



System-wide evaluation on progress towards a new generation of United Nations Country Teams

Headlines

The vision for a 'new generation of UNCTs' remains highly relevant. Many of the key foundations have been established. However, there remains a significant gap between the strategic intent and the operational realities

Notable improvements in joint analysis (CCAs), reinvigorated RC system, and participation of non-resident entities in UNCTs.

Examples of behaviours and approaches which match the ambitions and spirit of the reforms in terms of joint programming and collaboration.

The Cooperation Framework has not yet become the 'most important instrument for the planning and implementation of UN development activities in each country'.

UNCTs have not yet significantly 're-configured' in line with Cooperation Framework priorities.

The UN development offer remains broadly aligned with and relevant to national priorities, but these central elements of the repositioning have not yet resulted in the fundamental shift toward a collective offer that provides optimal contribution to SDG progress

Findings

Alignment/derivation

- UNCT entity country programmes broadly 'aligned' with Cooperation Frameworks.
- Little evidence that the substance of those programmes is significantly affected by the Cooperation Framework and its preparation process.
- 'Derivation' compliance points and timeframes can cause friction.

UNCT configuration

- Administrative exercises conducted at country-level disconnected from entity decision points on country level resourcing.
- Expanded engagement of non-resident entities in UNCTs.
- Have not contributed to more tailored, needs-based country presence to deliver Cooperation Frameworks.

CF implementation

- Weak collective UNCT ownership and use of the tools used to support implementation (including joint workplans, joint resource mobilization strategies and coordination structures).
- Limits the potential to deliver a more prioritised, strategic and coherent set of interventions in response to Cooperation Framework priorities.

Key factors – specific mechanisms and reform support systems

Cooperation Framework guidance and the MAF



Challenges relating to the Cooperation Guidance and the MAF in terms of clarity on key issues and their practical application.

Headquarters and regional support systems



Focused on design phase of Cooperation Framework cycles, with less attention to external and horizontal engagement to facilitate coherent implementation.



RC – entity regional director engagement highlighted as a gap.

Resident Coordinator and UNCT member leadership



Strengthened alignment and collaboration attributed to the leadership skills of UNCT members and Resident Coordinators rather than the tools and processes to support Cooperation Framework implementation.

HQ and regional leadership



UNSDG entity buy-in to the reforms is weaker at HQ and regional levels.



Practice varies, but overall, UNSDG entities have not fully integrated the necessary accountabilities and incentives within their own structures.

Broader enabling environment & systemic factors

Competition and transparency within UNCTs



Dynamics connected to project-based business models, donor behaviour and the primacy of entity-specific accountabilities are major impediments to the development of joint strategies and joint programmes and the leveraging of resources and expertise from across the UN system.

National engagement in Cooperation Framework cycles



The extent to which governments engage actively in the governance and coordination is a key driver of greater alignment and more coherent implementation of UNSDG entity activities at country level. The degree of engagement varies significantly by country and context.

Governing bodies



Existing UNDS governance arrangements are considered by many stakeholders to impede the extent to which UNSDG entities can fully integrate the reforms. UNSDG entity governing bodies tend to prioritise entity-specific mandates/visibility/results-attribution over system-wide coherence and performance.

Funding



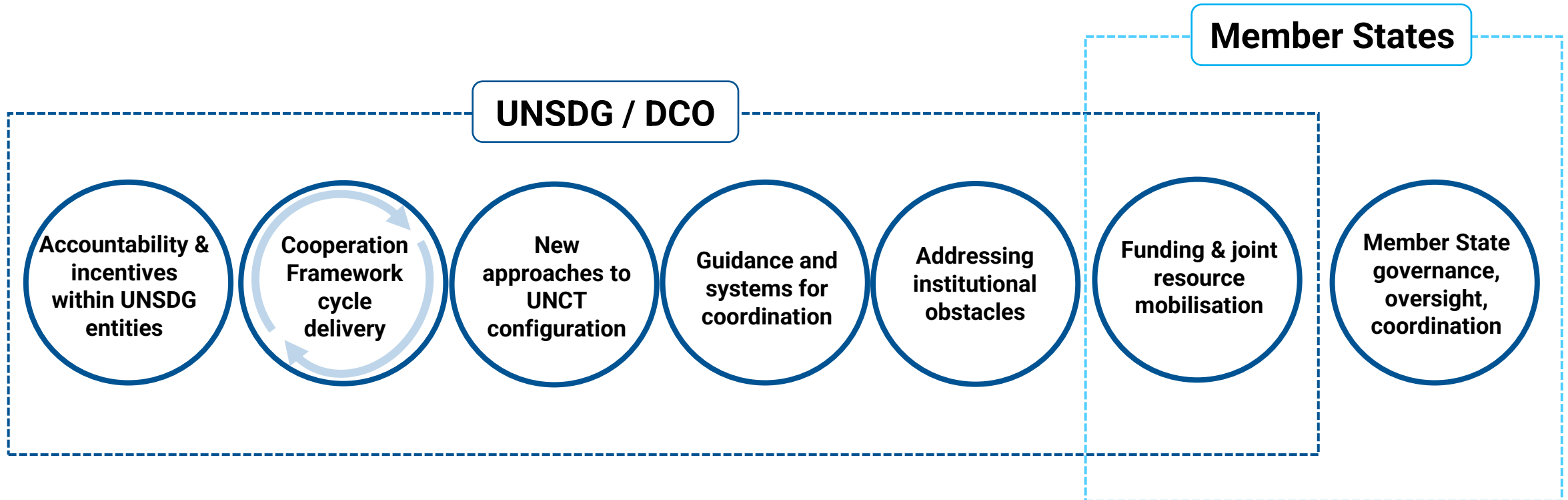
Funding pressures and donor approaches at country level are an impediment. The Funding Compact and UNDS repositioning are not central considerations for donor representatives.



Funding Compact implementation has been limited – earmarking continues to fragment efforts and undermine UNCT coherence.

Conclusions: areas for attention

The evaluation identifies 7 key areas in which changes, which need to be addressed holistically by a range of UNDS stakeholders, could better realise the vision for a new generation of UN country teams that are more coherent, effective, efficient, and accountable to contribute to SDG progress at country level





United Nations
Sustainable Development Group
System-Wide Evaluation Office

**Pre-publication summary of evaluation findings
and conclusions available at:**

www.un.org/system-wide-evaluation-office/

