

Good Practice Example:

UNCT-SWAP PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.1

Virtual Toolkit Resource



What?

**Guidelines on establishing UN Joint Programmes in Uganda
(UNCT Uganda 2021)**



Why?

The Guidelines outline what a UN Joint Programme (JP) is and when one is appropriate, including considerations and principles in order to drive successful JPs. As a minimum, all JPs should meet the minimum standards of a GEM 2 as set out in the UNSDG UNCT-Gender Equality Marker Guidance.

The Guidelines also include a checklist for establishing new JPs, which can be used by UNCTs to ensure that GEWE is visibly mainstreamed into all JPs (UNCT SWAP Scorecard KPI 2.1, criterion a) and that a system is in place to ensure gender mainstreaming in JPs ((UNCT SWAP Scorecard PI 2.1, criterion c).



Performance Indicator 2.1 Joint Programs

Approaches Minimum Requirements	<p>a. Gender equality is visibly mainstreamed into at least 50 percent of JPs operational at the time of assessment;</p> <p>or</p> <p>b. A Joint Program on promoting gender equality and empowerment of women is operational over current Cooperation Framework period in line with SDG priorities, including SDG 5.</p>
Meets Minimum Requirements	<p>a. Gender equality is visibly mainstreamed into all JPs operational at the time of assessment;</p> <p>and</p> <p>b. A Joint Program on promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is operational over current Cooperation Framework period in line with SDG priorities, including SDG 5.</p>
Exceeds Minimum Requirements	<p>Meets minimum requirements</p> <p>and</p> <p>c. A system is in place to ensure gender mainstreaming in Joint Programs.</p>

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Guidelines on Establishing UN Joint Programmes in Uganda

Overview

A Joint Programme (JP) is a set of activities contained in a joint work plan and related common budgetary framework, involving two or more UN agencies intended to achieve results aligned with national priorities as reflected in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Whereas JPs are between UN agencies, government entities, civil society organizations and the private sector, can be engaged as implementing partners depending on the rules of participating UN agencies. Funding to a JP can be:

- stand-alone (i.e., financed directly by UN organizations or by donors to the UN organization/s and not through a Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF)/One Fund or other pass-through funding mechanisms).
- financed through a multi-donor trust fund, including Uganda MPTF, or a global fund.
- co-funded by the Government.

When is a JP appropriate?

A Joint Programme is appropriate if it identifies and builds on complementarities and brings together the added value of its partners in addressing complex development challenges. It requires a commitment from participating organizations to work together and its success is premised on consensus building and a clear vision and set of strategies from the outset. Joint programming should contribute to making UN support to reaching the national priorities more coherent, effective, and efficient; avoids duplication, reduce transaction costs, and maximizes synergies among national partners and the UN. To the extent possible, participating UN organizations (PUNOs) in any given JP should co-exist in a particular geographical zone for better scale and maximum impact. Colocation promotes complementarity and addresses vulnerability from a whole of society perspectives.

When is JP not appropriate?

A Joint Programme is not appropriate if it is not programmatically preferred (e.g., not a good fit related to programming context, operating environment including aid architecture and business practices, capacities, etc.) or cost efficient (considering a mid- or long-term perspective). A Joint Programme may also face more difficulties in emergency settings and for it to be successful it requires a ‘do no harm’ analysis and the international principles for good engagement in fragile situations.

The UNSDG Guidance Note on developing Joint Programmes explains the concept and process in details. It is available here: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/undg-guidance-note-joint-programmes>. The global Guidance Note on JPs, however, does not explicitly address management issues. It deals more with management after a JP has been established and the participating agencies identified. Accordingly, UN Country Teams decide on a case-by-case basis the principles on establishing JPs.

Considerations for Successful JPs

Driving joint programming forward needs deep reflections and strategizing on the following factors:

- practical capacity (capacity to implement together)
- flexibility of instruments (to enable joint action)
- institutional coherence (coordination mechanisms and whether they can enable joint action)
- political interest – a level of structured engagement with national governments needs to happen at the right time to garner strategic buy in.
- high level leadership, prioritization, and clear link between UN Joint Programming and specific Cooperation Strategies being advanced (the JPs should be designed to facilitate/deepen cooperation, indeed in the spirit of the transition from UNDAF to UNSDCF)
- mechanisms should be in place to ensure the joint planning is locally led and with a clear eye on adding value – the NDP III PIAPs should be a major driver for the JPs. We need to increasingly focus on PIAPs as a point of departure to support government operationalize the NDP III.

Principles of Establishing Point Programmes in Uganda

- 1) **Build on country analysis and follow existing programme structures:** Any new JP should strongly profile the SDGs, the National Development Plan (NDP) III and the UNSDCF including Socio-Economic impacts of Covid-19. It must fit one or several of the outcomes/outputs of the UNSDCF and link to its results framework. If there is a need for additional indicators to be added, tailored to the JP specifically, this is acceptable. The Joint Work Plans of the UNSDCF are the primary planning instrument and all interventions in a JP should be captured in the JWPs through collaboration with UNSDCF Strategic Priority Groups and UN Results-Based Management (RBM) Team. The JPs align to NDP III Programme Implementation Plans, and other sectoral national and local government plans or policies, that should be used as the starting point.
- 2) **Gender Equality Marker (GEM):** A JP should meet the minimum standards as set out in UNSDG GEM 2.
- 3) **Adding value/Focus on results:** A JP is appropriate if it identifies and builds on complementarities and brings together the added value of its partners and comparative advantage in addressing complex development challenges. A JP should not be a magic bullet for increased resource mobilization. Improved results for development need to be the underlying linchpin. JPs should be developed only if they explicitly add value to existing joint UN planning, implementation, coordination, and reporting requirements in a certain topic/area and/or where there are emerging needs that were not known during UNSDCF planning. Whereas JPs can be created for resource mobilization purposes, they are only likely to be successful if they adhere to the principles around adding value, complementarities and focusing on results.
- 4) **Follow existing Governance structures:** There should ideally be Government participation in the planning stage as well as in implementation. Where feasible the JP should use the existing UNSDCF Management Structure. However, on a case-by-case basis, because of size, effectiveness or other considerations, a separate management body can be considered.
- 5) **UNSDCF Strategic Priority Groups as the starting point, but UNCT decides:** The starting point is a strategic long-term overview and discussion within the relevant Strategic Priorities of which JPs should there be and nominate which agency should lead, and the participating UN agencies. It is ideal that this is determined by consensus, however in case of disagreements, the Chair of the Strategic Priority group will decide and in special cases where this is questioned, the case will be brought to the UN Country Team. The lead agencies to be chosen are those with the most appropriate mandate, comparative advantage, and previously proven experience on the development issue/topic in question. Once the Strategic Priority Group has decided on the concept notes/ideas for potential JPs and their leads, these suggestions shall be sent to UNCT for review. JP proposals may also be initiated by individual UNCT members.

Participation should be based on mandates, comparative advantages, and previous experience of interventions for the particular topic in Uganda as evidenced by contributing to the corresponding UNSDCF sub-outputs. Previous JPs implementation successes, and physical presence in the geographic area(s) in question are also to be considered.

- 6) **Joint Accountability:** Participating UN Agencies are collectively accountable for the success and or failure of a JP in achieving intended results. No single PUNOs shall be held fully responsible for deficits in the attainment of the desired scale and impact for a joint programme. It stays a collective responsibility of all PUNOs to ensure the timely delivery of JP priority interventions. It is anticipated that once an agency signs up to participate in a JP, then it commits to active participation and engagement, throughout the implementation of the JP.
- 7) **Agency contributions and staff costs:** Another criterion to join a JP is for each participating agency to contribute with minimum 5-10% cost-sharing (at agency level) of their requested share of the budget. This is done to avoid starting a JP with a zero budget in a core area of the UN, to show internal UN commitment and to give the JP a head start. These funds can come from the agencies core/regular/assessed funds or from non-core funds at the global, regional or national level mobilized before joining the JP. In-kind contributions such as devoting time from existing staff to implement the programme are allowed, however this must be clearly articulated and quantified and agreed to before the finalization of the JP. These funds will only be dedicated towards the agency contribution and activities in the JP. Additionally, the staffing costs of the project budget should not exceed 25%* for each agency of what it is asking for in total.
- 8) **Mandatory pro-active joint planning, monitoring & evaluation, joint visibility:** The joint planning of JPs should precede the agency internal planning of projects and programmes and not vice versa. For the JP to be successful and add value, it requires a mind shift to a certain degree, beginning with the joint planning together with other agencies and partners, and adjusting the agencies' plans subsequently. The development of any JP should not be done in addition to or separated from ongoing agency interventions. It should ideally include some of them, and build upon those experiences and results, to avoid starting from zero. Planning should be evidence-based (in line with the UNSDCF) and build on the government-led analysis which informed the UNSDCF including the UNCCA. Monitoring and evaluation and reporting, and visibility will be done jointly in line with UNSDCF IMEP guidelines. Joint programmes and monitoring missions, in line with the UNSDCF, will benefit from UN Uganda initiatives to promote enhanced access to data, including through the UN RBM Group focal points and Pulse Lab Kampala.
- 9) **Area-based and multisectoral JPs:** For cross-strategic priority JPs, and multi-sector area-based programmes focusing on a specific geographical area, these will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and decided upon by the UNCT and the RC but should at large follow the above principles. The UNCT should be informed for any funding opportunities for cross- strategic priority JPs. Even these JPs will need to have a base in one of the strategic priorities of the UNSDCFs. Where UN Area Coordination Teams will be requested to support with field level coordination activities, JPs may decide to allocate resources to support agreed coordination related activities.
- 10) **Quality control:** The UN Deputies Group will provide a quality control of JPs throughout the programme cycle in close collaboration with SP groups. The team will provide recommendations to the relevant strategic priorities regarding the above principles and normative programming principles of the UNSDCF, following the checklist provided in annex 1 to this document.

Process for Establishing Joint Programmes in Uganda

The development of JPs in Uganda involves an iterative process, with initial discussions occurring within the respective UNSDCF Strategic Priorities. This culminates in identification of potential JPs and consensus on the Lead Agency and Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs). Aspects of cross-SP JPs are also discussed at this stage. The potential JPs and the proposed leadership are then presented to UNCT for endorsement. This stage is followed by a full-scale development of the JP document by the respective SPs. The draft JP document is presented to the UN Deputies Team for quality assurance and once cleared, the document is presented to UNCT for review and approval. Figure 1 below provides a synoptic view of the process.

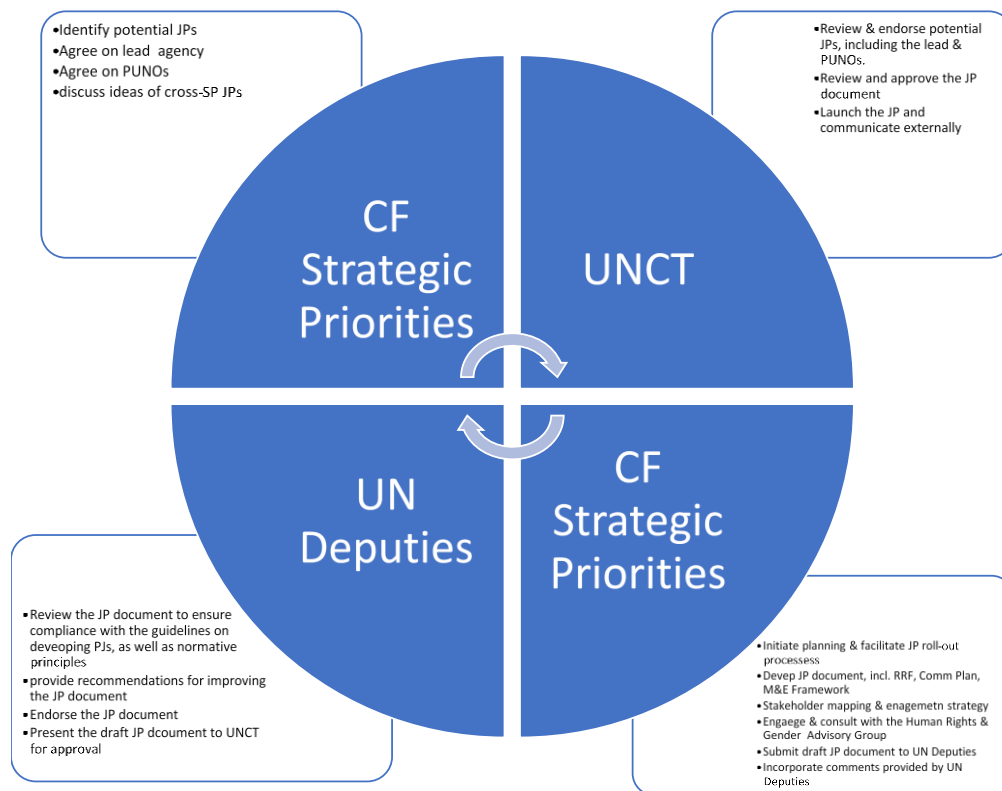


Figure 1: Process for Establishing Joint Programmes in Uganda

Annex 1: Checklist for Establishing Joint Programmes in Uganda¹

Sn	Criteria	Yes	No	If yes, please describe proof of compliance
1	Does the JP identify and build on complementarities and brings together the added value of its partners in addressing complex development challenges?			
2	Are the ideas of a potential JP been discussed within the relevant SP Group and the lead agency nominated?			
3	Have the government and partners been involved in the planning process?			
4	Has the original concept note and the lead agency been endorsed by the UNCT?			
5	Are two or more organizations working towards common strategic results and/or national priorities?			
6	Does it have a minimum of 2 years and a clear sustainability plan			
7	Does it build on previous and current programmes and experiences in the country and take into consideration other actors?			
8	Does it link up to SDGs, NDP III PIAPs, relevant sector national plans or policies as well as the UNSDCF?			
9	Has the Human Rights and Gender Advisory Group been consulted and involved in planning and review process?			
10	Does it include a solid results framework with outcomes, outputs, activities, indicators, and targets, clearly corresponding to the UNSDCF results framework including Socio-Economic Programmatic Indicators and gender and age disaggregation?			
11	Is there clear division of labour? Are the roles and responsibilities of each partner clearly defined, based on an analysis of the comparative advantages of each partner (including agreement about caseload and/or targeted recipients)?			
12	For the budget, will all participating agencies contribute with a minimum amount of 5-10% of what they are asking for in terms of resources?			
13	Are the staffing costs at a maximum of 25% of the overall costs for the JP or are there specific and valid reasons to extend this level? Are the budget costs reasonable in general?			
14	Is there adequate capacity to implement among participating agencies (including shared or overlapping geographical presence, logistics, human resources, technical expertise, capacity to scale up)?			
15	Does it integrate the new UN programming principles i.e., 1) leaving no-one behind 2) human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment 3) sustainability and resilience 4) accountability?			
16	Does the JP meet a minimum Gender Equality Marker code of GEM 2?			
17	Is there adequate support (resources, time, and willingness to work together) for the Joint Programme from all key stakeholders who consider the programme area a priority			
18	Are there strong results groups, coordination mechanisms, national steering committees, or sector/cluster groups exist and support Joint Programmes?			
19	Has the JP embedded a well stated robust result-based system with clear baseline information and targets?			
20	Is there a clear exit strategy to ensure sustainability of changes brought about by the Joint Programme?			
21	Is the programme addressing sector-wide and multi-sectorial development challenges that require an integrated response from different partners?			
22	Does the JP apply guiding principles of the UNSDCF including LNOB			

¹ Decision making processes for the JP initiation quality assurance will be determined

Annex 2 : Joint Programme Document Structure²

Section	Page limit
Cover Page	1
Executive summary	1
Situation analysis	2
Rationale/justification/proposed area of work	1
Strategies including lessons learned and the proposed joint programme	2
Results framework	3
Management and coordination arrangements	2
Fund management arrangements	1
Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting	2
Legal context or basis of relationship	1
Work plans and budgets	3

² Note that some donors and funds prescribe their own concept and Prodoc formats including word limit. These then take precedence