisational focus on achieving the 3TRs
2. Integrating the effects of megatrends into programming
3. Increasing the focus on populations left behind and emphasising reaching those furthest behind first.
4. Scaling up the provision of high-quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services
5. Expanding the humanitarian response capacity while also addressing mental health and psychosocial issues
6. Mainstreaming resilience, prevention, preparedness and early action and emphasising the complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace-responsive interventions
7. Incorporating the multisectoral needs of women, adolescents and youth and addressing structural inequalities
8. Tailoring programmatic and technical assistance to better respond to local contexts through a country-office-led process within the United Nations family on the ground
9. Strengthening the UNFPA normative role
10. Shifting the focus from funding the ICPD agenda to financing the ICPD agenda.
11. Reinvigorating and expanding partnerships

Source: Assessment team based on strategic plan 2022-25.

## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

**The UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS EB serves as UNFPA's governing body.** It comprises representatives from 36 member states who serve on a rotating basis (8 from Africa, 7 from Asia and the Pacific, 4 from Eastern Europe, 5 from Latin America and the Caribbean, and 12 from Western Europe and other States). The EB operates under the guidance of the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the United Nations Charter and meets three times a year in two regular and one annual sessions. Official sessions are preceded by informal meetings while other informal briefings and consultations are held on an ad hoc basis throughout the year. The ECOSOC elects board members for three-year terms although the Western Europe and other states group has determined its own internal rotation policy. The EB Bureau, consisting of a president and four vice-presidents, plays a crucial role in organising meetings, fostering transparent decision-making, and facilitating dialogue, with the support of the UNFPA EB Branch.

**The current decision-making and governance arrangements might evolve in 2025.** Member states are considering the recommendations of the UN's Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report (JIU, 2023b)<sup>1</sup>. These include establishing a separate UNFPA board or alignment with different UN funds or programmes with a high level of programmatic synergy and common areas of activity under the same board (recommendation 2).

1. Member states are currently establishing a working group to assess which recommendations should be implemented.

**Yemen, 2024 – RRM kits are distributed to families affected by flooding in Al Jawf**

The UNFPA-led Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) stepped up its response, delivering life-saving aid to the most vulnerable individuals. By August, 1,560 families (10,920 individuals) had received emergency relief through the RRM.

Photo: © UNFPA Yemen



## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

**Executive Director Dr Natalia Kanem has led UNFPA since October 2017.** She operates with an executive committee comprising deputy executive directors Mr Andrew Saberton for management and Ms Diene Keita for programmes, and division and regional directors. **New York HQ is home to five divisions** – technical, policy and strategy, HR, management services and communications and strategic partnerships **and their respective branches** (as of the beginning of this assessment) – as well as the independent offices for evaluation, audit and investigation services, and ethics, the PSEAH coordinator, the information technology solutions office, and the office of the security coordinator. The humanitarian response division (the humanitarian office until November 2022) is located in Geneva and the supply chain management unit (SCMU) is located in Copenhagen. The six decentralised representation offices of the division for communications and strategic partnerships sit in North America, Asia, and Western Europe, where they connect with key partners (including governments, parliamentarians, NGOs, civil society, academia, media, and citizens) in the countries covered by each office.

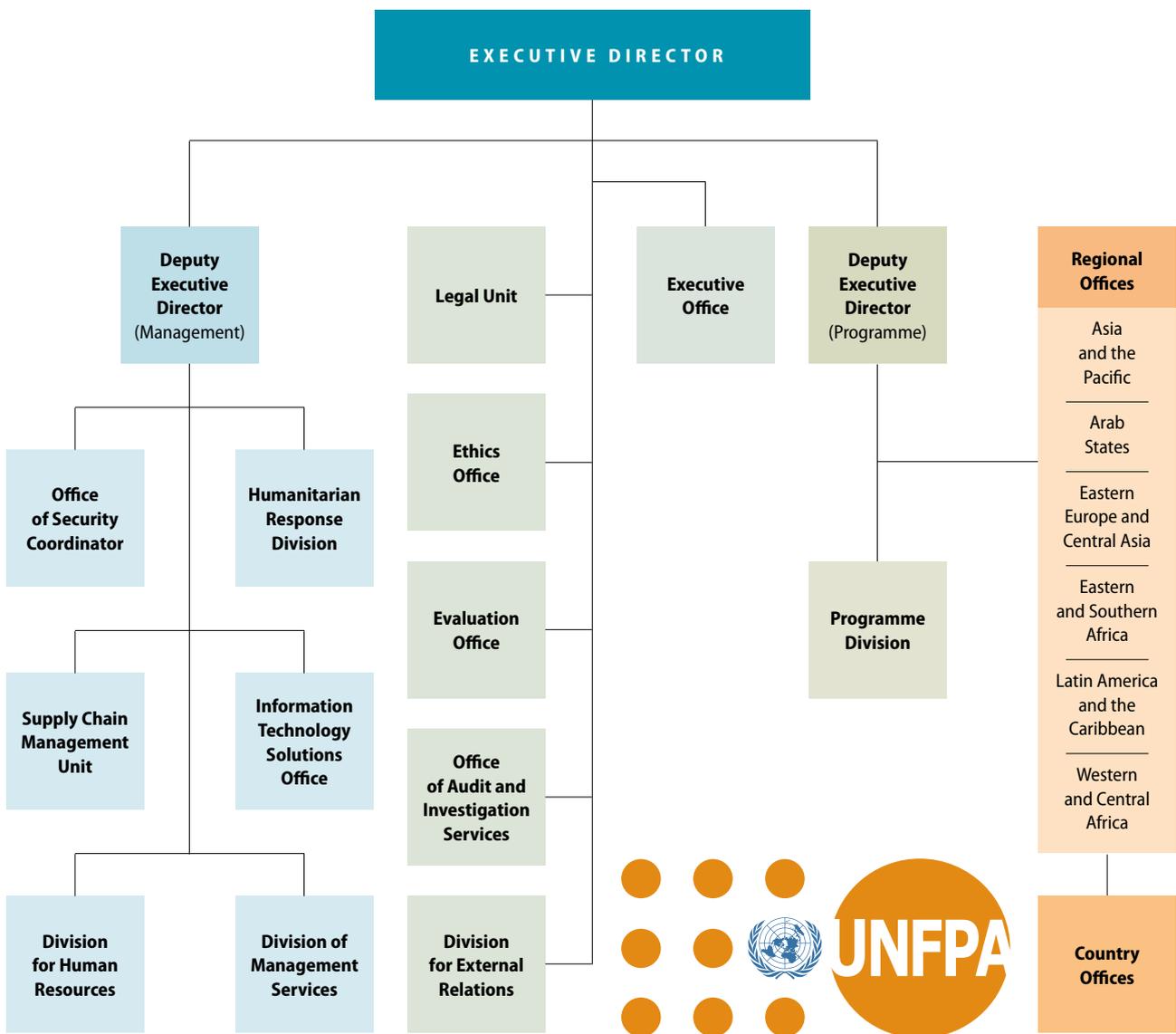
**UNFPA personnel are distributed primarily across 119 country offices, operating across more than 150 countries.** Six regional offices led by regional directors link UNFPA's global vision and strategy and the specific needs and contexts of each region and respective programme country. They provide support and technical expertise to the country offices and position UNFPA at the forefront of strategies, policies and debates about sexual and reproductive health and rights throughout the regions. Two sub-regional offices provide support for the small island developing states of the Caribbean (Jamaica) and the Pacific (Fiji) through multi-country programmes particularly affected by climate change.

**In September 2023, the UNFPA Executive Director launched its “Headquarters Optimisation” initiative** to adapt to the rapidly changing landscape in which it operates, in line with the UN reform (UNFPA, 2024). It comprises the following significant changes to be completed by September 2025:

- Integration of the parts of the policy and strategy division and technical division into one new programme division, with a new integrated structure and enhanced knowledge management, normative, data and analytics capacities based largely in Nairobi (a new programme liaison branch that is part of the programme division will remain in New York to ensure continued robust engagement on normative issues).

- Under the programme division directorate, (1) creation of the new data and analytics branch to build capacity and capability including in censuses and civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) and help country teams build robust investment cases for UNFPA’s mandate, and (2) consolidation of corporate knowledge management functions in a dedicated knowledge management unit.
- Relocation of the independent evaluation office to Nairobi.
- Integration of the UN and intergovernmental affairs branch (former intergovernmental, inter-agency and policy dialogue branch), Geneva Representation Office and Addis Ababa Representation Office to the African Union and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (previously part of the policy and strategy division) into the division of external relations (former division of communications and strategic partnerships).

FIGURE 3: UNFPA ORGANISATIONAL CHART (1 August 2024)



Source: Summary of Oversight Functions, UNFPA, as of 1 August 2024

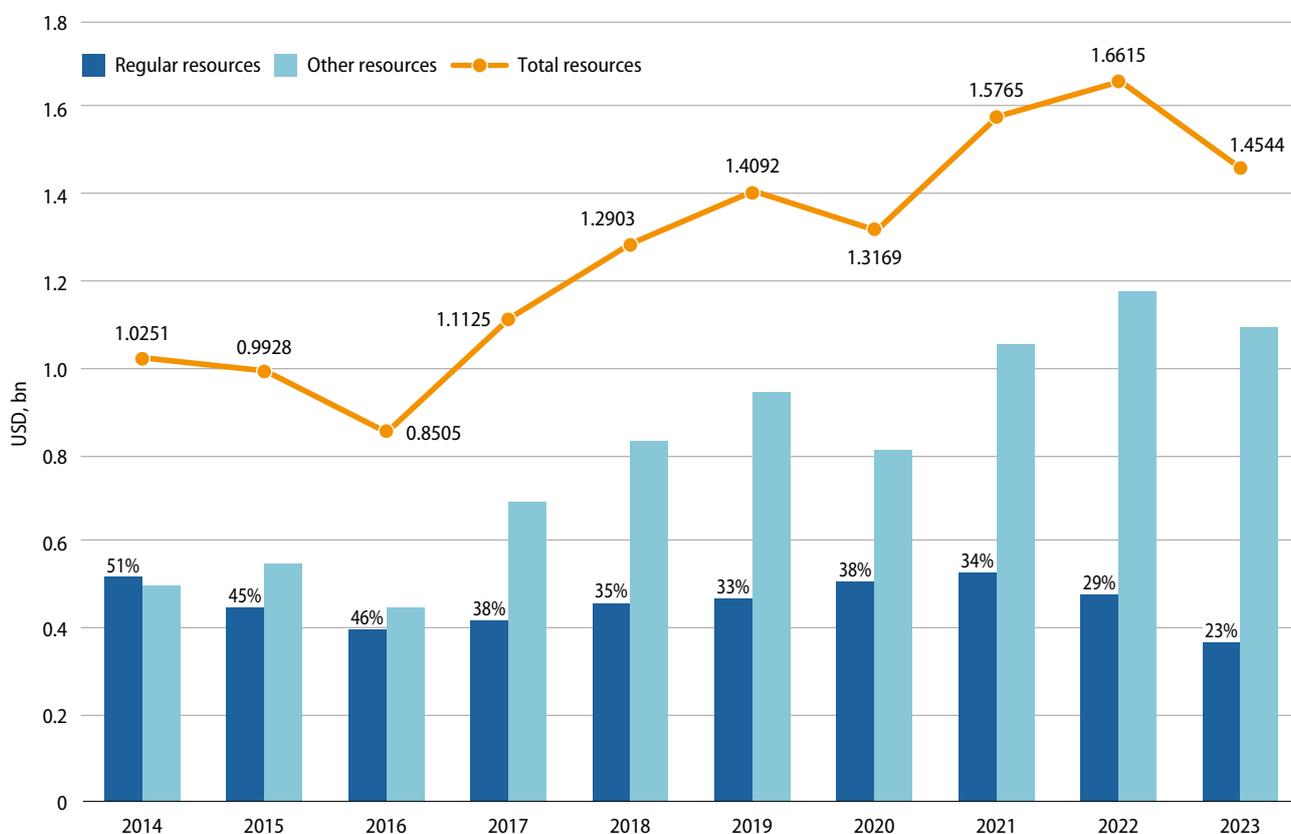
## FINANCES AND OPERATIONS

**UNFPA is fully funded by voluntary contributions and thus relies on goodwill and national interests. Contributions fall into two distinct categories of core and non-core resources.**

- Core resources (“regular resources”) are contributions without restrictions and are not earmarked for specific programming. UNFPA launches an annual campaign to mobilise core resources to implement the strategic plan. In 2022, 96 governments contributed to UNFPA’s core resources (UNFPA, 2023a).
- Non-core resources (“other resources”) encompass contributions restricted by the donors for a specific purpose, programme or activity. They include softly earmarked funds and other quality funding instruments and tightly earmarked funds.

Every four years, harmonised with the strategic plan cycle, UNFPA approves an integrated budget that includes all planned resources for achieving expected outcomes and organisational effectiveness and efficiency outputs. UNFPA’s Resource Mobilisation and Funding Strategy 2022-25 (“Mobilising Resources and Finances to Achieve the Three Transformative Results in the Decade of Action”) puts a particular focus on diversifying resources including through private sector funding, a portfolio of innovative financing instruments (e.g., development of impact bonds) and individual giving.

**FIGURE 4: UNFPA TOTAL REVENUE (Distribution by regular and other resources) (in USD billions)**



Note: Revenue figures for 2021 and 2022 are based on the modified accounting policy introduced in 2022. UNFPA started to consider “regular resources” as of the year an agreement was signed rather than the year for which the contribution was intended, as was done previously.

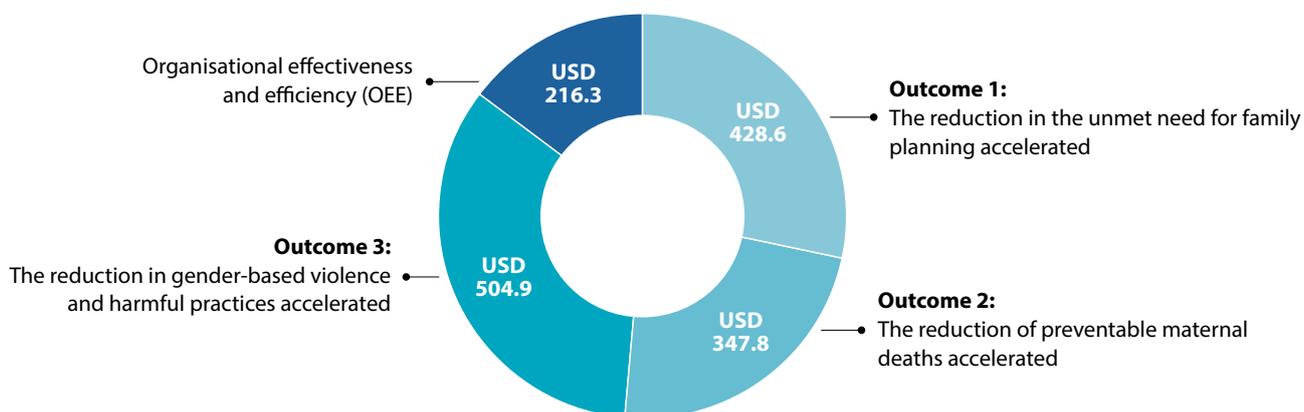
Source: UNFPA Annual Reports

UNFPA's overall revenue has grown substantially from 2014-23 (52,7%) albeit with slight declines in 2015, 2016, 2020, and 2023. However, regular resources have declined, and other/earmarked funding have increased notably (Figure 4). Additionally, there is a continued dependence on a limited number of key donors.

**UNFPA expenditures have grown consistently with the increase in revenues**, with a higher percentage of growth attributed to programme expenses compared to institutional expenses, with a territorial focus on Africa. Total expenditures have risen consistently from USD 926.9 million in 2017 to USD 1,510.4 million in 2023, or a growth of 63%. In 2023, expenses were distributed a relatively equitable distribution across the three development outcomes and organisational effectiveness and efficiency outcomes: 29% was spent on reducing the unmet need for family planning (outcome 1), 23% on reducing preventable maternal deaths (outcome 2), 24% on reducing gender-based violence and harmful practices (outcome 3), and 14% on organisational effectiveness and efficiency (OEE) (Figure 5).

**In accordance with UNFPA's Financial Regulations and Rules, implementing partners (IPs)** of programme activities can include (a) the government or governments of programme countries, intergovernmental institutions or agencies outside the UN system; (b) organisations or entities within the UN system; (c) non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and academic institutions. UNFPA staff can also implement activities directly. Between 2018-23, programme expenses by IPs increased gradually each year, in absolute and relative terms, to USD 481.5 million, or 37.2% of total programme expenses in 2023 (2022: USD 467.6 million, or 38.4%). In addition, UNFPA provided its partners with non-cash transfers of reproductive health commodities and other programme-related goods of USD 276.5 million in 2023 (2022: USD 215.4 million). Governments, intergovernmental and NGOs and other UN organisations engaged by UNFPA implement a significant part of programme activities on the basis of signed workplans or other appropriate agreements (UNFPA, 2023c).

FIGURE 5: 2023 EXPENSES BY OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED RESULTS AND RESOURCES FRAMEWORK (in millions of USD)



Source: UNFPA Statistical and Financial Review 2023, available at <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/board-documents/main-document/SFR%202023%20ANNEXES%20-%2015Apr24.pdf>

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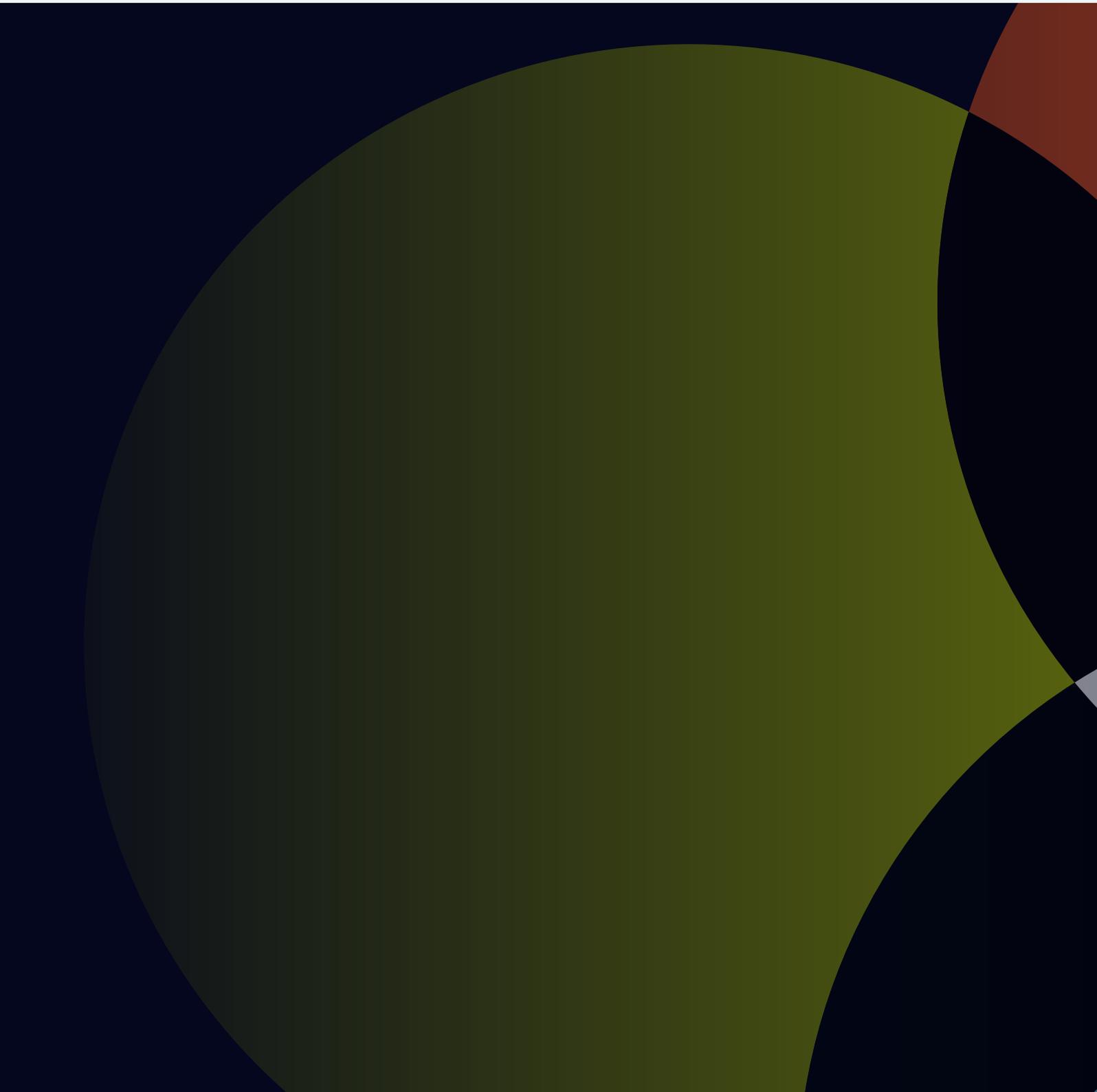
UNFPA, 2024: HQ Optimisation and the UNFPA normative role, <https://unfpa.org/sites/default/files/Normative%20Mandate.pdf>



**Syria, 2024 – Essential services are provided at the Jdeidet Yabous border crossing in Rural Damascus**

As thousands of Syrian and Lebanese arrive at the Jdeidet Yabous Crossing, UNFPA Syria and the Syria Family Planning Association are on the ground providing essential health services and referrals to those in need.

Photo: © UNFPA Syria / Waseem Khadour



# CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE





**Egypt, 2024 – Catalysts for change who inspire communities to abandon harmful practices like FGM**

Engaging Men and Boys – UNFPA and its partner Care have developed a tool and curriculum on engaging men and boys specifically on FGM programming, based on existing evidence and previously tested tools. The tool is adapted to the Egyptian context and tailored to the issue of FGM. Photo: © UNFPA / Roger Anis

## BACKGROUND

**The MOPAN assessment of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reviews organisational performance, effectiveness and results during a period of significant global events and internal changes.** They include the following:

- **UN system reforms:** The UN General Assembly’s adoption of the 2018 repositioning resolution and the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).
- **COVID-19 pandemic:** The global health crisis and its social and economic impact.
- **Adoption of transformative results:** UNFPA adopted three goals for 2030: i) to end preventable maternal deaths; ii) to fill the unmet needs for family planning, and iii) to end gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful sexual practices.
- **Evolution of strategic planning:** The successive implementation of the first two UNFPA strategic plans (2018-21 and 2022-25) leading up to 2030 and the achievement of the transformative results.
- **Organisational reforms:** Internal changes, including relocating key HQ staff to Nairobi.

## KEY FINDINGS

**This MOPAN assessment of UNFPA highlights strong progress since the previous one, emphasising key achievements and opportunities.**

UNFPA’s mission is to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person’s potential is fulfilled, including in humanitarian settings. To achieve this, the Strategic Plan 2022-25 (focuses on three transformative results (3TRs): ending preventable maternal deaths, addressing unmet needs for family planning, and eliminating gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), with a commitment to prioritising populations left behind (UNFPA, 2021e).

Despite a challenging operating context, UNFPA has successfully delivered the outputs of its strategic plan, even if achieving the 3TRs and the related SDGs by 2030 will still require a significant effort, as the slowing progress on the 3TRs shows (UNFPA, 2024b).

As UNFPA embarks on the development of its next strategic plan, it now has an opportunity to revisit its strategic priorities and transformative goals and consider strengthening its work on population change. It could also better capture cross-cutting priorities and rebalance funding priorities. UNFPA can show significant efforts and successes in generating funding for its work and in moving from *funding* towards *funding and financing*. Diversifying funding will have to remain a priority in the current financial environment.

UNFPA has successfully transformed itself into a development-humanitarian organisation, aligning its operating model with its strategic vision. To serve its partners better, UNFPA has delegated greater authority to regions and country offices and is relocating some of its functions (UNFPA, 2022a). It has launched a new risk policy and established more robust, independent oversight functions to strengthen accountability, transparency and responsible decision-making, including at country-level (UNFPA, 2022b).

The assessment sees further scope for improving UNFPA's operational excellence by linking up its humanitarian and long-term work more coherently, making the impact of its work more sustainable, delivering even faster, and rolling out its new risk management policy in all countries consistently.

This Chapter identifies UNFPA's main strengths and opportunities for improvement and offers considerations for the future. The conclusions of the assessment result from a granular analysis of performance against MOPAN's indicator framework, which are laid out in more detail in Chapter 3 of this report and in the Technical Annex (Part II)<sup>1</sup>. They are structured around key high-level messages addressing critical aspects of UNFPA's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability in a dynamic, complex global environment.

## PROGRESS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN DELIVERING ON THE STRATEGIC VISION AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE GOALS AMID A CHALLENGING GLOBAL CONTEXT

**UNFPA's operating context has changed considerably** since UN Member States adopted the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action in 1994 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. Economic uncertainty and the effects of international conflicts have added to the anxieties provoked by declining and ageing populations. Moreover, some governments and groups are increasingly expressing reservations about UNFPA's SRHR mandate and against gender equality more broadly. UNFPA personnel, programmes and local partners have had to navigate humanitarian crises and the COVID-19 pandemic. And while the digital transformation brings new opportunities for enhancing operations and impact, it brings new challenges as well, such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence (GBV). Furthermore, climate change threatens the reproductive health rights and choices of women, girls and vulnerable populations disproportionately.

**Nonetheless, UNFPA was able to report to its EB at mid-term that it was successfully delivering the outputs of its strategic plan amid these challenges and the rapidly evolving international context (UNFPA, 2024b). However, accelerating progress towards achieving the three transformative results (3TRs) and making a significant contribution to the SDGs by 2030 will require significant effort.**

In 2023, at mid-term, UNFPA fully achieved five of the six outputs of its Strategic Plan 2022-25. Its scorecard shows that the quality of care it delivered stood out as did its work with adolescents and youth, and policy and accountability-related matters. In contrast, its outputs on population change and data were only partially achieved. According to the mid-term review of the strategic plan, this was due to difficulties initiating census and other data collection mechanisms, the COVID-19 pandemic, and humanitarian crises, which have hampered efforts to generate and use data (KPI 9).

**In terms of transformative results (outcome level), global progress towards ending the unmet need for family planning has slowed since 2021.** UNFPA attributes this in part to the fact that several regions – including Europe, North America, Eastern and Southern Asia – have already achieved high levels of contraceptive use. As a result, reducing unmet needs further in these regions is increasingly difficult. The remaining unmet need is disproportionately concentrated in regions and contexts where women and adolescent girls face barriers such as the limited access to and choice of contraceptives; cultural, religious and social norms and gender inequalities that have limited women's autonomy regarding their reproductive choices; and the lack of favourable legal frameworks. The lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have further exacerbated these challenges. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that countries with the highest unmet for family planning, such as the 54 countries in the UNFPA Supplies Partnership, are continuing to make progress, with unmet need dropping by 2% since 2017.

1. Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) (2025), United Nations Populations Fund, Paris, available at: <https://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unfpa2024/index.htm>

**Vanuatu, 2024 –  
Executive Director  
of UNFPA  
Dr Natalia Kanem  
visits programmes  
in Vanuatu**

Dr Kanem with  
mothers and babies  
at Saupia Health  
Centre North Efate.  
Photo: © UNFPA  
Vanuatu / Anirban  
Mahapatra



**Progress on reducing preventable maternal deaths also stagnated between 2016-22. UNFPA estimates that over 80% of countries will not meet their national maternal mortality targets by 2030 for several reasons:** The failures of health systems, including resource constraints; health system fragility due to climate change and humanitarian crises thwart progress. So do weak supply chains and a lack of competent health staff (including lack of access to midwives); insufficient access to and availability of quality life-saving maternal and neonatal health care, including for marginalised populations; the lack of public trust in some health systems, and harmful gender and social norms.

**Assessing progress towards zero GBV remains challenging**, primarily due to a lack of comparable data to establish global trends (more than 80 countries are missing data for at least one SDG 5 indicator<sup>2</sup>), as well as variations in programming focus in different countries. **There has been some progress in reducing child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM)**, areas where UNFPA collaborates closely in joint global programmes with UNICEF. No other types of harmful practices are tracked. While UNFPA has reported a decline in child marriage, the rate of this decline is insufficient to meet the 2030 target. Since UNFPA prioritised the end of child marriage among its transformative results, the rate of reduction in child marriage has accelerated slightly. The reduction of FGM has also evolved positively.

### **THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVISIT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO ENSURE ONGOING RELEVANCE FOR NEW CHALLENGES**

**UNFPA's work and achievements are relevant to partner countries within their national contexts and priorities (KPI 9).** A review of a sample of country programme evaluation, documents shows that UNFPA's results are deemed highly relevant to beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable populations, thanks to thorough needs assessments. UNFPA also demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability needed to maintain intervention relevance in changing contexts, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. UN Women (2023). "Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023".

TABLE 1. HOW HAS UNFPA RESPONDED TO MOPAN'S FINDINGS FROM 2018?

Areas for improvement identified by last MOPAN assessment (2018)	Progress made
<b>UNFPA's unique offering of population data analytics could be better leveraged with further planning and resources.</b>	Despite some efforts on this front, challenges regarding the availability and use of high-quality population data persist, as noted in the Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Plan 2022-25. On population change and data, of the nine sub-outputs, most (seven) were not achieved. The current share (66%) of countries producing key population data outputs is below the target of 83%.
<b>Internal delays in sign-offs and disbursements affect partnerships and programme implementation.</b>  <b>Speed in procurement of humanitarian supplies and personnel remains a challenge.</b>	<p>UNFPA has made partial progress in this area. It set internal standards and procedures to track implementation speed (including recommending timeliness for completion of different processes such as procurement), which are yet to be completed by SCMU's upcoming strategy. UNFPA has established standard operating procedures for humanitarian settings (2017), which are complemented by the fast-track procedures (FTP) to ensure a timely and efficient response in situations of special concern, including in humanitarian settings (see MI 5.7. in Annex A).</p> <p>According to the output scorecard and indicator updates in reports by the ED, UNFPA has attained, and perhaps even surpassed, its objectives in terms of timeliness of implementation and results at the corporate level. However, CPEs analysed for this assessment illustrate that bottlenecks remain in specific contexts (see MI 11.2 in Annex A). In 2024, UNFPA has launched a new IP reporting system as part of the ERP Transformation Project, which is anticipated to improve disbursement speed through automation in key areas.</p>
<b>Advocacy and policy dialogue in some countries is out of sync with the seniority level of country representatives.</b>	Some issues persist on this front. Respondents to the MOPAN survey suggested that the optimal balance between project staff and experienced, senior-level or international staff for effective sharing of best practices and engagement in advocacy and policy dialogue was not always achieved. (see MI 6.9. in Annex A).
<b>Reviews and engagement with partners at country level do not always help build those relationships or address partner concerns.</b>	UNFPA has made good progress in this area. It is participating in joint performance reviews of development and humanitarian assistance at country level which help to build relationships. UNFPA also participates in multi-stakeholder dialogue around joint sectoral or normative commitments, including at field level. Overall, respondents from the MOPAN survey agree that UNFPA shares key information with partners on an ongoing basis. However, some respondents of different categories (financial partners, peer organisations, IPs) disagreed with the fact that UNFPA shares key information with partners on an ongoing basis. (see MI 6.8. in Annex A)
<b>Capacity-building interventions are not achieving potential return on investment.</b>	The 2024 assessment finds that more effort is needed to ensure capacity-building efforts lead to sustainable results. There are however success stories of UNFPA's efforts to build capacity, and it is important to note that UNFPA's Strategic Plan highlights the commitment to strengthening and developing country systems and building and capacity. However, MOPAN's review of CPs confirms that capacity-building interventions are not yet achieving full return on investment. The Sierra Leone CP illustrates that adequate capacity-building alone may not be enough to guarantee sustainability. UNFPA's commendable work in strengthening capacity at national and district levels is overshadowed by the country's reliance on UNFPA for financing reproductive health commodities. This leaves the country vulnerable to a potential withdrawal of UNFPA's fiscal support. Showing similar potential sustainability issues, Cambodia has put participation and capacity building at the core of its programme, but the lack of a clear exit strategy leaves the timeline for the eventual self-reliance undefined. (see MI 12.1 in Annex A).

**Since the last MOPAN assessment in 2018, UNFPA’s senior management and EB have made far-reaching decisions to ensure the fund’s ongoing relevance.** The assessment found that UNFPA’s Strategic Plan 2022-25 (and 2018-21) had a clear long-term vision of achieving the 3TRs by 2030: ending preventable maternal deaths, ending the unmet need for family planning, ending GBV and harmful practices (especially child marriage and FGM). The strategic plan 2018-21 set the vision and charted the pathway towards achieving the TRs; strategic plans 2022-25 and 2026-29 seek to accelerate progress and tackle unfinished business. In addition, the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-25 is the first to contain a dedicated output on humanitarian action, reflecting its growing importance in safeguarding achievements during crises and attaining transformative results (KPI 1).

### Enhancing cross-cutting priorities

**Cross-cutting issues could be better addressed to ensure UNFPA’s continued relevance and visibility (KPI 2).** To achieve its results, UNFPA is committed to making greater use of **innovation and digitalisation**, called “accelerators” in its strategic plan 2022-25. It is preparing an innovation strategy, supported by the UN Equalizer Accelerator Fund, to channel funds for innovation. In rolling it out, UNFPA should ensure consistent approaches to innovation across the organisation and take advantage of learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities. In addition, while UNFPA has focused more on **climate change and climate-resilient programming** since the 2018 MOPAN assessment, this is still an area needing improvement. Two opportunities would be to emphasise the need for climate-adaptive health and protection systems and enhanced preparedness and robust emergency responses. UNFPA does not yet have a dedicated climate change strategy and results framework with clear objectives, indicators and targets.

### Rebalancing funding partnerships and priorities

**UNFPA can show significant efforts and successes in generating funding for UNFPA’s work and in moving from funding towards “funding and financing”.** Over the past decade, overall revenue has grown significantly by 52.7% (2014-23). Moreover, the organisation has surpassed the USD 1 billion benchmark and consistently exceeded its resource mobilisation targets throughout the 2019-24 assessment period. Humanitarian funding in particular has grown steadily from USD 293.7 million in 2019 to USD 444.3 million in 2023 (UNFPA, 2024g). This reflects the expanded role UNFPA has played in providing life-saving services in humanitarian settings. In addition, UNFPA strengthened partnerships with international financial institutions, with 29% of growth in funding originating from international financing institutions (IFIs) in 2023. Also, UNFPA has made efforts to diversify its funding sources. It has one the highest numbers of core donors among the voluntary funded entities in the UN system (95 in 2023 and 96 in 2022), demonstrating member states’ broad support of UNFPA and its mandate. UNFPA continuously seeks to broaden its donor base.

**These successes mask concerning trends (KPI 3).** Such trends include a decline in unearmarked contributions (core/regular resources) and a growing dependence on earmarked resources (reflective of a general trend within the donor community to towards earmarking funding). Despite the large number of donors overall, 98% of its core funding relies on the voluntary contributions of just 20 donors – all from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) countries. The likely withdrawal of one of its top donors would have significant consequences. In 2023, the USA was the second donor in terms of overall contributions, the seventh in terms of core contributions (USD 30.6 million), the second in non-core contributions (USD 131 million), and the largest contributor to UNFPA’s humanitarian response (more than USD 130 million).<sup>3</sup> The UNFPA Resource Mobilisation Strategy 2022-25, with its three relevant priority objectives,<sup>4</sup> contains important measures to sustain and shock-proof UNFPA’s revenue base, but its implementation for the period and beyond is a challenge.

3. UNFPA website, Donor Contributions, United States of America, <https://www.unfpa.org/data/donor-contributions>, accessed in December 2024

4. 1) Sustaining and shock-proofing UNFPA’s revenue base with predictable, flexible, multi-year support; 2) increasing, diversifying, and scaling resources required to deliver on UNFPA’s mandate with core funding and non-core funding and 3) advancing UNFPA’s commitment to catalysing and leveraging finances to close the USD 222.2 billion funding gap for the strategic plan and its transformative results.”

**UNFPA will inevitably face greater funding challenges in the coming years. Notwithstanding its resource mobilisation successes, and despite efforts to diversify its funding sources, it has yet to rebalance its partnerships and continue to reach beyond governments.** This entails looking at innovative ways to mobilise IFIs, other United Nations (UN) agencies, the corporate sector and foundations to ensure to ensure as much stability as possible, particularly in light of possible forthcoming funding gaps.

**Funding challenges highlight the need to continue to use limited resources judiciously. UNFPA has already made a significant effort to ensure operational efficiencies.** For example, in 2022, it realised an overall operational efficiency gain of USD 34.7 million related to UNFPA-specific initiatives on the one hand and initiatives with partner UN organisations on the other. Country programme evaluations indicate that interventions are designed to produce outputs in the most cost/resource-efficient manner available. Interviews suggest that marginal efficiency gains may still be possible, especially by leveraging shared resources and expertise in collaboration with other UN agencies, but they are likely to be limited.

**UNFPA prioritises Tier 1 countries in allocating its resources in line with its commitment to leave no one behind** in the 150+ countries and territories where it operates. The strategic plan 2022-25 prioritised the 54 countries furthest from achieving the TRs by 2030, most of which are in Africa. Furthermore, the minimum annual floor for all UNFPA country offices with a country programme document was raised from USD 300,000 to USD 500,000 in an attempt to ensure that all country offices can effectively fulfil their essential normative functions.

**Funding therefore goes to the countries where it is most relevant for the TRs and where the need for support is highest. This creates consequences for Tier 2 and Tier 3 countries that merit reflection.** Many country offices in middle-income countries receive little more than the annual floor of USD 500,000 of core funds to play UNFPA's normative role, mobilise additional resources, and implement country programmes. UNFPA's efforts to communicate the importance of core funds, a broad and diverse donor base, multi-year funding and early payments including through structured funding dialogues, are thus essential but difficult given current financial constraints



**Cuba 2022 – A group of seniors attending the Day Centre of the Belen Convent in Old Havana**

Ageing is a demographic and development challenge in Cuba. In 2021, the population aged 60 years and over represented 21.6% of the total population. The Belen Convent is financed and managed by the Humanitarian Services Unit of the Office of the Historian of the City of Havana which is supported by UNFPA. Photo: © UNFPA / Jorge Luis Baños

and competition for funding. UNFPA continues to seek innovative ways to mobilise its own funds. However, it has not yet effectively shifted to leveraging domestic public and private financing especially and to collaborating with international financial institutions (IFIs), as announced in the strategic plan 2022-25 (KPI 4).

**The mid-term review of the strategic plan 2022-25 identified gaps and challenges in implementing the shift to funding and financing TRs** promoted by the UNFPA Resource Mobilisation Strategy and the ICPD agenda. Building on experience and lessons learnt from existing initiatives to operationalise the shift from funding to funding and financing includes the launch of the first development impact bond by a UN organisation and implementation of the strategic investment facility. Nonetheless, further efforts to leverage development financing are required. UNFPA's Financing the ICPD Agenda (2024-30) Strategy establishes priority objectives, strategic interventions and KPIs to drive efforts in this area. Increasing financing for the TRs will require solid engagement with key government donors, tailored approaches to emerging donors, expanded engagement in the multilateral space, and a greater focus on funding from programme countries. It will also require more and expanded partnerships with the private sector, philanthropy, individuals, IFIs, and regional banks. Recent progress in partnerships with IFIs include the new institutional framework agreements with five IFIs, including the World Bank Group.

### Revisiting strategic priorities

**UNFPA needs to re-think its strategic focus and prioritise its intervention areas based on new opportunities, available capacity and resources.** The current sharp focus on the 3TRs concentrates efforts on dedicated priorities, but it may at the same time hinder UNFPA from engaging in other vital SRHR support beyond the TRs and supporting countries' efforts to achieve demographic resilience. The next review of UNFPA's strategic focus should consider new opportunities and risks and continue to ensure the fund's ongoing relevance and visibility. Interviews suggest that in countries where other national priorities have emerged, UNFPA country offices feel constrained by the TRs and fear that their organisation's relevance and visibility will decline. The narrow corporate focus on maternal health and contraceptives for family planning in particular makes it difficult for UNFPA to support governments in tackling other female and male SRH issues – HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs),<sup>5</sup> cervical cancer and infertility – and in creating a conducive socio-economic environment for empowering people to obtain their desired fertility.

**The decision not to include population dynamics among the highest-level organisational goals has, to some degree, limited UNFPA's ability to address the complex demographic changes that many countries face.** This is particularly relevant given UNFPA's unique mandate, expertise, and status as a major supporter of population data collection (administrative data, censuses and surveys). Including and elevating this area in line with the 2024 QCPR<sup>6</sup> would allow UNFPA to fully leverage its expertise and mandate in this critical area and ensure its ongoing relevance and visibility. It would also allow UNFPA to better support countries to understand, anticipate and respond to demographic changes given the global trend of shrinking and ageing populations due to low fertility and outmigration.

## BUILDING ACHIEVEMENTS FOR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND PERFORMANCE AND LASTING RESULTS

### Further strengthening the operational model

**UNFPA has reviewed its operating model to align with its strategic vision and meet current needs** (KPI 1). Against the backdrop of a growing number of humanitarian crises and displaced populations, UNFPA's earlier **successful transformation into a development-humanitarian organisation** and more recent measures to strengthen humanitarian action and coordination are laudable. There is evidence of these changes at several levels. At the strategic level, a dedicated output for humanitarian action in the strategic plan; at the structural level, the creation of a humanitarian response division, and at the operational level, a revised fast-track policy and procedures. In addition,

5. Despite being part of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) that unites the efforts of 11 UN organisations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank.

6. United Nations (2024), Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, 25 November 2024, [A/C.2/79/L.60](#), para. 30.

oversight now includes inter-agency humanitarian evaluations, and finances have benefitted from the successful mobilisation of non-core resources -- including for the humanitarian thematic fund. UNFPA is also committed to strengthen local and national capacities in humanitarian responses, in line with the Grand Bargain localisation commitments. In 2023, UNFPA partnered with 360 local and national actors, representing around 80% of UNFPA's IPs - and transferred approximately USD 141.5 million (34.9% of UNFPA's total humanitarian funding) directly to them - exceeding the Grand Bargain target of 25%. Of this, USD 135 million supported local and national NGOs, while close to USD 7 million funded local and national government responses.<sup>7</sup>

**UNFPA has yet to link its humanitarian and development work more closely (KPI 1, KPI 5).** From both a programmatic and funding perspective, its humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) work have not yet been successfully bridged. The UNFPA Strategic Plan does not highlight the OECD-DAC recommendation on the HDP nexus, and its implementation is not monitored. The programme design process does not sufficiently reflect the HDP spirit and most country programme documents make no reference to it. UNFPA policies and standard operating procedures for guiding a humanitarian response focus predominantly on the actions for an immediate response to nascent emergencies. The Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS) 2023 report on internal audit and investigation activities indicates that there was no overarching framework to guide country offices in integrating and operationalising their humanitarian response in existing country programme documents. Nor are standards or procedures for ensuring accountability for affected populations (AAP) available.

**To deliver faster, UNFPA can still resolve some bottlenecks (KPI 11).** Overall, it delivers in a timely manner. It has filled surge requests efficiently, shortened its recruitment processes and delivered reproductive health commodity orders punctually. The MOPAN assessment confirmed this for the country level, too. However, bottlenecks remain, particularly in emergencies. Country Programme Evaluations and MOPAN interviews point to occasional delays in disbursements and co-ordination. UNFPA can, through partnerships and contingency planning, expedite lengthy approval processes further, minimise administrative delays, and resolve product delivery bottlenecks.

In addition, **UNFPA has yet to find ways to make the impact of its work more enduring.** Its efforts to improve local capacities and advocacy for legal and policy changes are promising but the financial dependency of partners on UNFPA and the absence of defined exit strategies have also jeopardised sustainability. As flagged by OAIS, it is particularly challenging to ensure greater sustainability in humanitarian response interventions.

**To serve its partner countries better, UNFPA has invested in delegating greater authority to regions and country offices, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (KPI 3).** Decentralising important programmatic and financial decisions to regional and country levels has greatly facilitated partnerships and humanitarian action. For instance, UNFPA was able to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic partly because it promptly delegated reprogramming and resource reallocation decisions to its country offices. Furthermore, since 2022, UNFPA representatives and office heads have been authorised to determine the modes of engagement for implementing UNFPA country programmes. However, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) finds that key decisions on human resources remain centralised even though UNFPA appointed new human resources business partners in its regional offices.

**UNFPA's HQ Optimisation initiative is a major organisational reform to bring the organisation closer to the people it serves. UNFPA will need to closely monitor the achievement of the desired efficiency gains and benefits.** The initiative was a response to lagging progress on TRs in many countries of the Global South. Consolidating the policy and strategy division and the technical division into one programme division largely located in Nairobi is a major step that implies relocating approximately one quarter of New York-based posts. The need for continued strong normative engagement is well-reflected in the new structure, both in terms of the staffing complement that

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7. [Grand Bargain Self Reporting 2024 - Activity/Info](#).

will remain in New York and in terms of the consolidation of the Geneva and Addis Ababa Representation Offices into the Division for External Relations. Regional and country offices, where much of the normative work takes place, will also benefit from this move. UNFPA staff and EB members alike generally welcome the integration, including, among other elements, the creation of a data and analytics branch.

However, many UNFPA staff did not expect the relocation. Announced in September 2023 and scheduled to begin in March 2025, the relocation provoked personal and professional concerns. During interviews, stakeholders anticipated various challenges: communications with New York, the loss of talent, temporary disruptions to business continuity, negative impacts on UNFPA’s normative role and its interactions with member state delegations, its presence in UN intergovernmental processes and activities in New York, especially given growing pushback against SRHR, and a heavy burden on the small liaison offices remaining in New York.

**UNFPA has strengthened its role within the UNDS (UNFPA 2022).** It has contributed significantly to UN system-wide effectiveness by strengthening coordination, collaboration, and generating knowledge. It is well-aligned with member state expectations and the 2030 Agenda; it plays a key role in UN joint programmes and inter-agency mechanisms. It has distinguished itself in humanitarian settings particularly, notably SRHR and GBV in the provision of lifesaving, quality, multisectoral services in humanitarian emergencies. UNFPA’s rapid response efforts in 50 crisis-affected countries in 2023 led to over 4.2 million people finding safety and protection from gender-based violence and over 10 million people accessing essential sexual and reproductive health services, including clean and safe delivery, prenatal care, emergency obstetric and newborn care, postnatal care, clinical management of rape, treatment, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections, and family planning. UNFPA has also taken a leading role in coordinating PSEA in several countries.

#### Haiti, 2024 – Giving birth amid crisis

Jolanda Dimanche, 21, gave birth to her first child two days ago at the Eliazar Germain Hospital. Pictured tending to her newborn son.

Essential medicines and supplies, including for the clinical management of rape, are in short supply, as are staff. Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health care and services to prevent and respond to violence, is close to impossible.

Photo: © UNFPA Haiti/  
Wendy Desert





**United States,  
2024 – 78th session  
of the UN General  
Assembly  
(UNGA 78)**

Dr Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of UNFPA, speaks at the High Impact Initiative: Data Dividend Session during UNGA 78. Photo: © UNFPA/ Yuntong Man

**Still, UNFPA must reflect on its comparative strengths within the larger UN development system (KPIs 1 and 6).**

Its strategic plan does not adequately articulate its comparative advantages relative to other UN agencies, which leads to operational challenges in the division of labour. This is particularly evident in the relationship with UN Women, where the lack of a formal agreement on the division of labour has led to coordination issues and missed opportunities for collaborating at the country level and in terms of synergies and efficiency. Additionally, UNFPA's Career and Performance Management system has historically overlooked staff contributions to the reform processes and inter-agency collaboration in the UN development system, although steps are being taken to address this.

UNFPA has actively embraced UN reforms and participates in the greatest number of UN joint programmes of all UN agencies. The reforms come with significant drawbacks, however. These include high transaction and monetary costs, including substantial financial contributions to the resident coordinator system and the management of a 1% coordination levy on earmarked contributions.

**Continuously strengthening RBM and ERM practices for stronger results**

**UNFPA has been making efforts to optimise decision-making by better managing results and risks. It is also strengthening its oversight functions to ensure strong learning and accountability to its stakeholders.**

**UNFPA is making strides in fostering a results-oriented culture but there is still room for improvement in its results-based approach.** It has a long history of implementing an RBM-based approach, and a “RBM Seal” was introduced to promote the use of RBM principles and standards by UNFPA country offices (KPI 7). **Its global monitoring and reporting systems still focus primarily on outputs due to challenges in attributing progress** to the high-level TRs to specific organisations (UNFPA, 2019). Moving from measuring outputs to measuring outcomes remains challenging. Moreover, reports to the EB often highlight successes whereas critical self-assessments of underperforming areas are less prominent. UNFPA's results reporting largely focuses on implementation and effectiveness while information on relevance, efficiency and sustainability is scattered.

**UNFPA’s corporate monitoring system is improving but requires more adequate M&E resources** -- staff seniority, time and continuity. Indeed, staff levels and seniority vary substantially across the regions. Dedicated M&E officers are concentrated in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, the regions with larger country offices. Focal points arrangements are located primarily in regions where country offices have relatively smaller budgets. In addition, the regional offices covered by six regional M&E advisors have high staff turnover rates. Interviews and the peer review of the evaluation function indicate that these regional M&E advisors do not work exclusively on monitoring. The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) has been strengthened with a new UNFPA evaluation policy approved in 2024. The policy states that UNFPA will gradually include all types of decentralised evaluations in the revamped evaluation quality assurance and assessment system. In addition, IEO developed and rolled out since 2023 a pioneering strategy for a generative AI-powered evaluation function. The 2023 peer review of the UNFPA evaluation function recognised the independence and quality of the IEO, but noted that decentralised evaluations are less independent and have feedback loops that could benefit from further strengthening (UNEG and OECD, 2023).

**Since the MOPAN assessment in 2014, the UNFPA enterprise risk management (ERM) system has matured** (KPI 5). The 2014 MOPAN assessment had suggested that UNFPA improve its strategies for identifying, reducing, tracking, and reporting risks. The 2018 assessment found that UNFPA had made progress in its approach to risk and risk management. It found evidence at all organisational levels that staff was more aware of risks and that new processes had improved UNFPA’s ability to respond to and reduce them. It concluded that UNFPA’s financial and risk management systems were strong and carefully monitored. In April 2022, UNFPA launched its first ERM policy, spanning all oversight policies, and took measures to implement it (UNFPA, 2022b). It established more robust, independent oversight functions to improve accountability, transparency and responsible decision-making.

**The present assessment confirms that UNFPA has further strengthened ERM as a strategic corporate tool** for navigating the uncertainties inherent in its work. The ERM Policy is an essential milestone in increasing risk maturity at all levels of the organisation, and moving beyond competencies, capacities and procedures towards an institutional culture and corporate framework for risk management. The roll-out is still underway at the country level and will need to be completed.

**UNFPA oversight and accountability functions have been significantly strengthened.** The OAIS was restructured, its handling of investigations improved, and the ethics office was enlarged. **Over the years, UNFPA has built a robust framework to address sexual misconduct** through its policies, personnel training, reporting mechanisms and survivor support services. The development of its first organisation-specific policy to protect from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in July 2024 further strengthened UNFPA’s work in this area (UNFPA, 2024d). It is a strong inter-agency player in PSEA, notably in supporting the UN’s work to make IPs accountable. Opportunities for continuous strengthening remain. Resources merit strengthening especially to bolster country-level capacity and human resources to coordinate PSEAH efforts, including on sexual harassment. As the system-wide lead agency on gender-based violence prevention and response, UNFPA often acts as the provider of last resort for other agencies in supporting SEA survivors. It is therefore important that it clearly delineate resources for GBV and PSEAH.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

**The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2026-29 offers a timely opportunity to revisit strategic focus and operating model.** Continuity in UNFPA’s strategic focus and the underlying operating model offers significant advantages for the organisation and its member states. These include predictability, reduced risk, optimised processes, and enhanced brand reputation and employee engagement. However, sustained relevance requires a delicate balance between continuity and adaptation in response to evolving global, regional and national priorities.

Developing the new UNFPA Strategic Plan 2026-29 is relevant for paving the way towards a post-2030 Agenda, building on the foundations laid by the SDGs and setting ambitious new goals and targets to address remaining challenges

and emerging issues. By loosening its strategic focus on SRHR beyond the TRs, UNFPA can strengthen its impact. This includes taking a more comprehensive approach to addressing demographic changes and leveraging digitalisation. It also involves strengthening its climate change efforts and the HDP nexus and addressing funding challenges. Through these actions, UNFPA can continue to be a leading force in advancing global health and development.

**These strategic choices are being made in an unfavourable funding environment.** The uncertainty in UNFPA’s operating environment has inevitable consequences for the effectiveness and efficiency of its work and the sustainability of the results to which it contributes. Although UNFPA has made efforts to improve operational efficiency and to diversify sources of funding, those will not fill the gaps left by declining donor resources. If UNFPA is to continue its critical work in support of SRHR and strengthen its commitment to demographic resilience, it will need to mobilise additional resources to fully implement the next strategic plan.

**UNFPA has shown commendable engagement in advancing system-wide effectiveness and is committed to learning from experience.** The formative evaluation of UNFPA’s engagement in the UNDS reform in 2022, the first of its kind in the UN system, is evidence of this. The fund’s role in fostering inter-agency coordination and collaboration in development and humanitarian settings, generating data and sharing knowledge for evidence-based decision-making is instrumental in advancing the SDGs and improving the lives of millions worldwide. This assessment calls upon UNFPA to remain a fundamental pillar of the UN system, based on clear comparative advantages. Continuing to shape and leverage UN reform processes would benefit UNFPA’s performance and that of the entire UN system, including the UN Secretary-General’s UN 2.0 Quintet of Change, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) and the implementation of the Pact of the Future.

**UNFPA may need to re-consider its goals in the context of the SDGs.** The mid-term review of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-25 indicates that the ambitious transformative results will not be achieved by 2030 at the global level, given current progress. UNFPA could consider additional outcomes. These could be immediate or intermediate between the outputs and the 3TRs, while maintaining alignment with SDGs 3 and 5 at the impact level. This would allow for more frequent monitoring and organisation-specific reporting.



**Ukraine, 2024 – Tatiana Putria, a nurse at work in the Kherson region**

“I am not a hero, I am a medic. Often we are afraid to drive to certain areas. Sometimes, the residents say to us, ‘We just had a shelling this morning. How did you come here, how are you not afraid?’”

UNFPA is working alongside the Government of Ukraine to restore and expand life-saving reproductive health and protection services.

Photo: © UNFPA Ukraine/Alina Stara

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#### **Afghanistan, 2024 – Emergency maternity clinic in Torkham**

Ms Shoko Arakaki, Director of UNFPA Humanitarian Response Division, speaks with female service providers from the UNFPA-supported Basic Health Centre in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan. The facility provides 24/7 services to Afghans returning to their country from Pakistan through the Torkham border crossing. Photo: © UNFPA Afghanistan/Arlene Alano

# ASSESSMENT FINDINGS



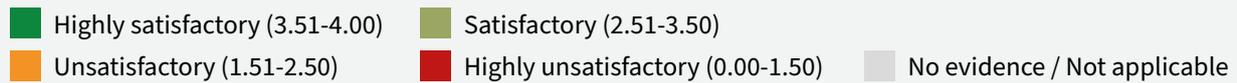


#### **Gaza, 2024 – Maternal health services at Al Mawasi Field Hospital**

UNFPA's first mobile maternity unit arrived in Rafah on 9 April and is stationed at Al Mawasi Field Hospital. The unit is equipped to provide comprehensive emergency obstetric care (CEmOC), including Caesarean sections and can provide blood transfusions. It provides a lifeline to women and helps to relieve pressure on the remaining functioning hospitals in Gaza which are struggling to cope. The maternity unit is operated by UNFPA's partner, International Medical Corps (IMC). Photo: © UNFPA/Elke Mayrhofer

This chapter provides a more detailed assessment of UNFPA’s performance across the five performance areas – strategic management, operational management, relationship management, and performance management and results. The chapter lists the KPIs related to each area, their scores and ratings, and a brief summary of findings for each. The MOPAN performance scoring and rating scales are listed in Figure 6.

**FIGURE 6. MOPAN 3.1 PERFORMANCE SCORING AND RATING SCALE**

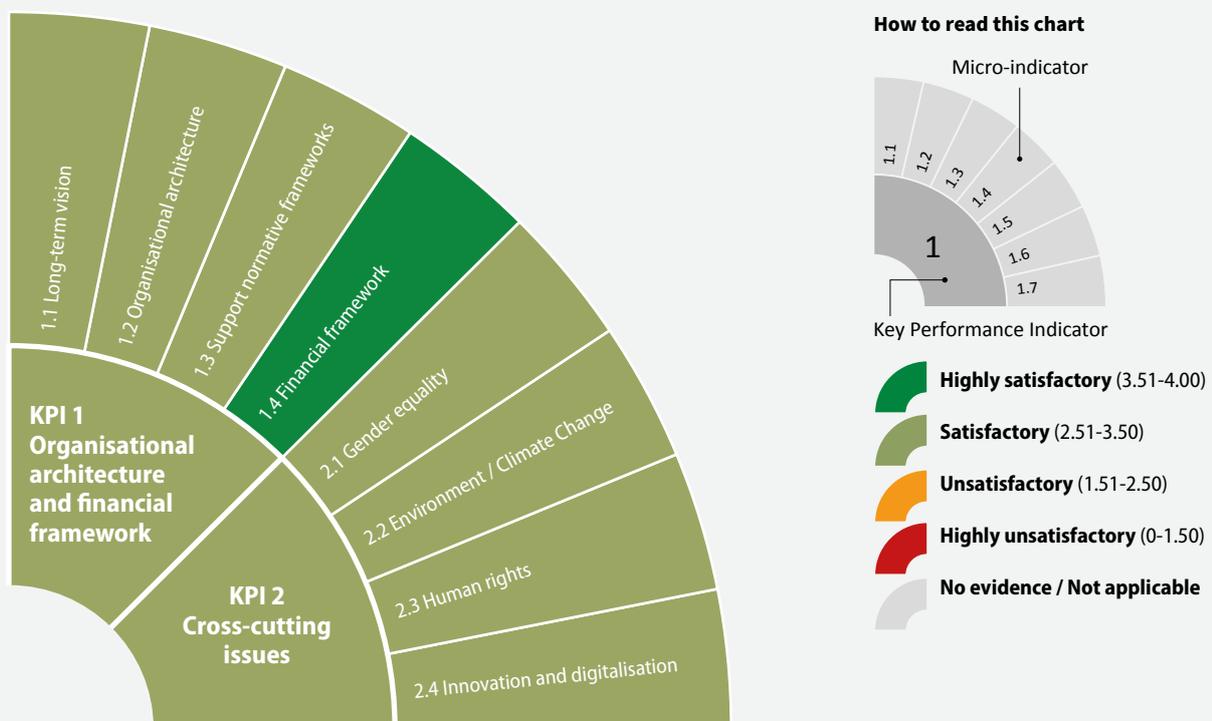


Assessment key findings draw on information from the three evidence sources -- document reviews, interviews and a partner survey (see Chapter 4 for more information). Further analysis per micro-indicator and detailed scoring can be found in Annex A; the full survey results are included in Annex C. For the full list and citation details of documents, please see Annex B.

**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

*Clear strategic direction geared to key functions, intended results and the integration of relevant cross-cutting priorities.*

**FIGURE 7. KEY FINDINGS ON UNFPA’S STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**



**UNFPA has a strong vision, which is closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda. It needs to reflect on its comparative advantages within the UNDS and refine its strategic priorities.** UNFPA’s strategic plan outlines a clear long-term vision, and the 3TRs provide a clear focus. The organisation has consistently adapted its structure and operating model to meet internal management and external programme needs. UNFPA’s financial framework supports the implementation of its mandate. However, the strategic plan does not sufficiently articulate the

organisation's comparative advantages with respect to other UN agencies. The concentrated focus on the 3TRs may be limiting collaboration to strengthen other vital SRHR services and country efforts to achieve demographic resilience.

**UNFPA has also supported most cross-cutting issues at the strategic level, but environmental sustainability requires more attention.** UNFPA policies recognise gender equality and women's empowerment far more, and the organisation emphasises human rights and made significant progress on innovation and digitalisation. For now, however, UNFPA lacks a dedicated climate change strategy and sufficient resources to reach its objectives and ambitions on this issue. The current strategy focuses more on reducing UNFPA's carbon footprint.

### **KPI 1: Organisational architecture and financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results.**

Satisfactory

3.19

*KPI 1 assesses how UNFPA's organisational architecture and financial framework allow the organisation to carry out its mandate and achieve expected results. The assessment is structured along four MIs pertaining to UNFPA's strategic plan, organisational architecture and operating model, strategic alignment with global commitments, and financial framework.*

**UNFPA's EB regularly reviews its strategic plan, which is publicly accessible, and outlines a clear long-term vision and approach. The board approves UNFPA's financial framework, which is based on a bottom-up approach to budgeting and funding allocation and supports mandate implementation. However, it does not sufficiently articulate the organisation's comparative advantages with respect to other UN agencies. Furthermore, its concentrated focus on 3TRs may be hindering collaboration to strengthen other vital SRHR services and countries' efforts to achieve demographic resilience.**

UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2022-25 (and strategic plan 2018-21) contains a clear long-term vision: by 2030, end preventable maternal deaths, the unmet need for family planning, GBV and harmful practices (especially child marriage and female genital mutilation)—the so-called transformative results. The strategic plan 2018-21 set the vision and charted the pathway towards achieving the transformative results. The strategic plan 2022-25 intends to accelerate progress. The strategic plan 2026-29 seeks to tackle unfinished business.

The integrated results and resources framework (IRRF) related to the UNFPA Strategic Plan is logically structured around the transformative results at the outcome level; the strategic plan states that UNFPA will achieve these outcomes by delivering on six interconnected outputs, focused on policy and accountability, quality of care and services, gender and social norms, population change and data, humanitarian action, and adolescents and youth. All are considered to have a multidimensional, "many-to-many" relationship with the outcomes. The strategic plan also contains a dedicated output on humanitarian action for the first time, reflecting the growing importance of its work to safeguard achievements and attain transformative results in crisis situations.

However, some interviewees voiced concerns that UNFPA was prioritising the three transformative results over other essential sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. They were also concerned that it was not sufficiently clear how the mandate should be interpreted to assist countries in understanding, anticipating and responding to demographic change, especially given the global trend towards shrinking and ageing populations (due to low fertility and outmigration), and that clearer benchmarks would be needed for a better balance. They also found that the strategic plan did not adequately articulate the fund's comparative advantages with respect to its sister UN agencies.

**UNFPA has consistently adapted its organisational structure and operating model to meet internal management and external programme needs, aligning with its long-term vision. The intent underlying recent changes to the system for allocating core resources is positive. However, there is a concern that UNFPA offices in countries closer to achieving the transformative results lack a critical mass of funding.**

Headquartered New York with several HQ functions based in Geneva and Copenhagen, UNFPA operates six regional offices, eight representational offices, and two subregional offices in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. Country programmes are managed and implemented by 121 country offices.

Since the last MOPAN assessment in 2018, UNFPA has implemented a range of critical organisational reforms at the global level. It has restructured the UNFPA Division for Human Resources, reinforced the humanitarian response division (the former humanitarian office) in Geneva, launched a SCMU in Copenhagen, created an innovation unit, and allocated additional staff to its independent oversight offices. During the MOPAN assessment period, UNFPA was implementing reforms - the “HQ Optimisation” initiative - to further align its organisational architecture with its high-level priorities and objectives. The initiative includes integrating the policy and strategy division and the technical division into one programme division based in Nairobi, to which the evaluation office would also be relocated. The initiative has elicited support as well as concerns on the part of staff and member states.

UNFPA has also adapted its operating model – “Business Model” (Strategic Plan 2022-25 Annex 3) to accelerate progress towards the transformative results. It made several changes to tailor solutions better to each local context: UNFPA country offices now have complete autonomy to decide which mode of engagement to employ – i.e., advocacy and policy dialogue, capacity development, knowledge management, coordination, partnership and South-South Cooperation, or service delivery. Furthermore, UNFPA classified programme countries into three tiers based on whether they have reached or exceeded thresholds related to the transformative results (discontinuing the colour quadrants). Using the tiers and other criteria, UNFPA’s core resource allocation system was modified to prioritise funding for the 54 Tier 1 programme countries furthest from achieving the transformative results. Tier 2 and 3 countries, in turn, in particular upper-middle countries, are expected to leverage domestic resources for impacts, focus on UNFPA’s normative role and support national ownership in addressing inequality issues, instead of delivering services itself to populations left behind. However, interviewees indicated that numerous Tier 2 and Tier 3 country offices were struggling to leverage much-needed funding and financing despite the increase in the minimum floor from USD 300,000 to USD 500,000 a year since the previous strategic plan. The six accelerators and 12 strategic shifts for country offices introduced as part of UNFPA’s business model to accelerate progress towards outputs and outcomes were welcomed. However, they were introduced without sufficient conceptualisation and have not been used to their full potential.

**The UNFPA Strategic Plan aligns well with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and relevant human rights conventions. However, it lacks references to and does not report to the EB on critical humanitarian framework to which the organisation is a signatory.**

The UNFPA 2022-25 Strategic Plan, with its transformative results, closely aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDGs 3 (good health and wellbeing) and 5 (gender equality), as well as the core principles of human rights, gender equality, partnerships and LNOB. It also consistently refers to other normative frameworks, especially the ICPD. It refers to international mechanisms or conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and universal periodic reviews. UNFPA has also affirmed its alignment with the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities for the development of the UN system. Interviews especially highlighted the centrality of the ICPD Programme of Action and UNFPA’s role in advancing its implementation, celebrating success and upholding agreed-upon standards and results in light of

political pushback. On the humanitarian side, however, the strategic plan fails to highlight UNFPA's alignment with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30, the Grand Bargain and the OECD-DAC recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, to which UNFPA is a signatory. Furthermore, apart from detailed reporting to the EB on the implementation of the QCPR recommendations, UNFPA does not report its results against other global commitments to the EB.

**UNFPA's financial framework supports the implementation of the organisation's mandate. It is approved by the EB and based on a bottom-up approach to budgeting and funding allocation. Strategic dialogues with the EB, new global thematic funds, and increased access to pooled and inter-organisational funding demonstrate UNFPA's preference for core and lightly earmarked non-core funding.**

The UNFPA Strategic Plan includes an estimate of additional resources needed to achieve the transformative results by 2030 (as of 2019), thus extending beyond the plan's period. This comprises USD 59.9 billion to end the unmet need for family planning, USD 103.6 billion to end preventable maternal deaths, and USD 58.7 billion to end GBV and harmful practices. The organisation intends to set clear priorities given limited funding, although that planning does not differentiate between GBV and harmful practices. UNFPA conducts financial and budgetary planning in a consultative, bottom-up manner every four years in tandem with strategic planning. It is approved by the EB as an integrated budget, which this assessment finds adequate to ensure transparency within and outside the organisation. Projections for core and non-core resources are formulated based on indications from donors, an analysis of contribution trends, an assessment of the funding landscape and a needs-based costing analysis. The EB is not involved in annual resource allocation and distribution decisions but retrospectively reviews annual statistical and financial reports and board of auditors reports.

In support of its long-term vision, UNFPA (as also evidenced by its resource mobilisation strategy 2022-25) is very clear about its preference for core and lightly earmarked non-core funding. To this end, it has operationalised the UN Funding Compact by carrying out annual structured funding dialogues with the EB. These dialogues are to improve the quantity and quality of funding to achieve UNFPA's corporate objectives. However, in 2022, the formative evaluation of UNFPA's engagement in the UNDS reform found that financial and political landscapes significantly influence donor funding patterns more than agency performance, despite the funding compact. Furthermore, UNFPA has continued to encourage member states to provide voluntary non-core funding through four entity-specific thematic funds for lightly earmarked funding: the supplies partnership (since 2008), the maternal and newborn health thematic fund (since 2008), the humanitarian thematic fund (since 2019), and the population data thematic fund (since 2020). It has collaborated with UN sister agencies to attract funding through the UN pooled funding modality, often considerably exceeding the funding compact target of 10%. According to the UNFPA Statistical and Financial Review for 2023, UNFPA received somewhat less in combined contributions through pooled funds and inter-organisational transfers - USD 218.7 million in 2022 and USD 208.2 million in 2023.

## **KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles**

Satisfactory

3.42

Although UNFPA strategic plans do not specify "cross-cutting issues", the strategic plan 2022-25 identified six "accelerators" to achieve its six outputs. We have thus interpreted KPI 2 accordingly and adapted the cross-cutting issues from the MOPAN framework for the identified cross-cutting issues: gender equality, environment, human rights and innovation/digitalisation.

**UNFPA has greatly improved the recognition of gender equality and women's empowerment at policy level.** The fund's strategy is grounded in the principle of gender equality, thus ensuring that UNFPA applies a gender lens

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**Lebanon, 2024  
– Psychological  
support for  
internally  
displaced people**

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A UNFPA delegation visits a government-supported shelter in Beirut where UNFPA is implementing much-needed gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health activities.

Photo: © UNFPA  
Lebanon/Anastacia  
Hajj



to all its work. Its strategic plan 2022-25 thus identifies the main target groups as women, adolescents, and youth, especially adolescent girls. The UNFPA Gender Equality Strategy for 2022-25 (the third such strategy) outlines the corporate approach to integrating gender equality and the rights of women and adolescent girls into planning and programming. There is a clear commitment to gender equality within reporting and evaluation systems, as well a strong commitment to adopt a transformative approach, notably through its agency, choice and access framework. However, mainstreaming the gender transformative approach at corporate level could still be strengthened by appropriating more gender screening tools and capacity development.

**UNFPA has demonstrated its growing attention to climate change and environmental sustainability.** The last MOPAN assessment indicated the absence of a dedicated policy on environmental sustainability or climate change. The Strategic Plan 2022-25 introduces the integration of “effects of megatrends, such as climate change, demographic shifts, inequalities and digitalisation, into programming” among its 12 strategic shifts. It recognises that UNFPA contributes to SDG Goal 13 of- to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. UNFPA’s commitment is apparent in its adoption of an environmental efficiency strategy 2021-25 to reduce its carbon emissions and environmental footprint more broadly, and its social and environmental standards to ensure that its programming causes no inadvertent harm to people and the environment. UNFPA has also provided guidance for its evaluations to integrate social and environmental standards into evaluations and encourages them to do so. However, it dedicates few resources to reach its objectives and ambitions on this issue.

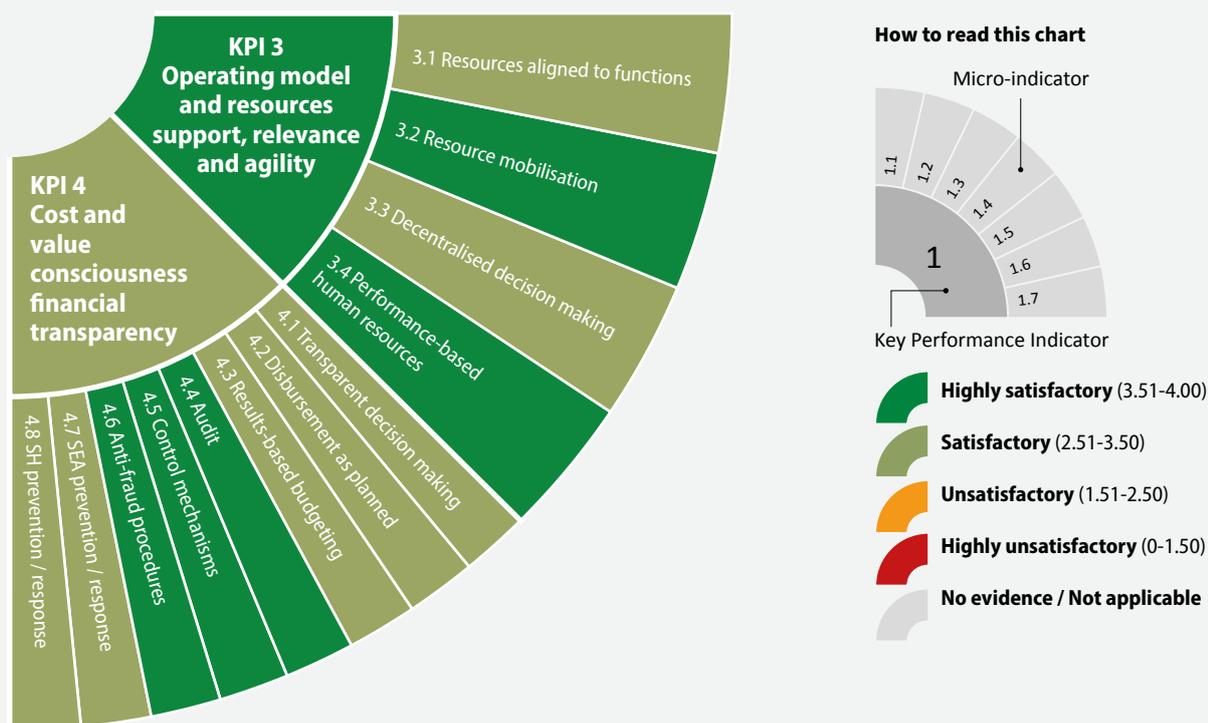
**Learning from the strategic plan 2018-21, UNFPA’s strategic plan 2022-25 places greater emphasis on promoting human rights for all and the necessity of LNOB.** It includes the human-rights-based approach (HRBA) and the LNOB principle among its six accelerators. Currently, neither the HRBA nor the LNOB principle are institutionalised through a single corporate strategy but are integrated as a cross-cutting issue at the corporate level through guidance and the SES framework. These accelerators are not monitored in terms of resource allocation, making it difficult to appreciate the dedicated resources.

**Significant progress has also been observed in innovation and digitalisation** since the last MOPAN assessment. Innovation and digitalisation became one of the six accelerators, although no dedicated policy/strategy document ensures or tracks the strengthening of innovations to improve programming results. Nonetheless, the new innovation strategy is being developed and several initiatives such as the equalizer accelerator fund have already been implemented.

## OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Assets and capacities organised behind strategic direction and intended results, to ensure relevance, agility and accountability.

FIGURE 8. KEY FINDINGS ON UNFPA'S OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT



UNFPA has continuously refined its operating model to support its relevance and agility in diverse areas, such as human resources, resource mobilisation and decentralisation. It has delegated greater authority to regions and country offices, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNFPA has restructured its division for human resources and placed human resources business partners in all of its regional offices. It has also transitioned from a performance appraisal and development system to a more comprehensive career and performance management framework for its staff.

Regarding resources, UNFPA's Resource Mobilisation Strategy 2022-25 aligns well with the strategic plan. Its emphasis on multi-year funding has shown some results. However, UNFPA continues to rely on a limited number of top core contributors, and the implementation of the funding and financing approach is facing some challenges.

UNFPA's organisational systems are value-conscious and have enabled a high degree of transparency and accountability. It is implementing a robust, participatory results-based budgeting system that adheres to the international public sector accounting standards (IPSAS). It has consistently strengthened its ERM system. However, delays in receiving some member state core contributions affect financial predictability, resource planning and the ability to allocate resources to decentralised levels. UNFPA has built a robust framework to protect from SEAH, introduced its first organisation-specific dedicated two-year strategy for PSEAH in 2024, and is a strong inter-agency player in this area.

**KPI 3: Operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility****Highly satisfactory****3.65**

*KPI 3 assesses how UNFPA's operating model and resources support relevance and agility. The assessment is structured along four MIs: human resources (including in the context of the UN resident coordinator system), the performance assessment system, resource mobilisation, and decentralisation.*

**UNFPA has grown from a small to a medium-size UN agency. Its workforce has increased considerably over the last decade, mainly thanks to increased non-core resources. Core resources have tended to bolster HQ, which the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) criticised. As part of UNFPA's commitment to strengthen the UN development system, UNFPA representatives are put forward to serve as resident coordinators and acting resident coordinators.**

Over the last decade, the number of national officers grew by 47%, international professional staff grew by 40%, and general services staff by 23%. As of the end of December 2022, UNFPA had a workforce of 5,227 personnel. Of these, 60.3% were staff members, and 39.7% were non-staff personnel: consultants (17.4%), service contractors (16.8%) and UN volunteers (5.5%). Non-core resources rather than strategic considerations and long-term planning are primarily responsible for this workforce growth in the development and humanitarian spheres. With existing core resources, UNFPA has tended to bolster headquarters rather than country presence, which the ACABQ criticised.

UNFPA has been a reliable and generous supporter of the resident coordinator system, doubling its cost-sharing contribution (USD 17.7 million for 2019-22). In addition, UNFPA representatives acted as resident coordinators for a month or more in 32 countries in 2022 and 2023. As of September 2024, six UNFPA staff members were serving as resident coordinators. Linked to UNFPA's commitment to strengthening the UN development system, UNFPA management has continued to promote UNFPA country offices to apply and benefit from mutual recognition within the UNDS. This permits agencies to use or depend on the policies, processes, contractual systems and associated operational frameworks of another entity to facilitate collaboration and reduce transaction costs for governments and collaborating agencies.

To promote joint UN programming and discourage earmarked non-core funding, the UN introduced a 1% coordination levy for tightly earmarked third-party non-core contributions to UN development-related activities. The levy is one of three funding sources for the resident coordinator systems (alongside voluntary contribution and cost-sharing by UNSDG agencies) and UNFPA has upheld its commitment to pass it on for the benefit of the resident coordinator system.

**UNFPA has redesigned its performance assessment system to extend performance culture and behaviours beyond the performance of individual staff members. The new career and performance management (CPM) system aligns individual, team and strategic plan goals but has struggled to fully reflect inter-agency collaboration. A clear process is available for addressing disagreements and complaints.**

During the review period, UNFPA transitioned from a performance appraisal and development system to a more comprehensive CPM system for its staff that focuses on changing the culture and behaviours around performance rather than solely on performance. It aims to ensure that individual and team goals are aligned with UNFPA's Strategic Plan, to motivate, enable and empower staff to set clear expectations and recognise achievements and high performance, manage and address underperformance promptly, and link performance management with talent and career development. The new CPM includes senior staff and is implemented as stipulated. It endeavours to recognise achievements and high performance while managing and addressing underperformance. There is documentation

and a clear process in place for handling disagreements and complaints, which encompasses a performance approval plan and, ultimately, the possibility of submitting a rebuttal. UNFPA's CPM aligns individual performance indicators with those of individual business units and the fund's overarching strategic objectives but ignores the valuable staff contributions to the UNDS reform processes and inter-agency collaboration for achieving programmatic goals. Recently, UNFPA management committed to reflecting inter-agency work in all relevant job descriptions and to acknowledge and reward staff performance in its coordination.

**UNFPA's Resource Mobilisation Strategy 2022-25 aligns well with the strategic plan, emphasising securing multi-year funding and expanding funding sources. This approach is essential, but implementation has proven challenging. UNFPA recently launched a financing strategy, a significant step towards engaging partners in support of its priorities.**

The UNFPA Resource Mobilisation Strategy 2022-25, "Mobilising Resources and Finances to Achieve the Three Transformative Results in the Decade of Action" is clearly aligned with the strategic plan 2022-25 in substance and timeframe. The strategy's emphasis on multi-year funding has shown results: multi-year funding has fluctuated between 49% and 67% between 2019-22. However, there is a long way to go to achieve the funding compact indicator of 100%. Given great financial strain, UNFPA is also aware of the ongoing and rising need to diversify its core funding base beyond its top donors. In 2020, 101 governments provided core funding; in 2023 the number dropped to 95. While this may seem high, available data indicate that 99.6% of UNFPA's core funds come from 25 government partners who also provide 68% of total revenue. Interviews confirm the significant challenges of mobilising resources from governments and other stakeholders such as IFIs, other UN agencies, the corporate sector and foundations. For this reason, the strategic plan and resource mobilisation strategy stress a transition to leveraging financing from programme country domestic budgets and IFIs from mobilising solely for UNFPA's programmes. UNFPA developed a paper on innovative financing in 2023 and introduced an innovative mechanism, the Strategic Investment Facility (SIF), through which country offices can leverage funding "to catalyse new funding from governments in the form of domestic resources, concessional loans by IFIs, in-country donor contributions, and investments from the private sector".<sup>1</sup>

**However, the operationalisation of this shift remains undeveloped.** Reporting on the implementation of the Strategic Plan indicates that the amount (core and non-core resources) contributed by donors other than the top 15 exceeded the target in 2022 (USD 360.4 million versus USD 276.0 million) but dropped in 2023 (USD 214.0 million versus USD 302.4 million). In addition, while private sector resource mobilisation targets were exceeded in 2022 (USD 42.9 million versus USD 26.0 million), these resources declined again in 2023 (USD 26.0 million versus USD 29.9 million) even though UNFPA had established seventy-three new partnerships. The resource mobilisation from philanthropic institutions is still an area under development at UNFPA with limited reporting at this stage. The recent launch of the UNFPA Financing Strategy 2024-30 is a crucial step.

**UNFPA regional and country office leaders have significant decision-making autonomy, which was especially valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Various corporate documents about resource management, programming, emergency situations, human resources management, etc lay out information on the delegation of decision-making authority within UNFPA, making it challenging to grasp a complete picture. Evidence points to the considerable flexibility in practice at decentralised levels to ensure responsiveness to needs, and UNFPA's commitment to further improving and sustaining decentralised decision-making. The COVID-19 pandemic is a case in point where reprogramming and resource reallocation decisions were delegated promptly. The formative evaluation of UNFPA's organisational resilience in light of its response to

1. SIF-funded initiatives implemented USD 3.7 million and leveraged an estimate USD 22.7 million (as of May 2024), approximately a 1:6 return on investment.

the COVID-19 pandemic (2024) found that it took early administrative and financial mitigation measures to navigate internal and external challenges despite the lack of preparedness for such a systemic shock. The measures supporting the UNFPA response included timely guidance on reprogramming work plans, repurposing funds and fast-tracking procedures for local procurement to maintain the flow of supplies.

#### **KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable transparency and accountability**

<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>3.44</b>
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*KPI 4 assesses UNFPA organisational systems and the extent to which they are cost- and value-conscious and enable transparency and accountability. The KPI spans eight MIs covering results-based budgeting, resource disbursement and allocation, ERM and control mechanisms, and PSEAH.*

**UNFPA employs results-based budgeting at the strategic plan’s output and outcome levels**, aligning with projected income and following modified accrual basis. UNFPA has significantly progressed in aligning financial resources with its transformative results through results-based budgeting. The integrated budget gives estimated resource allocations for core and non-core funding for each strategic output and outcome based on projected income. However, the analysis does not yet differentiate between indicative resources for GBV and harmful practices.

Delayed disbursements of contributions from member states often hamper resource planning and make it difficult to allocate resources predictably to decentralised levels. To facilitate effective planning and allocation to the decentralised levels, UNFPA advocates for member states to disburse core resources earlier. However, the prevailing trend indicates that payments are often received later in the year. While early payments increased from 2018-20 (33% of payments were obtained in the first half of 2018 and 85% in 2020), significant delays occurred again in 2021 and 2022 (only 46% of payments were received in the first half of 2022).

For allocating core resources, UNFPA is implementing a new resource allocation system (RAS) based on new criteria approved by the EB in 2021 on the allocation of core resources to UNFPA country programmes. UNFPA country offices are now entitled to a minimum floor of USD 500,000 (up from USD 300,000). Of all available core resources, 60% are ringfenced for Tier 1 countries; resources for the multi-country programmes in the Pacific and the Caribbean have been increased. Subsequently, UNFPA revised its policy for regular resources allocation and distribution for country programmes and established a resource management committee to operationalise it with the help of a guidance note. These criteria allow resources to be redistributed within the regions during the year based on requests from the regional offices. Now in its third years of implementation, this new resource allocation system will be reviewed in 2024/25.

UNFPA has implemented transparent systems to track expenditures from programme activities to their corresponding results at output and outcome levels. Its annual statistical and financial reports submitted to the EB provide detailed breakdowns of its financial outlays by region and recipient country/territory. UNFPA applies the international public sector accounting standards in its statutory financial reporting.

**UNFPA has consistently strengthened its ERM system. Its robust control mechanisms enforce its zero-tolerance policy for fraudulent and other prohibited activities and the fund is transparent with the EB.**

The JIU reviewed ERM in UNFPA in 2020 and OAS in 2021. JIU concluded that UNFPA’s internal oversight structure was robust but with some areas for improvement. OAS found that UNFPA had created the groundwork for a more integrated ERM process and rated its overall assessed maturity as level 2 - “Developing”, as per the 5-level HLCM Reference Maturity Model. To move to the next level -- “Established” -- UNFPA adopted its first comprehensive ERM

policy in 2022, which brings together several risk management policies, guidelines, processes, and practices, and created an informal integrity group.

**UNFPA has maintained its publicly accessible zero-tolerance policy against fraudulent and other prohibited practices.** This policy clearly delineates the corresponding responsibilities of management and personnel and mandates staff to complete mandatory ethics training. Clear and accessible guidelines are in place for staff and non-staff personnel to (anonymously) report identified issues and concerns. Most wrongdoings are to be reported to OAIIS while cases of retaliation are to be reported to the ethics office.

OAIIS generally conforms to all elements of independence and has aligned its operations with international best practices and standards. It offers several channels for reporting wrongdoing - a confidential web-based hotline on the official UNFPA website (in Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish); a dedicated investigation hotline email address; physical mail marked “Confidential” to the director of OAIIS; a dedicated OAIIS fax number; and reporting by telephone to an OAIIS-dedicated voicemail. Evidence confirms that UNFPA adheres to its policy against fraudulent and other proscribed practices. It reports to the EB annually, detailing cases of fraud, corruption, and other irregularities, along with corresponding actions taken, and makes these reports publicly accessible. Historically, fraud and financial irregularities constitute the majority of wrongdoings investigated by the OAIIS. For example, 170 (55%) of the 306 open cases at the beginning of 2023 concerned fraud and financial irregularities. OAIIS prioritises time-bound cases and those concerning retaliation, sexual misconduct, fraud, and the theft of large sums.

Clear, delineated procedures are in place for UNFPA management to address findings and recommendations from investigative activities, internal and external audits and reviews, and evaluations, including sharing management responses with the EB. UNFPA tracks the responses and actions taken in response to issues raised by control mechanisms.

**Over the years, UNFPA has built a robust framework to address SEAH** with policies, personnel training, reporting mechanisms, and survivor support services. The challenges of operating in complex humanitarian settings have made these efforts even more relevant and timely. As the organisation continues to strengthen its efforts to prevent and respond to SEA, it emphasises accountability and protection for those affected.

As the lead agency on gender-based violence prevention and response in the UN system, UNFPA approved the first organisation-specific, dedicated PSEAH strategy 2024-25 in June 2024. The strategy aims at scaling up human resource capacity to coordinate PSEAH workstreams, strengthen country-level capacity to improve effectiveness, accountability and coherence, and provide leadership in system-wide efforts.

Internally, UNFPA has strengthened its human and financial resources to deliver on its commitment to PSEA. A dedicated PSEA team is based in the executive office; full-time PSEA personnel are based in select country offices where they focus on organisational or interagency PSEA coordination and funded with earmarked resources. A network of 250+ PSEA focal points are in UNFPA regional and country offices. Training on SEA and SH is mandatory for all personnel, but its impact remains hard to measure.

UNFPA has also been a strong inter-agency player in PSEA over the assessment period. It has contributed positively to interagency efforts and used the IASC Championship to launch several initiatives. It reports that it supports, hosts or directly funds more interagency PSEA coordinators than any other UN entity. UNFPA also plays an active role in operationalising the implementing partner (IP) protocol and has put in place clear standards for holding its IPs accountable on SEA in its own work.

UNFPA has put in place benchmarks for the timely conclusion of investigations of PSEAH. It is also among a handful of UN agencies that plan to supplement the ClearCheck system by piloting the misconduct disclosure scheme that includes the names of UN perpetrators as well as those from NGOs, and is thus likely to provide broader coverage.

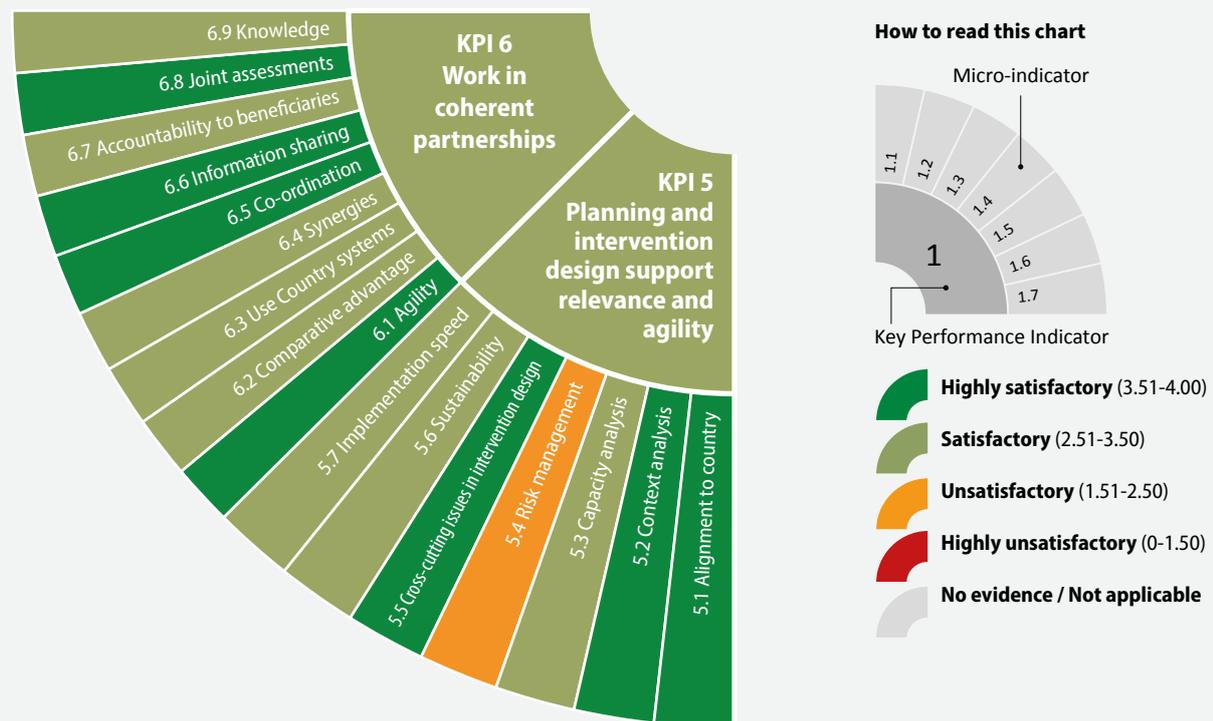
In MOPAN interviews, concerns were voiced from within UNFPA that advocating for more resources to protect from SEAH might jeopardise UNFPA’s funding to address GBV. Going forward, it will be important for UNFPA to communicate clearly the different uses and aims of GBV and PSEA efforts to its member states, understand donors’ setup in this regard, and integrate this in the fundraising strategy.

**RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

The relationship management performance area looks at whether and to what extent the organisation has engaged in inclusive partnerships to support relevance, leverage effective solutions and maximise results. This area is assessed through the two KPIs specified below:

*Engaging in inclusive partnerships to support relevance, leverage effective solutions and maximise results.*

**FIGURE 9. KEY FINDINGS ON UNFPA’S RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**



**UNFPA intervenes in complex environments to respond to varying needs. It adapts its work to those specific contexts**, notably through its country programme documents, which help ensure the relevance of its intervention.

**As described in KPI 4, UNFPA’s approach to risk management has also undergone significant and positive transformation.** UNFPA has enhanced its ERM system, notably by introducing its first-ever ERM policy (2022), a risk appetite statement, a revised risk governance structure, a new risk calendar, and comprehensive guidance materials. The risk management indicator in the relationship management area is specific to country-level programme and project design. The assessment recognises the improved risk management measures put in place

in country programmes since the policy came into force. At the same time, country programmes designed before the implementation of this new approach to risk management have yet to be strengthened in this regard.

**UNFPA plays a leadership role in joint initiatives within the UNDS and inter-agency mechanisms and is active in multi-stakeholder dialogue.** There remains some room to identify the division of labour and expected partnership benefits better.

UNFPA maintains a clear corporate commitment to information transparency but has yet to introduce general guidance and a framework for AAP.

### KPI 5: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility in partnerships

Satisfactory

3.27

**The assessment has confirmed the alignment of interventions/strategies with beneficiary needs, regional/country priorities and intended national/regional results.** Notably, CPDs make it possible to adapt UNFPA's intervention to these specific environments. They allow for taking into account the capacity, evolving contexts, and accountability framework of countries and partners.

**UNFPA's approach to risk and risk management evolved significantly over the period covered by this assessment.** Until 2022, UNFPA only had an ERM framework with no comprehensive risk appetite statement. Standard risk factors were applicable to all business units but could not be adapted to their specificities. What is more, risk assessments were triggered simultaneously for all business units, making it more complicated to conduct them given the significant workload. To have a fit-for-purpose ERM policy that follows risk management audit recommendations,<sup>2</sup> UNFPA changed its approach significantly by adopting a new ERM policy in April 2022. This was complemented by an ERM calendar, a new risk appetite statement, changes in the risk governance structure and new guidance (an ERM guidebook and risk and controls catalogue).

**This new approach to risk management brings greater agility and relevance to operational planning and intervention design.** At the programmatic level, the ERM policy notably requires a risk identification, assessment, response design, response action and escalation for all components. Risk assessments prove to be comprehensive, as assessed risk categories comprise external risk, delivery risk, operational risk, fiduciary risk, reputational risk, and safeguarding risk. Guidance for the CPR review and approval indicates that programmes must be “informed by thorough risk assessment and risk identification (political, sociocultural, economic, resource-related, etc.), mitigation, adaptation and management”.

**These significant advances have yet to permeate all UNFPA country programmes. The latest CPDs available, created after 2022, clearly demonstrate the progress driven by this new approach.** However, the new ERM calendar requires country offices to renew their risk assessment only when designing new CPDs, and not necessarily as the intervention context evolves. Therefore, the CPDs designed prior to the application of the 2022 policy and still under implementation have not yet adopted this new approach to risk management.

2. From the board of auditors, a [JIU report](#) and the OAI's ERM assessment report.

**KPI 6: Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources**

Satisfactory

3.42

**UNFPA plays a leadership role in joint initiatives within the UNDS and inter-agency mechanisms and is active in multi-stakeholder dialogue. It has contributed significantly to UN system-wide effectiveness by strengthening coordination, collaboration, and generating knowledge.** UNFPA is the co-chair of the UNSDG Business Innovation Group. Currently, it is leading the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS), takes an active part in the UN Gender Quality Network, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Population and Development. In addition to participating in many joint programmes including with other UN sister entities such as UN Women<sup>3</sup>, UNFPA is actively engaged with other actors. These include a partnership with the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF) aimed at transforming the financing landscape for SRHR, and with vertical funds such as GAVI and the Global Fund. Several UNFPA field staff provided examples of joint work locally. UNFPA is a coordinating agency in Bangladesh for humanitarian aid and is part of multi-donor co-ordination and dialogue mechanisms in Angola and Malawi (chair of the donor group on health) for instance. It is also part of a task force on digital development with ITU and UNESCO. Additionally, it leads a regional collaborative platform on data and statistics.

**UNFPA has suitable procedures in place to ensure efficiency in partnerships: some support joint planning, programming or collaboration with other partners, while others, notably the workplans, allow programmatic changes and adjustments when conditions change at various levels (mainly decentralised).** In practice, UNFPA is involved in several joint UN funding platforms at country, regional and global levels. It remains among the UN entities engaging in most UN joint programmes (USD 233.6 million received in 2023 from UN-to-UN transfers). It is part of thematic funds such as the Joint Programme on Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, the Global Programme to End Child Marriage and the Spotlight Initiative, 2gether 4 SRHR, regional joint programme between UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and UNAIDs aiming to improve the SRHR of all people in East and Southern Africa and the Joint Programme on Accelerating the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Philippines (jointly with UNICEF and WHO). Several field level examples were highlighted in interviews with UNFPA staff (UNFPA is part of donor groups on health in several countries, and the Youth Group and UN Data Group in Malawi). Workplans are adapted to allow programmatic changes and adjustments when conditions change.

**UNFPA's comparative advantage is reflected in its strategic priorities.** The review of CPDs shows that they identify the comparative advantages as the humanitarian-development continuum, SRHR for family planning, comprehensive maternal health, and prevention of STIs, adolescent and youth development/empowerment to support harnessing the demographic dividend, GBV prevention, strengthening data and national statistical system as a strategic census partner. These references are part of a broader strategy that draws on UNFPA's global expertise and strategic assets.

**However, reflections on how these strategic priorities come into play in UNFPA's partnerships within the larger UN development system are not always explicit.** Its strategic plan does not adequately articulate its comparative advantages relative to other UN agencies; and this can lead to operational challenges in the division of labour. There is still some potential for UNFPA to better articulate its role vis-a-vis other UN agencies, considering their respective footprints and comparative advantages, so as to apply a strategic division of labour with other entities, particularly with UN Women.

**UNFPA has actively embraced UN reforms and participates in the greatest number of UN joint programmes of all UN agencies. However, UNFPA also perceives certain aspects of the reforms as a burden.** These include high

3. For instance, through the EU 4 Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence.

transaction and monetary costs, including substantial financial contributions to the resident coordinator system and the management of a 1% coordination levy on earmarked contributions.

**UNFPA emphasises principles of country ownership and development effectiveness.** The strategic plan 2022-25 builds on the 2030 SDG Agenda. South-South and triangular cooperation is one of the key strategic shifts and one of the six accelerators established by this strategic plan.

**UNFPA identifies possible synergies and complementarities with development and humanitarian partners** through its work strategies (strategic plan, strategic partnership framework) and policies (policy for CPD), the High 5s Agenda, sectoral strategies, and through CSPs/RISPs most of the time. Interviewees provided examples of UNFPA's co-ordination with international donors, notably humanitarian, including OCHA (in Moldova), UNHCR (in Bangladesh) and OHCHR, and through a multi-donor co-ordination mechanism (Angola) However, there is room for improvement to better identify the benefits of partnerships and the division of labour with partners. The integrated partnerships plan that will be developed in the next round of CPD elaboration in 2025 is an opportunity to improve on this aspect.

**UNFPA has a clear corporate statement on information transparency and adheres to the standards set by the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).** A signatory to the IATI since 2012, it complies with its standards. The level and format of public data disclosure by UNFPA align with the IATI guidelines. Several interviewees (management, staff, board members) praised the engagement of UNFPA regarding accountability and transparency. In addition, two indicators (timeliness and comprehensiveness) to assess the progress in implementing the strategic plan relate to the IATI publishing statistics core. UNFPA performed well in 2023, exceeding its target for timeliness (88% in 2022 versus a target of 50%), and for the comprehensiveness indicator (95% versus a target of 75%). However, UNFPA lacks general AAP guidance and a framework, which is still under development. The policy for CPD does not establish approval mechanisms related to accountability to beneficiaries, but it is part of the UNFPA Social and Environmental Standards Policies. **Interviews with UNFPA stakeholders highlighted a need to emphasise accountability for affected population, including through workshops.**



**Haiti, 2024 –  
Survivor of gender-  
based violence.**

A spike in gang violence worsened an already severe humanitarian crisis in Haiti. Each day brought new horrors for women and girls – the loss of loved ones, homes destroyed by fire and the ever-present shadow of fear as armed gangs use extreme acts of gender-based violence and collective rape to humiliate, terrorise and consolidate control over communities.

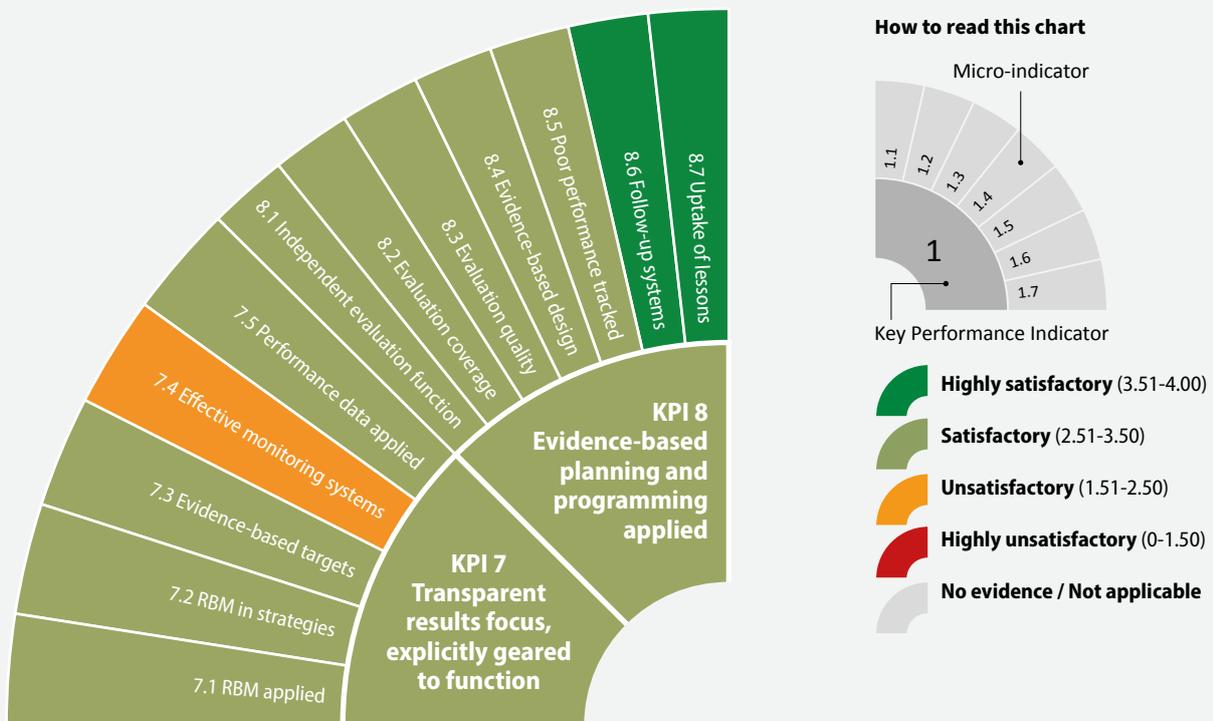
Photo: © UNFPA Haiti/  
Wendy Desert

**UNFPA has updated its knowledge management strategy in 2024 and produced material generally well perceived by partners.** However, the strategic plan mid-term review found that knowledge management in UNFPA needs to be improved to better support the application of the key shifts. There is potential for improvement in the use of analytics, documenting and sharing evidence, and in the use of new information technology (notably AI).

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The performance management area assesses the existence of systems geared to managing and accounting for development and humanitarian results and the use of performance information, including evaluation and lesson learning. This area is assessed through the two KPIs specified below.

FIGURE 10. KEY FINDINGS ON UNFPA’S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT



**UNFPA has a strong commitment to a results culture.** RBM was further strengthened in the strategic plan 2022-25. The multidimensional “many-to-many” relationships between strategic plan outputs and the transformative results at the outcome level are improved in terms of clarity and intent, bottom-up RBM, and decision-making.

**Room for improvement remains,** including the ability to demonstrate results attributed to UNFPA and more discernible links in the causal pathway between outputs and the achievement of UNFPA’s outcome-level targets.

**The UNFPA IEO has been further strengthened** following recommendations from the UNEG Peer Review of the Evaluation Function. It benefits from solid operational and financial independence. Clear accountability systems ensure that evaluation recommendations are followed up and that the uptake of evaluation lessons learned and recommendations in decision-making is clearly visible. The peer review revealed concerns, which are being addressed by the IEO, about the independence of the decentralised evaluation function, job rotation within the IEO, coverage of UNFPA’s humanitarian action, the quality of project evaluations, and the integration of evaluation results into decision-making processes.

**KPI 7: Strong and transparent results focus, explicitly geared to function.**

Satisfactory

3.28

**UNFPA has strengthened its results culture.** UNFPA is aware that programme quality determines its capacity to achieve development results and that results should be the main yardstick for measuring its performance. RBM has been integrated into their operating model as of the first strategic plan 2018-21 through the strategic plan 2022-25. The new strategic-level results framework structured around the TRs at the outcome level with six outputs considered to have a multidimensional “many-to-many” relationship with the outcomes, is an improvement over the 2018-21 results framework in terms of clarity of intent and facilitating bottom-up RBM. UNFPA also developed principles and standards in its 3+5 Framework for Self-Assessment. The mid-term of the review found that during the first two years of the strategic plan’s implementation, UNFPA systems, policies, practices and culture were aligned towards achieving the 3TRs. Throughout interviews, a “shift towards an RBM approach to strategic planning” had taken place. This was made evident by the demonstrated use of RBM systems to support decision making. A clear incentive, the RBM certification (“RBM Seal”), has been created and is available to country offices. However, this largely helps address gaps with the development of a roadmap rather than recognise high performance.

**There is still room for improvement.** This involves the ability to demonstrate results attributed to UNFPA, more discernible links in the causal pathway between outputs and achieving UNFPA’s outcome-level targets and the contribution to higher-level objectives. Overcoming these challenges will require a broader measurement effort within the UN system or more independent evaluations. Other margins for progress include paying closer attention to deviations between planned and actual results and making greater use of data and analytics. Defining outcome-level results and identifying available data at outcome level to measure progress (e.g. on specific themes such as GBV, climate, reduction of harmful practices) would help UNFPA measure its corporate contribution to results. It would also facilitate its positioning, communications, resource mobilisation and partnership building in these areas. These efforts would benefit from the finalisation of a new RBM handbook, and resources clearly dedicated to RBM within UNFPA.

**KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming applied**

Satisfactory

3.45

**The UNFPA IEO has been recognised for its operational and financial independence, as well as its professional contributions to decision making. Behavioural independence is not yet fully established: there is no job rotation within the evaluation team yet and the decentralised evaluation function is not yet organisationally independent.**

UNFPA has improved the coverage and quality of its evaluations. Currently, 97.3% of offices conduct evaluations within two cycles, up from 80% in 2017. The evaluation policy mandates systematic evaluations, and the organisation has performed well in this area. A more consistent approach is needed to ensure the quality of decentralised evaluations and UNFPA is addressing this. All decentralised evaluations, including project evaluations, are being included progressively in UNFPA’s quality assurance system as of 2024 whereas this was mandatory only for CPEs and RPEs so far. However, UNFPA must ensure that all types of decentralised evaluations (including project level and humanitarian evaluations) are gradually quality-assured. A prioritised, funded evaluation plan is in place, reflecting a commitment to strategic evaluation and RBM.

UNFPA is strongly committed to learning and adapting. It has established formal mechanisms to incorporate lessons from past interventions into new programme designs, enhancing RBM and organisational effectiveness. It can do more to ensure that feedback loops feed lessons from interventions into the design of new programmes and interventions.

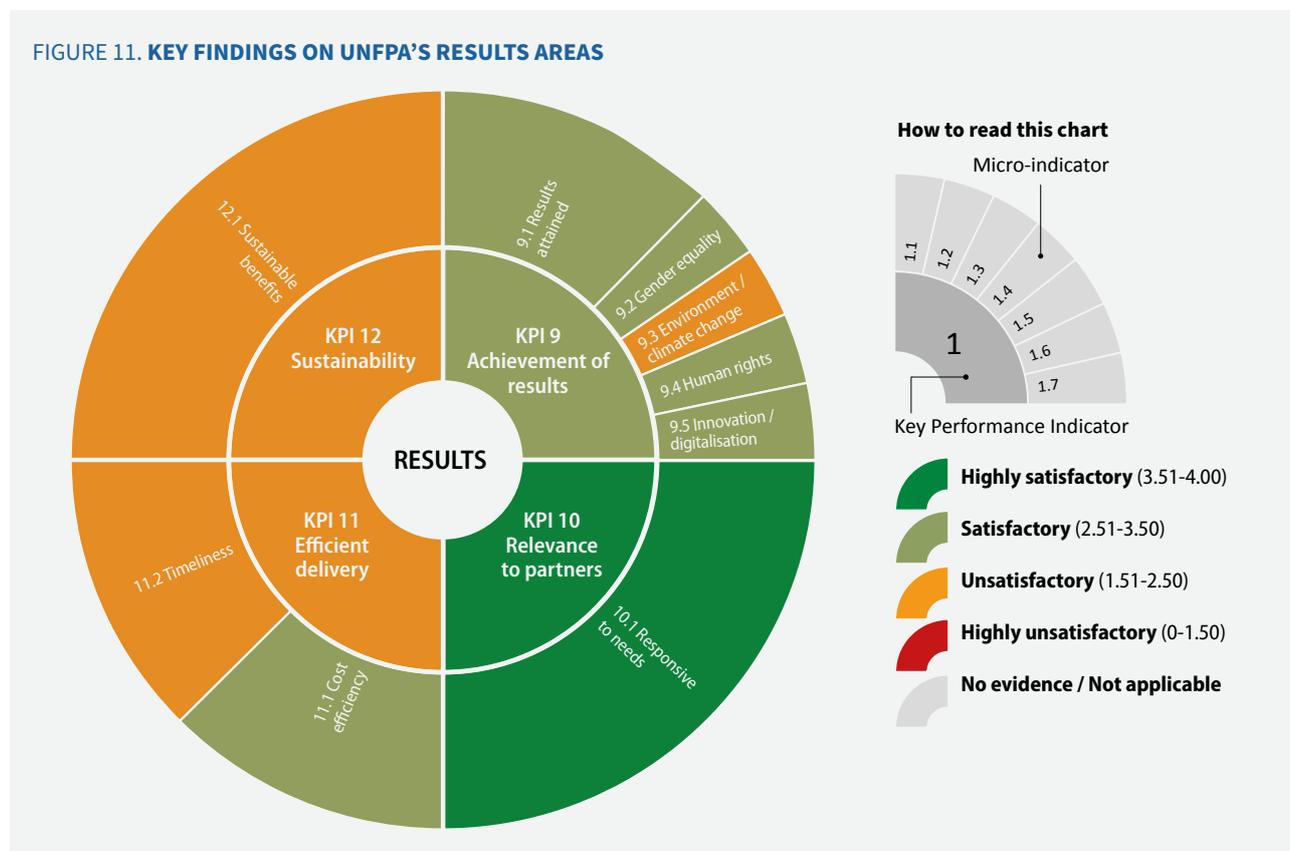
The evaluation office has discretion over its evaluation programme, but should focus on improving the evaluation of humanitarian action and the quality of decentralised evaluations to continue recent positive developments.<sup>4</sup> To support regional offices and country offices in conducting decentralised evaluations (notably CPEs), a decentralised evaluation team was created in 2023 to hasten the operationalisation of the UNFPA Evaluation Strategy Area 2 focused on effective decentralised evaluation systems implemented for greater accountability, improved programming, and a stronger culture of results. A new EQAA system (grid and guidance) were also introduced in 2023 to provide a more accurate, credible assessment of evaluation reports.

As of July 2024, to strengthen the reporting line of M&E staff at regional and country office levels, the evaluation policy defined several reporting lines: regional M&E advisors report directly to the regional director on evaluation matters, with a functional reporting line to the IEO and country office M&E officers report directly to the head of office/representative on evaluation matters, with functional reporting line to the regional M&E advisor. The policy foresees that OAS will assess compliance with its requirements, including alignment to the revised standard JDs and reporting lines.

Recommendations include addressing poor performance and making minor improvements to address behavioural independence and ensuring adequate funding.

### DEVELOPMENT/HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS

The results performance area explores the extent to which relevant, inclusive, and sustainable contributions to humanitarian and development results are achieved efficiently. This is assessed through the four KPIs below.



4. To support to ROs and COs in the conduct of decentralised evaluations (notably, CPEs) the creation (2023) of the IEO Decentralised Evaluation Team was created with the purpose of accelerating the operationalisation of the UNFPA Evaluation Strategy Area 2, namely, effective decentralised evaluation systems are implemented for greater accountability, improved programming, and a stronger culture of results. A new EQAA system (grid and guidance) has also been introduced in 2023. It is expected it will lead to a more accurate and credible assessment of evaluation reports.

**UNFPA’s interventions are relevant and produced good overall results at output level.** UNFPA’s intervention objectives and design addressed stakeholders’ needs, policies and priorities. UNFPA also demonstrated its flexibility in adapting its strategies to evolutive contexts to maintain the relevance of its interventions as circumstances change. UNFPA has achieved most of its SP’s planned outputs (5 out of 6), except in Population and for several sub-outputs on Gender and humanitarian action. Interventions have also led to positive results related to human rights and innovation.

**However, achievement at the outcome level is mixed. Interventions have also partially improved environmental sustainability.** However, the current pace of acceleration is inadequate to achieve the 3TRs by 2030 (KPI 9).

The goals and design of UNFPA interventions respond to global, country and partner/institution needs, policies, are relevant to the priorities of beneficiaries, and aligned with national contexts and priorities at country level (KPI 10).

Notwithstanding UNFPA’s significant efforts to ensure that its investments are cost efficient and its initiatives and interventions operate efficiently, there is room for improvement at the global and CP levels. This is notably the case with regard to disbursements and co-ordination in specific contexts, where further efficiency gains and greater impact are still possible (KPI 11).

UNFPA focuses on institutional and capacity issues but has yet to find ways to make its impact more sustainable (KPI 12).

### **KPI 9: Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals<sup>5</sup>**

Satisfactory

2.88

**UNFPA has achieved most of its SP’s planned outputs, except mainly in Population and for several (sub)-outputs on gender and humanitarian action.** Indeed, five of its six outputs were achieved in 2023 according to the mid-term review highlighting an overall positive performance: (1) policy and accountability; (2) Quality of care and services; (3) gender and social norms; (5) humanitarian action; and (6) adolescents and youth. However, the population change and data (4) output was partially achieved. In addition, for specific (sub)-outputs, despite some progress on gender and social norms, most were not achieved (four of seven). The balance is also mixed on humanitarian action: half of the ten sub-outputs were not achieved.

**At outcome level, the current pace of acceleration remains inadequate to achieve the three transformative results by 2030 according to the mid-term review.** Acceleration is hindered by factors related to humanitarian crises and their adverse impact on inequalities and health systems, discriminative gender and social norms, inadequate policy and legal frameworks, and the absence of data and evidence to guide interventions.

UNFPA can still make progress on specific indicators, but interventions regarding gender equality and women’s empowerment have improved to a large extent. Gender-related indicators are integrated as a cross-cutting issue in multiple strategic outputs. Some indicators were exceeded: For indicator 3.6. – “following up human rights recommendations related to social and gender norms and discrimination” – 85% of countries accepted the

<sup>5</sup> KPI 7 points out the methodological limit: the annual report does not detail the degree of results attributed to UNFPA (contribution analysis) because this is a common agreement across UN agencies that this is not an ethical way of reporting. Consequently, this section focuses on outputs and outcomes insofar as UNFPA’s reporting remains dominated by the output level.

recommendations above the 84% target); similarly, for indicator 6.4. on improving skills of adolescent girls, 6.4 million of marginalised girls reached out versus a target of 6 million. In addition, in 2022, UNFPA met or exceeded the requirements for all of the 16 applicable performance indicators of UN-SWAP 2.0 Performance. It has maintained its status as a top performing entity: its performance is stronger than the average results of the funds and programmes and of the UN system as a whole. UNFPA maintained overall UN-SWAP 2.0 compliance but one indicator rating dropped from “exceeds” to “meets” requirements (82% in 2021; 76% in 2022). UNFPA was encouraged to continue by working to exceed all UN-SWAP 2.0 requirements, particularly for the three indicators meeting requirements: audit, policy and equal representation of women”. However, beyond UN-SWAP 2.0, no other targets regarding SP indicators such as 5.3. related to the inclusion of women and young people in decision-making in humanitarian action were achieved. On gender and social norms, the output was partially achieved in 2022, and achieved in 2023. Of the seven sub-outputs, three were fully achieved while four were not<sup>6</sup>.

**Interventions have partially improved environmental sustainability.** One key limitation to assess this MI is the absence of dedicated climate change strategy (the ESS focuses more on the reduction of the carbon footprint) and results frameworks, and the lack of indicators to assess the progress at intervention level. One key UNFPA achievement was linked to the fact that 29% of countries have integrated SRHRR and an action programme into their national climate policies (above the 18% target). Some sub-outputs were not achieved, however, particularly those linked to data on megatrends including climate change.

**Interventions have largely improved human rights and strengthened results benefiting the populations left furthest behind.** UNFPA’s interventions in human rights and LNBO reflect its reinforced commitment through the new 2022-25 strategic plan (2024). UNFPA has invested in “populations left furthest behind” and “reaching those furthest behind first” over the recent years. A dedicated LNOB operational plan has been implemented since 2022. Several outputs of this strategic plan are related directly or indirectly to human rights and LNOB and were achieved most of the time in 2023.

**Interventions in innovation have largely improved.** The UNFPA strategic plan 2022-25 (2024) integrated mid-term review and implementation progress report states that UNFPA expanded its efforts to advance innovations by, for, and with women to accelerate the realisation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 3TRs. UNFPA supported more than 200 initiatives in 110 countries and territories, reaching 23 million people. Ten women-led social enterprises received USD 600,000 of seed funding and mentorship, reaching nearly 300,000 women and girls in 21 countries.

**KPI 10: Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate.**

Highly satisfactory

4.00

**The analyses demonstrated that UNFPA’s intervention objectives and design respond to the global, country and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities of beneficiaries.** At the global level, UNFPA’s interventions are aligned with its global strategy and the SDGs 2030. At the country level, they are relevant and aligned with countries’ national contexts and priorities as UNFPA’s CPs are aligned with national plans. The design of CPs takes national priorities, national policies and strategic development plans into account. They have proven to be highly relevant in responding to beneficiaries’ needs, including the most vulnerable population reflecting the participatory and collaborative assessments of beneficiaries’ needs undertaken during the design process with national actors and civil society.

<sup>6</sup> Those achieved include the availability of a platform for dialogue, strengthened social movements, following up human rights recommendations on social and gender norms and discrimination, collected and reported social and gender norm evidence. Unachieved are related to (sub)national mechanism to address social and gender norms, capacity for changing discriminatory social and gender norms, promotive positive masculinities, following up human rights recommendations related to social and gender norms and discriminations. Political push back is the primary impact on them.

**Kenya, 2022 – UNFPA-trained midwife Mugei performing an ultrasound screening**

ANC ultrasound screening services are having a positive impact in primary healthcare services and maternal health in rural parts of Kenya, where trained front-line health workers are able to provide the service at an affordable user fee.

Photo: © © UNFPA/  
Luis Tato



**UNFPA also demonstrated efforts to adapt its strategies to changing global and local contexts to maintain the relevance of its interventions.** The analyses showed clearly that it was responsive to changing national needs and political and contextual changes.

**KPI 11: Results are delivered efficiently**

Unsatisfactory

2.50

**UNFPA demonstrates significant efforts to ensure the cost-efficiency of its investments and the operational efficiency of its initiatives and interventions.** At the global level, UNFPA achieved key operational efficiencies, achieving an overall operational efficiency gain of USD34.7 million in 2022, for example. UNFPA also seeks operational efficiencies by implementing several measures with sister agencies and by deploying mechanisms to capitalise on partnerships with local actors at the programmatic level to enhance coverage and cost-sharing.

**However, despite measures to produce outputs in the most cost/resource efficient manner, there is room for improvement at the global and the CP levels.** Cost-efficiency and impact could be improved by collaborating even more with partners and other UN agencies to leverage shared resources and expertise. Delays, insufficient capacities of IPs and difficulties in collaborating with local authorities limit UNFPA's country level efficiency. Despite efforts to ensure timely implementation and results at the corporate and programmatic level, disbursements and co-ordination in specific contexts continue to limit UNFPA's efficiency gains and impacts.

**KPI 12: Results are sustainable**

Unsatisfactory

2.00

**UNFPA focuses on institutional and capacity issues but has yet to find ways to have a more sustainable impact.** UNFPA pays significant attention to local capacity development to ensure the sustainability of its results. Its interventions in all focus areas include capacity development components and work to advocate for changes in legal frameworks and norms. Nonetheless, partners' financial dependency on UNFPA and the absence of defined exit strategies jeopardise the sustainability of UNFPA interventions.

# ABOUT THIS ASSESSMENT





**Ukraine, 2023 – Oksana, neonatologist, Chernivtsi region**

“We are holding on, working, helping. We must! Because what will despair and depression give us? At first, there was some anxiety, but now we have adapted.” The war in Ukraine continues to take a heavy toll on millions of women and girls, as well as on those providing essential services on the front line and beyond. UNFPA is working alongside the Government of Ukraine to restore and expand life-saving reproductive health and protection services. Photo: © UNFPA Ukraine/Masha Kornilevska

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## THE MOPAN APPROACH

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The approach to MOPAN assessments has evolved to adjust to the needs of the multilateral system. Its latest iteration is the MOPAN 3.1 Approach, which was used in this assessment. (For additional information, see the MOPAN website [here](#).)

All assessments since 2020 use the MOPAN 3.1 Methodology,<sup>1</sup> which was endorsed by MOPAN members in early 2020. The MOPAN Methodology Manual describes how the framework draws on the international standards and references points. MOPAN 3.1 differs from the MOPAN 3.0 approach in the following ways:

- The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is integrated into the framework.
- It includes two new MIs for the prevention and response to SEA/SH.
- It integrates elements measuring key dimensions of the UNDS Reform.
- A reshaped relationship management performance area has updated more coherent, clearer KPIs 5 and 6. KPI 5 focuses on how partnerships operate on the ground in support of partner countries; KPI 6 focuses on how global partnerships are managed to leverage the organisation's resources.
- It includes a refocused, streamlined results component.
- It changes the application of ratings (and their corresponding colours) based on scores defined for indicators. Rating thresholds have been raised compared to previous cycles conducted under MOPAN 3.0 to reflect the growing demands for organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring are unaffected. This approach was already implemented in MOPAN 3.0\* (2019 cycle).

## APPLYING MOPAN 3.1 TO UNFPA

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### Interpretations and adaptations to the methodology

This assessment has used the MOPAN 3.1 methodology. The KPIs have been interpreted to be meaningful to UNFPA's specific mandate.

The MOPAN assessment framework is designed to be flexible and accommodate the many differences across the mandates and set-ups of the MOs that it assesses. This section describes UNFPA-specific amendments and interpretations to the assessment framework in general. For the full list of indicators and elements and details of amendments and specific interpretations, see Annex A.

The following overarching considerations influence the UNFPA-specific contextualisation of and amendments to the MOPAN assessment framework.

- UNFPA works at three levels - HQ, regional, and country programme levels. Its regional offices play an important role in corporate policy-making and country-level programming (besides implementing their own programmes/interventions).

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1. MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, 2020 Assessment Cycle, [http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN\\_3.1\\_Methodology.pdf](http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf).

TABLE 2. PERFORMANCE AREAS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance area	KPI
Strategic management	<b>KPI 1:</b> Organisational architecture and financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results
	<b>KPI 2:</b> Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles
Operational management	<b>KPI 3:</b> Operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility
	<b>KPI 4:</b> Organisational systems are cost- and value-conscious and enable financial transparency and accountability
Relationship management	<b>KPI 5:</b> Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility in partnerships
	<b>KPI 6:</b> Working in coherent partnerships directed at leveraging and catalysing the use of resources
Performance management	<b>KPI 7:</b> Strong and transparent results focus, explicitly geared towards function
	<b>KPI 8:</b> Evidence-based planning and programming applied
Results	<b>KPI 9:</b> Development and humanitarian objectives are achieved, and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals
	<b>KPI 10:</b> Interventions are relevant to the needs and priorities of partner countries and beneficiaries, as the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate
	<b>KPI 11:</b> Results are implemented efficiently
	<b>KPI 12:</b> Results are sustainable

Source: MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual, [http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN\\_3.1\\_Methodology.pdf](http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf)

- As a member of the UNSDG and part of the UNDS reform, UNFPA is expected to support reform measures and work in a coherent manner with its sister UN agencies in programme and business operations.
- The last UNFPA assessment took place at the beginning of the UNFPA strategic plan 2018-21. A new strategic plan 2022-25 (approved by the EB in 2021) has since begun implementation. In line with the MOPAN methodology<sup>2</sup>, the assessment of KPIs 1-8 focuses on the design and implementation of the latest strategic plan while paying attention to any significant changes to strategic directions between the two plans. As regards results (KPIs 9-12), UNFPA's performance is reviewed against both strategic plans as appropriate.
- UNFPA is at the mid-point of implementing the 2022-25 strategic plan and starting to prepare the 2026-29 strategic plan. The third and last consecutive strategic plan leads to the achievement of the transformative results, which is relevant for assessments against the fund's long-term vision.
- UNFPA strategic plans do not use the term "cross-cutting issues". The strategic plan 2022-25 identified six "accelerators" to achieve its six outputs. MOPAN KPIs 2, 5 and 9 explicitly cover the accelerators "human rights-based and gender-transformative approaches" and "LNOB and reaching the furthest behind first"; KPI 6 covers "partnerships, South-South and triangular cooperation, and financing"; and the KPIs under the results performance area talk to "data and evidence". Interpretations and changes have been made to the indicator

2. "Policies or guidelines at any level in the MO are selected only if they are in force at the time of the MOPAN assessment". MOPAN Methodology – 2020 Assessment Cycle.



**Brazil, 2022 -  
Midwife Leonor  
looks at ultrasound  
scans at the Casa  
Angela birthing  
centre**

UNFPA provide training to midwives in Brazil, on human rights and leadership.

The Casa Angela, Humanized Birth Center in São Paulo offers a safe and respectful environment for pregnant women who want to have a natural birth.

In a world where hundreds of women die every day from pregnancy and childbirth complications, midwives save lives.  
Photo: © UNFPA/Tuane Fernandes

framework so as to ensure that the two remaining accelerators are also assessed - i.e., the strengthened aspect “innovation & digitalisation” as well as “resilience and adaption, and complementarity among development, humanitarian and peace-responsive efforts” (understood as working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus).

- Additional cross-cutting issues included at the request of UNFPA in the 2017-18 MOPAN assessment were adolescents and youth, and humanitarian action. These are strategic outputs in the current strategic plan 2022-25, and are therefore already included in the assessment, especially in terms of results KPIs 9-12.
- UNFPA’s role in the IASC and on UN humanitarian teams has grown over recent years, thanks to successfully raising non-core resources for humanitarian purposes, among other things. When referencing strategies, regional and country programmes and interventions and results, the assessment framework has been adapted and is also understood to include an assessment of UNFPA’s performance in the humanitarian sphere.
- Regarding “interventions”, UNFPA’s main modes of engagement for implementing its programmes and projects include the following: advocacy and policy dialogue; capacity development; knowledge management; coordination, partnerships and South-South and triangular cooperation, and service delivery.
- UNFPA relies on a considerable number/percentage (39.7%; see above) of non-staff personnel to achieve its objectives. The assessment framework was changed to include their roles and perspectives.

Regarding the assessment framework, no indicators or elements have been found to be unapplicable to UNFPA. Two MIs and two elements have been added (called “changes”), and we have interpreted two MIs and one element in a specific way:

**Additions:**

- Added MI 2.4: Corporate/sectoral, regional and country strategies reflect the institutional emphasis on harnessing innovation and digitalisation in UNFPA's programming. [Innovation and digitalisation].
- Added E.5.6.5: Programme designs define UNFPA's efforts to promote the HDP nexus. [HDP nexus].
- Added E.7.2.6: UNFPA corporate reports clearly demonstrate the contributions of UNFPA results (outputs and outcomes) to achieving the transformative results by 2030 [transformative results].
- Added MI 9.5: Interventions assessed as having successfully applied innovation and digitalisation to achieve results [Innovation and digitalisation].

**Interpretations:**

- Interpreted E.1.3.1: A system is in place and applied to track the organisation's contributions to the achievement of the SDGs and other normative results (including the QCPR, the Grand Bargain and the DAC recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus<sup>3</sup>). [HDP nexus].
- Interpreted MI 5.5: Intervention designs include an analysis of cross-cutting issues. [Innovation and digitalisation].
- Interpreted MI 12.1: Benefits assessed as continuing or likely to continue after intervention completion (where applicable, reference to building institutional or community capacity and/or strengthening enabling environment for development, and/or promoting the HDP nexus approach in support of 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda) [HDP nexus].

**Lines of Evidence**

This assessment relies on three lines of evidence - a document review, a partner survey, and staff interviews and consultations. The assessment team collected and reviewed a significant body of evidence:

**A document review:** This comprised publicly-available documents published between 2019 to April 2024; some documents beyond that time frame were accepted selectively in areas where significant developments happened (e.g. PSEAH). Only final documents (i.e., not draft versions) that are recognised by management and available in English are considered. The 252 reviewed documents covered a wide range of themes including policies, guidelines, management, operations, relationships and results (evaluations, audits, results reports, etc.).

**An online survey:** Partners surveyed fall into the following categories:

- Global level (79, 25%)
- Regional (31, 10%)
- Single country (206, 65%) from 12 countries

A total of 316 partners responded to the survey, a 43% response rate. The survey was conducted between 16 March and 22 April 2024 (for more details, see Annex 3).

**Partners included:**

- Single country (206, 65%) from 12 countries
- Governing partners (EB) (29, 9%)
- Financial partners (60, 19%)
- Implementing partners (134, 42%)
- Peer organisations (83, 26%)
- Knowledge partners (10, 3%)

3. UNFPA is an "adherent" to the DAC recommendation, having signed the recommendation on 19.11.2020. OECD Legal Instruments.

**Interviews and consultations:** The 115 interviews were undertaken in two stages. In-person interviews were carried out during the inception phase in January 2024 while between March-April 2024 interviews were done virtually.

**Inception Interviewees:**

- 26 UNFPA Senior Management interviewees (23%)

**Data collection Interviewees:**

- 89 interviewees (77%)
  - HQ staff and management (46, 40%)
  - Regional and country offices (26, 23%)
  - PSEAH (8, 7%)
  - EB members (9, 8%)

Discussions with the institutional lead of the UNFPA assessment formed part of the analytical process and made it possible to gather insights on current priorities for the organisation from the perspective of MOPAN member countries.

General information about the sequence and details related to these evidence lines, the overall analysis, and scoring and rating process applied to UNFPA can be found in the MOPAN 3.1 methodology.

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS

FIGURE 12: MOPAN'S ASSESSMENT PROCESS

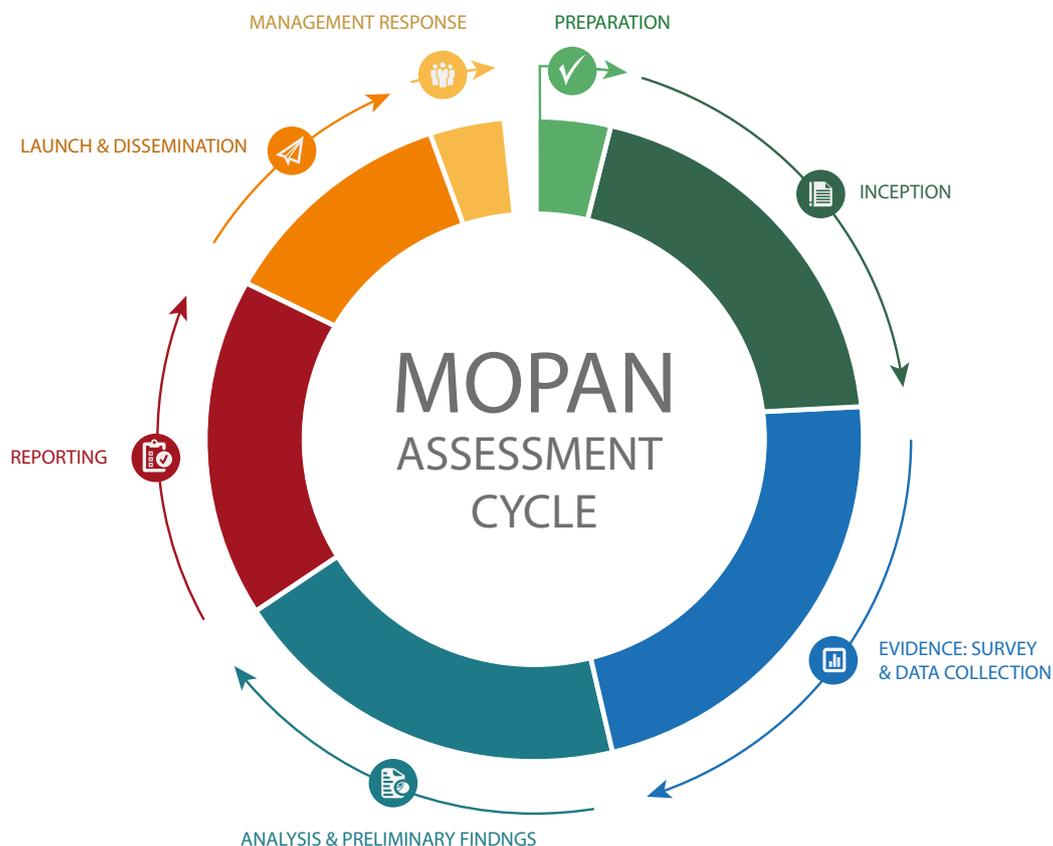
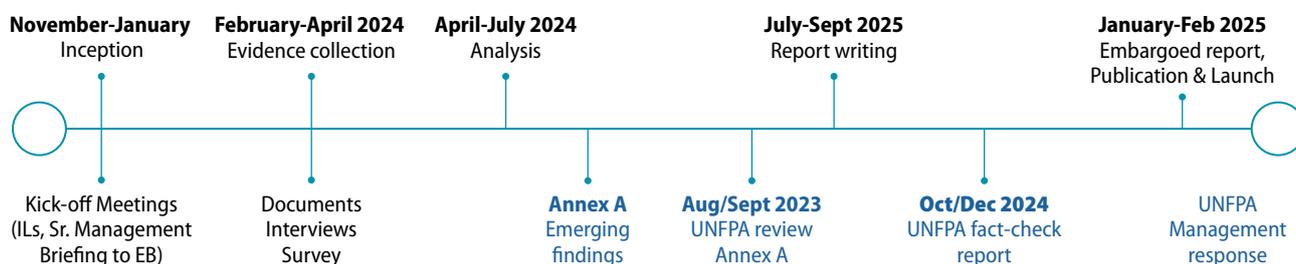


FIGURE 13: ASSESSMENT TIMELINE



The assessment consisted of four phases: inception, evidence collection, analysis, and reporting.

TABLE 3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Assessment Phase	Inception (November 2023-January 2024)	Evidence collection (February-April 2024)	Analysis (April-July 2024)	Reporting (July 2024-January 2025)
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adaptation of indicator framework</li> <li>Preparation of evidence collection – survey partners, key informants and key documents for review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key informant Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Triangulation</li> <li>Learning sessions</li> <li>Evidence documentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report drafting</li> <li>Quality assurance</li> <li>Presentations</li> </ul>
<b>Timeline</b>	<p>Scoping interview <b>(15 January 2024-24 January 2024)</b></p> <p>Draft Inception Report: <b>(22 December 2023)</b></p> <p>Final Inception Report: <b>(29 February 2024)</b></p>	<p>Key informant interviews: <b>(March-April)</b></p> <p>Document Review: <b>(March-April)</b></p> <p>Partner survey launch &amp; closure: <b>(16 March-22 April)</b></p>	<p>Preliminary Findings to UNFPA: <b>(16 July 2024)</b></p> <p>Draft Summary Analysis Table (Annex A): <b>(29 July 2024)</b></p> <p>Feedback received from UNFPA on Annex A <b>(19 September 2024)</b></p>	<p>Draft Assessment report shared with UNFPA <b>(29 November-6 December 2024)</b></p> <p>Feedback received from UNFPA <b>(16-18 December 2024)</b></p> <p>Final Assessment report (published online): <b>(20 January 2025)</b></p> <p>Presentation of Findings to EB <b>(21 January 2025)</b></p>

## METHODOLOGY FOR SCORING AND RATING

The 2020 Methodology Manual (MOPAN, 2020) describes the approach to scoring and rating under MOPAN 3.1. It is available on MOPAN website along with additional information about how the MOPAN framework was adapted for private sector operations.

Each of the 12 KPIs contain a variable number of MIs. A KPI rating is calculated by taking the average of the ratings of constituent MIs.



**Chad, 2024 – New mother, Mouna, with humanitarian midwife, Sylvie**

UNFPA and partners are offering support to neighbouring countries to ensure that the needs of those fleeing conflict are met with dignity. This includes South Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, Central African Republic and Libya. Continued clashes in Sudan could trigger further displacement both within and outside the country.

Photo: © UNFPA Chad/ Liga Nassandou

### Scoring of KPIs 1-8

The scoring of KPIs 1-8 is based upon an aggregated scoring the MIs. Each MI contains several elements, which vary in number representing international good practice. The average of the constituent scores per element is used to calculate a score for each MI. The same logic is pursued at aggregation to the KPI level to ensure a consistent approach. Taking the average of the constituent scores per MI, an aggregated score is then calculated per KPI.

### Scoring of KPIs 9-12

The scoring of KPIs 9-12 is based upon a meta-analysis of evaluations and performance information, rated at the MI level and aggregated to the KPI level. KPIs 9-12 assess results achieved as assessed in evaluations and annual performance reporting from the organisations. Other sources of information are reviewed and included as needed.

### Rating scales

<span style="color: green;">■</span> <b>Highly satisfactory</b> (3.51-4.00)	<span style="color: darkblue;">■</span> <b>High evidence confidence</b>
<span style="color: olive;">■</span> <b>Satisfactory</b> (2.51-3.50)	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> <b>Medium evidence confidence</b>
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> <b>Unsatisfactory</b> (1.51-2.50)	<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> <b>Low evidence confidence</b>
<span style="color: red;">■</span> <b>Highly unsatisfactory</b> (0.00-1.50)	
<span style="color: gray;">■</span> <b>No evidence / Not applicable</b>	

A score of “N/E” means “no evidence” and indicates that the assessment team could not find any evidence but was not confident of whether or not there was evidence to be found. The team assumes that “no evidence” does not necessarily mean that the element is not present (which would result in a zero score). Elements rated N/E are excluded from any calculation of the average. A significant number of N/E scores in a report indicates an assessment limitation (see the limitations section at the beginning of the report). A note indicating “N/A” means that an element is considered to be “not applicable”. This usually owes to the organisation’s specific nature.

### Changes to the MOPAN rating system

As previously stated, MOPAN's methodology is continuously evolving, and a notable change since the last assessment of UNFPA concerns the application of ratings (and their corresponding colours) based on MI and KPI scores. Compared to the pre-2019 rating scale, the threshold for each rating was raised to reflect the growing demands on organisational performance in the multilateral system. The underlying scores and approach to scoring are unchanged.

### REFERENCES

MOPAN, 2023, *MOPAN assessment of UNFPA, Inception Report, March 2024*

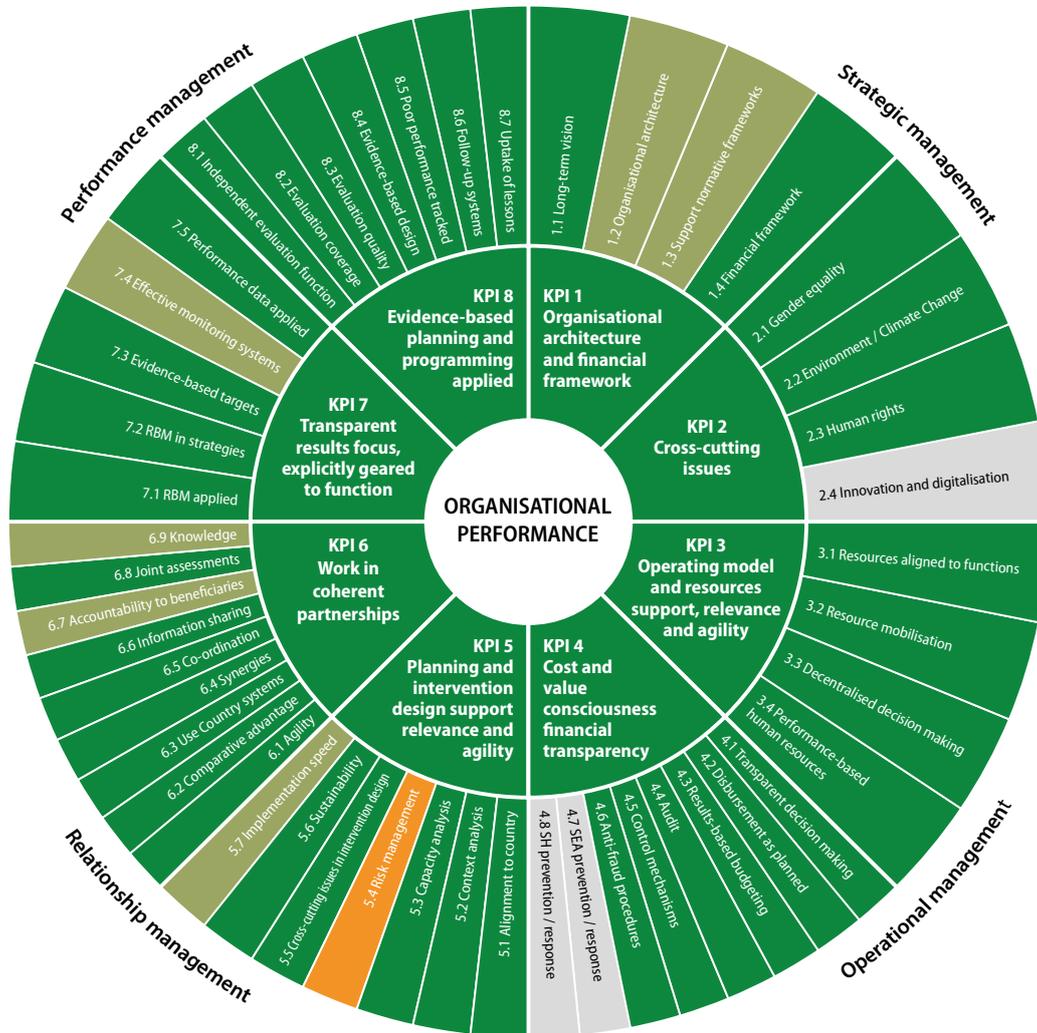
MOPAN (2020), MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual: 2020 Assessment Cycle, Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network, [http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN\\_3.1\\_Methodology.pdf](http://www.mopanonline.org/ourwork/themopanapproach/MOPAN_3.1_Methodology.pdf)



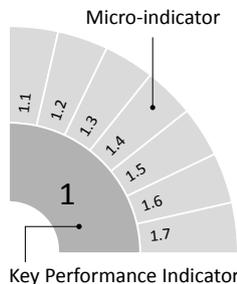
### Philippines, 2024 – Typhoon Trami Response

Widespread flooding and landslides in October 2024 caused by tropical storm Trami left nearly a million people displaced. Floods have damaged birthing facilities, and washed away essential family planning supplies and medicines, leaving women and girls extremely vulnerable to health risks and gender-based violence. UNFPA Philippines with partner ADRA Philippines, supported by Australian Aid, provided dignity kits and adolescent kits to protect the well-being of women and girls. Reproductive health kits were provided to rural health facilities, enabling them to ensure safe deliveries and respond to obstetric emergencies. These life-saving kits address urgent reproductive health needs and improves care for women in affected areas. Photo: © UNFPA Philippines/Ma. Lourdes Eudela

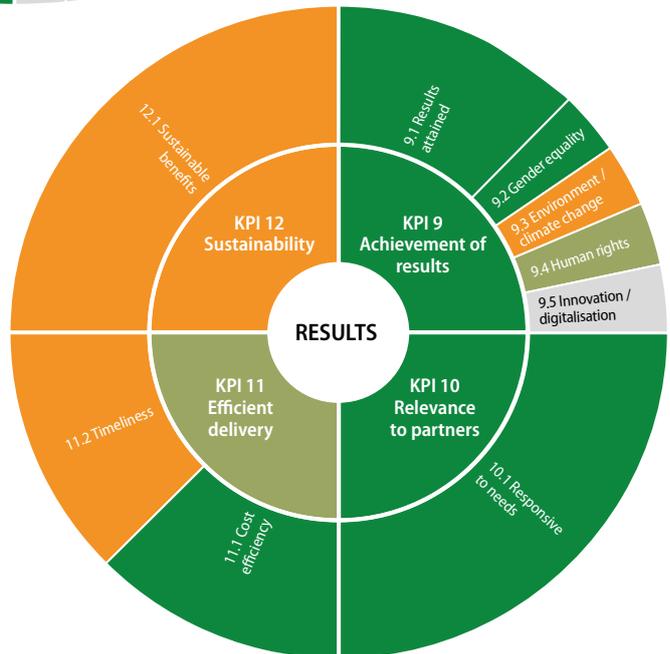
FIGURE 14: UNFPA PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY (PREVIOUS RATING SCALE)



**How to read these charts**



- **Highly satisfactory** (3.01-4.00)
- **Satisfactory** (2.01-3.00)
- **Unsatisfactory** (1.01-2.00)
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (0-1.00)
- **No evidence / Not applicable**

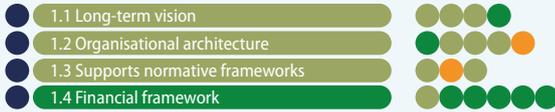


# ANNEX

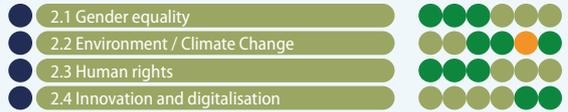
FIGURE 15: UNFPA PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW (Current rating scale)

## Strategic management

### KPI 1: Organisational architecture and financial framework



### KPI 2: Cross-cutting issues



## Operational management

### KPI 3: Operating framework

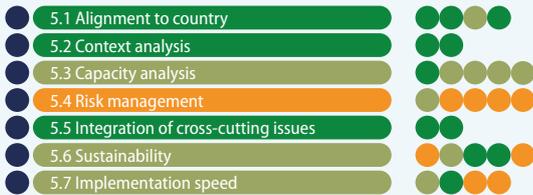


### KPI 4: Cost- and value-conscious systems



## Relationship management

### KPI 5: Relevance and agility

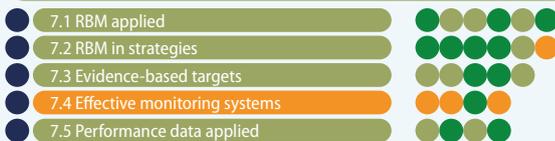


### KPI 6: Coherent partnerships

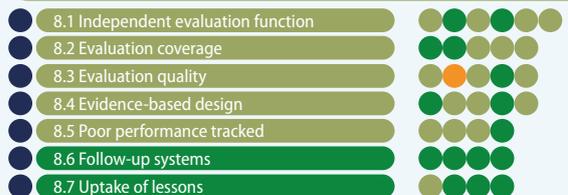


## Performance management

### KPI 7: Results management



### KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming

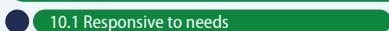


## Results

### KPI 9: Achievement of results



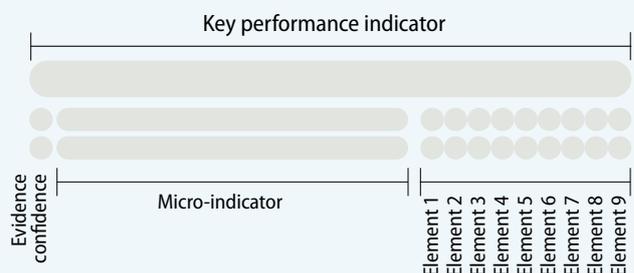
### KPI 10: Relevance

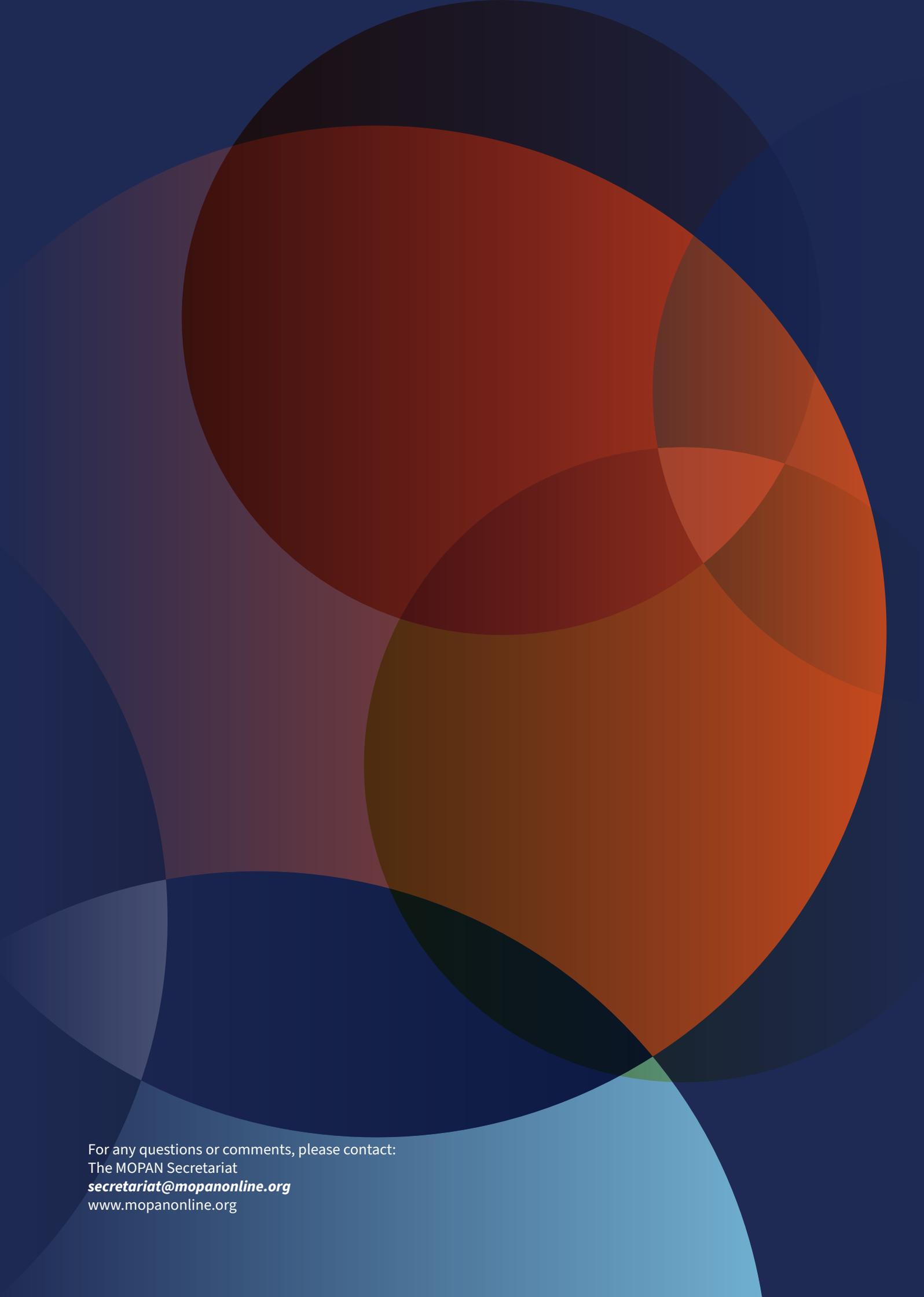


### KPI 11: Efficient delivery

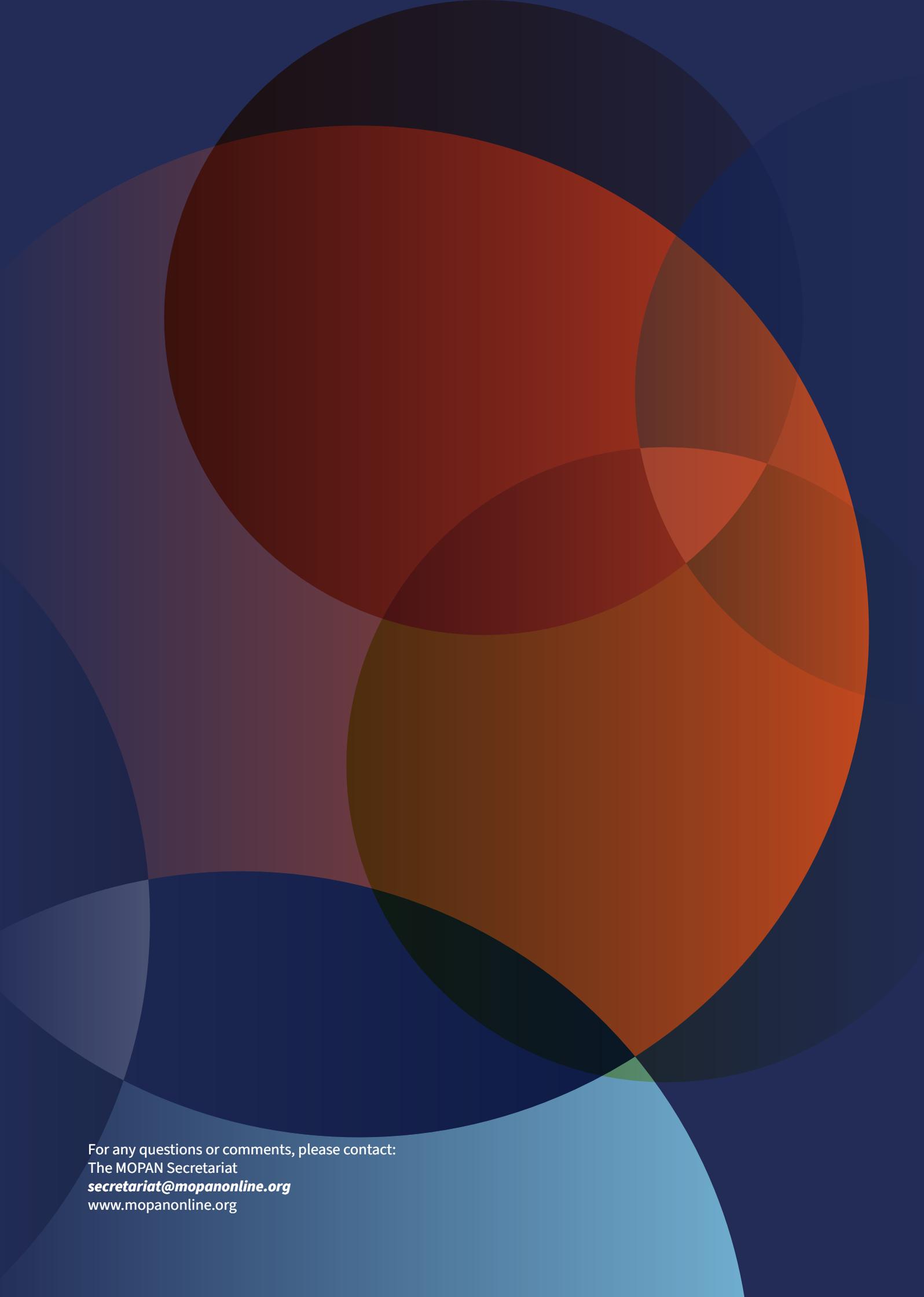


### KPI 12: Sustainability





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[www.mopanonline.org](http://www.mopanonline.org)



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