

ANNEX 6

Alignment to Strategic Plan, 2014-2017

A. Introduction

During 2014 and 2015, UNFPA steadily progressed towards full alignment of its programmes and business model to the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

B. Background:

The UNFPA strategic plan, 2014-2017, comprised of three main elements that represented a shift from previous strategic plans and, therefore, required some alignment to the changes to effectively implement the new one. The elements included:

- (a) The development results framework, management results framework and budgetary frameworks that were separate in previous plans were linked together in the 2014-2017 strategic plan to form an integrated resources and results framework;
- (b) A new business model was introduced – in the previous model, any of the main UNFPA interventions (service delivery, capacity building, knowledge management, and policy and Advocacy) could be implemented in any country. In the new model, interventions were given priority based on their strategic plan classification. The criteria include country's needs and ability to fund them. For example, the mode of engagement in countries with high needs and low ability to fund them could involve all four interventions. By contrast, the mode of engagement in countries with fewer needs and high ability to fund them would prioritize mainly policy and advocacy.
- (c) The financial resource allocation system was modified to conform to the new integrated resources and results framework and the new business model.

To adapt to the changes, business units were instructed to develop plans for aligning to the new strategic plan, and to implement and complete this alignment by 2015. In particular, the unit had to align their programmes and processes to the (a) new integrated resource and results framework, (b) business model and (c) funding arrangements. In addition, the organization defined a process for monitoring the implementation of the alignment plans. This process included:

- a) Defining the criteria for monitoring progress of the alignment. The criteria included:
 - a. Revision and linking of programme results and resource frameworks to the IRF, 2014-2017
 - b. Adjustment to appropriate modes of engagement as per country classification
 - c. Development of a partnership plan
 - d. Development of a human resource realignment plan
 - e. Alignment with stipulated regular resources as per Resource Distribution System, 2014-2017
- b) Developing and sharing with business units the guidelines on how to align to the strategic plan – prepare alignment plan, implement the plan, and monitor and report the progress of implementing it.
- c) Defining the analyses that would be used to assess the alignment. These included:
 - a. Analysis of the progress as reported in the business units' annual reports
 - b. Assessment of the alignment of the new country programme documents (CPDs) prepared in 2014 and 2015 – 43 new CPDs were developed and assessed, through the Programme Review Committee (PRC), which is responsible for quality assurance of new CPDs
 - c. Analysis of alignment of a sample of on-going/existing programmes – 47 country programmes were sampled and assessed over the two years, 24 in 2014 and 23 in 2015.

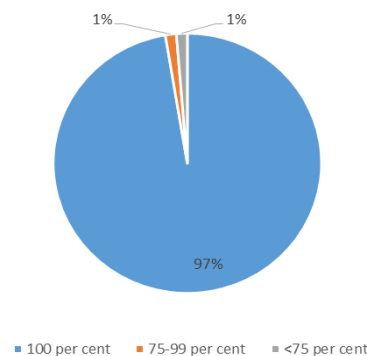
C. Progress of alignment to the strategic plan

Development and implementation of alignment plans

In 2014, 152 business units out of the UNFPA 165 business units 152 developed alignment plans; 13 business units, mostly small island countries and some headquarters units, did not develop plans because, for some, their plans were integral to the sub-regional office plans, as in the case of multi-county programmes; for others, mostly headquarters units, their plans were included in division-level plans.

Annual reports from 2014, show that 93 per cent of business units with alignment plans completed at least 75 per cent of the plan activities. Reports from 2015 show that 97 per cent of these units, including 122 Country Offices, had completed more than 90 per cent of the activities, as shown in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1: Proportion of UNFPA business units completing alignment activities, 2014-2015



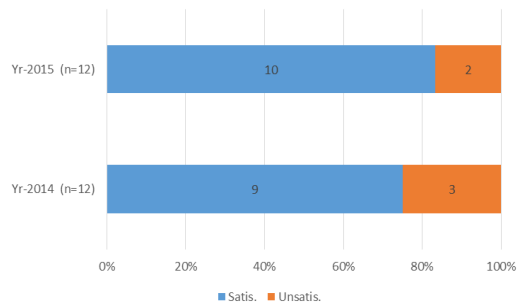
Source: Strategic Information System reports, 2015

Alignment to the Results Framework

Good progress was made in alignment to the strategic plan integrated results framework (IRF). Country programmes, guided by the outcome and output theories of change, revised respective programme results and resources frameworks (RRFs), to align to the IRF. A review of new CPDs, conducted by the PRC, found that all 43 CPDs developed in 2014-2015 had their RRFs fully aligned to the IRF. Full alignment means that (a) CPD focused on the IRF bullseye, (b) CPD results framework was linked to the outcomes and outputs of the IRF, and (c) as with the IRF, CPD results frameworks had appropriate indicators, baselines and targets.

The Business units' annual reports and the assessment of a sample of on-going/existing programmes also yielded similar results. In the 2015 annual reports, 98 per cent of Country Offices reported that their programme results framework had been revised to align with the IRF. Among the ongoing/existing sampled country programmes, 79 per cent had results frameworks that were satisfactorily aligned to the IRF, see Chart 2. Twenty one per cent of the sampled programmes were not satisfactorily aligned mostly because of weak results- monitoring indicators and in some cases, missing indicator baselines or target figures. This gap was communicated and support was provided to the respective countries to rectify accordingly.

Chart 2: Quality assurance review of sample RRFs, 2014-2015



Source: Programme Division

Data, 2015

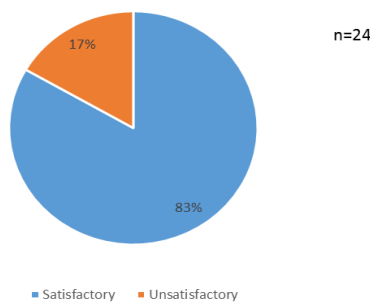
In 2016, another 58 revised country programme RRFs are scheduled for the PRC alignment review. After this review, UNFPA will have a full picture of alignment to the strategic plan results framework.

Alignment to the Business Model

UNFPA made steady progress in aligning to the modes of engagement. The business model alignment is assessed based on the alignment of country programmes to the following three parameters: (a) modes of engagement (b) partnership plans (c) human resource plans.

Based on the PRC review, the CPDs developed in 2014-2015 were aligned to the appropriate modes of engagement. In addition, the assessment based on the sample of on-going/existing programmes found that 83 per cent of results frameworks for these programmes were satisfactorily aligned to the appropriate modes of engagement, as shown in chart 3. The 17 per cent that is not satisfactorily aligned have been given feedback and guidance to make the necessary adjustments.

Chart 3: Sample RRFs with ratings on the modes of engagement criterion



Source: Programme Division Data, 2015

It should be noted that alignment to the modes of engagement is enforced in the newly rolled-out Global Programming System, which is used to manage the work plan implementation and budgets of implementing partners. In this system, every work plan activity must be tagged to a mode of engagement.

Aligning with the Partnership plans requirement

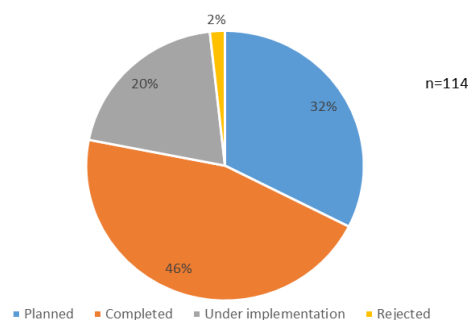
Most country offices developed partnership plans to reflect the vision of the new strategic plan business model. The 2015 country office reports show that 96 per cent had developed new partnership plans in the approved formats, which includes emphasis of brokering new strategic partnerships with a range of geopolitical groups, the private sector, the UN and other national partners. Most offices have begun operationalizing these plans.

In addition, an assessment based on the randomly-selected on-going/existing programmes found that 87 per cent of country programmes had satisfactory partnerships plans. Partnership plans were considered unsatisfactory if they did not include the private sector or regional strategic partners. These omissions were communicated and support was provided to the individual countries to improve their plans.

Human resource realignment plans

The Country Offices, in collaboration with the Regional Office and Headquarters, reviewed human resource capacity and structure to ensure alignment with the direction set out in the business model for advancing programme objectives, especially programmes that were to shift from heavy transactional, service-oriented operations towards upstream work such as advocacy and policy. By 2015, 114 Country Offices had developed human resource realignment plans. Chart 4 shows that about 68 per cent of HR realignment plans are either fully completed or under implementation while 32 per cent have been planned.

Chart 4: Distribution of human resource realignment plans by level of implementation



Source: Division of Human Resources Data, 2015

Alignment to the Funding Arrangements

The details of programme alignment to funding arrangements are in the UNFPA Statistical and Financial Report for the transition period (2014-2015). The report shows the proportion of Middle Income Countries contributing to the floor system of the Resource Allocation System (RAS), 2014-2017. The PRC assessed the 43 new CPDs on the alignment to the new resource distribution system; the assessment found that all these CPDs had satisfactorily aligned to the new system.

D. Challenges and Lessons learned

Being a pioneering experience for the UN system, it required substantial support and investment of time to operationalize the differentiated approach within a timeframe of two years. This is especially true when it came to landing and contextualizing the model and securing the agreement of partners. Accordingly, a continuous effort will be necessary to preserve the gains of the transition period.

There is need for flexibility in operationalizing the modes of engagement, especially in the context of unforeseen emergencies in fragile contexts. The flexibility approach was operationalized through a formal review and approval process for about seven cases business cases, providing valid justifications for interim deviation from the business model and through guidance for operationalizing the model in humanitarian settings.

Finally, mainstreaming the alignment exercise into office plans, dedicated and timely implementation support, and periodic reporting helped to keep offices focused on completing the exercise, rather than treating it as an ad-hoc requirement. Capacity-building of offices has contributed to raising awareness and sustaining the momentum for the exercise, in that more than 90 per cent of Country Offices made tremendous progress even in the first year of transition.