

Independent Evaluation – Management Response

(Note: This form is to be included in the final report.)

Name of programme/office/unit:	Strategic implementation of Agenda 2030 Unit		
Name of programme manager	Einar Bjorgo, Elena Proden		
Name of project undertaking	Capacity building for the 2030 Agenda 2.0	ID	TARRD016
Name of evaluation	Independent Mid-term Evaluation of the “Capacity building for the 2030 Agenda 2.0” project		
Report issuance:	October 2022		

SECTION I – Comments on Findings/ Conclusions/Recommendations

Since the evaluation results had been presented closer to the end of the project, most of the new recommendations were reflected in the design of the next phase of the project Capacity for the 2030 Agenda 3.0. Some of the recommendations however were already planned or being implemented by the team under the current phase.

Some of the findings confirmed the potential usefulness of the measures implemented in 2022 or currently being implemented such as proposing to the extent possible a comprehensive approach to technical support for pilot countries covering integrated planning, monitoring and financing aspects as may be relevant. In Cyprus, this approach had been reflected during the design stage and the pilot has been successful in so far as it helped the country adjust its SDG governance system so as to allow the monitoring information to inform programming, budgeting and reporting, incl. EU reporting. In Seychelles, in addition to the initial analytical work on the system map done by UNITAR and UNDESA, currently, a training program is being developed by both entities that would cover both integrated planning and indicators in response to the Government’s needs. Another measure is related to the scoping and missions. The scoping in Cyprus was done directly with Government from the outset, and was done through RCO in the case of Seychelles and Mauritius. The scoping mission to Seychelles took place in 2022 after the travel restrictions had been lifted. UNITAR participated in the High-level Dialogue between Ministers and UNCT Heads and discussed the support it can provide jointly with UNDESA. Another mission to Mauritius is planned in 2023 as the RCO promotes an integrated approach for both countries. The role of RCO would be critical in this regard for national-level cooperation. UNITAR will also do scoping missions for potential new pilot countries and offer integrated support.

One finding was related to the importance of revisiting the theory of change to help strengthen the impact and outreach of the project. This finding encouraged the team to revise the approach for the next phase of the C4A2030 project. Another significant finding was related to the geographic spread of beneficiaries and the importance of linguistic diversification. While some of the courses are currently being translated into new languages, as a result of this finding, it had been proposed that UNSDG:Learn should be translated into 2 additional languages and one of the KPIs of its Partnership Strategy should focus on the share

of offerings in other languages. In addition, UNSDG:Learn is increasing the number of its community pages to help tailor to the needs of different target audiences. The level of knowledge and skills application according to the evaluation results seems to be relatively high and a number of recommendations have been made to use “open clinics”, communities of practice and Level 3 evaluations. Learning reinforcement activities have been experimented in the current phase and “open clinics” and communities of practice will be included in the next one. Level 3 evaluations are part of the ongoing project and will be included again in the new phase.

Project monitoring for this project is done using two tools: Institute-wide Event Management System and the project monitoring table. The monitoring data are entered regularly in the project table and can be easily retrieved by the team. The format of the EMS sheets is defined at the level of the Institute and cannot be changed for the project.

Finally, the project funding approach has received a positive assessment, it does however decrease the flexibility on some of the project objectives given that the matched funding is mostly earmarked for a specific purpose. For the next phase, additional diversification measures may be considered. One could be a fee-based approach for some learning where some beneficiaries would be willing and able to pay a fee. Another one could be small voluntary donations by learners at the end of the course. Finally, programme support costs and direct service costs are defined by the Institute’s policy to account for the fact that unlike the UN Secretariat and may other agencies, UNITAR is fully project-funded. However, the Institute has shorter and more predictable administrative timelines compared to other UN partners and has been effective and efficient in developing and implementing time-consuming e-learning projects funded by other UN partners within the short timelines the partners had for project implementation (from 3 to 6 months).

SECTION II - RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Management Response and Planned Action
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		Accepted Partially Accepted Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)
1.	<p>Revisit the project's implementation approach and develop a more coherent and plausible theory of change for the next phase.</p> <p>This could include:</p>	Partially accepted	Revised theory of change in C4A2030 3.0 proposal	na	Implemented in the new proposal
<p>Comments: The theory of change has been revised to promote a more coherent approach across different activities and propose activities that would be split between those aimed specifically at broad outreach and those aimed at impact.</p> <p>The new overall objective of the project is to strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders to accelerate progress towards the SDGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. through greater knowledge outreach by promoting global knowledge development and dissemination and ensuring easy access to relevant e-learning for many learners around the world to change mindsets and build capacities of thousands of individuals; b. through more impactful capacity development activities leading to institutional change by training key “change agents” and strengthening national institutional and individual capacities in selected pilot countries. <p>The programming had been now structured around results areas that can be achieved through different types of intervention. Two results areas aimed at outreach focus on UNITAR’s participation in global and regional fora and contribution to global knowledge development and dissemination, and those that would ensure access to e-learning for all in more languages.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Result area 1. Promoting stronger global outreach Result Area 2. Making e-learning services accessible to all</p> <p>Two other results areas are aimed at ensuring impact with one focusing on global signature training programs for selected “change agents” and more targeted actions through integrated support in pilot countries.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Result area 3. Harnessing multiplier effect through signature training programs Result area 4. Developing stronger national capacities in pilot countries to achieve the SDGs</p> <p>A system map showing links between objectives and synergies matrix has been developed to guide the activities.</p>					

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<p>Ensuring more integrated actions by targeting the same pilot countries with interventions aiming at strengthening both the policy coherence and integrated planning as well as building the SDGs reporting and data capability (StaTact); and/ or</p> <p>Mapping the participants per country and propose a pilot (focused) intervention in that country leveraging the (presumably) enhanced capacity in specific areas. This can be done through tracking and tracing the beneficiaries in the pilot countries in order to identify the mass / pool of the project beneficiaries whose capacity is developed and capitalize on them to accelerate the intended change.</p> <p>While noting the recent development in the current data management systems, develop a more systematic project tracking and monitoring framework to allow periodic reporting and analysis of the activity data with partners to help them integrate the findings into their relevant processes.</p> <p>Consider periodic assessment of learning, through (i) deploying surveys every 3-6 months after a course or workshop is delivered, and (ii) consult with the participants after</p>	<p>Different interventions will be proposed to pilot countries in an integrated manner starting from cross-cutting – integrated planning, reporting, etc. – and moving to support on specific nexuses if needed. The exact nature will however be defined through scoping in response to the country’s demand. The integrated approach was already used in Cyprus where UNITAR provided support on the adjustments to the SDG Governance system, the development of the national SDG action plan and national monitoring mechanism, training of civil servants and other stakeholders and current national SDG communication strategy and action plan.</p> <p>It is not deemed feasible to propose pilots only based on e-learning participants as the key to success will be political will and support from RCO within the pilot country and the current pilots are interested in continuing the work. New pilots will also be considered based on the availability of matching funding (as was the case in Cyprus). However, it is deemed essential that a mapping of participants is done from current and new pilot countries and learners from these countries are encouraged to take free e-learning and key stakeholders are invited into signature programs to maximize impact.</p> <p>The team already has a systematic monitoring approach to record detailed results which has been shared with the evaluator. High-level monitoring is done at the level of the Institute using UNITAR’s Event Management System which has been recently reformed. Changes to EMS are decided at the level of the Institute by CITSU and cannot be implemented by this project team.</p> <p>Level 3 evaluations had been planned for the ongoing project (as part of independent evaluation for mid-term review and final ones to be undertaken by the team). The new project proposal includes Level 3 evaluations for all signature training programs and pilot countries’ training activities. They will be organized in the proposed waves (3-6 months and 6-12 months). Samples can be included from free e-course offerings.</p>
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	6-12 months to assess any potential changes in behaviour.				
Recommendation		Accepted Partially accepted Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)
2.	<p>Develop a project strategy to increase outreach across countries and institutions, promote the different project offerings and enhance the project's effectiveness and impact.</p> <p>This could include: Reconsidering the outreach strategy to the pilot countries by setting expectations, joint scoping of the technical assistance and ensuring continuous communication with the relevant government counterparts in the potential pilot countries.</p> <p>Closely managing the in-country missions to ensure engagement with the relevant government counterparts, proper scoping of the technical assistance, close communication with the consultants commissioned to deliver in-country technical support.</p> <p>Enhancing the offerings' language accessibility (ranging from the provision of captions/ script in different languages to developing courses in the native languages). Overcoming the internet connectivity issue by providing offline or</p>	Accepted	<p>Below recommendations to be included in the C4A2030 3.0 proposal Open Clinics will be tried for targeted training programs</p>		<p>Implemented</p> <p>Planned</p>
		<p>Comments: The new project proposal includes 2 objectives aimed at strengthening UNITAR's outreach: Result area 1. Promoting stronger global outreach Result Area 2. Making e-learning services accessible to all</p> <p>At the level of pilot countries, joint scoping will be done with the support of RCOs where available. RCO has a critical role to play in making sure that the Government is aware and consulted on proposals from UNITAR and partners.</p> <p>The in-country missions had been organized after the end of the COVID-19 travel restrictions to all countries except Mauritius. The mission to Mauritius is planned for 2023. Consultants had been closely supervised and received detailed guidance on their contributions.</p> <p>The new proposal includes the plan to translate UNSDG:Learn into 2 more languages, and it is planned to have more UNITAR courses available in more languages. Downloadable versions of lessons are already provided for some of the courses and will be provided for all courses. Other technical solutions to address connectivity are being explored at the level of UNITAR and will be considered by the team if feasible.</p>			

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	<p>downloadable versions of the courses.</p> <p>Scheduling periodic “open clinics” (open office hours) for specific types of courses to make the learning process more dynamic and active.</p> <p>Maximizing the use of the developed tools (such as the StaTact) by granting access to partners to disseminate its use while piggybacking on their missions and events.</p>	<p>“Open clinics” approach will be experimented in connection with signature training programs and/or country trainings.</p> <p>The tool had been put at the disposal of UNSD and a workshop is planned for other UN agencies and IOs to demo the tool and encourage them to create their agencies’ landing pages and use it with their colleagues.</p>			
Recommendation		Accepted Partially accepted Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)
3.	<p>Strengthen partnerships to maximize reach and effectiveness and enhance sustainability and impact.</p> <p>This could include: Finalizing the UN SDG:Learn Partnership Strategy performance measures.</p> <p>Initiating/ building a community of learners for those engaged in sectoral/ thematic learning to allow for more dynamic learning processes and peer support.</p>	Accepted	<p>Finalize KPIs for UNSDG:Learn Partnerships Strategy Additional Community Pages under UNSDG:Learn Including Forums in all signature training programs Share data analytics on a regular basis</p>		<p>Implemented</p> <p>Under implementation</p> <p>Planned</p> <p>Under implementation</p>
		<p>Comments:</p> <p>The KPIs for the UNSDG:Learn Partnerships Strategy had been discussed during the Steering Group meeting on 2 December 2022 and are now finalized.</p> <p>A key in the Partnership Strategy for UNSDG:Learn is the development of new Community Pages to bring together learners around their professional interests. In addition to Statistics, new pages under development are Evaluation, Gender and Business. Under Gender, a community of practice web solution will be developed and tested and could be applied under other pages in the future if there is demand.</p>			

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	<p>Sharing data analytics updates with partners on a periodic basis to analyze performance and inform decisions.</p>	<p>In addition, under signature training programs, a community of practice is included as a key method. This will be first tested under the ongoing project as part of the training program on “Data analysis for SDG policy formulation and evaluation” run from December 2022 to February 2023.</p> <p>Data analytics had been shared with other donors and partners based on their specific requests. It has now been decided to provide quarterly updates on key statistics on e-courses to funding partners with whom courses had been co-developed.</p>
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Name of Director/Programme Manager	Date	Signature
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