

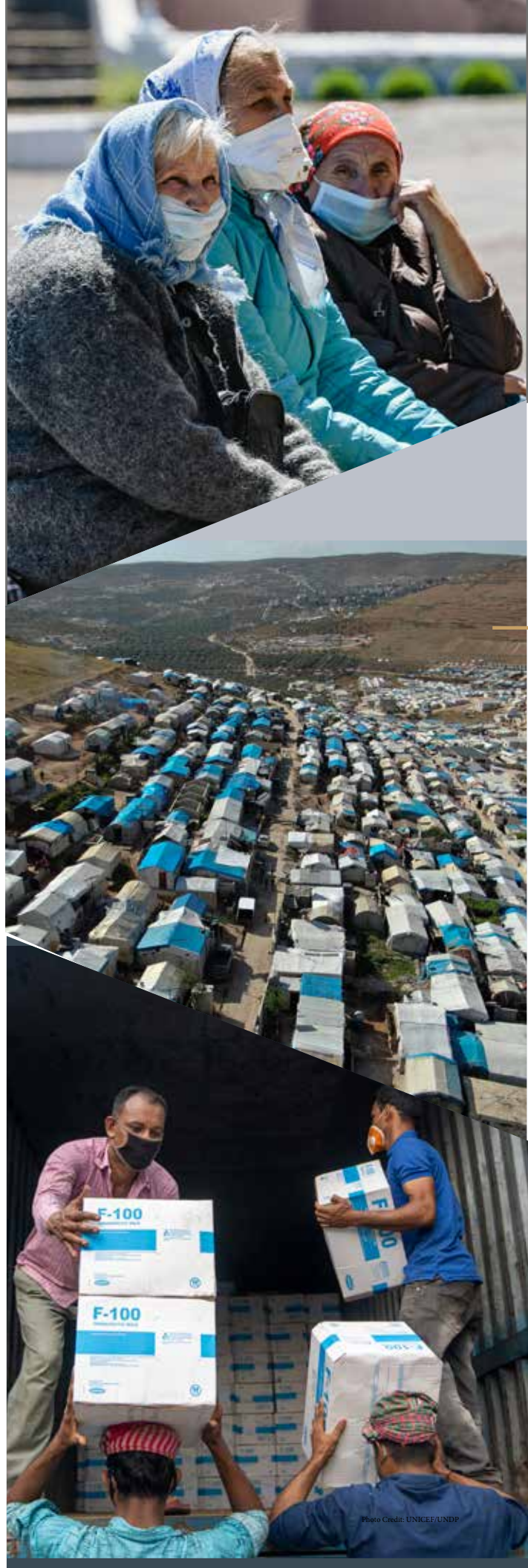
Portfolio of Joint Programmes on Integrated Social Protection and Leaving No One Behind

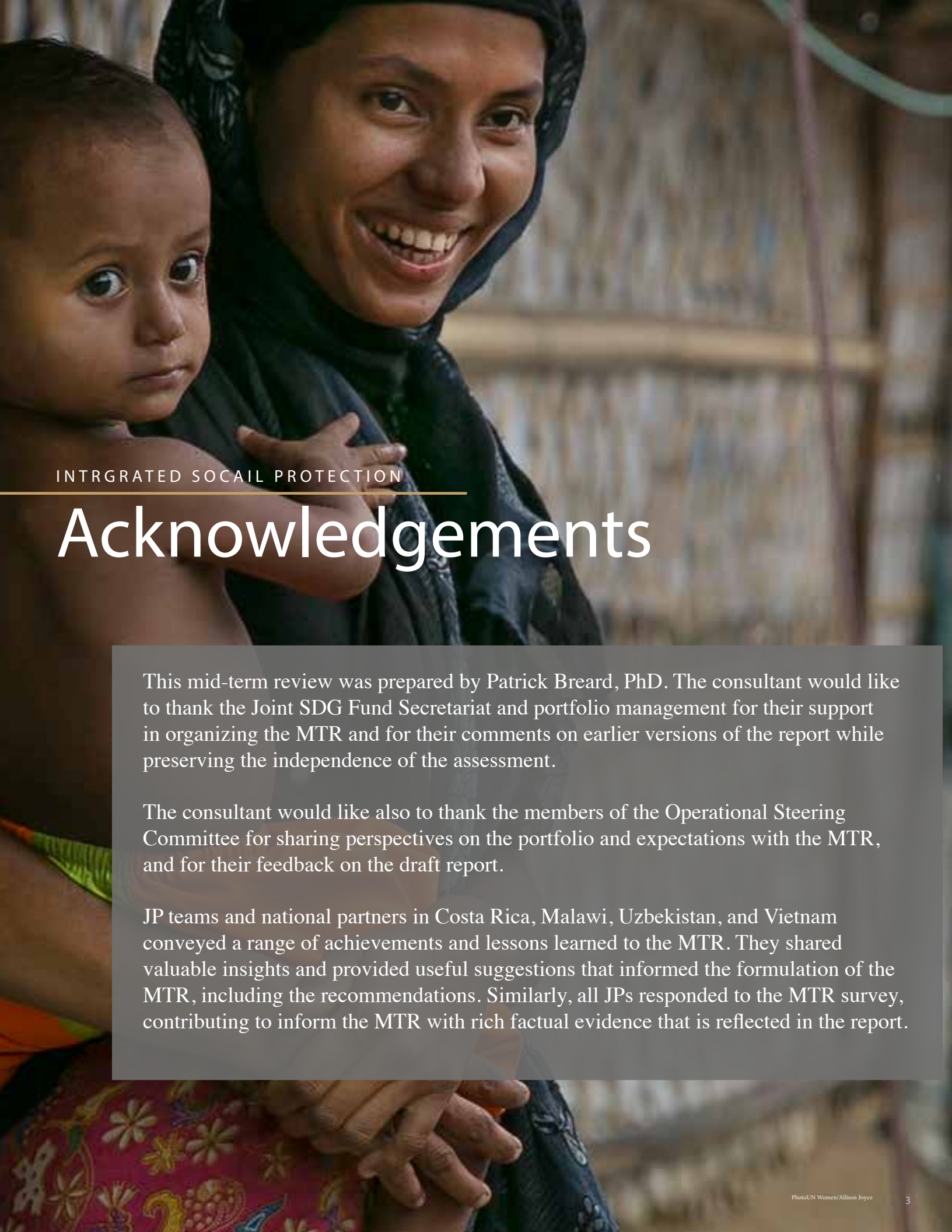
Portfolio Mid-Term Review



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A photograph of a woman wearing a black headscarf, smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a young child, who is looking off to the side with a neutral expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a wooden structure.

INTRGRATED SOCAIL PROTECTION

Acknowledgements

This mid-term review was prepared by Patrick Breard, PhD. The consultant would like to thank the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat and portfolio management for their support in organizing the MTR and for their comments on earlier versions of the report while preserving the independence of the assessment.

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JP teams and national partners in Costa Rica, Malawi, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam conveyed a range of achievements and lessons learned to the MTR. They shared valuable insights and provided useful suggestions that informed the formulation of the MTR, including the recommendations. Similarly, all JPs responded to the MTR survey, contributing to inform the MTR with rich factual evidence that is reflected in the report.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APR	Annual Progress Report
ASP	Adaptive Social Protection
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCO	Development Coordination Office
DPMO	Deputy Prime Minister Office
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FY	Fiscal Year
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
JP	Joint Programme
JSGDF	Joint SDG Fund
LDC	Least Developed Country
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MCO	Multi-country Office
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MPTF-O	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
MTR	Mid-term Review
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSC	Operational Steering Committee
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PLWD	Persons Living with Disability
PM	Prime Minister
PRODOC	Programme Document
PUNO	Participating UN Organization
PwD	Person with Disability
RC	Resident Coordinator
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SERP	Socio-Economic Response Plan
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
SP	Social Protection
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USD	US Dollar
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme



Executive Summary

1. INTRODUCTION

This summary presents the main objectives and findings of the mid-term review (MTR) of the Joint SDG Fund's portfolio on Integrated Social Protection and Leaving No One Behind (LNOB). This summary also conveys MTR conclusions and highlights possible areas of improvement for portfolio management.

2. CONTEXT

The **Joint SDG Fund** was launched in 2018 to catalyze acceleration of the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its core mandate is to invest in solutions that produce transformative results that catalyze change across systems, sectors, and industries.

The Joint SDG Fund operates through joint programmes (JPs) that provide the mechanism for transformative solutions implemented by governments and national stakeholders and supported by the UN Country Team led by Resident Coordinators (RCs). Strategic direction for the Fund is provided by the Strategic Advisory Group chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General as the chair of UN Sustainable Development Group. The Fund is managed by the Operational Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of 5 UN entities, and with the support from the Secretariat of the Fund. The UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) hosts the Fund and provides for the alignment with the broader UN Development System reforms. The Administrative Agent of the Fund, in charge of financial management, is the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O).

In March 2019, the Joint SDG Fund launched its first global **Call for Concept Notes** to support integrated policy for SDG acceleration focusing on Social Protection and Leave No One Behind (LNOB), particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized – children, adolescents, people living with disabilities, minorities, and the elderly. Applications were received from 114 countries and the top 35 proposals were selected based on comprehensive technical review criteria, leading to **development of 35 joint programmes** in 39 countries with the total funding of USD 102 million over 2 years (USD 70 million of Fund's contribution and USD 32 million of co-funding). JPs were finalized and approved in 2019 and launched in 2020. All joint programmes are expected to deliver results at scale by 31 January 2022, while improving the coherence of UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and facilitating acceleration of SDG progress.

3. MTR SCOPE AND APPROACH

The main purpose of the mid-term review was to look at the first year of the portfolio implementation to identify good practices and lessons learned and influence implementation in the second year. The MTR conclusions and recommendations therefore focus on

the actions that the Joint SDG Fund could consider right away to improve the delivery and achievements of the portfolio before it is closed in 2022. Conclusions and recommendations that would be relevant over the medium and/or long term were addressed partially as they will be likely covered during the final evaluations of JPs.

The mid-term review was initiated end of January and completed in April 2021. Data collection involved a desk review of secondary resources including JPs PRODOCs, JPs Annual Progress Reports for 2020, sample of strategic documents and communication content produced by JPs; interviews and focus groups with 55 informants; and analysis of the MTR questionnaire from 35 JPs.

4. FINDINGS

The average **financial delivery** of the portfolio for the first year of implementation was **45.68%**. Financial delivery tends to be lower on average for JPs implemented in the Africa region, and for JPs implemented in LDCs, SIDS, or conflict-affected contexts. The average rate of **committed funding** over the first year was **71.07%**. The Joint SDG Fund has provided 20 JPs with a second tranche of funding. Overall, the implementation progress of the portfolio is considered on track or satisfactory, with **85%** of the JPs that have achieved most of their **annual targets**.

Several challenges or constraints that JPs confronted in 2020, such as additional delays due to lock-down measures, lack of mobilization from national partners, or lack of fiscal space for installing social protection policies, were COVID-induced and did affect implementation. Risks remain significant over the coming year, with close to **70%** of the JPs indicating that conditions of implementation could be affected by the **COVID-19 crisis** in 2021.

Reporting on policy achievements shows that over the first year, **30 JPs have contributed to development or adaption of strategies, policies or legal frameworks that lead to improving social protection**. Close to 20 JPs have conducted needs assessments, inventories, and mapping of social protection systems either at national or subnational levels to inform policy making. Policies targeting women and children have been more frequently developed than for youth and PwDs. Policy related innovations identified by the MTR include promoting social protection to all political parties prior to an election to ensure smoother transition and swifter uptake of the JP.

JPs have also contributed to developing the **individual capacities** of country partners and stakeholders through learning events and training activities. Some of the JPs refer having trained large number of participants (for instance 8.000 in Cambodia). One JP has engaged country partners and leading national universities

in developing a curriculum on social work. At global level, the portfolio has organized a dozen of learning events and setup three communities of practice. Demand from JPs for learning, knowledge sharing, and south-south cooperation remains high.

As for the development of **organizational capacities**, close to 20 JPs reported being involved in the design, piloting, establishment, or improvement of a registration system as an instrument that improves targeting and accuracy of social protection as well as transparency of transfers, therefore reducing risks of corruption. Many ICT or process related innovations have been shared by JPs, including in relation to E-payments solution, E-registration, One-Stop Centre, or Standard Operating Procedures for governments to respond to crisis to ensure resilience and address vulnerable populations.

Several JPs reported having carried out a fiscal space analysis in 2020 and close to a dozen indicate this being in the pipeline for 2021. A few JPs worked on identifying innovative financial mechanisms for social protection. According to the MTR survey, **13 JPs contributed in 2020 to increase the amount of national spending for social protection**. A significant proportion of these achievements relate to national COVID-19 responses with unclear sustainability prospects.

Many JPs have successfully contributed to setup **cross-ministerial or cross-divisional governance structures** allowing more effective coordination between sectors. Furthermore, there is frequent involvement of women representative organizations in JPs, but more rarely so for youth organizations. Partnerships were also referred improved with IFIs (e.g. WB, ADB, IADB) and multi-lateral/bilateral organizations. However, outcomes on resource mobilization are unclear.

About two third of the JPs' reported for the first-year high sectoral contributions on food security/nutrition, and healthcare, reflecting involvement in the COVID response. Furthermore, **16 SPs reported improvements in terms of number of persons that have become legally covered in 2020**, with several JPs reporting high numbers of additional social protection beneficiaries (e.g. more than 47 million people in Mexico, 19 million in South Africa, and 14 million in Vietnam).

In 31 countries, JPs reported a contribution to **accelerating SDGs** in terms of scope, and 25 in terms of scale. However, there is a lack of clarity overall in the UN system on what SDG acceleration represents, which is then reflected in this portfolio. Furthermore, the Theory of Change of the JPs and results framework do not necessarily refer to relevant SDG targets (as baseline and JP indicators). Out of 11 SDGs originally targeted across the portfolio, JPs indicated for 2020 a contribution to 10 SDGs. The global scope of the portfolio appears to find a strong echo in the SDG target 1.3, and to some extent in SDG 5 and 10. Reporting evidence and MTR informants indicated also that shock responsiveness was another frequent attribute of the JPs.

JPs were found benefiting highly from the involvement of the **UN Resident Coordinators**, who elevate the social protection agenda, contribute to effective UN cross-sectoral social protection work, and help to reach national senior officials (PM/ministers/finance ministers). This brings efficiency and effectiveness (joint work planning, etc.), synergies and spillover effects, but room remains for increased joint programming. The percentage of joint funds in countries' UN budget is still limited and primarily sectoral.

The MTR did not aim to look into the final results, but after the first year, there is evidence of sustainable outcomes, primarily when policies, laws, and decrees were passed to institutionalize improved social protection coverage or comprehensiveness.

5. CONCLUSION

Overall, the MTR found that JPs on social protection and LNOB were **highly relevant**. The portfolio has contributed to install cross-sectoral approaches that help to address gaps in national social protection systems. JPs provide the RCs with an instrument to leverage the comparative advantages of participating agencies. RCs facilitate the establishment of a dialogue at the highest level with national partners, which is relevant for committing national institutions to cross-sectoral collaboration.

Progress on portfolio **implementation is satisfactory**, but many JPs reported considering the need for a no-cost extension, in part due to the implementation challenges induced by the COVID crisis. The MTR found significant evidence of policy achievements and contribution to capacity development (institutional, organizational, individual), and some evidence of increased fiscal space for SP despite new challenges caused by the COVID crisis.

The MTR found an effective contribution of the portfolio to **UN reform**, within the scope of the JPs and with some spillover effects sometimes. However, most UN resources at national level continue to be sector based and room remains to expand joint programming.

In terms of SP beneficiaries, JPs dedicated a strong and effective focus on **gender** responsive policies and on children. Despite some success stories, contribution to supporting SP for youth and PwDs has been more limited than expected.

On the basis of the above finding and conclusions, the MTR formulated the following main recommendations for portfolio management:

A. Support the JPs in transitioning and sustaining their activities.

- Develop a common approach or strategy to manage the upcoming requests for no-cost extensions.
- Invite JPs to reflect on and draft a sustainability plan as part of their Q3 reporting.

C. Consider providing stronger support to the technical agenda on SP and LNOB.

- Consider strengthening relationships with international initiatives (USP2030, SPIARC-b) to promote the development of analytical work on cross-sectoral SP informed by the portfolio, including on inter-agency strategic frameworks.
- Consider arranging for one of the 5 agencies from OSC to produce a meta-synthesis of the 35 JP evaluations to be conducted in 2022.
- Continue facilitating the communities of practice and organizing “meet-up” events between JPs with a focus on JPs’ knowledge needs and portfolio priorities.
- Consider organizing additional technical learning events with a focus on good practices and lessons learned over areas where JPs’ progress could be accelerated (e.g. private sector engagement, PwDs, cross-sectoral SP in LDCs/SIDS/conflict affected countries, social bonds, etc.).

B. Consider providing support to the JPs in their partnerships and resource mobilization efforts.

- Organize global events that promote specific JPs (or groups of) to facilitate relationships and matchmaking with donors.
- Consider furthering global and regional collaboration and partnerships with the IFIs, such as the World Bank and regional banks.
- Continue outreach and promotion activities including by developing communication resources on SP and LNOB that target Ministries of Finance.
- Organize a final global online conference that promotes SP and LNOB and provides stronger visibility to countries’ achievements and remaining gaps and priorities.

D. Finalize the portfolio’s theory of change.

- Consider aligning the portfolio’s results framework and monitoring with the finalized TOC, including by adding an indicator that reflects the support to the UN reform and type of contribution or outcome expected from the JPs (e.g. use or adapt the indicator from the Fund’s global Results framework).
- Improve progress monitoring with a focus on a limited number of results to inform decision-making and facilitate the identification of JPs or areas that may benefit from global attention.



E. Complement or adapt UN-wide guidelines on joint programmes.

- Consider developing guidelines on the selection of PUNOs.
- Include an optional section on south-south cooperation in the PRODOC template.

F. Consider contributing to global thought-leadership and knowledge management.

- Compile data and develop more in-depth analysis around SDG acceleration.
- Develop and provide the JPs with specific guidance (e.g. content submission map) on the types of information resources/outputs to be globally shared.
- Facilitate the establishment of a global content repository for JPs' information resources/outputs (e.g. training materials, assessments, fiscal space analyses, normative products, etc.) to facilitate mutual learning and reuse.
- Compile the list of consultants engaged by JPs to create a roster of top international SP experts.
- Compile evidence and share success stories of UN reform.

G. Consider strengthening JP teams' capacities during the initial stages of the Joint SDG Fund's next portfolios.

- For future calls, consider organizing induction trainings for new JPs (e.g. at regional level) on upcoming cross-sectoral thematic areas, joint UN programming, team building, inter-agency monitoring and reporting.



1. INTRODUCTION

The Joint SDG Fund was launched in 2018 to catalyze acceleration of the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its core mandate is to invest in solutions that produce transformative results that catalyze change across systems, sectors, and industries. The functions of the Joint SDG Fund¹ are to (i) Identify and activate SDG “accelerators”; (ii) Reinforce the SDG financing architecture and ecosystem; and (iii) Catalyze strategic programming and investments.

The Joint SDG Fund operates through joint programmes (JPs) that provide the mechanism for transformative solutions implemented by governments and national stakeholders and supported by the UN Country Team led by Resident Coordinators (RCs). Strategic direction for the Fund is provided by the Strategic Advisory Group chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General as the chair of UN Sustainable Development Group. The Fund is managed by the Operational Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of 5 UN entities, and with the support from the Secretariat of the Fund. The UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) hosts the Fund and provides for the alignment with the broader UN Development System reforms. The Administrative Agent of the Fund, in charge of financial management, is the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O).

In March 2019, the Joint SDG Fund launched its first global Call for Concept Notes to support integrated policy for SDG acceleration focusing on [Social Protection and Leave No One Behind \(LNOB\)](#), particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized – children, adolescents, people living with disabilities, minorities, and the elderly. Applications were received from 114 countries and the top 35 proposals were selected on the basis of 11 comprehensive technical review criteria applied independently by three experts (two of which from the outside of the UN system) for each proposal. This led to development of 35 joint programmes in 39 countries. JPs were finalized and approved in 2019 and launched in 2020 (Annex 3).

All JPs are expected to deliver results at scale by 31 January 2022, while improving the coherence of UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and facilitating acceleration of SDG progress.

This report presents the findings of the mid-term review of the LNOB portfolio. The report also formulates conclusions and a list of recommendations for consideration by the management portfolio.

¹United Nations Development Group, 2018. Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda. Terms of Reference. New York.

2. MTR Objectives and Approach

This section presents the purpose and scope of the review, the review methodology and limitations, and the structure of the report.

1. Scope and key questions.

The main purpose of the mid-term review is to look at the first year of the portfolio implementation to identify good practices and lessons learned and influence implementation in the second year. The MTR conclusions and recommendations therefore focus on the actions that the Joint SDG Fund could consider right away to improve the delivery and achievements of the portfolio before it is closed in 2022. Conclusions and recommendations that would be relevant over the medium and/or long term were addressed partially as they will be likely covered during the final evaluations of the portfolio and JPs.

2. The key objectives set for the assessment were to provide the following deliverables:

- Strategic snapshot of the implementation to date across the 35 JPs, articulated at the global, portfolio level.
- Analysis of main issues relevant for portfolio management, such as progress towards the JP results expected in 2021. Evidence for how the Fund's contributions to the JPs have facilitated systemic and catalytic change at the country level.
- Recommendations for portfolio management into 2021 and beyond.

3. According to the Terms of Reference, the MTR was not expected to be a conventional evaluation in the sense that it did not seek to address the OECD DAC criteria. Furthermore, the MTR did not undertake in-depth analysis of each JP, but rather a portfolio-level assessment. This analysis and reporting focused on the aspects that hold most relevance for the portfolio, and their contributions towards the global results of the Joint SDG Fund overall. The MTR was meant to streamline the engagement towards the most strategic findings.

4. The MTR took into consideration that this portfolio is the first of the Joint SDG Fund and is expected to provide lessons learned for other current and future portfolio. The final report provides content for the annual progress report of the overall Joint SDG Fund.

5. Building on the TOR and the above sections, the MTR addressed the following questions:

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1 What is the overall implementation status of the portfolio?

What is the level of delivery of the portfolio (financial and regarding expected results) and main global achievements?

Is the portfolio on track, on average, to achieving its intended objectives?

What are the main risks that the portfolio confronts in 2021?

What are the main interventions that the portfolio management might effectively conduct, given that JP implementation is devolved to the country level?

.....

2 What are the main JP issues and achievements relevant for the portfolio?

What are some of the salient achievements of the JPs at mid-term, including innovation, best practices and achievement of intermediary results?

What are the main good practices, success stories, and innovations across the JPs?

What were the main challenges, bottlenecks, or constraints that JPs confronted during the first year and how those are expected to be addressed in 2021?

.....

3 How have the JPs facilitated systemic and catalytic change at the country and global level?

To what extent have JPs adopted a systemic approach towards transformative results and SDG acceleration at the country and global level?

What should be the overall, global narrative of the portfolio, given high diversity of JP-specific results?

How have JPs in this portfolio contributed to UN reforms (including to incentivize RC leadership and improved collaboration and coherence of the UNCT)?

To what extent have governments been leading JP implementation and the development of the financial and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of results?

METHODOLOGY

The MTR collected and analyzed data from a range of sources to deepen understanding and triangulate the assessment. The following data collection instruments were used:

1. DESK REVIEW

Study of secondary resources including JPs PRODOCs, Annual Progress Reports (JP APRs), sample of strategic documents and communication content produced by JPs, and documents with consolidated information and data on the portfolio prepared by the Fund Secretariat. These resources covered the period July 2019 until March 2021. These documents were used to conduct a brief but strategic analysis of the portfolio, leading to an overview of the portfolio-wide progress, and highlighting examples of particularly successful results and innovations.

2. INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Interviews were conducted with a limited number of stakeholders. Consultations were organized virtually. The following consultations per stakeholder group were conducted:

Informant groups	Number of informants consulted
Joint SDG Fund Secretariat*	3
DCO*	1
Representatives of agencies involved in the OSC*	5
Government partners	5
UN Resident Coordinators	4
Country staff from PUNOs	32
Regional staff from PUNOs	1
Representatives of Fund's donors	3
Other partners (e.g. PBF)	1
Total	55

* Interviews covered the inception and assessment phases.

3. SURVEY

The Secretariat carried out a survey based on MTR questionnaire completed by the JPs that provided basic quantitative data on intermediary JP results to complement the Annual Progress Reports.

The MTR used a combination of complementary tools for analysis of the data collected.

- **Qualitative analysis** of data, secondary resources and interviews/focus groups.
- **Quantitative analysis** including cross-tabulations of APR and MTR survey data.



LIMITATIONS

The MTR methodology confronted several constraints and **limitations**. The MTR did not conduct any country visits, which has likely reduced the gathering of evidence regarding changes at national level. Interviews were organized with a small number of JPs and national partners, and triangulation further relied on the above data collection and analytical tools, but the MTR did not perform a comprehensive review to validate the information reported by the JPs. Business operations, and coherence with other global initiatives were largely out of scope. The MTR did not aim to be a final evaluation of the portfolio, or of any joint programme.

3. Portfolio on Integrated Social Protection and LNOB

This section presents the portfolio and development contexts, based primarily on a desk review of the portfolio document and secondary sources. The section also provides and discusses a reconstructed theory of change for the portfolio.



GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT
CONTEXT

The United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set out a 15-year plan to achieve 17 Goals, including to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030 (SDG 1)².

In 2018, the General Assembly of the United Nations mandated the reform of the United Nations development system (UNDS)³ to reposition the United Nations development system with a stronger, better-defined collective identity as a trusted, reliable, cohesive, accountable, and effective partner to countries in the 2030 Agenda. The reform intends to provide with a UN development system that is more integrated, more focused on delivery on the ground, with clearer internal and external accountability for contributions to national needs, and with capacities, skillsets and resources better aligned to the 2030 Agenda.

THE LNOB PORTFOLIO

The total funding of the portfolio is USD 102 million over 2 years, which includes USD 70 million of Fund’s contribution and USD 32 million of co-funding (Table 1).

Altogether, the joint programmes cover 11 SDGs (4.4 SDGs per JP on average) and a total of 53 SDG targets. The most frequently covered SDGs are SDG 1 – poverty (35), SDG 10 – inequality (23), SDG 5 - gender (19), SDG 2 – food security/agriculture (16), SDG 16 – rule of law / institution (14), and SDG 3 – health (14). Other areas covered include SDG 4 – education (11), SDG 17 – partnerships (10), SDG 8 – economic growth / employment (9), SDG 13 – climate change (5), SDG 11 – cities and settlements (2).

All 35 JPs integrate women among the beneficiaries. All JPs address gender equality and women’s empowerment on the basis of the Fund’s multidimensional Gender Marker, with 91% of the LNOB portfolio featuring gender results at the outcome level. Besides women, the top 6 vulnerable groups directly impacted are Children (27), Girls (24), PwDs (24), Youth (20), Elderly (20), Rural workers – farmers, herders, care workers (15). For instance, 91% of the portfolio seeks to produce positive results for youth. The total amount invested by the portfolio in disability is USD 43 million through 22 JPs with direct or indirect influence on this group.

Country/-ies	Joint SDF Fund Allocation	Co-Funding
Albania	1 500 000 USD	500 000 USD
Argentina	2 000 000 USD	900 000 USD
Bangladesh	2 000 000 USD	0 USD
Brazil	2 000 000 USD	646 400 USD
Cambodia	1 999 173 USD	2 000 000 USD
Chile	1 550 000 USD	658 936 USD
Costa Rica	2 000 000 USD	691 100 USD
Ecuador	1 997 630 USD	745 433 USD
Gabon	2 000 000 USD	210 000 USD
Georgia	2 000 000 USD	200 000 USD
Indonesia	2 000 000 USD	390 000 USD
Kenya	2 000 000 USD	1 300 000 USD
Lao PDR	2 000 000 USD	240 432 USD
Lebanon	2 000 000 USD	700 000 USD
Madagascar	1 999 723 USD	2 238 700 USD
Malawi	1 999 937 USD	0 USD
Mauritania	2 000 000 USD	8 000 000 USD
MCO Barbados	3 000 000 USD	1 804 402 USD
MCO Samoa	3 000 000 USD	386 176 USD
Mexico	2 000 000 USD	400 408 USD
Mongolia	1 990 000 USD	375 000 USD
Montenegro	1 970 000 USD	719 000 USD
Nigeria	2 000 000 USD	0 USD
Palestine	2 000 000 USD	639 500 USD
Philippines	1 740 000 USD	220 000 USD
Republic of Congo	2 000 000 USD	2 714 966 USD
Rwanda	2 000 000 USD	1 040 000 USD
São Tomé and Príncipe	1 900 000 USD	494 799 USD
Somalia	2 045 300 USD	594 926 USD
South Africa	2 000 000 USD	725 000 USD
Tanzania	1 994 400 USD	509 000 USD
Thailand	1 999 815 USD	662 000 USD
Turkmenistan	1 920 000 USD	430 000 USD
Uzbekistan	2 000 000 USD	0 USD
Viet Nam	2 000 000 USD	800 803 USD

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Table 1: Budget allocations per JP. Source: Joint SDG Fund Secretariat, 2021

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2. While globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty declined from 36 per cent in 1990 to 10 per cent in 2015, more than 700 million people, or 10 per cent of the world population, still live in extreme poverty today.

3. United Nations. 2018. Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. A/RES/72/279. New York.



Figure 1: Geographic coverage of the portfolio of JPs. Source: MTR, 2021

The implementation involves 600+ partners from governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations. Among the UN system, 15 UN entities and 2 Regional Economic Commissions are involved.

JPs in this portfolio were launched at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund provided an opportunity to re-purpose 20% of the budget, which was used by 1/3 of the JPs. In addition, all JPs adapted to the new context and responded to COVID-19, in particular given that social protection of most vulnerable proved to be essential to address the immediate and system impact of the pandemic⁴.

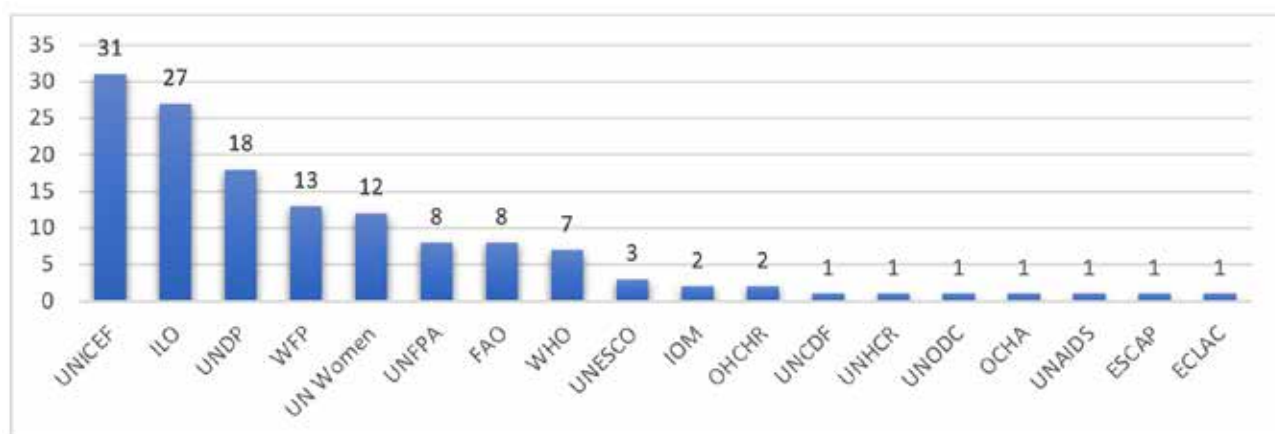


Figure 2: UN agencies contributing to the portfolio of JPs. Source: Joint SDG Fund Secretariat, 2020.

4. Almost all countries in the world have announced social protection measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis: <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowWiki.action?id=3417>

EXPECTED RESULTS

The TOR of the Joint SDG Fund, and its results framework, informed the Call for Concept Notes and anchored the expected results of the portfolio. The portfolio draws directly on and aims to contribute to the Fund's outcome 1 and output 3 (Table 2). This is reflected on the results framework of the JPs, which includes on the one hand country defined outcomes and outputs, and on the other hand the outcome and outputs set forth by the portfolio (and Joint SDG Fund). The aggregate monitoring of JPs' results informs therefore the portfolio's achievements, which contribute to the results of the Joint SDG Fund.

It was not in the scope of the MTR to analyse the results framework of the Joint SDG Fund. The results framework of the portfolio is briefly analysed in section 5.2.3.

Portfolio's expected results	Indicators	
Outcome 1: Integrated multi-sectoral policies to accelerate SDG achievement implemented with greater scope and scale	1.1	# and % of JPs in which integrated multi-sectoral policies have accelerated SDG progress in terms of scope
	1.2	# and % of JPs in which integrated multi-sectoral policies have accelerated SDG progress in terms of scale
Output 3: Integrated policy solutions for accelerating SDG progress implemented	3.1	# of innovative solutions that were tested (successfully)
	3.2	# of integrated policy solutions that have been implemented with the national partners in lead
	3.3	# and share of countries where national capacities to implement integrated, cross-sectoral SDG accelerators has been strengthened
	3.4	% of JPs that have a functioning partnership framework for integrated policy solutions to accelerate progress on SDGs

Table 2: Results framework of the LNOB portfolio. Source: Joint SDG Fund Secretariat, 2020.

RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE

A draft Theory of Change of the portfolio was reconstructed during the MTR inception phase and further elaborated with portfolio management and informants during the review phase (Figure 3). The Theory of Change was derived from the analysis of the portfolio's design, Call for Concept Notes from March 2019, JP documents, Terms of Reference of the Joint SDG Fund, and consultations with the portfolio management and agencies. The draft reconstructed TOC presents five main impact pathways, which are interdependent across the outcome levels.

1. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The policy causal chain (outlined in cyan) aims at policy change. At the output level, it covers activities such as inventorying and mapping national social protection mechanisms and conducting vulnerability risk assessments. Such activities are enabled by the installation of cross-sectoral governance structures. At the intermediate outcome level, the pathway goes across the drafting of policies, regulations, and strategies. This step is enabled by coordination and capacity development. Adoption of policies is facilitated by advocacy, and implementation by developed institutional, organization and individual capacities.

2. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

This causal pathway (outlined in grey) contributes to developing individual capacities for policy design and for analysis of the financial mechanisms and fiscal space. It also establishes or strengthens organizational capacities by installing or improving systems and platforms that enable the management of social protection programmes, through inventories, registries, statistical analysis, or payments.

3. FINANCING DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

This pathway (outlined in purple) aims to provide social protection reforms/improvements with the fiscal space required for their implementation and sustainability. At the output level, this pathway delivers fiscal space analyses and identification of financial mechanisms to broaden national social protection. Identification and development of the financial mechanisms is enabled by individual capacity development. At the outcome level, policies contribute to establish the financial instruments for LNOB.

4. PARTNERSHIP AND ADVOCACY PATHWAY

This pathway (outlined in dark blue) is multifaceted. It regards the installation of partnerships, coordination mechanisms including between UN agencies and government bodies; the provision of support to advocacy and communication; and learning and knowledge management. The portfolio contributes to this pathway through the organization of learning and networking events and the development of global communication products.

5. GLOBAL MANAGEMENT AND FACILITATION PATHWAY

This pathway (outlined in green) vehicles the role and objectives of portfolio management. It regards the facilitation of global coordination mechanisms between UN agencies and partnerships with resource partners other stakeholders; the provision of support to advocacy and communication; and learning and knowledge management.

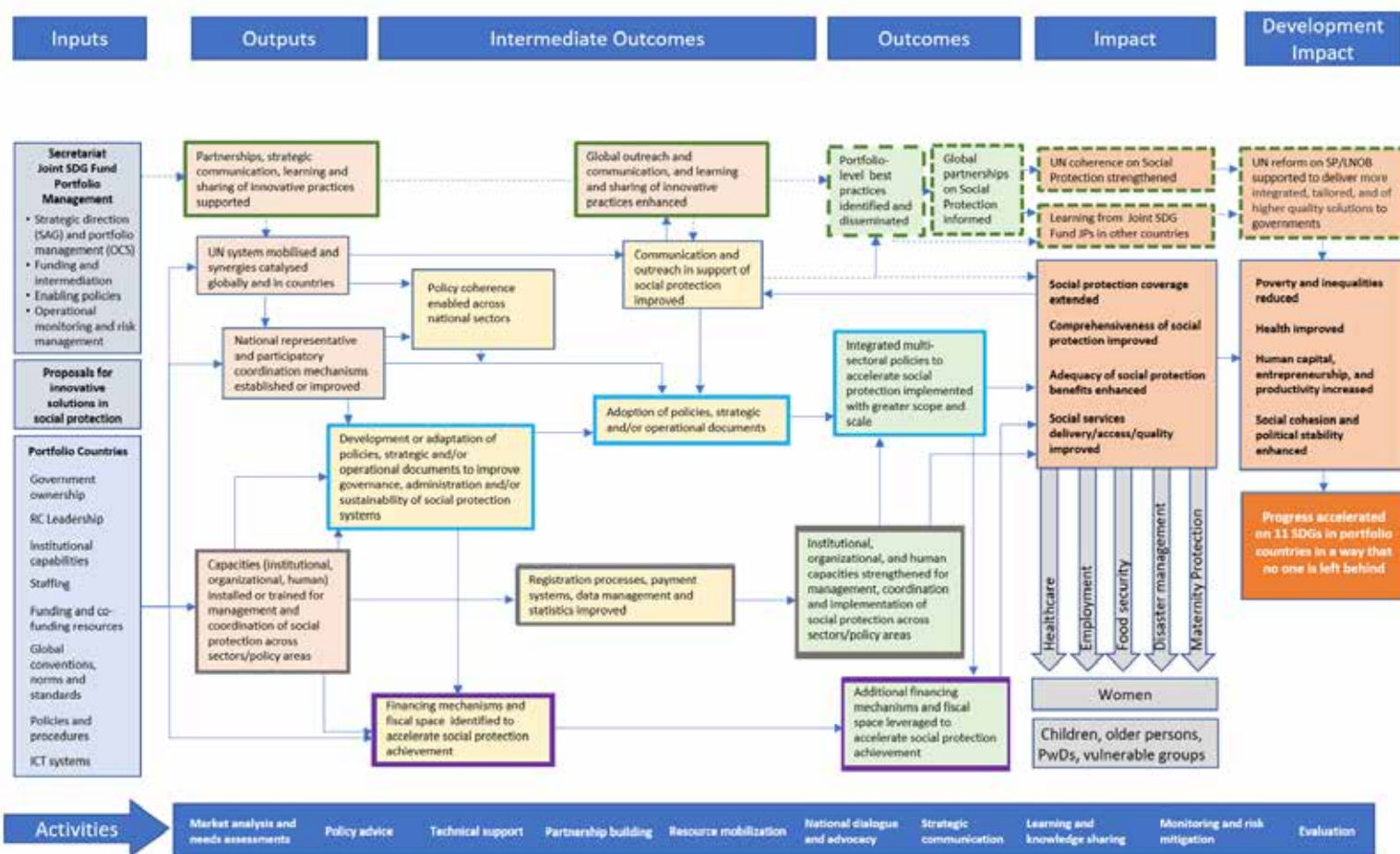


Figure 3: Reconstructed Draft Theory of Change of the LNOB Portfolio. Source: MTR, 2021.

The MTR used the reconstructed draft theory of change to articulate the findings of the review.

Furthermore, the MTR formulated several assumptions⁵ and drivers⁶ in the Inception Report. These assumptions and drivers are presented and analysed in section 5.2.2 on challenges and risks confronted by the portfolio.

5. Assumptions are conditions that are beyond the direct control of the portfolio.

6. Drivers refer to supporting actions or conditions over which the portfolio and/or IPs have a measure of control and that can be facilitated and have a meaningful influence.

4. Main Findings

This section presents the findings of the MTR articulated around the above main review questions.

Overall implementation status of the portfolio

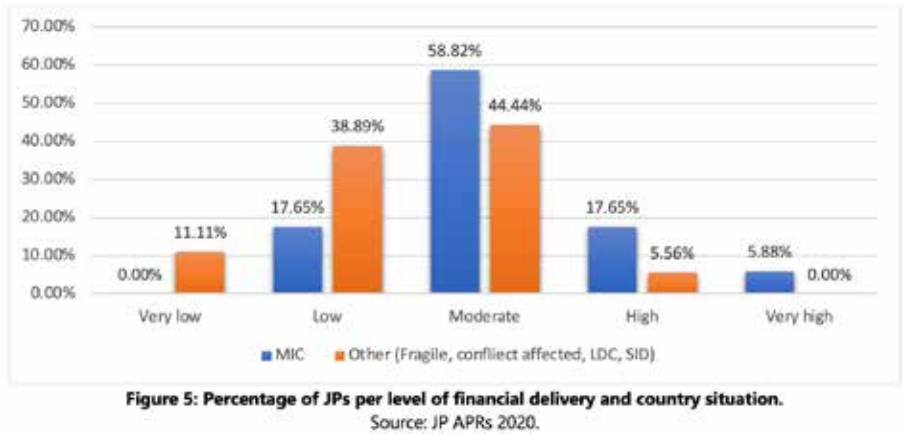
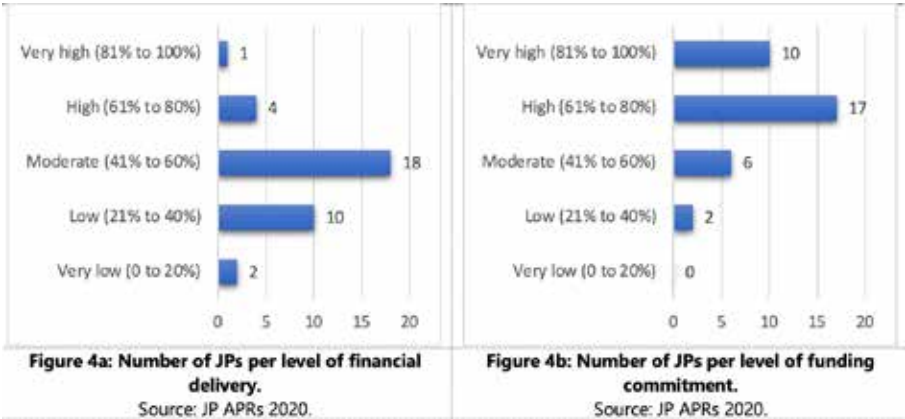
This section provides an assessment of the implementation status of the portfolio after the first year of implementation and identifies some of the risks it might confront during the second year.

Level of delivery of the portfolio and main global achievements

The average financial delivery of the portfolio for the first year of implementation is 45.68%. About 46% of the JPs returned a delivery rate above 50%. To support the analysis of the financial results, the MTR constructed a Likert scale presenting the level of delivery across five quintiles⁷. According to this MTR classification, about one third of the JPs have a low to very low delivery (Figure 4a). Five JPs have a delivery rate below 25% (Rwanda, 16%; Palestine, 17%; Malawi, 21%; Nigeria, 22%; Montenegro, 24.6%). According to MTR informants, financial delivery was negatively affected by the COVID crisis, which differed governments’ engagement and brought to cancel or delay recruitments of international consultants expected to conduct assessment missions, deliver technical assistance and research products. A detailed analysis also shows that 6 out of 12 Joint Programmes implemented in the Africa region have a very low to low financial delivery. Similarly, about 53% of the JPs implemented in LDCs, SIDS, or conflict affected countries have a very low to low financial delivery, compared to 17% for JPs implemented in MICs (Figure 5).

The average rate of committed funding reported in the APRs is 71.07%.

Close to 90% of the JPs have already committed more than 50% of their funding (Figure 4b). Only two Joint Programmes reported a low funding commitment after the first year (Rwanda, 21%; Palestine, 32%). The MPTF-O requires JPs to have committed a minimum of 75% of their funding before asking for the next tranche. Currently, 16 JPs received the second tranche. Others will make the request when they meet the requirements. Overall, when considering the funding commitments, the MTR found that the portfolio has been effective at moving implementation forward despite a global crisis context (see section 4.2.4).



7. From 0 to 19%: Very low financial delivery; from 20% to 39%: low delivery; from 40% to 59%: moderate delivery; from 60% to 79%: high delivery; from 80% to 100%: high delivery rate.

Progress of the portfolio towards its intended objectives

After one year, the portfolio has made a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the Joint SDG Fund. At the outcome level, 31 JPs reported a contribution to integrated multi-sectoral policies that have accelerated SDG progress in terms of scope⁸, and 25 JPs a contribution to integrated multi-sectoral policies that have accelerated SDG progress in terms of scale⁹ (Table 3). At the output level, 24 JPs report having strengthened national capacities to implement integrated, cross-sectoral SDG accelerators.

Two indicators show progress over the first year but pave the way to further efforts in 2021 to achieve final targets. The first indicator regards the number of innovative solutions tested. Altogether, 41 innovative solutions were tested during the first year, including 33 that were successful, 1 unsuccessful, and 7 for which it is too early to report on their outcome. Similarly, 44 policy solutions have been implemented with the national partners in lead during the first year while the portfolio set a target of 91 for the biennium. This number hides some discrepancies, with one country alone reporting 19 policy solutions for 2020 (and a somewhat broad interpretation of ‘policy solutions’).

A significant number of JPs were engaged in developing policies, strategies, and legal acts during the first year (confer section 5.1.1). This is likely to form a body of policy solutions to be considered for implementation in 2021. On a related note, according to the MTR survey, JPs expect in 2021 to develop or adapt 88 strategies, policies, or legal frameworks to extend Social Protection coverage, 85 to improve Social Protection comprehensiveness, and 64 to enhance adequacy of social protection benefits.



Figure 6: Number of JPs per level of progress

Source: JP APRs 2020.

According to the APRs, 85% of the JPs have achieved all or a majority of their expected annual results. Only 5 JPs report not having achieved most of their expected annual results. These 5 JPs are either in LDCs or conflict affected countries¹⁰.

Outcome 1: Integrated multi-sectoral policies to accelerate SDG achievement implemented with greater scope and scale		2020 APR	2022 Target
1.1	# and % of JPs in which integrated multi-sectoral policies have accelerated SDG progress in terms of scope	31 JPs 89%	34 JPs 97%
1.2	# and % of JPs in which integrated multi-sectoral policies have accelerated SDG progress in terms of scale	25 JPs 71%	28 JPs 80%
Output 3: Integrated policy solutions for accelerating SDG progress implemented		2021 APR	2022 Target
3.1	# of innovative solutions that were tested (successfully)	41 (33)	109
3.2	# of integrated policy solutions that have been implemented with the national partners in lead	44	91
3.3	# and share of countries where national capacities to implement integrated, cross-sectoral SDG accelerators has been strengthened	24 JPs 69%	31 JPs 89%
3.4	% of JPs that have a functioning partnership framework for integrated policy solutions to accelerate progress on SDGs	60%	100%

Table 3: LNOB Portfolio contribution to the Joint SDG Fund's Results.

Source: MTR, 2021.

8. Scope= substantive expansion: additional thematic areas/components added, or mechanisms/systems replicated.

9. Scale= geographical expansion: local solutions adopted at the regional and national level or a national solution adopted in one or more countries.

10. The level of committed funding for these 5 JPs varies from low to very high, indicating limited correlation between annual progress and funding commitments.

Constraints or bottlenecks in 2020

The MTR found JPs confronted significant challenges and constraints during the first year.

Programme implementation has been frequently delayed due to lockdowns or travel restrictions induced by the pandemic (e.g. Bangladesh, Gabon, Georgia, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Montenegro, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, Philippines, South Africa, Vietnam). An extreme case was provided by the Republic of Congo where the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting lockdown and travel/meeting restriction measures resulted in the shutdown of JP operations for a period of 3 months (from April – July 2020). A coordination meeting was organized to adjust the operational action plan and report the implementation of the activities to 2021. Another illustration is provided by Mexico where contact with the agricultural labour population on the field was found to be the biggest challenge faced by the JP due to the pandemic. Vietnam also indicated that international consultants could not fly to the country and that the JP Manager was grounded in East Timor for several months.

Many JPs devised and embarked on **ICT mitigation solutions** to continue implementation. In Nigeria, JP consultations among key stakeholders were to commence with a partner meeting planned for the 25th of March 2020. This was cancelled due to a lockdown across the Nation. The meeting took place online on the 11th of June 2020. In Turkmenistan, an additional team of national trainers was added to the overall design of programme implementation and the TOT social services certification trainings programme was delivered online by an international education institution, experienced in social workforce trainings. In Lao PDR, the JP arranged for blended presence/online activities like trainings and other capacity development measures, to enable international experience sharing and participation of international experts despite lockdown conditions.

Several JPs noted **changing Governments' priorities** in response to the crisis (e.g. Georgia, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, Vietnam). However, a significant number of JPs indicated the opposite, i.e. that the pandemic had put increased Government's attention to, and **emphasis on the importance of social protection**, which might be only temporary. More than two-third of the JPs indicated that they contributed to addressing **shock-responsive social protection** in 2020 by developing integrated national policies, mechanisms, programmes, or initiatives that were newly designed or incorporated into existing social protection systems (Figure 7).

Many JPs noted the **deterioration of SDG baselines** (a global pattern¹¹). In most countries, JPs' response included a contribution to the formulation of the UN socio-economic response plans. In Madagascar for example, the JP has made concrete contributions in response to COVID-19, into the design and prioritization of the UN's **Socio-Economic Response Plan** (SERP), putting the emphasis on social protection as a key element of the response to address the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and raising poverty and inequality in the country. In Turkmenistan, the second area of the SERP is dedicated to strengthening social protection and basic social services, where introduction of a system of social work and inclusive social services at the community level plays an important role. The potential of the JP activities to provide support to the most vulnerable groups, contributes to a number of deliverables of the SERP and enable creation of synergies in combination with other programmes not only related to the social protection, but also to the community resilience and overall social cohesion.

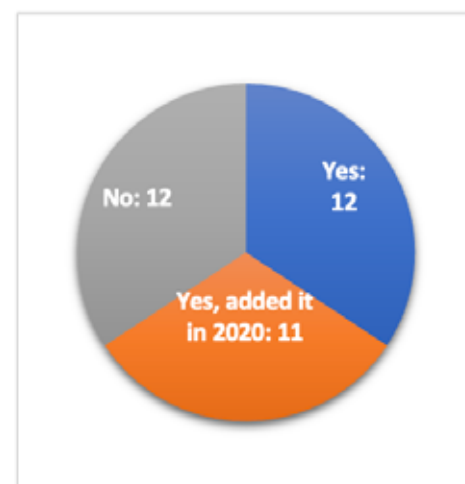


Figure 7: Number of JPs that contributed to addressing shock-responsive social protection in 2020.

Source: MTR 2021.

Several JPs have noted a **reduced fiscal space** for social protection (e.g. Ecuador, Lebanon, Vietnam, Malawi) and unclear short- and mid-term financing prospects. Several MTR informants stressed also that Social Protection was a complex and politically charged agenda requiring change of mindsets, which implies long-term advocacy and policy support. Furthermore, it was indicated sometimes that a 2-year time span for the JPs is short, especially in light of the COVID-19 crisis and above constraints.

11. <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/WSPDB.action?id=62>.

The reconstructed TOC drafted during the inception phase presented several assumptions and drivers, which are pre- or enabling conditions for the successful achievement of the portfolio. The above challenges informed the analysis of the TOC assumptions and drivers (Table 4).

Assumptions	MTR Findings
A1: Governance arrangements are in place at national level for UN agencies to partner with institutions involved in co-creation of JP results.	This assumption confronts national contexts and constraints. For example, the JP in Tanzania identified as main risk the fact that the Government has not yet signed the JP proposal document to date. In Lebanon, the JP referred to the extended political deadlock as a key constraint for implementation.
A2: Governments and other stakeholders adopt and comply with human rights mechanisms, and mainstream those in the JPs as relevant, including international and regional treaties and social protection conventions, norms, and standards.	This assumption still holds.
A3: Governments formulate policies and legislative frameworks supported by sufficient and sustainable staffing capacities.	In several countries (Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Georgia, Malawi, Mauritania, and Montenegro), elections and subsequent institutional changes, and/or movements of government officials, have challenged this assumption.
A4: Governments establish necessary financing mechanisms and ensure fiscal space that enable transformative and sustainable results.	In many countries, the advent of the COVID crisis has challenged this assumption.
A5: There is continuity of national policies and (sub)regional collaboration structures.	Continuity of policies and structures is influenced by the national policy agenda (confer A3). JPs reported a lack of continuity and delays stemming from policy changes despite mitigation measures sometimes.

Drivers	MTR Findings
D1: Stakeholders commit to the Decade of Action and SDG acceleration and have designed theories of change of JPs that identify catalytic priorities that lead to transformative results.	Selection of the JPs included two criteria on the “Rationale for the proposal” and “Expected results and Theory of Change” that covered how the JPs were expected to accelerate the progress on the SDGs and to have a catalytic potential. The analysis of the TOCs and JPs’ reporting, and the case studies, did not clarify how to measure specifically SDG acceleration, but evidence shows overall a positive contribution.
D2: Key stakeholders participate when required in the analysis and ensure availability of data to support addressing socioeconomic issues deemed to be of concern for the most vulnerable populations.	Most JPs referred to the COVID crisis as having complicated and delayed, but not prevented as such the involvement of national partners and stakeholders. However, participation of subnational bodies and vulnerable groups was sometimes not possible.
D3: UN country teams have the expertise required to provide technical support to JP stakeholders and an adequate understanding of joint programming allowing to collaborate actively towards the implementation of the JPs.	The level of <i>systemic</i> understanding of Social Protection and LNOB varies across UNCTs, which is partly due to the foci of the different agencies. Similarly, joint programming does not seem entirely familiar to the agencies but there is a lot of learning by doing.
D4: UN reform drives RC leadership and improved collaboration of UN agencies in UN country teams.	This driver holds. MTR informants stressed the relevance and effectiveness of positioning the JPs at the RC level (see also section 5.3.3).
D5: Relevant policy makers and stakeholders consider the social and economic cases for social protection and the cost-benefits of policy actions and identify positive outcomes and clear incentives for action.	Positioning the JPs at RC level contributes to increasing the political weight given to social protection by linking more directly this agenda with high-level national policy discussions and cross-sectoral forums, including under the direct oversight of the prime minister or line ministers.

Table 4: Assumptions and drivers formulated by the MTR and status.

Portfolio management provided in August 2020 a semi-annual review of the progress status of the JPs, including an analysis of the emerging risks that JPs confronted¹². The portfolio identified pandemic and non-pandemic related risks. The former covered implementation difficulties; economic challenges; competing government priorities; increasing number of vulnerable individuals and populations; aggravation of existing threats. Other risks were linked to national electoral and public management agendas (e.g. upcoming elections; cabinet-level turnover) and the possibility of JPs asking for no-cost extension. The resulting risk matrix articulated 4 main risks (Table 5). The semi-annual review further aggregated these risks at portfolio level as operational risks (e.g. implementation delays) or systemic risks (e.g. de-prioritization of social protection, undermined SDG progress).

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	TOTAL SCORE
Temporary implementation delays	3	1	3
Extending the overall JP duration	2	2	4
De-prioritizing social protection	2	3	6
Vulnerability increasing in scope and scale	3	3	9

Table 5: Portfolio risk matrix.
Source: Joint SDG Fund Secretariat, 2020.

Based on the findings reported in the previous section, the **operational risks** identified in the semi-annual review in August 2020 have largely materialized. It is highly likely that 10 or more JPs will request a no-cost extension (e.g. Albania, Lao PDR, Mauritania, Montenegro, Palestine)¹³. As for the **systemic risks**, the picture is more mixed. While economic and financial challenges have increased, and SDG baselines deteriorated, there is reportedly greater consideration by policymakers for social protection (i.e. increased political space, but reduced fiscal space).

The MTR sought to complement the analysis by considering two classes of risks. The first one relates to the risks identified by the JPs, which may impact the entire portfolio if similar risks were frequently reported and would form trends. The second type of risks regards those that the portfolio as a whole may confront.

The MTR performed a quantitative coding of the risks that JPs identified for 2021 in the APRs (Figure 8).

- About 24 of the JPs indicate a risk related to the conditions of implementation induced by a continuation of the pandemic, such as physical distancing, lockdowns, virtual works, which may affect the pace of delivery and effectiveness.
- Other frequently referred risks relate to the national political agendas, such as upcoming elections, reforms, recent elections and reforms that may bring institutional and organizational changes in the coming months.
- JPs also pointed out the risks of COVID induced economic and social problems (e.g. protests, strikes, unemployment).
- About 12 JPs also referred to the risk of reduced fiscal space for social protection, frequently stemming from the national responses to the crisis.

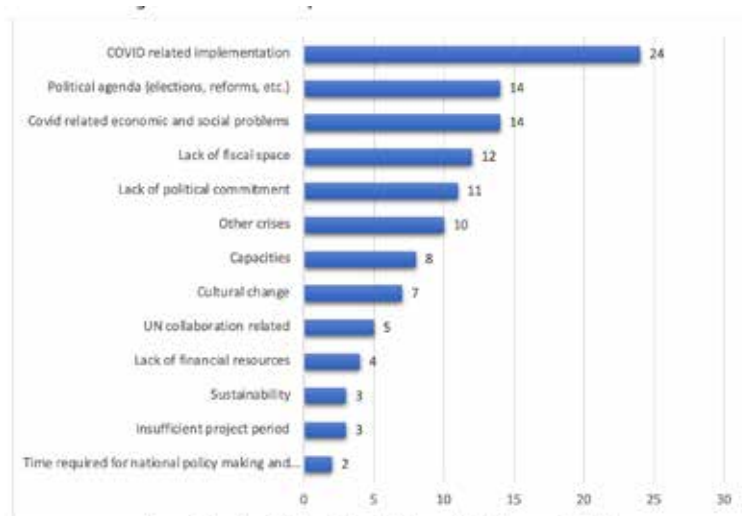


Figure 8: Number of JPs referring to the specified risk areas for 2021.
Source: MTR, 2021.

12. UN Joint SDG Fund, Integrated Social Protection to Leave No One Behind, 6-Month Progress Update, August 2020, New York.

13. These countries have already made reference to a no-cost extension in the APR of MTR survey.

At global level, the MTR tentatively formulated the following risks for the portfolio¹⁴:

1. FINANCIAL RISKS

This refers to the range of potential adverse outcomes (e.g. political, economic, environmental, or COVID-19 related) that may reduce financial capacities of partner countries to support UN reform and social protection, bringing the portfolio to confront declining ODA in the coming years. However, portfolio resources are secured for 2021 and funding support is expected to be a 2-year time-bound initiative. Likelihood: Not likely. Impact: Extensive.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL RISKS

This refers to the range of potential consequences for the Joint SDG Fund of interventions such as institutional, organizational or structural changes diverting staff and management's attention or influencing the direction of the portfolio. Likelihood: Moderately likely. Impact: Intermediate.

3. STRATEGIC RISKS

These risks relate to weaknesses in the JPs' programme design or TOC, such as unrealistic objectives or assumptions, insufficient focus on specific target groups, lack of or gaps in the systemic analysis (e.g. policy support not adequately supplemented by other interventions such as capacity development, or support to establishment of financial mechanisms/fiscal space). Likelihood: Moderately likely. Impact: Intermediate.

4. INSTITUTIONAL RISKS

This refers to the risk for partner agencies to focus the contribution to UN reform and social protection at national level, with limited synergies, scaling, knowledge management, and sustainability at global level. Likelihood: Moderately likely. Impact: Intermediate



14. Risk categories were identified and adapted after: (i) JIU. 2010. Review of Enterprise Risk Management in the United Nations System. Geneva.; (ii) OECD. 2014. Development Assistance and Approaches to Risk in Fragile and Conflict Affected States. Paris.; and (iii) UNDP. 2019. Managing Risks Across UNDP Programming and Operations. New York.
Photo Credit: UNICEF Việt Nam/Đỗ Mỹ Linh



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS, IMPACT, AND MAIN ISSUES

This section presents the key achievements of the JPs and the main issues they confronted in 2020.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE JP'S AT MID-TERM

The following section is organized according to the main pathways of the TOC.

A. Policy achievements

Close to 20 JPs reported having successfully conducted needs assessments, inventories, and mapping of social protection systems either at national or subnational levels to inform policy making. In Palestine for example, the JP conducted a mapping of existing social services to better understand the needs of the PwD and Older Persons and existing gaps. In Albania, the JP measured for the first time in the country the SDG indicator 1.3.1. "Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, work injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable". Preliminary findings indicate that the proportion of persons effectively covered by a social protection system, including social protection floors is 61.7%, while the proportion of the total population receiving cash benefits under at least one of the contingencies (contributory or non-contributory benefits) or actively contributing to at least one social security scheme is 70%.

In several countries, assessments were developed in response to the COVID crisis. In Somalia for example, the JP supported a vulnerability assessment aimed at generating data on groups that have been hardly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and that were left behind in the initial government response, in order to include them in priority in a comprehensive government response to the crisis. In Vietnam, the JP supported a vulnerability assessment to identify the most vulnerable group to inform government prioritization in policy response and the COVID-19 response plan.

Several JPs also referred to assessments aimed at institutional strengthening. In Costa Rica for example, the JP developed a mapping of institutional workflows, identification of bottlenecks and analysis on gender barriers that limit women's access and efficacy of social programs and services. In Nigeria, the JP conducted an institutional assessment of the National Health Insurance Scheme to improve internal administrative and financial management.

On a related note, several countries indicated the development of normative instruments and methodologies to inform policy making. In São Tomé and Príncipe, the JP developed a methodology to identify vulnerable families using a Mixed Targeting Approach. This combines the pre-identification of vulnerable families by communities and the use of a Proxy Means Testing survey by the National Statistics Institute to determine the degree of vulnerability of each pre-identified family. The approach is complemented by the identification of people or families who are not structurally vulnerable, but who fall into extreme poverty due to a shock. In Saint Lucia, the JP implemented an interactive microsimulation model, the first of its kind in the (sub)region, to provide an analysis of the impact of monetary and non-monetary impact on poverty as well as the poverty-reducing impact of several cash transfer scenarios targeting different groups in the population and at varying benefit levels.

Altogether, 30 JPs indicated having contributed to develop or adapt of strategies, policies or legal frameworks that lead to improving social protection. JPs reported having developed or adapted 64 strategies, policies or legal frameworks that lead to extend social protection coverage and 71 that aim to improve comprehensiveness (Figure 9).

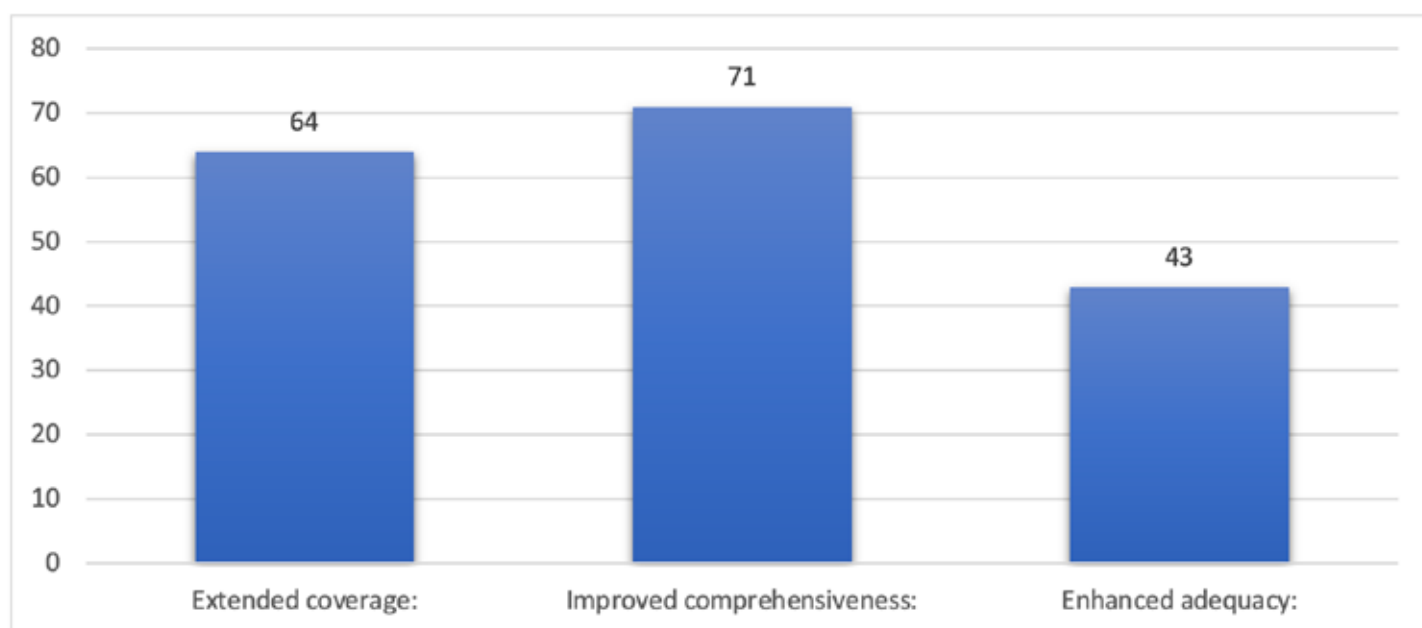


Figure 9: Number of strategies, policies, or legal frameworks that JPs contributed to developing or adapting in 2020 that are leading to the specified social protection outcomes.

Source: MTR, 2021.

Some of the salient examples (among many) of the JPs' contributions to policy outcomes include:



MEXICO

The JP contributed to the reforms of Articles 4th and 73rd of the Mexican Constitution that took place in November 2020 by which the National Care System will be established.



GEORGIA

In 2020, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (LRPD) creating a solid basis for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The JP contributed to the formulation of the LRPD and ensured that emphasis is placed on children, women and girls with disabilities.



ECUADOR

The JP provided technical support to the Government's National Social cabinet to develop a National Social Protection and recovery strategy. The strategy included identifying education, health, labour and social protection policies to help mitigate the impacts of the health crisis on the most vulnerable population and to better their access to inclusion mechanisms and social mobility.



UZBEKISTAN

The JP contributed a concept note that was taken up on developing the National Strategy for Social Protection (NSSP) and institutional design options.



VIET NAM

The JP supported the Government's revision of Decree 136, which promotes a rights-based and integrated SP system and more effective service delivery, prioritizing State budget to address equity, leading to higher coverage, especially among vulnerable groups including children, older people, PLWD, and informal workers.

Gender analysis is the approach most widely present in the documents developed by the by JPs in 2020 (Figure 10a). Among the types of beneficiaries targeted by policies, strategies, or legal acts developed by/with the JPs, women and children were the groups most often covered (Figure 10b). Conversely, the youth, older persons, and persons with disabilities¹⁵ were less frequently the focus of policy work. When comparing achievements with the baseline intent of the JPs as referred in joint programme documents, 10 out of 33 JPs have already translated the expectations for gender outcomes into policy developments. In comparison, only 3 JPs have developed policies, strategies or legal acts focusing on the youth, while 19 JPs had identified this group among the direct or indirect beneficiaries of planned interventions.

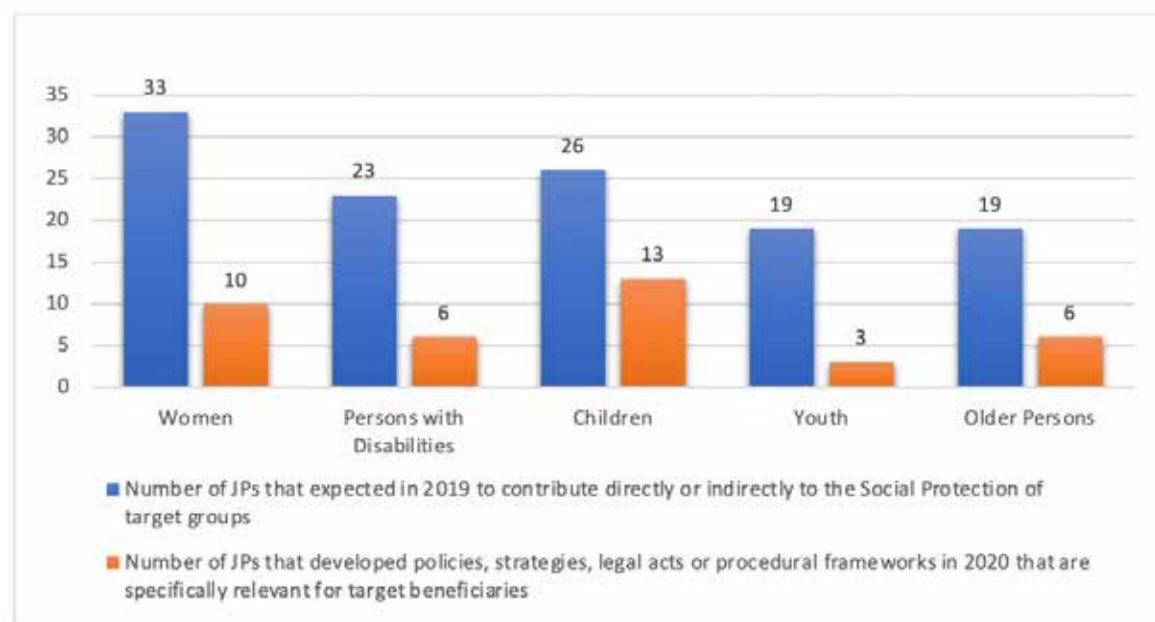
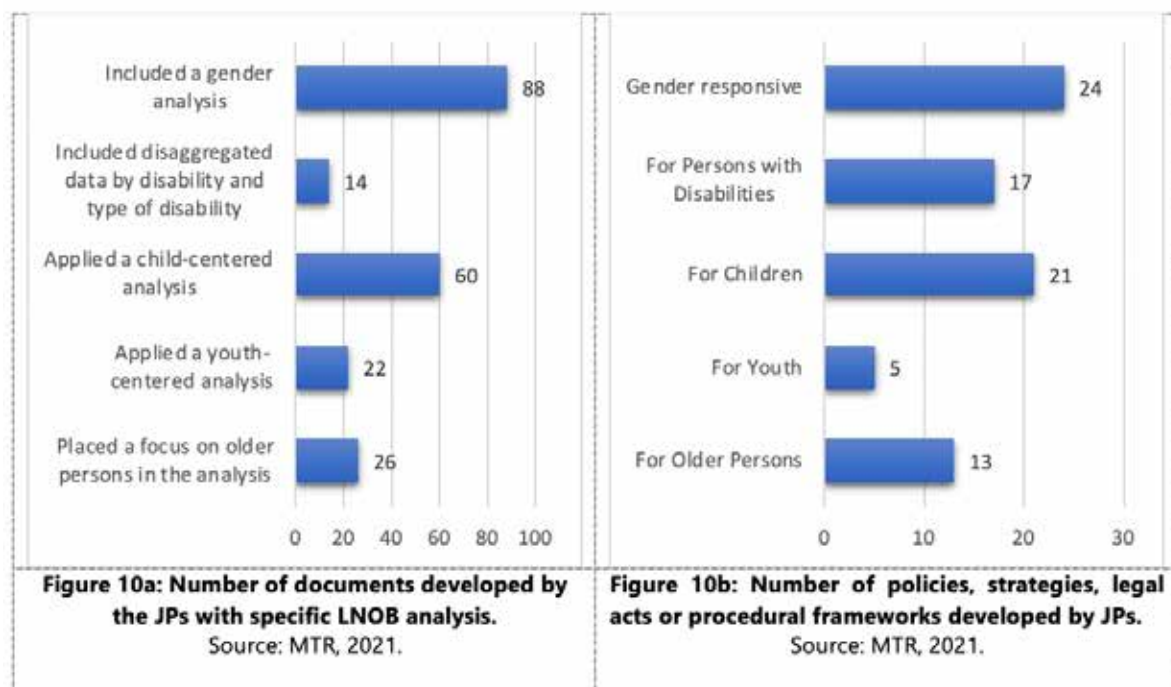


Figure 11: Expected versus reported contributions of the JPs per types of beneficiaries.

Source: MTR, 2021

Several policy-focused innovations or policy-related innovative approaches were also noted. In Malawi for instance, the UNCT reached out to all political parties prior to the elections in order to promote country programmes (including the JP on social protection), and increase the likelihood of a smooth transition/uptake of the JP after the elections. In Vietnam, data-driven policy was strengthened by the electronic monitoring system (Box 1).



Photo Credit: UNICEF

Box 1: Data-informed policies in Vietnam

The JP's support has led to a nation-wide e-record /e-report portal established and run for tracking implementation progress of the Government's Decision 15 on social assistance/cash transfer to most vulnerable people impacted by COVID-19. Instead of conventionally using the paper reporting system, the real-time reporting and data collection portal is enabling the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs to issue more responsive solutions and policy adjustment in the Government's scoping strategies for post COVID-19 pandemic in the short term. Furthermore, the initiative is laying a foundation to build an integrated e-system for delivering the regular and emergency social assistance services in a longer term.

B. Capacity development and technical achievements

According to the APRs and the MTR survey, 25 JPs reported a delivery of trainings in 2020 at national or subnational levels. In Uzbekistan, the JP conducted 10 capacity building training courses on COVID response, social security standards, social insurance schemes, financing social protection and costing issues as well as on the International Classification of Functioning norms. In Kenya, the Joint Programme facilitated trainings of government officers on disability-inclusion in statistical data collection and analysis. The JP also supported government officers, employers, and workers to participate in an e-coaching course on social protection at the International Training Centre of the ILO. In Mongolia, two officials attended an Executive Training on Social Protection Policy. Social insurance trainings were also organized by non-traditional partners, such herders or beneficiaries through their cooperatives and pastureland users' groups and life-long education centres.

In several countries, JPs involved national universities and academia in consultation mechanisms and sometimes into designing and delivering trainings on social protection. In Georgia for example, academia and universities were engaged to support the capacity building of medical professionals and functional assessment specialists. In Turkmenistan, the JP worked with the Ministry of Education and leading national universities to initiate the composition of a higher education curriculum on social work as profession, as a way to provide sustainability of the social services workforce and further development of human resources.

Some of the trainings contributed to the response to the COVID crisis. In Cambodia, the roll-out of the Cash Transfer Programme for Pregnant Women and Children 0-2 included massive training of personnel at Provincial, district and commune level, with 8,000 officials trained on the programme delivery and use of the Management Information System. The trainings, in addition to innovative coaching mechanism (using technology mobile phone peer support groups as helpdesks at Provincial level) created a solid basis for the delivery of the programme and were critical for the rapid roll-out of the national COVID-19 Cash Transfer programme.

For close to 20 JPs, support to the design, piloting, establishment, or improvement of a registration system has been a central feature of the intervention (Figure 12). In Indonesia, the UN has become the primary driver behind the updating of the unified database for social protection. The UN supported the updating of National Social Protection Registry, including to update the data of poor population in the country and increase the coverage of social protection programme from 40% to 60% of the population. In Kenya, several streams of work have been linked to the registry system. Engagement has been initiated on disability data disaggregation on the Enhanced Single Registry, which will include capturing disability-disaggregated beneficiary data. The accelerated development of an application programming interface (API) for the Enhanced Single Registry is also an example of a solution that was put in place to facilitate better coordination and effective information sharing mechanisms. In Ecuador, the JP partnered with the Social Registry Unit (SRU) to construct the registry of youth in informality. The SRU will host and update the registry that will foster a fluid communication with other government institutions to guarantee the constant exchange of information. In Gabon, the JP supported the Ministry of Social Affairs in the design of a Social Registry (with more than 500,000 entries of eligible persons, or 25% of the population) that will allow better targeting of poor households for sectoral interventions (education, social protection, health). MTR informants underlined several other outcomes from improving registration systems, including increased transparency for cash transfers and financial management.

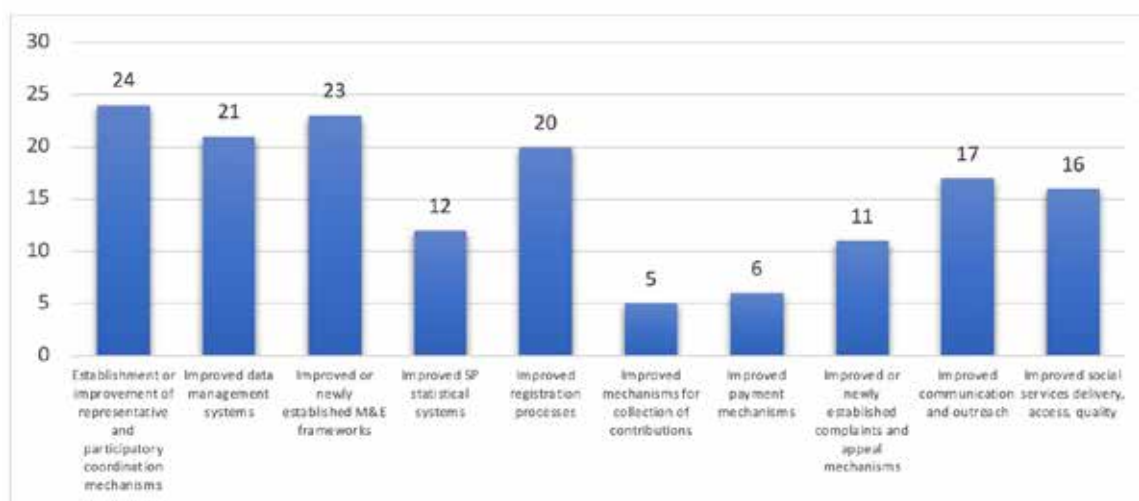


Figure 12: Number of JPs that contributed to the specified components of Social Protection systems.
Source: MTR, 2021.

Many technical innovations were anchored in the development of information and registry systems or installation of new processes. For example, the JP in Cambodia developed an E-payments solution and e-registration as well as innovative processes of social security and social assistance. In Gabon, the JP contributed to establish a One-Stop Centre and to introduce a digital data collection platform using the Go Data apps on smartphones. In Ecuador, a Digital Prototype was developed to help youngsters identify misleading job ads. In Kenya, a horizontal scale up using mobile money technology delivered emergency cash transfers to COVID-19 affected vulnerable families within the confines of the social protection system. In Malawi, satellite imagery was used to validate accuracy of targeting (Box 2).



Box 2: Targeting in Malawi

Support of the JP was requested by the newly elected Government of Malawi with a verification exercise to measure the accuracy of the targeting approach for the urban crisis cash response that identified geographical hotspots of vulnerability likely to be most affected by the economic effects of COVID-19. This led the JP to conduct a rigorous verification exercise using survey data, Google Earth, and high-resolution satellite imagery to independently verify the targeting process using one city (Blantyre) of the JPs' four target areas as an example. The exercise found there to be no inclusion errors and minimal (less than 5%) exclusion errors.

C. Financial Achievements

Several JPs reported having carried out a **fiscal space analysis** in 2020 (while close to a dozen indicate this being in the pipeline for 2021). One example is provided by the MCO Samoa that conducted a Fiscal Space Analysis for Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities in Niue, Tokelau, Cook Islands and Samoa. In Malawi, the Fiscal Space Analysis examined sector financing from the point of view of sustainable financing and the feasibility of increasing own resource coverage for social protection and reducing donor dependency. In Albania, ILO produced a technical report on Fiscal Space for Financing Social Protection in the country. The assessment focuses on the fiscal space analysis based on the historical data before the COVID-19 pandemic to provide an understanding of resource availability during normal times to finance a social protection system in the country that is non-discriminatory, gender sensitive, and economically sustainable. The purpose of this analysis was to provide guidance to the government, social partners, and other stakeholders on national and local capacity to mobilize resources during normal times, and to contribute to the national dialogue for shaping the future policy to enhance the effectiveness of the social protection and social services that leave no one behind.

According to the MTR survey, 13 JPs contributed in 2020 to **increase the amount of national spending for social protection** (Figure 13). Salient examples include Vietnam where the Government passed a resolution on Social Protection in response to the COVID-19 to provide timely social assistance support and cash transfer for 6 most vulnerable groups (estimation of 20 million people). The Social Protection package was USD 2.7 Billion. In addition, an estimated USD 48 million were budgeted for an extension of social assistance to older persons from 75-79, and USD 248 million for increased benefit level for older person, people with disabilities, etc.

In Thailand, as part of the COVID-19 response, the Government mobilized USD 765 million to provide top-up to social transfers. Beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant (1.4 million), Disability Grant (1.3 million people), Old Age Allowance (4.1 million people) and state welfare card holders (1.2 million people) received approximately USD \$32 per month for 3 months.

In South Africa, about 24% of additional funding was made available via the social grants top-ups. The original social assistance budget for FY2020 was approximately R188 bn (Estimates of National Expenditure 2020, National Treasury) and the Minister, in her submission to Parliament, estimated that R30 bn was used to pay for the existing social grants top-ups and a further R15 bn was paid out for the special COVID-19 grant.

In Saint Lucia, funds were provided to the Government as part of the overall COVID-19 response to support a 50% cash increase to children with disabilities and children in foster care for 3 months, and persons living with HIV/AIDS for 6 months. Furthermore, 200 new beneficiaries to the Public Assistance Programme were added representing a 7% in the total number of public assistance beneficiaries.

While recognizing this is difficult to monetize, 9 JPs indicated a contribution to **improved efficiency in the management of social protection programmes**. In São Tomé and Príncipe, savings were realized by engaging with the civil society to collect data on vulnerable children and elderly. CSOs have many volunteers in remote areas of the country who supported this intervention, which reduced the costs of mobilizing people from the ministries. In Madagascar, efficiencies were derived from developing common tools (registration and single window) to reduce the number of administrative tools. The JP set a 5% estimate of the administrative costs that the livelihood component and health protection component saved in conducting a joint registration with the cash transfer component.

A few JPs mentioned a contribution to **improving effectiveness** of spending on Social Protection. The MCO Barbados referred to gains from using the interactive Microsimulation model on monetary and non-monetary poverty, which supports the longer-term adjustment of transfer values and the government in determining a more adequate transfer value (for public assistance and children with disabilities) based on the modelled impact of different values for different beneficiary groups. In Congo-Brazzaville, the JP referred to the integration of additional schools in the school feeding programme as a source of effectiveness as USD 1 invested in school feeding has USD 9.6 return.

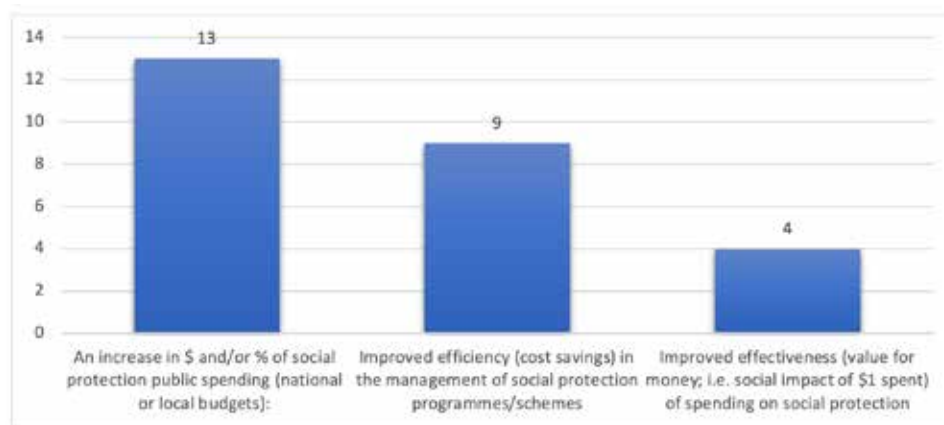


Figure 13: Number of JPs that contributed to improved financial outcomes.

Source: MTR, 2021.

A few **innovative approaches to finance social protection** have been explored. In Lao PDR, the work on SP financing commenced by assessing the SP-financing environment in the country and the viability of alternative SP financing options via capital markets. The JP assessed innovative SP financing options via national and international capital markets (e.g. SP Bonds) to complement domestic and ODA sources for social assistance program funding. The already-finalized technical and policy advisory papers on dedicated Chart of Accounts (CoA) for SP-financing, the proposed policy options for financing of the planned National Social Protection Fund (NSPF) as well as the drafted NSPF business plan structure are key building blocks towards ensuring that SP funding is on-budget and that additional traditional and non-traditional sources of finance are mobilized and blended with public sector budget allocations to secure sustainability of the NSPS and thereby jointly also accelerating progress towards SDG target 17.3. In Indonesia, the JP conducted a study for innovative financing for social protection programme in two target provinces and undertook further engagement with private sector as well as philanthropy and religion-based organizations to explore their potential contribution to strengthen the government's social protection programme. Findings from the study, which reviews innovative financing schemes such as crowdfunding, social financing, impact investing, and others, are expected to be piloted in 2021. In Costa Rica, in order to leave no-one behind, the JP initiated the launch of an e-commerce platform for rural women (Box 3).



Box 3: Income generation for rural women in Costa Rica

In order to leave no-one behind the JP sought to enhance women's employment and income generation prospects. An adaptation of the Buy from Women (BfW) tool into an e-commerce platform ("*Hecho por Mujeres*") was assessed and approved. BfW seeks to promote the economic autonomy of target women by providing them access to an e-commerce platform for the sale of their products, directly to consumers. The financing of socio-productive initiatives and the design of microfinancing models for rural and indigenous women is aimed at tackling the main barriers women face to access credits. The Government has recognized BfW to respond to the situation of women entrepreneurs in the context of COVID-19. The timeline for this activity was expedited by 2 months to assist with the response to COVID-19. The platform and app are currently under development.

D. Coordination, Partnerships, and Outreach

The governance of the JPs is ensured by different types of structures, most often steering committees, and technical committees. About 21 JPs indicated that a **partnership framework** was developed during the first year (Figure 14). In Thailand for example, the JP established the Programme Steering Committee, which provides overall guidance and recommendations towards the implementation of the JP. It is co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the UN Resident Coordinator. Its members include representatives from government agencies, academia as well as participating UN agencies. MTR informants stressed the added value such mechanisms bring to public institutions, which frequently work in silos leading both to gaps as well as overlaps.

Several JPs have therefore facilitated the establishment of **cross-sectoral coordination and governance structures** in national partner institutions. In Gabon, the JP established a partnership framework through the steering committee, which involves high level decision makers. Besides the JP steering committee, the Government also created a coordination group between the Ministries of Interior, Justice and Social Affairs to help strengthen the linkages between citizenship and social protection. In Lao PDR, the Social Protection Advisory Committee and its Secretariat were established (with meetings and equipment funded) under the JP and institutionalised by Ministerial decree. It will help coordinate social protection planning and implementation in Lao PDR amongst various ministries and Provincial authorities, led by a single ministry (Labour and Social Welfare).

Several JPs indicated a strengthened partnership with the **Ministry of Finance** (e.g. Lao PDR, Mexico, Montenegro, Uzbekistan (Box 4), Vietnam). In Vietnam, collaboration with MoF for example involved an assessment of the national fiscal space for extension of social protection coverage and the proposal for extension of social pension in the 2021-2030 period. Several MTR informants stressed the strategic relevance of partnering with MoF for fiscal space analysis and costing of social protection policies, and also to advocate that social protection contributes, inter alia, to productivity, growth, and poverty reduction¹⁶.



Figure 14: Number of JPs that developed a functioning partnership framework in 2020 for integrated policy solutions to accelerate progress on SDGs.
Source: MTR, 2021.



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¹⁶ E.g. Alderman H. & Yemtsov R. 2012. Productive Role of Social Protection. Background Paper for the World Bank 2012–2022 Social Protection and Labor Strategy. The World Bank. Washington.
Photo credit: Dominic Chavez/World Bank



Box 4: Collaboration with the Ministry of Finance in Uzbekistan

In February 2021, the President of Uzbekistan signed a Decree “On measures to improve the system of social protection of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021-2030”. The decree approves the Concept Note of the National Strategy of Social Protection (NSSP) for 2021-2030, the roadmap for drafting the NSSP and composition of the Republican working group to develop NSSP. The Concept Note was developed by the Ministry of Finance in cooperation with the JP. It is expected that the full-fledged Strategy will be developed in cooperation with ILO, UNICEF, and UNDP within the framework of the JP till November 1, 2021. The strategy will include fiscal space analysis and costing exercise, as well as mid-term action plan for strategy implementation.

Several JPs referred to strengthened partnerships with **International Financial Institutions**. For example, in Indonesia, the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) has revitalized the coordination meeting for Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) with the UN and the World Bank, ADB, and GIZ. Similarly, the JP implemented by MCO Barbados has forged closer links with the IFIs that are also working on social protection initiatives in the countries including the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank/EU Commission. In Palestine, the JP improved partnerships with stakeholders such as the EU and the World Bank. In Somalia, the Government (including staff supported by the JP) negotiated with the World Bank to have additional funding to expand social protection in 2021 and this additional funding will come from debt relief. Several other JPs referred to coordination and strengthened collaboration with the World Bank (Brazil, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Mauritania, Philippines, Rwanda, Uzbekistan, Vietnam). Several MTR informants indicated room for stronger engagement with the IFIs at global level as a means to further facilitate national level collaboration.

Many JPs have installed mechanisms to ensure that **vulnerable groups and their representative organizations** participate in the implementation of the programme (Figure 15). Involvement of women representatives has been frequently reported, while participation of the youth in the consultation mechanisms setup by the JPs is more limited. JPs shared a range of examples and good practices stemming from partnerships with NGOs/CSOs. In Lebanon, the JP created a steering committee coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs that brings together all the Ministries concerned (Education, Health, Social Affairs, Justice, Forestry, Environment, etc.) and indigenous organizations. Dialogue platforms for non-state actors resulted in their effective integration into the policy debate and helped shape the strategic policy solution proposed for the sector.

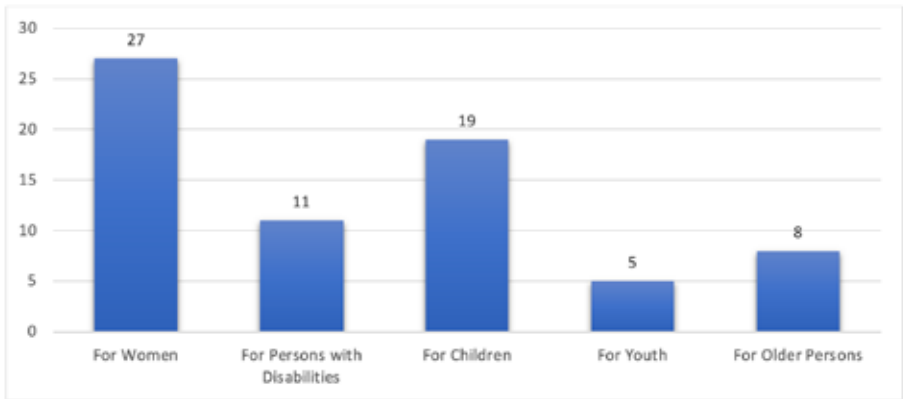


Figure 15: Number of JPs that implemented mechanisms and processes to ensure that vulnerable groups and their representative organizations adequately and meaningfully participate in all stages of implementation.
Source: MTR, 2021.

Metrics reported by the JPs showed significant communication and outreach progress, with 80% of countries surveyed that created a JP communications plan, and 71% of MTR survey respondents stating that visibility outcomes increased due to the funding provided for JP strategic communications. Countries reported a wide range of articles published by UNCT and JP PUNOs, resulting in over 470 articles. The MTR did not collect data on the number of visits/downloads to these resources. However, over 50% of countries reported that their social media follower numbers increased. For example, the JP in Georgia supported the Government to produce a video guide for the persons with disabilities. It was shared through TV and social media channels with 147,341 reach and 2,186 engagement on Facebook. About a dozen JPs contributed also to the development of media campaigns on national or local TV and on radios. Launch events were held by 71% of the portfolio, with a donor and/or partner event held by over 46% of respondents. These numbers need to be applied within the context of the global pandemic. The majority of JP's used less than 10% of their allocated communications budget.

Portfolio management and facilitation

Support of portfolio management to the JPs involved a range of activities, primarily:



Support to launch of JPs: Organization of webinars on procedures and policies, portfolio monitoring and reporting, changes of the workplan/budget, interface with the Fund; fund transfers; and support to kick-off events.



Portfolio progress monitoring and support to implementation: Quarterly check for Q1, 6-month progress update, quarterly check for Q3, regular circular emails and Yammer posts on key updates; compilation and analysis of JP data and information; bilateral meetings/calls with JPs on issues regarding implementation; tracking changing in JP docs (ProDocs), including budgets; and support to annual reporting (webinars, APR/MTR questionnaires development, collection, compilation, analysis).

Re-purposing up to 20% for COVID-related activities: Development of instructions, support to re-purposing, tracking progress and monitoring developments and trends on COVID-19 impact to inform the adaptations of JP approaches.



Portfolio learning, innovations, events and strategic documents: Launch of 3 learning communities¹⁷ for peer-learning across the JPs. Monthly learning “meet-ups” on these Yammer groups were organized, which include presentations, “peer-advisory” sessions (like “Clinique” for peer-learning focusing on one JP), and discussions on shared “burning issues”.

Portfolio strategic communications: Instructing, collecting and posting JP posts on the website (more than 100 for March – Dec 2020) – human interest stories, expert insights, and key documents (each JP has its own webpage on our website); instructions and guidance on using branding of the Fund in JP publications; support on social media for all JP activities; monthly newsletter (more recently).



Support to JP partnerships: Support to JPs in organizing donor meetings and in coordinating with related development initiatives.

Regional/global engagement: Regional/global level coordination and engagement with UN agencies (including providing analysis and responding to their queries); coordination and engagement with DCO on UN reform policies and seeking their support on joint programme approach and substantive issues (e.g. LNOB/human rights).

17. Focused on: (i) Innovative Business Models for LNOB: Platforms and Labs; (ii) Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems; and (iii) Social Care Services/.
Photo Credit: United Nations



Photo Credit: UNICEF/Fauzan Ijazah

These activities resulted, inter alia, in: providing support to 37 JP events (JP kick-off/launch and donor events); organizing 6 webinars on support to JPs (implementation, monitoring, reporting, etc.); 75+ bilateral meetings/calls with JP teams; 10 learning “meet-ups” in 6 months (July – December 2020); and more than 90 Yammer blog posts.

The Joint SDG Fund also developed the webpage “Integrated Social Protection”, where information about the portfolio is presented. Launched on 23 June 2020, the page received 2,181 views until the end of the year. In addition to the individual webpage, 39 country profile pages were developed for countries to use as a platform to share their successes with partners and donors. The website, JointSDGFund.org received 34,162 users, 34,558 new users and 52,555 session, with 84.2% that were new users to the website and 15.8% were returning users.

MTR informants consistently commended the management of the portfolio for swift and helpful assistance. Simultaneously, MTR informants also stressed consistently the demand for and importance of capacity development on SP and LNOB for JP teams and for partners, including through cross-regional learning initiatives and peer-to-peer support, and more systematic leverage of south-south cooperation activities. The three communities of practice have spurred limited on-going engagements, such as spontaneous requests for support from members. Facilitation of online communities is usually a time demanding activity, which benefits from face-to-face events that were out of portfolio’s scope (and would have been out of reach with the COVID-19 crisis). Some MTR informants reported also being unclear about the range of participants in these groups but an interest for expanding membership.

On a different note, one lead PUNO also indicated that the design of the JP had entailed investing significant amount of time and energy in the development of the PRODOC, including to harmonize the perspectives from participating UN agencies. The specific criteria requested by the Joint SDG Fund were found contributing to quality but made the **design process demanding** while little time was provided considering the range of consultations with national partners.

In terms of procedures, the process of planning and budgeting under the JP was found well streamlined, and templates clear-cut. The **guidelines** for the utilization of the funds were found clear and helpful to foster more cohesion of all PUNOs around the JP. However, another JP also pointed out the lack of common systems and duplicate efforts demanded by the **joint reporting** on one side and the reporting requested on the other side by the agencies. A system for online reporting was also suggested as a facilitating option.

A few informants noted that **guidelines regarding the selection of PUNOs** were not available. From a technical perspective, SP could potentially be implemented by a limited number of agencies. However, from a UN reform perspective, there is value in extending the number of participating agencies. Some informants were unclear about how to manage such trade-off and what it meant when/if responding to any future call for proposals from the portfolio.

The portfolio has supported to some extent partnerships of the Fund overall, including attempts to work more closely with the World Bank. However, by design, expectations for the portfolio's "global" engagement (including partnerships) versus emphasizing support to country-level implementation are not entirely clear.



From a cross-sectoral standpoint, 22 JPs reported having contributed to food security and nutrition of target populations (Figure 16). In some cases, this involved some policy developments, for example in Argentina and Ecuador. Most often, such interventions were a reflection of the COVID-19 response (e.g. in Albania, Ecuador, Gabon, Madagascar, Mauritania, Philippines). Several JPs indicated for example having provided support to COVID-19 affected populations through technical assistance related to cash transfers (e.g. inclusive targeting, test / pilot extensions, etc.).

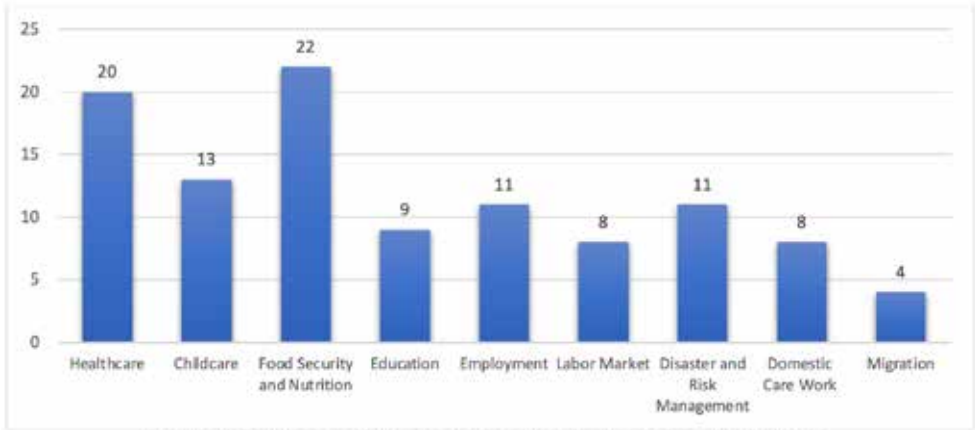


Figure 16: Number of JPs that contributed to the specified sectors or issues.
Source: MTR, 2021.

Similarly, several JPs reported contributions related to healthcare and COVID-19. For example, in Georgia, the JP assisted the Ministry of Health in preparing and adopting guidelines and protocols for mental healthcare providers with the aim to protect their beneficiaries and personnel from COVID-19. In Uzbekistan, particularly during the COVID-19 outbreak, the JP initiated micro-grants for CSOs that represent PwDs and facilitate access to health services. Other interventions include for example Montenegro where the JP assisted ex-Yugoslav refugees and persons at risk of statelessness towards the acquisition of a stable legal status for an efficient access to rights, including healthcare.

Furthermore, 22 JPs indicated a contribution towards the implementation of specific recommendations from human rights mechanisms (Figure 17). The conventions that were most frequently referred by JPs are CEDAW and CRPD.

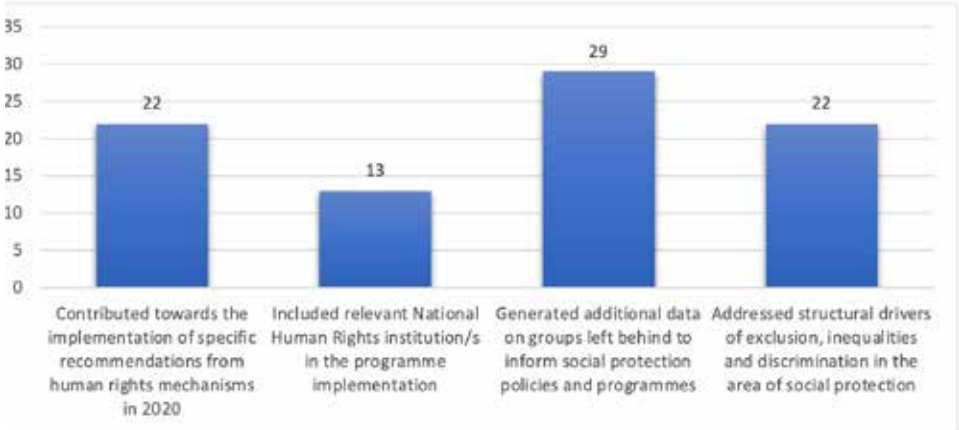


Figure 17: Number of JPs that contributed to human rights and equalities.

Positive results were reported by 16 JPs about increasing the number of persons legally covered by social protection schemes. Several JPs pointed out significant direct or indirect achievements, such as:



Brazil: In 2020, the JP supported the Happy Child Programme (HCP)¹⁸ in increasing participation and retention of eligible municipalities, with 306 new municipalities entering the programme. The JP also supported the Ministry of Citizenship (MoC) in expanding the number of beneficiaries: in total, the HCP reached 1,100,688 beneficiaries (500,688 new beneficiaries) - 898,106 children and 202,582 pregnant women.



Ecuador: In 2020, the JP provided technical support to the Government's National Social cabinet in developing the National Social Protection and recovery strategy. The strategy included identifying education, health, labour, and social protection policies to help mitigate the impacts of the health crisis on the most vulnerable population and to better their access to inclusion mechanisms and social mobility. The JP reported an (indirect) contribution to making 550,000 additional persons legally covered in 2020.



Indonesia: The JP supported the updating of the National Social Protection Registry, including to update the data of poor population in Indonesia and increase the coverage of social protection programme from 40% to 60% population. The JP estimates that this brought 800,000 additional households to be covered by the Family Hope Program, a programme providing conditional social assistance to underprivileged families.



Mexico: The JP contributed to reforms of the Mexican Constitution by which the National Care System will be established. The JP estimates to have contributed to bring 47,415,831 people to become legally entitled¹⁹ to coverage.

South Africa: The JP engaged in advocacy work with civil society, the South African Human Rights Commission, and academic partners to introduce social grant top-ups. These were temporary interventions that improved the overall allocation that existing beneficiaries received (intensive margins). In addition, a new special COVID-19 grant was introduced, and was expected to be ceased at the end of January 2021 (extensive margins). The outcome of the advocacy work led to an increase in grant recipients, an estimated 13 million children, 6 million adults (COVID-19 grant), totally approximately 19 million beneficiaries.

Vietnam: The JP supported the government in designing, extending, and refining the Government's COVID-19 package (short term), that provided 14 million vulnerable people with cash/support to supplement their lost income caused by COVID-19 and sustain their livelihood and business, preventing them from falling into poverty.

18. The Happy Child Programme (HCP) is an existing national social protection scheme that aims to support families/caregivers through home visits to ensure cognitive, emotional and social development of their children.

19. Note: legally entitled, not necessarily covered by SP benefits and schemes that the JP addresses.

Many JPs reported various contributions to the SDGs (Figure 18), most often covering SDG 1 (Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender), and SDG 10 (Inequality). However, the narrative associated with the reporting is most often a summary of the goals and activities of the JPs, and not very specific when it comes to quantifying acceleration (e.g. “registration system will accelerate the SDGs”). Basically, the MTR found that there is a lack of clarity overall in the UN system on what SDG acceleration represents, which is then reflected in this portfolio. The MTR did not find evidence of a SMART results-framework that would help to assess how the JPs addressed the call for proposals to show “How development results that normally require 5-10+ years can be achieved in 2-3 years”. This is certainly a difficult area to clarify. The MTR considered the option of referring to country SDG indicators as baselines and targets for the JPs (and for the assessment), but the analysis of the TOC (section 2.4) shows that expecting a major contribution (i.e. acceleration) on the SDGs in 2 years with USD 2 million might be very ambitious, while annual funding gap for the SDGs was USD 2.5 trillion prior the COVID-19 crisis²⁰. Eventually, strategic foresight and scenario analysis may help JPs in the future to further identify and spell out what can be achieved in 2/3 years vs. 5/10 years with or without the Joint SDG Fund.

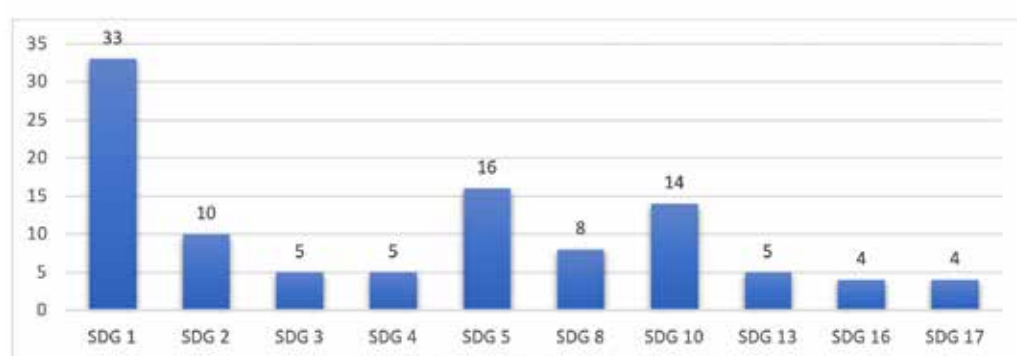


Figure 18: Number of JPs that target the SDGs.

Source: MTR, 2021.

Keeping the above provisions in mind, many JPs reported having adopted an approach towards accelerating SDG progress in terms of scope and scale, and towards strengthening national capacities to implement integrated cross-sectoral SDG accelerators (Figures 19). This is illustrated for example by the JP in Palestine, which contributed to implementing integrated multi-sector policies to adopt comprehensive social protection system mainly for two thematic areas of disability and aging contributing to accelerate progress towards mainly the SDGs 1, 10, 17 and also 2, 5, 8, 16. In Vietnam, a new decree on Social Assistance led to higher coverage, especially among vulnerable groups including children, older people and PLWD. In Mexico, JP contributions were made for the creation and improvement of regulatory frameworks, such as the constitutional reform for the creation of the National Care System. In Madagascar, the JP contributed to reinforce specific social protection thematic areas that were not sufficiently developed in the existing national social protection system, particularly the GBV component, the disability and the agricultural insurance component.



Figure 19a: Number of JPs that contributed to implement integrated multi-sectoral policies that accelerate SDG progress in terms of scope.

Source: MTR, 2021.

Figure 19b: Number of JPs that contributed to implement integrated multi-sectoral policies that accelerate SDG progress in terms of scale.

Source: MTR, 2021.

Figure 19c: Number of JPs that contributed to strengthen national capacities to implement integrated, cross-sectoral SDG accelerators.

Source: MTR, 2021.

The MTR further explored several dimensions reflective of the adoption of a systemic approach towards transformative results at country level.

Theory of Change: From a design perspective, 25 JPs presented a Theory of Change that was logframe-based or a graphic logframe (e.g. use of conventional logic tables, but in illustrations). Only 7 TOCs were of systemic type. Furthermore, only 15 JPs spelled out a financial causal pathway or expected fiscal outcome in their TOC²⁰.

Target beneficiaries: Mid-term reporting indicates that, in general, JPs have been primarily effective in their contribution to supporting women, and children. Many JPs intended (per the PRODOCs) to have a direct influence on a whole range of beneficiaries²¹. This remains partially achieved.

Partnerships: The JPs identified altogether more than 600 partners that would contribute to programme implementation (i.e. national and subnational government institutions, UN System and other development partners, civil society, and non-governmental organizations, local communities, private sector, and academia). At mid-term, most JPs did not report significant gaps with their partnerships, although the extent to which these were effectively mobilized and contributed to transformative outcomes is unclear. For example, involvement of private sector actors has been mostly consultative.

At **global level**, the portfolio has strengthened partnerships between participating agencies, particularly the 5 agencies that form the OSC. However, it was not necessarily in the scope of the Joint SDG Fund to trigger or contribute to global frameworks on SP and LNOB. MTR informants indicated room for strengthening collaboration of the portfolio with initiatives such as SPIAC-B²³, USP2030²⁴, or socialprotection.org. Similarly, contribution to transformative results which are out of scope but were referred by informants include strengthening global collaboration on SP and LNOB with the IFIs. Finally, country informants indicated the lack of a global strategy and common framework for SP, with UNCTs having to devise country models based on different UN approaches, leading eventually to systemic inefficiencies.

Altogether, the MTR does find that there is a contribution of the portfolio towards transformative results and SDG acceleration, but normative instruments were not installed to quantify or precisely qualify it.



20. <http://www.oecd.org/development/global-outlook-on-financing-for-sustainable-development-2021-e3c30a9a-en.htm> J

21. Ps that indicated in their TOC to provide support to increasing the fiscal space for SP: Albania, Cambodia, Ecuador, Indonesia, Kenya, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Malawi, Mauritania, MCO Barbados, MCO Samoa, Nigeria, Palestine, Tanzania, Uzbekistan.

22. I.e., women, children, PwDs, youth, older persons, rural persons, etc.

23. <https://www.ilo.org/newyork/at-the-un/social-protection-inter-agency-cooperation-board/lang--en/index.htm>

24. <https://www.usp2030.org/gimi/USP2030.action>

Photo credit from top to bottom: Image 1_UN Turkmenistan / Image 2_UN Argentina

The MTR found significant evidence of a positive contribution of the portfolio to UN reforms. The value-added of the JP spans across several dimensions of programme implementation:

Coordination:

Many JPs indicate stronger coordination between participating agencies (e.g. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Kenya, MCO, Samoa, Mongolia, Uzbekistan). In Mongolia for example, the JP contributes to the Output 2.4, Outcome 2 of the UNDAF Mongolia 2017-2021. The Output used to have only two traditional players (UNICEF and ILO) working on social protection. The JP brought UNFPA and FAO to work under this output, which has reportedly improved coordination and coherence of agency specific interventions for multiplied impact.

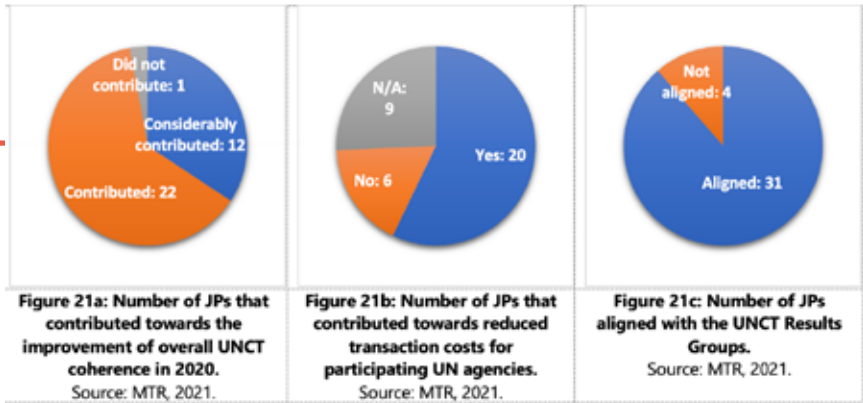
Collaboration:

Another area where JP-led improvements were reported is inter-agency collaboration (e.g. Argentina, Lebanon, Costa Rica, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe, Vietnam). For example, in Lebanon, key agencies leveraged the JP to produce several position papers and policy notes for JP actors and the UNCT more broadly, including the comprehensive “UN Position Paper on Social Protection”. This brought social protection to become one of the UNCT’s core priorities for 2021.

Communication:

Several JPs report having installed periodic meetings to share information and coordinate activities, improving communication between agencies (e.g. Brazil, Costa Rica, Georgia, Turkmenistan). In Turkmenistan, the JP PUNO team met weekly to ensure joint approach to the programme implementation. Furthermore, joint monthly updates were presented at the UNCT meetings by the Heads of Agencies taking turns – one agency each month. This ensured close cooperation, coherent approach, and ownership over the joint goals, instead of concentrating on the Agency-specific components.

This has resulted in a range of benefits, spanning across:



UN Coherence:

Several countries indicate the JP has improved policy coherence as well as provided the agencies and partners with more strategic perspectives on social protection and LNOB (e.g. Bangladesh, Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria, Vietnam). For instance, in Nigeria, the JP was found to have facilitated inter-agency discussions to advocate expanded and universal Social Protection and contributed to the Development partner’s common narrative on social protection.

UN Effectiveness:

In several countries, the JP has facilitated more direct access of some PUNOs to central government partners leading on social protection as well as helped to mobilize stakeholders from new/different relevant sectors to collaborate more effectively and efficiently on SP issues (e.g. Argentina, Lao PDR, Rwanda, Uzbekistan). In Argentina, the JP allowed the PUNOs to agree on a more comprehensive diagnosis on the situation of early childhood in the country, and helped to define activities that complement each other, both because of the topics addressed and their geographical focus.

UN Efficiency:

Several JPs indicate efficiency gains derived from the JP through the organization of joint meetings, field missions, and assessments, as well as by developing and/or using common implementation tools (e.g. Argentina, Bangladesh, Gabon, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mongolia, Uzbekistan). In Mauritania for example, where WFP has a long-term agreement (LTA) with a research firm, the agency made this LTA available to UNICEF and the WB within the framework of the joint study on social registry. This reduced the transaction costs related to the provider selection process (financial and indirect time costs of human resources involved in the service procurement process) and enabled the process to be concluded more quickly.

MTR informants highlighted also additional outcomes from the design and implementation of the JPs. The role of the **UN Resident Coordinator** was underlined as highly relevant and effective to elevate the SP agenda. UNRCs provide weight to the politically charged SP agenda and visibility to the JPs, and facilitate a cross-sectoral approach internally and externally, including through direct contacts with prime ministers, line ministers, and finance ministers. Support of the Prime Minister and/or involvement of the PM Office or DPMO for activities implemented by the joint programmes was referred important to setup inter-ministerial collaboration, as reported by several countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Gabon, Tanzania, Lebanon, São Tome & Príncipe, Montenegro, Palestine, Thailand, Uzbekistan). Several JPs have also established collaboration with Ministers (e.g. Albania, Brazil, Costa Rica, Lao PDR, Georgia, Mongolia, Philippines, Turkmenistan).

Joint UN work on social protection was further mentioned being a differentiator in (upper) **MICs**, adding a **comparative advantage** and value to the national sectoral expertise sometimes already well established in the country.

Some evidence of **spillover effects** was found. In Costa Rica for example, the JP triggered closer collaboration between UNDP and ILO, leading to the formulation of new joint proposals on social economic response plans and Climate Change assessment. In Ecuador, the JP partnered with the with the ILO project on Economic integration of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees in Peru and Ecuador through decent work to deliver trainings that targeted youth in informality and migrants.

Most if not all MTR informants shared the perspective that JPs were “the way to go”. Despite these achievements, many MTR informants indicated that room remains for furthering the **UN reform**, including by moving from joint programmes to joint programming. The percentage of joint funding in UN country budgets is still limited and primarily sectoral. From the perspective of a UNRC, JPs provide a joint funding channel, but budgets are separate. Informants also highlighted the importance of change management and behavioural change in the UN reform process; or questioned any in-built criteria in the Joint SDG Fund that would incentivize UNCT team building, which may go beyond the scope of the portfolio. Incidentally, the MTR noted that the indicators in the results-framework of the portfolio are programmatic, and do not include a “UN Reform” indicator. One MTR informant noted also that achievements of the JPs are not singled out in a separate section of the agencies’ global annual reports, which diminishes their visibility and promotion.

From a technical perspective, there is **no fully established global UN framework for SP**. The understanding about SP is not consistent between and within agencies, leading JPs across countries to reformulate a common platform.

A few MTR informants indicated being unclear about the **connections** established by the portfolio and/or agencies at global level under the SP/LNOB agenda with other initiatives (e.g. UNPRPD Fund, the Global Impact Investment Network, the COVID-19 MPTF, and the range of SDG platforms (e.g. Local2030, Business for 2030, etc.)). Interest was conveyed about contributing to matchmaking events that could create resource mobilization opportunities or would contribute to increase the visibility of the social protection/LNOB agenda globally.

Many JPs indicated having highly welcomed the flexibility of the Joint SDG Fund and the capability provided to **repurpose up to 20%** of the total value (without Fund’s approval) to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Several JPs stressed that flexibility was important to respond to changing national conditions and priorities.

Design and implementation of the JPs involve a lot of **learning by doing**. Good practices and lessons learned from past UN joint programmes were conveyed to JPs through webinars as they engaged in this initiative. However, needs for inter-agency capacity development may be only partly addressed through such mechanisms²⁶. According to the Fund’s TOR, it is not the role of the Secretariat/Portfolio management to ensure development of technical capacity. Nevertheless, some informants reported that the level of expertise of UN country team on SP and LNOB varies, especially when it comes to inter-sectoral approaches. By design, the Fund did not consider involving the agencies’ Regional Offices in regional capacity development, although examples of regional level’s collaboration and technical inputs were commended by MTR informants. Furthermore, JPs create rich knowledge in the form of information products and other outputs (e.g. training resources, assessments, normative products locally adapted, etc.) that are not collected, shared and reused. The MTR noted a significant knowledge management and learning and sharing agenda that was moderately addressed in the design and resourcing of the portfolio.

Several areas of work of the JPs provide evidence of sustainability of results. In terms of **policy and legal framework**, the JPs drafted or contributed to inform the development of binding instruments in several countries. In 2020, constitutional revisions, laws, bylaws, bills of law, and presidential or ministerial decrees extending SP were passed in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Gabon, Georgia, Lao PDR, Mexico, Nigeria, Palestine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam. In addition, as noted earlier (section 5.3.1), JPs contributed to policies and strategies.

In regard to **institutional capacities**, there is also evidence of some sustainable results in several countries. As noted earlier (section 5.3.2), national institutions have established coordination structures for SP. For instance, in Lao PDR, the Social Protection Advisory Committee and its Secretariat were installed (with meetings and equipment funded) under the JP and institutionalised by Ministerial decree to help coordinate social protection planning and implementation in the country amongst various ministries and Provincial authorities, led by a single ministry (Labour and Social Welfare). In Gabon, the Government has been setting up a coordination mechanism between the ministries of justice, social protection, interior to oversee the implementation of the nexus between social protection/inclusion, child protection, health, education sectors.

Organizational capacities show also prospects of sustainability. National registration and other systems are likely to endure after the JPs. In Chile for example, the JP contributed to establish the Nodo Emergency platform, which receives calls and gathers information about elderly and their caregivers. The platform became a public policy with permanent financing that will be operated from 2021 onwards as a permanent programme of the National Office for the Elderly (SENAMA). In Indonesia, the JP was behind the national programme on Updating the Unified Database for Social Protection, which is the main reference for the Government to determine the poor population and beneficiaries for social protection programme.

In terms of **financial capacities**, 13 JPs indicated that national partners have committed additional resources for SP and LNOB in 2020. However, in 9 cases this links to the COVID-19 crisis response. It is therefore difficult to assess the sustainability of these results. On a different note, 12 JPs secured additional funding in 2020. Resource mobilization is likely to come higher up on the agenda of the JPs in 2021. Government partners interviewed by the MTR conveyed their expectation that the collaboration with the UN agencies would continue. Policy and legislative changes accelerated by the JPs led to a need for technical assistance and capacity development to support their implementation over the coming years.

Advocacy and support to social change were other areas of expected long-term support. However, while DAC members mobilised USD 12 billion for COVID-19 support to developing countries in 2020²⁷, donor countries' budgets have tightened due to increased domestic spending and public revenue shortfalls. As many ODA budgets were finalized before the outbreak of COVID-19, the effect of the recession on overall ODA levels might not appear immediately. This was the case when ODA declined in 2011, three years after the 2008 financial crisis²⁸. But the overall context indicates an uncertain period for resource mobilization as well as the importance to continue enlarging the portfolio of resource partners, not only in countries but also at global level.

At **global level**, the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat is not expected to organize a global dialogue or to produce normative instruments on SP that would ensure a global upscaling and technical sustainability of the portfolio's cross-sectoral approach. This agenda is eventually devolved to the agencies engaged in the portfolio. However, there seems to be limited leverage of the initiative to inform global discussions on SP and contribute to bridging different conceptual frameworks.

27. OECD. 2020. Development Co-operation Report 2020. Learning from Crises, Building Resilience. Paris.

28. OECD. 2020. Six decades of ODA: insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis. OECD Development Co-operation Profiles 2020. Paris.

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a purple traditional garment, kissing a young child on the cheek. The child has light hair with pink bows and is wearing a purple jacket. They are outdoors at sunset, with a warm, golden glow in the background. The text 'Conclusions' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Conclusions

Overall, the **implementation** status of the Joint SDG Fund's portfolio on Integrated Social Protection and LNOB after one year is **satisfactory**. The average rate of committed funding reported by the joint programmes is 71.07%. At the outcome level, achievements came close to the targets set in the portfolio's results framework for the entire biennium. At the output level, the indicators related to the number of innovative solutions tested by the JPs, and number of integrated policy solutions that were implemented with the national partners in lead, have shown progress but further efforts will be required in 2021 to achieve final targets.

Progress has been slower for JPs implemented in LDCs, SIDS, or conflict affected countries, which may require further analysis.

Risks that the portfolio may confront in 2021 are primarily an extension of the challenges induced last year by the COVID-19 crisis. There are early signs that several JPs will request a no-cost extension.

JPs' interventions have frequently and directly targeted women and children. Despite a range of successful initiatives and achievements covering the youth and PwDs, contributions to supporting these groups have been more indirect.

Many JPs reported significant policy achievements as well as contributions to capacity development (institutional, organizational, individual). At least 10 JPs drafted or contributed to inform laws, bylaws, bills of law, and presidential or ministerial decrees that were passed in 2020 to extend social protection.

A range of cases also indicates a contribution to extending financial mechanisms for social protection and LNOB in 2020. However, increased national funding has been largely COVID-19 related. While it is too early to assess the long-term influence of the JPs on furthering the fiscal space for SP and LNOB, partnerships are being strengthened in several countries with MoF and IFIs.

Evidence was found that JPs facilitated systemic and catalytic change at the country level. During the first year, the portfolio spanned across 11 SDGs. The SDGs that are most frequently covered by the JPs are SDG 1 (Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender) and 10 (Inequality). The MTR did not apply a normative framework to quantify or specifically qualify the contribution of JPs to SDG acceleration, for example to identify if progress was more substantial on some SDG indicators.

At global level, despite effective outreach and communications, the contribution of the portfolio to strategic dialogues on SP and LNOB remains limited. By design, the portfolio does not provide a platform for policy and technical expertise that would engage in and contribute to spur global strategies on SP and LNOB. This is likely to create some inefficiencies at country level that agencies have not fully addressed at global level. Similarly, the related global funding architecture for SP does not appear to be strongly catalysed beyond the portfolio, which is planned to be a 2-year endeavour.

The JPs are also effectively contributing to UN reforms, with the provision that budgets of the UN entities at country level remain largely sectoral. JPs provide a lot of “learning by doing”, and some spillover whereby engagement in or interest for joint work is effectively increasing. Contribution of the RCs to the SP and LNOB agenda is highly relevant and overall effective.

Joint programmes on SP and LNOB provide the UN agencies with a platform of comparative advantages, and added value to national partners, which can be directed towards further promotion for resource mobilization. Sustainability of outcomes at national level through an extension of the fiscal space for SP and LNOB requires further engagement and partnerships as the portfolio aims to be catalytic and transformative but not primarily an instrument for implementation.



Photo Credit: UN Bangladesh/Tanjim Ferdous



Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusions, the MTR proposes the portfolio management to consider several interventions in the short and long term. The MTR did not assess their resource and capacity implications, which portfolio management may have to investigate along the review and prior to any adoption.

1. Support the JPs in transitioning and sustaining their activities.

- Develop a common approach or strategy to manage the upcoming requests for no-cost extensions.
- Invite JPs to reflect on and draft a sustainability plan as part of their Q3 reporting.

2. Consider providing support to the JPs in their partnerships and resource mobilization efforts.

- Organize global events that promote specific JPs (or groups of) to facilitate relationships and matchmaking with donors.
- Consider furthering global and regional collaboration and partnerships with the IFIs, such as the World Bank and regional banks.
- Continue outreach and promotion activities including by developing communication resources on SP and LNOB that target Ministries of Finance.
- Organize a final global online conference that promotes SP and LNOB and provides stronger visibility to countries' achievements and remaining gaps and priorities.

3. Consider providing stronger support to the technical agenda on SP and LNOB.

- Consider strengthening relationships with international initiatives (USP2030, SPIARC-b) to promote the development of analytical work on cross-sectoral SP informed by the portfolio, including on inter-agency strategic frameworks.
- Consider arranging for one of the 5 agencies from OSC to produce a meta-synthesis of the 35 JP evaluations to be conducted in 2022.
- Continue facilitating the communities of practice and organizing “meet-up” events between JPs with a focus on JPs' knowledge needs and portfolio priorities.
- Consider organizing additional technical learning events with a focus on good practices and lessons learned over areas where JPs' progress could be accelerated (e.g. private sector engagement, PwDs, cross-sectoral SP in LDCs/ SIDS/conflict affected countries, social bonds, etc.).

4. Finalize the portfolio's theory of change.

- Consider aligning the portfolio's results framework and monitoring with the finalized TOC, including by adding an indicator that reflects the support to the UN reform and type of contribution or outcome expected from the JPs (e.g. use or adapt the indicator from the Fund's global Results framework).
- Improve progress monitoring with a focus on a limited number of results to inform decision-making and facilitate the identification of JPs or areas that may benefit from global attention.

5. Complement or adapt UN-wide guidelines on joint programmes.

- Consider developing guidelines on the selection of PUNOs.
- Include an optional section on south-south cooperation in the PRODOC template.

6. Consider contributing to global thought-leadership and knowledge management.

- Compile data and develop more in-depth analysis around SDG acceleration.
- Develop and provide the JPs with specific guidance (e.g. content submission map) on the types of information resources/outputs to be globally shared.

7. Facilitate the establishment of a global content repository for JPs' information resources/outputs (e.g. training materials, assessments, fiscal space analyses, normative products, etc.) to facilitate mutual learning and reuse.

- Compile the list of consultants engaged by JPs to create a roster of top international SP experts.
- Compile evidence and share success stories of UN reform.

8. Consider strengthening JP teams' capacities during the initial stages of the Joint SDG Fund's next portfolios.

- For future calls, consider organizing induction trainings for new JPs (e.g. at regional level) on upcoming cross-sectoral thematic areas, joint UN programming, team building, inter-agency monitoring and reporting.

ANNEXES

- Annex 1: List of people consulted.
- Annex 2: List of resources consulted.
- Annex 3: List of Joint Programmes.
- Annex 4: TOR.



Annex 1: List of people consulted.

1. Alberto Miranda, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations, USA
2. Alessandro Ramella Pezza, Social Policy and Economic Specialist, UNICEF, Malawi
3. Allegra Maria del Pilar Baiocchi, Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Costa Rica
4. Andres CHAMBA, Social Protection Specialist, WFP, Italy
5. Anette Dahlström, Counsellor, Sida, Development Cooperation, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations in New York, USA
6. Azam Toshpulatov, Programme Manager for the UN Joint Programme on Social Protection (UNICEF), Uzbekistan
7. Benoit Thiry, Country Director, WFP, Malawi
8. Bessie Msusa, Chief Economist, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, and Development (EPD), Malawi
9. Carlota Rego, Portfolio-Lead, Shock-sensitive Social Protection, UNICEF, Malawi
10. Chang-hee Lee, Country Director, ILO, Vietnam
11. Claudia Vinay, Social Protection Specialist, UNDP
12. David Stewart, Chief, Child Poverty and Social Protection, UNICEF, USA
13. Diana King, Social Protection Advisor, WFP, Malawi
14. Doan Huu Minh, Programme Analyst, UNDP, Vietnam
15. Firuza Ziyaviddinova, Programme associate of UN Joint Programme on Social Protection (UNICEF), Uzbekistan
16. Francisco Delgado, Viceminister, Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion, Costa Rica
17. Gabriella Mata Marin, National Private Sector Specialist, UN Women, Costa Rica
18. Helena Fraser, Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Uzbekistan
19. Jasmina Papa, Social Protection Specialist, ILO, Uzbekistan
20. Jose Francisco Ortizj, Social Protection Officer, ILO, Costa Rica
21. Jose Vicente Troya, Resident Representative, UNDP, Costa Rica
22. Juan Luis Bermúdez, Minister, Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion, Costa Rica
23. Kagisanyo Kelobang, Social Protection Specialist, ILO, Malawi
24. Kamal Malhotra, Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Vietnam
25. Kash Hussain, Senior Humanitarian and Resilience Adviser, UNRCO, Malawi
26. Kendall Naylor, UN Joint Programme Coordinator, WFP, Malawi
27. Le Thanh Forsberg, UN Strategic Results and Partnerships Specialist, UN RCO, Vietnam
28. Lisa Kurbiel, Head of Secretariat, Joint SDG Fund, USA
29. Louis Msuku, National Programme Officer, ILO, Malawi
30. Maria Jose Torres Macho, Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Malawi
31. Martijn Engels, First Secretary – Development, Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations in New York, USA
32. Mira Ihalainen, Public Partnerships and Business Development Adviser, UNFPA, USA
33. Mirfozil Khasanov, Task Manager on Protection and Disability Issues, UNDP, Uzbekistan
34. Munir Mammadzade, Resident Representative, UNICEF, Uzbekistan
35. Nenad Rava, Head of Programmes, Joint SDG Fund, USA
36. Nguyen Hai Dat, Programme Officer, ILO, Vietnam
37. Nguyen Ngoc Quynh, Program Officer on Social Protection and Inclusive Growth, UNFPA, Vietnam
38. Nguyen Ngoc Toan, Deputy Director General, Social Assistance Department (DSA), MOLISA, Vietnam
39. Nguyen Thi Trang, UNICEF, Vietnam
40. Nilufar Kamalova, National Officer in Social Protection, ILO, Uzbekistan
41. Nuno Cunha, Senior Specialist on Social Protection, Regional Office, ILO, Thailand
42. Rafael Kivleev, Head of section, Department of budget policy in social sphere, Ministry of Finance, Uzbekistan
43. Randall Brenes, Human Rights and Governance Project Officer, UNDP, Costa Rica
44. Rosa Cheng, Consultant, UNDP, Costa Rica
45. Rosemary Kalapurakal, Deputy Director a.i., UN DCO, USA
46. Sherzodbek Sharipov, Public Policy Associate, UNDP, Uzbekistan
47. Sofia Salas, UN Joint Programme Coordinator, UNDP, Costa Rica
48. Solome Zemene, Public Partnerships Specialist, UNICEF, USA
49. Sylvia Chaves, Consultant, FAO, Costa Rica
50. Tammy Smith, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Peace Building Fund / UN Peace Building Support Office
51. Tinatin Baum, Chief of Social Policy, UNICEF, Uzbekistan
52. Umid Aliev, Social Policy Officer, UNICEF, Uzbekistan
53. Veronika Wodsak, Social Protection Policy Specialist, ILO, Switzerland
54. Victoria Cruz Lopez, Strategic Planning officer/RCO Team Leader, UNRCO, Costa Rica

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Annex 3: List of Joint Programmes

Country	Joint Programme Title
Albania	<u>Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Delivery</u>
Argentina	<u>Early Childhood and Sustainable Development: Towards a Comprehensive Care System</u>
Bangladesh	<u>Enhancing Social Protection for Female Tea Garden Workers and their Families in Sylhet Division, Bangladesh</u>
Brazil	<u>Building Better Lives through Integrated Early Childhood Interventions: Investing in the Happy Child Programme to Accelerate the Achievement of SDGs in Brazil</u>
Cambodia	<u>Social Protection Floors in Cambodia</u>
Chile	<u>Nodo Platform: Improving Social Protection and Inclusion of the Elderly through ICT.</u>
Congo	<u>Improving the Quality of Life of Indigenous Peoples in the Department of Lékoumou through Improved Access to Social Protection Programmes in the Republic of Congo</u>
Costa Rica	<u>Strengthening of the National Social Protection Strategy Puente al Desarrollo to Break the Cycle of Poverty at the Local Level with a Gender and Environmental Perspective</u>
Ecuador	<u>Expanding the Social Protection System for Young Men and Women in the Informal Economy</u>
Gabon	<u>Citizenship and Social Protection in Gabon</u>
Georgia	<u>Transforming Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities in Georgia</u>
Indonesia	<u>Leaving No One Behind: Adaptive Social Protection for All in Indonesia</u>
Kenya	<u>A Progressive Pathway Towards a Universal Social Protection System in Kenya to Accelerate the Achievement of the SDGs</u>
Lao PDR	<u>Leaving No One Behind: Establishing the Basis for Social Protection Floors in Lao PDR</u>
Lebanon	<u>Transforming National Dialogue for the Development of an Inclusive National SP System for Lebanon</u>
Madagascar	<u>Development of an Integrated Social Protection System for Madagascar, Sensitive to the Needs of People Living with Disabilities</u>
Malawi	<u>Social Protection for the SDGs in Malawi: Accelerating Inclusive Progress Towards the SDGs</u>
Mauritania	<u>Developing an Integrated Social Protection Model in the Region of Guidimakha, Mauritania</u>
MCO Barbados	<u>Towards Universal Adaptive Social Protection in the Eastern Caribbean</u>
MCO Samoa	<u>Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Island States Through Universal Social Protection</u>
Mexico	<u>Closing Gaps: Making Social Protection Work for Women in Mexico</u>
Mongolia	<u>Extending Social Protection to Herders with Enhanced Shock Responsiveness</u>
Montenegro	<u>Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People in Montenegro</u>
Nigeria	<u>Institutionalizing Social Protection for Accelerated SDG Implementation in Nigeria</u>

Annex 3: List of Joint Programmes

Country	Joint Programme Title
Palestine	<u>Towards a Universal and Holistic Social Protection Floor for Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons in the State of Palestine</u>
Philippines	<u>Ensuring Inclusive and Risk-Informed Shock-Responsive Social Protection Resulting in More Resilient Communities in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)</u>
Rwanda	<u>Accelerating Integrated Policy Interventions to Promote Social Protection in Rwanda</u>
São Tomé and Príncipe	<u>Reaching the Furthest Behind First: A Catalytic Approach to Supporting the Social Protection in Sao Tome & Principe</u>
Somalia	<u>Toward a Somali Led Transition to National Social Protection</u>
South Africa	<u>An Integrated and Universal Social Protection Linked to Developmental Social Welfare Services in South Africa</u>
Tanzania	<u>Strengthening the Social Protection System in Tanzania</u>
Thailand	<u>Accelerating Progress Towards an Integrated and Modernized Social Protection System for all in Thailand</u>
Turkmenistan	<u>Improving the System of Social Protection through the Introduction of Inclusive Quality Community-Based Social Services</u>
Uzbekistan	<u>Accelerating Agenda 2030 in Uzbekistan through Inclusive Transformation of the Social Protection System</u>
Vietnam	<u>Accelerating Vietnam's Transition Toward Inclusive and Integrated Social Protection</u>

Portfolio Mid-term Review of Joint SDG Fund- Consultant

Background

The Joint SDG Fund supports countries as they accelerate their progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It operates through joint programmes (JPs) that provide the mechanism for transformative solutions implemented by governments and national stakeholders and supported by the UN Country Team led by Resident Coordinators (RCs). Strategic direction for the Fund is provided by the Strategic Advisory Group chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General as the chair of UN Sustainable Development Group. The Fund is managed by the Operational Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of 5 UN entities, and with the support from the Secretariat of the Fund. The UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) hosts the Fund and provides for the alignment with the broader UN Development System reforms. The Administrative Agent of the Fund, in charge of financial management, is the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O). Official documents (e.g. Terms of Reference and Operational Guidance) of the Fund and information on funding can be found on the Gateway portal.

The Fund launched its first global Call for Concept Notes in March 2019 to support integrated policy for SDG acceleration focusing on Social Protection and Leave No One Behind (LNOB), particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized – children, adolescents, people living with disabilities, minorities, and the elderly. A 114 countries applied and the top 35 proposals were selected, leading to development of 35 joint programmes (hereinafter JPs) in 39 countries with the total funding of \$US 102 million over 2 years. JPs were finalized and approved in 2019 and launched in 2020. The implementation involves 600+ partners from governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations. All joint programmes are expected to deliver results at scale by 31 January 2022, while improving the coherence of UN Country Teams and facilitating acceleration of SDG progress. More information on JPs can be found on the Joint SDG Fund website and on the Gateway portal.

Portfolio Context

The focus of the portfolio is on integrated policies, institutions, programmes and services for social protection of the most vulnerable. The approach is based on the understanding that social protection refers to any vulnerability across the whole individual's lifecycle. This led to a diverse portfolio, which includes focus on a large number of vulnerable populations, including children, youth, elderly and persons with disabilities. Across all these groups, the focus on women is put into the foreground and JPs also substantially mainstream human rights because they address systemic inequality.

JPs in this portfolio were launched at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund provided an opportunity to re-purpose 20% of the budget, which was used by 1/3 of the JPs. In addition, all JPs adapted to the new context and responded to COVID-19, in particular given that social protection of most vulnerable proved to be essential to address the immediate and system impact of the pandemic.

The implementation of all JPs is carried out by UN Country Teams, led by the Resident Coordinator. Global portfolio management focuses primarily on: developing portfolio-level policies and best practices, operational monitoring (quarterly check and 6-month progress update); risk management; and support to partnerships, strategic communication, learning and sharing of innovation practices.

Portfolio Context

There are two levels of results. At the global level, the results relevant for this portfolio are those included in the Joint SDG Fund Results Framework (as presented in its Terms of Reference). The global results are divided into programmatic (outputs and outcomes that focus on integrated policy) and performance indicators. The second level of results are programme-specific and presented in detailed results frameworks in each JP documents. The high diversity of focus of the JPs implies that the programme-specific results frameworks are too diverse to be effectively aggregated at the global, portfolio level. JPs are required to report on both: a) they provide input to the global results of the Fund, which are then aggregated, and b) they provide detailed analysis of the progress towards the results from programme-specific results frameworks. The portfolio reports on aggregate global results; provides clustered summaries of progress and showcases innovation and emergent practices.

In 2020, JPs provided quarterly updates for Q1 and Q3, as well as a 6-month progress update. These emphasized overview of the progress on implementation, risks, and next steps. It is expected that the delivery of expected results for 2020 will be hindered by lock-down measures and the broader impact of COVID-19. However, there is a great emphasis for JPs to innovate and leverage partnerships and related initiatives. JPs are also in the process of adapting their workplans, which in most cases leads to postponing certain activities to 2021, but in several cases it facilitated accelerating the implementation in 2020 (e.g. by moving some activities from 2021 into 2020 when requested from the government). The JP progress reporting included both implementation of expected results and the additional contributions provided through innovation, partnerships and engagement with individuals and families across vulnerable groups. In addition, more than 100 blog posts – human interest stories and expert insights – have been produced by the 35 JPs in 2020. The major upcoming milestone for each of the JPs is the Annual Progress Report, to be submitted in January 2021. Given that the duration of the JPs is 2 years, the 2020 Annual Progress Report is a critical opportunity to collect information, data and insights into the state of play given the ambitious results expected by 2022.

Purpose and Scope of the Portfolio Mid Term Review

The Portfolio Mid-Term Review (MTR) will not be a conventional evaluation and it will not seek to address the criteria such as programme efficiency, effectiveness, etc. The MTR is expected to provide: a) a strategic snapshot of the implementation to date across the 35 JPs, articulated at the global, portfolio level; b) an analysis of main issues relevant for portfolio management, such as progress towards the JP results expected in 2021; c) evidence for how the Fund's contributions to the JPs have facilitated systemic and catalytic change at the country level; and d) recommendations for portfolio management into 2021 and beyond.

The MTR will also include the analysis of Annual Progress Reports from JPs, which will be then accompanied by supplemental data analysis (e.g. survey questionnaire) and a limited number of interviews of UNCTs. The final report will then provide content for the annual progress report of the overall Joint SDG Fund.

This MTR is meant to streamline the engagement towards the most strategic findings. Its scope is not to undertake in-depth analysis of each JP), but rather a portfolio-level assessment. This analysis and reporting should focus on the aspects that hold relevance across the most relevant for the portfolio, and their contributions towards the global results of the Joint SDG Fund overall. Furthermore, the MTR will take into consideration that this portfolio is the first of the Joint SDG Fund and aims is expected to provide lessons learned for other current and future portfolios.

Overall, the Portfolio MTR will include:

Contextual analysis

- Brief review of the scope and focus of the portfolio, its role in the broader Joint SDG Fund, key information on the 35 JPs, and the specific needs and requirement of portfolio monitoring and reporting.

Strategic analysis of Annual Progress Reports of JPs

- 35 JPs will submit Annual Progress Reports by end January 2021 in a standardized template with information on progress of implementation and results for each JPs.
- The Consultant will conduct a brief but strategic analysis of 35 reports focusing on the information considered most essential for the portfolio MTR. This will lead to an overview of the portfolio-wide progress, accompanied by limited number of examples of particularly successful results and innovations. The Consultant will be required to undertake brief review of results (as per JP-specific results frameworks) in order to validate the narrative sections of the reports, and to acquire relevant evidence and data. Aggregation of selected clusters of programme-specific results may be conducted only for a limited number of focus areas (upon the agreement with the Fund's Secretariat).
- The reports will also provide data on the contribution of each JP to the global Fund's results relevant for this portfolio. This data will be aggregated and analyzed by the Consultant.

In-depth analysis of MTR survey questionnaire

- In addition to the Annual Progress Reports, JPs will provide data through a survey questionnaire. It requires the JPs to provide basic quantitative data on results or to respond to multiple-choice questions. Data will be validated, consolidated and analyzed by the Fund Secretariat before it is provided to the Consultant for analysis.
- The data from the questionnaire will build upon the analysis of Annual Progress Reports and represent the core aspect of the portfolio MTR.

Interviews with key stakeholders

- The Consultant will conduct interviews with stakeholders of JPs (country-level) and of the Joint SDG Fund (global). The interviews with the JP stakeholders will need to be limited in both number and scope. The Consultant will propose the most optimal approach (e.g. 2-3 interviews for each cluster of JPs).

Quarterly check for Q1 2021

- The information provided in the Annual Progress Report and the MTR survey will refer to implementation during 2020. However, during the course of MTR, JPs will provide an additional monitoring update –the quarterly check for Q1. This monitoring update will be brief (1-2 pages per JP) and will provide additional information for the final MTR report.

Input to global report of the Joint SDG Fund and updated summaries of JPs

- The findings of the MTR report be summarized and included into the global annual report of the Fund overall. They will also inform the updating the existing summaries of JPs.

Given the scope of and the limited period for the portfolio MTR, it will be essential for the Consultant to be selective and strategic in the analysis and reporting. The Consultant will need to balance providing the “big picture” of the portfolio with the need to present evidence of results and progress of individual JPs. This will require an advanced aptitude for analyzing complex information from different sources, identifying most essential insights, and articulating multi-faceted and cross-sectoral findings in a clear and concise manner. It will also require the ability to quickly acquire optimal understanding of diverse country contexts and undertake high-quality research using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Duties and Responsibilities

Reporting to the Head of Programme in the Secretariat of the Joint SDG Fund, the Consultant will support the portfolio on Integrated Policy for Social Protection and “Leave No One Behind” with the following:

Contextual analysis to acquire proper understanding of the overall approach and identify key information on the 35 JPs, including

- Fund’s Results Framework, the overall Fund’s ToR and other Fund’s strategic documents;
- Original portfolio scope and focus from the description of the Call for Concept Notes in 2019;
- 35 JP documents and portfolio statistics (e.g. on vulnerable populations);
- Most recent update of summaries of the 35 JPs coming out of 2020 portfolio monitoring; and
- JP blog posts (JP human interest stories and expert insights) and JP strategic documents/

Analysis of the Annual Progress Reports from the 35 JPs, containing

- Aggregation of results vis-à-vis the Fund’s global Results Framework;
- Overview of the progress on implementation of 35 JPs in 2020 (in a format to be proposed by the Consultant and agreed with the Head of Programme);
- Identification and summary of best examples of JP innovation, partnerships, response to COVID-19, support to UN reforms, and key annual results;
- Overview of anticipated next steps in JP implementation in 2021, in the context of expected final results in 2022; and
- Identification of essential aspects of portfolio risk management based on risk analysis to be provided in JPs’ Annual Progress Report.

Portfolio Mid-Term Review Report based on:

- Selected information from the analysis of the Annual Progress Reports (as presented above);
- Analysis of consolidated data from the MTR survey/questionnaire;
- Conducting selected number of interviews with the country-level stakeholders; and
- Conducting interview with the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat and global stakeholders.

Based on the Portfolio Mid-Term Review Report and the quarterly check for Q1 in 2021 (brief monitoring update from JPs), preparation of the following

- Content for the global annual reporting of the Joint SDG Fund, within the scope of the portfolio on Social Protection and LNOB; and
- Updated overviews of results of the 35 JPs.

Access to necessary documents, information and data will be provided to the Consultant by the Head of Programme. Besides the final report, the Consultant will hand over other relevant data and information produced over the course of MTR.

Expected Outputs, deliverables and Timeframe

On the basis of the specific scope and focus of the portfolio and within the previously defined duties and responsibilities, the Consultant will produce the following outputs and deliverables:

Inception report

The Consultant will produce the Inception report on the basis of desk review within maximum of 10 days. It will be a brief report of not more than 5-7 pages. It will focus on contextual analysis, initial analysis of JP Annual Progress Reports, and internal consultations. The primary objectives of the Inception Report are to: a) Demonstrate Consultant's understanding of the broader context and specific the scope and focus of the portfolio MTR, including through identification of main issues to be address in MTR); b) Present a detailed workplan with specific milestones; and c) Propose a structure for the final MTR Report.

Final draft of MTR Report

- The Consultant will produce a final draft MTR report after completing the analysis of all elements of the MTR, including the stakeholder interviews. The final draft Report will be based on the structure proposed in the Inception Report and shall be agreed upon with the Head of Programme. The Consultant will focus on the main unit of analysis (the global portfolio), while zooming in (providing evidence for successful JP results and innovations) and zooming out (identifying the overall contribution of the portfolio to the Fund overall). Finalizing this deliverable will require the Consultant to submit the final draft of the MTR report that will not require further analysis and can be finalized within a maximum of 5 days upon receiving feedback.

Final MTR Report

- Final MTR Report will be prepared by the Consultant after receiving feedback from the Secretariat of the Joint SDG Fund.

Summarized information for the global Fund's Report

- The Consultant will prepare summarized information from the MTR report as input to the global annual report of the Joint SDG Fund.

Timeframe/ Duration of Work

- The consultant is expected to complete the assignment with in 60 workdays from January to May 2021
- Tentative deadlines for the main deliverables are as follows
- Inception Report: 10 working days after the start of the assignment
- Final draft of MTR Report: 45 working days after the start of the assignment
- Final MTR Report: 50 working days after the start of the assignment
- Summarized information for the global Fund's Report: 60 working days after the start of the assignment

Inspired by the Secretary General's reform of the United Nations, the Joint SDG Fund supports the acceleration of progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We incentivize stakeholders to transform current development practices by breaking down silos and implementing programmes built on diverse partnerships, integrated policies, strategic financing, and smart investments. To get the 'world we want' we need innovative solutions that fast-track progress across multiple development targets and results, and contribute to increasing the scale of sustainable investments for the SDGs and 2030 Agenda.

With acknowledgment to, NORCAP the Norwegian Refugee Council's global provider of expertise to the humanitarian, development and peace-building sectors. We build partnerships with international organisations and national actors to protect lives, rights and livelihoods.

Sustainable Development Goals

- 1 No Poverty
- 2 Zero Hunger
- 3 Good Health and Wellbeing
- 4 Quality Education
- 5 Gender Equality
- 6 Clean Water And Sanitation
- 7 Affordable and Clean Energy
- 8 Decent Work And Economic Growth
- 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- 10 Reduced Inequalities
- 11 Sustainable Cities And Communities
- 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
- 13 Climate Action
- 14 Life Below Water
- 15 Life on Land
- 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- 17 Partnerships for the Goals

The Joint SDG Fund receives support from the European Union and governments of:

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