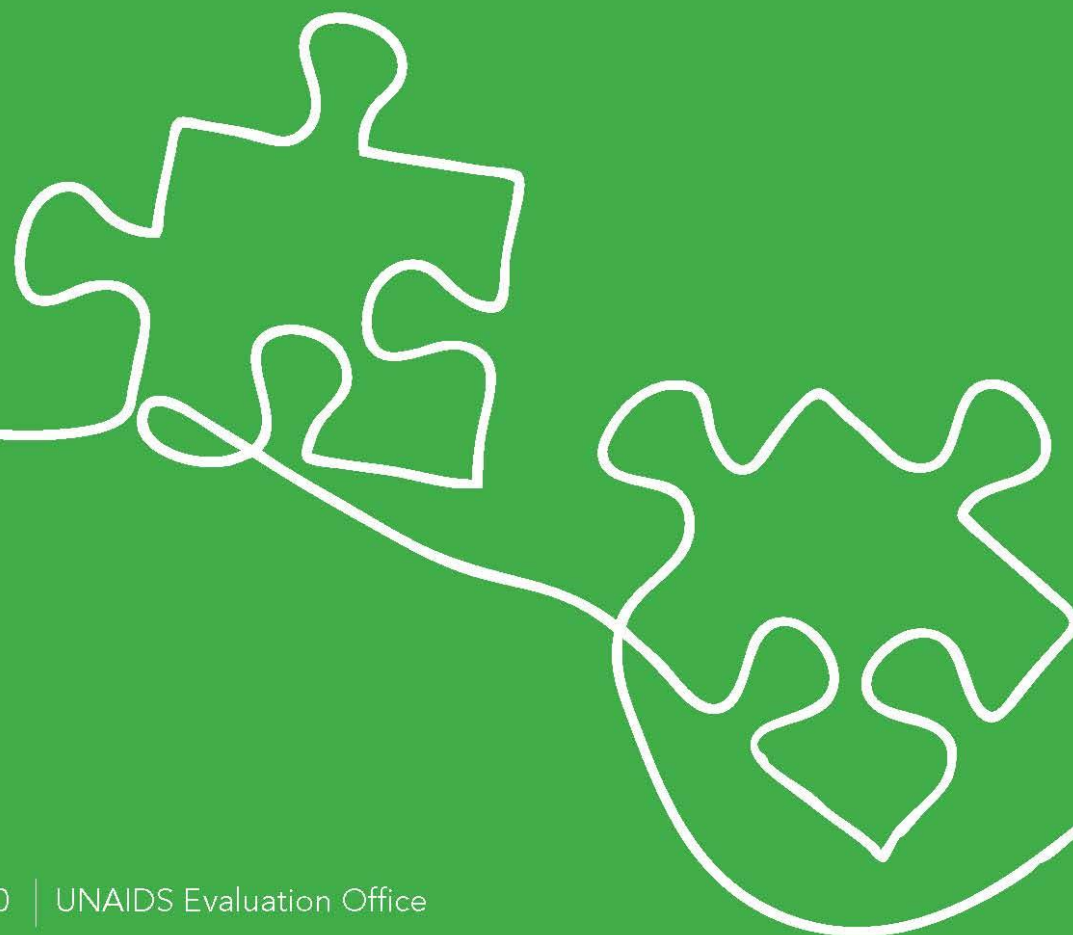


UNAIDS
EVALUATION REPORT

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE UN SYSTEM RESPONSE TO AIDS IN 2016–2019

Executive Summary



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UNAIDS/JC2996

Executive Summary

i. Overview

1. This is the final report of the Independent Evaluation of the UN system response to AIDS in 2016–2019. This evaluation focus is the 2016–2021 Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Strategy through the lens of the 2016–2021 Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF). The scope of the evaluation is the timeframe 2016–2018 (2019 where data are available), and UN system responses to AIDS at country, regional and global levels.
2. The evaluation is designed primarily for organisational learning but also for accountability purposes. The evaluation aims to provide actionable recommendations for the Joint Programme for its last biennium and, specifically, to provide guidance for how the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors will need to evolve in order to contribute to the goal of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. These recommendations have taken into account the changing AIDS context, which includes ongoing UN reform efforts, shifting priorities and evolving availability of resources.

ii. Evaluation approach

3. The conceptual framework for this assignment is based upon three overarching synthesis questions that needed to be addressed in order to inform the evaluation objectives and maximise the formative nature of the enquiry. These are as follows: Is the UBRAF covering the 'right things'? Is the Joint Programme doing these things in the 'right ways'? To what extent is the Joint Programme delivering the 'right results'?
4. This framework facilitates the unpacking of the Theory of Change (ToC) for the Joint Programme. Specifically, the 'right things... right ways... right results' framework provides the basis for testing the (explicit and implicit) assumptions that are embedded in the way the UN system response to AIDS has translated inputs into outputs through its activities, and to explore the extent to which these outputs have contributed to global outcomes. This is summarised in Figure 1.
5. As Figure 1 below highlights, 10 hypotheses have been identified to test as part of this evaluation. These hypotheses were developed based on an understanding of the overall ToC underlying the UBRAF approach, and through careful analysis of the strategic result areas (SRAs) outlined in the UBRAF document and the Evaluation Focus Areas articulated in the Request for Proposal (RFP). These hypotheses were discussed and validated with key stakeholders involved in this evaluation during the inception period.

Headline message

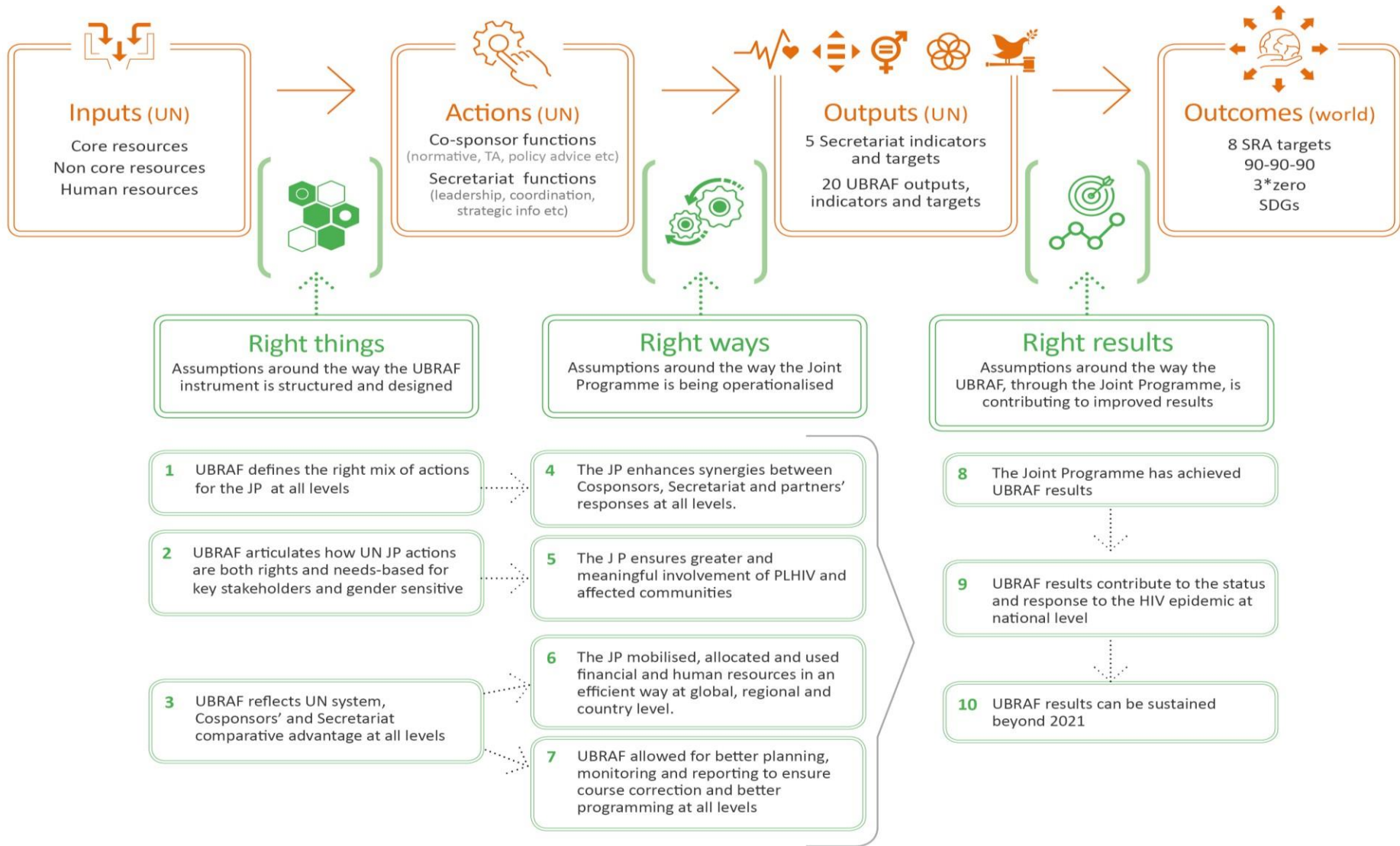
UNAIDS, the UN Joint Programme on AIDS, has long been held up as an exemplary expression of UN reform. The UBRAF is evidenced-based and proposes actions that are globally relevant to ending AIDS by 2030 in line with SDG targets. However, significant decreases in resource availability, has resulted in growing tensions between the Secretariat and UNAIDS Cosponsors.

These tensions are exacerbated as Cosponsors shed staff with HIV expertise and as decreases in core resources for Cosponsors compared to the Secretariat are combined with demanding requirements for reporting.

While a pragmatic approach to programme management and advocacy at country level shows the real advantages of a joint co-sponsored programme, the UBRAF itself offers little guidance as to how to set priorities when resources are constrained. Nor does it offer a means for understanding the specific contribution of the Joint Programme to national responses, or holding Cosponsors and the Secretariat accountable for their performance.

Recommendations offer a way forward that has the potential to break what otherwise may become a continuing cycle of decline and establish new and more effective ways of working and demonstrating clear results.

Figure 1: Overarching ToC for the evaluation – testing the space in between the ToC pathway



6. For each hypothesis, a draft set of evaluation questions (EQs) was developed through careful analysis of the EQs identified in the RFP. These EQs were also discussed and validated with key stakeholders involved in this evaluation and specifically were discussed with the reference group of Cosponsors and representatives of the Secretariat (departments and offices) and civil society.
7. In order to rigorously test each evaluation hypothesis, a mixed-methods approach to data collection was deployed. This allowed for triangulation of a range of sources to feed into robust, evidence-based findings on how each hypothesis played out at country, regional and global levels. Figure 2 summarises the main data sources which informed this evaluation.

Figure 2: Evaluation in figures



8. Key limitations included a very challenging timeline for the evaluation, issues relating to the evaluation focus of the exercise (UBRAF or the Joint Programme), issues relating to the evaluative import of the case studies, and data validity issues with the UBRAF output indicators. Despite these issues, the evaluation has generated a robust set of findings, a set of clear conclusions and has presented a number of targeted recommendations for the UNAIDS senior management team jointly with the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) to consider.

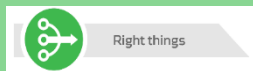
iii. Evaluation findings

9. The following paragraphs summarise the key findings against each of the 10 hypotheses. The findings address the evaluation questions and are articulated in more depth – with an assessment of the strength of evidence that supports them – in the full report.

H1: UBRAF defines the right mix of actions for the UNAIDS Joint Programme globally, regionally and at country level

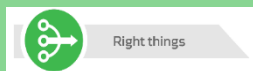
10. Strategies and actions of the Joint Programme are largely evidence based from both epidemiological and other sources, especially at global level. That strong evidence base contributes to the UN Joint Programme response being widely considered extremely relevant, given the challenges to maintain momentum at global and country levels. The translation to country-level UN Joint Plans is both a) highly dependent on local roles and the capacity of the UN staff involved and b) the degree to which there is alignment with the values and principles of country level stakeholders with the evidence around best practice programming. As such the relevance of these Joint Plans at the country level varies significantly.
11. The Unified Budget (UBRAF) reflects well the commitment of UNAIDS and Cosponsors to social determinants of HIV and to stakeholder participation. The UBRAF embodies the broad global ambitions of the UNAIDS Strategy. As such, the actions defined in the UBRAF are ambitious but,

given resource constraints, unlikely to be fully achieved, which undermines its realism. Importantly, the UBRAF provides little guidance for the Joint UN Programme or individual Cosponsors to prioritise strategic result areas or activities. While the UBRAF guides operational planning at all levels it does not articulate how resource allocation should be coordinated.



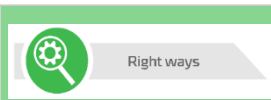
H2: UBRAF articulates how the UN Joint Programme actions are both rights and needs - based for key stakeholders including key populations, and gender sensitive.

12. The process to identify Joint Programme priorities is very inclusive and participatory at global, regional and country level and that the UNAIDS Strategy, UBRAF and country-level plans are responsive to the needs of governments and key populations.
13. The UBRAF promotes the greater and meaningful involvement of people living with HIV, communities and civil society and the UNAIDS Strategy provides a comprehensive rationale for interventions that address gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE). However, the lack of reference to a number of relevant global normative standards, along with consistent shortfalls in systematic gender analysis, constrains the Joint Programme from coordinating and prioritising sustainable gender-transformative HIV interventions.



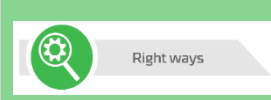
H3: UBRAF reflects the comparative advantage of the UN, Cosponsors and Secretariat at global, regional and country level

14. The UN system comparative advantage, especially with respect to 'upstream work', is indicated but not elaborated in the UBRAF. Key informants confirm the comparative advantage of the UN as trusted partner to engage in politically or culturally sensitive policy dialogues with member states, while United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund are seen as technical and/or funding agents, complementing the UN. Additional comparative advantages mentioned are catalytic core funding for innovations; joint UN advocacy on human rights being more effective than single Cosponsor policy dialogue; and the ability to influence Cosponsor boards and, through these, member states. Finally, the inclusion of civil society in the governance of the Joint Programme is seen to add value to the Joint Programme.
15. However, the evaluation found that global stakeholders are increasingly questioning the added value of the Joint Programme architecture beyond 2030, arguing, for example, that co-sponsorship is static, and does not always reflect Cosponsor ability and willingness to contribute to the UN system response.
16. While the UNAIDS division of labour adequately reflects the roles and mandates of Cosponsors and Secretariat, it is political, continuously debated and regularly revised, and the role of the Secretariat vis-à-vis Cosponsors at all levels, in particular, has been contentious and precarious from the early days of the Joint Programme. Incompatible demands from member states and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Cosponsors leave the Secretariat in a difficult position.
17. The UBRAF recognises the Global Fund and PEPFAR as funders of national responses, but not their technical support and normative role, and how this interacts with the UN system mandate at global or country level. The Global Fund and PEPFAR involvement in Joint Programme planning is mostly indirect.
18. The comparative advantage of regional Joint UN Teams depends on the willingness and ability of regional Cosponsor offices to collaborate. The value add of the Joint UN Teams at country level is also variable for similar reasons. At all levels policy and normative support is a clear comparative advantage; implementation support (e.g. procurement, grant management) is less so.
19. UBRAF and the Joint Programme are in line with UN and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) principles and the UNAIDS Joint Programme is considered to be an example of UN reform, and achieves UN reform objectives best at country level.



H4: The Joint Programme enhances synergies between Cosponsors, Secretariat and partner responses at global, regional and country level

20. Overall, the Joint Programme appears to be adequately interacting with its external partners, with some noting specific helpful initiatives and others noting that there is still room for improvement. Most respondents did not specify whether this cooperation differed between the global/HQ, regional and country levels.
21. The relationships and level of collaboration across the Joint Programme are under stress at the global level and it is widely reported that the relationship between the Cosponsors and the Secretariat, at least at the HQ level, had deteriorated in recent years and, in some cases, this has translated into suboptimal external relationships. However, collaboration of the Joint Programme at country level both internally and externally is reported to be generally working well.
22. While Joint Programme informants reported good knowledge of the UBRAF and how it had responded to the overall UN objectives, they flagged that the prominence of HIV within some United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs)/ United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) has decreased.



H5: The Joint Programme ensures greater and meaningful involvement of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV in the AIDS response

23. The UNAIDS 2016–2021 strategy notes that strong civil society engagement is critical to implementation, the overall governance structure ensures civil society engagement in global planning and decision making, and the evaluation finds that at the global level there is an intensive effort to engage with civil society networks to support global policy development, while at country level, UNAIDS plays a critical role as a broker bringing together civil society and other sectors.
24. However, there continues to be a degree of discontent among some stakeholders about the quality and level of Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and community involvement – particularly at the country level and it is noted that in the UBRAF, language around meaningful involvement of communities has shifted towards emphasis on the meaningful involvement of civil society which reflects assumptions on representativeness and governance.



H6: The Joint Programme has mobilised, allocated and used financial and human resources in an efficient way at global, regional and country level

25. Resource mobilisation for core funding has been less than anticipated since 2016 and this has resulted in increased tensions at all levels across the Joint Programme. A key issue explaining the lack of success in raising funds for the Joint Programme appears to be the Joint Programme's inability to link funding with results, particularly at the global and regional level and, to a certain extent, at the country level, which has reduced confidence for partners to provide resources. A challenge raised by the vast majority of Cosponsor key informants is the perception that a disproportionate amount of core funding is allocated to the Secretariat in relation to the Cosponsors.
26. There are mixed views on the adequacy in the way the Joint Programme has responded to the financial resource constraints though there is an emergent consensus that the realities of constrained resources represent an opportunity for the Joint Programme. Two of the main reported barriers to fully utilising the situation of constrained resources are (a) increased reporting and accountability demands on Cosponsors (even though funding has decreased) and (b) that the thinning of resources has left most programmes unable to demonstrate and communicate significant results, catalytic or otherwise.

27. The increased country-level allocation (through country envelopes) has been broadly appreciated. However, there are a number of reported issues which need to be resolved to ensure more effective implementation of the funding. The allocation of human resources both in terms of quantity and quality is widely reported to be one of the weakest areas of the Joint Programme. This has weakened the implementation of Joint Plans, the Joint Programme's effectiveness, and has led to suboptimal support for national strategies in some cases
28. Importantly, Cosponsor HIV-specific human resources are reducing, and this is affecting Cosponsor capacity to provide technical leadership in their mandated field; UNAIDS Secretariat and UNAIDS Country Office (UCO) human resources are also reducing (but to a lesser extent).



Right ways

H7: UBRAF has allowed for better planning, monitoring and reporting to ensure course correction, and better programming at global, regional and country level

29. While there has been recent good progress in streamlining and rationalising the UBRAF reporting system through the monitoring framework revision in terms of simplification of indicators and a focus on country-level results, it is still widely considered to be sub-optimal. There is still limited unification of the planning, monitoring and reporting systems across the Cosponsors and the quality of reports and how contributions are expressed differs significantly by country and agency. In addition, as responses to indicator questions do not change much from one period to the next, they are not providing dynamic data for analysis or timely data use for decision making. Finally, multiple measurement questions within each of the 20 output indicators, and a complex reporting architecture that consists of multiple levels, agencies and reporting formats, make the performance measurement system complicated and "not telling a clear story".
30. Measuring the contribution of Cosponsors and the Joint Programme is challenging. Indicators measure country outcomes rather than the contributions of the UN system to country-level and global change. External evaluations are supposed to provide a more objective and independent assessment of the Joint Programme contributions, to be triangulated with UBRAF reporting, yet evaluations done on Cosponsor or Secretariat HIV programmes have to date not been tasked to do so.



Right results

H8: The Joint Programme has achieved UBRAF results

31. At the global level, in 2018, 80% of the UBRAF indicator measurements met or exceeded the 2019 milestones set, an increase of 8% since 2016. This suggests that at a country level, considerable progress has been made in the AIDS response in those areas that the Joint Programme focuses on. However, in 2018, there were large differences between countries on an overall score, based on responses to the indicator measurements, indicating substantial differences between countries in the status and/or focus of their AIDS response. The evaluation also found that there is no real difference in progress in the response between Fast-Track and other countries or regions.
32. Some progress has been made in terms of changes in the number of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, although the Fast-Track targets that have been set for these impact indicators have not been achieved



Right results

H9: UBRAF results contribute to the achievement of global (Fast-Track and SDG) targets at national level

33. The UN Joint Programme contributes to SDGs identified in the UBRAF, to the extent that it contributes to strategic result areas and country HIV responses. While it is difficult to prove the contribution of the Joint Programme to country-level outcomes using quantitative data (UBRAF indicators), based on qualitative data, there is ample anecdotal evidence of Joint Programme outputs that have contributed to changes in HIV responses at the country and global level in terms

of normative guidance, policy options, tools, strategic information and resources in the period 2016–2019. However, the contribution of individual Cosponsors and the Secretariat to these outputs cannot be clearly established.

34. The UN Joint Programme has contributed to the addressing of social enablers at all levels, and this is mentioned to be ‘part and parcel’ of the Joint response. The evaluation also found that UN Joint Programme contributes, to some extent, to ensuring stronger systems and capacities to sustain national and local AIDS responses. In some cases, this includes supporting resource mobilisation at domestic level.



Right results

H10: UBRAF results can be sustained beyond 2021, including through sustainable financing for national responses

35. The sustainability of the UBRAF outputs (which measure country and global level HIV response results and not direct Joint Programme results) hinges on country capacity, willingness, and resources, which are largely outside the sphere of Joint Programme influence.
36. Importantly, the evaluation finds that the sustainability of the UN Joint Programming depends largely on willingness of Cosponsors to collaborate and contribute – and less on mobilising core resources. The sustainability of Cosponsor HIV programming depends on continued core funding but also (mainly) on Cosponsor investment of own resources. Similarly, the sustainability of the UNAIDS Secretariat programming and results depends largely on core funding resource mobilisation and donor commitment to UNAIDS, which are far from guaranteed.

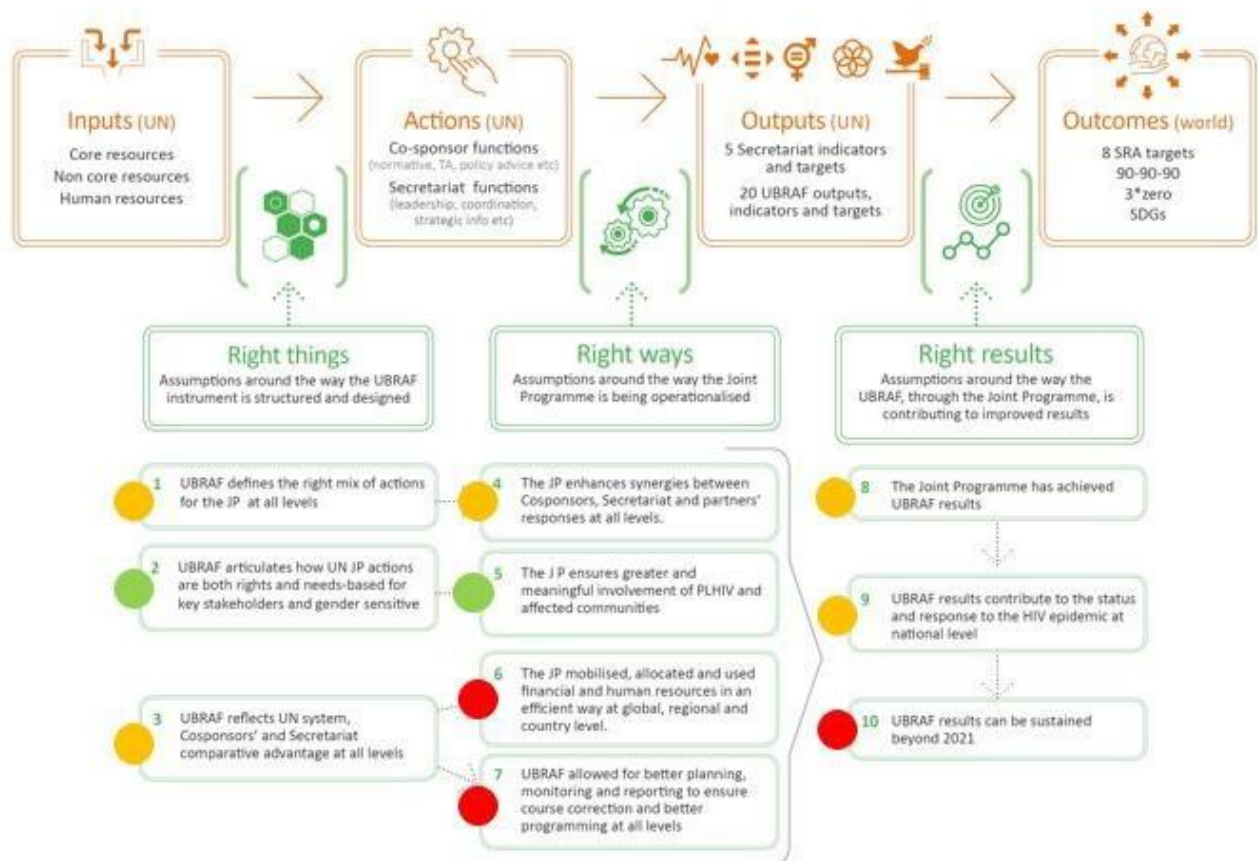
iv. Conclusions

37. On the basis of the hypothesis-driven validation of the theory of change, the headline conclusions of this evaluation are as follows:
- **The structure and design of** the UBRAF has been a success in several ways. It is needs based, inclusive and participatory and provides a comprehensive rationale for interventions that address gender equality and women’s empowerment. But despite demonstrating the potential for UN reform at country level, it has proved unable to achieve a consistent division of labour among the Cosponsors and Secretariat and neither guides the prioritisation of actions nor is an effective tool to allocate resources.
 - **In its operationalisation** UNAIDS has been most successful at engaging with and bringing together civil society with other sectors. In contrast, while collaboration across the Joint Programme generally works well at country level, it is under stress at the global level, where Cosponsors are increasingly unable to provide technical skills and leadership. Mobilisation of resources and allocation across the programme is recognised to be weak with poor accountability and falling effectiveness. The contribution of the UN system to country and global change is poorly recognised and insufficiently evaluated.
 - **The UBRAF** has potential to play a continued useful role as an instrument for the Joint Programme. However, for this to be the case the UBRAF needs to have a fully articulated Theory of Change (ToC) which is fully aligned with a modified results framework that includes precise output level performance indicators which are attributable to the UN system.
 - Despite shortcomings in UNAIDS’ operationalisation and measurement, evidence suggests a number of key UBRAF milestones for **results** were being met or exceeded in 2019, although with wide variation among countries. The Joint Programme clearly contributes to country level outcomes though the relative performances of the Cosponsors and Secretariat cannot be identified. The Joint Programme contributes to stronger systems and capacities to sustain national and local AIDS responses.
 - Looking forward, the **sustainability** of the results achieved through the Joint Programme will depend critically on a) continued core funding of UNAIDS, b) continued Cosponsor engagement and c) increased alignment with national priorities and associated domestic commitments. In

the current environment, none of these things are guaranteed. Cosponsor HIV programming depends on continued core funding but also (mainly) on Cosponsor investment of own resources and there is no certainty that Cosponsors will continue to invest their own resources moving forward. The sustainability of the UNAIDS Secretariat programming and results depends largely on core funding resource mobilisation and donor commitment to UNAIDS which is likely to be under threat: Some donors question the continuing relevance of the Joint Programme architecture and it is not clear that donors will remain committed to UNAIDS beyond 2021. Finally, at national level domestic commitments to AIDS programming have, on the whole, been disappointing and there is little indication that this will shift positively.

38. Figure 3 below maps against the theory of change, presented in figure 1, the extent to which the evaluation has concluded whether the 10 hypotheses have been validated or not.

Figure 3: Validation of the Theory of Change



Key

- Hypothesis largely validated
- Hypothesis only partially validated. Significant issues raised
- Hypothesis not validated

39. Presented below are the 11 more detailed specific evaluation conclusions which map against each of the three overarching evaluation questions that have been used to frame this assignment. These conclusions cut across the hypotheses.



Right things

1. The UNAIDS Strategy, which articulates the global response, is highly relevant because it describes the UN system's 'upstream' role within the global response, and is based on evidence and extensive input from the key stakeholders.
2. The UBRAF, which provides operational details on the Joint UN response, is not well known beyond the Joint Programme. It is not used as was intended and has demonstrated limited value as a prioritisation / resource allocation tool. The UN system cannot and/or does not use it as such.
3. The lack of Joint UN 'HIV and gender' plan, based on agreed definitions and priorities prevents clarity on the way forward.



Right ways

4. Country-level Joint Planning contains positive lessons in particular for UN reform.
5. The UBRAF output indicators do not allow assessment of the UN system contribution to global progress nor do they adequately systematically capture the direct contribution that Joint Programme activities make to country-level change.
6. The recognised challenges of Joint Programming across multiple agencies have been significantly exacerbated by a shortage of available funding – but this is seen by many as an opportunity for strategic prioritisation.
7. The view that financial and human resources from core funds are not being appropriately allocated across the Joint Programme is widely held, particularly at global level.
8. At the country level, the ability to provide leadership in HIV technical areas, as well as programme areas, and oversee HIV funds, has been negatively impacted by reductions of HIV positions for several Cosponsors. This will have short-, medium-, and long-term consequences for the Joint Programme.



Right results

9. There is progress in terms of reaching UBRAF milestones although there is wide variability between country performance, and the expected acceleration in the country response in fast-track countries versus other countries has not clearly happened yet. There are numerous, mainly qualitative, examples of UN contributions to the global and country HIV response.
10. The sustainability of the results achieved through the Joint Programme to date are not guaranteed and indeed are under immediate threat.
11. Looking forward, a coordinated UN response on HIV remains very relevant, especially at normative and policy level; however, the future relevance of the Joint Programme architecture is being questioned by a number of key stakeholders (including key donors).

v. Recommendations

40. Eight recommendations have been identified. These have been derived from the 11 conclusions. These recommendations are, in the first instance, all directed towards the UNAIDS senior management.
41. The recommendations are presented as overall recommendation statements with specific detailed recommendations presented as bullet points underneath these statements. These bullet points are listed in order of importance/urgency and proposed sequence of timing.
42. The recommendations are divided into four strategic and four operational. The strategic recommendations are structured to address the failures and concerns over resource allocation, especially from core funds. They include a redefined UN system strategy; a fully costed and prioritised unified budget; improving the theory of change to identify effective indicators; a radical revision of the architecture of the Joint Programme; and revamped professional interaction. The operational recommendations support strategic change and deal with mobilising resources more systematically; ways to improve allocation of core funds and to reassess human resources in the Secretariat and Cosponsors; and improved articulation for gender mainstreaming.

v.i. Strategic recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Joint Programme needs to prioritise programming in a more strategic and pragmatic way.

Conclusions 3, 6

- UNAIDS Secretariat to facilitate consensus among UNAIDS Cosponsors for the period until 2030, on a *UN System Strategy* in support of the global HIV response.
 - This UN System Strategy should be realistic:
 - based on scientific evidence of strategies having the most impact on the HIV epidemic;
 - based on cost-effective approaches;
 - tying into the agreed-upon Division of Labour and the upstream role of the UN system.
 - The UN System Strategy should be prioritised:
 - prioritising the geographical footprint for UN System support;
 - presenting specific UN activity areas as ‘investment cases’ showing value for money and comparative advantage for UN system and/or Cosponsors;
 - demonstrating priorities for different funding levels.
- UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors to finalise the next *Unified Budget*, guiding specific allocation of joint human and financial resources, so that the budget:
 - prioritises core funds to joint strategies and activities (as opposed to Cosponsor specific);
 - fully costs each priority of the UN system strategy, showing funding gaps, so that donors appreciate what the Joint Programme can or cannot do based on levels of funding;
 - reduces the number of countries for country envelope funding such that the monies are large enough to make a difference and reduce the transaction costs;
 - prioritises the UNAIDS Secretariat geographical footprint (fewer country offices, more multi-country offices) deploying savings to increase the Fast-track/country envelopes.
- UNAIDS Secretariat to facilitate where possible (e.g. around country-level NSP development and global review processes) improved UN joint system planning with the Global Fund, PEPFAR and mutual donors.

Recommendation 2: Revise the UBRAF Theory of Change (ToC) and modify the associated results framework and M&E systems accordingly to better capture the contribution of the Joint Programme to global and country-level outcomes

Conclusions 5, 9, 10

- The UBRAF has potential to be a play a continued useful role as an instrument for the Joint Programme. However, for this to be the case the UBRAF needs to have a fully articulated Theory of Change (ToC) which is fully aligned with a modified results framework that includes precise output level performance indicators which are attributable to the UN system.
- UNAIDS Secretariat to revise the UBRAF ToC and results framework (for example as proposed below – see also Annex M). A revised ToC and result framework should
 - Include Joint Programme *outputs* (i.e. attributable results of Joint Programme activities) which are currently missing, reflecting the ‘upstream’ functions of the UN;
 - Include Joint Programme *outcomes* and *impacts* (i.e. country-level changes that the Joint Programme outputs contribute to, but that are usually a result of the efforts of multiple actors).
- UNAIDS Secretariat to commission regular (preferably bi-annual) external evaluations that would aim to establish links between the UBRAF outputs and country-level outcomes, and validate the contribution implied by the ToC.
- UNAIDS Secretariat to further strengthen and streamline the M&E system and tools for the Joint Programme (JPMS) and invest increased human and financial resources into managing these systems in country and centrally.



Revised ToC framework with Joint Programme outputs and outcomes specified

Recommendation 3: Address head-on the future architecture of the Joint Programme

Conclusions 2, 4, 7, 11

- UNAIDS Senior Management to get on the ‘front foot’ of discussions about the UNAIDS Secretariat’s immediate role and especially long-term (post 2030) role, and to commission a comprehensive external review of strategic options.¹
- This review should build on the 2017 Global Review Panel and ensure the continued relevance of the Joint Programme as key part of the global HIV response explore options for the future *architecture* and *operation* of the Joint Programme, such as:
 - leveraging UN reforms – especially with respect to (a) transparency and simplification of

¹ It is noted that this review could be integrated in to the current (at time of writing) UNAIDS strategy facilitation process that has been commissioned.

planning, (b) improving financial allocation and reporting, (c) placing greater emphasis on instruments such as UNSDCF, and (d) the possibility of the UNAIDS country-level coordination function to be taken up as part of the UN Resident Coordinators Office – arguably this would also be more in line with the integrated and multi-sectoral approach to sustainable development promoted by the SDGs);

- radical architecture options such as greatly reducing the size and function of the Secretariat (particularly the Geneva HQ) so that it only has a coordination and strategic information function;
- increasing the agility of the Joint Programme, for example a more fluid and dynamic process for Cosponsors to join or leave the Joint Programme, and increasing the ability of resources to be reallocated quickly across Cosponsors or geographies to maximise results;
- leveraging synergies between the big players in the HIV response such as Global Fund and PEPFAR to maximise impact and reduce overlap and inefficiencies.

Recommendation 4: The Joint Programme should invest more in working better together

Conclusions 6, 10

- UNAIDS Leadership to hold the CCO responsible for addressing management and resource issues, so that Cosponsor technical experts can collaborate more effectively on programmatic issues. The CCO needs to:
 - strengthen the agency of technical staff to collaboratively implement the Joint Programme as a powerful basis for ongoing future work to combat HIV; and
 - separate conversations around management issues (around process, governance and resources) from the technical and programmatic issues, with an emphasis on ensuring that the former does not crowd out the latter.
- UNAIDS Secretariat to create more platforms and opportunities for Joint Programme technical experts and professionals at all levels to collaborate around key technical and programmatic issues and challenges, such as:
 - technical gatherings/meetings for Joint Programme counterparts to discuss technical issues, best practices, and lessons learned;
 - setting up of a short-term secondment system so that staff can learn more about counterpart programming;
 - joint planning at all levels (country/regional/global).

v.i.i. Operational recommendations

Recommendation 5: UNAIDS Secretariat to develop a Joint Programme resource mobilisation strategy that is linked directly to the UN System Strategy and Unified Budget mentioned in Recommendation #1

Conclusions 2, 6, 10

- UNAIDS Secretariat to conduct a systematic resource mobilisation review for the Joint Programme.² This review should cover:
 - three main perspectives: (1) the relative ability of the Secretariat vis-à-vis Cosponsors to raise funds; (2) the resource mobilisation options from a global, regional and country perspective, and (3) an assessment of why the previous UNAIDS resource mobilisation strategy was unsuccessful;

² In some cases the need for an independent/external review has been suggested. However, external reviews are expensive and so, where the need for an external review is not paramount – as is the case here – this has not been suggested in the text.

- an assessment of the donor and member states' likely ongoing support for a special UN programme on HIV, seeking indications from these constituencies on the specific areas that are perceived to be needed/add value, indicating options for the future architecture of the UN response on HIV (see Recommendation #3).
- The results of this review should inform a revised Joint Programme resource mobilisation strategy which is agreed on and owned across the Joint Programme.

Recommendation 6: The Joint Programme needs to sharpen – and possibly overhaul – its resource allocation processes

Conclusions 2, 6, 7

- UNAIDS Secretariat to solicit independent advice (for the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB)) for a resource allocation process for UNAIDS *core* funding in the next Unified Budget, in order to restore the collective belief in the validity of the process, improve efficiency and improve transparency for fundraising. This independent review should propose the following:
 - documented rationale and accountability process for resource allocation across the Joint Programme;
 - criteria to allocate core funds to Cosponsors, e.g. contribution to UN System Strategy priorities, resource needs and fundraising abilities;
 - criteria to allocate core funds to programme activities, e.g. contribution to UN System Strategy priorities, joint versus individual Cosponsor activities, priority countries;
 - an arbitrated resource allocation process;
 - an exit strategy for Cosponsors to graduate out of core funding support if they have enough resources, and strategy for UN agencies to 'buy into' UNAIDS services.
- UNAIDS Secretariat to commission a detailed assessment/evaluation of the country envelope mechanism.
- UNAIDS Secretariat to commission an independent review of the human resource levels of the UNAIDS Secretariat vis-à-vis UN System Strategy priorities (see also Recommendation #8). This review should assess:
 - economies of arrangements within countries and regions;
 - appropriateness of human resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat at global, regional and country level;
 - options for arrangements to allocate staff across agencies depending on requirements, the presence of agencies and programmes.

Recommendation 7: The Joint Programme should develop a concise and clear Joint UN 'HIV and gender' plan to facilitate the implementation of strategic gender commitments

Conclusion 3

- UNAIDS Secretariat to mainstream gender commitments into the upcoming Strategy, by developing an accompanying Joint UN 'HIV and gender' plan (annexed or standalone) that provides guidance for the Joint Programme on practical implementation of the commitments. This process should ensure that the Joint UN 'HIV and gender' plan:
 - articulates a shared understanding of the gender aspects of the HIV epidemic, definitions, scope and principles;
 - allocates roles and responsibilities to action areas among Cosponsors and Secretariat
 - Is informed by a review of evidence that demonstrates where strategic gender commitments resulted in positive HIV response outcomes the national level

- reflects existing gender mainstreaming strategies, approaches and best practice articulated across the UN system and elsewhere;
- UNAIDS Secretariat to incorporate the above into the UN System Strategy and Unified Budget described in Recommendation #1.

Recommendation 8: Act now to maintain HIV technical expertise in Joint Programme Response

Conclusions 7, 8, 10

- UNAIDS Secretariat to undertake a review of the human resource levels of the Cosponsor HIV departments vis-à-vis UN System Strategy priorities (see also Recommendation #6). This review should:
 - address the need to maintain HIV technical leadership across the Joint Programme.
 - examine to what extent HIV specialist expertise (e.g. in relation to working on issues around Key Populations and policy work) is being adequately resourced.
 - help bolster focused Cosponsor technical HIV expertise (mainly but not only at country level) so that quality programming is assured.
- UNAIDS Secretariat to support Cosponsors to advocate for adequate human resources with the PCB and donors, and the financial resource for this.

UNAIDS
20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

+41 22 791 3666

unaids.org