

**Lesotho United Nations Development Assistance Framework
(UNDAF 2019-2023) Evaluation**

Final Evaluation Report

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Commissioned by the Lesotho Resident Coordinator's Office

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Acronyms

AGOA	African Growth and Opportunities Act
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
BOS	Business Operations Strategy
CBF	Common Budgetary Framework
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DaO	Delivering as One
DHMT	District Health Management Team
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
EWS	Early Warning System
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GOL	Government of Lesotho
HCWs	Healthcare Workers
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
JWP	Joint Work Plans
LNOB	Leaving No One Behind
LVAC	Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment
MIC	Multi-cluster survey
MDWG	Migration Data Working Group
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

NCC	National Consultative Committee on Migration
NHSSP	National Health Sector Strategic Plan
NRAs	Non-Resident Agencies
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
OMT	Operations Management Team
ORG	Outcome Result Group
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PCT	Programme Coherence Team
RBM	Results Based Management
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RMNCAH	Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SBCC	Social and Behavioural Change Communication
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SDGs	Sustainable Development Group
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
TiP	Trafficking in Persons
TOC	Theory of Change
UNCG	United Nations Communication Group
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNEG	United National Evaluation Group
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNINFO	United National Information System
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VAC	Violence Against Children
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank

Executive summary

Introduction

1. The UN County Team, in collaboration with the Government of Lesotho, commissioned the evaluation of the Lesotho UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019-2023 in August 2022. This was an independent and participatory evaluation to contribute to transparency, accountability and learning on UN cooperation with the Government of Lesotho.

Objectives and scope of the evaluation

2. The purposes of the evaluation were to (i) Promote greater learning and operational improvement through providing a transparent and participatory platform for dialogue with stakeholders; (ii) Support greater accountability of the UNCT to UNDAF stakeholders by objectively providing evidence of results achieved within the framework of the UNDAF and assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions used; and (iii) Deliver clear recommendations to support the next Corporation Framework cycle and ensure accelerated progress towards the SDGs. The evaluation findings and recommendations are to inform the development of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) as well as the development of individual UN entity country programme documents.

3. The evaluation covers the UNDAF implementation from January 2019 to June 2022: It covered the collective results in joint work plans and joint programmes, outputs, and outcomes of the UNDAF, in all the four outcome areas as undertaken through the Outcome Result Groups, other inter-agency teams and UN implementing partners. The evaluation also assesses cross cutting issues and normative work of the UNCT, including gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability. Other issues considered are the global UN programming principles such as leaving no one behind (LNOB)¹; and the context and emerging challenges such as frequent government changes and humanitarian emergencies including COVID-19 pandemic and its impact. The evaluation assesses the delivery of UNDAF by UN Agencies and implementation through government institutions and other partners.

Methodology

4. The evaluation was conducted as per the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards and ethical guidelines, the UNSDCF Evaluation Guidelines of 2021 and OECD/DAC (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee) criteria of relevance and adaptability, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, progress towards impact and sustainability.

5. In terms of methods and techniques of data collection and analysis, the evaluation applied the theory of change and adopted a gender sensitive mixed methods approach involving the use of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Purposive sampling was used to identify stakeholders from which data was collected using key informant interviews, an online survey and Focused Group Discussions. Data was collected at national and district levels. Sources of secondary data included UN strategic documents, UNDAF plans and reports and documentation of key coordination meetings. In order to enhance the validity and credibility of the findings, the evaluation employed data triangulation methods within and across different data sources and used desk review to complement primary data. Descriptive statistics, iterative and contribution analyses were used to generate key findings of the evaluation highlighted below.

Key findings

1. Relevance and adaptability

- The pillars and outcomes outlined in the UNDAF design, and outputs and activities in the joint work plans are aligned with the needs, priorities and policies of government as articulated in National Strategic Development Plan II (2018/19 to 2022/23) and sector policies and plans as well as needs of targeted institutions and communities.
- UNDAF is aligned and consistent with the Lesotho's efforts to achieve the SDG 2030 targets but its alignment to Africa Union Agenda 2063 is not explicitly articulated

¹ LNOB covers marginalised and vulnerable populations relevant to different sectors as defined by the UN. This includes the youth and migrants

- UNDAF was adequately flexible and adjusted to respond to unforeseen needs, particularly the humanitarian needs that arose during the drought in 2019 and COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. In responding to humanitarian emergencies, the UN RCO and individual UN agencies collaborated with the Government of Lesotho, development partners, civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector actors in responding to these humanitarian emergencies including droughts, floods and COVID-19 pandemic. RCO led UN agencies in mobilizing resources, individual UN agencies, through ORGs, coordinated their support to government and CSOs to address the effects of droughts, floods and COVID-19.
- Although there was no specific gender analysis done, UNDAF was informed by gender analysis incorporated in the common country assessment. This analysis was not rigorous enough for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

2. Coherence

- The UN family in Lesotho is viewed by government, development partners and civil society as a credible and reliable partner that delivers what it promises and provides valued technical support and normative guidance. However, the UNDAF coordination structures have played a lesser role in strengthening the UN system positioning and partnerships due to limited participation of government and CSOs in these structures.
- Although individual UN agencies engage with their relevant government ministries, civil society organisations and development partners in programme planning and implementation, the UNDAF coordination structures have not adequately promoted complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with government, private sector and CSOs due to lack of participation of these structures in the ORGs and passive participation of Government representatives in the UNDAF Joint Steering Committee. However, this situation may change because the UNCT started involving Government ministries in ORG meetings and RCO started convening development partners meetings in 2022.

3. Effectiveness

- Basic elements of Result Based Management (RBM) were adopted by the UNCT, particularly the results framework with outcome indicators and targets, the annual joint work plans with output targets, UNDAF output and outcome level reporting tool, and the setting up of outcome results groups (ORGs) responsible for data collect and use. However, the ORGS did not collect data and report against the UNDAF outputs and data for most outcome indicators was lacking, making it difficult for the ORGs and UNCT to periodically review the performance of UNDAF.
- The support provided by UN as a family to the Government of Lesotho was outlined in the Joint Work Plans. However, due to the lack of data for all output indicators and most of the outcome indicators, the evaluation could not assess the extent to which the outcome and output targets were achieved. However, qualitative data from UNDAF annual reports and interviews show that activities outlined in the joint work plans were, to a large extent, undertaken.

4. Cross cutting themes

- Although gender is mainstreamed into UNDAF outcomes, results framework and joint work plans, an inter-agency coordination mechanism, consistent monitoring and reporting and inter-agency efforts to support government in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are lacking
- The UN family has made progress in integrating human rights in the UNDAF outcomes and joint workplans (especially using the human rights marker) and the RCO is providing technical support to ORGs on human-rights based programming, but data on the human rights marker is not analysed and a mechanism for coordination of human rights issues across UNDAF outcomes is lacking.
- The UNCT and ORGs approached environment sustainability from a sectoral perspective where environmental issues such as natural resources management, land reclamation and climate change adaptation were addressed in outcome 3.2. Integration of environmental sustainability as a cross cutting theme in other UNDAF outcomes is limited.
- UNDAF coordination structures have facilitated synergies and collaboration among UN Agencies in joint planning and reporting on their programmes but less so in implementation of programmes supported at national and district levels. Programmatic synergies between non-resident and resident agencies are weak due to limited participation of the non-resident agencies in the UNDAF coordination structures (UNCT, ORGs, PCT and M&E working group).

- UNDAF has facilitated linkages between humanitarian, development and peace across all outcomes but frequent leadership changes in government and lack of long-term financing for comprehensive multi-year program (to address the root causes of the development challenges, poverty reduction to shock (conflict / disaster) prevention and mitigation and response strategies) is limited the extent to which the triple nexus can be strengthened

5. Efficiency

- The UNCT has in place a comprehensive resource mobilization and partnership strategy which identifies diverse strategies for closing the funding gap but resource mobilisation has mainly focused on traditional donors and has been conducted through joint proposals, most of which have not been funded. However, the UN family, through RCO coordination, have been successful in mobilizing funding for humanitarian emergency response.
- UNDAF coordination structures have facilitated collaboration of individual UN agencies in carrying out operational services such as procurement, Information, communication and technology (ICT) and human resources management and this has contributed to reduction of transaction costs.
- Individual UN agencies have leveraged the government human resources in implementation of programme and activities. However, the individual UN agencies leveraging of government financial resources has been limited due to the financial constraints facing government. UN agencies have, on the other hand, leveraged financial resources of other development partners, especially in cases where UN agencies provide technical support while other development partners provide financial support to government to implement the same programme.

6. Coordination

- RCO has contributed to improvement of internal coordination among UN agencies through technical and secretarial support to UNDAF coordination structures but this has not gone far enough to realise joint programming, joint resource mobilisation, improved coordination of cross cutting issues and improved coordination of non-resident agencies
- Joint Steering Committee, as a key platform for UN family/Government coordination of the UNDAF has not been functioning optimally partly due to low awareness about the UNDAF at highest level of government and frequent government leadership changes
- The RCO adequately coordinated and facilitated the joint UN family response to emerging issues particularly drought, floods and COVID-19 pandemic through joint resource mobilisation, coordinated adjustment of the joint workplans, repurposing of existing financial resources, coordinating information sharing and joint implementation of humanitarian response activities

7. Progress towards Impact and sustainability

- Contributing to UNDAF expected results, implementing UN agencies addressed key needs of the country and targeted populations. The analysis of its theory of change shows a clear progression from joint workplans activities to outputs and contribution to UNDAF outcomes. However, there is no adequate data to ascertain the UN's consolidated contribution to improving Lesotho people's lives.
- The achievements resulting from the support provided by UN agencies are likely to be sustained if government ownership of UNDAF at highest level is enhanced, financing is improved and there is an enabling environment to utilize individual and institutional capacities strengthened

Conclusions

- UNDAF design was responsive to needs and priorities of Lesotho as articulated in the NSDP II but it was not adequately responsive to gender dimensions and needs of marginalised and excluded communities
- Individual UN agencies complement and harmonise their programmes with the government sector plans and other development partners' support but UNDAF coordination structures played a lesser role in harmonising UN collective response with government and even less so with CSOs and private sector
- Results Based Management practices have not been adequately operationalised both in UN and Government largely due to gaps in data completeness and quality. A huge percentage (77%) of the UNDAF outcome indicators lacked data.
- GEWE, Human Rights and Environmental Sustainability have been integrated into UNDAF to varying degrees but monitoring and coordination of these cross-cutting themes is lacking
- UNDAF coordination structures to a large extent are fit for purpose and have functioned well with meetings held regularly and the structuring executing their mandates. The RC Office is adequately

facilitating these structures and overall UNDAF coordination. However, there are limited synergies among UN agency programmes at implementation level, gaps in non-resident agencies coordination, limited joint programmes and joint resources mobilisation.

- The UNDAF was supported by a common budgetary framework and a resource mobilisation and partnership strategy but most resource mobilisation efforts have not been successful except for humanitarian emergency response. In addition, the UNDAF coordination structures have facilitated internal coordination of UN agencies and contributed to improved efficiency.
- Sustainability of UNDAF results depends on the assumption that Government ownership will be enhanced, financing will be improved and institutional capacity and accountability will be enhanced. These assumptions themselves can be realised if there is overall political will.

Recommendations

- Complement the common country analysis with separate deeper analysis of gender and marginalised population to inform the next cooperation framework
- Strengthen mechanism for UN family engagement with government at the highest level of government and establish high level engagement with civil society and private sector
- In the next UNSDCF, the UNCT should include evidence generation as a cross cutting issues and develop a joint programme on evidence generation
- Strengthen the coordination and monitoring of cross cutting themes (GEWE, human rights and environmental sustainability) through integrating them within the existing UNDAF coordination structures
- In the next cooperation framework, (i) strengthen results-based management practices through establishing a joint programme to support government in evidence generation to address data gaps for national outcome indicators; and (iv) increase joint programmes to enhance synergy across programmes of individual UN agencies
- In the next UNSDCF, update the current resource and partnership strategy; effectively monitor its implementation
- The RC should lead the UNCT in collaborating with other development partners to advocate for efficiency in financing of SDGs and improvement of institutional accountability while prioritising support for institutional capacity development

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

6. The UN Country Team, in collaboration with the Government of Lesotho, commissioned the evaluation of the Lesotho UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019-2023 in August 2022. This was an independent and participatory evaluation to contribute to transparency, accountability and learning on UN cooperation with the Government of Lesotho; and to inform the next UN cooperation framework. This report details the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation.

1.2 Lesotho's development context

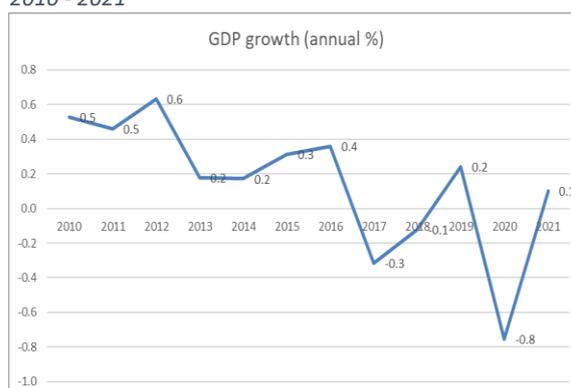
General context

7. The Kingdom of Lesotho is a mountainous landlocked country with a landmass of 30,555 square kilometers, surrounded by South Africa and home to the Basotho people.² It has a total population of 2 million people, of which 48.9 percent are male and 51 percent are female. Children aged 0-14 years account for 15.9 percent and those aged 18 years and above make up 37.8 percent of the population. The trend in population distribution by district has remained largely the same with Maseru having the highest proportion followed by Leribe while Qacha's Nek has the least proportion of the population.³

8. Lesotho Human Development Index (HDI) for 2019 was 0.527 which puts the country at a low human development category and positioning Lesotho at 165 out of 189 countries and territories. However, the country's HDI has been on an increasing trend – from 0.498 in 1990 to 0.527 in 2019, an increase of 5.8 percent. However, between 1990 and 2019 Lesotho's life expectancy at birth decreased by 5.5 years, mean years of schooling increased by 2.1 years and GNI per capita increased by 26.8 percent. The 2019 HDI falls to 0.382 when discounted by inequality, suggesting large inequalities in the three dimensions measuring HDI. Further, the country has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.553 and ranking at 139 out of 162 countries⁴.

9. Lesotho GDP has been on a general declining trend in the last 10 years largely due to various shocks – global financial crisis, political instability, droughts and the COVID-19 pandemic⁵. As shown in figure 1, the country had a negative GDP growth rate in 2020 largely attributed to socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, fuel shortages and weaker agriculture output.

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC1: Lesotho GDP growth rate 2010 - 2021



10. Lesotho has witnessed a reversal of gains made in reducing poverty. Between 2012 and 2017, the poverty rate⁶ in Lesotho declined from 61.9 percent of the population to 27.2 percent. By 2017, poverty rate in urban areas (at national poverty line) had reduced from 41.2 percent to 13.5 percent while poverty rate in rural areas had only fallen from 61.3 percent to 60.7 percent. High poverty in rural areas is attributed to slow growth in the agricultural sector, climate-related shocks and fall in remittances.⁷ Urban poverty is due to high (60 percent) unemployment.⁸ However, the poverty rate increased from 27.2 percent in 2012 to 30.5 percent in 2021 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the floods and drought.⁹ The COVID-19 pandemic related lockdowns resulted in employment and income losses while employment and income losses in South Africa

² The Government of Lesotho, 2018. National Strategic Development Plan II 2018/2019 – 2022/2023

³ Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2016. Population and housing census report

⁴ UNDP, 2020. The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene, Lesotho

⁵ World Bank indicator data for Lesotho: Accessed on 11 August 2022

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=LS>

⁶ National poverty line is measured at US\$ 1.90 a day

⁷ World Bank, 2019, Lesotho Poverty Assessment: Progress and Challenges in Reducing Poverty

⁸ ILO (2020) ILOSTAT Database

⁹ World Bank, 2021, The World Bank in Lesotho

triggered the emergence of returnee migrants as a new vulnerable group and caused a fall in remittances from US\$544 million to US\$471 million in 2020, thus further deepening households' vulnerability.

Governance and human rights

11. The political landscape in Lesotho is characterised by a deeply rooted and chronic wave of political instability and insecurity that has eroded governance and weakened the capacity of national institutions to deliver on their mandates, uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights. For example, in 2017, Lesotho was ranked 15 out of 54 countries in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance.¹⁰ With the on-going political challenges that necessitated SADC intervention, the country regressed to a ranking of 20 out of 54 countries in 2020 with a score of 5.¹¹ As a result of the intensive effort of the UN working with the EU, SADC and civil society including the Christian Council of Lesotho, the country had a peaceful elections and transition of power following the October 2022 general elections. In terms of corruption, the situation in Lesotho has been deteriorating over time. The ranking of Lesotho in the Corruption Perception Index slipped from 55 to 74 out of 180 countries in 2014 and 2017 and further declined to a ranking of 96 with a score of 38 in 2020.¹² The country has also seen deterioration in the area of security and rule of law where it declined by -4.1 to the 23rd position with a score of 53.9 during the same period.

12. Governance challenges facing Lesotho are exacerbated by consistently poor performance on democracy, social inclusion, and access to justice indicators. In terms of democracy, the country was ranked 56 out of 167 countries with the score of 6.64 out of 10 but regressed to position 64 out of 167 countries with the score of 6.3¹³. With regard to access to justice, the country has experienced a decline from 82.7 in 2012 to 60.9 in 2016¹⁴ leading to the erosion of trust in key institutions with 30% and 42% of Basotho trusting police and judiciary respectively¹⁵. Moreover, lack of trust in the justice system stems from weak institutional and legislative framework for protection of human rights. In addition, the absence of the National Human Rights Commission and inadequate capacity of the judiciary and public prosecutions have created a culture of impunity and lack of accountability with increasing human rights violations by law enforcement officers such as police and correctional institutions.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

13. Although Lesotho has made improvements in gender equality, challenges remain and the improvements made are not sufficient to attain gender equality and women's empowerment targets. For instance, Lesotho has regressed on composite indicators on participation, rights, inclusion and gender equality. With regard to Women's representation in parliament, the proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly dropped by two-percentage points from 25 percent to 23 percent after the June 2017 National Assembly Elections.¹⁶ Young women particularly have high unemployment rates (31.1 percent), compared to young men (27.1 percent).¹⁷

14. GBV is prevalent throughout country and it further increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lesotho is placed in a group of 14 countries which have experienced increasing deterioration of gender equality and women empowerment over the last 5 years.¹⁸ However, the enactment of the Counter Domestic Violence Act in 2020 with the support of the UN, is a step towards strengthening the legal framework for prevention and management of GBV in the country.

Health

15. Lesotho faces major challenges in achieving the SDG 3 2030 targets on health and well-being. Maternal mortality ratio is estimated at 544 per 100,000 live births; neonatal mortality rate at 42.8 per 1,000 live births; under 5 mortality rate at 86.4 per 1,000 live births; and incidence of tuberculosis is estimated at 654 per

¹⁰ UNDAF 2019-2023

¹¹ IIAG 2020

¹² Corruption Perception Index 2021

¹³ Economist Intelligence Unit 2021

¹⁴ UNDAF 2019 – 2023

¹⁵ Common Country Assessment 2021

¹⁶ Gender links, 2017

¹⁷ Lesotho Labour Force Survey 2019

¹⁸ IIAG 2020

100,000 people.¹⁹ The country has a high HIV burden. HIV incidence among adults aged 15-49 years declined from 1.1 percent in 2016/17 to 0.55 percent in 2020 which shows a reducing trend in new HIV infections. Progress has also been made in HIV treatment with 90.1 percent of adults living with HIV knowing their status; among these, 73 percent are on ART; and among those on ART 79.8 percent are virally suppressed.²⁰ According to the Lesotho Common Country Assessment of 2021, the country's health system faces governance challenges due to frequent change of leadership, weak management systems at national and district level and has inadequate human resources.

Education

16. Lesotho's children face many challenges in accessing education.²¹ Gross enrolment rates in pre-primary and secondary are 35.2 per cent and 54.3 percent, respectively. Thus, education deprivation affects 64.8 per cent of preschool-aged children and 45.7 per cent of secondary-aged children. The gross enrolment rate for primary education is over 100 per cent²², as this education level is free of charge. About 80 per cent of children enrolled in primary education in 2018 completed primary education. For lower secondary and upper secondary, completion rates were estimated at 44 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively. School fees, long distance to school, early marriages and herding for boys are the main reasons why most children drop out of secondary. Although literacy rates are good for youths (87 per cent) and adults (90 per cent), children aged 7-14 years old have poor numeracy skills (15.0 per cent) and reading skills (40.3 per cent) rates.

Water and Sanitation

17. Lesotho has high access to basic drinking water services with 89 percent of the population having access to improved drinking water source. However, due to recurring droughts, there has been a minimal 2 percent improvement in access to drinking water since 2000 while 66 percent of the population do not have access to a water source on their premise.²³ Access to sanitation has improved significantly since 2000 and stands at 73% of the population. 82 percent of the population has access to hygiene facilities, all of whom have access to soap while only 22 percent have access to water for hygiene purposes.²⁴ Access to hygiene services is likely to have increased across the population during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social protection

18. The Government of Lesotho implements both core and complementary social protection programmes. Core social protection programmes include child grant programme, public works, old-age pension and public assistance. In addition, infant and disability grants have recently been approved. Complementary social protection programmes include school feeding programmes, bursaries for Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), tertiary education bursaries and additional pension payments. The Child Grant Programme (CCP) has steadily increased its coverage from 38,738 households in 2018 to about 50,000 households in 2020. The OVC bursary covers 23,845 children. Overall proportion of the population covered by social protection programmes increased from 6 percent in 2010 to 71 percent in 2017.²⁵ The exposure of children to poverty was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic due to closure of schools and other pandemic effects. The Child Grant Programme was expanded to respond to the pandemic. An estimated 22 percent of the households in Lesotho receive some form of assistance during the pandemic, with 15 percent receiving food and 7 percent receiving direct cash transfers.²⁶

Agriculture and food security

19. Agriculture (crop farming and livestock production) is a major source of livelihood for about 80% of the rural households in Lesotho. Agriculture is predominantly subsistence, with farmers cultivating less than half a hectare of land. ²⁷Of the 55% of the total population which depends on agriculture for livelihood, only 9%

¹⁹ Sachs et al, 2021, The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable Development Report 2021

²⁰ Lesotho Population-Based HIV Impact Assessment (LEPHIA), 2020

²¹ Lesotho UNICEF: Education Budget Brief 2020/21

²² Gross enrolment can be over 100 percent due to early entry or late entry (enrolment) in terms of age

²³ UNICEF, 2018. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

²⁴ UNICEF, 2018. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

²⁵ World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020

²⁶ Bureau of Statistics, 2020, Covid-19 Socio-Economic Impact on Households Survey

²⁷ Lesotho Biennial Update Report 2021

practice commercial farming (Lesotho Government, 2012). Agricultural productivity is highly variable (especially due to erratic precipitations and climate change impact), and it has steadily declined over the latest 30 years. The livestock sector provides a significant proportion of rural income and is well integrated in the national and the regional economy through the export of wool and mohair. However, the importance of livestock in income generation has also started to decline due to the recurrent droughts, poor animal quality and inadequate disease control.

20. Food insecurity continues to be a chronic challenge in Lesotho and a key obstacle in the country's development agenda and progress towards (SDG2) ending hunger. Lesotho experiences recurrent droughts which reduce the capacity of subsistence farmers to produce sufficient food for their own needs and for the market, particularly in rural areas,²⁸ thus exacerbating food insecurity.

Employment and labour market

21. Unemployment rates in Lesotho remain high at 24.6 percent (using strict definition) and 23.8 percent (using expanded definition that includes discouraged job seekers) in 2019^{29,30}. Unemployment rates had been declining from 2014 to 2019 after which there has been a spike in unemployment following the COVID-19 pandemic impact in 2020.

22. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2019 estimated that 33,791 people were in time-related underemployment, which amounts to 6.5 percent of the employed population. The majority (53.2 percent) of them were females.³¹ The proportion of time-related underemployment was high (46.7 percent) in rural areas as compared to urban (44.1 percent) and peri-urban (8.3 percent)³². Furthermore, the highest share (42.7 percent) of underemployed population had attained primary school level of education³³. The percentage distribution of unemployed population shows that 57.8 percent was in the rural areas while 33.5 percent was the urban areas³⁴. The National Youth Unemployment rate is 29.1 percent, with female unemployment rate being higher at 31.1 percent compared to males at 27.1 percent.³⁵

Private sector development

23. Lesotho's second National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II) prioritises private sector led job creation through four priority sectors: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Tourism and Creative Industries, and Technology and Innovation.³⁶ However, of these sectors, only manufacturing (and agriculture in a productive year) contributes significantly to economy which account for 84 percent of all formal sector employment and over two-thirds of all exports. On the other hand, Lesotho's textiles sector has benefitted under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), which has allowed Lesotho to export over US\$ 3 million worth of goods to the United States of America (USA) per year.³⁷ The sector employs over 40,000 people, the majority of whom are women. Lesotho's private sector is largely concentrated in two sectors – mining and textiles/apparel manufacturing – and economic diversification has proven challenging due to a lack of investment as a result of lack of competitiveness in the country;³⁸ attributed to political instability, high tax rates and poor business practices of the informal sector.³⁹

²⁸ Lesotho Common Country Report 2020

²⁹ Unemployment rate is defined as the ratio of the number of unemployed persons to the total labour force. It is an indicator that shows the social health, and performance of the economy or labour market

³⁰ www.theglobaleconomy.com/unemployment-rate/rankings

³¹ Time-related underemployment is one of the measures of labour underutilization mismatch between labour supply and demand; leading to an unmet need for employment among the population. The criteria for defining time-related underemployment are as follows: – willingness to work additional hours; – availability to work additional hours and, – having worked (total number of hours actually worked) below a threshold of working hours.

³² Lesotho Labour Force Survey 2019

³³ Lesotho Labour Force Survey 2019

³⁴ Lesotho Labour Force Survey 2019

³⁵ Lesotho Labour Force Survey 2019

³⁶ Lesotho Bureau of Statistic Report 2020

³⁷ Lesotho Common Country Analysis Report 2020

³⁸ Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project 2021

³⁹ Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project 2021

Migration

24. Lesotho emigration stood at over 30 percent of the skilled labour force in 2019 which is higher than the global average of 5 percent.⁴⁰ There is a high incidence of irregular migration given the porous border between Lesotho and South Africa which heightens the risk of Trafficking in Persons (TiP). Thus, in 2020, Lesotho was put on the Tier 3 watch list of the UN Department of State. Through the support received from the UN, Lesotho has improved to Tier 2.⁴¹ During the COVID-19 pandemic, about 100,000 labour migrants returned mainly from South Africa⁴² and the majority of these returnees faced challenges upon their return due to inability to support themselves and integrate into society. Migrants, especially undocumented migrants from Lesotho and into Lesotho, are not included in government's social protection programmes; they have significant challenges access cross-border health services and most lack legal identification documents, face stigma and discrimination and lack knowledge of migrant rights.⁴³

Climate change and natural disasters

25. Lesotho's topography renders it vulnerable to natural disasters (floods and droughts), exacerbated by shifting precipitation patterns that are compelling evidence of climate change⁴⁴. This has negative implications for agro-ecological conditions, as the growing season is pushed forward and shortened, and agricultural production is limited to one cropping season. More than 70 per cent of the population relies on less than 10 per cent of arable land – creates high dependency on food imports. Limited mainstreaming of environmental considerations into cross-sectoral policies, coupled with limited progress on national climate-change policy, prevents the country from following an environmentally sustainable, more resilient path toward development⁴⁵.

1.3 Lesotho UNDAF design

26. The United National Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019-2023 articulates the UN support to Lesotho National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) II, which itself outlines Lesotho's efforts to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs). It was designed to facilitate the UN transformation process of gradually shifting from direct implementation to providing upstream support in areas of evidence generation, national capacity development and creating an enabling environment for people driven sustainable and inclusive development.

27. UNDAF has three pillars designed to address critical issues summarized as follows:

Pillar 1 addresses issues of political instability and challenges to governance institutions. Lesotho has had three governments in less than five years reflecting the governance challenges. Frequent elections and changes in governments resulted in disruptions and discontinuity of government policies and priorities. This pillar aimed at promoting long term stability and improve human rights promotion and protection.

28. Pillar 2 focused on social services and social protection. The UN sought to support the Government of Lesotho to address challenges in the health sector; improve access to quality education; and strengthen social protection. Other issues prioritised under this pillar included challenges of migrants in accessing services, counter trafficking in persons and gender-based violence.

29. Pillar 3, with its two outcomes, was designed to reduce poverty and unemployment through inclusive economic growth. Issues that UNDAF aimed at addressing include limited private sector development; weak and poorly skilled and financed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); high unemployment among women, youth and other vulnerable populations; skills gap assessment, and migration and development (labour migration and diaspora engagement), weak economic diversification; predominantly subsistence agriculture that accrues low incomes; weak infrastructure and natural resource management.

⁴⁰ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020, Population Division

⁴¹ US Department of State, 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Lesotho

⁴² IOM, 2020, Rapid Assessment of the Livelihood Situation of Returnees and COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in Migration Affected Areas in Lesotho

⁴³ IOM, 2020, Rapid Assessment on Best Practices and Challenges in Regard to Cross-Border Access to Health Services including Sexual and Reproductive Health

⁴⁴ Lesotho Biennial Update Report 2021

⁴⁵ Lesotho Biennial Update Report 2021

30. The Lesotho UNDAF pillars and outcomes are outlined in the table below:

Table 1: UNDAF 2019-2023 pillars and outcomes

Pillars	Outcomes
Pillar 1: Accountable Governance, Effective Institutions, Social Cohesion and Inclusion	Outcome 1.1: By 2023, Government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law, and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making in peaceful environment.
Pillar 2: Sustainable Human Capital Development	Outcome 2.1: By 2023, All citizens including women and children, particularly the poor, most vulnerable and marginalized benefit from evidence-based, shock and gender responsive social protection and social services for the sustainable and equitable realizations of their rights.
Pillar 3: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth for Poverty Reduction	Outcome 3.1: By 2023, Government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security, and decent work, especially for women, youth and People Living with Disability. Outcome 3.2: By 2023, The people of Lesotho have access to, and use, natural resources in a more sustainable manner, and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient

31. Lesotho UNDAF programming principles include: (i) Human rights, gender equality and women's Empowerment which aimed ensuring UNDAF is aligned with international standards and addresses inequalities and promoted meaningful participation by all stakeholders; (ii) Sustainability and resilience through balancing between economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainable development and strengthening mechanisms to prevent adverse impacts of development on people; (iii) Accountability principle which involves strengthening mechanisms to ensure people's voice and participation in development and strengthening overall national accountability mechanisms. UNDAF adopted several programmatic themes which included human rights, gender equity, youth, people living with disabilities, HIV/AIDS and voice and participation.

32. Financial resources required to deliver UNDAF 2019-2023 was US\$256,486,259. US\$159,397,203 was projected to be available while US\$97,053,057 was to be mobilized. Of the total financial resources estimated in the budgetary framework, 8% was for UNDAF pillar 1 (Governance), 48% for pillar 2 (human capital), and 44% for Pillar 3 (Economic growth). The budgetary framework is summarized in the table below.

Table 2: UNDAF Lesotho 2019-2023 Summary Financial Overview

Pillars/ Outcomes	A	B	C
	Total (US\$)	Projected to be available (US\$)	To be mobilized/ Gap (A-B) US\$
Pillar 1	19,413,097	11,463,359	7,913,738
Outcome 1.1	19,413,097	11,463,359	7,913,738
Pillar 2	123,992,202	94,961,814	29,030,389
Outcome 2.1	124,292,202	94,961,814	29,330,389
Pillar 3	113,080,960	52,972,030	60,108,930
Outcome 3.1	48,558,120	13,550,286	35,007,834
Outcome 3.2	64,522,840	39,421,744	25,101,096
Total	256,486,259	159,397,203	97,053,057

Implementation of UNDAF 2019-2023 was to be coordinated and managed through the following structures:

33. UNDAF Joint Steering Committee (JSC): This committee's role was to guide the strategic direction of the UNDAF implementation by overseeing the development and implementation of joint annual work plans for the Outcome Result Groups (ORGs).

34. UN Country Team (UNCT) is the highest-level inter-agency coordination and joint decision-making body represented by heads of agencies and with participation of non-resident UN agencies. UNCT role included reviewing partnerships, joint resource mobilization priorities, programme implementation progress, and

strategic priority issues. It links UN with the JSC and is chaired by the Resident Coordinator (RC). Office of the UN Resident Coordinator (RCO) provides direct facilitation and support to the RC and UNCT and also coordinates all inter-agency activities related to DaO SOPs and UNDAF 2019-2023 implementation.

35. UNDAF Outcome Result Groups (ORGs): These are internal UNDAF four outcome-based UN structures consisting of agencies implementing UNDAF under one outcome. ORGs are led by Heads of Agencies. They were expected to be responsible for inter-agency coordination and technical support associated with implementation of agreed UNDAF outcomes and cross cutting issues; development of joint work plans and ensuring outputs are costed and available resources identified, and conducting periodic progress reviews.

36. The Programme Coherence Team (PCT) which was established in 2021 to advise UNCT on cross cutting issues relevant to the UNDAF, ensure coherence between Outcome Result Groups and also address structural issues. UN Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group (M&EWG): This group was expected to support the ORGs to monitor implementation of UNDAF based on Joint Work Plans (JWPs) and also provide input into the Joint Annual Report. Membership comprises M&E specialists or focal persons from all UN Agencies.

37. UN Communication Group (UNCG) as an inter-agency body whose membership was expected to include communication and advocacy focal points and is responsible for development and implementation of a joint UN Lesotho communication strategy. Operational Management Team (OMT) is an inter-agency structure expected to be responsible for development, implementation and monitoring of the BOS.

1.4 Evaluation objectives and scope

1.4.1 Evaluation purpose, objectives and audience

38. The UNDAF evaluation had three primary purposes:

- (i) Promote greater learning and operational improvement through providing a transparent and participatory platform for learning and dialogue with stakeholders regarding national progress, challenges and opportunities, and best approaches in the context of the system-wide national response.
- (ii) Support greater accountability of the UNCT to UNDAF stakeholders. By objectively providing evidence of results achieved within the framework of the UNDAF and assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions used, the evaluation was to enable various stakeholders in the UNDAF process to hold the UNCT and other parties accountable for fulfilling their roles and commitments.
- (iii) Deliver clear recommendations to support the next CF cycle and ensure accelerated progress towards the SDGs: The evaluation was to provide information for strengthening programming and results at the country level, specifically informing the planning and decision-making of the next UNSDCF programme cycle and improving UN coordination at the country level.

39. The evaluation findings and recommendations are to inform the development of the new UNSDCF as well as the development of individual UN entity country programme documents. The results of this evaluation will be disseminated to the intended users who include UN agencies, Government of Lesotho, development partners, civil society, academia, private Sector, implementing partners and other secondary users including the public through platforms to be determined by the UN.

1.4.2 Scope of the evaluation

40. The scope of the evaluation will be as follows:

- a) Temporal: The evaluation covers the UNDAF implementation from January 2019 to June 2022
- b) Thematic scope: The evaluation covers the collective activities in joint work plans and joint programmes, outputs, and outcomes of the UNDAF, in all the four outcome areas as undertaken through the Outcome Result Groups, other inter-agency teams and UN implementing partners. The evaluation also assesses cross cutting issues and normative work of the UNCT including gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability. Other issues considered are the global UN programming principles such as leaving no

one behind (LNOB)⁴⁶; and the context and emerging challenges such as frequent government changes and humanitarian emergencies including COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation assesses the delivery of UNDAF by UN Agencies and its implementation through government Ministries, institutions and other partners. However, the evaluation does not assess the individual agency programmes or activities.

- c) Geographical scope: The evaluation covered the support provided by the UN at national and district levels.

1.4.3 Evaluation criteria and questions

41. The evaluation questions were framed in line with the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria which comprise relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as outlined in the terms of reference (annex 1). The evaluation also took into two additional criteria– Coherence and coordination. The evaluation questions were refined based on consultations with the UN Resident Coordinator’s Officer, the Evaluation Managers.⁴⁷ The criteria and questions that guided the evaluation are as follows:

EQ1: Relevance and adaptability: (is the UNDAF addressing the relevant national development needs and was its implementation flexible enough to satisfactorily accommodate and target emerging needs)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the UNDAF 2019-2023 aligned and consistent with the needs, priorities, and policies of the Government of Lesotho (including national development goals and targets – NSDP II, national plans, strategies and frameworks, Agenda 2030, SDGs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How agile and responsive has the UNDAF been to emerging and unforeseen needs (including emergencies such as COVID-19 response, floods, droughts), while being collaborative in its programming with other development partner’s interventions in country?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the UNDAF build on a sound gender analysis, in a way to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment and in inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups?
EQ 2. Coherence (how well has the UNDAF promoted complementarity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the UNDAF strengthened the position, credibility and reliability of the UN system as a partner for the government and other actors, and has served as an effective partnership vehicle?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the UNDAF promoted and strengthened complementarity, harmonization and coordination with key development partners, CSOs, private sector, and government counterparts to maximize the achievement of results?
EQ 3. Effectiveness (has the UNDAF achieved its objectives? is the UNDAF doing it right?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did UNDAF adopt results-based management practices in its design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the achievement of results?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective has the UNDAF been in achieving the results outlined in the results framework (including through new solutions/innovations that can be replicated or scaled up)? What have been the benefits for the people and institutions targeted by the interventions (including the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized population)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the UNDAF contributed to the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, supported human rights principles, and given full consideration to environmental sustainability?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the UNDAF 2019-2023 contributed to achieving better synergies among programmes of UN agencies with an effect on progress towards the National Development priorities and in response to emergencies such a COVID-19?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the UNDAF facilitate linkages between humanitarian, development and peace (triple nexus)
EQ 4. Efficiency (how well have resources been used?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the UNDAF supported by an integrated funding framework (Common Budgetary Framework) and by adequate funding instruments? What were the gaps, if any? Have resources been (re-)allocated efficiently based on UNDAF collective priorities and changing needs where necessary?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the UNDAF facilitated internal UN coordination to contribute to greater operational efficiency, including coordination processes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did UN mobilise resources and leverage on available financial resources from government and other development partners in support of national priorities to which UNDAF is aligned?
EQ 5. Coordination. (how well has implementation of the UNDAF been coordinated?)

⁴⁶ LNOB covers marginalised and vulnerable populations relevant to different sectors as defined by the UN. This includes the youth and migrants

⁴⁷ The evaluation inception mission was undertaken from 15-19 August 2022 with the purpose of gaining deeper understanding of UNDAF design and implementation process and availability of data for the evaluation in order to establish the extent to which each evaluation question can be answered.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the RCO fostered internal coordination and contributed to the promotion of UN agencies' synergies and interlinkages through UN-wide coordination mechanisms, keeping in mind the spirit of the UN reform and adhering to it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent the national government and the UN system successfully coordinated the implementation of joint work plans (through the UNDAF Outcome Results Groups) to maximize efficiency, coverage, reaching the most vulnerable (disabled, women, youth, etc.) while reducing overlaps?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the RCO been able to coordinate UN responses to national and global emerging issues during the implementation of the UNDAF, including joint resource mobilization and implementation of joint programmes?
EQ 6. Orientation towards Impact (what difference do UNDAF interventions make?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have UN system activities articulated in the UNDAF driven progress towards, or supported achievement of Theory of Change outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have UN activities stemming from the UNDAF impacted gender inequality, human rights, and inclusiveness?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the UNDAF promoted a just transition to environmental sustainability and addressed environmental sustainability concerns?
EQ7. Sustainability (will the benefits last?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What mechanisms, if any, has the UNDAF established to ensure socio-political, institutional, financial and environmental sustainability? Will the strategies/plans/tools be more widely replicated or adapted by the GOL?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent results achieved and strategies used in the frame of the UNDAF are sustainable as a contribution to national development and SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the UNDAF contributed to building national and local capacities and knowledge, and ensuring long-term gains?

1.5 Evaluation methodology

1.5.1 Evaluation approach

42. The UNDAF evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation The UNDAF evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) evaluation norms and standards; the OECD/DAC evaluation principles; and UNEG guidelines for integration of human rights and gender into evaluations. The evaluation applied a mixed methods strategy using a theory-based evaluation design to assess the extent to which UN support to Lesotho achieved its outputs and contributed to national outcomes as outlined in UNDAF results framework; and taking into account the UNDAF key assumptions. Secondly, the evaluation adopted a participatory approach where different stakeholders outlined in table 1.1 were involved in different stages of the evaluation process. The evaluation also adopted a gender and human rights responsive approach in which fair distribution of all gender was considered in stakeholder mapping; a sub-question on gender equality and women's empowerment as well human rights integration across all outcomes; and questions on gender and human rights were included in data collection tools to elicit information on GEWE and human rights.

1.5.2 Sampling

43. This evaluation adopted a purposive sampling strategy to select different participants to ensure all UNDAF outcomes and output as well as all evaluation questions were covered during data collection. The mapping of stakeholders prepared in collaboration with the Evaluation Manager and the Office of the Resident Coordinator was used as a sampling frame to identify three categories of participants. The first category included a sample of 83 officials drawn from UN, Government Ministries, CSOs, DPs selected on the basis of their involvement in implementation of the activities outlined in the JWPs, partnerships with UN agencies and knowledge of the programmes supported by different UN Agencies in the last five years. Out of the total sample, 65 officials participated in the key informant interviews generating a response rate of 77%. The second category of respondents were drawn from five districts representing the Central, the North, and the Southern regions of the country. This second category included the District Administration Office, the District Council Secretariat, Heads and Government Departments, District Councils, Chiefs, and UN Agencies operating at the district level. In this regard, 55 out of 65 sampled participants participated in the key informant interviews generating a response rate of 85%. The last category of participants was reached through the online survey, which was sent to 48 participants representing Programme Officers from the

Government, UN agencies, CSOs, and Development Partners. The online survey yielded a response rate of 75% (36/48).⁴⁸

44. The selection of different categories of participants was guided by specific criteria. As noted earlier, key informant interviews at the national and districts level were selected because of their knowledge, accrued from working directly or indirectly with different UN Agencies in Lesotho. The criteria were also used to select participants in the online survey. With regard to the five districts selected, the Evaluation Team consulted with the Evaluation Management Team to identify districts where the UN support covered more than two sectors.

1.5.3 Data collection methods

45. To ensure a coherent data collection, in line with the mixed-methods approach, the Evaluation Team developed an evaluation matrix that was used as a framework to guide data collection. For each evaluation question, the matrix identified key assumptions and evaluation indicators relevant for providing primary and secondary data, as well as specific sources for each type of data. Semi-structured interview guides were used to obtain primary data from key informants while a questionnaire was used as an instrument for collecting empirical data from the online-survey. Document review and analysis was used to obtain secondary information. Specifically, different UN reports, Joint Annual Work Plans, minutes of meetings as well as strategic documents prepared by different entities of the Government of Lesotho. A detailed account of methods and sources of data is provided below.

- a) Desk review: This involved a review of documents of different types, and programmatic and financial data relevant to each evaluation question to derive secondary data. The criteria for document selection included relevance to specific UNDAF outcomes, relevance to evaluation questions, periodicity of the document to ensure documents fall within the UNDAF implementation period and relevance to UNDAF and Lesotho socio-economic context. Documents reviewed included the international development frameworks, national policies and strategic plans, UNDAF design document and its work plans and reports, survey reports, and minutes and reports of UNDAF coordination meetings. A list of documents reviewed is included in annex 3.
- b) Semi-structured interviews with key informants: These interviews were undertaken to collect primary data from key informants selected purposively from the stakeholder mapping provided by the UN. Key informants were drawn from UN, Government, Civil society and Development Partners.
- c) Data collection at district level: A combination of Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) and key informant interviews was used to solicit data from the participants in selected districts identified in consultation with the Evaluation Management Team. The Key informant interview schedule was used for both FDGs and Key informant interviews. The purpose of collecting data from district level stakeholders was to gain insights on how different UN Agencies supported national priorities at the district and local level. In particular, as agents of the Government and in some cases of the individual UN agencies at the district level, Self-assessment questionnaire: A structured questionnaire was sent out electronically to the key informants that were not part of those selected for key informant interviews to complement data from key informants and documents review.

1.5.4 Data quality assurance

46. The evaluation team ensured data quality through different ways. First, a common data collection instrument (semi-structured interview guide) was used to obtain data from a single group of participants. Second, the evaluation team used different data collection tools to obtain data from multiple sources. In this regard, an online survey was used to record quantitative data while data was also obtained through semi structured interviews and from documents review. The use of multiple data sources strengthened the evidence base for the evaluation findings. Lastly, the preliminary evaluation findings were presented to the UNCT and stakeholders for review and validation.

1.5.5 Data analysis

47. Data analysis techniques used in this evaluation were as follows

⁴⁸ Annex 3 and 4 provides the detailed sampling of people interviewed

- Descriptive quantitative analysis which involved the ET applying simple descriptive quantitative data analysis to analyse programmatic data UNDAF outcomes, financial data as well as stakeholder self-assessment data.
- Qualitative iterative analysis applied to analyse qualitative data from key informants and open-ended responses in the stakeholder survey. It allowed the ET to connect and cluster qualitative data according to evaluation sub-questions; and to identify the emerging themes. The emerging themes from each cluster were further re-categorized to establish patterns of findings for each evaluation question.
- Contribution analysis: Contribution analysis was informed by the UNDAF theory of change which assisted in assessing the extent to which UN JWP activities led to the achievement of outputs and how the outputs contributed to strategic outcomes. The key assumptions, risks and other contextual factors that influenced the achievement of outputs were also analysed.
- Triangulation: Two types of triangulation were done: (i) method triangulation where qualitative data was used to identify or gain insights into results of quantitative data analysis. (ii) data source triangulation which involved examining consistency across data sources. This included analysing consistency of emerging themes within the same category of stakeholders and across different categories of stakeholders.

1.5.6 Limitations and mitigation measures

48. The evaluation faced the following limitations:

Limitations	Mitigation measures
Unavailability of some key informants for interviews	The evaluation team mitigated this limitation through triangulating data from different sources
Lack of data for some of the UNDAF outcome indicators	The evaluation team used multiple data sources to triangulate results and to assess performance related to outcomes lacking data. However, the evaluation is unable to provide the most up to date status of outcome indicators where data is missing.

2. Evaluation findings

This section outlines the findings for each evaluation criterion and question

2.1 Relevance and adaptability

EQ1.1: To what extent is the UNDAF 2019-2023 aligned and consistent with the needs, priorities, and policies of the Government of Lesotho (including national development goals and targets – NSDP II, national plans, strategies and frameworks, Agenda 2063 and SDGs)

Finding 1.1a: The pillars and outcomes outlined in the UNDAF design, and outputs and activities in the joint work plans are aligned with the needs, priorities and policies of government as well as needs of targeted institutions and communities

49. The UNDAF outcomes, and the outputs and activities outlined in annual joint workplans are well aligned with the Lesotho National Strategic Development Plan II (2018/19-2022/23). The UNDAF Outcome 1 (government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights) is directly aligned with NSDP II priority 1 on strengthening the national governance and accountability systems.⁴⁹ UNDAF Outcome 2⁵⁰ (gender-responsive social policies and programmes) is aligned with the priority area of NSDP II priority focusing on improving the country's productivity and innovation capacity by strengthening human capital through investments in health, education and training

50. UNDAF Outcome 3.1 (on inclusive economic growth, food security and decent employment); and Outcome 3.2⁵¹ (on natural resources management) are directly aligned with the same NSDP II Priority on supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector led job creation. The alignment of the UNDAF design to the Lesotho national development priorities is shown in the table below.

Table 3: Alignment UNDAF outcomes with NSDP II priorities

NSDP II priorities	NSDP II strategies to which UNDAF is aligned	Lesotho UNDAF 2019-2023 outcome and interventions supported by the UN aligning to the NSDP II strategies in column 2
1. Strengthening the national governance and accountability systems	Accountable Governance, Effective Institutions, Social Cohesion and Inclusion	Outcome 1: By 2023, government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making processes in a peaceful environment.
2. Improving the country's productivity and innovation capacity by strengthening human capital through investments in health, education and training	Sustainable Human Capital Development	Outcome 2: By 2023, all people, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from gender-responsive social policies and programmes for the sustainable and equitable realization of their rights
3. Supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector led job creation	Sustainable and inclusive economic growth for poverty reduction	Outcome 3: By 2023, government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent work especially for women, youth and people with disabilities
4. Supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector led job creation	Sustainable and inclusive economic growth for poverty reduction	Outcome 4: By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient

⁴⁹ Review of UNDAF document, UNDAF results framework, SDGs and UNDAF annual reports

⁵⁰ Review of UNDAF document, UNDAF results framework, SDGs and UNDAF annual reports

⁵¹ Review of UNDAF document, UNDAF results framework, SDGs and UNDAF annual reports

Source: Review of UNDAF document, UNDAF results framework SDGs and UNDAF annual reports

51. The design of the UNDAF was also found to be well aligned to the needs of government and communities in relevant sectors. At the national level, UN supports government ministries based on the priority activities or interventions defined by ministries in their work plans and/or priorities identified through sector working groups, which UN agencies also participate in. This ensures that the support provided by UN family addresses the needs of specific sectors. At district level, the support the UN family provides to government was also found to be addressing the needs of the communities at the grassroots level. For instance, the school feeding program supported by WFP is directly aligned to the Ministry of education policy which dictates that every learner at the ECCD and primary schools should receive at least one nutritious meal daily. Another, relevant intervention which directly addresses the needs of the communities are that of nutrition clubs, where the WFP is assisting and educating the communities on vegetable garden production and food preservation. This programme is assisting the communities to be self-sustained in addressing malnutrition among children under-5 years of age and also creates productive activities as households are able to sell surplus food to purchase other basic needs from the proceeds.

The UN family in collaboration with the Ministries of Health and Social Development also implemented numerous inclusive social protection programmes for general communities in response to COVID-19, including sensitisation of COVID-19, access to WASH, cash transfers and food parcels. This was the emergency response mechanism programme as declared by government during the COVID-19 pandemic.

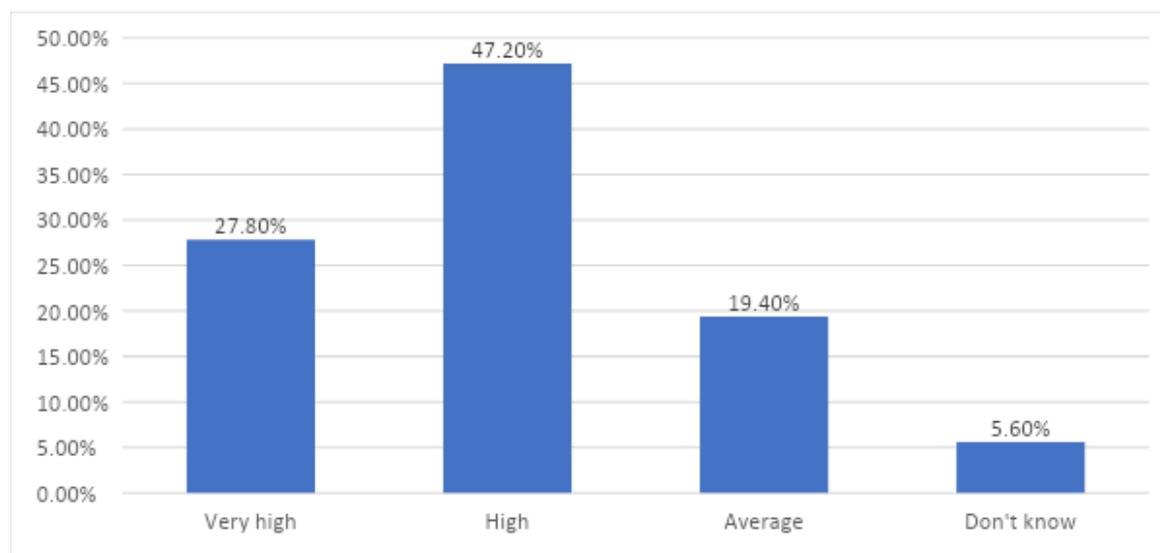
Moreover, the IOM in Leribe has been working with the community councils and government ministries in supporting activities to protect women and victims of abuse also took precedence during the pandemic, driven by the increase in gender-based violence (GBV) as victims were trapped at home with their perpetrators, whilst perpetrators faced increasing stress from rising income insecurity. The programme also addresses the issues of Human Trafficking within the border of Maputsoe, the UN family ensured that shelters for female victims of trafficking (VoT) stayed open and supported the rehabilitation of a new crisis shelter.

UNDP and FAO are also directly aligned to the Ministry of Energy policy which promotes access to energy in the rural areas, where the agencies in partnership with the local private sectors are implementing a solar energy project (Energy for All) in the districts of Thaba Tseka, Mokhotlong and Qachas Nek where they have achieved and enabled the development of 10 mini-grids and energy centres, that as a result has improved the standard of living, economic activity as well as improvement in education as children are now able to study access technology and research in the remote rural.

52. UNDAF responsiveness to national priorities was rated very high (27.8%) and high (47.2%) by respondents to the on-line survey. Respondents show that UNDAF (2019-2023) was fully aligned, relevant, consistent and appropriate with the Lesotho national development context, needs and priorities.⁵² Figure 2 below illustrates the respondent's distribution on how responsive UNDAF was to the national priorities.

⁵² On-line survey and key informant interviews

Figure 2: Rating on the extent to which UNDAF is responsive to national priorities



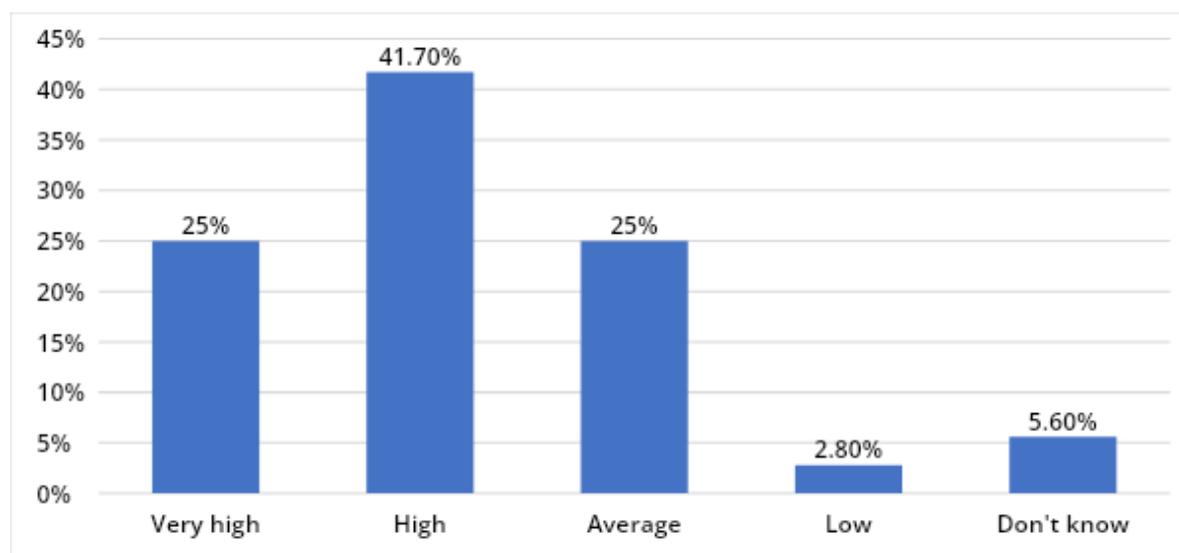
Source: On-line survey

Finding 1.1b, The UNDAF is aligned and consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but its alignment to Agenda 2063 is not explicit

53. The outcomes outlined in the UNDAF document and the activities in the joint work plans are well aligned to the SDGs. The UNDAF is aligned to the NSDP II which has integrated SDGs relevant to Lesotho and outlined strategies that will enable the country progress towards the SDG 2030 targets. Secondly, the UNDAF goal is to support government achieve SDG targets and, therefore, its overall strategic orientation is aligned to the SDGs. The UNDAF theory of change shows a clear logical link between the outcomes and specific SDGs. In addition, most of the UNDAF outcome indicators are drawn from the SDG indicators.

54. Figure 3 below shows the rating of the extent to which UNDAF was supporting government efforts to achieve the SDGs by respondents to the on-line survey. About 41.7% rated high and 25% of the respondents rated it very high and average respectively. ⁵³ Respondents are confident that UNDAF (2019-2023) initiatives and interventions are consistent, well aligned and integrated to the SDGs (Agenda 2030), which are also relevant to the Lesotho national strategies and priorities as outline in the key strategic document NSDP II.

Figure 3: Rating of extent to which UNDAF supports government effort to achieve sustainable development goals



⁵³ Interviews with the UN and Government Key informants, and online-survey

Source: On-line survey

EQ1.2: How agile and responsive has the UNDAF been to emerging and unforeseen needs (including emergencies such as COVID-19 response, floods, droughts), while being collaborative in its programming with other development partner's interventions in country?

Finding 1.2a: The UN family adjusted the UNDAF joint workplans to respond to unforeseen needs, particularly the drought in 2019 and COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. UN collaborated with the Government of Lesotho, development partners, civil society and private sector actors in responding to these humanitarian emergencies.

55. Major unforeseen emergencies took place during the period of UNDAF 2019-2023, specifically, the droughts, floods and COVID-19 pandemic. The effect of the drought experience in 2018 started to be felt in 2019 at the onset of the UNDAF implementation period. In response, the UN family, coordinated by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), supported government to develop the national drought response plan for 2019-2020. The UN family, through the RCO, launched a flash appeal to United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); in collaboration with the Government of Lesotho, other development partners and civil society to support five worst hit districts⁵⁴ in the country. A total of US\$33.7 million was raised and emergency interventions supported beneficiaries in the agriculture and food security, social protection, health, nutrition, education and WASH sectors⁵⁵. The UN family support was swift and well-coordinated through the leadership of RCO, which also leads the Humanitarian Country Team⁵⁶.

56. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Joint Work plans were adjusted in two ways in response to the pandemic. First, a criticality assessment of the activities in the joint work plans conducted by Outcome Results Groups (ORGs) identified activities that were responsive to COVID-19 and, therefore, needed to continue; those that were necessary to ensure service continuity despite COVID-19 lockdowns; and those that were not critical and could be dropped or postponed. The UNCT instituted changes in working modalities to ensure business continuity while keeping staff and their dependents safe, such as working remotely from home and conducting meetings virtually.

57. Secondly, the UN family developed the Lesotho COVID-19 Social Economic Response Plan (SERP) covering a period of 36 months with a financial requirement of US\$67 million. UN family repurposed US\$9 million in total from the adjustment of individual UN agencies activities. The SERP galvanized individual UN agencies capabilities and resources to support government in responding to COVID-19 pandemic itself; ensuring continuity of health services; support to continuity of education services despite school closures; provision of social protection services; support to informal and formal enterprises including protection of jobs; strengthening government macro-economic response and strengthening social cohesion and community resilience. In 2021, the plan was integrated into the JWP to improve overall coherence of the UN continued response to the pandemic and focus on development support.

58. UN family coordinated its response with other development partners, particularly the World Bank, European Union, African Development Bank and PEPFAR. Individual UN agencies, especially WHO, UNDP, UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNICEF provided technical guidance for the health response to COVID-19 to government and other development partners. UN family also collaborated with private sector, such as the telecommunication firms, to deliver digital solutions for social assistance⁵⁷.

59. Overall, UN family responsiveness to emergencies was rated very high and high by respondents to the on-line assessment of UNDAF. UN family is recognised for its proactive and swift response in guiding government in emergency response and in adapting its focus towards emergencies. It is also recognised as catalyzing government to act and supports mobilisation of resources for emergency response (Figure 4)

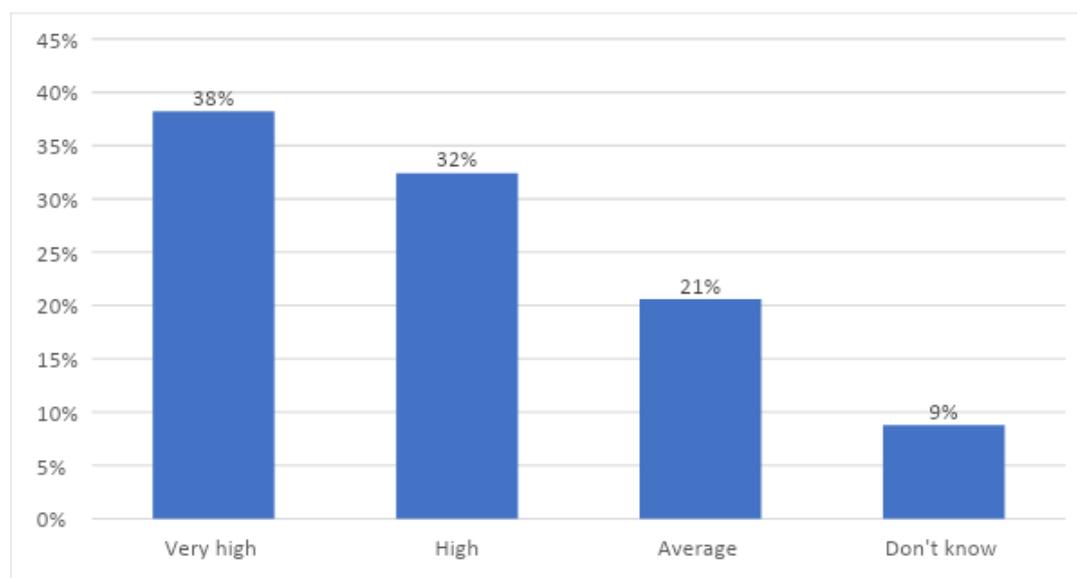
⁵⁴ Districts worst hit by climate induced emergency were Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Maseru, Qacha's Nek and Quthing

⁵⁵ Interviews with UN agencies and government ministries, and UNDAF annual reports

⁵⁶ Interviews with UN agencies and responses to the on-line assessment

⁵⁷ Interviews with development partners

Figure 4: Rating of responsiveness of UN to emergencies (droughts and COVID-19)



Data source: Responses to in-line assessment of UNDAF

EQ 1.3: To what extent did the UNDAF build on a sound gender analysis, in a way to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and in inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups?

Finding 1.3a: Although there was no specific gender analysis done, UNDAF was informed by gender analysis undertaken within the common country assessment. This analysis was, however, not rigorous enough for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

60. A specific or dedicated gender analysis was not done to inform UNDAF design. The UNDAF design was, however, informed by a gender analysis derived from the Common Country Assessment (CCA)⁵⁸ conducted in 2017. The CCA provides a detailed gender analysis especially in the health sector and HIV, governance; the intersection between gender and poverty, gender and education, gender and leadership and gender and employment as well as gender-based violence⁵⁹.

61. In terms of whether the gender analysis derived from the CCA was used to inform UNDAF design, the evaluation established that gender issues are explicitly addressed in some outcomes. For instance, the focus of outcome 1 (on governance, rule of law and human rights), is based on the need to address the decline in the representation of women in leadership positions as detailed in the CCA, with a focus on women participation in governance, peace and security, and national governance reform dialogue. The CCA identified gender inequalities in health and education which are explicitly addressed in outcome 2 which supports development of gender responsive policies and programmes for sustainable and equitable realization of the rights of all people. Outcome 2 includes interventions for strengthening capacity for prevention and mitigation of GBV and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights.⁶⁰

62. Further, outcome 3.1 (on economic growth, food security and employment) addresses gender issues including development of gender-sensitive policies, strategies and programmes promoting decent employment and entrepreneurship. In outcome 4 (natural resources management), UNDAF prioritised development of pro-poor, gender sensitive strategies and interventions to address climate change and enhance resilience.⁶¹ The UNDAF design has also included gender as one of the cutting issues and included gender sensitive indicators and data disaggregation by sex and age in its results framework.

⁵⁸ Lesotho Country Analysis Working Document Final Draft, 2017

⁵⁹ Lesotho Country Analysis Working Document Final Draft, 2017. Section 3.1

⁶⁰ United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Lesotho 2019-2023

⁶¹ United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Lesotho 2019-2023

63. However, as pointed out above, the CCA does not provide a detailed analysis of gender issues across all the sectors. For instance, CCA provides a detailed gender analysis on HIV but does not provide adequate analysis of socio-economic factors that inhibit women's access to health services in general. Gender inequalities in school enrolments are outlined but the CCA does not provide a detailed explanation on low enrolment rate for boys in primary and secondary education. The CCA also identifies patriarchy as the main source of gender inequalities in Lesotho but a detailed analysis of manifestations of patriarchy is lacking. Similarly, the CCA does not provide adequate analysis on how women are affected by climate change and whether there are policies in place to improve women's livelihoods and increase their participation in the policy-making decisions aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change. The limitations in gender analysis within CCA are understandable because CCA is a high-level analysis of socio-economic development in Lesotho and is not expected to delve deeper into one issue.

2.2 Coherence

EQ 2.1: To what extent has the UNDAF strengthened the position, credibility and reliability of the UN system as a partner for the government and other actors, and has served as an effective partnership vehicle?

Finding 2.1a: The UN family in Lesotho is viewed by government, development partners and civil society as a credible and reliable partner that delivers what it promises and provides valued technical support and normative guidance. However, the UNDAF coordination structures have played a lesser role in strengthening the UN system positioning and partnerships due to limited participation of government and CSOs in these structures.

64. UN family in Lesotho is viewed as a credible and trusted entity providing visibility to neglected or culturally and politically sensitive issues. It provides a voice to needs of marginalised populations such as key populations in the health sector; amplifies the voice of civil society and brings attention to neglected or culturally sensitive issues such as adolescent sexual and reproductive health. The UN family is also credited for having and sharing global experience and good practices across sectors including health, climate change, agriculture, food security among others. The UN family also provides normative guidance and generates evidence and analyses which is valued by government and other development partners. This includes the guidance for COVID-19 prevention; guidance in health services delivery including HIV, TB and immunisation; migration; and UN human rights analysis. UN family has human resources with technical expertise which provides technical support to government as well as civil society. Regarding reliability, government, development partners and civil society are of the view that UN is responsive to organisation/government needs and delivers on its promises.⁶²

65. The UN family in Lesotho is also viewed as neutral and therefore is the government's partner of choice especially in dealing with sensitive issues such as governance reforms, human rights issues and in situations that require mediation between different voices or stakeholders. This underscores the critical role UN family played in supporting the governance reform process arising from political instability in the country. The UN family has built trust among the development partners and donors therefore it is easier for the donors to channel resources through UN agencies to support government.⁶³

66. UNDAF has contributed to the strengthening of the positioning of the UN family in Lesotho by focusing its support on policy advocacy, evidence generation, advocacy on reform and needs of marginalised populations, focusing on human rights, convening stakeholders and providing normative guidance. The approach of working upstream through providing technical support and strengthening capacity of government institutions has positioned the UN family in line with its comparative advantage.⁶⁴

67. The assessment of how UNDAF as a vehicle for strengthening partnership received mixed results. At sector level, government ministries are working closely with the individual UN agencies to identify sector priorities (with UN supporting development of policies and strategic plans) and supporting government ministries to convene sector working groups. Individual UN agencies also collaborate with development

⁶² Interviews with government and development partners key informants

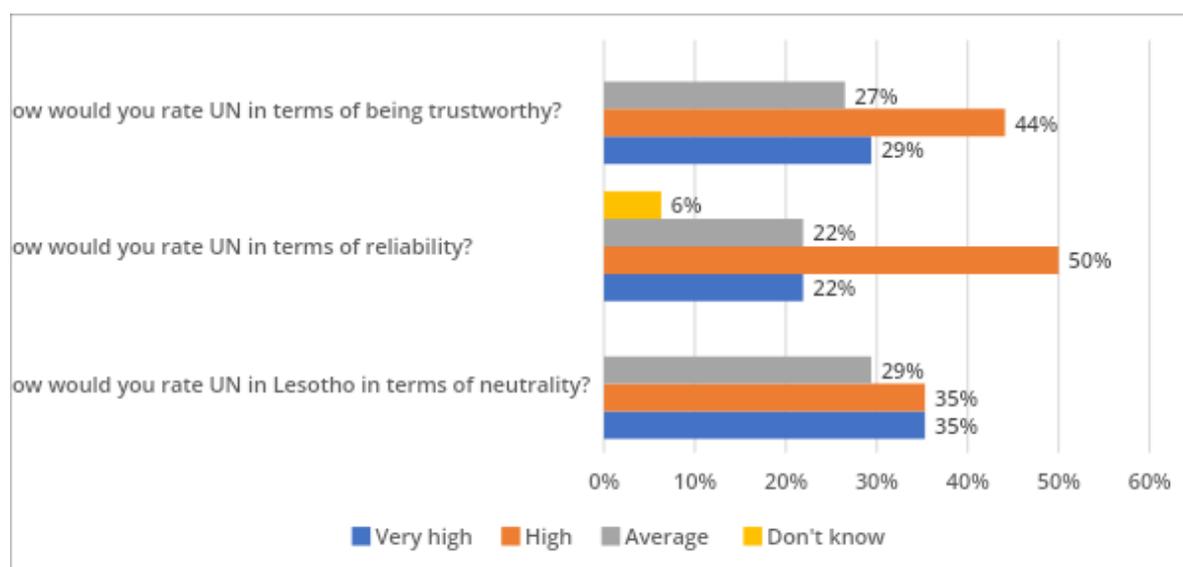
⁶³ Interviews with government, development partners, civil society and UN agencies

⁶⁴ Interviews with UN agencies, development partners and government stakeholders

partners⁶⁵ at programme level to enhance synergies. However, the partnership of individual UN agencies with civil society was found to be more transactional especially where specific the individual agencies engage civil society organisations to implement defined activities; while the engagement with private sector has been in areas where individual UN agencies tap private sector expertise to develop innovative solutions such as mobile cash transfer and digital learning platform.

68. Overall, UN family credibility and reliability are assessed as being high while partnerships with civil society and private sector have been transactional. Figure 4 below shows the rating of UN family on trustworthiness, reliability and neutrality.⁶⁶

Figure 5: Rating of UN is reliability, neutrality and trustworthy



EQ2.2: To what extent has the UNDAF promoted and strengthened complementarity, harmonization and coordination with key development partners, CSOs, private sector, and government counterparts to maximize the achievement of results?

Finding 2.2a: Although individual UN agencies engage with their relevant government ministries, civil society organisations and development partners in programme planning and implementation, the UNDAF coordination structures have not adequately promoted complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with government, private sector and CSOs due to lack of participation of these structures in the ORGs and passive participation of Government representatives in the UNDAF Joint Steering Committee. However, this situation may change because the UNCT started involving Government ministries in ORG meetings and RCO started convening development partners meetings in 2022.

The UNDAF coordination mechanisms⁶⁷ have not adequately promoted complementarity and harmonisation of UN family support (through the joint work plans) with programmes of its partners (government, development partners, private sector and CSOs). For instance, the Joint Steering Committee through which interventions prioritised in the joint work plans should have been harmonised with the government agenda at the highest level of government did not work well. As detailed in evaluation question 5.2, the government members of the JSC had low awareness of the UNDAF design and the joint workplans and their participation was largely passive. There is also no civil society and private sector representation in this committee. Furthermore, there has been no government, civil society and private sector participation in the ORG meetings where UN family develops its joint work plans until 2022. There is an assumption or understanding that individual UN agencies engage with their respective partner government ministries in identifying specific

⁶⁵ Especially World Bank, European Union Delegation and PEPFAR

⁶⁶ On-line survey

⁶⁷ Mechanisms referred to include ORGs, JSC and the Partners Coordination Forum

priorities and these priorities are carried through to the development of the joint work plans. However, the UN family has taken a step to improve harmonisation of its plans with those of government by inviting government and non-government stakeholders to the ORG meetings for 2022.

69. Regarding harmonisation of UN family support with that of other development partners, individual UN agencies engage with specific development partners. This bilateral engagement focuses in the sectors relevant to the mandates of the individual UN agency.⁶⁸ However, from 2022, the RCO rejuvenated Development Partnership Forum convened by the UN Resident Coordinator and bringing together development partners and government to focus on key development challenges of the country, harmonise development partners (including UN) support to government priorities in these areas, and develop new strategic approaches. Civil society organisations are also invited to this forum.⁶⁹

70. Overall, the UNDAF as a framework for bringing together UN agencies to work collectively as one and to improve cooperation and coordination with government and other partners, has to large extent focused in internal coordination of the UN. The JSC, which is a mechanism for engaging with government, has functioned sub-optimally. The Development Partners Forum has revived the coordination and harmonization of UN family programmes with those of other development partners while no specific platform for harmonizing UN family support with civil society and private sector is in place. These findings take into account the fact that individual UN agencies continue to engage with their partners,⁷⁰ but only underscores that UNDAF, as a partnership vehicle, has not adequately broken through the individual UN agency silo approach to planning, coordination and engagement with government.

2.3 Effectiveness

EQ 3.1: To what extent did UNDAF adopt results-based management practices in its design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the achievement of results?

Finding 3.1a: Basic elements of Result Based Management (RBM) were adopted by the UNCT, particularly the results framework, the annual joint work plans with output targets, UNDAF output and outcome level reporting tool, and the setting up of outcome results groups (ORGs) responsible for data collect and use. However, the ORGS did not collect data and report against the UNDAF outputs and data for most outcome indicators was lacking, making it difficult for the ORGs and UNCT to periodically review the performance of UNDAF.

71. The UNCT adopted RBM practices in several ways. In designing the UNDAF, the UN family took up the recommendation of the evaluation of the previous UN Development Assistance Plan (LUNDAP) 2013 – 2018 by reducing the number of UNDAF outcomes from 10 to 4 to ensure the framework was more focused and results oriented.⁷¹

72. The UNCT also adopted the basic elements of RBM. These include a results framework outlining UN family contribution to national outcomes results and SDG targets; a results framework setting out baselines and targets the outcome indicators; and joint work plans that include output indicators and targets to measure the annual performance of the framework⁷². Reporting guidelines and tools were also developed and shared with the Outcome Results Groups to facilitate monitoring UNDAF outputs. The UNINFO systems was also put in place to manage outcome and output data and was expected to make such data available to ORGs and UNCT for decision making.⁷³ An M&E group is also in place to coordinate data collection and reporting against the results framework. ORGs are also expected to use M&E data to review progress in implementation of the JWPs and make necessary adjustments, and the UNCT is expected to use the strategic information originating from the monitoring system to make decisions.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ For instance, WHO and UNAIDS engaging with PEPFAR in health focusing on HIV and TB response; FAO, WFP and UNICEF engagement with EU, IFAD and World Bank.

⁶⁹ Development partners' forum reports and key informant interviews

⁷⁰ The evaluation team has evidence on how individual agencies harmonise and complement their support with government and other development partners virtually in all sectors which need not be detailed in this section.

⁷¹ Documents review

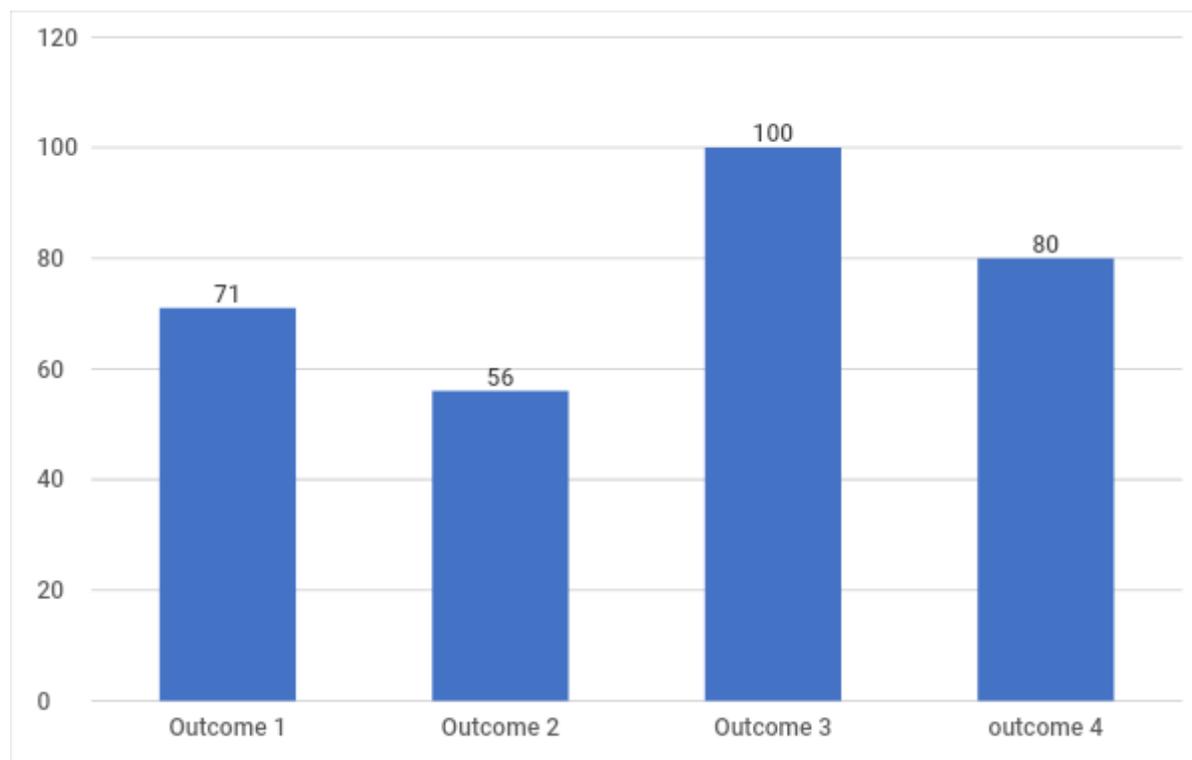
⁷² UNDAF 2019-2023 results framework and joint work plans for 2019/2020, 2021 and 2022

⁷³ Interviews with UN staff

⁷⁴ Documents review

73. Although the basic elements of RBM were adopted by the UNCT, they were not effectively applied. For example, data for tracking progress of most outcome and output indicators were not available. Specifically, 71%, 56%, 100% and 80% of indicators for outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively, have no data to measure progress. This has negatively affected the review of the extent to which national outcomes are improving. UNDAF outputs were also not tracked which means the ORGs could not assess the performance of the JWPs. Consequently, UNDAF reports have tended to focus on activity implementation, despite the deliberate effort (and guidelines) from RCO to ensure ORGs review progress towards achieving output and outcome targets. The system for monitoring of cross cutting themes (gender, HIV, voice, human rights and participation), especially those tracked using markers was also put in place but it was not backed up with analysis of the data for the markers.⁷⁵ Figure 6 shows the extent to outcome data for UNDAF is lacking.

Figure 6: Percentage of outcome indicators with no up to date data



Source: ET analysis of availability of outcome indicator data based on UNINFO data

74. The unavailability of data limited the ability of the UN to engage the government effectively to highlight indicators that off track and develop appropriate strategies to support the government towards achievement of national priorities and SDGs. In cases where the government has reliable administrative data, for example, the migration database hosted by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the UN has not leveraged such data to monitor UNDAF outputs.⁷⁶

EQ 3.2: How effective has the UNDAF been in achieving the results outlined in the results framework (including through new solutions/innovations that can be replicated or scaled up?) What have been the benefits for the people and institutions targeted by the interventions (including the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized?)

75. Most of the UNDAF outcome indicators lack up to date data and output indicators were not tracked as mentioned in the section above. Therefore, the assessment of UNDAF effectiveness presented in this section focuses on UN family interventions as outlined in the joint work plans.

Outcome 1: By 2023, government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making processes in a peaceful environment

⁷⁵ Documents review and key informant interviews

⁷⁶ Interview with key stakeholders

Finding 3.2.a: UN Agencies have contributed to national priorities in the areas of governance, rule of law and human rights but the major reforms in these sectors have not been completed

76. Under outcome 1, the UN, through UNDP, UNCIEF, RCO, WFP, IOM, UNHCR, ILO, UNODC, UNAIDS, UNFPA contributed to the progress made in strengthening Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights, Access to Justice and Peace and Stability in the country. This is evidenced by the fact that Lesotho had a peaceful, credible and transparent election in October 2022 (judged “Free and Fair” by EU, AU, SADC and UK Observation mission). A peaceful transition of power following the elections demonstrates Lesotho’s maturity in democracy. As of December 2022, 27.5 % of the seats in the National Assembly were held by women, a slight increase from 25.3% as Baseline in 2017. An independent National Human Rights Commission is in the process of establishment (Baseline in 2017: Non-existent). Lesotho’s ranking in the Democracy Index has slightly decreased to 63 in 2021 (Baseline in 2017: 56) indicating further needs for the improvement

77. As indicated in EQ3.1 above, despite the lack of outcome to assess the UNDAF performance, key informants and data from documents review shows that UN agencies contributed to strengthening of the capacity of national institutions for effective delivery of their mandates. For instance, the MoGYSR was supported to pilot gender audits in 3 ministries which stimulated demand for the same intervention in other ministries; and the training of Parliament SDGs Committees, Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, and the Social Cluster Parliament Committee resulted in parliament passing the Counter Domestic Violence Bill. The UN extended support for the establishment of the human rights commission. Though the human rights commission is not yet in place, advocacy efforts and technical support to the national reforms processes resulted in the approval of the amendment of the human rights commission bill by parliament. UN also strengthened the capacity of government to report on international human rights instruments such as the UPR for the first time without external technical assistance.

78. The UN family strengthened the capacity of national institutions to generate, access, and use evidence to inform decision-making. For instance, the WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to update the integrated web base DHIS2 platform; generation of community level HIV estimates thereby improving the capacity of government to respond to the needs of people living with HIV; dissemination of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), and supported Child Poverty analysis thereby contributing to availability of quality data to inform policy decisions. UNDP further strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Police in data collection, reporting, and use leading to availability of disaggregated crime statistics.⁷⁷ To address under-utilization of data in the area of migration, the IOM trained officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the members of the National Consultative Committee on Migration (NCC) and the Migration Data Working Group (MDWG). In addition, through the support of the IOM, migration was included as one of the priority areas in the NSDP II resulting in development of policies and action plans to integrate migration into mainstream development agenda. The UN family contributed to the Mid-Term Review of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II) which identified gaps in data that is critical for monitoring progress in national development. In addition, the UN family strengthened national capacity for M&E through technical and financial assistance that resulted in improved capacity of government officials as well as development of the national M&E policy which was approved by cabinet.⁷⁸ Despite these efforts, Lesotho lacks data for several national outcome indicators because of key surveys such as demographic and health survey have not been done due to funding constraints.

79. In an effort to address political instability that Lesotho has experienced over time, the UN family enhanced the capacity of national and local mechanisms to facilitate all inclusive, open and participatory national reforms process, and (ii) mitigate conflict. In this regard, the UN contributed to creation of a peace architecture by encouraging and supporting national and subnational dialogue among the Basotho and in collaboration with government, the National Reforms Authority, civil society and faith-based organisations. Parliament, senate and principal chiefs were also trained on conflict management. These efforts increased the participation of Basotho people through different organisations including Community Based Organisations, in the reforms process thereby enhancing ownership of the national reforms process⁷⁹ increased participation of and resolution in anticipation of potential risk of conflict brought about by the reform process. As part of the reforms, the UN supported the Ministry of Defence and National Security to

⁷⁷ Interviews with key stakeholders

⁷⁸ Interviews and documents review

⁷⁹ Interviews with key stakeholders

develop the framework for the National Security Policy and Strategy. Another important contribution to the national reform agenda was the drafting and adoption of comprehensive constitutional amendments to pave the way for sustainable peace and political stability. However, this bill was not passed by parliament before the just concluded general elections.

80. Two factors facilitated the implementation of outcome 1 interventions: Firstly, the UN family's convening power and policy brokerage which secured Government endorsement to coordinated development partners in generating comprehensive reform actions.⁸⁰ This is consistent with the majority (87%) of the online-survey who rated UN family as reliable and credible owing to its neutrality.⁸¹ Secondly, active involvement of policy makers in processes for developing M&E capacity.⁸²

Outcome 2: By 2023, all people, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from gender-responsive social policies and programmes for the sustainable and equitable realization of their rights

Finding 3.2b: UNDAF interventions were relevant to and potentially contributed to the outcomes for health, HIV and TB, education, social protection and nutrition

81. The UN agencies collaborating in the implementation of the joint workplan for outcome 2 and thus contributing to intended outcome level results included FAO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, IAEA, ILO, ITC and UN Women.

82. Outcome 2 of the UNDAF focused on social sectors including health, education, WASH, gender, child protection, nutrition and social protection. However, most of the indicators lacked up to date data that could measure progress during the extent to which intended outcome targets were achieved because the Demographic and Health Survey which is the major data source was last done in 2014. The outcome indicators for outcome 2 include percentage of married women with unmet family planning needs, prevalence of gender-based violence, under five mortality rate, maternal mortality ratio and prevalence of stunting. Indicators for which data is available show progress in the last three years of UNDAF implementation period. For instance, there has been a reduction of HIV incidence among adults and adolescents and young women; reduction in infant mortality rate and an increase financial allocation by government to social protection.

Indicator	Baseline (2018)	2019	2020	2021	2022	Target (2023)
Indicator 2.1-1 - Percentage of currently married women (aged 15-49 years) with unmet need for family planning, Percent	18					11
Indicator 2.1-2 - HIV incidence in adults 15-49 years., Per 1000 uninfected population ⁸³	1.1		0.55			
Indicator 2.1-3 - HIV Incidence in young women 15-24 years, Percent			0.34			
Indicator 2.1-4 - Net cohort survival rate (primary), Percent	72.7					95
Indicator 2.1-5 - Allocation of social protection as a percent of GDP, Percent	9	7.1	6.4	8.4		11
Indicator 2.1-6 - Prevalence of Gender Based Violence among women experienced in a lifetime., Percent	86					80
Indicator 2.1-7 - 3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate, Deaths per 1000 live births	85					62
Indicator 2.1-8 - Maternal Mortality Ratio, Deaths per 100, 000 live births	1024					300
Indicator 2.1-9 - Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years, Percent	33					25

⁸⁰ Document review

⁸¹ Results of the online survey

⁸² Interviews with key stakeholders

⁸³ Lesotho Population-based HIV Impact Assessment 2020

83. UNDAF output indicators that could demonstrate the UN agencies contribution to the outcome indicators above were not tracked and, thus, output data is not available. In view of this, the evaluation assessed the of activities outlined in the joint workplans.⁸⁴

84. In the health sector, UN contributed to the strengthening of the health sector governance; capacity to deliver integrated RMNCAH and SGBV, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene services; and capacity to deliver HIV and TB services. UN agencies supporting government in the health sector strengthening include WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UNAIDS and IOM. The UN interventions that did contribute to the health outcomes include:

85. Strengthening health sector governance through development and dissemination of the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (NHSSP) which shows priority areas where partners and government should invest. A key governance issue in the health sector is the high staff turnover, accountability and inadequate implementation of the NHSSP. UN addressed these issues through training and coaching of Ministry of Health (MoH) managers on leadership and management competencies; and worked collaboratively with MOH to convene and coordinate all health sector actors at the central level, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the decentralized level, the UN supported District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) to develop district health plans aligned to the NSSP. Other aspects of the health sector strengthened with UN support included the health information systems (DHIS2); updating of health service delivery guidelines and tools; technical guidance for conducting the National Health Account.⁸⁵ UN also supported MoH to engage with communities, traditional and religious leaders (especially during COVID-19) to bring the gaps between demand and supply of health services. Despite this support by UN family (and other health sector actors), health governance remains a major issue. Nearly a quarter of trained health managers are in private sector due to low motivation in working for government, and the country has a demand side problem of healthcare workers (HCWs) shortage. The health sector has is weak accountability, with poor performance monitoring and reporting partly due to high turnover of leaders in the MoH.

86. Capacity strengthening for delivery of Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescents Health (RMNCAH) Services; Nutrition and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Services (WASH): UN contributed to national outcome in maternal health, family planning and sexual and reproductive health through strengthening development and updating of policies and guidelines.⁸⁶ Other interventions included advocacy for improvement of legal and policy environment for SRHR, and enactment of Child Marriages Act; development of registers and reporting tools that integrate SRHR/SGBV and HIV; and training of HCWs on adolescent and youth friendly services (AYFHs) and provision of integrated SRHR/HIV and SGBV services. Young people were empowered on social accountability to hold service providers accountable for providing AYFHs; and were also provided with comprehensive sexuality education. Regarding nutrition services, UN family contributed to nutrition outcomes through development of nutrition and agricultural investment cases, introducing food fortification, HCWs capacity strengthening on management of acute malnutrition, strengthening food and nutrition coordinating offices at national and district levels. The multi-sectoral nutrition SBCC and gender transformative strategy was developed and implemented while communities were sensitization on diversified livelihoods and food production systems; and sensitization of caregivers on infant and young children feeding practices. The UN family focus on WASH was on the development of the hybrid strategy for rural sanitation, hygiene and safe water messaging especially in drought affected districts. Nutrition and WASH support was also provided in the education sector.

87. HIV and TB service delivery: UN played a critical role in contributing to gains made in HIV and TB response in Lesotho. UN agencies contributed to the decentralization of HIV services in Lesotho in order to improve access and strengthen quality and efficiency of services. Extensive support was train healthcare workers and community focal persons for treatment services; establish community support group (to strengthen differentiated service delivery), and roll out 3 to 6 months multi-month dispensing of anti-retroviral medicines. To overcome the impact of COVID-19, the UN mobilized additional resources for the pandemic response, strengthened laboratory services and trained healthcare workers which assisted the

⁸⁴ Data from documents review and responses of key informant interviews, district stakeholders' interviews and the on-line assessment and districts level interviews

⁸⁵ This is the first time Lesotho is undertaking the National Health Account

⁸⁶ These include EPI policy, integrated SRHR, HIV and SGBV training manual, Village Health Workers policy, and inclusion of integrated SRHR/HIV/SGBV nursing training curriculum)

government to open more COVID-19 treatment centres. The UN also supported intensive advocacy which led to integration of HIV testing and family planning services and scale up of pre-exposure prophylaxis for breastfeeding mothers. UN support strengthened comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) through capacity building of teachers and field inspectors, and technical support for the development of CSE learning materials. UN supported the sensitization of vulnerable and key populations, traditional leaders on reproductive health and rights, HIV and GBV to address violence against women and girls. UN also intensely lobbied parliament leading to the enactment of Counter Domestic Violence bill of 2021. With regard to TB, the UN participated in the TB prevalence survey which provided key evidence to guide TB response in the country and supported the MoH in planning and capacity strengthening of national and district TB coordination and health facility service providers.

88. Education sector: There was one indicator for the education sector outcome (net cohort survival for primary level). UN family interventions (through UNICEF and WFP) focuses on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), primary and secondary education. At the ECCD level, support was provided for the development of the ECCD curriculum; development of guidelines for set up of ECCD centres; capacity strengthening of ECCD care givers and teachers and provision of teaching and learning materials. ECCD centres, particularly the home based centres, were targeted for feeding to improve the nutrition status of children from disadvantaged communities. Interventions for primary education included the provision of teaching and learning materials and capacity strengthening for teachers. In secondary level, adolescents were provided with health information (life-skills education) in addition to capacity strengthening of teachers for STEM subjects. UN also supported the provision of distant education targeting marginalized groups through the literacy programme targeting mainly herd boys and continuing education targeting those who dropped out of school. Regarding curriculum development, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was supported to strengthen methods for teaching maths and science to improve performance and to develop the basic education policy. During COVID-19, UN played a key role in contributing to continued access to education even during the school closure period. Learner packs delivered through digital platforms and the media were developed to reach learners across the country. Measures to ensure safe opening of schools were also instituted including training of teachers and establishment of sanitation facilities in schools. UN has also been at the centre of the education transformation agenda aimed at accelerating learning to address the education losses experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

89. Gender-based violence (GBV), violence against children (VAC) and Trafficking in Persons (TiP): UN contribution has been in strengthening the enabling environment to address GBV through the advocacy for enactment of laws against domestic violence. The information system for GBV is also being improved through developing the GBV register, improving GBV data collection at police stations and integrating GBV into other data tools at health facilities. The capacity of HCWs has also been strengthened to implement the integrated guidelines for medico-legal care for survivors. Addressing Violence Against Children (VAC) is part of the broader interventions for child protection. Community awareness was raised on the prevention and response to child protection issues; and GoL identified proposed amendments to the Children Protection and Welfare Act of 2011. Community awareness on TiP has also been improved and national referral mechanisms for victims put in place. a legal assessment was done to inform interventions; and leaders in most affected districts sensitized, and community-based protection committees trained on TiP.

90. Social protection: There has been an increase in the financial allocation to social protection in the period of the UNDAF. The Government has in place the Social Protection Strategy which prioritises core social assistance and complementary social assistance programmes. The core social assistance programmes are 97 percent funded by government which demonstrated government commitment. The UN support focused on strengthening coordination and systems for social protection service delivery, capacity strengthening and provision of technical expertise as well financial support. Interventions included the expansion of coverage of the child grant programmes and OVC bursary; development of the social protection plan and M&E framework; support for NISSA and expanding it to capture data for urban households. During COVID-19, UN supported the development and use of digital mechanisms for money transfer to beneficiaries.

91. Emergency/ humanitarian response: The UN family supported the MoH to complete a risk assessment to identify hazards Lesotho might face and developing contingency plans. The MoH generated multi-hazard response plan, set up of emergency operations centres, one at MOH equipped to receive and disseminate data and the others in 3 districts. This support has expanded the core capacities of Lesotho to respond to emergencies (surveillance, lab, equipment). Focus was also on assisting the MoH to liaise with other ministries

97. UN agencies implementing activities in the JWP for outcome 3.2 are FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and NRAs: IAEA, UNCDF and UNIDO. Outcome indicators for outcome 3.2 included: reduction of the proportion of land that is degraded over total land area; increase of proportion of land under improved range management; increase of proportion of population living in households with access to energy and financial services; and increase of proportion of Household Heads with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation, by sex and type of tenure. Data for most of these indicators is lacking.

98. The interventions supported by the UN agencies to contribute to these outcomes are as follows: Strengthening of institutional capacity, policy and strategies through support for development of climate change communication strategy; establishment of a Socio-Economic Unit (Ministry of Forestry Range and Soil Conservation) to inform the design of new programmes and monitoring the effectiveness of on-going initiatives; and development of the Soil and Water Conservation Policy guide soil and water conservation programmes.

99. UN family also focused on climate change adaptation and related land degradation through support for improvement of access to clean energy, natural resource management, and climate change adaptation initiatives, including early warning mechanisms. Four renewable mini-grids were established and supported by innovations to regulatory frameworks, enabling policies and concession agreements between energy providers and the Government of Lesotho. Clean energy stoves were also purchased and distributed to rural communities, where they will improve health outcomes by reducing smoke inhalation and reduce deforestation, by offering clean slow-burn briquettes.

100. UN family also supported the protection of Lesotho's natural resources where new land was protected and designated to sustainable land management whilst wetlands continued to be protected. Communities were trained on governance of natural resources and were supported with improved access to clean water for agricultural and domestic use. UN further supported the construction of portable water systems which are supplying communities with clean water especially in Mohale's Hoek. Support in agricultural investment focused on increasing adaptive capacity to climate change and early warning system strengthening to enable the country to react pre-emptively to potential risks.

EQ 3.3. To what extent has the UNDAF contributed to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, supported human rights principles, and given full consideration to environmental sustainability?

Finding 3.3a: Although gender is mainstreamed into UNDAF outcomes, results framework and joint work plans, an inter-agency coordination mechanism, consistent monitoring and reporting and inter-agency efforts to support government in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are lacking

101. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) is one of the cross-cutting issues spelt out in UNDAF. The UN family planned to promote GEWE through integrating gender in planning, implementation, and monitoring and reporting on UNDAF. GEWE was also to be promoted through capacity strengthening of national institutions, integration of GEWE into national strategies and programmes and working with partner women groups and gender equality advocates⁸⁷.

102. Gender is integrated in to the UNDAF joint work plans for each results area, with a gender score given to joint activities based on the extent which they promote GEWE but there is no mechanism to coordinate GEWE programming across agencies. The need to promote GEWE is discussed in meetings, during the development of joint work plans and in UN/Government forums but there is no UN-wide deliberate way to empower women and improve gender quality. In some cases, junior officers are assigned to be the gender focal person which limits the visibility of this promoting GEWE. The UNDAF results framework has integrated gender sensitive indicators and provided for gender disaggregation, but data for most indicators is lacking. Agencies also report on the gender marker assigned in the JWPs but this data has not been analysed to inform decisions and programming. It was also observed that gender-based violence, a critical issue given Lesotho's socio-cultural norms and practices, is not explicitly prioritised in the UNDAF⁸⁸.

⁸⁷ Lesotho UNDAF 2019-2023 document

⁸⁸ Interviews with UN and Government key informants, on-line assessment and the Gender scorecard assessment report

103. However, interventions promoting GEWE are taking place at agency level. Individual agencies have integrated gender into their programming and are supporting programmes that promote GEWE in health, education, social protection, migration, climate change adaptation agriculture, food security and nutrition, human rights, prevention of gender-based violence and trafficking-in-persons programmes among others, in collaboration with the Government of Lesotho⁸⁹. What is lacking is a coordinated UN-wide deliberate programming or approach to promoting GEWE, in collaboration with partners (GoL, Civil Society and other Development Partners)⁹⁰. There is also no consensus on how gender should be mainstreamed and coordinated among key informants. Some view the use of the gender marker as an important step while others see the gender marker as not effective because the scoring of the gender marker is not always based on data analysis. In addition, establishing a coordination structure specifically for GEWE is also seen as likely to be burdensome given that agencies are participating in several UNDAF coordination structures⁹¹.

104. The UNCT is taking steps in strengthening UN-wide efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. In 2021, the UNCT carried out the Gender Scorecard Assessment to assess the performance of the UN system in Lesotho and identify the role of inter-Oagency collaboration and coordination in achieving results on GEWE by focusing on the process of gender mainstreaming. The scorecard assessed the UN in Lesotho against 15 indicators covering planning, partnerships, gender architecture and capacities, resources and gender results. Of the 15 indicators, 20 percent were scored as "missing minimum standards", 47 percent "approaches minimum standards", 33 percent "meets minimum standards" while no indicator exceeded minimum standards. The scorecard findings informed the development of the UNCT Lesotho Scorecard Action Plan for the period 2022 to 2026⁹². However, interviews with UN key informants show that implementation of this action plan has not commenced and it is likely to be integrated into the next UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Secondly, the Resident Coordinator's Office has recently started engaging individual agencies and spotlighting GEWE issues.

Finding 3.3b: The UN family has made progress in integrating human rights in the UNDAF outcomes and joint workplans (especially using the human rights marker) and the RCO is providing technical support to ORGs on human-rights based programming, but data on the human rights marker is not analysed and a mechanism for coordination of human rights issues across UNDAF outcomes is lacking.

UN family has taken steps to integrate human rights across the UNDAF in its design and during implementation. In the UNDAF design, human rights approach to programming was mainstreamed through increasing alignment with international standards and addressing inequalities and promoting meaningful participation of stakeholders as well as building the capacity of duty bearers to address needs of vulnerable populations.

105. The steps taken to integrate human rights include including the human rights marker in Joint work plans which prompts agencies to ensure human rights aspects are addressed across sectors. The weakness is that scoring of the marker is not analysed to identify areas of improvement

106. RCO has strengthened its capacity by recruiting a human rights expert to analyse data and support ORGs and agencies to integrate human rights in programming. As a result, there is increased awareness in human rights-based approach in the implementation of joint work plans.⁹³ However, there is no systematic approach to collecting, analysing, and using data to inform strategic integration of human rights issues across all the UN programmes.⁹⁴ Another limitation is that the UNCT does not have a clear framework and coordination mechanism for integrating human rights issues in the design and implementation of its programmes⁹⁵.

⁸⁹ Interviews with UN and Government key informants

⁹⁰ Interviews with UN agencies and feedback from on-line assessment

⁹¹ ET is not able to quantify these responses because these are qualitative responses from key informant interviews and the on-line assessment

⁹² UNCT Lesotho Gender Scorecard Action Plan 2022-2026

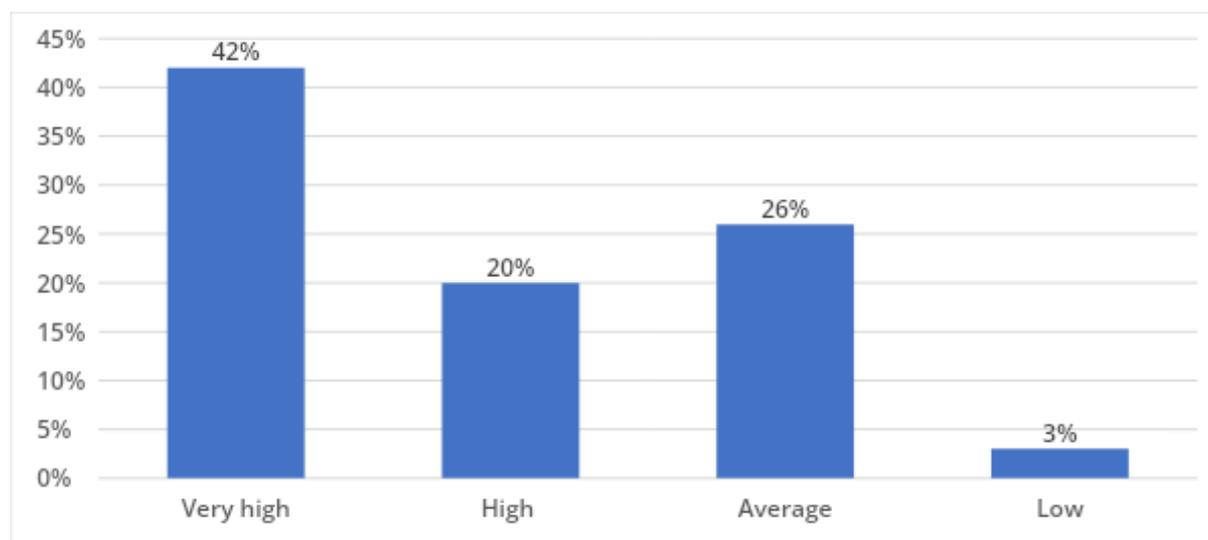
⁹³ Interviews with UN Officials

⁹⁴ Interviews with UN and government officials

⁹⁵ Interviews with UN Officials

107. Despite these limitations, interviews with UN Staff and Government Officials at national and district level show that UN interventions across sectors are targeting the needs of most vulnerable. For example, UNDAF interventions address issues of LGBTI with respect to access to health services⁹⁶. Figure 2 below shows the results of the online survey on how the UN family has addressed the needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Figure 7: Perceptions of stakeholders on the extent to which UNDAF addresses the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups



108. As noted in Figure 1, 62% of respondents rated UN high or very high is addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. This positive rating of integration of human rights into the UNDAF is largely attributed to the leadership and training human rights-based approach to programme provided by the RCO.⁹⁷

Finding 3.3c: The UNCT and ORGs approached environment sustainability from a sectoral perspective where environmental issues such as natural resources management, land reclamation and climate change adaptation were addressed in outcome 3.2. Integration of environmental sustainability as a cross cutting theme in other UNDAF outcomes is limited.

Environmental sustainability and resilience are embedded in the UNDAF design particularly in the context of Lesotho's vulnerability to climate change induced shocks as outlined in outcome 3.2 which aims to achieve sustainable use of natural resources and increasing the resilience of marginalized and vulnerable people. This is the only UNDAF outcome which specific focuses on environmental sustainability.⁹⁸ Thus, the UNCT and ORGs approached environmental sustainability from a sectoral perspective focusing mainly on energy, agriculture, and natural resources management.⁹⁹ In the area of energy, the UN contributed to development of policies and regulatory frameworks for promotion of sustainable energy technologies. It also strengthened the capacity of government in collecting and analysing energy data.¹⁰⁰ With regard to agriculture and natural resources management respectively, the UN family supported climate-smart agricultural technologies and strengthened the capacity of local councils and communities in in natural resources management including range lands.¹⁰¹ Integration of environmental sustainability as a cross cutting issue is limited.

⁹⁶ Interviews with UN Officials and UN Country Results Report 2021

⁹⁷ Interviews with UN Staff

⁹⁸ Review of UNDAF 2019-2023

⁹⁹ Document review and interviews with UN officials

¹⁰⁰ Interviews with government officials and review of UN Country Result Report, 2021

¹⁰¹ UN Country Results Report 2021

EQ 3.4 To what extent has the UNDAF 2019-2023 contributed to achieving better synergies among programmes of UN agencies with an effect on progress towards the National Development priorities and in response to emergencies such a COVID-19?

Finding 3.4a: UNDAF coordination structures have facilitated synergies and collaboration among UN Agencies in joint planning and reporting on their programmes but less so in implementation both for programmes supported at national and district levels. Programmatic synergies between non-resident and resident agencies is also limited.

109. UNDAF coordination structures have facilitated programmatic synergies among UN agencies. For instance, the ORGs provide a platform where UN agencies contributing to the same outcome develop joint work plans which reflect activities that they need to implement across agencies to achieve common outputs and contribute to specific outcome indicators. Agencies also report on activities implemented during the year through the ORGs. After developing JWPs, agencies implement activities separately; there is limited joint implementation of activities in the JWP. This, to some extent, limits synergy among the agencies during implementation.¹⁰²

110. To improve synergies among UN agencies in addressing cross cutting issues and through development of joint programmes on cross cutting themes, the Programme Coherence team (PCT) has been established to coordinate this effort. The PCT is relatively new, it has mapped out areas of joint programming and identified challenges with integration of crossing cutting themes such as gender mainstreaming¹⁰³. However, the PCT has not realized results from its work¹⁰⁴. The PCT is, however, a step in the right direction in breaking silos and strengthening interlinkages and delivery as one among the UN agencies.

111. UNCT is the high level UNDAF structure which provides strategic direction to the whole UN. UNCT promotes collaboration among agencies, focusing on common programmatic issues and common UN approach to support the government. UNCT within the UNDAF have authorized joint programmes that involve multiple agencies around important development themes for Lesotho.¹⁰⁵ Joint programmes is seen as crucial in areas that demand multiple and varied competences and specialties which are possessed by different agencies.¹⁰⁶ However, financial resources have not been successfully mobilized for most of the joint programmes and, thus, have not adequately contributed synergies and delivering as one among UN agencies.

112. There are several non-resident agencies (NRAs) implementing activities in the country. UNDAF has not adequately facilitated synergies and collaboration of these agencies with the resident agencies (RAs). Although NRAs signed to the support UNDAF, not all NRAs have been participating in the UNDAF coordination structures especially as core structure of the ORGs. Some NRAs such as OHCHR, UNCDF, IFAD, UNESCO do have focal points in the country and participate Outcome Results Groups and other interagency structures. Other NRAs who do not have focal points in the country and implement their assistance programmes directly with the Government ministries without the involvement of RCO. A few NRAs, UNHCR and UN WOMEN, are represented in the country by the RCO. A clear mechanism is needed to improve synergies between NRAs and RAs.

113. Joint resource mobilisation is another way in which UNDAF can facilitate collaboration among UN agencies. However, this has tended to work better in mobilizing resources for humanitarian emergency response than development programmes. For instance, RCO coordinated UN agencies to mobilise financial resources for joint support of the country for the drought and COVID-19 emergencies, but funding for development joint programmes has not been equally successful.

114. The UN family has not evolved a clear coordination mechanism for its support at district level. Programmes supported by the UN are planned with government ministries and CSOs at national level and implementation is cascade to the districts through these partners. However, UN agencies meet regularly to share information on programmes and as well doing regular monitoring visits to districts. However,

¹⁰² Key informant interviews and documents review

¹⁰³ UNCT Lesotho Gender Scorecard Action Plan 2022-2026

¹⁰⁴ Documents review (PCT minutes)

¹⁰⁵ UNCT Minutes and UN Key Informants interviews

¹⁰⁶ UN Key Informants interviews

programmes coordination and communication with the districts is not up to standard across agencies.¹⁰⁷ There are instances where UN Agencies work collaboratively at district level. A typical is climate change and resilience programme in Leribe and Mokhotlong districts where two UN agencies have agreed on one of them to coordinate activities.¹⁰⁸ Overall, there is little collaboration among the agencies at the district level.

EQ3.5: To what extent did the UNDAF facilitate linkages between humanitarian, development and peace (triple nexus)

Findings 3.5a: UNDAF coordination structures and the planning processes have facilitated linkages between humanitarian, development and peace across all outcomes but frequent leadership changes in government and lack of long-term financing for shock prevention and mitigation strategies has limited the extent to which the triple nexus can be strengthened

115. Key issues underpinning the humanitarian, development and peace nexus (triple nexus) in Lesotho include the fragile ecosystem, recurrent disasters (droughts and floods), vulnerability to climate change and disruptive political instability. In the UNDAF design, the UNCT prioritised prevention and mitigation of shocks caused by these vulnerability factors through support to government and national partners to address root causes of conflict and disaster, integrate the prevention agenda into development policies, safeguard development gains while ensuring resilience of communities at local level. During UNDAF implementation, UN agencies, through the ORGs, have made considerable progress in facilitating linkages humanitarian, development and peace nexus and assisting the country to build resilience as follows:

- (i) Supporting the country to address political instability by focusing on root causes through implementation of national reforms that saw the country process 36 pieces of legislation and constitutional amendments that were approved by the Cabinet and subsequently tabled in Parliament through the Omnibus Bill. However, this bill was not passed into law before last general elections. These reforms seek to address the root causes of political instability which has been a major cause of conflict and weak government leadership in socio-economic development in Lesotho. The UN family worked in partnership with key government institutions and other partners including SADC and European Union; and supported community participation in this process.
- (ii) Support to government to respond to strengthen the private sector (micro, small and medium enterprises – MSMEs) and promoting diaspora investment in the country as key strategies for increasing employment and securing livelihoods especially for the youth and women. This support contributed to strengthening resilience and also addressing the impact of MSMEs during humanitarian emergencies (COVID-19 pandemic).
- (iii) Support to address food insecurity through improved agricultural production and access to markets which contributes to improved incomes of smallholder farmers, many of whom are vulnerable to climate change, droughts and floods. This included inclusion of rural farmers in agricultural census, developing by-laws strengthening farmer based organisations, establishing e-market platforms (which enabled farmers to access markets during COVID-19). While strengthening food systems, the UN also addressed humanitarian emergency needs of communities during the drought, floods and COVID-19 emergencies through food and cash assistance.
- (iv) UN agencies (FAO, UNDP, WFP, UNCDF) are major players in supporting Lesotho's strategies for climate change adaptation and sustainable natural resources management. These include land reclamation, range management and green energy technologies which has contributed to resilience building. This support (in outcome 3.2) has contributed to reducing the effects of climate change and flooding; and improved sustainable environmental management.
- (v) UN family support to the country for development of early warning systems (outcome 3.2) and surveillance, preparedness and response capacity (outcome 2) have contributed to improving preparedness and response to emergencies. In the health sector, the UN family supported Lesotho to respond to COVID-19 and also to recover from this pandemic in a resilient manner by adopting some of the innovations developed during the pandemic, such as multi-month treatment plans for people living with HIV, distance learning packages and the agenda for education transformation,

¹⁰⁷ District Key Informants Interviews

¹⁰⁸ District Key Informants Interviews

integrating shock responsive social protection into core social protection programmes among others.

116. Although there is room for improvement in continuous risk analysis and risk-based programming across all UNDAF outcomes, the UN family has played a key role in supporting the country to link development-humanitarian and peace nexus. Political instability resulting in frequent change of leadership in government ministries and limited long-term financing as two major factors that have limited Lesotho's capability to facilitate the triple nexus.

2.4 Efficiency

EQ 4.1: Was the UNDAF supported by an integrated funding framework (Common Budgetary Framework) and by adequate funding instruments? What were the gaps, if any? Have resources been (re-allocated efficiently based on UNDAF collective priorities and changing needs where necessary?)

Finding 4.1a: The UNCT has in place a comprehensive resource mobilization and partnership strategy which identifies diverse strategies for closing the funding gap but resource mobilisation has mainly focused on traditional donors and has been conducted through joint proposals, most of which have not been funded. However, the UN family, through RCO coordination, have been successful in mobilizing funding for humanitarian emergency response.

117. The UNDAF common budgetary framework was for US\$257 million over a five-year period, of which US\$97 million was the funding gap as shown in the table below. The major instrument guiding the resource mobilization to address the common budgetary framework (CBF) funding gap was the UNCT resource mobilization and partnership strategy. This strategy lays out several approaches for mobilizing resources from tradition and non-traditional sources. It also included approaches for support the GoL to finance SDGs through aligning its budget to the SDGs and improving efficiencies¹⁰⁹.

Table 4: UNDAF Lesotho 2019-2023 Summary Overview

Pillars/ Outcomes	A	B	C
	Total	Projected to be available	To be mobilized/ Gap (A-B)
Pillar 1	19,413,097	11,463,359	7,913,738
Outcome 1.1	19,413,097	11,463,359	7,913,738
Pillar 2	123,992,202	94,961,814	29,030,389
Outcome 2.1	124,292,202	94,961,814	29,330,389
Pillar 3	113,080,960	52,972,030	60,108,930
Outcome 3.1	48,558,120	13,550,286	35,007,834
Outcome 3.2	64,522,840	39,421,744	25,101,096
Total	256,486,259	159,397,203	97,053,057

118. The evaluation found that the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy was not well tracked and data on resources mobilization is not complete. For instance, in 2019, US\$25.1 million was projected to be available and US\$47.7 million was to be mobilized; and total of US\$ 12.7million was mobilised. This included a US\$4 million from Sweden for the integrated SRHR/HIV and SGBV joint programme; Euro700,000 from EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations for early warning system for social protection; US\$5.5 million for the humanitarian response to the drought emergency¹¹⁰.

119. In 2020, the UNCT repurposed US\$9.7 million from funds available for the UNDAF joint workplan implementation to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Inclusive of this amount, a total of US\$25.5 million was mobilised by UNCT for the UN support to government response to COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, US\$1.1 million was mobilised for the Joint Programme on Economic and Financial Management Integration for the Achievement of SDGs (JP-EFMIS) while US\$ 10 million Adaptation Fund project was launched: Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Populations in Lesotho (IACOV), a project focusing in climate change adaptation. In 2021, funds were mobilised from Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) to support Lesotho to establish a functional and sustainable integrated planning and public financial management system.

120. Key informant interviews with UN staff and documents review show that the implementation of the resource mobilization and partnership strategy mainly focused on resource mobilization from traditional donors and through joint proposals. For instance, a donor round table was held in Pretoria, South Africa in 2020 to mobilise resources but follow up actions were disrupted by the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UNCT was also responding to calls for joint funding proposal such as the Multi-Partner Trust Fund and also developed their own internally prioritised initiatives such as support for early economic

¹⁰⁹ Lesotho United National Resource Mobilisation and Partnership Strategy 2019-2023

¹¹⁰ 2019 Lesotho One UN Report

recovery, sustained learning and enhanced life-skills education, enhanced COVID-19 shock responsive social protection, youth employment and waste circular management and GBV¹¹¹. Key informant interviews show that most of these joint proposals were/have not been funded¹¹². There is no evidence on the implementation of the other aspects of the resource mobilization and partnership strategy such as support to government for budgeting for SDGs and improvement of efficiency in spending, establishing robust risk management approach, improving aid coordination, strengthening collaboration with International Financing Institutions, use of tools such as impact bonds, and strengthening south-south cooperation.¹¹³

EQ 4.2 Has the UNDAF facilitated internal UN coordination to contribute to greater operational efficiency?

Finding 4.2a: UNDAF coordination structures have facilitated collaboration of individual UN agencies in carrying out operational services such as procurement, Information, communication and technology (ICT) and human resources management and this has contributed to reduction of transaction costs.

Internal coordination of the UN agencies is being facilitated through the Operations Management Team (OMT) which is part of the UNDAF coordination structures. The OMT draws membership from all UN agencies resident in Lesotho and has working groups for human resources, procurement, ICT and finance and administration. The OMT leads the UN in the implementation of the UN Business Operations Strategy which aims at improving efficiency of the UN system.

121. The UNCT (through the OMT) has taken measures to improve the internal operational efficiency to reduce cost. These include reduction of energy costs and promoting environment protection through installation of solar and reduced use of plastics; harmonisation of travel allowances for all UN partners across agencies and use of long-term agreements for procurement. The human resources survey has also been completed and the recommendations are being implementation. In addition, a roaster for local consultants is being developed to facilitate timely recruitment. During COVID-19, the UN supported staff to work from home through provision of internet services.

122. The internal coordination has contributed to improved implementation of UNDAF is the following ways: (i) Agencies have adopted centralised recruitment process through harmonising procedures. For instance, agencies can share drivers on a roaster approved by any agency. (ii) A UN partners portal is being developed and, when ready, a UN agency can select a partner or organisation already cleared by the UN from this portal. (iii) Agencies are benefiting from economy of scale through using existing systems such as the WFP Cash Based Transfers system which was used by UNDP for its resilience building programme and IOM project targeting returnees, instead of seeking to set up their own system with different service providers. This reduced time and transaction costs and leveraged the WFP capacity. (iv) use of long-term service agreements with different suppliers established by individual agencies, instead of each agency replicating a process that has already been done by any other sister agency. the OMT estimates that US\$1.2 million was saved in 2019/2020 and US\$1.m million in 2021 from sharing of common services.

123. However, internal operations efficiency would be further gained by addressing bottlenecks facing BOS implementation. For instance, although specific and dedicated staff have been assigned OMT roles in each agency, these staff have limited understanding of their roles and need continuous training. The roles have also not been recognised in performance appraisals. This has contributed to low staff participation and ownership of the BOS activities. The OMT does not have adequate resources to deliver their mandate.

EQ4.3: To what extent did UN manage to mobilise resources and leverage on available financial resources from government and other development partners in support of national priorities to which UNDAF is aligned?

Finding 4.3.a: Individual UN agencies have leveraged the government human resources in implementation of programme and activities. However, the individual UN agencies leveraging of

¹¹¹ Minutes of UNCT and PCT meetings

¹¹² Interviews with UN staff

¹¹³ Annual UNDAF reports, and UNCT and PCT minutes and key informant interviews

government financial resources has been limited due to the financial constraints facing government. UN agencies have, on the other hand, leveraged financial resources of other development partners, especially in cases where UN agencies provide technical support while other development partners provide financial support to government to implement the same programme.

UN family has made progress towards leveraging resources from government and development partners to support UNDAF outcomes. In particular, there is a Joint Programme on SDG financing [is this JP for UN agencies or a joint UN/Government), which has paved a way for leveraging resources from government. For example, the UN worked with government to carryout Development Finance Assessment (DFA) the result of which is an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF). This framework identifies innovative financing sources such as climate financing, private sources, FDI diaspora remittances as potential sources for SDG financing, and outline strategies for tapping into these sources for purposes of financing SDGs.¹¹⁴

124. UN family leverage resources from government using several strategies. For example, the UN family leveraged resources from the climate change response fund [who is funding] administered by the Ministry of Finance to support the National Adaptation Programme Action. This attracted interest from EU and AfDB who also injected funds in the pool in support of UNDAF outcomes.¹¹⁵ In addition, the UN leveraged government resources in the form of human resources, physical resources and use of government implementation systems. For example, government ministries provided transport and office space to facilitate implementation of UNDAF activities. There is however limited evidence of government co-financing UN supported activities due to constraints government budgets.¹¹⁶

125. Furthermore, the UN agencies leveraged resources from development partners. For instance, funding was mobilized from GEF to support climate change interventions and improving livelihoods in communities; UN agencies leverages Global Fund grants and PEPFAR for HIV, TB and health/community systems; and EU and World Bank funding to various sectors through its normative and technical roles.¹¹⁷ Development partners acknowledged the UN comparative advantage in that engaging the Government,¹¹⁸ the UN family has used this recognition to open doors for development partners to work collaboratively with Government.

2.5 Coordination

EQ 5.1: To what extent has the RCO fostered internal coordination and contributed to the promotion of UN agencies' synergies and inter-linkages through UN-wide coordination mechanisms, keeping in mind the spirit of the UN reform and adhering to it?

Finding 5.1a: RCO has contributed to improvement of internal coordination among UN agencies through technical and secretarial support to UNDAF coordination structures but this has not gone far enough to realise joint programming, joint resource mobilisation, improved coordination of cross cutting issues and improved coordination of non-resident agencies

126. The RCO contributed to the functioning of the UNDAF coordination structures through which UN agencies jointly plan, review and report on UNDAF implementation. The RCO supports chairs of the coordination structures (UNCT, ORGs, PCT, UNCG, M&E and OMT) to convene meetings and to follow up on decisions or issues emerging from these meetings. The RCO support particularly enabled the system of annual rotation of ORG chairs to function more effectively through keeping reports and providing institutional memory. The RCO also provided ORGs with UNDAF joint planning and reporting guidelines and tools to ensure agencies focus on results rather than activities; and established the UNINFO as and UNDAF data management repository. However, the reporting tool has not been well utilised, because there has been no reporting on UNDAF outputs while outcomes data for most indicators is missing, and, as a result, the utility of the UNINFO has been low. The RCO coordinates the development of UNDAF annual reports that track

¹¹⁴ Key informant interviews and document review

¹¹⁵ Key informant interviews

¹¹⁶ Key informant interviews

¹¹⁷ Key informant interviews

¹¹⁸ Key informant interviews

progress in UNDAF implementation indicating the collective work of the UN. These reports have also tended to track activity implementation with less focus on results.¹¹⁹

127. The RCO has made efforts in supporting the development of joint programmes and joint resource mobilisation which are tools for fostering synergy and internal coordination among UN agencies. However, there has been little success in these areas, except in resource mobilisation for emergency response. The RCO did support UNCT (and PCT) to develop joint proposals/programmes (such as youth empowerment, waste management, gender-based violence) but the joint programmes have not been completed nor funded. The RCO also led the donor-round table held in Pretoria, South Africa but follow up was disrupted by COVID-19. During emergencies, (drought in 2019 and COVID-19) the RCO coordinated UN Agencies to jointly mobilise resources through flash appeal and from the CERF. This is an area where RCO has the potential of strengthening synergy and inter-agency linkages by providing technical support and coordinating agencies to undertaken joint programming and resource mobilisation.¹²⁰

128. The RCO has increased visibility and placed high on the UNDAF agenda cross cutting themes and other major development issues in Lesotho, (including youth empowerment, gender equality and women's empowerment and human rights).¹²¹ This has led to discussions on how to improve inter-agency coordination and joint programming around these issues, but internal coordination on these issues has not been improved and the development of the selected joint programmes has not been completed.

129. RCO is viewed by UN agencies as being neutral with no conflict interest, and where agencies have "equal voice". This has contributed to the RCO ability to facilitate internal coordination and synergies across agency programmes. However, the extent to which the RCO has facilitated interlinkages between non-resident agencies (NRAs) and those resident in Lesotho varies across individual agencies. Some of the NRAs have requested the RCO to serve as their focal point while some have limited linkage with the resident agencies and work directly with government institutions. The synergy between NRAs and RAs programming could be improved.

130. The RCO's contribution to strengthening internal coordination of the UN can also be attributed to improved human resources capacity. The RCO has staff dedicated to supporting the coordination structures, UNDAF M&E and following up on decisions of UNCT and other structures. This capacity includes experts in human rights, economic development and disaster risk management who provided technical support to UN agencies. However, two of these positions – the economist and disaster risk management, are currently vacant. key informants are of the view that RCO needs to increase its technical support in integration of cross cutting issues in UNDAF.¹²²

EQ5.2: To what extent the national government and the UN system successfully coordinated the implementation of joint work plans (through the UNDAF Outcome Results Groups) to maximize efficiency, coverage, reaching the most vulnerable (disabled, women, youth, etc.) while reducing overlaps?

Finding 5.2a: Joint Steering Committee, as a key platform for UN family/Government coordination of the UNDAF has not been functioning optimally partly due to low awareness about the UNDAF at highest level of government and frequent government leadership changes

131. JSC is highest policy level body for coordinating UNDAF implementation with UN and is co-chaired at Minister and RC level. The JSC was expected to be the forum for providing strategic direction for UNDAF implementation, ensuring continued government leadership and UN accountability to government.¹²³ However, the participation of government in the JSC has been inadequate. The JSC itself meets annually but the awareness of the UNDAF among government members has been low which affects their contribution to the reports presented in these meetings.¹²⁴ This has also limited government ownership of the UNDAF. The

¹¹⁹ Interviews with UN Agencies including UNDAF coordination structures, and minutes of UNDAF coordination structures

¹²⁰ Interviews with UN agencies and minutes of UN coordination structures

¹²¹ Minutes of UNCT meetings and interviews with UN agencies

¹²² Interviews with UN agencies

¹²³ Documents review including minutes of meetings

¹²⁴ Interviews with the Government and UN Key Informants

JSC has not been adequately involved in substantive review of UNDAF JWPs, progress in UNDAF implementation.¹²⁵

EQ 5.3: To what extent has the RCO been able to coordinate UN responses to national and global emerging issues during the implementation of the UNDAF, including joint resource mobilization and implementation of joint programmes?

Finding 5.3.1 The RCO adequately coordinated and facilitated the joint UN family response to emerging issues particularly drought, floods and COVID-19 pandemic through joint resource mobilisation, coordinated adjustment of the joint workplans, repurposing of existing financial resources, coordinating information sharing and joint implementation of humanitarian response activities

132. The RCO coordinated the UN family response to national and global emerging issues especially during the onset of drought in 2019 and Covid-19 in 2020. Specifically, the RCO coordinated the UN effort towards supporting evidence-informed emergency response planning.¹²⁶ For example, evidence from the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment for 2018 and 2019¹²⁷ and the assessment of severity of drought in 2019 were used as the basis for planning and implementing the national response to drought.¹²⁸ The LVA findings informed the strategies used for selection of districts and beneficiaries targeted through UN family emergency response interventions. At the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, the RCO coordinated UN agencies and collaboration with development partners such as the World Bank to conduct a socio-economic assessment of the impact of COVID-19,¹²⁹ which informed the government response to COVID-19 and was also used by the UN to design its support to the Government of Lesotho.¹³⁰

133. The RCO also coordinated UN agencies to jointly mobilise resources for emergency response. During the drought emergency in 2019, the RCO successfully mobilized US \$5.5 million from CERF to fund a Joint Programme addressing humanitarian needs in agriculture and food security, health and nutrition, protection, and WASH¹³¹. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the RCO coordinated UN agencies efforts to undertake the criticality assessment of the UNDAF resulting in repurposing of \$9.4 million to support the Government of Lesotho's Integrated National COVID-19 Plan and National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19.¹³²

134. The RCO ensured that the UN provided a coordinated policy, advisory, and technical support to the Government of Lesotho. In this regard, the RCO ensured representation of the UN at the National COVID-19 Command Centre, which was a platform for assessing COVID-19 risk and advising the Government on necessary strategies to control the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impact on livelihoods. UN Staff deployed to this structure reported to the RCO and all the UN financial and technical support to government was coordinated through RCO thereby providing a single reference point through which the government was able to engage with the UN on matters relating to COVID-19.¹³³

135. In terms of communication, the RCO published regular updates on COVID-19 situation in Lesotho on the UN website thereby ensuring consistency of messaging and advancing the principal of Delivering as One.¹³⁴ Again, this positioned the RCO as a point of reference for the UN family's communication on COVID-19 thereby ensuring a coordinated approach to strategic communication on UN response to COVID-19 pandemic.

¹²⁵ Interviews with the Government and UN Key Informants and documents review

¹²⁶ Interview with UN staff and review of Country Office Results Report 2019

¹²⁷ Interview with UN staff and review of Flash Appeal 2019

¹²⁸ Interview with government and UN

¹²⁹ Interview with UN staff, SERP 2019; UN/WB report 2019

¹³⁰ Interview with UN Staff and review of SERP

¹³¹ Review of Country Results Report 2019

¹³² *ibid*

¹³³ Interview with UN staff

¹³⁴ Document review

2.6 Orientation towards impact

EQ6.1: To what extent have UN system activities articulated in the UNDAF driven progress towards, or supported achievement of Theory of Change outcomes?

Finding 6.1a: Contributing to UNDAF expected results, implementing UN agencies addressed key needs of the country and targeted populations. The analysis of its theory of change shows a clear progression from joint workplans activities to outputs and contribution to UNDAF outcomes. However, there is no adequate data to ascertain the UN's consolidated contribution to improving Lesotho people's lives.

136. This reconstructed theory of change for the UNDAF (Figure 8), based on the pathways to change arising from the evaluation of UNDAF, is shown below. The TOC shows that UN family in Lesotho intervenes both at upstream level focusing on policy, strategic development, institutional and individual capacity development, evidence generation and technical and financial support to government programmes. The UN family provides this support taking into account the support provided by other development partners and creating synergies with this support. Implementation of joint workplans is done by and with government ministries at the central level. The government ministries then cascade the support to districts, service delivery points and to communities. There are also instances where UN in collaboration with government ministries support implementation of programmes at district level. For instance, support for nutrition and food security to vulnerable households during emergencies and to home-based ECCDs; support to smallholder farmers, green energy technologies, support to migrants and returnees among others. These examples show that UN activities are both upstream and downstream.

137. The activities in the joint workplans contributed to the achievement of the outputs shown in the figure below. Although data for UNDAF outputs was not available (see EQ 3.1 findings), key informant interviews at national and district levels provided qualitative information that demonstrate that intended outputs of the UNDAF were to a large extent achieved.¹³⁵ The outputs were utilized to a large extent to contribute to the outcomes of the UNDAF.

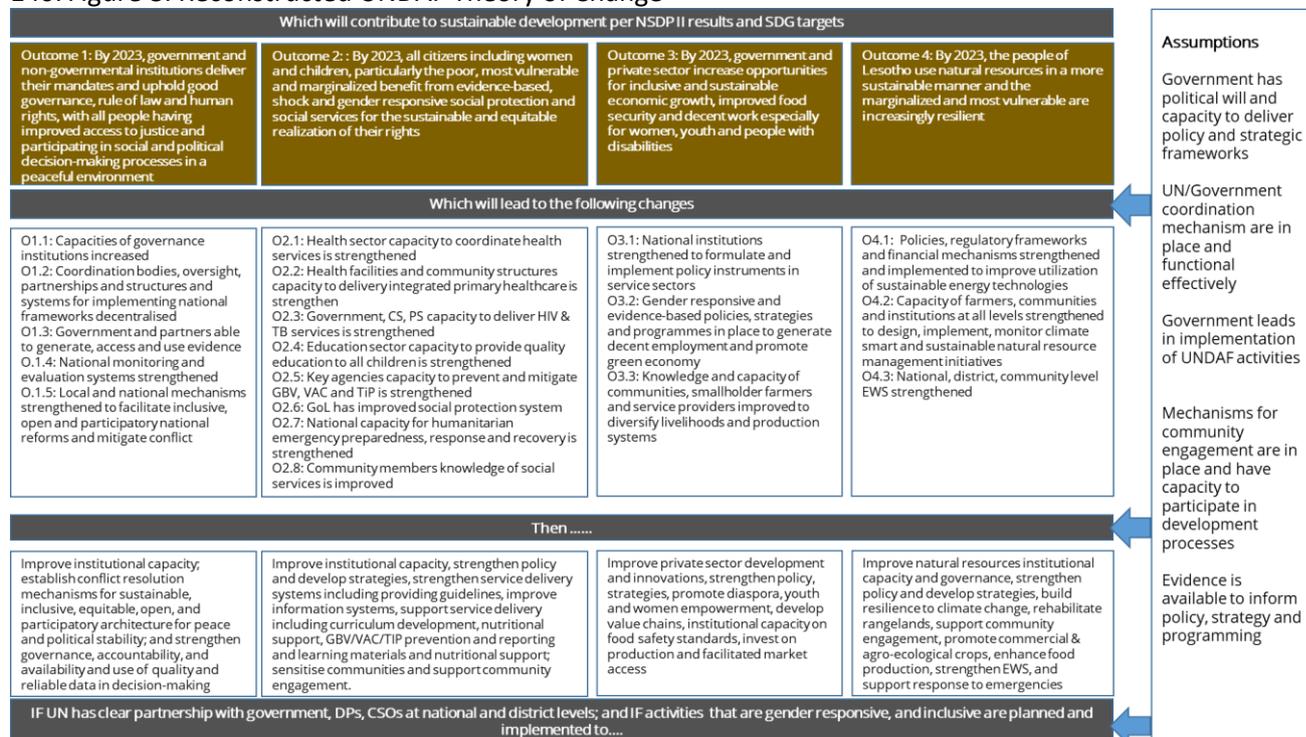
138. The TOC developed at the UNDAF design stage lists several assumptions for achievement of the UNDAF results. Based on assessment of the UNDAF implementation, 5 assumptions stand out as the most critical in ensuring achievement of UNDAF results. These assumptions were not systematically monitored but key informant responses from UN agencies and Government stakeholders demonstrate that: (i) where political will and government capacity were in place, UN support was better delivered and utilized and output results were realized. Political will was affected by frequent change of leadership government ministries, resulting from overall political instability. New leadership took time to understand the sector priorities and weakened governance systems. (ii) UN/Government coordination mechanisms functioned fairly well at sector level and this facilitate utilization of UN family support and achievement of output results. (iii) Government led the implementation of activities outlined in the joint workplans. To mitigate gaps in government-led implementation, government implemented activities "with" UN individual agencies (iv) Community engagement in the development process (under UN agencies' supported interventions) did work as well in some of the interventions. There are examples of good engagement with communities especially in sexual and reproductive health and rights interventions, national reforms dialogue, HIV response, community engagement in crime reporting, engagement of returnees, and smallholder farmers in climate smart agricultural and market access. However, there is an opportunity for UNCT (and government) to utilize the district councils and community leadership structures to deepen the engagement of communities in the development process. (iv) Availability of evidence to inform policy, strategy and programming was a key challenge that affected the TOC across all outcomes.

139. Overall, there was clear progression of the activities outlined in the joint workplans (as implemented through individual agencies) to output results and contribution to outcomes. What cannot be ascertained is the extent of the overall impact on people's lives. Anecdotal feedback from the district level interviews show that UN family's support has been so instrumental in supporting the communities at the districts especially within health, education, climate change adaptation, smart agriculture, nutrition and energy sectors. For instance, in Leribe and Mokhotlong districts, UN agencies are implementing projects which addresses food

¹³⁵ The outputs of UNDAF achieved were numerous to be listed here, but the ET confirms that key informants interviewed in government and UN confirmed the achievements attained with support by specific UN agencies.

security, climate smart agriculture and nutrition intervention under SADP-IFAD/WB supported programmes. Another example where UN agencies are supporting the community is Maputsoe HRS and Anti-Human Trafficking project, where the UN agencies are supporting the HIV/AIDS interventions together with the advocacy on Human trafficking programme, a joint programme spearheaded by the office of Leribe District Administrator, DHMT and Local Councils.

140. Figure 8: Reconstructed UNDAF Theory of Change



2.7 Sustainability

Findings 2.7a: The achievements resulting from the support provided by UN agencies are likely to be sustained if government ownership of UNDAF at highest level is enhanced, financing is improved and there is an enabling environment to utilize individual and institutional capacities strengthened

The evaluation of sustainability looked into the extent to which UNCT has established mechanisms for socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental sustainability; sustainability of results and strategies of UNDAF and the likelihood of capacity strengthened contributing to sustainability.

141. Sustainability of UNDAF results and strategies present a mixed picture. The alignment of the UNDAF with government priorities in NSDP II and with sectoral plans ensures that UN family is supporting interventions that are in government plans. This has a high likelihood of enhancing sustainability. However, the downside is that government faces financial constraints and institutional leadership challenges that affect implementation of its own programmes, irrespective of alignment of UNDAF to these programmes. Thus, sustainability of outcome achievements resulting from support by the UN family and other development partners is affected by government institutional and governance weaknesses.¹³⁶

142. Government ownership of the support provided by the UN family at the high policy level is a key sustainability. The JSC was put in place to ensure government ownership of UN family support to Lesotho and to provide a platform where UN family could raise the issue of sustainability in addition to other issues. However, the passive participation of government in this committee has to some extent weakened government ownership of UNDAF. However, the situation is different at sector level where individual UN agencies are collaborating with government ministries in implementing UN support. At this level, there is government ownership of UN support. This disconnect between low ownership of UNDAF at highest level of

¹³⁶ Key informant interviews with UN agencies, development partners and government key informants

government and high ownership of UN agencies specific support at sector/technical levels of government needs to be bridged.

143. The UN agencies support for political/ governance reform in the country is, in itself, a sustainability measure. Political stability is a key prerequisite for sustainable social-economic development. However, the reforms were not completed due to dissolution of parliament (for elections) before passing the omnibus bill that could have anchored the reforms in law. With a new government in place, this fruition of the reforms depends of a new political economy.

144. UN family support for capacity strengthening of government institutions at national and district levels and, to some extent at community level, is likely to sustainability of strategies supported by UN, with the assumption that staff whose capacity was strengthened remain in their positions¹³⁷ to provide services, institutions establish strong governance, planning and accountability systems to utilize capacity effectively and systems established continue to be maintained.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

The major conclusions arising from the key findings of this evaluation are as follows:

Conclusion 1: UNDAF design was responsive to needs and priorities of Lesotho as articulated in the NSDP II but it was not adequately responsive to gender dimensions and needs of marginalised and excluded communities

145. The UNDAF has clear alignment to the NSDP II priorities across all outcomes and to the SDGs. The interventions supported by UNDAF contributed to the goals of the NSDP II. However, responsiveness to gender and needs of marginalised communities was not adequate, to some extent, due to lack of deeper analysis of gender and marginalised populations at the time of UNDAF design and weaknesses in coordination of GEWE and human rights integration during UNDAF implementation.

Origin: Evaluation question 1.1 and 1.3

Evaluation criteria: Relevance

Associated recommendation: R1

Conclusion 2: Individual UN agencies complement and harmonise their programmes with the government sector plans and other development partners' support but UNDAF coordination structures played a lesser role in harmonising UN collective response with government and even less so with CSOs and private sector

146. At the individual UN agency level, there is clear complementarity and harmonisation of the UN support with government programmes in all sectors. All individual UN agencies work closely with relevant government ministries, first to support the ministries develop sector priorities and, second, to identify the specific sector priorities that they support. This ensures that individual UN agencies support interventions that are drawn from government plans. In other instances, government priorities are identified through sector working groups convened by ministries (involving all stakeholders) and UN supports priorities identified through this process. At UNDAF level, UN established the JSC as a mechanism where UN support to Lesotho was to be harmonised with the government development agenda at the highest government level. This mechanism did not work optimally and it is this level of UN harmonisation and coordination with government that presents a gap. In addition, there is no specific mechanism for UN agencies to harmonise and coordinate their support with civil society activities and to engage with private sector. Civil society are either involved in the sector working groups or they engage bilaterally with each individual UN agency as implementers. Private sector firms were engaged as service providers such delivery of foods to schools, transfer of mobile cash to beneficiaries, dissemination of education content through radio and TV stations and installation of solar energy in rural communities.

Origin: Evaluation question 2.1 and 2.2

¹³⁷ UN has built capacity of staff across sectors – health, education, home affairs, agriculture, natural resource management, governance and justice sector etc.

Evaluation criteria: Cohesion

Associated recommendation: R2

Conclusion 3: Results Based Management practices have not been adequately operationalised both in UN and Government largely due to gaps in data completeness and quality. A huge percentage (77%) of the UNDAF outcome indicators lacked data.

147. A huge proportion of the UNDAF outcome indicators lacked data while the UNDAF output indicators were not tracked. monitoring. The data gaps hindered effective operationalisation of results-based management practices both in UN and in government. Outcome 1 of the UNDAF prioritised the support to government to generate evidence but, despite this specific attention to data, Lesotho lacks data for most of the national outcome and SDG indicators and this has affected programming across several sectors. The quality of data available was also poor as most of the data is for the period prior to the start of the UNDAF and is not disaggregated according to key variables – age, sex, marginalised populations and districts among others. Consequently, the contribution of the UN family (through the UNDAF joint work plans) to the intended outcomes outlined in the results framework could not be effectively assessed. However, qualitative data shows that UN family addressed needs of targeted institutions and populations at national and district (community level).

Origin: Evaluation question 3.1, 3.2 and 6.1

Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness and orientation towards impact

Associated recommendation: R3

Conclusion 4: GEWE, Human Rights and Environmental Sustainability have been integrated into UNDAF to varying degrees but monitoring and coordination of these cross-cutting themes is lacking

148. GEWE, human rights and environmental sustainability were integrated into the UNDAF design and also in the joint work plans where a score is given on how well each joint activity integrates these themes. Individual agencies have also integrated GEWE and human rights (focusing on social inclusion or leaving no one behind) in their programming. However, there is no clear coordination of these cross-cutting issues at the level of UN as a family. There is no UNDAF structure which is explicitly responsible for tracking integration of these themes across all outcomes. A monitoring mechanism for these three themes is lacking.

Origin: Evaluation question 3.3

Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness

Associated recommendation: R4

Conclusion 5: UNDAF coordination structures to a large extent are fit for purpose and have functioned well with meetings held regularly and the structuring executing their mandates. The RC Office is adequately facilitating these structures and overall UNDAF coordination. However, there are limited synergies among UN agency programmes at implementation level, gaps in non-resident agencies coordination, limited joint programmes and joint resources mobilisation.

149. UNDAF structures (UNCT, ORG, PCT, OMT, UNCG, M&E) meet regularly and have to a large extent carried out their functions as expected. These structures have enabled individual UN agencies to plan and report jointly on UNDAF implementation. The RCO has fostered internal coordination by supporting these structures to function effectively and also bringing visibility to cross cutting issues. However, there are limited synergies among UN agency programmes at implementation level; there is a gap in the coordination of non-resident agencies; the joint steering committee has not worked as well as expected; and joint programmes and joint resource mobilisation have not been successful except in humanitarian emergency response

Origin: Evaluation question 3.4, 5.1 and 5.2

Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness and coordination

Associated recommendation: R5

Conclusion 6: The UNDAF was supported by a common budgetary framework and a resource mobilisation and partnership strategy but most resource mobilisation efforts have not been successful except for

humanitarian emergency response. In addition, the UNDAF coordination structures have facilitated internal coordination of UN agencies and contributed to improved efficiency.

150. A common budgetary framework for UNDAF was developed and completed with a resource mobilisation and partnership strategy aimed at closing the funding gap. However, the common budgetary framework was not well tracked for all the years; the UN (through RCO office, ORGS and PCT) focuses on resource mobilisation from traditional donor and by responding to request for proposals (although there is a shift to UNCT prioritised JPs from 2022). Most joint programmes developed were not funded. Lesotho also has a small donor base which limits the funding sources for UN programmes.

151. Regarding internal efficiency, the UNDAF coordination structures have facilitated improvement in internal efficiency through bringing individual agencies together to undertake joint planning and progress review mechanism done by ORG, the PCT addressing cross cutting issues; and the OMT which has facilitated utilisation of common services such as procurement, administrative, human resources and ICT.

Origin: Evaluation question 4.1 and 4.1

Evaluation criteria: Efficiency

Associated recommendation 6

Conclusion 7: Sustainability of UNDAF results depends on the assumption that Government ownership will be enhanced, financing will be improved and institutional capacity and accountability will be enhanced. These assumptions themselves can be realised if there is overall political will.

152. UN family has invested in the capacity strengthening, policy strengthening, strategy development, support for specific programmes across sectors, national governance reforms. The TOC analysis shows that the UN support has contributed to national outcomes. However, sustainability of any gains Lesotho has made in improving its SDGs depends on high level political will to improve institutional accountability, achieve efficiency in financing various sectors while also improving resource mobilisation.

Origin: Evaluation question 2.7

Evaluation criteria: Sustainability

Associated recommendation 7

Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations emerging from the conclusions above:

Recommendation 1: Complement the common country analysis with separate deeper analysis of gender and marginalised population to inform the next cooperation framework

Conduct a gender analysis covering all sectors prioritised by the UN in Lesotho to complement the CCA and to provide a basis for comprehensive integration of gender in the next United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF) including its results framework. Secondly, the scope of the CCA should be expanded to provide a disaggregated analysis of SDG indicators by marginalised populations and districts in all sectors. This analysis will inform the focus of the UNSDCF on the programming principle of leaving no one behind.

Priority: High

Target level: UN RCO

Based on conclusion 1

Recommendation 2: Strengthen mechanism for UN family engagement with government at the highest level of government and establish high level engagement with civil society and private sector

The UNCT should improve the functioning of the JSC through ensuring the participation of highest level of government in the development and validation of UNSDCF; and through conducting UNSDCF sector level reviews with government technical officers who then present sector reviews to the JSC. The JSC should consider expanding its members to include civil society and private sector representation. The outcome results groups should maintain the practice that was started in 2022 of involving relevant government ministries in their meetings. The outcome results groups should also consider including civil society and private sector representatives in their meetings.

Priority: High

Target level: UN RCO

Based on conclusion 2

Recommendation 3: In the next UNSDCF, the UNCT should include evidence generation as a cross cutting issues and develop a joint programme on evidence generation

In the next UNSDCF, the UN should consider including evidence generation as a cross cutting issues which all the Outcome Results Groups, the Programme Cohesion Team and Joint Steering Committee should address in the joint work plans and also during progress review meetings. Individual agencies should be requested to support data generation to address data gaps identified in the UNSDCF results framework and during the development of JWPs. The PCT and ORGs should work collaboratively to develop a joint programme on evidence generation in the next UNSDCF in order to mobilise financial resources to support the country to address data gaps.

Priority: High

Target level: UN RCO

Based on conclusion 3

Recommendation 4: Strengthen the coordination and monitoring of cross cutting themes (GEWE, human rights and environmental sustainability) through integrating them within the existing UNDAF coordination structures

The UNCT should consider reviewing the roles of the ORGs and PCT to include the coordination of the GEWE, human rights and environmental sustainability mainstreaming in all UNSCDF outcomes, joint work plans and programming. Consideration should also be given to the development of indicators with clear data sources and a reporting tool for monitoring the mainstreaming of these cross-cutting issues. The RCO office, in collaboration with the M&E Working Group should lead the analysis of the data reported to assess progress made in mainstreaming of these cross-cutting issues and provide evidence to respective coordinating structures for decision making and to improve programming.

Priority: High

*Target level: UN RCO
Based on conclusion 4*

Recommendation 5: In the next cooperation framework, (i) strengthen results-based management practices through establishing a joint programme to support government in evidence generation to address data gaps for national outcome indicators; and (iv) increase joint programmes to enhance synergy across programmes of individual UN agencies

In the next UNSDCF, the UNCT should consider developing at least 1 joint programme per outcome area to strengthen synergies among individual UN agencies programming and programme implementation. The UN should also consider including non-resident agencies in these joint programmes. Secondly, although the non-resident agencies are currently included in the joint work plans, they should be encouraged to report through the ORGs among other ORG activities. Thirdly, the ORGs, with RCO support, should utilize available data to establish results achieved periodically and make adjust or refocus JWPs to address areas lagging being in achievement of intended results.

*Priority: High
Target level: UN RCO
Based on conclusion 5*

Recommendation 6: In the next UNSDCF, update the current resource and partnership strategy; effectively monitor its implementation

The current resource mobilisation and partnership strategy should be updated to align it with the next UNSDCF and its implementation should be monitored. Given the limited donor base for Lesotho, the UNCT should establish innovative resource mobilisation strategies including development of joint programmes.

*Priority: High
Target level: UN RCO
Based on conclusion 6*

Recommendation 7: The RC should lead the UNCT in collaborating with other development partners to advocate for efficiency in financing of SDGs and improvement of institutional accountability while prioritising support for institutional capacity development

Sustainability of gains made through the UN family contribution to Lesotho's development as well as contribution by other development partners has in the past faced challenges including limited fiscal space and frequent change of governments which made the governance and policy environment unstable. The new government established following the October 2022 elections offers an opportunity for the UN, in collaboration with other development partners to advocate to government to sustain gains made towards SDG goals through prioritising financial resources allocation, improving institutional accountability and reviewing or formulating supportive policies.

*Priority: High
Target level: UN RCO
Based on conclusion 7*

Annex 1: Summary of Terms of Reference

Introduction

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Lesotho is a medium-term strategic planning document that was produced by the United Nations (UN) Country Team in Lesotho including Non-Resident Agencies as a collective UN vision and response to national development priorities during 2019-2023. The UNDAF was prepared in collaboration with the Government of Lesotho and other stakeholders, and informed by the Common Country Analysis, as well as innovative initiatives including foresight, scenario building, public engagement, and other processes. Building on the experiences gathered from the adoption of the Delivering as One modality in 2009, UNDAF, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core, contributed to the achievement of the National Strategic Development Plan II objectives and supported the Lesotho Government's aspiration to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Through UNDAF, the Government of Lesotho and the UN Country Team committed to working through partnerships and under the Delivering as One modality in the best interests of the people of Lesotho.¹³⁸

As a way of assessing its implementation performance, UNDAF 2019-2023 is to be evaluated in 2022 by an independent evaluation team, to draw critical insights to understand if the UN System in Lesotho is fit for purpose to deliver on the promise of the SDGs in the changing development landscape, to provide recommendations for improvement, building on current strengths and achievements; to bring out emerging needs to be addressed and recommendations for accelerated progress, to provide practical recommendations as basis for development of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) as well as the development of individual UN entity Country Programme documents. The results of this evaluation will be disseminated to the intended users such as UN agencies, Government of Lesotho, development partners, Civil Society, academia, Private Sector, implementing partners and other secondary users including the public through several platforms. The evaluation results will further provide strategic and programmatic lessons to promote accountability and visibility around the achievements and work of the UN in Lesotho.

Overview of UNDAF design

UNDAF Strategic priorities and Accompanying Outcome Results Areas are:

Pillar 1: Accountable Governance, Effective Institutions, Social Cohesion and Inclusion: Outcome 1.1: By 2023, Government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law, and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making in peaceful environment.

Pillar 2: Sustainable Human Capital Development: Outcome 2.1: By 2023, All citizens including women and children, particularly the poor, most vulnerable and marginalized benefit from evidence-based, shock and gender responsive social protection and social services for the sustainable and equitable realizations of their rights.

Pillar 3: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth for Poverty Reduction: Outcome 3.1: By 2023, Government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security, and decent work, especially for women, youth and People Living with Disability. Outcome 3.2: By 2023, The people of Lesotho have access to, and use, natural resources in a more sustainable manner, and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient.

Evaluation purpose and objectives

The UNDAF evaluation is to be conducted in 2022, which is the penultimate year of the current UNDAF implementation in Lesotho. The evaluation findings, lessons learnt, recommendations are expected to naturally inform the new Cooperation Framework to be effective from 2024.

The UNDAF evaluation has three primary purposes:

- I. Promote greater learning and operational improvement. The evaluation will provide a transparent and participatory platform for learning and dialogue with stakeholders regarding national progress,

¹³⁸ UNDAF, 2019-2023, pp 6.

challenges and opportunities, and best approaches in the context of the system-wide national response. The UNCT, host government and other UNDAF stakeholders will learn from the process of documenting good practices and lessons learned, which can then be shared with the Development Coordination Office (DCO) and used for the benefit of other countries.

- II. Support greater accountability of the UNCT to UNDAF stakeholders. By objectively providing evidence of results achieved within the framework of the UNDAF and assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions used, the evaluation will enable various stakeholders in the UNDAF process, including national counterparts and donors, to hold the UNCT and other parties accountable for fulfilling their roles and commitments.
- III. Deliver clear recommendations to support the next CF cycle and ensure accelerated progress towards the SDGs: The evaluation will provide important information for strengthening programming and results at the country level, specifically informing the planning and decision-making of the next UNSDCF programme cycle and improving UN coordination at the country level.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

1. To assess the contribution of Lesotho UN agencies (resident and non-resident) in the UNDAF framework to national development results and identify enabling factors as well as bottlenecks (learning).
2. To generate a set of clear, forward-looking, and actionable recommendations for improving the UNCT's contribution, especially for incorporation into the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. These recommendations should be logically linked to the findings and conclusions and draw upon lessons learned identified through the evaluation.
3. To gauge the efforts at increasing efficiency gains by reducing the cost of doing business through reducing multiple and extensive transaction costs incurred by a number of agencies carrying out their own programmes independently by combining their initiatives with other agencies
4. To conduct a thorough analysis of how the whole UN system works with itself and its partners, within a systemic approach, which can support the planning cycle of the upcoming UNSDCF.

Scope

The evaluation will cover the UNDAF from January 2019 to March 2022. The results to be assessed will be around UN joint programmes, inter-agency teams annual work plan achievement in terms of UNDAF Outcomes, Outputs and activities through Outcome Results Groups, other inter-agency teams and UN implementing partners yearly achievements. Cross-cutting issues and normative work of the UNCT (i.e., gender equality and empowerment of women, human rights, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability, global UN programming principles such as leaving no one behind (LNOB) will be included in the scope of the evaluation. The key outputs and programmes that contribute to the UNDAF outcomes, including the work of non-resident agencies in the country during the UNDAF programming cycle will be considered. The UNDAF evaluation will consider context and its emerging challenges, such as frequent change in the Government, droughts / floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic in both the UNDAF programming (e.g., the UNCT's responsiveness, adaptation and reprioritization) and its operations (e.g., methods for managing stakeholder participation and inclusiveness in the COVID-19 context).

The evaluation will also assess the contribution and accountability of the Government of Lesotho as a key partner to the UNDAF, alongside the UNCT. Findings and recommendations will be useful for the Government of Lesotho partners and the UN System to strengthen relevant coordination and implementation modalities for the next Cooperation Framework.

In principle, the UNDAF evaluation will not evaluate the individual programmes or activities of the UN agencies, but build on the available programme and project evaluations conducted by each agency. The evaluation should cover all UN bodies active in Lesotho, as well as national counterparts at the Government of Lesotho, any bilateral partners, and donors.

Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation of the UNDAF 2019-2023 will be guided by key evaluation criteria and aim to answer the below evaluation questions. However, the evaluators may adapt the evaluation criteria and questions, upon agreement between the evaluation managers and the evaluators as reflected in the inception report.

1. Relevance and adaptability (*is the UNDAF addressing the relevant national development needs and was its implementation flexible enough to satisfactorily accommodate and target emerging needs?*)

1. To what extent is the UNDAF 2019-2023 aligned and consistent with the needs, priorities, and policies of the Government of Lesotho (including national development goals and targets – NSDP II, national plans, strategies and frameworks, Agenda 2030, SDGs etc.).
2. How agile and responsive has the UNDAF been to emerging and unforeseen needs (including emergencies such as COVID-19 response, floods, droughts), while being collaborative in its programming with other development partner’s interventions in country?
3. To what extent did the UNDAF build on a sound gender analysis, in a way to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment and in inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups?

2. Coherence (*how well does the UNDAF fit?*)

1. To what extent has the UNDAF strengthened the position, credibility and reliability of the UN system as a partner for the government and other actors, and has served as an effective partnership vehicle?
2. To what extent has the UNDAF promoted and strengthened complementarity, harmonization and coordination with key development partners, CSOs, private sector, and government counterparts to maximize the achievement of results?
3. To what extent has the UN system promoted or supported policies that are consistent among each other and across sectors, given the multi-sectoral nature of social and economic development?

3. Effectiveness (*has the UNDAF achieved its objectives? is the UNDAF doing it right?*)

1. To what extent did UNDAF adopt results-based management practices in its design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the achievement of results?
2. How effective has the UNDAF been in achieving the results outlined in the results framework (including through new solutions/innovations that can be replicated or scaled up)? What have been the benefits for the people and institutions targeted by the interventions (including the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized population)?
3. To what extent has the UNDAF contributed to the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, supported human rights principles, and given full consideration to environmental sustainability?
4. To what extent has the UNDAF 2019-2023 contributed to achieving better synergies among programmes of UN agencies with an effect on progress towards the National Development priorities and in response to emergencies such a COVID-19?

4. Efficiency (*how well have resources been used?*)

1. Was the UNDAF supported by an integrated funding framework (Common Budgetary Framework) and by adequate funding instruments? What were the gaps, if any? Have resources been (re-)allocated efficiently based on UNDAF collective priorities and changing needs where necessary?
2. Has the UNDAF through UN coordination reduced transaction costs for partners through greater UN coherence and efficiency in implementation (both programmatic and operational)?
3. To what extent did UN manage to leverage on available financial resources from government and other development partners in support of national priorities to which UNDAF is aligned?

5. Coordination. (*how well has implementation of the UNDAF been coordinated?*)

1. To what extent has the RCO fostered internal coordination and contributed to the promotion of UN agencies’ synergies and interlinkages through UN-wide coordination mechanisms, keeping in mind the spirit of the UN reform and adhering to it?
2. To what extent the national government and the UN system successfully coordinated the implementation of joint work plans (through the UNDAF Outcome Results Groups) to maximize efficiency, coverage, reaching the most vulnerable (disabled, women, youth, etc.) while reducing overlaps?

3. To what extent has the RCO been able to coordinate UN responses to national and global emerging issues during the implementation of the UNDAF, including joint resource mobilization and implementation of joint programmes?

6. Orientation towards Impact (*what difference do UNDAF interventions make?*)

1. To what extent have UN system activities articulated in the UNDAF driven progress towards, or supported achievement of Theory of Change outcomes?

7. Sustainability (*will the benefits last?*)

1. What mechanisms, if any, has the UNDAF established to ensure socio-political, institutional, financial and environmental sustainability? Will the strategies/plans/tools be more widely replicated or adapted by the GOL?
2. To what extent results achieved and strategies used in the frame of the UNDAF are sustainable: i) as a contribution to national development and SDGs, and (ii) in terms of the added value of UNDAF to cooperation among individual UN agencies
3. To what extent has the UNDAF contributed to building national and local capacities and knowledge, and ensuring long-term gains?

Methodological approach

The evaluation approach will adhere to the United National Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards. The evaluation will be conducted at outcome level and the detailed evaluation design will be developed by the external evaluators to be contracted to conduct the valuation during the inception phase, in close consultation with the UN Evaluation Technical Team (ETT) and key evaluation stakeholders. The design should specify how data collection and analysis methods integrate gender considerations throughout the evaluation process. A number of UN agencies have also undertaken, and some completed, their country programme evaluations, studies or assessments, which will be valuable resources to review and use for this UNDAF evaluation. To avoid duplication, data collection for this evaluation will be carried out to cover any issues not already covered by UN agencies' individual evaluations / assessments.

The exercise is meant to provide a transparent and participatory platform for learning and dialogue with stakeholders regarding progress, challenges, and opportunities.

Contribution analysis (based on the Theory of Change): The evaluation will be conducted on the basis of a theoretical approach, which means that the evaluation methodology will be based on a careful analysis of the expected results, outputs and contextual factors (which may affect the implementation of the CF interventions) and their potential to achieve the desired effects. The analysis of the UNDAF's theory of change and the reconstruction of its intervention logic, if necessary, will therefore play a central role in the design of the evaluation, in the analysis of the data collected throughout the evaluation, in communicating results, and in developing relevant and practical conclusions and recommendations.

Data Collection methods: The UNDAF evaluation will draw on a variety of data from primary and secondary sources, including but not limited to the following:

- **Document review:** CCA, UNDAF and 2019-2022 Joint Work Plans; One UN UNDAF annual reports (2019-2021) and existing evaluation reports (notably those conducted by individual UN agencies, and those issued by national counterparts); strategy papers; national plans and policies; and related programme and project documents
- **Synthesis or meta-analysis** of previous evaluations and assessments carried out by UN agencies and/or development partners. In principle, the UNDAF evaluation should not conduct a full evaluation of individual programmes, projects or activities of UNCT members, but rather synthesize evidence from programme and project evaluations conducted by each agency.
- **Semi-structured interviews** with key stakeholders including, for example, government counterparts, civil society organizations, UNCT members and implementing partners
- **Field visits** with the guidance of Outcome Results Groups in at least 5 districts to showcase some of selected joint projects implement under UNDAF.
- Stakeholder surveys to wider stakeholders. Survey monkey template will be circulated through shared email addresses to the stakeholders with specific timelines. Questions will border around gaps and

strengths of UN relationships with stakeholders in terms of accountability and communication during the implementation of UNDAF.

- **Focus Group discussions** involving community groups and sub-groups of stakeholders such as youth, People Living with Disability, other vulnerable groups, stakeholder, decision-makers, partners be conducted to get the in-depth insights as to what has worked and not worked in terms of UNDAF implementation.
- **Other methods**, such as case studies and direct observation; mobile-based data collection tools; Big Data and data mining are encouraged to support triangulation

Data Quality Assurance and Approach

- Ensure that the information collected is valid, reliable and sufficient to meet the evaluation purposes, scope and approach and that the analysis is coherent and complete (and not speculative or opinion-based)
- Use a mixed method, employing the most appropriate qualitative and quantitative approaches, data types and methods of data analysis
- Ensure triangulation of the various data sources to ensure maximum validity and reliability of data
- Apply participatory and utilization-focused approach to involve key stakeholders and boost ownership of the evaluation
- Ensure a Leave No One Behind lens, particularly gender equality and human rights
- Systematically disaggregate data by sex and age and, to the extent possible, by geographical region, ethnicity, disability, migratory status and other contextually relevant markers of equity.

Management arrangements

The UNDAF 2019-2023 Evaluation will be a participatory and consultative process, involving the government and other implementing partners, along with UN agencies participating in its implementation. The Evaluation process is commissioned by the UN-RCO and will be jointly led by the UN-RCO and Ministry of Development Planning (MODP).

- **Evaluation Managers** – Provide direct supervision to the consultants and oversee the entire process and implementation of the evaluation, from its preparation to the dissemination and use of the final evaluation report, including the management of the evaluation budget. They will report regularly to the evaluation joint steering committee by organizing regular evaluation steering committee meetings. They also ensure consultations with all UN entities and identify possible synergies in terms of process and content.
- **Evaluation Technical Team (ETT)** – This group includes the UN inter-agency M&E Team and Government representatives – M&E Officers of Ministry of Development Planning, Bureau of Statistics and Office of the Prime Minister among others. The group will facilitate recruitment of the evaluation consultants, facilitate the consultants' activities and stakeholder engagements, and avail the necessary documents for review. The ETT will ensure that the evaluation abides by the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards, including gender equality and human rights-based evaluation processes. The ETT will ensure the development of a management response to UNDAF evaluation.
- **Joint National-UN Steering Committee** – This is the decision-making organ of the evaluation and will be chaired by the UN RC. The committee supports the evaluation process; guide the Evaluation consultants and facilitates access to stakeholders and information, as well as approves all deliverables for the UNDAF evaluation. It is a multi-stakeholder consultative group with members from the UN System, Government of Lesotho and other stakeholders.
- **The External Evaluation Team** – the team will be composed of a multidisciplinary and gender-balanced team of three evaluators (including an international team leader) with expertise in at least one of the three UNDAF strategic pillars. The Team Leader must have expertise in designing and undertaking programme evaluations. Each team member will focus on one of the three pillars, and hence will relevant expertise and experience in that area, including: governance, climate change/environmental sustainability, sustainable and inclusive social and economic development/growth.

The team will be expected to conduct the evaluation in adherence to the UNEG evaluation Norms and Standards, code of conduct and ethical guidelines for evaluations, CF evaluation guidelines and the guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations. The Team should be built with

due consideration to cultural and language balance, gender balance, collective knowledge of the national context in various areas of UN work, and a balanced team of both national as well as international experts.

There should be no conflict of interest such as recent or expected employment by UNCT members or implementing partners, private relationships with any UNCT members of staff or government counterparts or implementing partners; participation in the design, implementation or advising CF being evaluated, among others). Any potential conflict of interest should be declared by candidates during the application process.

- The United Nations Network for Evaluation in Eastern and Southern Africa (UNNEESA) – A regional interagency network aims to strengthen the evaluation function in the UN system in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, and promote coordination and collaboration among member agencies related to evaluation. Through the DCO/HQ, the UNDAF evaluation will receive technical and quality assurance support from UNNEESA on evaluation deliverables.

Deliverables

- Inception report
- Draft evaluation report
- Final evaluation report

Annex 2: List of documents reviewed

Agriculture Expenditure Review 2019

Bureau of Statistics, 2020, Covid-19 Socio-Economic Impact on Households Survey

Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) Economic Outlook Q1 2022

Government of Lesotho, Ministry of Social Development, 2019. A report of a National Disability Situational Analysis

Government of Lesotho, 2018. National Strategic Development Plan II 2018/2019 – 2022/2023

Ministry of Development Planning: National Strategic Development Plan II 2018-2023

Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2016. Population and housing census report

Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance, 2021. Lesotho Poverty Assessment report 2021

IOM, 2020, Rapid Assessment of the Livelihood Situation of Returnees and COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in Migration Affected Areas in Lesotho

IOM, 2020, Rapid Assessment on Best Practices and Challenges in Regard to Cross-Border Access to Health Services including Sexual and Reproductive Health

Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA) Review Report 2020

Lesotho Common Country Analysis Report 2020

Lesotho Common Country Analysis Report 2021

Lesotho Development Finance Assessment Report 2021

Lesotho UNICEF: Education Budget Brief 2020/21

Lesotho Bureau of Statistic Report 2020

Lesotho Development Finance Assessment Report 2021

Lesotho Biennial Update Report 2021

Lesotho UN Development Assistance Programme 2013 – 2017

Pryor, W., et al. (2018). The case for investment in accessible and inclusive WASH. New York: UNICEF

UN Lesotho Country results Report 2019

UN Lesotho Country results Report 2020

UN Lesotho Country results Report 2021

Lesotho UNICEF: Education Budget Brief 2020/21

Ministry of Finance, 2021, Budget Estimates for The Financial Year 2021/2022

Sachs et al, 2021, The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable Development Report 2021

United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2019-2023

UNDAF coordination structures meetings minutes – JSC, UNCT, ORGs, OMT, UNCG, PCT

UNCTAD World Investment Report 2019

UNDP, 2020. The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene, Lesotho

UNICEF, 2018. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

US Department of State, 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Lesotho

World Bank indicator data for Lesotho: Accessed on 11 August 2022
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=LS>

World Bank, 2019, Lesotho Poverty Assessment: Progress and Challenges in Reducing Poverty

World Bank Poverty & Equity and Macroeconomic, Trade and Investment Global Practices 2021. Lesotho Biennial Update Report 2021

Annex 3: List of people interviewed

The people interviewed are categorized by UNDAF outcome area and coordination in the table below

Type of stakeholder	Organisation	Full Name	Position	O1	O2	O3	O4	Coordination
UN	RCO	Vimbainashe Prisca Mukota	Head of RCO					X
UN	RCO	Potso Sofonia	Development Coordination Officer					X
UN	RCO	Reitumetse Russell	Associate Development Coordinator, Programme Communications & Advocacy					X
UN	RCO		Human rights Coordinator					X
Joint Steering Committee (JSC)	Focal Person	Malefu Khanyapa	PS Development Planning					X
ORG 1	UNDP	Betty Wabunoha	Country Representative	X				
ORG 3	IOM	NISHIMURA Eriko	Country Representative			X		
UN SDG Group	UNDP	Motulu Molapo	INFF Project Officer					X
ORG 2	WHO	BANDA, Richard	Country Representative		X			
M&E Working Group	UNFPA	Motselisi Molorane-Moeno	Assistant Representative					X
ORG 4	WFP	Aurore RUSIGA	Country Director				X	
PCT	UNICEF	Kimanzi Muthengi	Deputy Representative					X
OMT	WFP	Brigitte NYIRASAFALI and Aurore Rusinga	Finance & Admin Officer					X
UN Youth Group	UNFPA	Maseretse Ratia	NPO-BCC/Adolescent					X
JUNTA	UNAIDS	Pepukai Chikukwa	Country Director					X
UN	UNDP	Thabo Mosueunyane	Governance Specialist				X	
UN	UNICEF	Celine Sieu	Research & Evaluation Specialist					X
UN	IOM	Masoai Dennis	National Monitoring,					X

			Reporting and Evaluation Officer					
UN	UNDP	Charles Mukunja	LNDSP Project Manager	X				
UN	UNODC	Banele Kunene	(TIP and SoM)	X				
UN	OHCHR	Michael Ngabirano	Senior Human Rights Advisor	X				
UN	UNDP	Ephrem Gebre	Peace and Development Advisor	X				
UN	UNFPA	Mats'eliso Khesa	GBV & Human Rights Programme Officer	X	X			
UN	UNDP	Nessie Golakai	Deputy Resident Representative	X				
Government	Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)	Commissioner Mohlolo Lerotholi	ORG 1 Focal Person	X				
Government	Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)	Ms Ntatisi Thabane	Refugees and migration coordinator	X				
Government	Ministry of Labour (IOM, ILO)	Mpinane Masupha, Ms.Mamohale Matsoso	Principal Migrants Liaison Officer, Labour Commissioner	X				
Government	Bureau of Statistics	Melehloa Molato	Director	X				
Government	Ministry of Law, Judiciary and Correctional Services	Polo Chabane		X				
Government	National Reform Transitional Office	Khatibe	NRA Deputy CEO	X				
Civil Society	Migrants Workers Association	Lerato Nkhetse	Executive Director	X				
UN	UNFPA	Marc Derveeuw	Country Representative		X			
UN	WHO	Dr. Zeblo Mesfin	WHO HSS Advisor		X			
UN	UNICEF	Renato Pinto	Chief of Health		X			
UN	UNICEF	Umasree Polepeddi	Chief Education		X			

UN	UNICEF	Marisa Foraci	Chief of Social Policy		X			
Government	Ministry of Education and Training	Thuto Mokhehle-Ntsekhe	Chief Education Officer - Primary		X			
Government	Ministry of Education and Training	Mabakubung Bertha Seutloali	Chief Education Officer - Secondary		X			
Government	Ministry of Education and Training	Sekhotseng Molapo	Director - National Curriculum Development Center		X			
Government	Ministry of Education and Training	Monaheng Mohale	Director - Lesotho Distance Teaching Center		X			
Government	Ministry of Education and Training	Matsepiso Ntsaba	ECCD Manager		X			
Government	Ministry of Health	Palesa Mashoai	Director Planning		X			
Civil Society	PSI	Palesa Malebo (delegated to Mamorapeli Putsoane - Programme Director	Country Representative		X			
Civil Society	World Vision Lesotho	Maseisa Ntlama)	Programmes Manager		X			
Civil Society	Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)	Esther Mandara, Tankiso Phori	Country Director		X			
Civil Society	Mothers2Mothers	Mpolokeng Mohloai	Country Director		X			
Development Partner	PEPFAR	Christine Hooyman	Deputy PEPFAR Coordinator		X			
Development Partner	World Bank	Yoichiro Ishihara	Country Representative		X	X		
Development Partner	European Union	Mario Varrenti	Head of Cooperation	X	X		X	
UN	WFP	Masahiro Matsumoto	ORG 3 Focal Person			X		
UN	UN	WFP	Likeleli Phoolo			X		
UN	UN	WFP	Makhauta Makhetha			X		
UN	UNDP	Mabulara Tsuene	ORG 3 Focal Person			X		

UN	FAO	Mohlophehi Maope	Agricultural Officer			X		
UN	FAO	Bakang Mantutle	Senior Agronomist			X		
Government	Ministry of Development Planning	Malefu Kanyapa	Director of M&E Department			X		
Government	Ministry Agriculture Food and Security	Mabafokeng Mantutle	Director of Crops			X		
Government	Ministry of Small Business Development and Cooperatives	William Sole	Director Small Business			X		
Government	Min. of Communications Science and Technology	Kori Lenyatsa	Chief Economic Planner			X		
Civil Society	Rise	Daniela Gusman	Executive Director			X		
UN	UNDP	Limomane Peshoane	ORG 4 focal person				X	
UN	UNCDF	Mabohlokoa Tau	UNCDF				X	
UN	FAO	Rethabile Pelane	M&E Officer				X	
UN	FAO	Mokitinyane Nthimo	FAO-Assistant Representative				X	
Civil Society	CRS	Kris Ozar	Country Representative				X	
Total¹³⁹				15	20	13	8	13

Annex 4: Number of interviews under each of the mapped stakeholders

Stakeholder	Interview approach			Comments on identification approach
	Key informant interview	In-depth interview	Focus group discussion	
UNCT and UN Family	11	27		All proposed heads of Agencies and senior officials representing of resident and non-resident UN Agencies were selected on the basis of their first-hand information on key aspects of

¹³⁹ Total number of individual key informants interviewed were 65 as indicated in paragraph 43. The total reflected in this table is 69 because some of the key informants covered more than one outcome areas. There the difference is accounted for by double counting.

				UNDAF and as heads of UNDAF coordination structures
Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies		17		21 Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies are selected
Districts		5	3	District officials were selected on the basis of their involvement in implementing UNDAF Joint Work Plans. FGDs were conducted in three districts with participants spread across the four pillars of UNDAF
Bilateral/Multi-lateral partners		3		3 bilateral and multilateral institutions selected based on funding scale, strategic role and collaboration with individual UN agencies
Non-Governmental Organization/Civil Society Organization		7		The CSO/NGOs are selected on the basis of their strategic role in the implementation of UNDAF Joint Work Plans
Online survey		36		A representative sample of stakeholders drawn from the UN, Government, NGOs and Development partners was selected to supplement data obtained through qualitative data collection methods
<i>Total interviews</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>3</i>	